

## **Child Marriage Under the Muslim Law in Sri Lanka: An Assessment in the Light of Human Rights Law and Values.**

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Child marriage is a phenomenon that indicates the formal marriage or informal union entered into by an individual before reaching a certain age. The negative consequences of child marriage directly affect to the girl child which are severe and long-lasting. This situation is prevalence under the Muslim law in Sri Lanka. Like many other countries in South Asian region, religion and customs play an important role while designing the personal Laws among different regions and religions in Sri Lanka particularly in marriage consequences of Muslims. Marriage and Divorce (Muslim) Act, No 13 of 1951, being the principal piece of legislation for the Muslim marriage consequences was enacted without mentioning minimum age for marriage. Accordingly this Act leads to occur child marriages under Muslim law in Sri Lanka. Therefore, this paper discuss the problem of child marriages in Sri Lanka under Muslim law and investigates the inadequacy of the current legal framework governing marriage under Muslim law in Sri Lanka in promoting the rights of girl child and expects to make suggestions to enhance the existing legal regime in the light of human rights law and values. This research mainly emphasizes the responsibility of legal authorities in making the suitable platform to ensure the rights of the girl child. Amending or replacing the minimum age for Muslim marriages in Sri Lanka or enacting a new legislation by recognizing the rights of girl child is the major recommendation for the protection against the discrimination on the grounds of sex and religion under the Muslim law in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, a comparative analysis of successful examples from selected jurisdictions such as India and Pakistan were carried out in order to come up with recommendations. The methodology adopted for this research is purely a qualitative approach, which mainly carried out by the reference of primary and secondary sources such as legal enactments, statutes, academic writings, international legal instruments and e-sources.

**Keywords:** child marriage; human rights; Muslim law; Sri Lanka