**CHILD, EARLY AND FORCED MARRIAGE IN UGANDA**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Child marriage is a global problem affecting millions of girls across the world. It is considered a human rights violation because it deprives those involved of education and health services, the chance to learn skills and develop their personalities and leaves them vulnerable. It is an appalling violation of human rights and robs girls of their education, health and long-term prospects,” says Babatunde Osotimehin, M.D, Executive Director, UNFPA. Despite the physical damage and the persistent discrimination to young girls, little progress has been made toward ending the practice of child marriage. This is commonly caused by increasing levels of poverty, low levels of education backed by cultural and traditional beliefs of securing the lives of girls in marriage. In fact, the problem threatens to increase with the expanding youth population in developing world.

The report puts together findings and recommendations from different research about child, early and forced marriage in Uganda to guide and encourage policy makers, programme designers and implementers the processes of mitigating the vice.

**INTRODUCTION**

**Back ground**

The term “early marriage” is used to refer to both formal marriages and informal unions in which a girl lives with a partner as if married before age of 18 (UNICEF 2005; Forum on Marriage and the rights of women and girls 2001). For UNFPA (2006) early marriage, also known as Child marriage, is defined as “any marriage carried out below the age of 18 years, before the girl is physically, physiologically, and psychologically ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage and childbearing.” Child marriage, on the other hand, involves either one or both spouses being children and may take place with or without formal registration, and under civil, religious or customary laws.

It also refers to any marriage of a child younger than 18 years old, in accordance to Article 1 of the convention of the right of the child.

Forced marriage is the marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and is a marriage in which duress-whether physical or emotional- is a factor. Any child marriage constitutes a forced marriage, in recognition that even if a child appears to give their consent, any one below the age of 18 is not able to make a fully informed choice whether or not to marry. Child marriages must be viewed within a context of force and coercion, involving pressure and emotional blackmail and children that lack the choice or capacity to give their full consent. Most early marriages are arranged and based on the consent of parents and often fail to ensure the best interests of the girl child. Early marriages often include some elements of force, (Otoo Oyortey and Pobi 2003). One in seven girls in the developing world marries before 15 (Population Council 2006). Nearly half of the 331 million girls in developing countries are expected to marry by their 20th birthday. At this rate, 100 million more girls—or 25,000 more girls every day—will become child brides in the next decade (Bruce and Clark 2004). Between 2011 and 2020, more than 140 million girls will become child brides, according to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). If current levels of child marriages hold, 14.2 million girls annually or 39 000 daily will marry too young. Furthermore, of the 140 million girls who will marry before they are 18, 50 million will be under the age of 15.

**The prevalence of child, early and forced marriage in Uganda**

According to Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), which provide much of the current country-level child marriage data, child marriage is most common in the world’s poorest countries. The highest rates are in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia as well as parts of Latin America and the Caribbean (ICRW 2006; NRC/IOM 2005).

Uganda is one of the countries with the highest early and forced marriage. 10% of girls are married off before the age of 15 and 40% of girls re married off before their 18th birth day (UNICEF 2011). Around 46 per cent of all women are married by the age of 18, according to UNICEF 2011 figures despite the law setting 18 as the legal age of marriage.

A report submitted by a journalist Mutegeki Goffrey in March 2012, in Kabarole district, 20 primary pupils have been married off in a period of three months. These include three pupils from Kibyo Primary School, five from Mahyoro Primary School in Karangura Sub County, five from Kibaata Primary School Bunyangabu Sub County and seven from Kateebwa SDA primary school in Kateebw Sub County. The research indicates that, their parents aided the process in exchange of goats and some other material items.

A survey carried out by **Joy for Children Uganda** in the mountainous sub counties of Kabarole- Karangura, Kabonero, and Kateebwa inhabited mainly by Bakonjo in July –October 2013; it was found out that child marriage is the leading cause of girls dropping out of school. At Nyarukamba Primary school in Karangura Sub County, the school drop out rate of girls for marriage was at 15% in 2009 and 10% in 2012. The young girls are married off in exchange of goats ranging from 1-5.

***Biira Annet (not real name) 14 did not sit for her Primary Leaving Examination 2013 at Nyarukamba Primary school in Karangura Sub County. Her parents negotiated for her marriage without her consent in exchange of 2 goats in a nearby community. The Head Teacher reported the case to police but the parents insisted that their daughter went to visit her relatives in another district.***

**The impact of child marriage on the human rights of women and girls in Uganda.**

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) Article 16.2: *Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses*. Therefore early and forced marriage is a violation of human rights. Child marriage denies girls their rights to health, education, to live in security and to choose when and whom they marry.

There are numerous detrimental consequences associated with early marriage which involve physical, developmental, psychological and social implications.

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**Physical consequences**

When a child bride is married she is likely to be forced into sexual activity with her husband, and at an age where the bride is not physically and sexually mature this has severe health consequences.

Child brides are likely to become pregnant at an early age and there is a strong correlation between the age of a mother and maternal mortality. Girls ages l0-14 are five times more likely to die in pregnancy or childbirth than women aged 20-24 and girls aged 15-19 are twice as likely to die. Young mothers face higher risks during pregnancies including complications such as heavy bleeding, [fistula](http://www.forwarduk.org.uk/key-issues/fistula), infection, anemia and eclampsia which contribute to higher mortality rates of both mother and child. At a young age a girl has not developed fully and her body may strain under the effort of child birth, which can result in obstructed labour and obstetric fistula. Obstetric fistula can also be caused by the early sexual relations associated with child marriage, which take place sometimes even before menarche.

Good prenatal care reduces the risk of childbirth complications, but in many instances, due to the limited autonomy or freedom of movement, young wives are not able to negotiate access to health care. They may be unable to access health services because of distance, fear, expense or the need for permission from a spouse or in-laws. These barriers aggravate the risks of maternal complications and mortality for pregnant adolescents.

Child brides may also suffer vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. Being young and female in Africa is a major risk factor for infection and young girls are being infected at a considerably disproportional rate to that of boys. Whilst early marriages are sometimes seen by parents as a mechanism for protecting their daughters from HIV/AIDS, future husbands may already be infected from previous sexual encounters; a risk which is particularly acute for girls with older husbands. The age disparity between a child bride and her husband, in addition to her low economic autonomy, further increases a girl's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. It exacerbates the abilities of girls and women to make and negotiate sexual decisions, including whether or not to engage in sexual activity, issues relating to the use of contraception and condoms for protecting against HIV infection, and also their ability to demand fidelity from their husbands.

**Developmental consequences**

Child Marriage also has considerable implications for the social development of child brides, in terms of low levels of education, poor health and lack of agency and personal autonomy. The Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls explains that 'where these elements are linked with gender inequities and biases for the majority of young girls, their socialization which grooms them to be mothers and submissive wives, limits their development to only reproductive roles.

Whilst girls in Africa are already less likely to go to attend school than boys, particularly in poorer households, the non-education of the girl child is a problem compounded by child marriage, with studies showing a strong correlation between a woman's age at marriage and the level of education she achieves. Large numbers of the girls who drop out of school do so because of early marriage, leaving many women who married early illiterate. Early marriage plans can also discourage a girl's parents from educating their daughter because they believe that a formal education will only benefit her future family in law.

A lack of education also means that young brides often lack knowledge about sexual relations, their bodies and reproduction, exacerbated by the cultural silence surrounding these subjects. This denies the girl the ability to make informed decisions about sexual relations, planning a family, and her health, yet another example of their lives in which they have no control.

The cyclical nature of early marriage results in a likely low level of education and life skills, increased vulnerability to abuse and poor health, and therefore acute poverty.

**Psychological and social consequences**

It is a huge responsibility for a young girl to become a wife and mother and because girls are not adequately prepared for these roles this heavy burden has a serious impact on their psychological welfare, their perceptions of themselves and also their relationship.

Women who marry early are more likely to suffer abuse and violence, with inevitable psychological as well as physical consequences. Studies indicate that women who marry at young ages are more likely to believe that it is sometimes acceptable for a husband to beat his wife, and are therefore more likely to experience domestic violence themselves. Violent behavior can take the form of physical harm, psychological attacks, threatening behavior and forced sexual acts including rape. Abuse is sometimes perpetrated by the husband's family as well as the husband himself, and girls that enter families as a bride often become domestic slaves for the in-laws.

Early marriage has also been linked to wife abandonment and increased levels of divorce or separation and child brides also face the risk of being widowed by their husbands who are often considerably older. In these instances the wife is likely to suffer additional discrimination as in many cultures divorced, abandoned or widowed women suffer a loss of status, and may be ostracized by society and denied property rights.

**Maternal Health**

Studies show a strong association between child marriage and early childbirth, partly because girls are pressured to prove their fertility soon after marrying and they have little access to information on reproductive health or ability to influence decision making on family planning (Mathur, Greene and Malhotra 2003; Blesdoe and Cohen 1993; Mensch, Bruce and Greene 1998; Malhotra et al. 2003).

One third of women in developing countries give birth before 20; as much as 55 percent of women give birth before 20 (Save the Children 2004).

Women who bear children at a young age may face serious health consequences.

Young mothers experience higher rates of maternal mortality and higher risk of obstructed labor and pregnancy-induced hypertension because their bodies are unprepared for childbirth (Save the Children 2004; Mathur, Greene and Malhotra 2003). Girls between 10 and 14 are five times more likely than women ages 20 to 24 to die in pregnancy and childbirth (UNFPA and the University of Aberdeen 2004). Girls ages 15 to 19 are twice as likely as older women to die from childbirth and pregnancy, making pregnancy the leading cause of death in poor countries for this age group (Save the Children 2004). ratio is 178 for every 100,000 live births of women ages 15 to 19, compared to only 32 for women ages 20 to 24 (FCI and the Safe Motherhood Inter-Agency Group 1998; CDC 2002).

Girls who have babies also have a high risk of suffering from obstetric fistula, a condition in which the vagina, bladder and/or rectum tear during childbirth and, if left untreated, cause lifelong leakage of urine and feces (UNFPA and Engender Health 2003). Two million women suffer from obstetric fistula worldwide, and an additional 50,000 to 100,000 new cases develop annually among girls (Murray and Lopez 1998).

Child marriage also exposes young married girls to a greater risk of HIV infection.

Married girls may be more vulnerable to HIV infection because they have little option to change their sexual behavior even with knowledge about HIV (Clark 2004). Child brides also have less access to quality health care services and information compared to girls who marry when they are older (Mathur, Greene and Malhotra 2003; Mensch, Bruce and Green 1998; Singh and Samara 1996).

**Infant Health**

The children of teen mothers experience serious health consequences as well. A child born to a teen mother is twice as likely to die before the age of 1 as the child of a woman in her 20s. Currently, 1 million infants of young mothers die every year worldwide as a result of pregnancy and childbirth-related causes. If they survive, these infants tend to have higher rates of low birth weight, premature birth and infant mortality than those born to older mothers (Save the Children 2004). After birth, infants of teen mothers are more likely than infants born to older mothers to have poorer health care and inadequate nutrition as a result of their young mothers’ poor feeding behavior (Save the Children 2004; Kurz 1997).

 **Education and Economic Status**

Child marriage is associated with lower education and economic status of girls.

Child brides are less able than older or unmarried girls to access schooling and income-generating opportunities or to benefit from education or economic development programs. Girls already in school are often forced to terminate their education when they marry early (Save the Children 2004). Limited mobility, household responsibilities, pregnancy and raising children, and other social restrictions for married girls prevent them from taking advantage of education or work opportunities (Mathur, Greene and Malhotra 2003). Early childbearing and motherhood, which usually accompanies early marriage, also is associated with lower levels of education and higher rates of poverty (Singh and Samara 1996; Mensch, Bruce and Greene 1998). Opportunities for young mothers to continue their education or to work often are limited because they have little access to resources, and are responsible for childbearing and household tasks (Save the Children 2004). Thus, early childbearing, as well as early marriage tends to preclude further education and reinforce poverty.

***I did not sit for my Primary Leaving Examination in 2009. My parents arranged my marriage without my consent with a stranger. I gave birth to my first born when I was 15. I have two children with my husband who is a peasant with little income to support the family since all of us have no better paying jobs. I wanted to go back to school after giving birth but I had no one to leave my child with. Narrates Yuniya Kamaliya who was a pupil at Kasisi Primary school Rutete Sub County Kabarole district.***

**Domestic Violence and Decision Making**

Girls who are married young often lack status and power within their marriages and households, and so are more likely to experience domestic violence, sexual abuse, and isolation from family and community (UNICEF 2005; Jenson and Thornton 2003). Younger married girls reported experiencing sexual violence three times more often (ICRW 2005). Girls who marry young are also more likely to believe violence is justified (UNICEF 2005; Jenson and Thornton 2003). A study found that 36 percent of girls who married before 18 believe that men are justified in beating their wives, compared to 20 percent of those who married at a later age (UNICEF 2005). Lower status in the home also leaves married girls with less ability to influence decisions about their own lives (ICRW 2005; UNICEF 2005). Women who married as children are more likely to have partners who have the final say on household decisions, including their visits to family or friends, their health, their ability to work, large and small household purchases, and contraception (UNICEF 2005).

**What is being done to end child marriage in Uganda?**

The government and civil society organizations and Non-government organizations are conducting awareness rising on issues of early and forced child marriages through local radio stations across the country since majority of rural communities use the radio as the main media source. This is usually done in the local dialect where everyone easily understands the disseminated information and also contributes towards the debate. **Joy for Children Uganda** in partnership with **Raising voices** conducts such talk shows on local radio stations in Kabarole district.

The civil society organizations, Non-government organizations and the government run programmes in schools aimed at reducing and eliminating the vice.

**Joy for Children Uganda** run “Good school” programme in schools of the Rwenzori region. The schools are mobilized to start child rights clubs aimed at sensitizing their fellow children, teachers, parents and the community about violation of children rights with child marriage taking a centre stage as the major cause for school drop out especially among girls in the region.

It has also implementing **Girls Not Brides Empower Project** that works to keep girls to remain in school, sensitize the community on danger of child marriages and economically empowers vulnerable families to prevent children. The project is being piloted in Karangura sub county Kabarole district.

 **Kaana Foundation** a local Non-government Organization based in the Rwenzori region runs a “girl child accessing school” programme in the Rwenzori region. This program is all inclusive as the community is mobilized, teachers are motivated, and the school administration is encouraged to make routine monitoring of the girls that enroll in their schools until completion. The school children are also involved in the activities of the program. This is strategically done because people assume that education priority should be for boys.

**Raising voices** in partnership with local Non-Government Organizations is piloting a project “Girls Education Challenge” in four districts of Uganda- Kabarole, Kampala, Luwero and Lira. The project is aimed at enabling marginalized girls access school, stay in school and complete to attain quality learning out comes to increase and improve their life chances.

**Agape of Hope Female Youth Development Association** a local Non- Government Organizationoperating in Kasese district is working to improve the lives of the young women by empowering them with non-formal skills and educates them about their reproductive health and rights.

Several other civil society organizations and Non-Government Organizations in Uganda commemorate special days for children especially girls – Day of African Child (DAC) commemorated every 16th June of every year, International Day of the Girl Child commemorated every 11th October of every year with educative and advocacy themes. Mass sensitization activities about violence against children and in particular child marriage are organized.

In western Uganda 2013, **Save the children Uganda** mobilized other Non-Government Organizations operating in the Rwenzori region such as World Vision to commemorate the Day of African Child with a theme “Eliminating harmful social and cultural practices affecting children, our collective responsibility”. The function was held in Bundibugyo district where the practice is reported to be high. Other local Non-Government Organizations and CBOs organize the same functions in their respective operational areas with the aim of rising awareness about the dangers of child marriage and other violence against children related cases.

UNICEF introduced **Girls Education Movement (GEM)** spearheaded by the Ministry of Education and Sports in 2001 in all the primary schools in Uganda.

Girl’s Education Movement (GEM) is a child-centered, girl-led global movement of children and young people whose goal is to bring about positive social transformation by empowering girls through education. The programme focuses on the national priority of improved water and sanitation coverage in schools and girls’ school enrollment and reduced dropout rates. As a result of GEM in action, schools are increasingly providing special facilities for girls such as, separate latrines, bathrooms and sanitary materials for use especially during menstruation periods, and are cleaner and safer with availability of water and soap to wash hands, and there are more open discussions of hygiene, sexuality, maturation, and HIV/AIDS. H

The government recently allowed schools to use part of the Universal Primary Education funds to support GEM.

The Ministry of Education and Sports in partnership with other NGOs launched a campaign dubbed “Go back to school” stay in school, and complete” in schools around the country in 2007. This is aimed at supporting school drop out children especially girls to go back to school, stay in school and complete the primary cycle. Activities included advocacy, community mobilization and sensitization of stake holders, introduction of bylaws making primary education compulsory by making parents send their children to school, promoting sports and games in schools among others.

Also raising awareness on human rights is being done along side child support programmes in schools and communities.

At national level the **Girls Not Brides Uganda (GNBU)** alliance has been formed to campaign against child, early and forced marriage. This is done through partnering and networking with other Non-government organizations with similar agenda to run programmes that aim at eliminating the practice. Therefore, there is need to widen the scope and interventions of Girls Not Brides network to be able to reach out to the needy communities through research, coordination, and advocacy activities in districts with the highest prevalence of the vice.

**Legal framework**

According to 1995 Constitution of Uganda article 31. (1) Men and women of the age of eighteen years and above, have the right to marry and to found a family and are entitled to equal rights in marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

According to the **Convention on** **the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**, the most comprehensive international bill of rights for women, states that any betrothal or marriage of a child should not have any legal status. The Committee that monitors this convention states further in General Recommendation 21 (Article 16(2)) that the minimum age for marriage for both male and female should be 18 years, the age when “they have attained full maturity and capacity to act”.

**Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages, 1964** Article 2, States Parties to the present Convention shall specify a minimum age for marriage ("not less than 15 years" according to the nonbinding recommendation accompanying this Convention). No marriage shall be legally entered into by any person under this age, except where a competent authority has granted a dispensation as to age, for serious reasons, in the interests of the intending spouses.

 **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990** Article XXI, Child marriage and the betrothal of girls and boys shall be prohibited and effective action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify the minimum age of marriage to be eighteen years.

**Challenges for effective implementation of the policies and programmes.**

It is a common phenomenon in Uganda that, the policies, bylaws and programmes made by local governments remains on paper. Most local government structures and some Non-government organizations facilitate workshops and retreats for policy making and do not facilitate the implementation processes. Policies and bylaws remain not known to the local communities and this escalates the problem. For instance, most local people do not know the laws in the constitution of Uganda because it was not translated in their local languages for those who can read.

**Economic survival strategies:**

The high levels of poverty in Uganda have contributed to the persistent vice of child marriage. According to the United Nation’s Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), Uganda currently has 34.5 million people, about 23.1 million are prone to poverty, and about 8.4 million of them (about 24.5%) are trapped in absolute poverty.

Further studies indicate that, about 67% of Ugandans are either poor or highly vulnerable to poverty, the expenditure review for Uganda 2012 by the Directorate of Social Protection in the gender ministry has revealed. 67% represented both Ugandans who spend below the poverty line of $ 1.20 (about sh3, 170) per day and those who are below twice the poverty line, $2.40 (about sh6, 340) per day.

Where poverty is cute, a young girl may be regarded as an economic burden where one less daughter is one less mouth to feed (UNICEF 2001, Forum on marriage and the rights of women and Girls 2001; Mathur 2003 and Nour 2006).

Parents encourage the marriage of their daughters while they are still children in hope that the marriage will benefit them both financially and socially, while also relieving financial burdens on the family.

Additionally, poor families tend to marry off girls at the same time to help reduce the burden of high marriage ceremony expenses.

**Traditional beliefs:**

The marriage to a much older – sometimes even elderly – man is a practice common in some societies. In traditional societies in Uganda, a man is given another wife (a sister to the first wife) from the same family if the first one is dead or disabled. In the case of a girl in Rwebisengo Sub county Ntoroko district is one of many cases of girls who are married off at a very young age due to traditions. In 2011, a thirteen-year-old girl’s secondary education was terminated and married off to a 40-year-old man in order for the family to maintain traditional ties. The previous wife of the man had died of AIDS! This was in arrangement with the local leaders and girl’s parents.

In other traditional societies – where infant mortality was very high and survival depended on a family’s ability to produce its own food or goods for sale – child marriage helped to maximize the number of pregnancies and ensure enough surviving children to meet household labour needs (Mathur 2003).

**Socio-cultural and religious values**

In communities where child marriage is prevalent, there is strong social pressure on families to conform. Failure to conform can often result in ridicule, disapproval or family shame. Invariably, local perceptions on the ideal age for marriage, the desire for submissive wives, extended family patterns and other customary requirements, are all enshrined in local customs or religious norms. In many contexts child marriage is legitimized by patriarchy, and related family structures, which ensure that marriage transfers a father’s role over his girl child to her future spouse. The marriage or betrothal of children in some parts of Uganda is valued as a means of consolidating powerful relations between families, for sealing deals over land or other property, or even for settling disputes (UNIFPA, 2006).

**Value of virginity and protection of young girls**

Early marriage is one way to ensure that a wife is protected, or placed firmly under male control; that she is submissive to her husband and works hard for her in-laws’ household; that the children she bears are legitimate, (UNICEF 2001; Mathur, 2003 and Nour 2006). On the other hand, for many societies that prize virginity before marriage, early marriage can manifest itself in a number of practices designed to ‘protect’ a girl from unsanctioned sexual activity. In the eastern and north eastern parts of Uganda, control may also include the practice of female genital mutilation

(FGM) to restrict sexual pleasure and temptation. Some parents withdraw their girls from school as soon as they begin to menstruate; fearing that exposure to male pupils or teachers puts them at risk.

These practices are all intended to shield the girl from male sexual attention, but in the eyes of concerned parents, marriage is seen to offer the ultimate protection measure.

In Wars and civil conflicts parents or careers resort to child marriage as a protective mechanism or survival strategy. Displaced populations living in refugee camps may feel unable to protect their daughters from rape, and so marriage to a warlord or other authority figure may provide improved protection. For the young girls orphans or separated with their parents or relatives the only way to survive and to get protection is to get married, (De Smedt 1998).

**The most effective strategy for overcoming child marriage**

Studies strongly show that higher levels of schooling for girls decrease their risk of child marriage (NRC/IOM 2005; UNICEF 2005). Girls with eight or more years of education are less likely to marry young than girls with zero to three years of school (NRC/IOM 2005).

Education is widely credited as the most significant factor for delaying girls’ age at marriage (Mathur, Greene and Malhotra 2003; United Nations Commission on Population and Development 2002). Over the last several decades, parents have come to value education for their children, and to be willing to postpone the marriages of their daughters so they can attain a higher education level (Schuler et al.

2006). It is thought that education enhances girls’ autonomy, giving them negotiation skills in choosing a partner and influencing the timing of marriage (Lloyd and Mensch 1999; NRC/IOM 2005). Education also is believed to increase girls’ aspirations and extend the process of finding a suitable marriage partner (Lloyd and Mensch 1999).

More studies have shown the important role that education must play in efforts to eliminate child marriage. Research by UNICEF shows that the more education a girl receives, the less likely she is to be married as a child. Improving access to education and eliminating gender gaps in education are therefore important strategies for ending the practice of child marriage.

**Recommendations**

* As child marriage is common among illiterates and marginalized groups, community networks and vigilant groups comprising all concerned stake holders can be formed and mobilized to intervene in programmes to end child marriage.
* Empower the youth to manage their sexual and reproductive issues through different approaches i.e. peer-to-peer approach, comprehensive sexuality education in schools, life skills based education, youth information centers.
* Child marriage is a worst form of Gender-based violence, programmes such as “go back to school” focusing on enrolling and retaining girls in schools until they complete and attain quality learning outcomes should be maintained among communities.
* Ending child marriage requires consolidated efforts of all organizations and stake holders including government, civil society organizations, Non-government organizations, Faith Based organizations and Community Based organizations. Therefore, networks, coordination and collaboration of all different stake holders and organizations from community to national level should be strengthened.
* There is urgency need to roll out the policies, bylaws, programmes and strengthen the linkage between the lower local governments at the village level to district level to revamp and enforce them for the protection of children from all forms of abuse and exploitation.
* There is also need to strengthen networking, operationalisation, systematic documentation, referral mechanism and follow up on the cases of abuse, improved coordination among key actors and advocates for protection of children.
* The government and other organizations should put emphasis on supporting schools with scholastic materials; carry out refresher trainings for teachers and other progrmmes that create conducive learning environment for the retention of girls in schools.
* Government should implement a comprehensive national school feeding programme to improve primary school enrolment and regular attendance and reduce dropout rates.
* Mothers are said to be more supportive to their daughters compared to fathers. The government should support women enterprise development programmes, by establishing of a targeted fund for women to address credit access constraints so that they can support education of their daughters.
* Increase support for Universal Primary and Secondary Education to provide equal access to quality primary and secondary education for both girls and boys.
* mobilizing girls, boys, parents and leaders to change practices that discriminate against girls and to create social, economic, and civic opportunities for girls and young women
* providing girls who are already married with options for schooling, employment and livelihood skills, sexual and reproductive health information and services (including HIV prevention), and offering recourse from violence in the home;
* Addressing the root causes of child marriage, including poverty, gender inequality and discrimination, the low value placed on girls and violence against girls.

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