

RESEARCH ARTICLE/ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

Case analysis of early marriage and its consequences in adolescent children

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Abstract

In this study, children in adolescence, which is recognized as the 10-19 age group by the WHO (World Health Organization, 2022), and early marriage, which is one of the leading problems of children in this age group, and its consequences were examined. In addition, a case study was conducted on a 13-year-old girl who was forced into marriage. This study aims to destroy the perception that forced marriages are a thing of the past, to show that they still exist today, and to raise awareness in society. It is to show that it is not easy for people in the adolescent period to avoid forced marriages. Because the case study shows that the victim is forced, threatened, and physically harmed in this process.

Keywords: Adolescent, Forced Marriage, Child Marriage, Violence, Victim, Perpetrator, Crime

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1. INTRODUCTION AND AIM

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, anyone under the age of 18 is a child. Child marriage is the marriage of a child to an adult or a child. (Polat, 2019) Child marriage is contrary to many international and national regulations in the field of human rights and threatens the future of girls in particular.

It is possible to specify the reasons for child marriages as traditions, family honor, misinterpretation of religious information, economic reasons, gender inequality, immigration, and social and family pressure on parents. (Zoraki Evliliklere Sifir Tolerans, 2020) Child marriage is a fundamental human rights violation. It often leads to early pregnancy and social isolation. It interrupts education. And it puts a child's development in jeopardy by assigning the child an adult role for which she is not yet ready (Boran, 2013).

Turkey has one of the highest rates of child marriage in Europe, with an estimated 15% of girls marrying before the age of 18, and is quite common (Reva-Polat, 2019).

Within the scope of this study, a case study was conducted on a 13-year-old girl who was forced into marriage in line with the demographic questions prepared by the IMDAT Violence Prevention and Rehabilitation Association Child Marriage Commission.

Ultimately, the aim is to evaluate early marriage and its consequences that marriage is an institution that should be built on the right foundations, that forced marriages should not be normalized, and that legal regulations should be made in this regard.

2. CASE ANALYSIS

(A) was forced into marriage at the age of 13 by her family. We obtained some demographic data by asking (A) where she is from, how old she is, how many children she has, how many siblings she has, her family's income status, her husband's age, her husband's family income, and her education level.

(A) is now 28 years old. She was forced into marriage when she was 13. She has nine siblings.

Seven of them are female. Two of them are male. Her parents are seasonal workers. They have an average income.

Her older sister was forced to marry one of her husband's brothers when she was 13 years old just like (A). Her other siblings were also forcibly married at an early age. (A) got married in Urfa. She lived there. However, she always had to flee to various cities afterward.

(A) has three children. Her eldest son is fourteen years old, her daughter is eleven, and her youngest son is five years old. All of this happened without her consent. She had her first child in her arms at the age of 14. She also had a miscarriage. When (A) was five months pregnant, her husband punched her and aborted her child.

(A)'s husband was twenty-four when he got married. In other words, there is an 11-year age difference between him and (A). Her husband is not a relative but (A)'s mother and mother-in-law were close friends. (A)'s husband's family was rich. When they got married, her husband's family paid approximately 45,000 TL bride price for (A). Her family prevented her from going to school.

In the continuation of the interview, we asked (A) about her family life before marriage. She said that she usually had a family life where there was always a lot of fighting, and girls had no say. Girls' decisions weren't questioned. The boys always had what they said.

(A) had no idea about marriage because she was just a 13-year-old girl. That is why she didn't want to get married. However, no one asked her for her opinion. Although she said many times that she didn't want to get married, no one cared about it.

She said that she felt awful when she got married. Their first night together was painful. Because she said it was forcibly beaten by her husband.

(A) received psychological treatment for two years after her marriage. She used heavy drugs. She's gathering has never been easy.

Because every time she was beaten by her hus-

band, she was hospitalized. The last time she ran away from home, her husband broke (A)'s leg so that she couldn't run away again.

(A)'s husband was constantly beating (A) and her children and using violence. He especially beat her little son a lot. Despite repeated complaints, she couldn't resist. For 13 years, her eyes and body were always purple. Because she could neither get along nor communicate with her husband. (A) is constantly changing cities for fear of being caught because she is afraid of being killed by her husband.

3. SANCTIONS IMPLEMENTED BY VARIOUS COUNTRIES AGAINST FORCED MARRIAGES AND THE SITUATION IN TURKISH LAW

Forced marriages are criminalized in countries such as England, Belgium, Norway, Germany and Canada, and prison sentences are applied for this. For example, forced marriages are prohibited by law in Belgium. A person who forces someone to marry another person against his will is punished with imprisonment of up to 2 years. (www.zwangsheirat.de, 2022)

Under Article 222 of the Norwegian Penal Code, the penalty for forced marriage is up to 6 years in prison, and people who assist in the crime are punished in the same way. As it can be understood at this point, forcing people to marry is also punishable in Norway. (rightsofwomen.org.uk, 2022) Germany, on the other hand, adopted the '*Anti-Child Marriage Law*' in 2017. The law in question is designed to protect young girls and women from being forced into arranged marriages against their will. With this law, the minimum age for marriage is set at 18 without exception.

In this context, forced marriage is regulated as a crime in Germany, and people who commit this crime are punished with imprisonment from 6 months to 5 years.

According to the current situation in Canada, the national minimum age for marriage is 16. (www.writinglaw.com, 2006) In addition, there are sanctions in the Penal Code for those who celebrate, assist or participate in a marriage ceremony

knowing that one of the people got married against their will. In this context, those who commit the crime of forced marriage are sentenced to imprisonment for up to 5 years. Finally, the maximum penalty for forced marriages in England is 5 years in prison. In addition, it is a punishable situation for a person to be deceived and forced into marriage by deceiving him.

Considering the situation in Turkish law, only the age of marriage is mentioned in the Turkish Civil Code, and no sanctions are foreseen in terms of the Turkish Penal Code.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Contrary to popular belief, forced marriages take place all over the world, including in developed countries. Early marriage is one of the leading problems of adolescents. Although forced marriages are thought to be a thing of the past, today women and children can be forced into marriage. As a result of these forced marriages, unhappy individuals, unhappy families, and an unhappy society are formed. In addition, the traumas experienced by girls who are forced into marriage at a young age are reflected in their babies, and this situation continues from generation to generation. (Reva Z., 2019)

Getting girls married at an early age means being confined to their homes at an early age when they should be going to school, and having to "play house". This situation is not considered a "problem" by the majority of society. Still, it is legitimized under "marriage" and even the wedding is celebrated with an association.

However, child marriages, which are like sexual exploitation, are not suitable for the child's physiological, sexual, and psychological development, let alone sexual abuse. (<http://www.zorakievlilik.org>, 2022)

Within the scope of the study, a girl who was forced to marry at the age of 13 was interviewed and demographic data were obtained by asking questions such as the city where she was born, the city where she lived, the age of her husband, the income status of her family, how many children and how many siblings.

In this context, it has been determined that it is not easy for adolescents to avoid forced marriages. Because the victim was forced, threatened, and physically harmed in this process.

Forced marriages, which are a reflection of domestic and sexual violence, often go unnoticed because victims are often afraid to speak up.

Another point determined on the subject is that no sanctions regarding forced marriages are foreseen in Turkish Laws. However, in countries such as England, Belgium, Norway, Germany, and Canada, forced marriages are regulated as a crime, and prison sentences are applied for this.

According to the data obtained as a result, it is very important to implement determined state policies to end forced marriages, and exceptions should not be created by taking refuge in various excuses in this regard. (Commission, 2021) The public should be made aware of the inconvenience of forced marriages, especially in TV programs that people frequently follow, by methods such as subtitles and text placement. In addition, it is extremely important to increase support mechanisms and to ensure that this process is easily accessible and progresses quickly.

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