

EARLY MARRIAGE AMONG MUSLIMS IN SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

Early marriage means, a marriage which takes place before the age of maturity. It can be found in each and every society. The occurrence of early marriages can also be seen among the Muslims in Sri Lanka. Therefore, this study attempted to analyze the current situation regarding early marriages in Muslim community, and how does it differ from Sharia law as well as how Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act influence to such situation. Also, this study focused on the reasons, impacts and socio-economic background of the families. This study was conducted with eighty people using both probability and non-probability sampling such as women who got married at the young age, husbands, parents, officers, federation people, Quazi judges, psychiatrists and students. The research is mainly based on primary data, and were collected through interviews, questionnaires, and case studies and also secondary data was collected from the documents as books, journals, and web sites. Some of the key findings of this research were reasons for the early marriages and the impacts of them. Out of the reasons for early marriage poverty, educational status, traditions and customs, immoral relationships, affair, separation between parents etc. In addition to that, the impacts as, divorce, disease, no right to refund the properties, frustration on life, psychological issues, and blaming of society were also some significant findings of this research. Apart from these, some of the reasons were found for why problems occur after marriage as a consequence of early marriages. This study has also explored the ideas of Sharia law which emphasizes the maturity as a condition for marriage and how Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act fixed the age as twelve in 1951 and how it differ from the contemporary period's maturity. Moreover, this study proposed that the age limit should be changed according to the present period and maturity. Finally, some recommendations were also mentioned in this study as solutions for the early marriages and to promote healthiest and happiest family life among the Muslim community in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Divorce, Early marriages, Muslim community, Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act, Sharia law.