

Economic Stability and Role of Family Planning in Preventing Child Marriage

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ABOUT THE STUDY

Family planning plays a pivotal role in shaping the health, well-being, and future prospects of individuals, particularly women and girls. One of the significant benefits of family planning is its potential to prevent child marriage. While child marriage is a complex issue influenced by various factors such as cultural norms, poverty, and lack of education, family planning provides an important tool to delay marriage and empower young girls to make informed decisions about their future.

Empowerment of women and girls

Family planning empowers women and girls by providing them with control over their reproductive health. In the context of child marriage, where girls are often married before reaching adulthood, family planning offers a means to break the cycle of early pregnancies and births. By allowing girls to choose when and how many children they want to have, family planning gives them the agency to decide when they are ready for marriage and childbirth.

The empowerment resulting from family planning goes beyond reproductive health.

Health benefits of family planning

One of the main reasons child marriage is harmful is the significant health risks it poses to young girls. Girls who marry early are at a higher risk of experiencing complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Early pregnancies often lead to higher rates of maternal and infant mortality, as the female body may not be fully developed to handle the stresses of pregnancy. Family planning offers young girls the ability to delay pregnancies and avoid the associated health risks, ensuring they are better prepared for motherhood when the time is right.

By providing access to contraception, family planning reduces the risks of unintended pregnancies, which can occur within the context of child marriage. With effective family planning services, girls can delay sexual activity, thus avoiding early pregnancy altogether. Furthermore, by having the ability to plan pregnancies, young mothers are more likely to space their children, which can

improve their health and that of their offspring. Additionally, access to family planning reduces the need for unsafe abortions, another risk associated with early marriage.

Educational advancement

Education is one of the most powerful tools in preventing child marriage. Young girls who are able to continue their education beyond childhood are less likely to marry early. Family planning enables girls to stay in school for longer periods by preventing early pregnancies, which are often a reason for dropping out of school. When girls marry young and start having children, they are often forced to leave school to take on domestic and caregiving roles. This disrupts their education and limits their opportunities in life.

Family planning helps girls remain in school by giving them the ability to control their reproductive health. With the right tools and information, girls can plan their pregnancies and delay marriage until they are older and more mature. The ability to attend school and delay marriage not only contributes to the personal growth and development of young girls but also benefits society by increasing the literacy rate and workforce participation among women.

Economic stability and independence

Family planning plays a critical role in improving the economic stability of women and their families. By delaying childbearing and marriage, women can pursue education and enter the workforce, leading to greater financial independence. For many girls, marriage at a young age is linked to economic vulnerability. Early marriage often means that girls are thrust into poverty, with limited access to resources, education, and opportunities for career advancement.

Policy advocacy and legal frameworks

Government policies and legal frameworks that promote family planning are needed in preventing child marriage. In many countries, laws prohibiting child marriage exist, but without access to family planning services, these laws may not be effective. Family planning programs supported by governments can help bridge the gap between legislation and actual practices on the ground.

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In addition to providing access to contraception, family planning programs can raise awareness about the legal age of marriage and the harmful effects of early marriage. Governments can integrate family planning services with educational campaigns that highlight the risks of child marriage, providing communities with the tools and information necessary to prevent it.

Involvement of health systems

The role of the health system in providing family planning services cannot be overstated. Healthcare providers, including doctors, nurses, and community health workers, play a vital role in offering family planning information and services to young

people. By ensuring that young girls have access to accurate information and safe contraceptive options, health systems can prevent early pregnancies and the pressures that lead to child marriage.

Family medicine plays an important role in advancing family planning initiatives by providing comprehensive, patient-centered care that addresses reproductive health needs. Family physicians are often the first point of contact for young girls and their families, offering education, counseling, and access to contraceptive services. By integrating family planning into routine healthcare, family medicine ensures holistic support, fostering healthier families and empowering women to make informed decisions about their futures.