



30 April 2019

Press Release

**Special Clause on Child Marriage Restraint Act:
Misappropriating the Legal Age of Marriage**

“We need to document our progress and challenges when working on preventing child marriage and disseminate information where it is most needed. It does not suffice to come up with innovative approaches to prevent child marriage but also we have to make sure that people know about these instruments and know where to go to seek help. Communication is of utmost importance.” Says Rasheda K Choudhury, Executive Director, CAMPE in the round table discussion on “Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017: New Evidence and Perspectives.”

This event jointly hosted by Population Council and BLAST (Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust) in collaboration with the University of Kent, UK and the University of Malaya, Malaysia on 30 April 2019 at The Daily Star Conference Hall.





In Bangladesh, as in many other parts of the world, adolescent girls face strong social pressures to marry from the onset of puberty. Recent research has established that the practice of child marriage has adverse consequences not only for the women who experience it but also for the next generation of children. But there remains wide-ranging debate among policymakers and researchers about the most cost-effective strategies for tackling the issue.

In February 2017, the Bangladesh parliament approved a new law aimed at restricting early marriages, the first of its kind in nearly 90 years. The 2017 Child Marriage Restraint Act increased the severity of punishments for adults who engage in or facilitate child marriages but also introduced an ‘exception clause’ for cases where a court rules the marriage is in the ‘best interest of the child’.

Zaki Wahhaj, Reader (Associate Professor) in Economics at the University of Kent and M Niaz Asadullah, Professor of Development Economics at the University of Malaya presented new evidence on child marriage practices in rural Bangladesh since the passage of the new law, including new research on its impact upon social attitudes and practices. Sara Hossain, Honorary Executive Director, BLAST and D: Sajeda Amin, Senior Associate, Population Council gave their speech on Child marriage practices and legal practitioner’s perspectives in Bangladesh.

About 60 Participants attended including expert Practitioners, Researchers, Donors, NGOs, Government officials, Academician, Media attended the programme assessed new evidence and insights from the field, and explore possible future directions for policymakers and other stakeholders engaged in tackling child marriage.

Message Convener

Asma Ul Hosna
Communication Specialist, Blast
Email: asma@blast.org.bd