

TALKING POINTS FOR PARTNERS

WHEN CHILDREN

HAVE CHILDREN

TIPPING POINT TO END CHILD MARRIAGE

1. This Book by Mr Bhuwan Ribhu is on the issue of child marriage. It looks at the existing data on child marriage and lists 257 districts in India where the issue of child marriage is worst, which means where the occurrence of this evil practice is highest as compared to national numbers.
2. The Title of the Book “When Children have Children” raises question on the state of girls who are forced to marry at a very young age. It highlights that child marriage leads to early pregnancy, which can result to their own death or death of their newborn. The newborns are also under-nourished as the young mother child neither knows nor has the capacity to bring up a baby.
3. The Author also highlights the issue of lost education opportunities for girls as they have to drop out of school to marry and live a married life. Illiteracy of girls leads to disempowerment both financially and socially.
4. Therefore, denial of education and health for young children especially girls is a serious matter that requires serious interventions.
5. Government has enacted the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act in 2006 but no special efforts were made to implement the law. The issue was left to die its natural death.
6. The Author brings to focus the helpless and hopeless condition of victims of child marriage especially girls and proposes an action plan to be taken up at a large scale to end this evil practice in next 7 years, which will save 30 million girls from getting married at an early age.
7. The Author has used the words “Tipping Point to End Child Marriage”. Tipping point is a level/point at which occurrence of child marriage declines automatically. In order to reach the Tipping Point, the Author proposes strategy at national and district level.
 - a. National Level strategy where Governments, Institutions, statutory bodies, etc. work towards prevention, protection, increased investment, improved prosecution, convergence and use of technology for monitoring
 - b. District Level strategy is similar to national level strategy but includes district administration, Panchayats, civil society, NGOs, other functionaries, parents and children who work collectively to prevent, report, and take action against child marriage
8. Some specific recommendations by Author include:
 - a. Mandatory reporting of child marriages along with strict penalties for offenders
 - b. Universal child protection system that treats all children equally
 - c. Amendment in the Right to Education Act to include free education for all children till the age of 18 and linking it with the age of marriage
 - d. Special schemes for girls such as the conditional cash transfer schemes already in place in some states
 - e. Registration of people across faiths who conduct marriages (qazis, pandits, priests) and fixing their accountability
 - f. Tracking absenteeism of children
 - g. Incentivizing of police and other child protection functionaries as a technique to combat child marriages.