Article of the Month

Girl and Marriage
Article of the Month

EXCLUSIVE

Music Duo 'Dancing on Glass' releases new album. Shares behind the scenes and how to create chart topping music.
What is the right age for a girl's marriage?? Is there any right age??

This is one question that every parent who has a girl child asks. Many communities in the world advocate for girls getting married at a young age as soon as they attain puberty. The reasons are many.

I am now thinking aloud some of the points and counter points in this matter.

Point One: A girl after puberty is ready for bearing a child scientifically..and hence she can get married.

Counter Point One: But she needs to be prepared mentally, emotionally, physically and socially before that. (Incidentally, yesterday there was a news about a 12 yr kid, who was sexually abused, giving birth to a baby and yes, it happened in Kerala! ..So, what should the baby call the kid- "Amma" or "Sister" ?)

Point two: A girl after puberty is ready for marriage, coz the earlier the parents can marry off their girl, the better.. especially in the minority communities and where there are many kids and the system of dowry is hard.
**Counter point two:** But, have you ever asked how comfortable she is in that marriage? If at all there is a problem, all that the parents can advise is, "Try to adjust dear... all this is part of married life". And how many such marriages are actually "happy marriages"? 90% of such marriages could be just "adjustment marriages", coz, they can't get separated, and that's coz they already have kids to take care.

**Point Three:** An early marriage helps the girl settle down in life faster.

**Counter Point three:** What do u mean by settling down? Marriage needs a real strong sense of managing relationships, nurturing a family and is actually more challenging than being a bachelor. In most families, the wife is the silent bearer of all the tensions, worries, difficulties and what not.. Most husbands show their tensions on their wives. So, are these under aged wives ready to face such situations?

**Point four:** An early marriage helps the community in better sexual discipline.

**Counter point four:** There are hundreds of examples of domestic violence, marital rape and other sexual offences which are occurring to married women. An early marriage may give a discipline to men and women who gets a vent out for their sexual desire .. but marriage is not just about sex and the better way is to legalize prostitution..!
**Point five:** A girl's primary role in society is to build and nurture a family ..the earlier the better!

**Counter Point five:** But, did you ask the girl about her dreams about her life? Or did you just instill such a thought into her mind? (unfortunately, our society instills this thought into the girl's mind right from the time she is born!). Most of the women who have unfulfilled dreams about their life (career or family) actually end up as poor mothers for their kids. The kids of such mothers feel neglected and may develop a personality disorder. In some cases, the wife develops many types of somatoform disorders (physical illness that may be purely due to mental reasons) or may become hypochondriacs, creating a disturbed family environment.. A kid brought up in such a scenario can never be a good citizen of this society for sure!...

Points and counter points can go on and on...Recently I met a girl - a young girl (may be 22 yrs old) ,who got married around 6 months back. She had a band aid on her wrist. I funnily asked her, "hey, what's this? did you try to suicide?" .To my surprise, she nodded "yes". Reason? - She had a fight with her husband (again ,a young guy who is only 26/27yrs) .

**Reason for fight ?** - because she danced at her office function, without telling him. Both of them had a big fight and ended up in crying and trying to suicide. A girl at the age of 22 is still young ,according to me, to take up the challenging role of a wife.
I also know of many girls who got married even younger and are happy wives. Marriage needs sacrificing of personal freedom and has to be built on mutual partnership and respect. Not just that, it also needs a lot of patience, nurturing, caring of each other and the kids. This partnership is more relevant in the case of educated girls, who have their career aspirations as well. Many of the middle aged women I meet these days share a story of being dissatisfied with their marital life and that they are taking it ahead, only for their children. The reasons they share are varied :- incompatibility with husband, husband not understanding their needs, unable to pursue their career, incompatibility with in-laws, or even financial problems.

So, the right age of a marriage of a girl is when she is ready to take up the "real challenge" and "finds a suitable partner". Such a marriage will be an ideal one and all others will end up as "adjustment ones".

Ms.Chandra Vadhana R  
Chief Mentor, Prayaana Labs
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