

ABSTRACT**Tonmoyee Chutia¹**

Child marriage refers to a marriage in which either of the contracting party or both are below the legal age of marriage prescribed by law. In simple word, Child marriage is the marriage of a child who has not attained the age of majority. Child marriage is not only a matter of concern for one nation but it is considered as a global problem. Despite amended laws advocating 18 as the legal minimum age of marriage for female, every third adolescent girl below 18 years are married and even giving birth to child. In Assam, the most common reasons for child marriage are poverty, Lack of education, lack of awareness, love affairs, increase amount of dowry with the increasing age of the girl, the fear to face the society if the girl is not married after a particular age etc. These reasons increase the incidents of child marriage in the state. From 3rd February, 2023 onwards the Government of Assam has started a massive crackdown against child marriages in Assam by arresting offenders involved in child marriages, under Protection of Children From Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO) and Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006. In this crackdown 60 cases of child marriage were found in Sonitpur district itself. This crackdown has opened the eyes of many people who are unaware of the rampant practice of child marriage in Assam. The consequences of child marriage not just affect the concerned parties but also affect the families, community and the nation at large. This research aims at understanding the prevalence of child marriage in Sonitpur district of Assam, the concerned issues which promote child marriages and to analyse the initiative taken by the Government in order to eradicate child marriage.

Keywords: Child Marriage, Girl Child, Poverty, practice, awareness

¹ LLM Student, Department of Law, Tezpur University, Assam LAM21014@tezu.ac.in