

THE CHILD MARRIAGE RESTRAINT ACT, 1929

[Act No. 19 of 1929 dated 1st. October, 1929]¹

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An Act to restrain the solemnisation of child marriages.

WHEREAS it is expedient to restrain the solemnisation of child marriages; it is hereby enacted as follows:

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1. Short title, extent and commencement

(1) This Act may be called the Child Marriage Restraint Act, ²[1929].

³[(2) It extends to the whole of India ⁴[except the State of Jammu and Kashmir]; and it applies also to all citizens of India without and beyond India].⁵

(3) It shall come into force on the 1st day of April, 1930.

2. Definitions

In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context,-

⁶[(a) "child" means a person who, if a male, has not completed twenty-one years of age, and if a female, has not completed eighteen years of age;]

(b) "child marriage" means a marriage to which either of the contracting parties is a child;

(c) "contracting party" to a marriage means either of the parties whose marriage is ⁷[or is about to be] thereby solemnised; and

(d) "minor" means a person of either sex who is under eighteen years of age.

3. Punishment for male adult below twenty-one years of age marrying a child

Whoever, being a male above eighteen years of age and below twenty-one, contracts a child marriage ⁸[shall be punishable with simple imprisonment which may extend to fifteen days, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both].

4. Punishment for male adult above twenty-one years of age marrying a child

Whoever, being a male above twenty-one years of age, contracts a child marriage shall be punishable with ⁹[simple imprisonment which may extend to three months and shall also be liable to fine].

5. Punishment for solemnising a child marriage

Whoever performs, conducts or directs any child marriage shall be punishable with ⁹[simple imprisonment which may extend to three months and shall also be liable to fine], unless he proves that he had reason to believe that the marriage was not a child marriage

6. Punishment for parent or guardian concerned in a child marriage

(1) Where a minor contracts a child marriage, any person having charge of the minor, whether as parent or guardian or in any other capacity, lawful or unlawful, who does any act to promote the marriage or permits it to be solemnised, or negligently fails to prevent it from being solemnised, shall be punishable with ⁹[simple imprisonment which may extend to three months and shall also be liable to fine]:

Provided that no woman shall be punishable with imprisonment.

(2) For the purposes of this section, it shall be presumed, unless and until the contrary is proved, that where a minor has contracted a child marriage, the person having charge of such minor has negligently failed to prevent the marriage from being solemnised.

7. Offences to be cognizable for certain purposes

¹⁰[The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, shall apply to offences under this Act as if they were cognizable offences-

(a) for the purpose of investigation of such offences; and

(b) for the purposes of matters referred to in section 42 of that Code, and (ii) the arrest of a person without a warrant or without an order of a Magistrate.]

8. Jurisdiction under this Act

Notwithstanding anything contained in section 190 of the ¹¹[Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973] no Court other than that of a ¹¹[Metropolitan Magistrate or a Judicial Magistrate of the first class] shall take cognizance of, or try, any offence under this Act.

¹²[9. Mode of taking cognizance of offences

No Court shall take cognizance of any offence under this Act after the expiry of one year from the date on which the offence is alleged to have been committed.]

¹³**[10. Preliminary inquiries into offences**

Any Court, on receipt of a complaint of an offence of which it is authorised to take cognizance, shall, unless it dismisses the complaint under section 203 of the ¹¹[Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973], either itself make an inquiry under section 202 of that Code or direct a Magistrate subordinate to it to make such inquiry.]

11. Power to take security from complainant -Repealed by the Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act, 1949]

¹⁴**[12. Power to issue injunction prohibiting marriage in contravention of this Act**

(1) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in this Act, the Court may, if satisfied from information laid before it through a complaint or otherwise that a child marriage in contravention of this Act has been arranged or is about to be solemnised, issue an injunction against any of the persons mentioned in sections 3, 4, 5 and 6 of this Act prohibiting such marriage.

(2) No injunction under sub-section (1) shall be issued against any person unless the Court has previously given notice to such person, and has afforded him an opportunity to show cause against the issue of the injunction.

(3) The Court may either on its own motion or on the application of any person aggrieved rescind or alter any order made under sub-section (1).

(4) Where such an application is received, the Court shall afford the applicant an early opportunity of appearing before it either in person or by pleader; and if the Court rejects the application wholly or in part, it shall record in writing its reasons for so doing.

(5) Whoever knowing that an injunction has been issued against him under sub-section (1) of this section disobeys such injunction shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three months, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both:

Provided that no woman shall be punishable with imprisonment.]

Foot Notes

1 The Act has been extended to Berar by the Berar Laws Act, 1941 (4 of 1941); to Dadra and Nagar Haveli by Reg. 6 of 1963; to Goa, Daman and Diu by Reg. II of 1963 and to Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands by Reg. 8 of 1965 and supplemented in its application to Assam by the Assam Rural Panchayat Act, 1948 (Assam Act 27 of 1948).

2 Substituted by Act No. 8 of 1930, for the figures "1928".

3 Substituted by the Adaptation of Laws Order, 1950 for former sub-section (2).

4 Substituted by Act No. 3 of 1951, for the words "except Part B States".

5 In its application to Pondicherry, after sub-section (2), read: -

"Provided that nothing contained in this Act shall apply to the Renoncants of the Union Territory of Pondicherry.", (vide Act No. 26 of 1968).

6 Substituted by the Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act, 1978, w.e.f. 1st October, 1978.

7 Inserted by Act No. 19 of 1938.

8 Substituted by Act No. 41 of 1949, for the words "shall be punishable with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees".

9 Substituted by Act No. 41 of 1949, for the words "simple imprisonment which may extend to one month, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both".

10 Inserted by Act No. 2 of 1978, w.e.f. 1st October, 1978.

11 Substituted by Act No. 2 of 1978, w.e.f. 1st October, 1978.

12 Substituted by Act No. 41 of 1949, for the former section.

13 Substituted by Act No. 41 of 1949 for the former section.

14 Inserted by Act No. 19 of 1938.