

Early Child Marriage in Jordan as a Human Rights Issue

Universal Rights vs. Cultural Relativism

Abstract
Maha Sweis

The paper is written to focus on the problem of early child marriage in general and in Jordan in specific as a human rights violation. I will analyze this concept on a universal level interpretation of violation and as a cultural notion and justification. It will shed a light on the violations of children's and women's rights, as youngsters under the age of 18 who are forced into marriage, especially young women. The purpose is to raise awareness about early marriage as a human rights violation with its traditional, cultural, economic, political and social background; how and why phenomenon still exists in regards to different cultures as opposed to international laws. The paper involves discovering different theories about universal rights and culture relativism, concentrating on issues related to early marriage. Moreover, this research looks at the work of different empirical research studies and analysis in Jordan. The research will compare studies that took place in Jordan by UNICEF in 2014, Population Reference Bureau 2013, Savethechildren 2014 reports, and other related research. In my first section, theoretical backgrounds regarding universal human rights vs. cultural collectivity and perspectives will be identified and argued. It recognizes human rights violations with a focus on gender issues and children's protection within the frame of universalism and cultural relativism, and the conflict between human individual rights and 'culture'. In my second chapter, I will go in depth in my research with qualitative and quantitative data in Jordan and analysis of backgrounds and discussions in terms of findings and discussions with recommendations and conclusions.

Keywords: (universalism and culture relativism, early child marriage, human rights, international responses and laws, social work).