

TEXT:

Despite the provisions of the New Family Code, child marriages are on the rise in Morocco. The Moudawana raised the minimum marriage age from 14 to 18 and required a judge's approval for marriage with a minor. Still, five years after the Family Code became law, 33,253 females below the age of 18 got married. There were nearly 3,000 more child brides in 2009 than during **the previous year**, the Social Development Ministry reported.

Even though the practice is sustained by long-standing traditions, it is time for the government
to take responsibility and bring an end to the phenomenon, MP Farida Naimi said at a November
23rd plenary session at the Chamber of Councillors. Justice Minister Mohamed Naciri
acknowledged that the reality speaks for itself in a number of Moroccan regions where parents
marry their daughters off at traditional weddings (through the ritual of fatiha). "In some places, girls
aged 13 or 14 who are still single are regarded as old maids."

The problem lies not in the legal domain but in people's attitudes, according to the minister. In several cases, judges are forced to give their approval in order to legalize traditional marriages for girls who are already pregnant. As such, a solution to the problem necessitates social development, especially in terms of education.

Tradition alone doesn't explain the persistence of underage marriages. Poverty is also a factor, said sociologist Ahmed Mrani. Many parents in rural areas prefer to marry off their daughters at an early age because "it means one mouth less to feed". In his view, the better off families become, the less they will allow their young daughters to wed. To tackle this phenomenon, efforts must be made to encourage development in even the most remote regions, and access to education must be guaranteed, Mrani argued. Civil society and the media also have important roles to play in raising awareness and highlighting the damaging effects of **this practice**, he noted.

There are many alarming cases. At the age of 24, Salima N. is already divorced and a mother of three children aged four, six and eight. Her childhood and life were destroyed at the age of 15, she said, when she married a 38-year-old man. "I was humiliated in all sorts of ways. I didn't understand my role as a spouse or mother. After six years of marriage, I felt worn out. I dared to demand a divorce after several years of suffering," she told Magharebia.

Badr Abou Rayan's Compilation

I. READING COMPREHENSION (8 marks)

A. Give a title to the text: (1).....(0.5 mark)

B. Looking for information: List from the text two main factors leading to underage marriage (1 mark)

2)	3)
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C. Looking for information: List from the text two solutions to child marriage (1 mark)

4)	5)

D. True or False statements: Read the text and say whether the following statements are TRUE or FALSE. Justify by quoting a specific passage from the text. (3 marks)

6) The poorer the parents are, the more likely they are to marry their daughters at an early age. T/F

.....

7) In 2008, there were less child marriages than in the following year. T/F

.....

8) Salima N. got married at the age of 24. T/F

.....

.....

E.Referencing: What or who do the following words refer? (1 mark)

F. Vocabulary in context: Find the synonyms of the following words in the text. (1.5 mark)

11) admitted (Parag 2) $= \dots$	
12)consciousness (Parag 4) =	
13) very tired (Parag 5) = (13)	

II. LINGUISTIC AND COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE (7 marks)

G. Complete the text with the following link words(2 marks)

in spite of – although - therefore – unless – because of.

With the advent of the new Family Code, girls cannot get married (14)
they are 18. But people have noticed that there has been no change. Child marriage has increased,
especially in remote areas (15)
parents generally marry off their children (16) poverty and lack of
education.(17) the Minister of Justice has decided to find some solutions to
this problem.

H. Complete this conversation meaningfully between a Moroccan journalist and Fatimawho regrets getting married when she was a child. (3 marks)

Journalist: Can you please tell us about your marriage? What was it like? Fatima: It was really terrible. I wish I hadn't married that man.
Journalist: No one asked your opinion about your marriage,
Fatima: No, my parents decided everything for me.
Journalist: (19)How?
Fatima: I was 14 years old when I married that man.
Journalist: What about(20)?
Fatima: He was 38 years old.
Journalist: According to you what
Fatima: I think that poverty and illiteracy are the main causes of child marriage.
Fatima: I think that poverty and illiteracy are the main causes of child marriage.
Fatima : I think that poverty and illiteracy are the main causes of child marriage. Journalist : What solutions do you suggest to stop this phenomenon?

G. WORD BUILDING: Complete this passage with the correct form of the words between brackets. (2marks)

.....

It is a huge (<i>responsible</i>)	
because girls are not adequately prepared	for these roles. As a result, they may suffer abuse and
(violent)	5), and even rape, with inevitable psychological as well as
physical (damaging)	(26). Studies indicate that women who marry at young
ages are more likely to believe that it is so	ometimes (<i>accept</i>)(27) for a
husband to beat his wife, and are therefore	e more likely to experience domestic aggression
themselves.	

Choose <u>one</u> topic and write about 150-200 words. (5 marks)

Topic1: Do you agree with child marriage? Why or why not? Defend your choice with strong arguments.

Topic2: Write a letter to the Minister of justice to denounce child marriage in your village. Tell him the causes and consequences of this phenomenon and propose some solutions to the problem.

Good luck!