

Child marriage common to both Ethiopia, India: Experts

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The problem of child marriage is common to both Ethiopia and India and both can learn from each other's development models for tackling it, experts said here Friday.

Tesfaynesh Aregaw, director, Youth Affairs, Ministry of Women and Children of Ethiopia, said: "As in India, the problem of early or child marriage exists in many parts of Ethiopia."

She was speaking at a conference on the Ethiopian policymakers' knowledge visit to India.

She said that Ethiopia has formulated a structure where women's self-help groups address these issues and the Indian government can study this model to see if it can be effective in India.

Aregaw said though the problem of child marriage facing India and Ethiopia was the same, the issues leading to it were different.

She added: "In India, it is related to social causes like dowry while in Ethiopia, it is more due to poverty."

Leena Sushant, director research at NGO Breakthrough, said the social sector in India was trying to address these issues through initiatives like using the radio to send messages to the rural populace.

Priya Nanda of the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) said despite Indian government having sound policies, the proper implementation of those was lacking at the ground level.

She said: "We have state and central level initiatives, but their implementation is a problem."

Observing that the two countries can learn from each other's experiences, Ashwajit Singh, CMD of IPE Global, a development consultancy firm, said the Ethiopian delegation has evinced interest in Indian models of social development in some states.

The Ethiopian policymakers interacted with the government at various levels and also visited a number of states to study models of governance.

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