

# Muslim girls forced into marriage via Skype

From the [DNA India](#)

Muslim girls in the UK as young as 11 are being forced to marry men living abroad via the internet notwithstanding a ban on forced marriage in the country.

Imams in the UK and abroad have been conducting ceremonies using Skype so girls can be married remotely before “being put on a plane and consummating the marriage at the earliest opportunity”, according to Freedom, a charity.

The marriage is often conducted with the promise of a visa to the UK for their new husband, it said. Prem said the use of Skype was appealing to families because it is instant and there is less risk of being caught. “The reason is to curb the behaviour of their children when they become ‘too western’,” charity founder Aneeta Prem was quoted as saying by ‘The Sunday Times’.

“Once married, there is enormous pressure to get a spouse visa. The hope is the girl will visit (country of husband’s origin) and fall pregnant to make the union seem more legitimate before bringing the partner back,” she said.

Last week, a Sunday Times investigation revealed that among the youngest victims of forced marriage was a six-year-old girl with special needs. Campaigners say education is key to preventing the practice but raising awareness in schools of forced marriage is not compulsory.

Karma Nirvana, a charity that runs free workshops to raise awareness of forced marriage, said in a two-month period at the end of last year it had received 38 referrals from 14

schools, including 11 from one school in Birmingham made the day after it gave a presentation.

Anna Kaur, the charity's youth worker, said: "We sometimes have students asking us to go in because there is a problem but then when we approach the school they refuse a visit."