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GENDER EQUALITY: TOP ISLAMIC SCHOLARS LAY DOWN RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

'Muslim girls can nullify marriage'

A GIRL has full right to choose her husband and if forced to marry against her wish, she can declare the marriage "null and void", prominent Muslim bodies and Islamic scholars have said.

Islamic scholars and clerics from several Muslim bodies share the view that a girl can not be forced to marry. The decision was taken at a meeting which was attended by members of AIMPLB, Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband and more than 100 prominent bodies under the banner of Is-



lamic Fiqh Academy (IFA).

After a long discussion, over 300 participants unanimously decided that "in Islam, the girl has every right to marry the boy of her choice and

her parents cannot impose their decision on her," said General Secretary of IFA Amin Usmani. It was "total injustice" to force a girl to marry a boy whom she doesn't like, the body said.

The scholars further said if a girl was forced to marry by her parents or any one against her wish, she can declare the marriage "null and void".

"Forced marriage is not allowed in Islam and if a girl is forced to go against her wish, she has every right to declare her marriage null and void," S.Q.R. Ilyas, an Islamic scholar and spokesman of All India Muslim Personal Law Board, said.