

EFFECTS OF EARLY MARRIAGES ON GIRLS' EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT: *This study was designed to investigate the effects of early marriages on girl's education. The core assumption of this study was that early marriage is one of the major socio-cultural customs that compelled early marriage of school-going girls. To study the effects of early marriage we collected data from 50 married girls, having age from 15 to 30 years. The results show that 94% of the respondents regretted over their early marriages, 92% said that they had negative effects on their lives due to early marriage, 92% of the school girls were married due to poverty, 24% of the school girls were married because they were pregnant. We recommend that the government should launch awareness campaign on media against early marriage and benefits of education.*

Key words: Early marriages, girls' education, customs, poverty.

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1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1. Background of the Study:

The issue of child marriages is very normal and normal practice and an instrument of sexual orientation based on biasedness against women in all developing countries including Pakistan. Though Child Marriages Restraint Act, 1929 (CMRA) there were some improvement in India and Bangladesh, but the situation is not encouraging in Pakistan. Indeed, Pakistan had opted UNCRC charter in 1990 on child marriage. Poverty and customs are two main causes of child marriage. But such marriages have caused different physical, social, mental, emotional and financial problems.

1.2 Statement of Problem:

This study was designed to investigate the effects of early marriages on girl's education. The core assumption of this study is that early marriage is one of the major socio-cultural customs that pressure the major and minor socialization of girls in the rural settings of the Pakistan. Therefore, understanding the *nature, causes* and consequences of earl marriage and its effects on girls' learning are very necessary.

1.3 Objectives of Research:

The objectives of this study are given below:

- To investigate the % age of early married school girls.
- To know the age of early married school girls.
- To know the causes of early married school girls.
- To examine the effects of early marriage on the lives of early married school Girls.
- To suggest the solution to get rid of their problem in the community.

1.4 Scope of the Study:

This study is very important from many perspectives. It will provide theoretical and practical framework to policy makers and academicians about the negative effects of child marriage and enable to frame such a policy to prevent it.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Holcamp (2009) contended that most of the schoolgirls' drop out to be higher since parents believe schoolgirls' teaching as of no benefit when they go to their family after marriage. The women have to manage their families and look after their children.

Mansory(2007) stated that premature divorces are the main cause of failure of marriage in Afghanistan because there is no tradition of female child education. The female who insist on education after marriage are divorced in Afghanistan. Awan (2014) measured the effects of early marriage on the life of teenage girls. He contends that teenagers faced different hardships after marriage because they had no prior experience of family life. He said that there is close relationship between early marriage and poverty.

Heinonen (2002) argued that poverty is one of the main cause of child marriage because the parents could not afford the expenses of their children and in order to reduce their financial burden they arranged early marriage of their children.

Naveed et al (2012) emphasized that child marriages take place mostly on the pretext of poverty, illiteracy and gender inequality. The physical, social, psychological and economic consequences of child marriage are severe on girls, who are generally pulled out of primary/secondary education and more likely confront physical, emotional

and sexual violence. Pakistan is in the midst of demographic transition and a big portion of the population comprises of children.

Bhanji & Punjani (2014) conducted study on "Determinants of child (early) Marriages among young girls- A Public Health Issue". They stated that Sindh government has recently proposed amending the old child marriage laws to include stricter penalty and punishments". The practice of early marriage has increasingly been recognized as human rights violation affecting girls more than boys with severe consequences. Though the numbers of cases have reduced worldwide, it still remains pervasive in South Asia, predominantly in Pakistan. Despite national laws and international agreements, this public health issue presents a threat to the lives and health of children, especially young girls.

Pachani & Nazish (2015) pleaded that "Marriage is a precious bond formed between a bride and groom. In contrast, early marriages area challenge, especially for a girl. Sudden shift in roles, responsibilities and environment creates a stress. Their physical and psychological immaturity to deal with emerging issues leads to illnesses like; depression, sepsis, obstructed labor, HIV, etc. This issue is completely preventable, but its roots are deep. Social, cultural, economic, and religious factors encouraging rural and semi-urban population of Pakistan for many decades. There is a need to review this practice. Educating girls and making them self-reliant is a key need.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

3.1 Research design:

This is a quantitative study in which we have studied the negative effects of early marriage on the lives of female teenagers. For this purpose, we

used primary day which was collected from 50 married women living in the different villages of District Muzaffargarh. The data was collected through a structured questionnaire and interviews. The purposive sampling technique was used in collection of data. Most of the selected respondents were the residents of the villages of Tehsil Alipur and Jatoi of District Muzaffargarh. About seven months was consumed in collection of data. In order to learned local customs and traditions the researchers spent about two months in these villages and also participated in four of wedding ceremonies of teen aging girls, besides conducting interviews of 50 families. We also recorded their views on the issue of early marriage and its effects on the family life of girls after wedding.

4. DATA ANALYSIS:

4.1 Demographic statistics of respondents:

4.1.1 Age:

The age group of different respondents are given in Table 1:

Table 1: Age of respondents

Age(years)	Percentage
10-15	3
16-20	25
21-25	18
26-30	24
31-35	5
36-40	15
41-45	4
46-50	3
51 and above	2

The data in table show that the majority of the respondents were aged between 16-20 and 26-30 years.

4.1.2 Education Level:

Education helps people make rational decisions in the family and at the community level. The absence of it in almost half of the respondents signifies a loss of the benefits accrued through education to the society. This in turn could have far reaching negative social and economic implications for the whole community. Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by their level of education.

Table 2: Respondents' level of education

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Below Primary level	26	52.0
Primary level	14	28.0
Secondary level	8	16.0
College level	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0

The data in table 2 indicate that the majority of the respondents had not completed even primary education.

4.1.3 Marital Status:

The results on marital status of respondents are shown in Table 3:

Table 3: Marital Status of the Respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Single	5	10.0
Married	43	86.0
Divorced	1	2.0
Widowed	1	2.0
Total	50	100.0

It is evident from data that the majority of the respondents are married. This is a clear indication of how marriage is considered to be very important in the community and also implies that women get married as early as possible without seeking higher education.

4.1.4 Duration in Marriage:

The results regarding duration of marriage are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Duration in marriage

Years	Percentage
0-5	0
5-10	15
10-15	45
15-20	85
20-25	10
25-30	12
30-35	5

The results indicate that most of the girls are married between the age of 15-20 years.

4.1.5 Employment Status:

Table 5 shows the employment status of the respondents.

Table 5: Respondents' employment status

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	10	20.0
No	40	80.0
Total	50	100.0

Out of 50 respondents, 10 (20%) said they were employed while 40 (80%) said they were unemployed. The majority of the respondents were unemployed and it was a reason of their early marriages.

4.1.6 Employment Sector:

Table 6 shows the type of employment of those respondents who were employed. The data in table show that very few women were in formal sector employment. This is probably due to the respondents' low levels of education.

Table 6: Respondents' employment sector

Type of employment	Frequency	Percentage
Formal	5	10.0
Informal	45	90.0
Total	50	100.0

4.1.7 Respondents' Monthly Incomes:

The researcher also sought to establish the monthly income of the respondents in order to have an idea of their living standards. Table 7 shows distribution of respondents by their monthly income.

Table 7: Respondents' monthly incomes

Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
Less than PKR 3000	33	66.0
PKR 3000-6000	9	18.0
PKR 7000-10000	5	10.0
Over PKR 10000	3	6.0
Total	50	100.0

Results reveal that the majority of the respondents earned less than PKR 3000 per month which suggests that most of the respondents were unlikely to meet their financial needs. Income level is an important variable since it determines the affordability of services deemed necessary for living.

4.1.8 Age at Marriage:

The researcher sought to find out at what age the women were married. The purpose was to investigate the rate of early marriages by women in the sub-County. Table 8 shows the distribution of the age brackets of the respondents at marriage.

Table 8: Respondents' age at marriage

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 15 Years	14	28.0
16-18	21	42.0
Above 18 Years	15	30.0
Total	50	100.0

It is evident from Table 8 that the majority of the respondents were married at age 16-18 years which is quite an early age for marriage.

5.Reasons for Marriage:

The researcher also sought to know the leading reasons of marriages by the respondents. The reasons given were pregnancy, the right age and financial problems in the family. Table 9 summarizes the findings.

Table 9: Respondents reasons for getting married early

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
I got pregnant	12	24.0
I was of age	3	6.0
Financial issues in the family	35	70.0
Total	50	100.0

5.1 Causes of Early Marriages:

The study sought to investigate the possible causes which had contributed to women engaging in early marriages. Table 10 shows the distribution of these causes.

Table 10: Possible causes of early marriage

Causes	Percentage
Poverty	92
Culture	2

The results in the above table indicate that poverty was the leading cause of early marriages in the Muzaffar Garh Punjab as 92 percent of respondents were married in earlier age due to poverty. Similarly, the study found that girls dropped out of school because their parents/guardians could not afford school fees for their education. As a result, they stopped education and married early since they had no other options.

5.2 Effects of Early Marriage on the Girl-Child Education

Early marriage has negative effect on the girls' education in District Muzaffar Garh as explained by the area chief in an informal interview:

Early marriage is a distraction for the future of young girls - educationally, socially and economically. When a girl is married in teenage, she will not find time to socialize with other people or go to school. When a girl is married in early-age, she will suffer from poverty and ignorance. Early marriage leads to maternal deaths because when a young girl conceives before reaching maturity, this leads to maternal deaths especially when she does not deliver in hospital. She may also suffer obstructed labour which leads to vesico-vaginal fistula. She may deliver underweight children because she does not know what to eat during pregnancy and this may result in child illnesses and finally death of the child other than early marriage affecting the girls' education the researcher sought to find out other effects of early marriage. The possible effects by the respondents are summarized in Table 11:

Table 11: Effects of early marriage

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	4	8.0
No	46	92.0
Total	50	100

The results in Table 11 indicate that the majority of the respondents disagreed with the suggestion that early marriage had any positive effects on the girl's life. Girls enter into marriage when they are still young and this may often lead them to divorce and enter into prostitution. Again their illiteracy level goes up and they may not know what they are doing. By the time they were getting married the girl and the husband may have been around 16 years old, and then they all of a sudden realize that there is a stage they passed. Then there is the issue of mobile phones. The girls can talk to other boy-friends on phone, and at times this phone is put on loudspeaker and the girl gives the same phone to her husband to use. There is gender-based violence in these homes - husbands beat up these young girls and because they are ignorant they do not report such cases because they do not know their rights. Even if they make money through business and make profits, it is the husband who will possess all money. There is high rate of mortality of children because their mothers prefer traditional birth attendants (30+years old lady, cultural officer) rather than professional doctors.

5.3 Regrets of Engaging in Early Marriage:

The respondents regretted to have engaged in early marriage because they said they were experiencing a lot of financial hardships and in their married life. The responses are summarized in Table 12:

Table 12: Is early marriage led to regrets

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	47	94.0
No	3	6.0
Total	50	100.

From the above results, it can be noted that the majority (94.0%) of the respondents regretted that they were married at an early age. They

also regretted that they could not get education and employment due to early marriage.

6. CONCLUSIONS:

Pakistan is a male dominance society where females are given generally household obligations to perform. In child relational unions, young ladies are kept at homes, which compel them to leave their training and job opportunities. In poor families, guardians don't have assets for the bearing the cost of their female children so they wish to wed their little girls as ahead of schedule as conceivable to be mitigated from the duty. They don't see their future anyplace else with the exception of sending them to their husband's home. A devastated family may see girl as financial burden that must be discharged through marriage at early age. In Punjab, it is financially more plausible to wed little girls at a younger age since the costs of marriage are lower. Likewise, the costs of share may likewise be bringing down for more youthful young girls in numerous areas of District Muzaffar Garh.

For some guardians, especially in the rustic groups with constrained means for job, youngster marriage frequently fills in as a strategy to off their obligation as far early as possible. Most of the illiterate young girls will have to work at agriculture farms for cotton picking, sowing and harvesting of crops. Most of the women who were married before maturity regretted over it due to negative effects and miseries suffered by them due to not having financial resources or earning.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS:

On the basis of the conclusions, we would like to make the following recommendations: -

1. The government should launch an awareness campaign on media about the

- benefits of girls' education and negative effects of early marriage.
2. The government should introduce strict penalties and punishments for parents of both boys and girls for resorting early marriage of their children.
 3. Special corner meetings may be arranged in the rural areas where literacy rate is very low and financial assistance may be provided to poor families for providing education to their children particularly girls.
 4. The meeting of educated women may be arranged with poor families living in the rural areas to apprise the economic and financial benefits of female education.

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CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHORS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

This research work was conducted in collaboration between two authors.

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