

The Early Marriage: Origin of Domestic Violence and Reproductive Health Challenges

(With Special Reference to Orangi Town –Karachi)

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Abstract

This traditional practice affecting not only the reproductive health of young girls but it is a major cause of domestic violence as well. This issue has been calling the care of national and international organizations in modern societies, containing Pakistan. Numerous issues which support this belief include poverty, lack of education, the perception of “virginity” of a single girl as key to a family’s honor, family building (whether joint family or nuclear family), spiritual clarification of being an adult, and short employment opportunities consequence in whole necessity of these girls on their manlike blood relatives. However, the present literature review revealed that there is no comprehensive study on child marriages and its impact on girls’ reproductive health common in Pakistan. The objectives of the present study were to study the causes of early marriages, domestic violence, and reproductive health problems as well as evaluate socio-economic features on this practice. Orangi Town then the oldest slum settlement of Karachi city was treated as the research universe in the present study while it’s UC-12 ‘Mujahidabad’ and UC-13 ‘Baloch Goth’ was the target areas. This research was a qualitative study where the researchers selected the mixed-method strategy for data collection. The snowball sampling and convenience sampling techniques were adopted. A tailor-made Questionnaire was used for data collection. The data was analyzed in tabular form and relevant case studies were also incorporated.

Key Words: Early Marriage, Origin, Domestic violence, and Reproductive Health

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Introduction

Early marriage is one of the highlighted issues in Pakistani culture. It is observed that each third adolescent teenager in the age group of 15 to 18 years, get married and each second married adolescent girl given birth to a child. However, there has been a measured tendency toward postponing marriage. The majority of female marrying before being 18 years old is very high in the multi-cultural society of Pakistan.

A part from this early marriage is a social privileges and health hesitation a global consensus that needs to be table talk as soon as possible. It the mean while the Middle East suggested enforcing prevailing laws in countries likewise South Asia and South Africa about early marriage besides implementing programs to break marriage. While the states with a high frequency of early marriage needed to concern the importance with the help of ahead the assurance of law enforcement agencies.¹

However, numerous people define early marriage in multiple ways but here authors deeply pointed out that child marriage or early marriage as the relationship between two people in which one or both are adolescents (McIntyre, 2006; ICRW, 2005). According to the statement of the rejection of violence beside women, gender-based violence is expected to the result of physical, sexual, and psychological impact as well as womankind suffering from several issues including pressure, uninformed scarcities of liberty before the marriage and threats of such acts while happening in community or isolated life.²

However, absorbed that early marriage beside with slight of un-education, and economic necessity, rejection of policymaking authority, discrimination within the home as well as sexual manipulation badly affect psychological health. The girls are entertained from the identical creation to admit the culture of man power, which cheerfully or unenthusiastically focuses them to unfair practices in Pakistan. Basically, girls needed to support from the dominant social and cultural values. In Pakistan, gender discrimination arises before birth and is regularly flattering unreceptive during the lifetime of the Pakistani women.³

Anti-human rights social and cultural practices are factors cited for the popularity of early marriages due to poverty as well as illiteracy. Accordingly, child marriage indicated to initial formation, finally affects the reproductive fitness of the adolescent. However, used toward torture the adolescent to bear children, mostly in developing countries; early pregnancy of adolescent girls is the recognition of death. Unfortunately in Pakistan the practice of child marriages is common, especially in the poor urban and rural areas but the act of formalizing child marriage is not cognizable and the police cannot take action against the lawbreakers. The amendment is intended to serve as a restrictive and to remove the surviving gender inequality in age from the child marriage restraint “Amendment” Bill, statement.⁴

1 International Institute for Population Sciences & the Population Council, “How Early Marriage Compromises Girls’ Lives, Maharashtra”. Youth in India: Situation Policy Brief No. 6. India, (2008): Pp.45-46

2 Sabri, Rubeihat, A Study on Violence against Women in Jordan’, quoted in UNICEF, Ending Gender Disparities in the Arab World. Jordan, (1994): 18 Accessed at August 12, 2016.

3 UNICEF, “Personal Development and Inadequate Socialization”. Vol.7, No.14, United State, (2001)

4 Members, National, Assembly, “The child marriage restraint “Amendment” Bill”. Pakistan, (2014): Accessed at March 11, 2019, <http://www.actionaid.org/pakistan>

The girls are more vulnerable toward several practices of gender-based passion; frequently the period gap among spouses can generate control on changing aspects besides social separation. These specific categories of supremacy and restriction can also limited girl's capability to assign the use of condoms or contraceptives while situating them at risk for sexual relation spread infections besides human immunodeficiency virus. However, a parent always seeing the marriage as a traditional ceremony that withdraws protection for their daughter from sexual defense and offers the care of a male caretaker. Mostly, the parents often think that an adolescent is lead financial support and consequently willingness for early marry tainted their daughters earlier they become an profitable liability.⁵

An early marriage is the recognition of multiple types of violence against women and girls throughout their lives likewise honor killing, domestic violence, rejection of social privileges like liberty of superior, and right to get education are directly linked with child marriage. The state needs to raise awareness of the negative health outcomes of early marriage and also apply strict laws against child marriage practice as well as encouraging civil, sexual and reproductive health rights for women to reduce adolescent girl marriages.

Review of Literature

It is projected that about 100 million adolescent are willing to be married earlier at the age of 18 years old, also specified to as child marriage, in the developed world through the next 10 years. Globally state of South Asia became one of the peak rates of early marriage, which is an entire violation of the worldwide affirmation of human rights during 1948 as well as the universal agreement on civil and political privileges 1966 are concern. Nevertheless with high parental rate and child death and illness are the recognition of early marriage, its practice extremely leading toward the state. However, the United Nations highlights the requirement of dropping child marriage and its impact on nurturing and child health over the period growth goals for improving parental health, reducing child death as well as recommending gender inequality and women permission.

Mostly boys are suffering from financial crises to drop out from the school to start working, early marriage is worldwide measured a key blockade to holding girls in school. Globally in South Asia region there are following countries giving importance on child marriage likewise Nepal, Afghanistan, alongside Bangladesh, India as well as Pakistan also reflected a hot spot country in South Asia continually practicing early marriage is universe.⁶

It's globally estimated that 15 million adolescent girls got married every year. In the developing country, one out of nine girls is married earlier her 15th birthday. These children are deprived from their youthful without their privileges to health, education and safety. The states should calls a resolution with the participation of significant stakeholders for the implement of holistic as well as to develop comprehensive strategies for early and forced marriage and also support already married girls or adolescents. There must be child protection system and also for women through protection appliances likewise safe shelters, entrance to justice and the allocation of best practices across restrictions.

5 Center for Global Development, "Girls Count: A Global Investment & Action Agenda". Washington, DC- CGD, (2008)

6 UNFPA, "Marrying too young; End child marriage". United State, (2012): Accessed at November 08, 2018, <http://www.unfpa.org>

The gender inequality is one of the highest ranges, whereas numbers of girls are victims of child marriage in Pakistan. At the mean while early marriage perversely affected the poor females, which are suffering from low education mostly living in rural areas. In Pakistan the young girls are suffering from maternal illness due to unwanted pregnancy, and pregnancy termination that influences mortality. It is estimated that early marriage also increased probability of diarrhea, and under 5 mortality and infant mortality in Pakistan. Most of the married women with as children were found importantly related with a decreased chance of prenatal care.

In Pakistan, some of the valid reasons for high rates of early marriages are poverty, cultural practices likewise Watta-Satta (bartering fiancée for spouse), Pait-Likkhi (marrying children before they are born or are silent very young). In Pakistan due to the multi-cultural society there is also the following practices applied; Addo-Baddo (marriage among families), and Swara-Khooon-Baha/Vani/Sikh (girls specified in marriage as a form of disagreement purpose), protecting the honor of child and family, and lack of application of legislation.

A resolution passed by Sindh and Punjab assemblies in order to making marriage illegal before 18 years of age. Nationally, the Child Marriage Restraint Act socializing from 1929 states that no male under 18 and no female under 16 may be legally married. However, the Child Marriage Restraint Act does not accord with the November 2014, UN declaration signed by 116 countries setting an international prohibition on child marriage. Pakistan signed the UN convention on the dismissal of all forms of discrimination against women (1979), also known as a prototypical international women's bill of rights, in March 1996.⁷

A campaign launched by Action-Aid Pakistan to stop early marriage practice, which has a serious issue on the life of young girls who are repudiated the right to have control over their bodies as well as resultant bearing on their basic rights of education, health, and other necessary. Early marriage is a crime. It is injustice which leads to social isolation and deprives the educational opportunities from a girl. However, a girl has a complete right to live her life entirely, and should not be forced into early marriage. A campaign reflected by Action-Aid Pakistan on the bases of the wider presence in restricted areas specially the disaster-hit localities has enabled it to measure the strength of the early girl marriage issue. It is observed that high rates of early marriage within the tragedy impacted groups due to socio-cultural and financial self-doubt of the people.⁸

In the developing countries including China, every out of third young girl got early marriage, which is before 18 years old. Repeatedly the health issues of early marriage among the young girls as well as their children after a swarm of confusing factors are measured. The present indication is certain about several indications such are: unplanned pregnancy, issues related pregnancy, preterm of delivery, and low birth weight babies as well as mortality fetal and breeding forcefulness within the early marriage. However, indication show a mixed picture about several other signals, the risk of reproductive health, sexual infection of spread diseases likewise HIV aids the risk of newborn, infant and early childhood mortality are also the recognition of risk factors.

7 Carol, Khan. Pressing concern: Study proves child marriage linked to domestic violence. The Express Tribune, January, (2015): Accessed at January 05, 2018, <http://www.tribune.com.pk>

8 Action-Aid, Pakistan, "Stop Early Girls Marriage". Pakistan, (2014): Accessed at April 09, 2018, <http://www.actionaid.org>

Accordingly, the early marriage linked to the breeding of domestic violence, also entitled for centralized interposition alongside the child marriage of young women beside expressed responsiveness neighboring the sensitive risk of breeding strength against early spouses. The data from the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey of 2012-2013 of married women between the ages of 15 to 24 of the respondents were the range of 47.8% of adolescent girls or boys got married to this group. Approximately one-third of the young females had abided breeding violence and always controlling behavior from their husbands and in-laws.⁹

However, child marriage, as linked to adult marriage was increased incidents of forceful husband behavior likewise physically and emotionally. The Council of Islamic Ideology mentioned its perspective that a child is ready for marriage once he or she should be touched adolescence. However, opponents of Pakistan's legislature allowing young women under 18 years old to be married mention husband violence as well as destruction of educational career and following socio-economic opportunities as reasons girls should not marry before 18 years old. At the meanwhile, the national commission for the status of women sustains that the legal, national marrying age must be 18 years old for both males and females. Early marriage can create numerous reasons likewise similar effects on reproductive health, breeding violation of bodily rights as well as growth in domestic violence. Moreover, it is a constitutional right of every young girl should get the education. According to the NCSW biologically physical and mental adulthood does not begin maturity, if a young female is measured to be an mature at 18 years old to vote, must get a driver's license and also eligible for CNIC the same conditions should be followed during the age of marriage.¹⁰

The observations of community toward the impact of culture are varying clarification of religion, and defensive family morality as well as some of the factors that may play an active role in the prolongation of early marriage practice in Pakistan. In Pakistan there need to be developed awareness campaign for the negative health outcomes of child marriage by the government, native and worldwide NGOs, relating and imposing severe laws against child marriage practice, encouraging civil, sexual and reproductive health rights for women, and providing economic opportunities for girls and their families likewise microfinance schemes might eradicate early marriage practice.

Objectives

- To find out the major cause of early marriage
- To know early marriages as per the cause of violence
- To explore the consequences of early marriages on reproductive health
- To evaluate socio-economic aspects of early marriages

9 Nasrullah, M & Zakar, R. Child marriage and its associations with controlling behaviors and spousal violence against adolescent and young women. Pakistan demographic and health survey. Pakistan, (2012-2013): Pp.23-31

10 United Nations Statistical Commission. Report on the Meeting of the Friends of the Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission on Statistical Indicators on Violence against Women. United Nation, (2010): Accessed at February,04,2017, <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/vaw/docs/finalreport.pdf>

Research Methodology

This study was qualitative research in which the data was collected by using questionnaires and survey technique, sample size; 40 respondents and six case studies were taken from two different Union Councils of Orangi town namely UC-12 ‘Mujahidabad’ and UC-13 ‘Baloch Goth’. For data collection mixed techniques, the snowball sampling and convenience sampling method were adopted. The collected data was analyzed in frequency distribution tables. The research instrument was closed-ended and pre-tested as well to ensure its reliability and validity. This was mainly focused on the respondent's age, educational level, and family structure, the decision of her early marriage, socio-economic status, and number of children, reproductive health issues and domestic violence.

Results

Table 2: Personal Profile

Nature of Family	F	%
Joint	27	68%
Nuclear	13	32%
Age at Married	F	%
10 to 12 years	12	30%
13 to 15 years	15	38%
16 to 18 years	13	32%
Qualification	F	%
Illiterate	7	17%
Literate	11	28%
Primary	13	33%
Secondary	9	22%
Husband Monthly Income	F	%
Rs. 1000 - 5999	8	20%
Rs. 6000 - 10999	17	43%
Rs. 11000 & above	15	37%
Total	40	100%

The above table indicates that 68% of the respondents lived within a joint family. Mostly (38%) the respondents got married at the age of 13 to 15 years old, qualification of 33% were primary and 43% the respondent's husbands earned between Rs. 6000-10999.

Table 2: Consequences of Early Marriages

Decision of Marriage	F	%
Self	06	15%
Parents	19	48%
Grandparents	15	37%
Number of Children	F	%
No Child	14	35%
1 - 4	19	48%
Above 5	07	17%
First Delivery	F	%
Home	12	30%
Hospital	28	70%
Miscarriage	F	%
Yes	23	58%
No	17	42%
Reproductive Health Issues	F	%
Yes	29	73%
No	11	27%
Victim of Violence	F	%
Yes	31	78%
No	09	22%
Total	40	100%

The above table indicates that 48% of the respondents' marriage decided by their parents. 48% of the respondents have 1-4 children, 70% of respondents' first delivery occurred in a hospital. Mostly (58%) of the respondents got miscarriage, 73% of them have reproductive health issues and 78% of the respondents experience domestic violence.

Relevant Case Studies

The alarming issues on early marriage: is the breeding of violence as well as reproductive health among the mix communities of Baloch Goth UC-13 and Mujahidabad UC-12 Orangi Town, at least six case studies have been conducted from both UCs of Orangi Town, which is mentioned below.

Case # 1

Ms. Kiran (not real name) belongs to a rural community of Mardan, settled in Baloch Goth UC-13 Orangi Town Karachi. She was under 14 years when got married to a 30 years old man. She is the mother of 5 male children. She lived in a single-family; the husband was a Rickshaw Driver.

She was studying in Middle School at the time of her marriage. She informed that when she refused for marriage her father's started beating her and said we don't you to study anymore. She also tried to convince her elder brother but he also replied the same.

There was a lot of confusion in her mind regarding the upcoming situation as she was not enough mature mentally, physically and socially. After one month of the marriage, she got pregnant and went to severe depression and she was not able to share her emotions with any of the family

members even with her husband. During the whole phase, she suffered various challenges, mental torture, weight loss as well as a sleeping disorder.

Ms. Kiran claimed that firstly early marriage snatched the chance for further study, gave her an unhappy marital life where all her rights were denied.

Case# 2

Mrs. Noor Jan (not her real name) lives in Baloch Goth UC-13 Orangi Town Karachi, got married at 15 years and became a widow at 17 years due to the sudden death of her husband.

She informed that her father took a loan of Rs.1000000 from her husband's father before, but he failed to return it till the deadline. This loan, unfortunately, became the reason for her early marriage with 35 years old person having 5 children from the first wife. After marriage, Noor Jan became a member of a joint family but strongly rejected by all family members, neighbors, and other relatives. This attitude made her depressed day by day.

After a month she got pregnant which made her worried and she couldn't share this situation with husband and other members of the family. She once again, suffered from various reproductive problems, an unhealthy diet, and a stressful environment resulted in abortion of her 5 months baby. After 2 months of miscarriage, she got pregnant again and gave birth to a baby girl who is now 7 years old. After being a widow she started living with her family facing numerous socio-economic challenges. After so many hardships her family gave the freedom to make a decision but she lost her identity.

Case # 3

Ms. Parveen (not real name) belongs to interior Sindh, settled in Jamoot Muhalah UC-13 Baloch Goth Orangi Town Karachi got married in childhood while her husband was 21 years old working as a waiter in New Quetta Hotel.

Accordingly, her husband and her in-laws were inflexible and conservative regarding family norms, customs, and traditions.

In the early days, she was tortured to follow her in-law's morals and values where these bindings missed chance all her freedom. She was not allowed to meet her family member if she insisted on her husband on visiting her parent then she just had to have a veil on her face.

After 4 months she got pregnant unaware of this phase. Opposite of her house there was a general store, one day, unfortunately, went to buy something and started talking to the shopkeeper after turning back she was abused and beaten up by her in-laws. Resultantly she got a miscarriage. Due to which she faced several reproductive health issues. After a long gap, she gave birth to a daughter. The second time she again gave birth to a girl which became the cause of torture and blames. Her in-laws severely pressurized due to which she became mentally and physically unfit. After six months of the delivery, she got pregnant fourth time and gave birth to a son.

After going through cruel circumstances, she recommended that early marriage is undoubtedly the root cause of domestic violence but mental and social harassment as well as.

Case# 4

Mrs. Salma (not real name) belongs to the rural community of Balochistan, settled in Mujahidabad UC-12 Orangi Town Karachi. She was 9 years old and a student of 4th class when her parents migrated. She got marriage at the age of 13 years old along with elder brother and sister due to family pressure. Her husband's age is 15 years after 11 months of marriage, she delivered a girl child. Now she is 19 years old and mother of two girls as well as 3 months of pregnancy. According to her, she has been tortured by her husband and his family members for not having a male child. She faced an abusive attitude of her husband and in-laws which caused a stressful situation.

According to her the decision of early marriage was unfair for her and her husband too. They missed the chance to grow and also lost their adolescent recreational activities.

At the end of the discussion, she indicated early marriage result in physical and mental harassment, an increased risk of violence, abuse and health issues and early death of females or the child.

Case# 5

Ms. Akhtari (not real name) basically from Bajoor Agency settled in UC-12 Mujahidabad Orangi Town Karachi. She got marriage at the age of around 12 years old.

As her statement, she was not aware of her marriage because her family didn't disclose it. She was dancing and singing to enjoy that happy moment with her family and relatives. One day her mother asked her elder sister to buy necessary clothes, domestic appliances, and utensils for "Akhatari". At that moment she was sitting with her mother, she asked her what you talked about. Her mother said it's regarding your marriage. Hearing this she started crying and warned her mother that if you insisted I will commit suicide.

After one and a half years of marriage, she became a mother at the age of around 14 year's old and experienced shyness, depression, and stress as she doesn't know how to carry a baby. She became psychologically disturbed, harassed, reproductive health issues increased higher due to unprotected sexual relations but felt very shy to share with her husband and other family members because they did not bother about her health issue and were not serious to take her for essential medical treatment. However, she watched health-related talk shows from where she gained knowledge regarding the use of contraceptives and the importance of sexual health. When she disclosed this information with her husband he not only denied but said that more children are blessings of God, but she insisted that she doesn't want more children.

At the conclusion, she gave a message "A young married girl does not know how to look after a child. His safety, proper diet and healthy upbringing are a very tough job for her".

Case#6

Ms. Jenifer (not real name) from Shikarpur settled in UC-12 Mujahidabad Orangi Town Karachi. She got marriage at 11 years old and her spouse was above 20 years old working as a Sweeper in Kuthyana Memon Hospital, Karachi. While in her Nikkah-Nama her family urged to mention her age as 13 years but she wasn't. Her husband was a drug addict, abuse her that 2 years have passed and she didn't conceive. She became disappointed, lost weight, suffered depression due to which she committed suicide but God gave her the chance to live a life. One day her husband and in-laws physically tortured her and asked to leave their house. After 4 years of their marriage, her husband got married again but God did not bless him with a child at this time as well. In the end, she raised a question for everyone, Are the early marriages necessary for girls?

Discussions and Conclusions

Early marriages are bringing severe destitutions to the lives of girls. It deteriorates the understanding and pleasure of their rights. Marriage at young age might disturb the marriage relationship at an early age when they are not getting ready for married life. These disagree with them of freedom, an opportunity for personal growth, and other rights including health and security, education, and contribution in social life. In some cases, it also leads to motherly mortality due to severe problems of early sex and pregnancies.

The major principle regarding the present research is pointed out early marriage become one of the main socio-cultural customs that affect the major and minor socialization of girls now Pakistani society. On this basis, the present research examined existing leanings, fundamental bases and overall concerns with early marriage specific from reproductive health, violence, and socio-economic perceptions.

Early marriage is not just a problem that happens in remote areas of Pakistan but is widely established, disturbing over a third of Pakistan's youths, and continuing in a cruel rotation to affect the children. Marriage, a reason for celebration around the world, becomes strong unhappiness when young children got married. Childhood and adolescence are periods of innocence, in both eras the child needs care and growth opportunities. The atmosphere of the children are exposed to in these sensitive stages, blemishes them in their lifespan. Some necessary and serious steps need to be taken against this critical issue likewise nurturing awareness regarding the negative health outcomes of early marriage, sexual, reproductive health issues as well as rights for women educating the youth especially girls up to a key level, all such steps might help to reduce child marriages in Pakistan.

Recommendations

Present study researchers measured various criteria of early marriage and recommend the following reasons. That will be helpful for the government, non-profit organization as well as the social scientist for the long term planning and also help the students for further informative knowledge as well.

- Government or non-profit organizations, as well as active citizens, must arrange programs focused on delaying the entry of young males or females regarding early

marriage and motherhood through awareness information and education or communication.

- Awareness of reproductive health is very important should be put on meeting regarding adolescent mothers to help to improve the nutritious position of their children, to breakdown the round of spiteful, poverty.
- Breeding violence one of the alarming issues among early marriage but we must conduct more case studies on domestic violence in the various areas of the country.
- We should be focused on the reason for the domestic violence always the recognition of bearing son preference, allegations of childlessness and not being good at household performing activities.
- The parents should give the right to vote to their young boys or girls regarding their marriages because parental opposition to teenage love affairs occasioned many runaway situations leading to legal rape as well as early marriage.

However, experiences and knowledge are concerned that sexual relations are given priority by the majority of the husbands feel this is their right after marriage. Due to sexual incompatibility, she faces abusive language and harassment by their husband, while the young woman suffered from various reproductive health problems.

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