

1.1 Introduction

The practice of early marriage in rural India is deeply embedded in cultural values and grounded in social structures. Despite laws that prohibit marriage before legal age, the practice is still extremely prevalent in many parts of the country. Marriage at such early age exists because of several social factors, which includes conventional gender norms, the value of virginity and parental concerns regarding premarital sex, demand of marriage transaction, i.e. dowry and poverty (Amin, Chong & Haberland, 2007). Number of recent studies have documented that early marriage is negatively linked with health, education and economic outcomes (Jain and Kurz, 2007; Mathur, Greene and Malhotra, 2003; Mensch, Singh and Casterline, 2005; UNICEF, 2005). It is also argued that young women who get married early are more likely to experience early school departure, lower earning capacity, early childbearing, repeated pregnancies, pregnancy complications, higher maternal and infant mortality, and increased risk of Sexually Transmitted Infections including HIV/AIDS (Singh and Samara, 1996; UNICEF, 2001; Miller and Lester, 2003; Bruce and Clark 2004; National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2005; Mukuria et al., 2005; UNICEF, 2005; ICRW, 2007).

Majority of the married adolescent girls are school dropouts. Marriages are mostly arranged by parents and relatives. Early age at marriage limits women's privilege to choose their life partner. It also affects women's socio-psychological development. Adolescent girls are not mentally prepared for the change they experience at their marital home, because they are too young to marry. Moreover, they are burdened with heavy household workloads at their marital place for which they are not well-equipped. After marriage, young women often entire into a non-nuclear family, where they are required to seek permission for seeking health information and care. Early marriage thus deprives young girls of their transitional phase of moving into adulthood. On the other hand, in India, the practice of dowry, or the marriage transaction is very much common. The parents of young brides, who are mostly poor, often agree to pay the hefty amount of dowry to marry-off their daughter. But due to non-payment or partial payment of the dowry demands, young brides often face violence at their marital place. Therefore, it is explicit that young women form a vulnerable group and many of the programmes are offered to married women once they experience motherhood. This suggests the need to explore the marital dynamics and the experience of young women after marriage.

1.2 Objectives

The various aspects of marital union together with young women's initial feelings of moving into the marital home, problem experienced in the first year of marriage, the practice of dowry and dowry-related violence have been explored. Finally, an attempt was made to explore young women's marital happiness.

1.3 Data and methodology

1.3.1 Source of data

The primary data was collected from three blocks of South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. The study was supported by Parkes Small Grant, Cambridge, U.K. Total sample size is 654 women of 13-24 years.

1.3.2 District at a glance

The district of South 24 Parganas has 29 blocks and 2,140 villages. In rural South 24 Parganas, the female literacy is 56 percent. The scheduled caste population comprises of 35 percent of the total population. The female work participation in the district is only 18 percent.

1.3.3 Study design

Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select twelve villages for the study. Twenty nine blocks were stratified on the basis of female literacy. Three groups were formed confirming similar population size from each of them. One block was then selected from each of these three sub-groups on the basis of the distance from the district headquarter, Kolkata. After the selection of blocks, 4 villages were selected from each block. For each block, villages were arranged in ascending order of proportion of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Population. Four sub-divisions were made from this arrangement, confirming similar population size from each of these four sub-divisions. Then one village was randomly selected from each of these four sub-divisions. Thus four villages were selected from one block. All the households in the selected villages were listed. During listing, the households with at least one eligible woman, i.e. 13-24 years married woman were identified. Households were selected by systematic random sampling.

1.3.4 Data collection and survey instruments

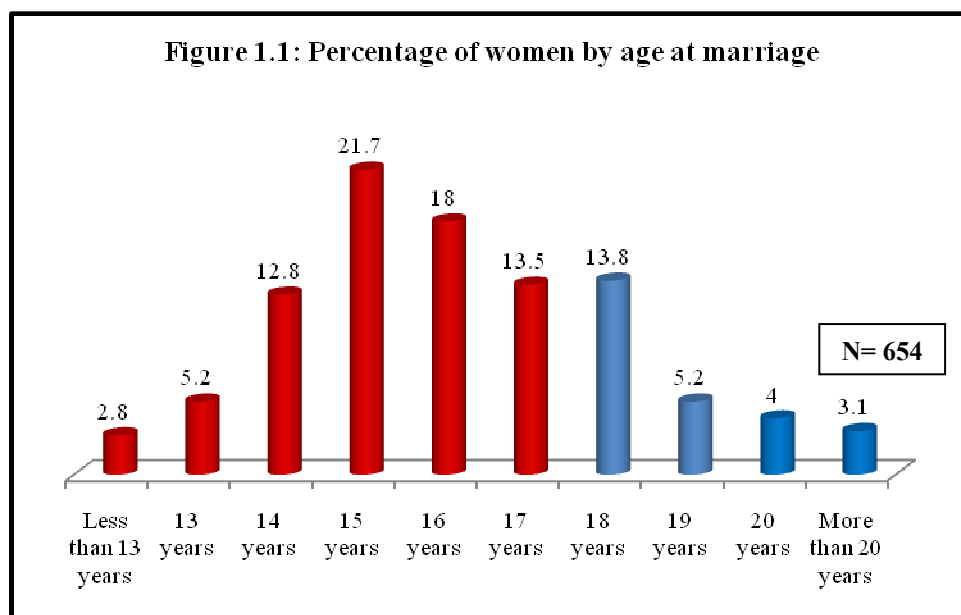
Data collection was done in 2007. The study includes both the quantitative as well as qualitative techniques. Qualitative techniques include Group Discussions and Case Studies.

1.3.5 Data compilation and data analyses

Data was compiled using CPro 3.3 software. Data analysis was done by using SPSS 15.0 and STATA 10.0 software. For the analyses, uni-variate, bi-variate and multivariate techniques were used. The Principal Component Analysis was used for the computation of household wealth index.

1.4 Discussion

1.4.1 Age at Marriage and meeting husband before marriage- Three out of four (74 percent) women were married off before reaching the legal age at marriage. More than two-fifth (22 percent) got married at age 15; 18 percent at age 16; 14 percent each at age 17 and 18; 13 percent at age 14 and eight percent got married within 13 years of age (Figure 1.1). This indicates the wide practice of early marriage among the study population.



Since, the age at marriage was considerably low, bi-variate analysis had been carried out for women's mean age at marriage by their selected characteristics (Table 1.1). The mean age at marriage was found to be 15 years among women who had no years of schooling and it was more than 18 years for women who had secondary level of education or more. For non-Hindu

women and those who belonged to Scheduled Tribe community, the mean age at marriage was one year lower compared to women who were Hindu and who belonged to general caste. Several studies have suggested that parents want to marry off their daughters at early age because of poverty. Therefore, an economic characteristic, namely type of parent's house was introduced in the analysis. It may be noted that type of house is a reflection of the economic status of the household. Types of parent's house had been included to know whether parents who were staying in kachha houses (serves as a proxy for low household wealth index) married-off their daughters at an early age. The mean age at marriage varies significantly with the type of parent's house. The mean age at marriage was found to be lower by almost two years for women whose parents were staying in kachha houses compared to those whose parents were staying in semi-pucca and pucca houses (reflection of better-off households). All these differentials were found to be statistically significant.

About three-fourth (74 percent) women had arranged marriage, i.e. marriages arranged by parents. Bi-variate analysis showed that type of marriage did not vary much by women's age at marriage. Since the age at marriage was low and most of the marriages were arranged, women were asked about acquaintance with husband before marriage, i.e. whether they had met and talked to their husbands before the marriage was finalized. About 30 percent women who got married before reaching age 18 did not meet their husbands before marriage compared to 17 percent who got married at age 18 or more. Similarly, two-fifth (39 percent) women who got married before 18 years had met and talked to their husbands before marriage compared to almost half (48 percent) women who got married at a later age. Thus, there exist a close association between age at marriage and meeting prospective husband before marriage. Quoting a young woman from the community, *"I got married at an early age without seeing my husband before marriage and was scared before coming to in-laws place"*.

1.4.2 Expressing opinion regarding marriage- Since most of the marriages were arranged at early age by parents, it was essential to know if young women could express their opinion regarding marriage. Majority of the women reported that discussion regarding marriage was held prior to their marriage but young women had little say in such discussion. Only ten percent women could object who felt that their marriages were arranged at an early age. The objection in marriage for making it early varied significantly by women's educational attainment. It was found that only five percent women who were illiterate could object in

marriage for making it earlier than expected compared to 29 percent women who had secondary education or more. Educational attainment was also found to have a significant positive association with the expression of opinion regarding marriage (Table 1.2). Two more characteristics, namely, exposure to media and type of parents' house were introduced in the bi-variate analysis. Women were asked about the type of media exposure at the time of survey, assuming that they had same exposure before their marriage, it was found that expression of opinion regarding own marriage was significantly higher for women who had some media exposure. Type of parents' house was considered as a proxy to the household wealth index. It was found that expressing opinion regarding own marriage was significantly higher for women who were staying in pucca house before their marriage. One instance of repenting for not objecting to early marriage, *"My husband always forces to have sex and perform some acts which I do not want. He even forces me during my menstruation. He is very much addicted to alcohol and what more can I expect from him? He never uses condom. He shouts at me very much if I take oral contraceptive pills. Once I forgot to take pill, I conceived and I had to go for abortion. My in-laws are better in the sense at least they offer me food or take to doctor whenever I fall ill. Many a times I feel that I did not raise my voice regarding my marriage and I am paying for it"*.

1.4.3 Initial feelings after moving into marital home- Since, most of the marriages were arranged by parents and young women had no objection regarding the same, women were asked whether they were mentally prepared to marry at that age. Nearly half (47 percent) women reported that they were not prepared mentally before getting married. Thus, many of them were not ready for the new familial changes. Since, they were not prepared for the change, they were more likely to experience uncomfortable situation after moving into their marital home. To explore this dimension, women were asked about their feelings initially after moving into the marital place (Table 1.3). Though majority (53 percent) women reported that they were happy and comfortable in the initial days of marriage, more than a quarter (26 percent) reported to be lonely; 14 percent were unhappy, uncomfortable and did not like the change after marriage, which includes change of place, new persons around and problem in adjusting with them, and uncomfortable sex. Quoting a young bride, as evident from depth interview, *"Before my marriage, husband never came to see me. After the marriage, he asked me to go to my parent's house, since I am not good-looking and smart as my sister-in-law and that created problem in the initial days of my marriage"*. Eleven percent reported to be frightened, six percent were feeling shy and four percent reported some other

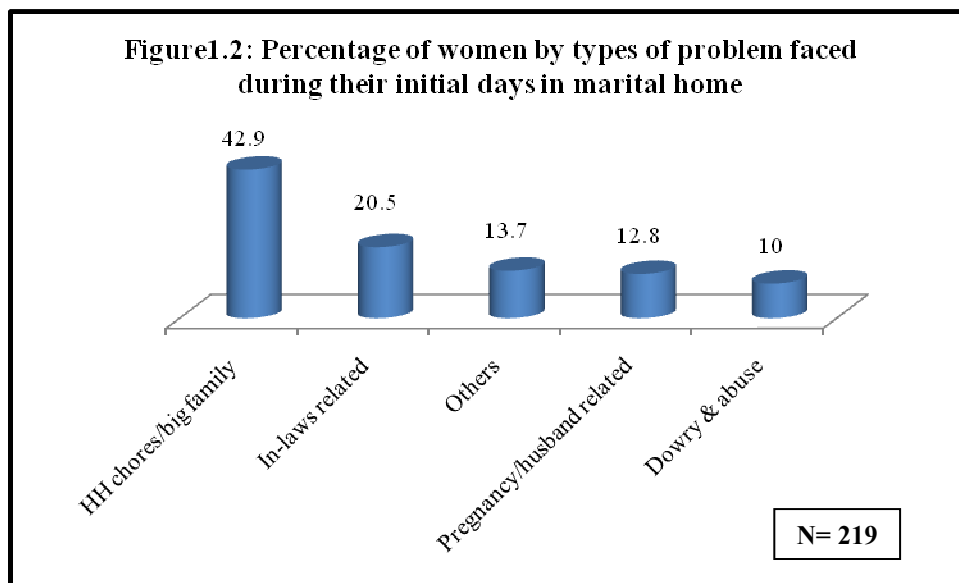
feelings in the initial days of marriage which includes felt restless, excited, indifferent and so-so, and immature to understand the changes.

1.4.4 Problem faced during initial days in the marital home

In the earlier section, it was found that many girls were married off early, and young women had little say regarding their marriage. The mental preparation was also found to be less among the young brides. Therefore, the young women were more likely to face problems in the marital home. This section deals with the problem faced in the first year of marriage. Many young women reported to have experienced some problem within the first year of marriage. One-third women reported that they had to experience some problem in the first year of marriage at their marital place. More than a quarter (26 percent) reported to have experienced problem to some extent and eight percent had experienced severe problem in the first year after arriving their marital home.

More than two-fifth (43 percent) had to face problem since they did not know to perform household chores (Figure 1.2). The daily household chores includes getting up early in the morning and mopping/cleaning of rooms at least three times a day (in the morning after getting up, before having food twice a day); washing utensils (twice or more a day); washing clothes; collecting drinking water from outside, which is often at a distant place; collect cow dung, straws to be used as fuel for cooking; feeding domesticated animals and taking them to field; besides taking care of their children and in-laws. The problem was further aggravated by big family size and the joint family type when the young bride had to do all these tasks for a large number of family members. To quote a young woman, *“I feel weak in performing such workload and if I cannot finish-off my work in time, my husband beats me up. When I speak about my weakness to my in-laws, they say I am stating false reasoning for avoiding household works”*. More than one-fifth (21 percent) women reported that they had problem related to in-laws, which includes in-laws do not like her since she is not good-looking and fair, in-laws not accepting love marriage, in-laws not happy with her, and find faults with her activities. To quote one young woman, *“I had love marriage and it is not accepted by in-laws. I face lot of violence from my in-laws. They beat me, once they put hot potato in my mouth and often threat that if I say anything to my husband situation will get even worse. It is shocking to me and I am forced to go out of my in-laws place and stay with my parents”*. About 13 percent reported the problem was husband-related and few reported it was pregnancy-related. This category includes husband does not earn, he suspects her, forces for

sex, abuses verbally & physically, has affair or another wife, and takes alcohol. A newly married woman stated *“My husband has affair with one of his relatives. If I ask him anything about the relationship, he replies that he is going to marry her. I repent that I got married at such an early age and with a wrong person like him”*. Another instance, *“I got married just after menarche. I was not at all ready to marry. My parents, neighbours all tried to convince me for the marriage. I conceived in the next month of my marriage and my husband started suspecting me that I had relation with somebody else. He alleged that it was not his baby and he is going to drive me out”*. About 14 percent cited some ‘other’ problems they had to face after coming to their marital home which includes monetary problem, problem due to change in caste (moving from lower to higher caste) after marriage, own health problems, feeling of loneliness, monetary problem between husband and in-laws, and not allowed to work after marriage. Another ten percent were facing abuse due to non-payment of dowry, which created lot of problems during their initial days in marital home.



1.4.5 Culture of Dowry

Dowry system in India is prevalent since the Vedic period. Dowry is derived from the ancient Hindu customs of "kanyadan" and "stridhan". In "kanyadan", the father of the bride offers the father of the groom money or property, etc. whereas for "stridhan", the bride herself gets jewelry and clothes at the time of her marriage, usually from her relatives or friends. In "varadakshina", the father of the bride presents the groom cash or kind. The dowry custom continues to rule the Indian society. In majority of Indian families, the boy has inheritance rights while the girl is given a hefty sum at the time of her marriage in lieu of the

Government regulated equal rights for girls in parental property. The present section examines the culture of dowry, its consequences on young bride, the violence experienced due to nonpayment of dowry items and the spousal support.

About three-fourth (74 percent) young women reported that dowry had ever been demanded by their in-laws. About 70 percent women reported dowry had been demanded at the time of marriage and 6 percent reported it was demanded after their marriage, since they had love marriage, dowry was not demanded at the time of marriage. There were also some women who reported that dowry was demanded both the times, at the time of marriage and after the marriage.

Dowry-related violence- Though majority of women reported dowry demand had been met, about two-fifth could not meet the demand completely. Therefore, they were at a risk of dowry-related violence. About 15 percent women had experienced current dowry related problems, i.e. they had faced violence, either verbally or physically due to non-payment of dowry. Thirteen percent had experienced verbal violence due to non-payment or partial payment of dowry demands in the last one year preceding the survey (Table 1.4). About three-fourth (76 percent) women had experienced the verbal violence from their in-laws, mostly mother-in-laws and father-in-laws, whereas 31 percent had experienced the same from their husbands. Three percent women reported to had experienced physical violence in the last one year due to non-payment or partial payment of dowry, where husbands were mostly involved. To quote one young woman, *“My husband often hits me and once I got hurt. I face more humiliation when I ask for money. My parents are very poor and they could not meet the demands. My in-laws forced me to stay separately and they don’t even look after my child”*.

Women were asked about the support they had received during violence related to dowry. About 31 percent women reported their husbands were involved in the violence and they did not support the wives. It is surprising to note, half of the women reported their husbands were not involved but did not stand by their wives at the time of experiencing violence. Only 19 percent women reported that their husband supported them when they experienced violence. It is interesting to note that when the spousal age difference was more, support from husband was more during the experience of violence.

1.4.6 Marital happiness- After examining various aspects of marital union of young women, an attempt was made to understand their marital happiness. Women were asked to address their marriage as happy, average or unhappy. It is interesting to note that more than half (51 percent) of the women addressed their marriage as happy, 37 percent felt it was average and 12 percent felt it was unhappy (Table 1.5). The women who addressed their marriage as unhappy were asked the reasons they think responsible for the same. Majority (58 percent) women reported 'husband-related' reasons, which includes responses like husband suspects, husband's second marriage, husband has another wife, takes alcohol, beats her up, does not care for her, does not have regular earning, and forces for sex. More than one-third (34 percent) women felt their unhappy marriage was due to poverty; 16 percent stated 'in-laws-related' reasons, which include in-laws do not like her, and mother-in-law shouts at her without any reason. Eleven percent reported there was lack of will to live together. Only one respondent reported that her marriage was unhappy since she was not conceiving.

Bi-variate analysis had been carried out for women's marital happiness by their selected characteristics (Table 1.6). Marital happiness was found to be associated with women's age at marriage, number of children, religion, household workload, type of family and household wealth index. Marital happiness increased with increased age at marriage. Majority (67 percent) women who got married at age 18 or more addressed their marriage as happy, and the proportion drastically declined to 47 percent for women who got married between age 15 and 17, and further declined to 39 percent for women who got married by age 14. Marital happiness was found to be significantly higher among women who did not have children or less number of children compared to women with three or more number of children. Three-fifth of young women, who did not have children, addressed their marriage as happy and the proportion declined to 49 percent for women who had up to two children and further declined to 36 percent for women who had three or more number of children. This may be attributed to their young age, when they were not ready to accept motherhood but many a times, they experience unplanned pregnancy. Therefore, not having child or having less number of child was one of the determinants of young women's happiness. It had been analyzed further in regression analysis. Marital happiness was also found to be high among women who were Hindu (55 percent) compared to women who were non-Hindu (38 percent). Differentials by household workloads were large. Majority (66 percent) of women with less household workload addressed their marriage as happy, the proportion sharply declined to 50 percent for

women with moderate household and further declined to 43 percent for women with heavy household workload. It was interesting to note that marital happiness was reported higher among women who came from non-nuclear family compared to those who came from nuclear family. More than half (55 percent) women who belonged to non-nuclear family reported their marriage as happy compared to 44 percent women who belonged to nuclear households. This may be attributed to the fact that young women can share certain things with in-laws and their presence result in less spousal violence. Marital happiness by household wealth index varied considerably. The happiness was found to be higher among women who belonged to high household wealth index (70 percent), the proportion drastically declined to 43 percent for women who belonged to medium household wealth index and further declined to 40 percent for women who belonged to low wealth index. Somehow, women's age, caste and working status did not show significant association with their marital happiness.

After analyzing marital happiness with basic socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, some of the spousal and marital characteristics were introduced in the bi-variate analysis (Table 1.7). The marital characteristics introduced in the analysis were spousal education, spousal age difference, women's decision-making regarding spending husband's income, type of marriage, spousal difference in opinion, current adjustment problem, husband's place of stay and choice of life partner given a chance. Marital happiness was significantly higher among women with spousal education of secondary and above; women who had 6 years or more younger to their spouse; who did not have any current problem in adjustment; who would have chosen the same person they got married, given a chance; women who could decide on spending husband's income; and who had less spousal difference in opinion.

After the bi-variate analysis, two sets of logistic regression models were used, considering the binary nature of the dependent variable in order to understand the effect of the selected socioeconomic, demographic and marital correlates on the likelihood of having marital happiness (Table 1.8). The dependent variable, i.e., marital happiness was made dichotomous, clubbing responses for unhappy and average marriage together and happy marriage on the other hand. The essence behind such grouping was that, women who had reported their marriage as unhappy, they were really unhappy and those who had reported their marriage as average, chances were more that they were unhappy. This may be due to underreporting of marital unhappiness, since they were reporting something personal to a

stranger (interviewer). In spite of enough rapport building, the underreporting of unhappiness cannot be ruled out. Thus, grouping of unhappy and average marriage was justified. The independent variables controlled in the first model were women's age, age at marriage, number of children, religion, caste, household workload, type of marriage, type of family, and household wealth index. Results showed that the odds of having marital happiness were significantly higher among women whose age at marriage was 18 years or more (OR=1.5); women with moderate household workloads (OR=1.9); and who belonged to high household wealth index (OR=2.6).

After considering all the conventional socio economic and demographic variables, a set of eight contextual variables, mainly marital characteristics, were introduced in Model 2. These were spousal education, spousal age gap, spousal difference in opinion, spousal communication and support, husband staying with wife, women's decision regarding spending of husband's income, choice of partner given a chance, and current problem in adjustment. Results indicated that the odds of having marital happiness were significantly higher among women who had less spousal difference in opinion (OR=2.7); who had a spousal age difference of 6 years or more (OR=2.3). It was evident from the table that the odds of having marital happiness was significantly higher where both the spouses had secondary education or more (OR=1.5) and when both had unequal educational attainment, for example, one had middle school, other was illiterate, one had primary and other had secondary and likewise (OR=2.3). This may be attributed to some unmeasured factors which was not included in the study. The likelihood of marital happiness was significantly higher among women, who had more spousal communication and support (OR=1.5). The reporting of marital happiness was significantly lower among women who reported that they would have married some different person (OR=0.10) and those who would have left the decision to their parents if given a chance to live life over (OR=0.36). The odds of having marital happiness were significantly higher for women who did not have any current problem in adjustment (OR=2.7). The odds of having marital happiness was significantly lower among women who had three or more children (OR=0.43). No significant association of marital happiness was found between love marriage and arranged marriage; husband staying with wife or staying away and wife's decision of spending husband's income.

1.4.7 Summary & conclusions

The age at marriage was low, the mean age at marriage was found to be 16 years in the study area. The mean age at marriage was found to be still lower among non-Hindu women, who belonged to Scheduled Tribe community, and whose parents belonged to low household wealth index. Most of the marriages were arranged by parents or relatives. Meeting prospective husband before marriage was significantly lower among women who were married off before reaching age 18. Since many women were not mentally prepared, they had to face some problem during their initial days in the marital home. Women who got married before reaching age 18 reported to be less adjusted in their marital place. Dowry was universally practiced in the community. Parents had to go through stress to meet the dowry demands and where dowry was not paid or met partially, the young bride had to face either verbal or physical violence. Support of spousal support was remarkably low even if the husband was not involved in perpetuating violence. Marital happiness was found to be lower among women who had three or more number of children. Marital happiness was significantly higher for women who had less spousal difference in opinion, who had more spousal support and communication, who had spousal age difference of 6 years or more, spousal education was secondary and above, and women who belonged to non-nuclear households.

The study suggests to strictly enforce the legal age at marriage, integrating and providing incentives to women marrying 18 years or more. Promotion of school education at all levels is required with special emphasis to check school-dropouts. Promoting an increase in the girls' ability to generate income, by helping families offset the costs of postponing marriage and by changing local norms on bride price and dowry, is required. In addition, programs should focus to keep girls in school and prepare them for economic independence, even within the marriage. Vocational training should be imparted to them so that they learn to earn something that matters. Spacing methods of contraception should be promoted among the young brides so as to avoid early childbearing. The law prohibiting any sort of domestic violence needs to be effectively implemented. Community mobilization strategies through behaviour change communication (BCC) may be implemented to eradicate the prevailing beliefs and norms that contribute to acceptability and perpetuation of gender-based violence.

References

- Amin, S., Chong, E., & Haberland, N. (2007): 'Programs to Address Child Marriage: Framing the Problem' (Brief no. 14). Retrieved from the Population Council Website: <http://www.popcouncil.org/pgy>
- Bruce J. and S Clark 2004, 'The Implications of Early Marriage for HIV/AIDS Policy', New York: Population Council.
- Frontline. 2005. Child Brides: Reluctant to Act. Vol 22, Issue 14, July 02-15, 2005.
- Haberland N et al. 2003. *Married Adolescents an Overview*, presented at WHO/UNFPA/ Population Council Technical Consultation on Married Adolescents, Geneva.
- International Centre for Research on Women (2007): 'Child Marriage and Domestic Violence'. Washington, DC: ICRW.
- Jain, S. and K. Kurz (2007) 'New Insights on Preventing Child Marriage: A Global Analysis of Factors and Programs', Washington, D.C: ICRW
- Jensen R. and R Thornton (2003) 'Early Female Marriage in the Developing World', *Gender and Development*, 11(2): Pp 9-19.
- Malhotra A. 2003. *Variations in the Meaning of Marriage: Historical and Cultural Perspective*. ICRW. Presented at WHO/UNFPA/ Population Council Technical Consultation on Married Adolescents, Geneva.
- Mathur S, Greene M and Malhotra A. 2003. *Too Young to Wed: The Lives, Rights and Health of Young Married Girls*. International Center for Research on Women, citing Amin S et al. 1998. *Transition to adulthood of female garment-factory workers in Bangladesh*. *Studies in Family Planning* 29(2): 185-200.
- McIntyre, P. 2006. *Married Adolescents: No Place of Safety*. Geneva: WHO.
- Mensch, B.S., S. Singh and J.B. Casterline (2005) 'Trends in the Timing of First Marriage among Men and Women in the Developing World', Lloyd, C.B. et al (eds.) *The Changing Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries: Selected Studies*, Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, Pp 118-171.
- Miller, S. and F. Lester (2003) 'Improving the Health and Well-being of Married Young First-time Mothers', paper presented at the Technical Consultation on Married Adolescents, organized by World Health Organization, 9-12 December, Geneva
- Mukuria, Altrena, Casey Aboulaflia, and Albert Themme (2005) 'The Context of Women's Health: Results from the Demographic and Health Surveys, 1994-2001'. DHS Comparative Studies No. 11. Calverton, MD: Macro International Inc.
- National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2005) 'Growing Up Global: The Changing Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries', Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press.
- Ram F., RK Sinha, SK Mohanty et al. (2006) 'Marriage and Motherhood: An Exploratory Study of the Social and Reproductive Health Status of Married Young Women in Gujarat and West Bengal', India, New Delhi: Population Council.
- Singh, S, and R. Samara (1996) 'Early Marriage among Women in Developing Countries.' *International Family Planning Perspectives* 22: Pp 148-157, 175.
- Singh S. 1998. Adolescent childbearing in developing countries: a global review. *Stud Fam Plann*; 29(2): 117-136.
- United Nations Children's Fund (2001) Innocenti Research Centre. 2001. 'Early Marriage, Child Spouses'. *Innocenti Digest*, March 2001, No.7.
- UNICEF (2005) 'Early Marriage, a Harmful Traditional Practice: A Statistical Exploration', 2005. New York. UNICEF.

Table 1.1: Percentage of women showing mean age at marriage by selected characteristics

Characteristics	Mean age at marriage	N	F-Value
Educational attainment			
Illiterate	15.07	131	71.13***
Up to primary	15.69	232	
Up to middle school	16.24	186	
Secondary and above	18.39	105	
Religion			
Hindu	16.40	495	28.20***
Non-Hindu	15.39	159	
Caste			
Others (General & OBC)	16.24	395	4.32**
Scheduled Caste	16.21	197	
Scheduled Tribe	15.40	62	
Type of parents' house			
Kachha	15.73	439	29.77***
Semi-pucca	17.17	101	
Pucca	16.90	114	
Total	654		

*** p<.001, ** p<.05

Table 1.2: Percentage of women who expressed opinion and objected in early marriage by selected characteristics

Characteristics	Objection in marriage for making it earlier than expected	N	Expressed opinion regarding marriage	N
Age at marriage	$\chi^2=9.99^{**}$		$\chi^2=14.97^{***}$	
11-14 years	5.3	131	69.9	136
15-17 years	10.1	307	76.4	348
18 years & above	20.8	53	87.6	170
Educational attainment	$\chi^2=33.98^{***}$		$\chi^2=10.31^{**}$	
Illiterate	4.6	108	74.0	131
Up to primary	4.8	188	74.1	232
Up to middle school	13.2	136	79.6	186
Secondary and above	28.8	59	88.6	105
Religion	$\chi^2=0.37$		$\chi^2=2.37$	
Hindu	10.5	363	79.4	495
Non-Hindu	8.6	128	73.6	159
Caste	$\chi^2=1.38$		$\chi^2=0.24$	
Scheduled Caste	9.6	157	79.2	197
Scheduled Tribe	5.8	52	77.4	62
Others (General & OBC)	11.0	282	77.5	395
Exposure to media	$\chi^2=0.73$		$\chi^2=4.18^{**}$	
Not exposed	7.1	70	69.4	85
Exposed to media	10.5	421	79.3	569
Types of parents house	$\chi^2=2.86$		$\chi^2=6.40^{**}$	
Kachha	8.9	348	75.9	439
Semi-pucca	9.4	64	77.2	101
Pucca	15.2	79	86.8	114
Total	10.0	491	78.0	654

***P<=0.001, **P<=0.05

Table 1.3: Percentage of women by initial feeling on moving into marital home

Feelings after arriving at marital home	Percentage
Lonely	25.7
Frightened	10.6
Shy	5.8
Happy	52.5
Unhappy/Uncomfortable/Did not like	14.1
Others	4.4
Total	654

Table 1.4: Percentage of women by experience of dowry-related violence

Experienced verbal violence in last one year	Percentage
Yes	13.2
No	86.8
Total	484
Persons involved in verbal violence*	
Husband	30.8
In-law members	75.6
Total	64
Experienced physical violence in last one year	
Yes	2.5
No	97.5
Total	484

* Multiple response

Table 1.5: Percentage of women by marital happiness and reasons for unhappy marriage

Level of marital happiness	Percentage
Unhappy	12.2
Average	37.2
Happy	50.6
Total	654
Reason for unhappy marriage	
Lack of joy or will to live together	11.3
Poverty	33.8
Husband-related	57.5
In-laws related	16.3
Total	80

Table 1.6: Percentage of women showing level of marital happiness by selected background characteristics

Characteristics	Marital happiness			N
	Unhappy	Average	Happy	
Demographic characteristics				
Age Groups	$\chi^2=2.94$			
13-17 Years	15.8	41.1	43.2	95
18-21 Years	11.6	37.2	51.3	277
22-24 Years	11.7	35.8	52.5	282
Age at marriage	$\chi^2=36.95***$			
11-14 years	22.8	38.2	39.0	136
15-17 years	11.2	41.4	47.4	348
18 years and above	5.9	27.6	66.5	170
Number of children	$\chi^2=12.67**$			
None	9.9	29.8	60.3	151
Up to 2	11.9	39.1	49.0	453
Three or more	22.0	42.0	36.0	50
Social characteristics				
Religion	$\chi^2=19.48***$			
Hindu	9.5	36.0	54.5	495
Non-Hindu	20.8	40.9	38.4	159
Caste	$\chi^2=2.26$			
Scheduled Caste	12.2	35.0	52.8	197
Scheduled Tribe	9.7	45.2	45.2	62
Others (General & OBC)	12.7	37.0	50.4	395
Household workload	$\chi^2=19.56***$			
Too much	18.7	38.6	42.8	91
Moderate	9.8	39.8	50.4	397
Not much	11.0	23.1	65.9	166
Economic characteristics				
Working status	$\chi^2=3.21$			
Not Working	11.3	35.8	52.9	444
Working	14.3	40.0	45.7	210
Household characteristics				
Type of family	$\chi^2=7.10**$			
Nuclear	13.8	42.3	43.9	246
Non-nuclear	11.3	34.1	54.7	408
Wealth Index	$\chi^2=51.58***$			
Low	18.3	41.7	39.9	218
Medium	13.2	44.3	42.5	218
High	5.1	25.3	69.6	218
Total	12.2	37.2	50.6	654

*** P<=0.001, ** P<0.05, * P<0.1

Table 1.7: Percentage of women showing level of marital happiness by selected marital characteristics

Characteristics	Unhappy	Average	Happy	N
Spousal education	$\chi^2=39.56^{***}$			
Both primary or less	16.9	46.4	36.7	248
Both secondary or above	4.5	13.4	82.1	67
All other	10.3	35.1	54.6	339
Spousal age difference	$\chi^2=8.51^*$			
0-2 years	15.2	54.5	30.3	33
3-5 years	14.9	34.8	50.2	221
6 years and above	10.5	37.0	52.5	400
Type of marriage	$\chi^2=1.55$			
Love	12.1	33.3	54.5	165
Arranged	12.3	38.4	49.3	489
Current problem in adjustment	$\chi^2=115.83^{***}$			
Yes	41.3	39.4	19.3	109
No	6.4	36.7	56.9	545
Given a chance to select life partner	$\chi^2=208.96^{***}$			
Marry same person	4.4	33.8	61.9	480
Marry different person	48.3	41.4	10.3	116
Parent's wish	5.2	56.9	37.9	58
Husband's place of stay	$\chi^2=0.66$			
Stay with wife	11.9	36.5	51.6	455
Stay in other town/city	13.1	38.7	48.2	199
Decide on spending husband's income	$\chi^2=13.58^{***}$			
No	15.7	38.0	46.3	395
Yes	6.9	35.9	57.1	259
Spousal difference in opinion	$\chi^2=108.55^{***}$			
Less	2.2	28.1	69.7	317
More	21.7	45.7	32.6	337
Total	12.2	37.2	50.6	654

***P<=0.001, **P<0.05, *P<0.1

Table 1.8: Logistic regression results indicating likelihood of marital happiness among young women

Characteristics	Model 1	Model 2
Age groups	Odds Ratio	Odds ratio
13-17 Years [®]	1.00	1.00
18-21 Years	1.41	1.23
22-24 Years	1.40	1.21
Age at marriage		
Less than 18 years	1.00	1.00
18 years or more	1.51*	1.21
Number of children		
None	1.00	1.00
Up to 2	0.74	0.68
Three or more	0.58	0.43*
Religion		
Hindu [®]	1.00	1.00
Non-Hindu	0.79	1.05
Caste		
Others (General & OBC) [®]	1.00	1.00
Scheduled Caste	1.23	1.16
Scheduled Tribe	1.15	1.31
Household workload		
Too much [®]	1.00	1.00
Moderate	1.97**	1.62
Not much	1.21	0.93
Wealth Index		
Low [®]	1.00	1.00
Medium	1.04	0.67
High	2.61***	1.35
Type of family		
Nuclear [®]	1.00	1.00
Non-nuclear	1.28	1.54*
Type of marriage		
Love [®]	1.00	1.00
Arranged	1.10	1.09
Current problem in adjustment		
Yes [®]		1.00
No		2.70**
Spousal education		
Both illiterate [®]		1.00
Both 8 th and above		1.55*
All others		2.30**
Spousal age difference		
0-2 years [®]		1.00
3-5 years		1.96
6 years and above		2.39*
Spousal communication and support		
Less		1.00
More		1.50*
Given a chance to select life partner		
Marry same person [®]		1.00
Marry different person		0.10***
Parent's wish		0.36**
Husband's place of stay		
Stay with wife [®]		1.00
Stay in other town/city		1.14
Decide on spending husband's income		
No [®]		1.00
Yes		1.26
Difference in opinion with husband regarding some basic marital issues		
More [®]		1.00
Less		2.76***
Constant	0.43**	0.07***

Dependent variable is level of marital happiness that takes a value of 1 if yes and 0 for otherwise.

***P<0.001; ** P<0.05; *P<0.01. [®] Reference category