

# Prevalence of Child Marriages and its Socio-Economic Impacts

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## Abstract

Child marriage is a broad societal phenomenon that has existed in every part of Pakistan since its inception of the country. This study demonstrates a male-dominated society of Makran, where the social, economic, and psychological perspectives of child marriage, are day-to-day issues faced by most of the areas. The impacts on the health of brides during pregnancy and their education will be focused on in the aforesaid research. Albeit, this article is based on qualitative and quantitative approaches by conducting in-depth interviews at the union council level. The findings of this study will be used for the legislature as the existing laws are not adequate to with-strain child marriage. The illiteracy and lack of awareness are reasons that most cases of child marriages go unreported, thenceforwards, it has caused mental and physical impacts on children; However, this present study will expose the potential outcomes and will be used to overcome the challenges. This research, too, will examine the consequences of child marriages and their effect on the economy, thenceforth, the research will be beneficial for the needful. This paper will contribute to a lasting impact on child marriage and oblige the concerned authorities to get rid of such illicit cases and bring children into a fascinating and delightful society.

**Keywords:** *Child Marriage; Gwadar; Turbat; Case Study*

## Introduction

CRC defines a child as “a child means every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, the majority is attained earlier”. Further, CRC considers 18 years as the minimum age for marriage for both men and women. Child, early, and forced marriages or wedlock are a global problem across many different countries, cultures, religions, and ethnicities (Nasrullah M, Rubeena ,2014). Reaching the age of 18 is called an early marriage. (Nasrullah M, Rubeena ,2014). Child marriage is a clear violation of international laws that include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, and the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (Nasrullah M, Rubeena ,2014).

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To analyze the consequences of health, nutrition, and violence of aggrieved brides.
2. To examine the impacts of labor force participation and the growth of the economy.
3. To find out the educational attainment and learning of the affected couple.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Religious Perspective**

In Islamic law, child Marriage is a legal contract that legalizes the husband and wife a kind enjoyment. It displays that marriage is mandatory when they reach the age of adulthood. However, marriage is prohibited when the marriage parties are incompetent. This caused a wrong interpretation to many people which displayed the result of Child Marriage. Religion is predicted one of the main reasons for child marriage in Pakistan. It is interpreted in religion that marriage the daughter is as soon as puberty age is attended and the longer the parents wait shall remain accountable for all sins of their daughters. They believe that marrying their daughters before 18 stops them from unwanted attention (Ullah Nazir et. al., 2021). The age according to Islam is when the puberty age is acquired. It is mostly considered at the age of 10 years a girl adult which is even under doubt and causes numerous problems. Islamic laws permit marriage below even 15 years which is more than dangerous (Ullah Nazir et. al., 2021).

#### **Legal Perspective on Child Marriage**

The prevalence of child marriage is a global barrier that has caused unpredicted results for women. Meanwhile, the phenomenon has been experienced worldwide. In spite of controlling child marriage, about one-third of girls marry below 18 every year which is legally considered a crime, unlike other crimes. It has been estimated that 14.2 million adolescents, who are less than 18 years old, are married. This causes a number of socioeconomic issues in many developed and undeveloped countries (Yaya sanni et. al., 2019). Howbeit, developed with underdeveloped countries have laws by setting the age of marriage to 18 and the prevalence of child marriage is found 40% low than in the countries having particular laws against child marriage. Marriage below 18 correlates with women's reproductive behavior, mental growth, and health and arise different social difficulties with economic barriers (Belinda Maswikwa et. al, 2015). Further, the reason of drop out of school is due to child marriage which is considered a reason for backwardness. It provides many unnecessary outcomes for females especially because they are ignored of their social life rights along with many other difficulties (Cong Minh Nguyen & Wodon Quentin, 2015).

Additionally, the reason for child marriage is quoted that it's due to the financial need of the girl's family, cultural desires to preserve sexual purity for marriage, religious beliefs, and external conflicts along with lack of education access and rural residence (Raj Anita, 2015). Meanwhile, the prevalence of child marriage among women is 8.9% in some particular states like America, India, and Pakistan and it is owing to the low income along with education. It is further enumerated that it has numerous impacts on women (Strat B Le, et, al., 2011).

However, child marriage appraised that minors are married below eighteen (18) more than five times as compared to boys. Whereas in some states gender discrimination is higher; 77 percent of women aged 20-49 were married before 18 in Niger. Subsequently, the rate of child marriage is not high in countries where the prevalence of it is high, rather countries are the victims of it too. In Mauritania and Nigeria, the women are married under the age of 18. In addition, International human rights recognized that child marriage damaging, discriminatory global practice. International governmental, advocacy stakeholders and academics have called for a legislative framework to eradicate the dilemma (Arthur Megan, et, al., 2018). In addition, in the age of a minority, marriage is a human rights violation that raids a girl of her childhood, lays her health, and growth, and disturbs her education opportunities for empowerment. While child marriage isn't specifically declared in diverse Conventions like the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The Convention doesn't consist of a proviso of eradicating "traditional practice prejudicial to the health of children". On the other hand, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) for the Asia-Pacific, Parliament entitled to end the rotation of violence against girls in Asia-Pacific examined the importance of legislation in fighting the exercise of child marriage, focused on analyzing the laws to be adopted and implemented in the region. It is examined that parliamentarians play a crucial role in implementing the legislation (Scolaro Elisa, et, al., 2015). The world economy along with the domestic has been a victim indirectly. Laws of child marriage can better be implemented by making violence against women cognizable. Moreover, in response to the physical health and development of child brides, their kin, and their broader communities are a victim at large. Legislation's role can be stronger eliminating the issue if the issue would not be measured in many parts of the world's personal affairs. Moreover, the report of UNICEF illustrated that 21 percent of Pakistani girls are married by the age of 18, and 3 percent before 15. Child marriage tends to occur in the country's most marginalized and vulnerable communities and has devastating consequences (Ijaz S, et, al., 2014).

There are frequently societal and economic factors at play when parents decide to marry their daughters, However, the immediate economic factors affect parental preference (Parsons Jennifer, et, al., 2015). What steps may be taken to end child marriage? Reform of the legal and policy framework is a crucial but insufficient component of the solution, according to a

comprehensive analysis of child marriage interventions. The most effective interventions are those that: equip girls with knowledge, skills, and support systems; improve the quality and accessibility of formal education for girls; and provide financial assistance and incentives for girls and their families to keep girls in school or marry later. Another crucial and effective solution is the education and mobilization of parents and community people against the practice. Reframing the notion of girls transitioning to maturity without marriage does, in fact, necessitate a discussion with community and religious leaders who have a great deal of influence (Parsons Jennifer, et, al., 2015).

This article is going to explore the further factors of Child Marriage and its Socioeconomic impact which affects the socialization of Children in early-age marriage families within Makran Division because according to the literature review there was no empirical and mix methods qualitative and quantitative research on this topic at all therefore this article is going to fill the research gap.

## Methodology

This research is purely Empirical and based on qualitative and quantitative mixed methods. In-depth interviews of affected brides and grooms, experts, and legal practitioners were taken as primary sources, questionnaires were distributed among university students of Turbat final semesters of every department. and review articles, journal articles, textbooks, and dictionaries were used as secondary sources. As collected data were analyzed through S.P.S.S software as well as for interviews the researchers used thematic analysis for the result.

## Data Analysis

### Descriptive Statistics

Following is the data distribution of the respondents of the research.

**Table 1 Respondent Demography**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	32	64%
Female	18	36%
Total	50	100%
<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Less than 20 Years	13	26%
20 to 25 Years	31	62%
26 to 30 Years	5	10%
31 to 35 Years	1	2%
Total	50	100%
<b>Semester</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>

1st	13	26%
3rd	9	18%
5th	5	10%
7th	23	46%
Total	50	100%

Advocating for policies that rise the legal age of marriage from 16 to 18 years old for both girls and boys, without exceptions. Modifying initiatives based on research in regions where child marriage is prevalent. On the other hand, implementing support programs that empower girls at risk or who are currently in child marriages.

According to R3;

*“Females aren’t considered an important part of society. He believes that the patriarchal families are the reason for this issue and for honor, they don’t allow to approach the court for a solution. And he mentioned the “ego” is a reason too.”*

And the R2 said;

*“A case that he had preceded of a family forcing a girl at the age of 16 to get married and he said that he has reason to believe that, residing in a male-dominated society is tough to stop such crises but to stop such unethical acts. He suggested these points to overcome such issues: 1, Government shall provide awareness about laws.2, there shall be some working agencies for such purposes to provide awareness. And lastly, he believes for long-term solutions education is the tool whereas, for short-term solutions, the court has to be approached.”*

The researchers had examined that the socially constructed phenomena of ‘patriarchy’ have fully changed the male mindset, whether a male can fulfill the wife’s desire or not but he can go for the things he wants. Because he has been given a power of superiority in this society and the power is being misused.

#### **Economic conditions and dependency:**

The economy in every society has a huge value for males and females both, but how the economy is being utilized and for what purpose it is used matters the most. The researchers have observed that in the Makran family male mostly shows dominance over the young ones by having a large amount of money as they are the breadwinners and female are

dependent on them. It might be an exceptional case that female is not dependent on male on economic status.

As R1 said:

*Brides are biased and they have no reason to disagree and even disagreement might be the reason for the death her, she believed that poverty is one of the major reasons for early marriages. However, she mentioned some other reasons as well."*

The researchers had observed that in a male-dominant society both unmarried and married female are economically dependent on male, as males are considered bread earner of the family. The researchers found out the economic dependency of females in lower-middle class families has harsher consequence in early marriages.

### **Early marriages and health issues**

In Makran division early arrange marriages are very common. As it was mentioned before that, a marriage arranged by family members, usually parents, based on factors other than the couple's personal preferences, such as family connections or the desire for social status or economic gain. The researchers had observed that arrange marriage for female mostly lead to mental problems because families feel awkward to go for love marriages.

According to R4:

*She mentioned that 40% to 30% of minor cases of child pregnancy were reported in the Makran regions. Most of these cases involve the death of the infant with the mother and the percentage of deaths is 50. We have a lower survival rate. Since the nutritional ratio of the mother is very low for the mother in such instances are found to be very weak. Teenage pregnancy causes most diseases in the mother, as there are chances that her heart may be affected by the neural tube and brain of the mother.*

Further she elaborated;

*In Such scenario, the depression cases of mother are in high ratio because they face different problem which at this age cannot be dealt with them, similarly this too again causes*

*suicidal acts and so on. Early age causes various diseases in mothers, such as sexual diseases, cervical cancer, bleeding disorders, delayed menstruation, etc. Socially, they will be unable to care for their families.*

This research analyzed that in Makran some families force their children to do marriage by their well by not looking at the future effects on children psyche. Though family is a basic institution of society by which the supervision of the children takes place but still in Turbat and Gwadar families are not going into a proper track of surveillance, neither for future nor for marriages.

After a long study on Child Marriages, the researchers analyzed that not every female is happy with early marriage, some just said yes to see their parents happy. Furthermore, when they couldn't find happiness for themselves then went for divorce or separation.

## **Discussion**

Child marriage is common phenomenon practiced in our society. The researchers had surveyed in the southern part of Balochistan in Makran Division Tehsil Turbat and District Gwadar and has come to know that the religious interpretation on Child Marriages are being misinterpreted for self-satisfaction or future greed in the region. Child marriages prevails in the Division. Furthermore, as it is well known that according to the religious interpretation, a female has permission to get marry when she reached 7 years but on the other hand terms and conditions are also given that under which circumstances a girl can marry. Moreover, in the same line of series the reviewed literature, in the recent past also discussed this phenomenon in her case study "Islamism and masculinity" demonstrated that 'men use Islamism and its variants as means of self-actualization and directly in service of matters associated with personhood, masculinity, and patriarchal honor.

Furthermore, the finding of the research revealed that the laws were made before independence in 1929 then after amended. Where for marriage before it was 16 years, after amending, they considered the age 18 years. On the same point, the Sindh laws which are separated from other laws. More specifically, the negative impacts are more than positive impacts as for view of judge is concerned. Sharia laws have no determination over the age but normally they consider it 14. Similarly, the recent judgments had proved it again that there is no specific time for marriage, when puberty age is arrived one can no longer be stopped to marry. Judge has considered state responsible that state isn't playing the role because there are enough laws were made to prevention of Child Marriages but there is lack of implementation of enforced laws regarding early marriages.

## Conclusion

This research concludes that Child Marriage can affect serious emotional harm to matrimony and children. Child Marriage might be suitable in some religious countries; however, it should be checked for further research on “Child Marriage laws and their implementation” because it leads to many problems in family life. Some people believe that problems will not happen during Child Marriage but Nonetheless, but it must also be recognized that problems often happen in early marriage families because the majority of the husbands can't afford the expenses of the family if seems to be jobless or a dependent to his parents. Currently, most adolescent girls do not cover the weight of 10 to 20 kg during pregnancy, which is essential for the birth of a healthy baby. Early age causes various diseases in mothers, such as sexual diseases, cervical cancer, bleeding disorders, delayed menstruation, etc.

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