

## **Effects of Education and Poverty on the Prevalence of Girl Child Marriage in India and Consequences of Early Marriage**

**By**

**Dr. Ramesh Chandra Pathak**

Dean, Department of Mass Communication, Dev Bhoomi Uttarakhand University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India [dean.sojla@dbuudoon.ac.in](mailto:dean.sojla@dbuudoon.ac.in)

**Rajkumari Ghosh**

Assistant Professor, School of Humanities, Arka Jain University, Jamshedpur, Jharkhand, India [rajkumari.ghosh@arkajainuniversity.ac.in](mailto:rajkumari.ghosh@arkajainuniversity.ac.in)

**Mr. Tushar,**

Assistant Professor, Centre for Language and Communication, SGT University, Gurugram, Haryana, India [tushar\\_fclc@sgtuniversity.org](mailto:tushar_fclc@sgtuniversity.org)

**Mr. Aishwary Awasthi**

Research Scholar, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Sanskriti University, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, India [aishwary@sanskriti.edu.in](mailto:aishwary@sanskriti.edu.in)

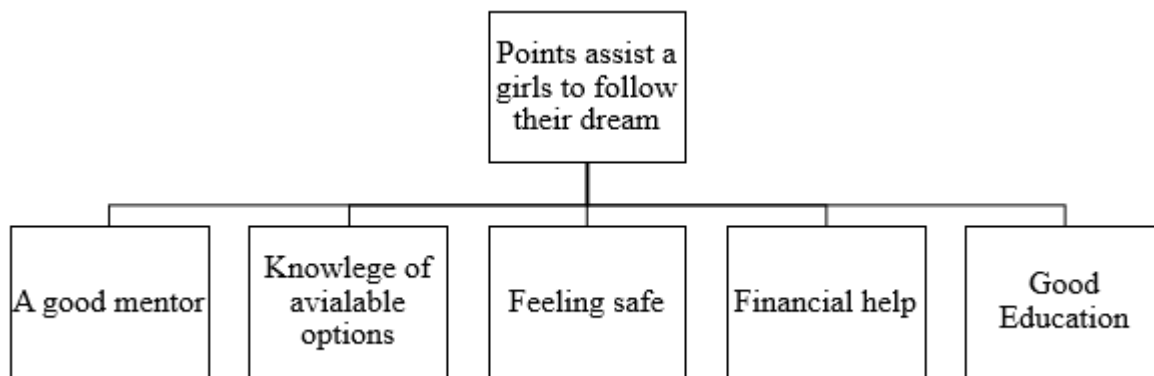
### **Abstract**

Marriage is a revered tradition across the world, but the husband and wife must be emotionally and physically committed with one another and swear to remain together forever. As a result, the minimum age for marriage must include some age restrictions. Family planning in the child marriage is like a burden on society, and many organizations and government bodies are working very hard to stop it and persuade parents to wait until their daughters and sons are 18 and 21 years old, respectively, instead of getting married. The purpose of the current study is to determine the impact of early marriage on girls and what. The purpose of the current study is to determine the effects of early marriage on girls as well as the causes of child marriage and what can be done to stop it. The paper's result is that education may be used to increase people's awareness of child marriage and, secondly, to help them become economically independent by allowing them to make their own decisions.

**Keywords:** Child Marriage, Dowry, Education, Girl, Government.

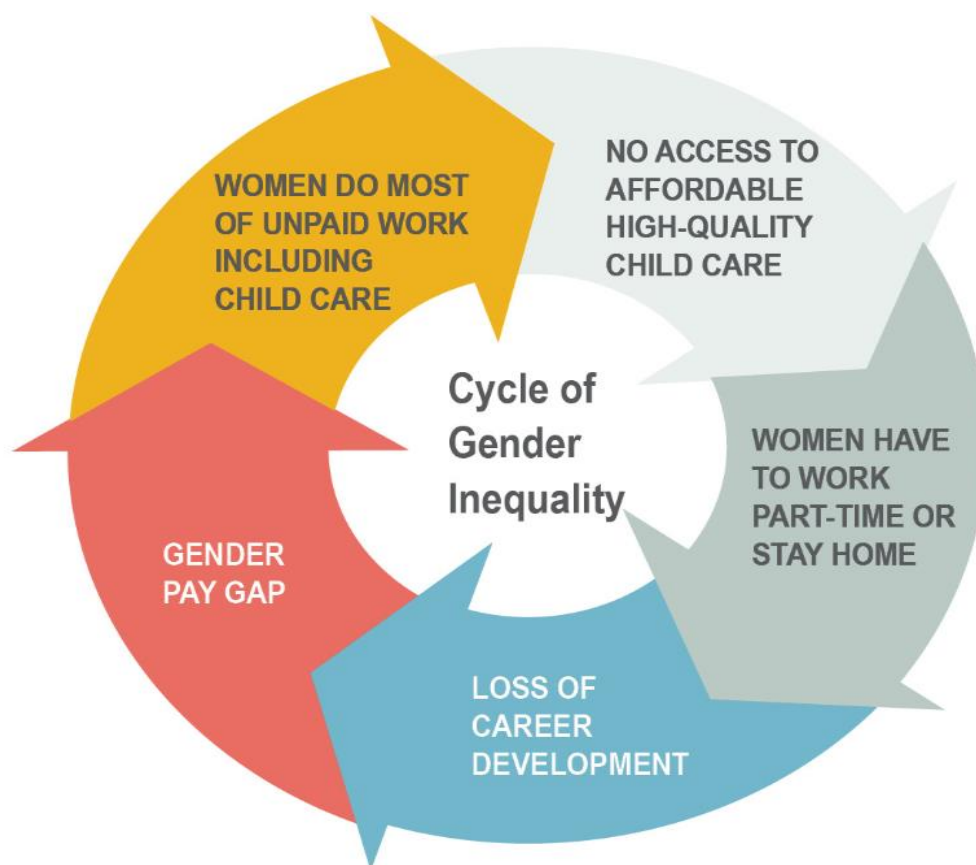
### **Introduction**

Despite the fact that the newborn of a baby is generally regarded as a joyous event, if the newborn is a female, it may not be viewed as such in some cultures due to the girl's impending marriage. Girls always move into someone else's house after getting married, thus parents must make some form of financial arrangement to organize the girl's marriage. Given the amount of money required, marriage is viewed as a costly occasion in India. In certain tribes, finding the ideal partner for a girl's marriage relies heavily on the dowry, and occasionally the profits come from grooms side (Figure 1). Even though dowry has been deemed a crime punishable by law, it is nevertheless practiced as a widespread habit throughout most of India and the rest of the globe.



**Figure 1:** Factors that Affect the Life of a Girl to Feel Empowered and Self-Motivated

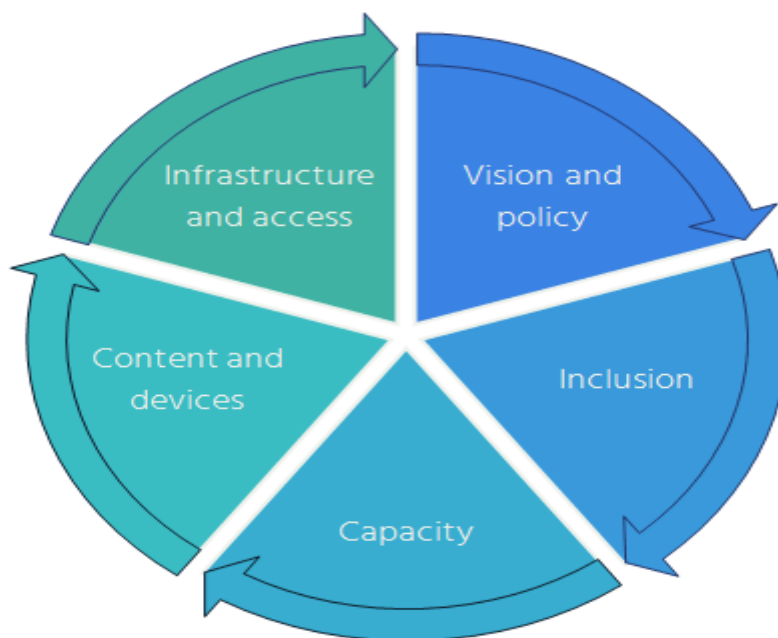
Girls have long been seen as the weaker gender, and their conditions are quite poor. If a person is citizen of developing country and doesn't have sufficient financial standing, the situation since a girl within this household gets much worse. This is due to a lack of essential facilities and services, such as a lack of reliable income sources, which may make it difficult for the family to find work on a consistent basis and a lower-earning person relative to the size of the community. It is a pretty well-known reality that practically every country in the world today is experiencing inflationary changes, and that even the cost of essential goods are rising. The situation of low-income households would worsen as a result.



**Figure 2:** Adverse Effect of Practice of Gender Equality on Women's Life at Work Place (Berliana et al., 2021)

Although everyone has to go through the process of being married, even young boys and girls, there used to be no age restriction on females and boys getting married. At a certain time, girls as young as ten years old were getting married, and the most pitiful part was that, while the groom's age occasionally coincided with the girl's, it frequently differed significantly (Figure 2). A girl's life was made terrible by having to endure labor pains when still a teenager, and much of the time the mother's immaturity resulted in the death of the mother, the newborn, or both. In other instances, a poor girl from non-wealthy family would have to coerce an elderly man into giving her the dowry she wanted, or the girl's parents were unable to secure the necessary funds.

The issue upon the dowry is as significant as the preparations for a girl's wedding. The original intent behind the dowry was honorable, but as time went on, this tradition changed, and people began to demand hefty amounts of money in addition to numerous goods and other items. It has since become customary in all societies to mandate a quality and increase even without taking into account the status and financial situation of the girl's family. Money involvement in weddings is not a commendable conduct since this custom undermines civilized society's standards and also has an effect on the couple's married life because some people voluntarily really want dowry also after marrying. The principles of a civilized society should be preserved by ending this practice.



**Figure 3:** Key Factors That Should Be Implemented In Social Life to Ensure Growth and Development of a Women (Schaffnit, Urassa, & Lawson, 2019)

Every religion has regarded ladies as a type of a goddess since they have the ability to have children, according to ancient religious writings. However, there are still many harmful social customs that may have an impact on women's lives and dignity. In order to empower women and specifically girls' children to participate in household and other judgment procedures, there should be a concerted effort to improve the conditions of women and specifically girls (Figure 3). Along with the substantial attempts undertaken by several Non-governmental organizations and the UN, numerous government institutions have been striving to improve the girl's situation.

Marriages are said to be created in paradise, however this is untrue as many females have experienced severe pain after marriage due to the dowry and comprehension issues. The majority of violence against women has been documented; undoubtedly, this is the main issue since, in the majority of cases, after wedding, a woman, usually in the form of a mother or sister-in-laws', fails to assist the newlywed bride (Manandhar & Joshi, 2020). A significant factor in both mother and child deaths is the fact that many nursing women are not given a healthy diet plan. These situations are extremely terrible in developing nations, despite several admirable attempts.

Due to a lack of resources and a shifting attitude where individuals want a successful marriage for their son, female marriages are still difficult to arrange in many developing nations. Funny thing is, parents' perspectives while seeking for a brides for their sons are very different from those when looking for a husband for their girl (Figure 4). Equality of thinking is required to close this gap, regardless whether a family is seeking for a bride or a husband. Another of the justifications to address the issues and inequalities between girls and boys is because there shouldn't be any distinctions existing between them.




**Figure 4:** Effect of Education on a Women in Society, Family, and Nation (Amzat, 2020)

The primary issues with female marriage are finding a suitable partner and setting up the finances. One thing that is important to note is that while this is not always true, most cases are motivated by the idea that if the groom had a good job or came from a privileged background, the expectations for the dowry would be high. The girl's family has been burdened by the wedding (Sezgin & Punamäki, 2020). If the family falls into the middle-class income bracket, the issue has taken on a much more regressive form.

The legal minimum age for marriage in India is 18 years, and it is a crime if it is discovered that a female under the legal minimum is planning to wed. Early marriage also constitutes a human rights violation since it affects a girl's life in every way—social, physical,

and educational—and is considered to be forced marriage. According to the sustainable development goals, forced marriage must be abolished worldwide by 2030 at the latest. However, there are several nations where childhood development marriage is still common. The reality is that, given their social - financial situations, these nations are more at risk. Table 1 displays the literacy rate for each Indian state.

**Table 1:** Data of Literacy of Women in the Indian States and Union Territory of India (Tessema, 2020)

State or UT	Census 2011		
	Average	Male	Female
A&N islands <sup>[UT]</sup>	85.17	89.01	82.73
Andhra Pradesh <sup>[a]</sup>	68.56	74.46	58.63
Arunachal Pradesh	66.85	73.59	58.47
Assam	72.07	77.79	66.17
Bihar	63.76	73.28	52.22
Chandigarh <sup>[UT]</sup>	86.38	90.42	81.27
Chhattisgarh	70.02	81.34	60.46
Dadra and Nagar Haveli <sup>[UT]</sup>	76.54	85.34	65.73
Daman & Diu <sup>[UT]</sup>	87.06	91.36	78.46
Delhi <sup>[UT]</sup>	85.23	90.02	79.83
Goa	86.30	91.71	80.72
Gujarat	78.21	86.12	70.62
Haryana	75.52	84.27	65.65
Himachal Pradesh	82.64	90.72	75.50
 <b>India</b>	73.03	81.13	64.34

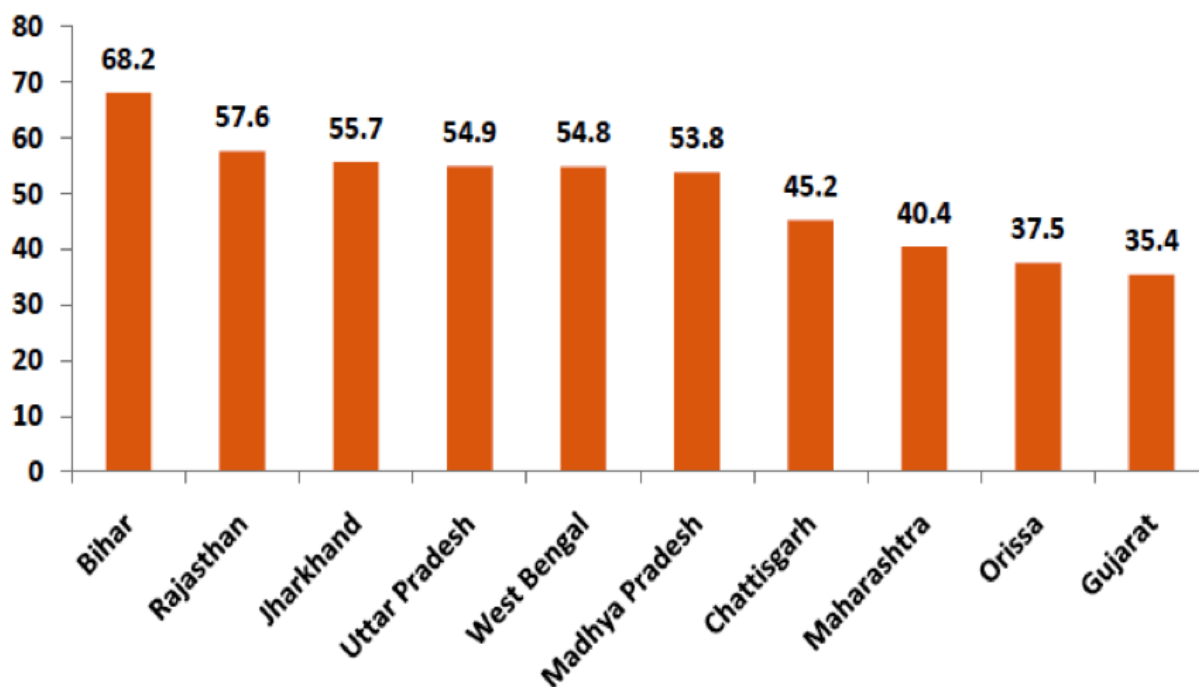
State or UT	Census 2011		
	Average	Male	Female
Jammu and Kashmir	67.64	77.16	56.01
Jharkhand	65.30	77.36	55.11
Karnataka	74.40	81.75	67.12
Kerala	92.81	95.01	91.78
Lakshadweep <sup>[UT]</sup>	91.27	95.01	87.15
Madhya Pradesh	70.59	79.42	59.32
Maharashtra	81.86	88.71	74.37
Manipur	78.74	85.38	72.16
Meghalaya	74.37	76.16	72.65
Mizoram	90.47	92.61	78.30
Nagaland	80.01	82.18	75.57
Odisha	72.23	81.30	63.25
Puducherry <sup>[UT]</sup>	85.34	91.10	80.11
Punjab	75.58	79.38	72.23
Rajasthan	67.06	77.41	50.42
Sikkim	81.18	86.26	75.32
Tamil Nadu	79.23	85.71	72.75
Telangana	-	-	-
Tripura	86.75	91.17	82.14
Uttar Pradesh	68.62	78.13	58.15
Uttarakhand	79.52	88.23	70.60
West Bengal	76.07	81.58	70.15

Although early girl marriage is a global problem, a review of works on this topic reveals societal vulnerabilities that heighten the risk for young child marriage at both the national and local levels. Studies consistently show that child marriages are more likely to occur in rural and underdeveloped areas with little access to healthcare; provincial strife and instability further enhance vulnerability (Nirmal & Singh, 2018). The main factor increasing the risk of a girl kid being married, though, is sex inequality, which is frequently thought of as resulting in women's less equal access to education and job opportunities. Across all national origins, the poorest and least educated females are most likely to be married young, and for girls who are in school, an early marriage appears to prevent them from finishing their education.

It is also true that gender disparity contributes to early child marriage in part because it involves social antagonism based on gender, as well as coercion and violence. The finalization of weddings is usually done by a parent, oftentimes even without the girl's agreement. It might be seen that weddings have indeed been fixed by the woman's family or other relatives acting as mediators or someone else. Only a few instances when a girl's consent was sought have been seen. In the case of an early or forced marriage, the girl's age makes her immature, and she must deal with a lot of hardship at their in-law residence. The age gap between the bride and groom may be the source of these difficulties since the girl wasn't really ready to handle marriage because it comes with a lot of obligations (Chauhan et al., 2020).



**Percentage of women married before the age of 18**



**Figure 5:** Percentage of Girls Married Before the Age Of 18

It is important to handle child weddings as quickly as possible since they are the cause of societal unrest. Another reality is that a girl's future depends on her parents' financial situation, including whether she will pursue an education or spend the rest of her days working in the house (Figure 5). Additionally, the quality of healthcare in underdeveloped nations often subpar, or the costs of using the facilities are so high that the average family cannot afford to use them (Mohanty et al., 2019). Despite the fact that government has taken several attempts to address these issues, a huge population makes matters more difficult.

Education is crucial for maintaining a respectable standard of life as well as for achieving social mobility and family stability. It's conceivable that you were passed over because you're a girl or woman, but a knowledgeable individual can possibly make their point, participate in family decision-making, and choose their job and way of life. Education is crucial to changing society's and other people's perceptions of a girl and may aid or support her in achieving her life objectives. There are various situations when a female who is uneducated, unable to read, or comprehend logical phrases, may be duped.

Because a girl must marry as a child against her will and while she has not reached full physical and mental maturity, early marriage is a misfortune. Because of certain long-standing, deeply ingrained practices, child marriage has become a problem. However, child marriage is nothing more than a breach of the law and human rights, and it is also equivalent to a cursed about an immature girl (Mishra, Mishra, & Mishra, 2010). Early marriages leave a psychological, emotional, and physical scar on a girl's life since the onset of sexual activity soon after the wedding leads to severe in an early motherhood at a young age, which increases the risk of infant mortality.

## Discussion

Only through education can individuals be fully informed of the negative effects of prenatal marriage and immature pregnancy. For a girl, a forced marriage is nothing short of a nightmare. Marriage is a partnership that comes with a lot of duty in addition to happiness. To be able to handle a baby while simultaneously managing a profession, schooling, and other responsibilities after marriage, one must be mature enough. Given that many females have certainly perished during their labor pains, giving birth is difficult for a girl since it is like giving birth a second time.

Even if child marriage was common in former times among affluent people as well, one's financial situation is now a second reason to avoid it. The government decided that the marriage age for girls should be 18 years old and the marriage age for boys must be 21 years old. This decision was made in response to the efforts of many honorable community and social welfare organizations. The mindset of the underprivileged is that forced marriage of daughters will free them from obligation even without giving it a second thought that childish maturity level is not correct for marriage. The legislation has been put into effect by a proposed legislation and is being enforced or governed throughout India according to what is necessary to do so.

## Conclusion

The purpose of the current study is to investigate the prevalence of teenage pregnancies and any related issues that may have an impact on a girl's life. Because a girl is the true foundation of life on earth and is responsible for providing birth, a girl's existence is not particularly simple. Male domination, combined with some antiquated customs and myths, compelled parents to wed their girls at a young age. The practice of a girl could be caused by her poverty and bad financial situation. The act established a minimum age for a girl to marry, however if a involvement in a girl's marriage occurs before this age, all parties involved will be brought in front of a court. Therefore, by ensuring that everyone in the country, both in urban and rural areas, has access to a quality education, it is possible to eradicate underage marriage of girls as well as other incorrect practices in society.

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