



Differentials and Determinants of Early Marriage and Child Bearing: A study of the Northern Region of Bangladesh

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Abstract

Early marriage is the serious violation of the right of humans. Bangladesh has one of the highest rates of early marriage (68.7%) and it is one of the largest problems of Bangladesh. This paper consider the relationship between early marriage and grails education, their household income, educational status of her parents, educational status of her husband, place of residence, monthly income and expenditure and access to mass media. The impact of the early marriage on fertility is also considered in this paper. This study shows that about 90% of the marriage occurs before reaching the age 20 years and large percentage of them will become pregnant before the physically fitted. Logistic regression technique was applied to calculate the degree of association between early marriage and among others variable.

Introduction

Marriage is not just a word. Marriage is one of the most important vital events of human life which connects two souls to begin a new generation. After marriage spouses start conjugal life with a bed of roses, but this bed of roses may turn into bed of thorns, especially for the bride, if marriage takes place before the physical and mental maturity

which is commonly known as early marriage. Early marriage is defined as marriage before the age of 18 – applies to both boys and girls, but the practice is far more common among young girls (WHO). Child marriage is a global issue but rates vary dramatically, both within and between countries. In both proportions and numbers, most child marriages take place in rural sub-Saharan Africa (41%) and South Asia (46%) (World

vision report 2013). In specific parts of West Africa, East Africa and south Asia marriage before puberty is not unusual. In North Africa, the Middle East and others parts of the Asia marriage shortly after puberty is common among those living traditional life styles. Marriage of female adolescents between sixteen and eighteen years of age is also common in parts of the Latin America and Eastern Europe. But early marriage is the major concern issue for the third world country like Bangladesh. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) predicts that if current levels of child marriages hold, 14.2 million girls annually or 39 000 daily will marry too young. Furthermore, of the 140 million girls who will marry before they are 18, 50 million will be under the age of 15 (WHO). Same report also mention the 10 countries with the highest rates of child marriage are: Niger, 75%; Chad and Central African Republic, 68%; Bangladesh, 66%; Guinea, 63%; Mozambique, 56%; Mali, 55%; Burkina Faso and South Sudan, 52%; and Malawi, 50%. Bangladesh is one of the most seriously affected countries by child marriage. According to the UNICEF report of the world children (2011), one third of women aged 20-24 in Bangladesh are married by the age of 15 and about one third of the women age 18. A recent report of the International Centre for Diarrheal Disease Research in Bangladesh

(ACPR, ICDDR' & Plan Bangladesh 2012) shows the improving trend, with 64% of women in age group 20-24 are married before reaching the age of 18 years of age. Early marriage rate in rural area is more than urban area. Higher proportion of women (71%) in rural area are married before reaching the age of 18 years of age, compared to 54% women in urban areas. This report also shows the strong correlation among child marriage, education and economic status. Under the Child Marriage Restraint Act (1929), the legal marriage age in Bangladesh is 18 years for female and for 21 years for male. But most of the cases, this act cannot be followed in different rural and urban part of the countries. Through females are the most sufferer of child marriage (68%) (WHO) male child marriage also takes place (5%). Several times different scholars have tried to find out the main cause of early marriage in national and international perspective. S. M. Mostafa Kamal was presented a paper on international population conference (2009) on which he was attempting to find out the relationship between early marriage and early motherhood. Plan Bangladesh also presented a report on which they are focus the different causes of early marriage in Bangladesh. In 2001 UNICEF presented a report under the heading "Early marriage and child spouses" on which they are presented the different causes of child

marriage. In 2003 a report was published by the Forum of marriage and the right of women and girls under the heading “Early marriage and poverty” on which they are try to find out the several form of early marriage due to poverty. All of these different literature and case studies of the national and international newspapers reports and daily newspapers reports (Both Bengali and English) were mainly investigated the causes and effect of birth on early marriage on the nationwide. The main objectives of the study were to identify trends, causes and consequences of early marriage. We are also try to access the prevalence of early marriage in the selected areas and its relationship with socio economic factors, analyze the main socio cultural, demographic and religious forces which influence early marriage, and try to identify the basic attitude differences between urban and rural people towards early marriage in this study.

Data Sources

In this study data is taken from total of 600 married female population, aged less than 50 years. Interviewed were conducted during 18 August 2012 to 30 December 2012. Urban

data were collected during the different part of the Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) and rural data were collected from Muhonpur Union. Respondents were interviewed using a standard questionnaire purposive sampling technique.

Materials and Method

Uni-variate and logistic regression analysis have been used to analysis the collected data. Initially, uni-variate analysis was used to explore the current situation of the respondents and finally logistic regression analysis was completed out to identify the risk factor of adolescent marriage. The dependent variable used in logistic regression analysis as a dichotomous binary variable, was of the following form:

$$Y = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if the respondents marriage occur less than 20 years} \\ 0, & \text{marriage occur 20 years and older} \end{cases}$$

The independent variable of the logistic analysis were Place of residence, Childhood residence, Educational qualification of husband, Respondents occupation, Occupation of husband, Types of family, Monthly income, Ownership of property, Ownership of electricity, Access to mass-media, types of migration of the respondents.

Table 1: Selected demographic characteristics of the respondents

Variable	Frequency (N=600)	Percentage (100)
Respondents age		
<15 years	147	24.6
15-19 years	391	65.1
20-24 years	51	8.5
25-29 years	11	1.8
30-34 years	0	0
Respondents Sex		
Female	600	100
Male	0	0
Religion		
Muslim	580	96.67
Non-Muslim	20	3.34
Marital Status		
Currently Married	581	96.833
Divorce	4	.667
Separation	5	.833
Widowed	10	1.667
Family Type		
Nuclear	472	87.7
Combined	66	12.30
Age at First Marriage		
<15 years	147	24.6
15-19 years	391	65.1
20-24 years	51	8.5
25-29 years	11	1.8
30-34 years	0	0
Age at First Birth		
<15 years	0	0
15-19 years	351	58.5
20-24 years	156	26.0
25-29 years	25	4.2
30-34 years	7	1.2
No Child	61	10.2

We began with a brief overview of the study population with respect to the several demographic characteristics (Table 1). Result indicates that majority of the respondents are Muslim (96.67%) and majority of the family type are nuclear (87.7%). More than half of the respondents age lies in age group 15-19 years (65.1%) while the while one fourth of

the total respondents (24.6%) is less than 15 years which indicate that one of every fourth women faces the marriage before reaching the age of 15. In this study it is also show that, through about 25% marriage occurs before age 15 but the birth before age 15 is zero (0%).

Table2: Selected Socio-Economic Variable and differentials of early marriage

Variable	Age at marriage		
	Less than 20 years	20 and others	All (By total respondents)
Child hood Residence			
Rural	359 (89.30)	43(10.69)	402(67.0)
Urban	179 (90.41)	19(9.59)	198(33.0)
Respondent's educational qualification			
No education	156(95.12)	8(4.87)	164(27.3)
Primary	168(98.24)	3(1.76)	171(28.5)
Secondary	177(88.5)	23(11.5)	200(33.3)
Higher secondary or above	37(56.92)	28(4.7)	65(10.9)
Educational qualification of husband			
No education	147(96.72)	5(3.28)	152(25.3)
Primary	151(96.8)	5(3.20)	156(26.0)
Secondary	157(94.0)	10(1.7)	167(27.8)
Higher secondary or above	83(66.4)	42(33.6)	125(20.8)
Respondents occupation			
House wife	507(91.18)	49(8.82)	556(92.7)
Service	7(36.84)	12(63.15)	19(3.2)
Others	24(96)	1(4)	25(4.2)
Occupation of husband			

Farmer	190(93.59)	13(6.41)	203(33.8)
Service	163(81.91)	36(18.09)	199(33.2)
Business	90(90)	10(10)	100(16.7)
Labor	5(5.10)	93(94.89)	98(16.3)
Monthly Income			
Less than 1500	87(97.76)	2((2.24)	89(14.8)
1600 to 3000	209(93.31)	15(6.69)	224(37.3)
3100 to 4500	103(92.80)	8(1.3)	111(18.5)
4600 to 6000	77(88.50)	10(11.50)	87(14.5)
6000 above	62(69.67)	27(30.33)	89(14.8)
Ownership of property			
No	494(90.31)	53(9.29)	547(91.2)
Yes	44(83.02)	9(16.98)	53(8.8)
Ownership of electricity			
No	218(94.37)	13(5.62)	231(38.5)
Yes	320(86.72)	49(13.28)	369(61.5)
Access to mass-media			
No	254(94.43)	15(5.57)	269(44.8)
Yes	284(85.80)	47(14.20)	331(55.2)

We began with also a brief overview about the study population with respect to the several socio economic characteristics (Table 2). In this study it is show that early marriage rate in rural area are high (67.0%) as compared to the urban area (33.0%). Again in both rural (89.3%) and urban (90.41%) areas, most of the marriages were taken place before reaching age 20 years where only 10.69% marriages occurred in rural area and 9.59 % marriage occurred in urban area after reaching the age of 20 years. In this study, it is also

revealed that, there is a positive linkage between the respondents education qualification and respondents husbands qualification and early marriage on which early marriage rate are high in the persons (both male or female) who are not formally educated or primary educated group. In this research, it is also showed that, early marriage rate are high among the girls (91.18%) who are not engaged in formal work and others (90%) work (business) as compared with the service (36.845). This term may also be true

for respondents husband occupation on which the farmers (93.59%) and Business (90%) groups, early marriage rate are high as compared with the service (81.91%) group. This study also shows that, there is a positive linkage between the monthly income and early marriage on which the income level is low early marriage rate is high. In this study, it is also reveals that, early marriage rate is low who are access to mass media (94.43%) as compared with the not access to mass media(85.80%). It is also found that, early marriage rate are also high in the women who have no any property (90.31%) as compared

to the women who have property (83.02%).

Logistic Regression analysis

Logistic regression analysis was used to identify the risk factor of adolescent marriage. In the model, age at first marriage was used as the dependent variable, which we dichotomized by assigning the value of 1 for age at marriage less than 20 years and the value of 0 for age 20 years and older; selected demographic and socio economic characteristics were used as explanatory variable. The explanatory variable considered in the model is the categorical and are shown in the following table:

Table 3: Variable and their categories used in the Logistic Regression Analysis

Variable		Category
Dependent	Independent	
Y=Age at first marriage $= \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if the respondents marriage occur less than 20 years} \\ 0, & \text{marriage occur 20 years and older} \end{cases}$	X_1 = Place of residence	1= Urban 2= Rural
	X_2 = Childhood residence	1= Rural 2= Urban
	X_3 = Respondent’s educational qualification	1= No education 2= Primary 3= Secondary 4= Higher secondary or above
	X_4 = Educational qualification of husband	1= No education 2= Primary 3= Secondary 4= Higher secondary or above
	X_5 = Respondents occupation	1= House wife 2= Others
	X_6 = Occupation of husband	1= Farmer 2= Service

		3= Business 4= Labor
	X_7 = Types of family	1= Nuclear 2= Joint
	X_8 = Monthly Income	1= Less than 1500 Tk 2= 1600 to 3000 Tk 3=3100 to 4500 Tk 4=4600 to 6000 Tk 5= 6000 above Tk
	X_9 = Ownership of property	1=No 2= Yes
	X_{10} = Ownership of electricity	1= No 2= Yes
	X_{11} = Access to mass-media	1= No 2= Yes
	X_{12} = Types of migration of the respondent	1= No migration 2= Rural- Urban 3= Rural-Rural 4= Urban- Rural 5= Urban- Urban

Table 4 gives the estimate of the logistic regression coefficients (B) corresponding to the independent variables and relative odds calculated for each category of the categorical variables. The category with relative odds of 1.00 responds the reference category for that variable. If the odds ratio is greater than unity, the probability of age at marriage occurring below 20 years is higher than that of the age at marriage occurring 20 years and older. To test the significance of variables we have used Wald test procedure.

From table 4 it is observed that respondent's educational qualification, educational qualification of husband, respondent's

occupation, types of family and access to mass have significant impact on age at marriage and other variables do not produce the significant results.

From the results of the logistic regression analysis, it appears that respondent's education is the most factors that influence age at marriage being below 20 years, when the other variables are controlled. Differential analysis also substantiates these findings. The relative odds of no education, primary and secondary educations are found to be 1.508, 8.003 and 2.064 respectively. This show that the likelihood of age at marriage being below 20 among women with no education and primary and secondary educations is 1.508,

8.003 and 2.064 times higher, respectively than that of the secondary or above educated women. Here it is also observed that prevalence of early marriage among women with no education, primary education and secondary education is very much higher than that of more highly educated women. In part, this may be because the highly educated women have higher socio-economic status and live in urban areas. Thus, we conclude that increasing the level of education for females could rise the age at marriage at study area.

The analysis indicates that respondent's work status is the next most important determinant influencing low age at marriage. It has been observed that age at marriage below 20 years is likely to be 2.693 times higher among women who have never worked outside the home, i.e. house wife than others those who had work experience.

The analysis further shows that husband's education has a significant and positive effect on low age at marriage. The result shows that women whose husband have been educated at

the primary and secondary level had a significantly higher likelihood (odds of 3.998 and 4.334) of low age at marriage compared with those having higher secondary or above higher educated husband. And women whose husbands are not educated were much more likely (odds of 7.987) to have been married at a young age than those with a higher secondary or above educated husband.

The occurrence of low age at marriage is consistency higher (2.677 times) in women who are member of the nuclear family than the combined family. Because in combined family females are well supported from socio economic concern.

Access to mass media is one of the important effective factors that influence the age at marriage. The analysis indicates that respondents, who do not access to any mass media have 2.499 times higher chance of marry before age 20, than that of who access to any mass media. That means mass media has a substantial effect on age at marriage before age 20.

Table 4: Logistic regression of age at marriage below 20 years on selected socio economic factors

		B	S.E	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
x_1 = Place of residence							
	1= Urban						1
	2= Rural	.955	.902	1.122	1	.290	2.559
x_2 = Childhood residence							
	1=Rural						1
	2= Urban	.168	.634	.071	1	.791	.845
x_3 = Respondent's educational qualification				87.95	3	.047	
	4=Higher secondary or above						1
	1=No education	.411	.761	.291		.589	1.508
	2= Primary	2.080	.804	6.693	1	.010	8.003
	3=Secondary	.724	.476	2.315	1	.128	2.064
x_4 = Educational qualification of husband				10.353	3	0.016	
	4=Higher secondary or above						1
	1=No education	2.078	.855	5.900	1	.015	7.987
	2= Primary	1.386	.684	4.107	1	.043	3.998
	3=Secondary	1.469	.490	8.979	1	.003	4.344
x_5 = Respondents occupation							
	2= Others						1
	1=House wife	.991	.540	3.362	1	.067	2.693
x_6 = Occupation of husband				1.060	3	.787	

	4= Labor						1
	1= Farmer	-.652	.785	.690	1	.406	.521
	2= Service	-.780	.768	1.032	1	.310	.458
	3= Business	-.622	.783	.630	1	.427	.537
x_7 = Types of family							
	2= Joint						
	1= Nuclear	.985	.391	6.342	1	.012	2.677
x_8 = Monthly Income				2.996	4	.564	
	1= Less than 1500						1
	2= 1600 to 3000	1.453	1.042	1.945	1	.163	4.275
	3=3100 to 4500	-.070	.533	.017	1	.896	.933
	4=4600 to 6000	.268	.564	.227	1	.634	1.308
	5=6000 above	.106	.522	.041	1	.840	1.11
x_9 = Ownership of property							
	2= Yes						1
	1= No	.350	.516	.461	1	.497	1.419
x_{10} = Ownership of electricity							
	2= Yes						1
	1= No	-.335	.481	.485	1	.486	.715
x_{11} = Access to mass-media							
	2= Yes						1
	1= No	.916	.477	3.690	1	.055	2.499
x_{12} = Types of migration of the respondent				.521	4	.971	
	5=Urban-Urban						1

	1=No migration	.210	.626	.113	1	.737	1.234
	2=Rural-Urban	.077	.680	.013	1	.910	1.080
	3=Rural-Rural	-.145	.853	.029	1	.865	.865
	4=Urban-Rural	.277	1.472	.035	1	.851	1.319
Constant		2.153	.548	15.437	1	.000	8.614

Conclusion

Study shows that education and monthly income are the major problems from view of the respondents about the early age of marriage and early conception. The study also reveals that both the age at first marriage and age at first birth are high in age group 15-19 years. Early marriage and early birth are also high in no formal educated and primary educated girls as compared to the secondary and higher educated persons. In this study, it is also show that, early marriage rate are high in no formal work group (house wife) as compared to the as compared to the group who are involved services or other occupation. Early marriage and early birth rate high in the people who are involved in agricultural work and service as compared to the others occupation. In this study, it is also observed that respondent’s educational qualification, educational qualification of

husband, respondent’s occupation, types of family and access to mass have significant impact on age at marriage and other variables(Ownership of property, family type etc) do not produce the significant results.

Recommendations

The following policy and program should be recommended and reinitiated to solve the problem related to reduce early marriage and child bearing and its impact:

- Increasing educational enrollment rate and increase the parents awareness to keep their daughter in school and ensure the received their right to basic education.
- Support young women to changing the economic status by providing the livelihood skills training, support for

working teenagers and ensure marriage is not a pre-condition for eligibility in the development schemes, such as micro credit programs.

- Increasing the awareness about the bad impact of early marriage through the use of mass media.
- Strongly applied the child marriage restriction law in both rural and urban area, especially the rural area.
- Birth registration system will be done compulsory within one week of birth and for marriage birth registration certificate will be required compulsory.
- Use research results to highlight child marriage as a public health concern which is detrimental to the individuals and communities.
- Work with government and health provider to develop the policies to meet the special need of young marriage grails and those of risk at marriage
- Increases the awareness of the girls who are already married not conceives before age 20.

- Work with communities/ women's groups and local political and religious leaders to increase the awareness and address of misconception and myths around the women right in marriage.
- Identify the risk group where child marriage occur at large scale and taken a special program to reduce it.
- Make a child marriage reduction committee in every village under the imam of mosque by applying the condition, if any child marriage occurs in the area under committee then the committee will be fully responsible for this.
- Strongly followed the grail children who are drop out from the primary level of education and increase the participation of grail children in secondary level of education.
- Increase the security of adolescent girls,

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