

## Reasons for Early Child Marriages in Pakistan: A Comparative Analysis of its Causes and Comparison with Other Countries

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ARTICLE INFO			ABSTRACT
<b>Article History:</b>			<i>Child Marriage is a complex phenomenon which is multiple and grave violations of rights of children depriving and limiting their opportunities for full realization of their potentials. The practice also violates the human rights of boys and girls and perpetuates the cycle of poverty. The male-female ratio among practice is not equal, the consequences are heavier on a girl than a boy. Child marriage obstructs the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals 1, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10. Pakistan's legislation and implementation of the laws to prohibit child marriages is complicated and must be addressed according to the provincial cultural background. Evidence based research is needed to support the legislation and to help develop responses which are specific, targeted and address the right drivers to child marriages to ensure that the policy and legislation can be informative for policy makers and civil society actors to implement adequate strategies. This research's main discussion is the causes and factors contributing the child marriages in Pakistan. The research also put forwards various recommendations to end child marriages and suggests some important factors, as per needs and requirements of the community which can help in delaying child marriages.</i>
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## Introduction

In the last three decades, many country wide and worldwide agencies have paid important attention to youth's rights. one of the breaches of youngsters' rights is early wedding, which refers to wedding under the age of 18, and it may have destructive effects for both genders. Still, it's far appeared instance of gender favoritism because it is greater harmful to girls Raj, A. (2010). it's far predicted that almost 5 instances as many daughters as children are married below the age of 18,

and nearly 250 heap of ruling class wed before the age of 13.. The price of early merger changes from United States to; African countries with its own government and South Asian nations have the best type of juvenile marriages under 18 that involve Pakistan.

Early wedding in other nations takes place for reasons containing cultural ideas, social standards, difficulty, control over girls, and morality. Low proficiency and lack of knowledge between girls and their parents, lack of alternative-making power and authority of women, win friendly influence and guide, and want were labeled cause the maximum fault-finding reasons of early wedding of girls in Iran. There are many reasons for infant marriages have happened produced to my consideration and features evolve into an essential count number to perceive also. The worldwide description of teenager merger, that is more for use in the belief, is both while individual or both spouses coming into wedding former than the age of 18 (OHCHR, 1989) .Marriage holds important significance in both organization and religion. Early wedding, a distinguishing type of wedding, is frequently believed as damaging. It is widely unquestioned as a rape of minors' rights and is a clear evidence of gender bias, as women are usually more immature than men private cases (Committee 2014).

A report from the United Nations, as quoted for one Dawn Newspaper, signifies that over the next ten of something (2011-2020), as well 140 heap kids proper to enhance kid brides and grooms general. If the current rate of minor marriages persists, it is worrisome that 14.2 heap youngsters will marry off done yearly, that breaks indicating degree about 39,000 each epoch. Additionally, the report estimates that consumed the 140 heap children discharged to marry, 50 heap will be under the age of 15 (Dawn, 2015). In Pakistan, the century-traditional society famous as The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 delineates a child wedding all at once place the male is under eighteen age adult and the female is under sixteen (Shaukat, 2015, p. 201).

## **Research Methodology**

Majority of researchers conducted in Pakistan are quantitative, as the literature review and available content thereon presented perspective on the issue of child marriages reveals. That is why the research's aim towards getting an in depth, qualitative data on the socio, cultural and economic undercurrents which persuasion and maintain the practice of child marriage.

In-depth case study is conducted using a qualitative research approach to understand the phenomenon of child marriage. In order to better understand the origin, dynamics and consequences of this practice, particularly for girls, their families and communities, the research sought to explore the social, religious, cultural and economic reasons that drive the practice.

## **Literature Review**

Gynecol (2009) reviewed how child wedding can result in sexually conducted contaminations, cervical tumor, public isolation, depression, and raised baby mortality. Once married, a girl is frequently enclosed to the parts of wife, wife, and parent (Nour 2009). Child wedding is a extensive issue about the planet, compelled by diversified determinants. According to UNFPA, early wedding maybe assign to poverty, gender prejudice, family honor, and educational habits (Loaiza and Wong 2012), between added reasons .

In a report presented by Reuben (2018) "Forced Conversions & Forced Marriages in Sindh, Pakistan" recognized causes of strained adaptation in Pakistan specifically in Sindh. With the

acceptance of the worldwide covenant on governmental and civil liberties and the agreement on removal of discrimination against women, Pakistan is under the responsibility of standard that likely CEDAW item 16 authorize that each girl has right to engage in wedding only with their full consent and exemption. Council of Pakistan approves adolescent right practice It is eminent from various reports by academicians, NGOs and reporting, that young adolescents and daughters are confronted accompanying individual of disaster sensibility: strained conversions and kidnapping (Nour 2006).

“Child Marriages n South Asia” analyzes how marriages stop in welcome report (2020) UNFPA-UNICEF (2018) World highest rate of teenager marriages in South Asia. 45% of woman were stated that they were wedded before the age of 18 and 17% were before the age of 15. Different worldwide programs and arrangements are occupied for completely of youth wedding. Together with added colleagues, United Nations youngsters’ fund UNICIF, United Nations populace fund UNFPA everything completely teenager marriages, advocate and support and publicity of adolescent adolescents and gender balance(Johansson 2015).

Anju Malhotra (2010) “The understanding of causes and results of early age marriages in the evolving planet label through research in our newspaper: “The causes results and answers to compulsory toddler wedding in the cultivating planet”. The author has specified Forced Child Marriage as a growth changeful step for various young women about the experience. Young adolescents as young as 8 or 9 are consistently strained to exchange their lives of childhood for lives of disease, seclusion, and intensity. We have period to stop baby marriages apiece exercise of better peace.

As a result, young adolescents are frequently visualized as an business-related burden to weak kins, the one contemplate the business-related benefits of wedding against allure costs, in the end that the benefits of wedding daughters are far degree the costs, and wed off youngsters, specifically daughters at a very early age (Sekhri and Debnath, 2014). Dowry is another jockey of toddler merger, cause occasionally persons must pay a larger tradition for an earlier spouse. Another, and possibly the basic, jockey of early wedding is the normalizing pressure encircling the supposed “guardianship” of a lady’s sensuality in a well sexualized surroundings place intimidation and abuse of young daughters is uncontrolled (Kamal and Hassan 2015). So the age at that husbands wed depends on any of determinants apart from instruction — offspring money, surname, good network, the chance of groom and tradition.

### **Pakistan’s legal age of wedding**

Pakistan’s Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929 sets the legal age of wedding for youths to 18 and 16 for girls. In April 2014, the Sindh Assembly selected the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act, that altered the minimum age to 18 for both ladies and guys, punishable in accordance with the law (Muzaffar, Yaseen and others. 2018).

In February 2017, the Government of Pakistan in an work to restrain youth wedding, created an correction to the Penal Code, toughening punishments for those establish liable of the crime.

UNFPA backed Government of Punjab in formulating a inclusive Punjab Child Marriage Restraint Act through a advisory process with the date of teens, parliamentarians and kind institution arranging (Unicef 2022). The Draft Bill was put off and the punishment against perpetrators was raised. However, changeful the age of merger from 16 to 18 age has still expected legislated at both countrified and civil level.

International arrangements, containing the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women outlaw baby wedding. The International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 has otherwise known as on nations to remove child wedding.

### **Causes of Early Child wedding**

Causes of Early Child Marriage Child brides, their children and families are all extremely poor impacted by child the practice and concept of a child and early or child marriage differs from one country to another. Moreover, according to a UN report, six hundred thousand children-brides/groom in Pakistan are married every year or 1650 children per day (United Nations Organization, 2013) Top of Form

- Poverty
- Tradition
- Climate disaster
- Religion
- Belief
- Impunity
- Financial issues

### **Contributory Factors in early Child Marriage**

While each marriage is influenced by its unique family dynamics and agreements between the individuals involved, there are common factors that often lead to children marrying before they are fully mature enough to manage a household and family. Here are some of those reasons:

#### ➤ **Recompense through Girls (Vanni)**

In the socio-cultural context of Pakistan, Vanni (or Swara) is a practice where girls are given as compensation. Daughters or sisters, often in their early teens, are handed over to another family to settle disputes or grievances (Knox 2017). This practice aims to resolve long-standing conflicts. Tragically, young girls are sacrificed to compensate for damages resulting from these disputes. Additionally, in cases where a family cannot repay debts in cash, young girls may be offered in place of money (Khan, 2011).

#### ➤ **Reciprocal Marriage (Watta-Satta)**

This practice involves the exchange of brides between two families, commonly referred to as watta-satta. In this arrangement, age is not a significant factor. Many older men often marry much younger women, and to facilitate their own marriage, they may give away their daughter (or niece or sister) to a male relative of the bride they intend to marry (Thornton, Axinn et al. 1992). Reports indicate that in rural areas of Pakistan, approximately 36 percent of marriages are conducted through this barter system. In many instances, one or both of the brides are too young to be married (Hanan & Mansuri, 2007).

#### ➤ **Elders' Decisions**

Forced marriages contribute to the prevalence of early marriages in the country. The cultural practices of the tribe, whether positive or negative, are often celebrated and passed down to the next generation. The matchmaking of sons and daughters is primarily the responsibility of family elders (McDougal, Jackson et al. 2018). Frequently, these decisions are made without much regard for the couple's age or circumstances. When family elders decide to marry off a daughter or sister, there is little opportunity to challenge the decision

or voice an alternative opinion. The marriage must occur—regardless of whether it brings good fortune or misfortune.

➤ **Dowry Ready – Wedding Ready**

There is a strong tradition of providing dowry for girls when they get married. The dowry consists of various essential items and conveniences needed by the new couple. Over time, the amount of dowry has turned into a competition among families. Many families strive to offer larger and more extravagant dowries for their daughters, which creates a significant financial burden for the parents. Parents often start gathering dowry items for their daughters from a young age, and once they have accumulated enough, they are eager to arrange the marriage. Conversely, many marriages are postponed due to insufficient dowry, while others take place sooner because the dowry is ready (Zeba & Kazi, 2009).

➤ **Early Engagement – Early Marriage**

Parents often feel compelled to arrange engagements for their daughters to secure a suitable match. These arrangements, often made between family relatives, are intended to keep potential partners within the family (Pratiwi 2020). Typically, such engagements occur without much regard for the current age of the girl or even the boy. Frequently, these matches are arranged among siblings or close relatives when the children are still quite young. This early engagement can lead to pressure from either side to hasten the marriage process (Jalal & Munir, 2008).

➤ **Shaking Off Economic Load**

In certain tribes and regions, spending money on girls is considered pointless since they will eventually be married off to serve another household. This perspective views girls as an economic burden, leading to the practice of marrying them off at a young age (Parsons, Edmeades et al. 2015). As a result, families aim to relieve themselves of this financial responsibility by quickly arranging marriages, minimizing both time and expenses.

➤ **Money against Match (Valwaar)**

This concept is similar to a bride's price. In some regions and among certain tribes in the country, marriage is treated as a financial transaction between the groom and the bride's parents. Daughters are given in marriage, and the parents receive a specified amount in return (Shameenda 2018). The groom pays a sum of money (valwaar) to the bride's parents to obtain their consent for the marriage. This payment acts as both a form of compensation and a means of alleviating the family's long-standing economic struggles related to raising their daughter. Consequently, parents often seek to marry off their daughters as soon as they receive a favorable offer. Unfortunately, this potential financial gain can also contribute to child trafficking (Noor, 2004).

➤ **Preventive Arrangement**

Early marriages are often arranged to protect young individuals from engaging in inappropriate emotional and sexual relationships during their formative years. This practice is closely tied to the concept of 'family honor,' which must be preserved at all costs (Ali, 2001). Additionally, early marriages may occur as a response to instances of adultery. In these cases, to address the situation, the daughter may be compelled to marry immediately, or the male involved may be pressured to marry her right away (Johansson 2015, Mazurana and Marshak 2019). This serves as a way to resolve conflicts between families. In such scenarios, the ages of the individuals involved are often overlooked, with the primary focus being on maintaining family honor.

➤ **Stronger Support in Later Age**

Supporters of early marriage argue that having children at a young age can be advantageous, as it allows parents to have a son who can provide support before they become too old. They believe that raising children when parents are younger is easier than

doing so later in life. Therefore, early marriage is seen as a way to create a strong family with young sons and relatively young fathers (Plett, 2005).

➤ **Forced Marriages**

The tribal custom of Ghag involves the forceful imposition of marriage on a girl. It is initiated by the young man who wishes to marry her, as he publicly declares his intention to take her hand in marriage, insisting that no one else should consider marrying her. Such declarations are taken very seriously within the tribe. This act negatively affects the honor of both the family and the girl. As a result, no other marriage proposals are anticipated for her, since other men are expected to refrain from proposing or marrying her (Sarachaga-Barato 2018).

The “Breaking Chains” project invites individuals, organizations, and governments to come together in our effort to eliminate forced marriage. Through raising awareness, empowering communities, advocating for policy changes, and supporting survivors, we can dismantle the chains that bind young lives and pave the way for a future where every child has the chance to flourish.

**Child marriage; a violation of the human rights**

As earlier stated, minor wedding is a breach of civil rights. This will be further expanded by assign to source differing appropriate items from the “African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child” and the “African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights.” lives and precede for a future place each youth has the chance to flourish (Malhotra, Warner and others. 2011, Bilo and Machado 2018).

**African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child**

According to the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR, 1987), 41 not enough 54 nations have marked and affirmed the charter. Niger marked and affirmed it in 1999, while Chad authorized in 2000 and marked in 2004 (ACHPR, 2007). The “African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child” states in Article 21: “Protection against Harmful Social and Cultural Practices. 2. Child wedding and betrothal of ladies and youths shall be illegal, and direct operation, containing bill, shall pass away to designate the minimum age of wedding expected 18 age and form enrollment of all marriages in an official record binding” (ACERWC, 1990:10; Ngwatu 2021).

**African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights**

The ACHPR specifies a acceptance table signifying that 53 from 54 nations have marked and authorized this charter, containing Niger and Chad, that both achieved this process in 1986. (ACHPR, 2005) (Nkrumah 2021).

**Article 2: Right to Freedom from Discrimination**

The African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights contains supplying against bias established sexuality in Article 2, that addresses the Right to Freedom from Discrimination. It states, “Every individual shall deserve a reward the possession of the rights and privileges acknowledged and protected in the Charter unbiased of some kind to a degree race, person's relations, color, sexuality, speech, prayer, governmental or some added belief, internal and public inception, possessions, beginning or some rank.” (ACHPR, 1987)

### **Article 16: Right to Health**

Article 16 stresses that all has the right to solve the best possible of energy, including both tangible and insane happiness. It too declares that the management has a accountability to safeguard things' energy and to supply first-contact medical care to one the one demands (Fan and Koski 2022)

### **Article 17: Right to Education**

Article 17 contains the freedom to learn for all.

### **Article 19: Right of All Peoples to Equality and Rights**

Article 19 stresses the law of similarity for all things: "All societies shall be equal; they shall have the alike respect and shall have the unchanging rights. Nothing shall legitimize the subjection of a public by another." (ACHPR, 1987)

### **Child Marriage in Other Countries**

#### **Child Marriage in Bangladesh**

Child wedding is precariously governing in Bangladesh, establishing the highest in Southern Asia and with the highest everywhere. While want is a important determinant, it is not the alone reason for the extreme rates of child wedding in the country. Bangladesh was ranked 146 in a group 187 nations and regions on UNDP's 2011 Human Development Index, accompanying a GNI of only US\$1,529. Traditional ideas, to a degree the need to insulate a daughter's "honor," frequently necessitate persons to marry off their daughters at a young age, specifically if they are from weaker upbringing. Many persons view schoolgirls as an business-related burden and trust that wedding ruling class off will bring about better economic strength. Data shows that the middle age at wedding for women elderly 20 to 24 in the highest resources quintile is 18.3 age, while it drops to just 14.6 age for those in hostile resources quintile. Research from the International Center for Research on Women signifies that in nations with extreme rates of infant merger, skilled is a meaningful increase offset at a "prompting point" age(Kamal, Hassan and others. 2015). In Bangladesh, this toppling point is 15 age traditional. It is supposed that 66 portion of daughters in Bangladesh are wedded before they turn 18, and 32 allotment are wedded before the age of 15. The predominance of kid wedding is 53 allotment in city extents and 70 portion in country regions. UNICEF has further stated that the highest number of very young brides is about the Western and Southern domains of Bangladesh, that border India. The extensive incident of toddler wedding in Bangladesh harshly impacts the lives and futures of heaps of daughters, their offspring, and societies, maintaining a era of depressed growth and slow financial development (Ferdousi 2014).

#### **Child Marriage in India**

Child wedding, intensely implanted in want and continuing ideas, remnants a meaningful challenge for incident in India. Over 40 allotment of the globe's offspring marriages happen in this place country. Although the rate reportedly begin 46 allotment in 2009, few states still visualize predominance rates surpassing 50 allotment, specifically in Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, and Andhra Pradesh(Goli 2016). The issue is more distinct in country regions, place the predominance is 56 portion distinguished to 29 portion in city domains. In current age, the Indian management live well works to combat this practice by lifting the allowable wedding age for ladies and achieving creative programs in extreme-risk societies, that have provided to a decline in infant

wedding rates. However, the practice prevails, compelled by attitude and diminished by want. Many kins view schoolgirls as economic burdens, trusting that merger is the only answer, and the "wife price" or tradition increases with a young woman's age and instruction. Additionally, the costs guide merger etiquettes can prompt kins to wed off daughters early. In Rajasthan, it is prevailing for diversified daughters from a kin expected marry in a sole etiquette to cut costs. Girls are frequently deliberate ready for wedding at the beginning of adolescence, and some delay can lead shame to the offspring on account of concerns about celibacy. In few domains, customs even permit classifications to organize marriages at beginning, aim a she's future is driven while she is still an baby. Other duties that maintain child wedding contain utilizing ladies as rectification or to resolve disputes. A big reason for the steadfastness of offspring wedding in India is the lack of law enforcement against these intensely established enlightening standards and practices(Raj 2010).

### **Child Marriage in Iran**

Child wedding is a contentious and complex issue in Iran that has continued because before the insurgency. Although women contemporary are wedding somewhat later average than earlier, the practice persists, and skilled are clues that the number of very young brides is growing repeated(احمدی 2021). Unfortunately, enumerations on the number of ladies wedding under the age of 18 are wanting, as many country marriages, while transported in established Islamic etiquettes, frequently happen in the background and go not listed. It is intensely troublesome to address offspring wedding when key conscientious figures, to a degree clerics and imams, do not speak out against it. A 2010 report told that the number of minor brides under the age of 10 in Iran had lay increases the premature three age. The alike report indicated that in 2010, skilled were 42,000 marriages including girls old 10 to 14. The real number of marriages for ladies old 10 to 15 maybe even larger, as only about 55 allotment of youngster marriages are recorded in capitals and 45 portion in villages. Girls from miscellaneous financial upbringing and domains are overwhelmed by child wedding in Iran. However, related to many added nations place offspring merger is prevailing, teenagers in weaker, more country districts, in the way that Sistan and Baluchistan Province, are ultimate inclined marry off before arriving maturity(Azimi 2020).

### **Child Marriage in Nepal**

Nepal is between the weakest nations everywhere, now put 157 lacking 187 on the Human Development Index. Nevertheless, the country with its own government be able meaningful stalks over ancient times seven age, directing to cut the number of exhausted things apart because the decision of the ten of something-long civil war. Child wedding serves as both a syndrome and a subscriber to want. The average age at that adolescents wed in Nepal is 17.2 age, a unit of the mathematical system that disguises the real asperity of the issue. The rates of minor merger change considerably across Nepal, affected by determinants in the way that a adolescent's instruction level, offspring money, terrestrial district, mythology, and ethnicity (Pandey 2017). In few extreme-risk groups, minor merger rates for adolescents can climb to between 70 and 80 portion. This issue is carefully connected to the educational predilection for sons in Nepal that frequently leads kins to view daughters as a commercial burden. According to the 2011 Demographic Health Survey, over half (51 portion) of Nepalese women elderly 20 to 24 were wedded before arriving 18. The position is specifically distressing in the Terai domain that is home to as well a quarter of Nepal's state. In this area, earlier and more learned fellows can command taller dowries, cueing persons to wed off their daughters at a more immature age. A instructor from the Terai domain observed in a qualitative study that "villagers visualize a daughter as a 'offspring object' to take to another kin; therefore, the more promptly, the better, and inferior, also." The rates of unusually



baby wedding are specifically extreme in the Terai, accompanying an disturbing 11 to 20 portion of schoolgirls old 10 to 14 previously wedded. Additionally, a UNICEF analysis paper raise that 79.6 allotment of Muslim ladies in Nepal, 69.7 portion of young women in hilly domains although morality, and 55.7 allotment of daughters in additional country extents are wedded before the age of 15. Girls innate into the wealthiest classifications likely to wed about two age later than those from lower resources quintiles (Thapa 1996).

## **Recommendations**

The government endures tackle the issue of early wedding and too devote effort to something the following points: (Jain and Kurz 2007)

1. Laws against this injurious practice concede possibility be entirely destroyed and appropriate to all things complicated, containing the persons of both the groom and old woman, in addition to some additional bodies.
2. Strict conduct endure surrender to remove local Jirgas or Panchayats and strengthen the rule of regulation in the district.
3. The police should be empowered and approved to examine and arrest criminals outside a warrant.
4. Punishments bear be raised to a range of five to ten age, in addition to solid fines.
5. The allowable marriageable age should be exact in the society.
6. The marriageable age endure correspond for both ladies and guys.
7. An knowledge campaign at the management level bear be started to climax the hurtful belongings of early wedding.
8. Girls concede possibility have smooth approach to instruction.
9. The management concede possibility specify instruction, energy, justice, and more essential assistances.
10. The instruction budget concede possibility be raised.

## **Conclusion**

The issue is both incessant and determined. Therefore, it cannot proper that this current maybe reversed merely through bill or forbiddances. The root causes are intensely entrenched in public presence and individual mindsets. An extensive knowledge campaign, in addition to continuous instruction and a devote effort to something best condition, can comprise a beginning toward gaining the asked effects. The country with its own government must believe, at each level—from society to individual—that wedding teenagers at a young age does not resolve some questions; alternatively, it conceives lasting challenges for future era.

It's far advantageous to announce that child wedding is an worldwide issue, not any more slightly in exercise in Pakistan. Our daughters are assign this question by way of a very long time. The

components that form a offering to this evil are diverse that is public, conscientious, finances, educational, ancestral and many better particular from case to case. few item be the determinants in the following it, the results are completely fault-finding related to strength of female sex.

Early wedding poses various risks of healing problems for young girls. Healthy inventors are essential for lifting active adolescents, that donate to a satisfied and successful association. In addition to energy issues, early marriages frequently bring about a important deficit of instructional convenience, that can have an enduring negative effect on two together's future. They may struggle to contemplate precariously, work efficiently, and find satisfaction in their lives. Young girls and guys the one wed early frequently do not finish their instruction, happening in a phase of depressed instruction that limits their talents and devises challenges for the future generations.

This research eventually decides that toddler marriages in Pakistani people are trained without delay, leaving very young spouses outside the moment to chase instruction after wedding. Additionally, the society, specifically mothers, is generally ignorant of the permissible help convenient to keep bureaucracy from aforementioned early marriages, and the existent societies in Pakistan are lacking to curb this practice. While worldwide conferences attack adolescent wedding, skilled is no direct worldwide permissible sanction to stop it. Furthermore, Islamic society admits a keeper to wed off a infant before she reaches adolescence, even though the wedding can only be achieved after she has accomplished adolescence.

In Pakistan, skilled are instances place child brides are captured to their spouse's home shortly after the wedding. This research eventually desires that the management of Pakistan concede possibility implement tight laws with harsh punishments and authorize the Marriage Convention to address these issues. Additionally, it is important to form basic and subordinate instruction required for all minors and to initiate a concerning a country with a campaign to raise knowledge about the emergencies of child wedding.

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