

Effects of Early Marriage Among Married Women Residing in Buddhabhumi Municipality of Kapilvastu

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Abstract

Introduction: Child marriage is a public health problem. It has physical, psychological and socio-economic effects for the bride. They face worse socio-economic and health effects than their unmarried peers which leads to maternal and child morbidity and mortality. The aim of the study was to find out the effects of early marriage among married women.

Methods: Cross-sectional study was conducted to find out the effects of early marriage among 119 married women. Purposive and snowball sampling was used to select samples and semi-structured interview schedule was used for data collection. Data was analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics with Statistical Package for Social Science 16.

Results: The findings revealed that 84.87% and 74.38%, 38.65% and 36.13% of the respondents faced socio-economic problems, physical health problem, psychological problems and reproductive and sexual problems as effects of early marriage respectively. Physical violence (65.34%) and school dropout (47.52 %) were found as socio-economic effects of early marriage. Backache (56.17%) and lower abdomen pain (51.16) were main physical health problem. Anxiety (86.95%) and even suicidal thoughts (26.08%) were found. Age at first pregnancy and age at first delivery had influence on problems of the respondents.

Conclusion: The study findings concluded that the socio-economic problems are main effects of early marriage Anxiety was main problem and an even suicidal thought was also found. Local and national level programs on minimizing early marriage and early childbearing might reduce health problems and violence in women' lives.

Keywords: Consequences, early marriage, effects, married woman, problems

Introduction

Child marriages is formal marriage or informal union between a child under 18 years and adult or another child.¹ Early marriage and 'child marriage' used interchangeably.²

Globally 21% of women married as children.³ Girls aged 15–19 years were married (27.1%) and mothers or pregnant with first child (17%).⁴ Early marriage may cause at a risk of domestic violence.⁵ Women reported back

pain (12%), anxiety (18.2 %) and sleep problems (26.3%)⁶ at risk of anemia (18 %) ⁷ lower abdomen pain (35.1%), foul smelling vaginal discharge (18.5%), uterine prolapsed (9.8%), painful sexual intercourse (12.34%) vaginal bleeding during intercourse (9.5%), no sexual desire (17.77%), deprived to money (10.4%), home issues (3.98%), problem in daily expenses (15.9%) and 2.2% husband' second marriage as effects of early marriage, ⁸ 34.9% developed

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suicidal thoughts, physical violence (27.9%) and emotional violence (31.6%).⁹ and school dropout (39.8%) when they got married at early age.¹⁰

Methods

Cross sectional study was conducted to find the effects of early marriage among married women. One hundred and nineteen women who got married before 20 years of age, married since 2 years and who were able to communicate verbally. Purposive and snowball sampling technique were used to select samples for the study. The study was conducted in 4 toles of Buddhabhumi municipality-5, Kapilvastu, Lumbini Province, Nepal. Semi-structured interview schedule developed by researchers and used for data collection. Ethical approval was obtained from Institutional Review Committee of Universal College of Medical Sciences. Administrative approval was obtained from ward office authority of Buddhabhumi municipality prior to data collection. Written informed consent was taken from the respondents. Assured the confidentiality of the respondents' information. Data was collected by researchers from November 22 to December 20, 2020. Descriptive statistics; frequencies, percentage, mean, standard deviation and inferential statistics such as chi-square was used to find out the effects of early marriage among married women with Statistical Package for Social Science Software 16.

Results

Regarding socio-demographic variables 52.1% of the respondents were of age group 31-40 years, 58.82% were illiterate, 46.22% were farmers, 52.95% were residing in joint family, mean age at marriage was 13.61±2.27, mean age at first pregnancy and delivery was 17.011.26 and 17.261.40 as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Respondents' Socio-demographic Variables n=119

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Age in years		
21-30	57	47.90
31-40	62	52.10
Mean age ±SD = 30.7113.24		
Educational status		
Literate	49	41.18
Illiterate	70	58.82
Occupation		
Farmer	55	46.22
Homemaker	44	36.97
Others (teacher, labor, shopkeeper, tailor)	20	16.81
Type of family		

Nuclear	49	41.17
Joint	63	52.95
Extended	07	5.88
Age at marriage		
Mean age at marriage ±S.D.=13.61±2.27		
Age at first pregnancy		
Mean age ±SD =17.011.26		
Age at first delivery		
Mean age ±SD =17.261.40		

Regarding problems faced by respondents 84.87% and 36.13% reported socio-economic and psychological as effects of early marriage shown in table 2.

Table 2: Types of Problems Faced by Respondents n=119

Types of problems #	Frequency	Percent
Physical health problems	89	74.38
Psychological problems	43	36.13
Reproductive and sexual problems	46	38.65
Socio-economic problems	101	84.87

Multiple responses#

Similarly regarding physical health problems, 56.17% and 35.95% of the respondents reported backache and low blood in body. Regarding reproductive and sexual health problems, 51.16% and 11.62% reported lower abdominal pain and genital rashes/sore problems respectively shown in table 3.

Table 3: Physical and Reproductive and Sexual Health Problems due to Early Marriage

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Physical health problems (n=89)#		
Backache	50	56.17
Whole body ache	36	40.44
Chronic fatigue	34	38.20
Increased workload	33	37.07
Low blood in body	32	35.95
Reproductive and sexual problems (n=43)#		
Lower abdominal pain	22	51.16
Foul smelling vaginal discharge	15	34.88
Uterus prolapsed	10	23.25
Difficulty to conceive	09	20.93
Bleeding after intercourse	06	13.95
Painful sexual contact	06	13.95
Genital rashes/sore	05	11.62

Multiple response#

Furthermore 86.95% and 8.69% responses were feeling of anxiety and difficulty sleeping as psychological problems.

Regarding socio-economic problems, 65.34% and 2.97% had physical violence and husband extra marital affairs as shown in table 4.

Table 4: Psychological and Socio-economic Problems due to Early Marriage n=119

Problems	Frequency	Percent
Psychological problems (n=46)#		
Feeling of anxiety	40	86.95
Feeling disinclined in work	13	28.26
Feeling alone	12	26.08
Suicidal thoughts	12	26.08
Feeling meaningless	11	23.91
Loss of sexual desire	10	21.73
Loss of appetite	08	17.39
Difficulty sleeping	04	8.69
Socio-economic problems (n=101)#		
Physical violence	66	65.34
Emotional violence	63	62.37
Conflict with husband	38	37.62
School dropout	48	47.52
Need to give explanation for all expenses	35	34.65
Deprivation of inancial resources	32	31.68
Problems in daily expense	13	12.87
Conflict with in-laws	29	28.71
Difficulty in managing home issues	20	19.80
Husband' extra marital affair	03	2.97
Polygamy	05	4.95

Result also shows that there is significant association between effects of early marriage and age at first pregnancy ($p=0.011$) and age at first delivery ($p=0.027$) as shown in table 5.

Table 5: Association between selected socio-demographic variables and effects of early marriage n=119

Variables	Effects of early marriage		χ^2	p value
	Yes	No		
	F (%)	F (%)		
Educational status				
Literate	47 (95.91)	2 (4.09)	2.200	0.138
Illiterate	62 (88.58)	8 (11.42)		
Age at marriage				

Less than 14 years	20 (95.24)	1(4.76)	2.946	0.400
14-19 years	89 (90.82)	9 (9.18)		
Age at first pregnancy				
14-19 years	105 (92.93)	8(7.07)	6.526	0.011
20 years and above	4 (33.33)	2 (66.66)		
Age at first delivery				
14-19 years	102 (92.73)	8 (7.27)	4.901	0.027
20 years and above	4 (66.66)	2 (33.33)		

*Significant level at $p<0.05$; p value calculated by fisher' exact test

Discussions

The study showed that 56.17%, 8.69% and 86.95% of the women had backache, 38.29% chronic fatigue, difficulty sleeping and anxiety which are inconsistent with the study conducted in Egypt, shows that only 12% perceived back pain and chronic fatigue, 26.3.2% had sleep problems and 18.2% had anxiety as consequences of early marriage.⁶ The study also showed 35.95 % had low blood in body which is inconsistent with the study in Turkey which shows that 18 % had hematological system diseases, mostly anemia.⁷

The study showed that 51.16% had lower abdominal pain, 34.88% had foul smelling vaginal discharge, 23.25% had uterine prolapsed, and 11.62% had genital rashes/sore which are inconsistent with the study conducted in Nepal which reveals that 35.1% had pain in lower abdomen, 18.5% had foul smelling vaginal discharge, 9.8% had uterine prolapsed and 6.5% reported rashes around vagina. Whereas current study showed 21.73% had loss of sexual desire, 13.95% had bleeding after intercourse and 13.95% had painful sexual contact which are consistent with the same study which shows 17.77% reported no sexual desire, 12.34% reported painful sexual intercourse and 9.5% reported bleeding from vagina during intercourse.⁸

Regarding psychological health effects, the present study showed that 86.95% and 8.69% had anxiety and sleep problems, which are inconsistent with the study which shows that 18.2 % had anxiety and 26.3% had sleep problems.⁶ The study found 28.26% of women had feeling of disinclined in work, 26.08% had feeling alone and suicidal thoughts, 23.91% had feeling meaningless and 17.39% had loss of appetite.

Study found that 65.34% had physical and 62.37% had emotional violence which are inconsistent with the study which shows that 27.9% had experienced physical violence and 31.6% had emotional violence.⁹ The findings of the study showed that 47.52% of the respondents had drop out from school due to early marriage which is inconsistent with the study that shows 39.8% girls drop out from school as they got married.¹⁰

The findings of the study showed that 31.68% got deprived from financial resources, 19.8% had difficulty in managing home issues and 4.95% had second marriage of husband. These findings are not consistent with the study which shows that 10.4% were deprived to money, 3.98% had difficulty in managing home issues and 2.2% female reported their husband had second marriage. Whereas current study showed 12.87% had problems in daily expense which is consistent with the same study which shows 15.9% had problems in daily expenses.⁸

The findings of the study showed that mean age at marriage was 13.61±2.27, at first pregnancy was 17.011.26 and at first delivery was 17.261.40 This was consistent with the findings of Nepal demographic health survey (2016) which shows that median age of the women at marriage was 17.9 years and at first birth was 20.4 years.⁴

The finding of the study revealed that there was significant association between effects of early marriage and age at first pregnancy ($p=0.011$) and age at delivery ($p=0.027$).

Conclusion

It is concluded that majority of married women faced socio-economic problems like; physical violence, emotional violence, school dropout and deprivation of financial resources as effects of early marriage. Other effects of early marriage were backache, lower abdomen pain, whole body ache, chronic fatigue, foul smelling vaginal discharge, uterine prolapsed and loss of sexual desire as physical and reproductive and sexual problems. Anxiety was found main psychological effect of early marriage in married women. Even suicidal thoughts, husband' second marriage and husband' extra marital affair were also found as effects of early marriage. Age at first pregnancy and age at first delivery tends to influence the lives of early married women. The findings of the study might be helpful to the concerned authority of community to conduct awareness raising program regarding effects of early marriage.

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