Child Marriage in Nepal
Research Report

Child Marriage in Nepal
Research Report

Child Marriage in Nepal
Research Report

© 2012
Plan Nepal
Save the Children
World Vision International Nepal

Research Team
Prof Dr Ram Krishna Maharjan
Dr Khem Bahadur Karki
Dr Tara Maiya Shakya
Mr Bhagwan Aryal

Published by
Plan Nepal
Nepal Country Office
Shree Durbar, Pulchowk, Ward No. 3, Lalitpur
P O Box 8980, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel +977-1-5535580/5535560
Fax +977-1-5536431
www.plan-international.org

Save the Children
Nepal Country Office
Shree Krishna Bhawan, Airport Gate,
Shambhu Marga Sinamangal, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel +977-1- 4468128
Fax + 977-1-4468132
www.savethechildren.net

World Vision International Nepal
Jhamsikhel, Lalitpur-3, Nepal
P O Box 21969, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel +977-1-5548877/5547177
Fax +977-1-5013570
http://nepal.wvasiapacific.org

ISBN
978-9937-2-5417-5

Design and Print
Horizon Creation

Foreword

Child marriage is a global problem which affects millions across the world but especially girls in South Asia. The Government of Nepal has signed many international instruments designed to tackle this problem and has passed a law forbidding child marriage but has found it difficult to eradicate the phenomenon due to weak enforcement and low levels of awareness.

By law, both boys and girls can marry at the age of 18 with parental permission and at the age of 20 without it. By custom, however, some communities have been arranging the marriage of children under the age of 18 for generations.

Child marriage has numerous adverse effects on the overall wellbeing of children who are mentally, psychologically, emotionally and physically unfit for married life. It constitutes a violation of child rights and must be abolished.

Until this study was conducted, there was no up-to-date, national-level information or data on child marriage. The study, whose focus is more qualitative than quantitative, documents the prevalence and changing paradigms and patterns of child marriage; its underlying causes and its consequences; and gaps in law enforcement. Its results will be useful for different purposes, including the development of policies and plans and the design of programmes and interventions to eliminate Child Marriage in Nepal.

The study is the collaborative effort of Plan Nepal, Save the Children and World Vision International Nepal. They are pleased to be publishing such a valuable resource and are grateful to the village and district development committees, municipalities, and local non-government organisations that contributed to its success.

Plan Nepal, Save the Children and World Vision International Nepal extend a special vote of thanks to the children, youths, women, and entire families who participated in the research as well as to their partner organisations for their penetrating insights and invaluable support.

The Society for Local Integrated Development Nepal (SOLID Nepal) also deserves commendation for carrying out the research successfully.

Donal Keane
Country Director
Plan Nepal

David Wright
Country Director
Save the Children

Michael Frank
National Director
World Vision International Nepal

Acknowledgments

Society for Local Integrated Development Nepal (SOLID Nepal) study team is grateful to Plan Nepal, Save the Children and World Vision International Nepal (WVIN) for entrusting it with the important task of undertaking this study on Child Marriage in Nepal. We especially acknowledge Mr. Krishna Kumar Shrestha, Mr. Subhakar Baidya, Ms. Madhuwanti Tuladhar, Mr. Bhagwan Das Shrestha, Mr. Prem Aryal, and Mr. Sher Bahadur Rana of Plan; Ms. Sita Ghimire and Mr. Tarun Adhikari of Save the Children; and Mr. Deepesh Paul Thakur, Mr. Pushkar Khati and Ms. Archana Rai of World Vision International Nepal for their guidance, support and feedback.

The study team also acknowledges Ms. Rama Bogati of the Makwanpur Programme Unit (PU) of Plan; Mr. Suraj Hamal, In-charge at Basamadi Sub Health Post, Makawanpur; Mr. Rajesh Shrestha of PEACE Nepal in Makawanpur, Mr. Dan Bahadur Vishwakarma of the Rautahat PU of Plan; Mr. Paras Hussain, Rural Development Centre Nepal, Rautahat; Mr. Juju Bhai Maharjan of the Morang PU of Plan; and Mr. Purna Kumar Nepali of World Vision International Nepal in Kailali, all of whom provided us their valuable time and assistance during field visits as well as helped collect the information needed.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to our research associates and assistants for collecting the information for this study.

Finally, we thank Mr. Anup Adhikari, Mr. Ajit Acharya, Mr. Sunil Parajuli, Ms. Smridhi Pradhan, and Ms. Drishti Poudel for their support in data entry, management, and analysis.

Research Team

Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CBO	Community Based Organisation
DDC	District Development Committee
EPI	Expanded Programme on Immunization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HH	Household
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICF	Intermediate Care Facility
ICRW	International Center for Research Women
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IRDC	International Reference and Development Centre
KIRDARC	Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre
KII	Key Informant Interview
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MOHP	Ministry of Health and Population
MOWCSW	Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare
NDHS	Nepal Demographic and Health Survey
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NPC	National Planning Commission
PAF	Poverty Alleviation Fund
PEACE Nepal	Poverty Elimination and Community Empowerment Nepal
RRN	Rural Reconstruction Nepal
SOLID	Society for Local Integrated Development
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VDC	Village Development Committee
WVIN	World Vision International Nepal

Table of contents

Executive summary I
Major findings I
Recommendations II
1. Introduction 1
1.1 Background 1
1.2 Objectives of the research 3
2. Methodology 4
2.1 Household survey 4
2.2 Focus group discussion 6
2.3 Case studies 7
2.4 Key informant interview 7
2.5 Finalisation of data collection tools 7
2.6 Methods of data processing and analysis 7
2.7 Ethical considerations 7
2.8 Field work process 8
3. Findings 9
3.1 Socio–demographic information 9
3.1.1 Demographic information 9
3.1.2 Composition of respondents who married young 12
3.1.3 Economic information 13
3.2 Marriage–related information 14
3.2.1 Current marital status 14
3.2.2 Type of marriage 16
3.2.3 Prevalence of child marriage 16
3.2.4 Decision–making role in marriage 22
3.2.5 Attitudes toward child marriage 24
a). Attitudes of household heads towards child marriage 24
b). Attitudes of people who married young towards child Marriage 25
3.3 Causes of child marriage 26
3.3.1 Causes of child marriage among respondents who married young 28
3.3.2 Knowledge of legal age of marriage among household heads 29
3.4 Consequences of child marriage 29
3.4.1 Consequences on health 32
3.4.2 Consequence of child marriage on education 34
3.4.3 Social consequences of child marriage 35
3.4.4 Economic consequence of child marriage 35
3.4.5 Other consequence of child marriage 35
3.5 Changing paradigms and patterns of child marriage 37
3.6 Good programme designs, practices and initiatives against child marriages 39
3.7 Suggestions from household heads to prevent child marriage 40
3.8 Gaps in law enforcement regarding child marriage 43
3.8.1 Evidences of reporting against child marriage 43
3.9 Marriage registration 44
4. Overall findings 45
5. Recommendations 47
References 48

List of tables and figures

Table 1: Sample distribution in 15 districts..... 6
Table 2: Distribution of population in sample households by districts..... 9
Table 3: Distribution of population by caste/ethnicity..... 10
Table 4: Distribution of the respondents by religion..... 10
Table 5: Marital status of the people in sample households..... 10
Table 6: Educational status of the people..... 11
Table 7: Type of family..... 12
Table 8: Distribution of respondents who married young by districts..... 12
Table 9: Distribution of early married respondents by age category..... 12
Table 10: Major occupation of the people..... 13
Table 11: Food security by ecological region..... 14
Table 12: Food security by age at marriage..... 14
Table 13: Current marital status of the respondents..... 15
Table 14: Type of marriage..... 16
Table 15: Median age at marriage by district..... 18
Table 16: Median age at marriage by age category..... 18
Table 17: Percentage distribution of child marriage by educational status and sex..... 19
Table 18: Age at marriage by migration status..... 19
Table 19: Percentage distribution of child marriage by location..... 19
Table 20: Percentage distribution of child marriage among respondents by age and sex category..... 21
Table 21: Percentage distribution of child marriage by religion..... 21
Table 22: Percentage distribution of child marriage by caste..... 22
Table 23: Major castes involved in child marriage by district..... 22
Table 24: Decision making role in marriage by sex..... 23
Table 25: Decision maker by age at marriage and sex..... 23
Table 26: Major decision maker of child marriage in family..... 24
Table 27: Right to make decision of marriage..... 24
Table 28: Decisions regarding different activities by female..... 24
Table 29: Attitude of household heads towards child marriage..... 25
Table 30: Attitude of people who married young towards child marriage..... 25
Table 31: Causes of child marriage by district..... 26
Table 32: Reasons behind early marriage by sex..... 28
Table 33: Reasons of child marriage..... 28
Table 34: Reasons of not organising early marriage of children..... 29
Table 35: Knowledge of legal age at marriage among household heads..... 29
Table 36: Consequence of child marriage witnessed by FGD participants..... 30
Table 37: Death of female during pregnancy or delivery..... 32
Table 38: Causes of maternal death..... 33
Table 39: Death of infants in the family by age at marriage..... 33
Table 40: Incidence of miscarriage or still birth in the family..... 33
Table 41: Reasons for the miscarriage..... 34
Table 42: Knowledge of consequence of child marriage on health..... 34
Table 43: Consequences of child marriage on education..... 34
Table 44: Social consequences of child marriage..... 35
Table 45: Economic consequences of child marriage..... 35

List of tables and figures

Table 46: Change of workload and responsibility after marriage among males..... 35
Table 47: Relationship between husband and wife..... 36
Table 48: Relationship with family..... 36
Table 49: Problems in wife's health after marriage..... 36
Table 50: Types of health problems faced by male's spouse after marriage..... 36
Table 51: Health problems of women who married young..... 37
Table 52: Psychological problems..... 37
Table 53: Sexual problems..... 37
Table 54: Programmes to abolish child marriage suggested by household heads..... 40
Table 55: Agent responsible for abolishing child marriage..... 40
Table 56: Measures to prevent child marriage as suggested by who married young respondents..... 41
Table 57: Responsible agent to prevent child marriage..... 41
Table 58: Knowledge of organisations working on abolishing child marriage 41
Table 59: Name of the organisations known by the household heads..... 42
Table 60: Activities of organisations which were to prevent child marriage..... 42
Table 61: Learning from organisation's activities..... 42
Table 62: Registration of marriage by location..... 4
Table 63: Registration of marriage by sex..... 44

Figure 1: Population pyramid..... 11

List of appendices

Appendix A Survey form for household..... 49
Appendix B Questionnaire for early married female..... 54
Appendix C Questionnaire for early married male..... 57
Appendix D FGD Guideline for boys and girls..... 59
Appendix E KII guidelines..... 61

Executive summary

Child marriage is a global problem which affects millions of people across the world. It is considered a human rights violation because it deprives those involved, especially girls, of education and health services, the chance to learn skills and develop their personalities, and leaves them vulnerable indeed. Although the Government of Nepal has signed many international agreements, its national-level commitments are inadequate to address the issues.

In Nepal, marriage before the age of 18 is considered to be child marriage. In some communities, child marriage is a customary, socially established practice that has been carried on for generations. Child marriage has numerous adverse effects on the overall wellbeing of a girl child who is mentally, psychologically, emotionally or physically not prepared for married life and must be eliminated for its numerous adverse consequences on society.

Because the majority of Nepal's population is illiterate, ignorant and disadvantaged, age-old traditions and customs are not easy to do away with. However, education and awareness among people, especially those living in the rural areas, can make a difference. Unless people are made aware of the devastating multi-pronged effects of early marriage, they will not strive to eliminate it from society. People should also be made aware of human rights so that they are aware of their own rights and the rights of children. Only then will parents be motivated to ensure that their children enjoy their right to a childhood.

This research on child marriage was undertaken in support of three organisations—Plan Nepal, Save the Children and World Vision International Nepal—which have programmes related to child development. Its aim was to inform the designs of their programmes for combating child marriage. The report identifies trends in child marriage as well as its causes and its consequences for children and their families and communities. The outcomes of this research will be utilised to reduce child marriages as well as inform marketing, communications and advocacy efforts.

The main aim of the study was to understand the embedded reasons for child marriage. Its specific objectives were to identify the prevalence and changing paradigms and patterns of child marriage; to find out the underlying causes and consequences of child marriage, to document good programme designs, practices and initiatives; to identify gaps in law enforcement; and to set up a database on child marriage to use for policy change and implementation, improving programme design and delivery, communication and advocacy.

A mixed quantitative and qualitative methodology was followed to conduct the research and analysis. Altogether, the team surveyed 649 household heads from 15 districts covering all of Nepal's three ecological and five developmental regions so as to make the survey representative. In addition, 95 males and 334 females who married young were surveyed. To gather qualitative information, 31 focus group discussions (FGDs) and 25 key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted, and a few case studies developed.

After the quantitative data was collected from the field, it was edited and coded where necessary in order to proceed toward analysis using SPSS software and EPI Data. Some narratives were derived from the qualitative data. Then dummy tables were prepared, and, finally, the necessary analytical tables were prepared so as to present the analysis in a systematic way.

Major findings

- At the current age group of 20–24, the average prevalence of child marriage among both sexes was 46.2% (52.3% among females and 33.8% among males).

- Child marriage was most prevalent among the illiterate and the *Janajati* (indigenous ethnic groups) and the Dalit (the so-called untouchables in the Hindu caste system).

- It was most often parents (in 55.9% of cases for males and 63% for females) who decided upon the marriages of their children.

- Aware parents sought to delay the marriages of their children but the children themselves to part in "love marriages" at an early age.

- A paradigm shift was found in some aspects, such as the shift in decision-making from parents to children, from arranged to love marriages, from parental pressure to love and fulfilment of sexual desire, and from rural to rural-urban settings.

- According to household heads, the major causes of child marriage were family pressure (32.1%), children's own desire (32.1%), and the need for support in carrying out household activities (14.2%), whereas those who had married young said parental pressure (52.7% for male and 67.1% for female) and the need for support in carrying out household chores (45.2% for male and 1.2% for female).

- Parents and key informants blamed mobile phones and mass media for early marriage based on love. Children in the Terai who took part in FGDs and key informants claimed that early marriages were held to save money spent on a girl's dowry money. Parents have to pay more money if they organise the marriages of their children late.

- Food security had a positive impact on the right age of marriage (91% of food-secure people married above the age of 19).

- The people who married young had suffered physical health related consequences. All 41 of the maternal deaths identified occurred among females who married young and 51.5% males who married young reported that their wives suffered from illness, weakness and fever. The females who married early stated they suffered from pain in the lower abdomen (35.1%) and a foul-smelling vaginal discharge (18.5%).

- The educational consequences of child marriage included dropping out of school (67.1% of males and 33.1% of females) and not being able to study because of the need to care for a child (24.7% of males and 45.9% of females). The data suggests that marriage at a young age prevents both males and females from continuing their education.

- Case studies and KIIs showed that there is a higher incidence of disliking the earlier married girl by a boy after studying in higher classes especially in urban area which will result the second marriage incidence.

- Among males and females who married young 78.3% and 69.6% respectively said that parents are the most responsible for preventing child marriages. They suggest that to prevent child marriage, awareness-raising among the public (44.6% of males and 31.2% of females) and parents (22.8% of males and 31.5% of females) is needed.

- Only 13.1% of household heads knew of any organisation working to eliminate child marriage.

- The activities of child clubs, adolescents and girls were found to be very useful in preventing child marriage. Legal action against parents can control the practice of child marriage but it fails in case of children who enter into love marriages of their own volition. In the latter case, using legal means to separate such children may lead to devastating consequence such as suicide.

- No genuine evidence that cases of child marriage had been reported was found. The reason for the silence is that people did not want to take the risk of being a whistle-blower.

Recommendations

On the basis of the above findings, the following recommendations are suggested for ending Child Marriage in Nepal:

- As child marriage is widely prevalent in communities, especially among Dalits and other poor and

marginalised people, community networks and vigilant groups comprising all concerned stakeholders can be formed and mobilised. Programmes for ending child marriage should be linked with livelihood opportunities made available in the concerned communities.

- Adolescent boys and girls should be empowered to manage their sexual and reproductive health issues through different approaches such as the peer-to-peer approach, comprehensive sexuality education in schools, life skills-based education, and youth information centres.The focus of the empowerment should be given on not marrying below the age of 18 and, if a child marries before 18, on delaying pregnancy and adopting safe sexual practices as a way of life. Adolescent-friendly health services and easy access to contraception and other health services reduce the consequences of unsafe sex. Therefore, in addition to empowering adolescent girls and boys in communities, their linkages to primary health service outlets in their communities should be strengthened so that they can utilise the existing health services as they need to.

- Child marriage is a worst form of gender-based violence. Girls are more likely to marry young than boys and illiterate girls are significantly more at risk of child marriage. Therefore, programmes should be focused to enrol and retain girls in school. Programmes which follow the gender transformative approach should be designed.

- Ending child marriage requires the consolidated efforts of all organisations. Therefore, networks, the coordination and collaboration of different stakeholders, and organisations from community to national level should be strengthened. National responses to end child marriage should be linked with global partners such as Girls Not Brides, an initiative of the Elders. Ending child marriage should be established as a crosscutting issue and mainstreamed into all development works. It should be an important agenda of any development initiative.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment among other charters and conventions all directly or indirectly forbid the degrading and mistreatment of girls inherent in child marriage.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979) states that the betrothal and marriage of a child shall have no legal effect and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age of marriage (as cited in UNICEF, 2006). The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommends this age to be 18 (UNICEF, 2006).

The International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) (2012) identifies that the child marriage most often occurs in poor and rural communities. It says that the most of the effects of child marriage are seen among the girls.

Bruce and Clark (2004) describe that the most countries have declared that 18 is the minimum legal age of marriage; despite the sanctions on child marriage, however, more than 100 million girls are expected to marry in the next decade (as cited in UNFPA, 2005).

In many regions, parents arrange their daughter's marriage without even informing her. It means that one day, a daughter might be playing with her siblings at her home and the next day she would be married off and be compelled to live with her husband and his family – the strangers in the next village. Most probably, she is dropped out of school. Ultimately, she will be a victim domestic violence and might suffer with many health complications associated with early sexual activity and childbearing (ICRW, 2012).

UNICEF (2006) claims that, globally, 36% of women aged 20–24 were married or in a union before they reached 18 years of age and that an estimated 14 million adolescents between the ages of 15 and 19 give birth each year. Girls in this age group are twice as likely to die during pregnancy or childbirth as women in their twenties. The marriage of young girls is most common in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. According to UNICEF (2006), 77% and 65% of 20–24 year old women in Niger and Bangladesh respectively were married before the age of 18.

In Nepal, the Civil Code of 1963 (11th amendment) fixed the legal age for marriage is 18 for both girls and boys in parental consent and 20 year without parental consent.

Marriage is an important part of human life. It is an association which demands maturity, ability and responsibility. However, Child Marriage in Nepal is a customary, socially-established institution that has been practiced for generations. Religion has endorsed it, and society has ensured its stability. While boys are also the victims of this norm, the religious Hindu texts of ancient time contain strict moral laws that instruct parents to marry off their daughters before they reach puberty.

Sage Manu, considered the progenitor of humankind and the first king of earth, categorically writes in *Manu Smriti* that if a girl remains unmarried after reaching puberty, her parents have failed in their duty towards her. Another sage, Parasara, wrote that the parents of a girl who reaches puberty before marriage would go to hell. Such rules imposed by holy leaders had their effect upon religious people, and the practice of child marriage was decisively established. Even the marriage of infants became common. The ceremony of marrying off a daughter is called kanyadan, which literally explains 'the gift of a virgin,' and is an act which earns parents much punya, or credit for piety.

Another reason for the prevalence of child marriage is the dowry system. Dowry, the presents a girl's parents give the groom and his family at marriage, consists mainly of household items to help the couple establish their new home. Parents giving dowry according to their ability is part of the wedding ritual in all parts of Nepal, but it is

most strictly observed in the Terai region. There, the bridegroom demands a dowry price, locally called tilak. The tilak money demanded can be a hefty sum and might not correspond to the economic status of the bride's family, thereby making the marriage of daughters a heavy burden on a girl's parents. The tilak is adjusted according to the education, qualifications and social standing of the boy. The higher the qualifications, the higher the price he demands. It is for this reasons that parents do not support their daughters' desires to study at higher levels: if a girl is well-educated, she will marry a well-educated boy, who will demand more tilak. The need to pay dowry compels parents to marry off their daughters as early as possible.

Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) (2009) explains that poverty plays a central role in causing and continuing early marriage. In many families, girls are viewed as an economic burden and marrying them off is viewed as a way to alleviate household expenses. Poor countries and families often have few resources to support healthy alternatives for girls, such as schooling. In families with limited resources, child marriage is often seen as a way to provide for a daughter's future (CARE, 2009). However, girls who marry young have an increased chance of being and remaining poor. If few educational and economic opportunities are available, a girl may be married to strengthen an agreement that protects her and the family's economic wellbeing. Community customs regarding gender roles, the appropriate age of marriage, and the family's honour can put pressure on families to marry their young daughters (CARE, 2009) Tristam (2012) identifies the following causes of child marriage:

Poverty: Poor families sell their children into marriage either to settle debts or to make some money and escape the cycle of poverty. Child marriage fosters poverty, however, as it ensures that girls who marry young will not be properly educated or take part in the workforce.

"Protecting" the girl's sexuality: In certain cultures, marrying a girl young presumes that the girl's sexuality, therefore the girl's family's honour, will be "protected" but ensuring that the girl marries as a virgin. The imposition of family honour on a girl's individuality, in essence robbing the girl of her honour and dignity, undermines the credibility of family honour and instead underscores the presumed protection's actual aim: to control the girl.

Gender discrimination: Child marriage is a product of cultures that devalue women and girls and discriminate against them. "The discrimination," according to a UNICEF report, "Child marriage and the Law," "often manifests itself in the form of domestic violence, marital rape, and deprivation of food, lack of access to information, education, healthcare, and general impediments to mobility."

Inadequate laws: Many countries such as Pakistan have laws against child marriage. The laws are not enforced. In Afghanistan, a new law was written into the country's code enabling Shiite, or Hazara, communities to impose their own form of family law–including permitting child marriage.

Trafficking: Poor families are tempted to sell their girls not just into marriage, but into prostitution, as the transaction enables large sums of money to change hands.

The 2001 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) found that 40% of women aged 15–19 were married; the 2006 NDHS that 32.2% of women and 10.4% of men aged 15–19 were married. The median age at first marriage among women aged 20–49 was 17.2 years in 2006, a noticeable increase from the 16.4 years reported in 1996. Women aged 20–49 in rural areas married younger (17 years) than those in urban areas (18.1 years) and those in the Terai (17.2 years) married younger than those in the hills (18) and mountains (17.8). According to the 2011 NDHS, 28.8% of females and 6.9% of males were married by the age of 15–19 years (MOHP, New ERA and ICF International Inc., 2012).

Child marriage can have numerous adverse effects on the overall wellbeing of a girl child who is mentally, psychologically, emotionally or physically not prepared for a marital life. An early marriage deprives her of the opportunity to start or continue her education and reduces any possibility of her developing her own personality and growing professionally. Once married, she is expected to assume the multiple roles of a wife, daughter-in-law, housekeeper, caretaker and mother. This transition can be psychologically and emotionally stressful for a young girl. Deprived of her childhood and lacking the maturity and skill she needs to handle her personal, family, economic and social relationships, a young wife may develop fears and complexes that last her whole life.

Child marriage has to be eliminated despite its strong hold on society. In Nepal, where the majority of the population is illiterate, ignorant and deprived of different facilities, age-old traditions and customs are not easy to do away with, but education and awareness among people, especially in the rural areas, can make a difference. Unless people are made aware of the devastating multi-pronged effects of early marriage, they will not strive to eliminate it from society. People should also be made aware of human rights, which mean equal rights and opportunities for men and women, as well as child rights, which recognise the girl child as being as rightful an heir to a childhood as her brothers. When people, especially women, are aware of their own rights and the rights of their children, they will be able to ensure the right of their children to a childhood.

This research on child marriage was undertaken in support of three organisations, namely Plan, Save the Children and World Vision International Nepal.

Plan is a child-centred community development organisation committed to promoting children's right to realise their full potential in societies that respect people's rights and dignity and to achieving lasting improvement in the quality of life of deprived children in developing countries. Plan has been discouraging child marriages for several years as part of its programmes on gender-based violence and child protection. It educates adolescent girls and boys and parents on the ill effects of child marriage and motivates child clubs to intercede.

Save the Children is a child-centred organisation committed to the protection of children from all sorts of violence, abuse and exploitation. It is also committed to protecting children's right to education and health. Save the Children has been working in Nepal for more than 30 years in the field of child rights in different parts of country through partnerships with the government and local and national level NGOs. The fight against child marriage is one of the priority activities of Save the Children under its broader framework of child protection.

World Vision is a Christian relief development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. WVIN is running long-term development programmes in 12 districts of Nepal. Its country strategy for 2010 to 2013 has identified child protection as an elevated crosscutting theme amongst its major programmes and child marriage is one of the child protection issues that it intends to address at the national and district levels.

This research on Child Marriage in Nepal was designed to inform the programme designs the three organisations adopt in order to combat child marriage. It identifies the trend in child marriage, its causes, and its consequences on children and their families and communities. It is expected that the outcomes of this research will be utilised to reduce child marriage as well as inform communications and advocacy efforts. The findings of the research will be instrumental in improving the on-going and future programme design and delivery of the anti-child marriage initiatives of the Plan, Save the Children and WVIN.

1.2 Objectives of the research

The key objective of the research was to understand the embedded reasons for child marriage which prevail in many communities of Nepal. The research compared the various social norms regarding Child Marriage in Nepal. More specifically, the researchers aimed to

i. Find out the prevalence and changing paradigms and patterns of child marriage in different geographical locations of Nepal.
ii. Find out underlying causes and consequences of child marriage on girls and boys, especially in their health and education.
iii. Document good programme designs, practices and initiatives against child marriage.
iv. Identify gaps in law enforcement in the areas of child marriage .
v. Generate a database on child marriages for use in policy change and implementation, improving programme design and delivery, and communication and advocacy efforts.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study used participatory methods to ensure the full participation of partner organisations and key stakeholders in research design, procedures, tools development, and data collection. The research team got support from the advisory committee, which comprised the heads of the concerned programmes of Plan, Save the Children and WVIN.

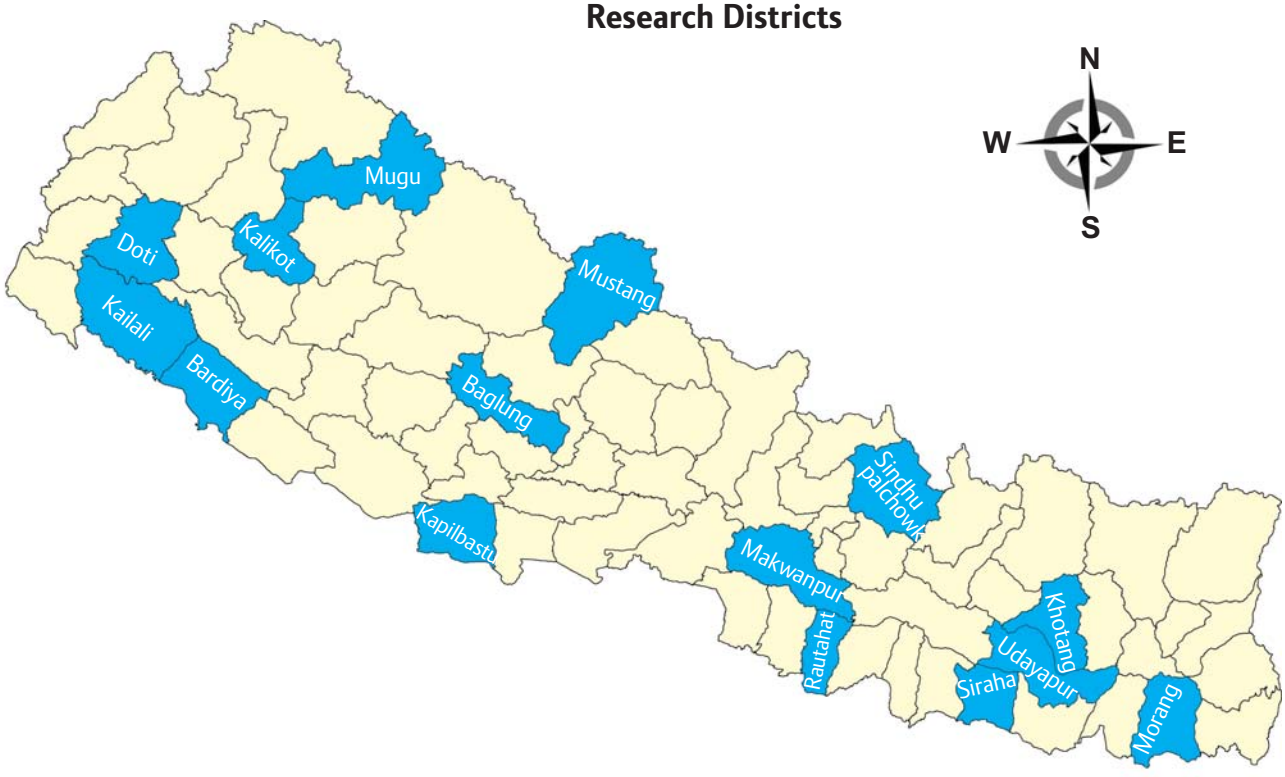
This research was carried out in 15 districts: Doti, Kailali, Bardiya, Kalikot, Mugu, Mustang, Baglung, Kapilbastu, Makwanpur, Rautahat, Sindhupalchowk, Khotang, Udayapur, Siraha and Morang–selected to be representative of the social, geographical and developmental state of the nation. A representative mix of rural and urban districts was also selected.

Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used to conduct the research work and analysis. Data and information derived from a review of secondary literature, household survey, focus group discussions (FGDs), interviews, and case studies were triangulated to obtain valid results. The methods used are discussed in more detail below.

2.1 Household survey

Multi-stage sampling was applied to select the sample households. First, 15 districts representing the topographical and developmental regions of Nepal were sampled. Then, for each district, one municipality (if there was one) and either two or three VDCs, to make a total of three places, were randomly selected from a list of all municipalities and VDCs in that district. For each municipality or VDC selected, one of the nine wards was randomly selected. Then the researcher or assistant visited the ward and, in the centre of the human settlement, threw a pencil in the street. Whatever way it pointed indicated the first household to survey. He or she continued in this direction until the sample size was reached. The number of sample households was proportionate to the total number of households in each ward.

Research Districts



A structured and pre-tested questionnaire was used to collect information about demographic, social and economic characteristics as well as child marriage-related situations, patterns, causes, and consequences. The survey questionnaire was administered to household heads unless he or she was absent, in which case another household altogether was included. The study tried to identify the prevalence of child marriage in each survey region. Separate tools were prepared to survey the males and females who had married young who were found during the household survey. The sample tools are presented in Appendices A, B and C.

To conduct the household survey, statistically representative households were selected from the sampled districts. To determine the total sample size, the reference prevalence (p) of the national prevalence of child marriage (marriage at the age of 15–19) was taken to be 50%. Using 5% as the allowable error, 1.5 as design effect and 10% as non–response, the total sample size was 649 households as per the formula $Z^2*p*q/d^2*deff*(1+nr)$. The sample distribution was done according to the number of households in the 15 districts.

Calculation of the sample size is as follows (Raosoft):

Sample size

Proportion of child marriage p = 50% (0.5)
Allowable error d = 0.05 (i.e. a range from 45% to 55%)
Design effect deff = 1.5
No response nr = 10%
Where
η = Sample size $\eta = \frac{Z^2*p*(1-p)*deff*(1+nr)}{d^2}$

Z^2 = 5% level of significance $(1.96)^2$
p = Proportion of those aged 15–19 who marry young (0.5)
deff = Design effect, which is set to minimise sampling variability caused by cluster sampling. (1.5)
nr = No response rate; it is assumed 10% (0.1) will not answer
d = Allowable error (0.05, so that the range is from 45% to 55%).
The equation for deriving the sample size is given as below.

$$\eta = \frac{Z^2*p*(1-p)*deff*(1+nr)}{d^2}$$

$$\text{or } \eta = \frac{(1.96)^2 *0.5*(1-0.5)*1.5*(1+0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$\text{or } \eta = \frac{(1.96)^2 *0.5*0.5*1.5*(1+0.5)}{0.0025}$$

$$\text{or } \eta = \frac{(3.84* 0.25*1.5*1.1)}{0.0025}$$

$$\text{or } \eta = \frac{1.584}{0.0025}$$

$\therefore \eta$ **= 633.6 (i.e. 634)**

The research team increased the sample size to 649, raising that in Mugu from 5 to 10 and that in Mustang from 2 to 8.

Table 1 Sample distribution in 15 districts

	Cluster	Districts	Total household projected for 2010/2011*	Proportion	Sample households (no.)		
					Urban	Rural	Total
1	A	Doti	42,057	0.036	–	23	23
2	A	Kailali	146,299	0.125	15	65	80
3	A	Bardiya	85,846	0.073	10	37	47
4	B	Kalikot	22,157	0.019	–	12	12
5	C	Mugu	9,672	0.008	–	10	10
6	D	Mustang	3,275	0.003	–	8	8
7	D	Baglung	64,652	0.055	8	28	36
8	E	Kapilbastu	87,270	0.074	13	38	51
9	F	Makwanpur	90,101	0.077	10	39	49
10	F	Rautahat	101,937	0.087	11	44	55
11	G	Sindhupalchowk	70,437	0.060	–	36	36
12	H	Khotang	45,721	0.039	–	25	25
13	I	Udayapur	63,493	0.054	8	26	34
14	I	Siraha	117,974	0.101	14	50	64
15	I	Morang	222,657	0.190	24	95	119
		Total	**1,173,548**		**114** (17.5% of Total)	**535**	**649**

Distribution of the total sample households to districts is carried out proportionately.
*** Source:** Paudel, J. P., Tandon, H., Tandan B. etal. (eds.) (2010)

2.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

FGDs are a participatory approach used to gather in-depth information from key people, such as local boys and girls. The team used FGDs to extract key information on causes, patterns and impact of child marriage, child marriage initiatives, and recent practices and development-related issues in the locality. FGDs were organised among young people to create a friendly environment for extracting their views. They assisted the research team in identifying good programme designs, practices and initiatives against child marriages; and identifying the present programme design and delivery, marketing, communication, advocacy and fundraising efforts in the sample districts, municipalities and VDCs.

Two FGDs, each comprising 6 to 12 people, were conducted in each district using a checklist (Appendix D). A total of 31 FGDs were conducted separately with boys and girls. Emphasis was given to the marginalised and ethnic girls, who were included wherever it was important and possible.

Focus group discussion with boys in Manahari, Makwanpur

2.3 Case studies

Case studies of individuals who married as children were conducted in those households where the situation of the child was either very poor or exemplary. Case studies were conducting using a detailed guideline for interaction, but the researcher had the flexibility to go beyond the guideline as the situation dictated. Sample case studies provided qualitative information to support the quantitative research. Five cases were collected, but this report includes only the two most relevant. They are presented in the form of narratives

2.4 Key informant interview (KII)

Key personnel such as the officials of municipalities and VDCs, including VDC secretaries, officials of NGOs working in the field of child protection and campaigning against child marriage; child and youth club members, adolescent groups, child protection committees and women groups; and related community leaders were interviewed. A checklist (Appendix E) was used to find out the present situation and changing paradigms and patterns of child marriage and to identify the present programme design and delivery, marketing, communication, advocacy and fundraising efforts. At least two individuals in each district were selected to be interviewed, but only 25 were actually interviewed. Stakeholders related to the partner agencies were consulted in the field after the other field work was over.

2.5 Finalisation of data collection tools

All of the research tools were pre-tested. First, the research associates and assistants were oriented to the tools and taught practical techniques for conducting FGDs. Then they tested these tools in the local community of Hattivan, Lalitpur. After returning from the field, a discussion was held to finalise the tools incorporating all the feedback from the pre-test. Plan, Save the Children and WVIN were also consulted to finalise the tools.

2.6 Methods of data processing and analysis

Data and information collected from both secondary and primary sources were processed using relevant methods. The data collected from the field was entered, edited and analysed using SPSS EPI Data and statistical measures. It

Household survey in Gaur municipality, Rautahat

was then presented in appropriate tables, graphs and charts. Qualitative information–narratives, phrases, and case studies—was categorised using the themes and objectives of the study.

2.7 Ethical considerations

Research ethics refer to the appropriateness of a researcher's behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subject or are affected by his or her work (Wolff and Pant, 2005, p.32). The researchers maintained ethics by not placing their personal interests or those of the research above the interests of their respondents.

All possible means were used to inform the community and stakeholders of the aims of the research, the advantages expected from it, and any possible hazards or inconveniences. Verbal consent was taken before the administration of any tool. In individual interviews and household surveys, the respondents' anonymity was preserved and they were assured of the confidentiality of the data. Every provision was made to ensure the accuracy of the results.

2.8 Field work process

Field work was a major part of the assignment, which required a good range of primary data and information. Before going to the field a three-day workshop was organised for the research team, including associates and assistants, to orient and pre-test the tools among all the research team including. The associates and assistants got practical experience during a field visit with the researchers.

To collect the necessary data and information, nine clusters were formed. The first cluster, 'A,' included Doti, Kailali and Bardia districts; the second cluster, 'B,' included Kalikot district; the third cluster, 'C,' included Mugu district; the fourth cluster, 'D,' included Mustang and Baglung districts; the fifth cluster, 'E' included Kapilbastu district; the sixth cluster, 'F,' included Makwanpur and Rautahat districts; the seventh cluster, 'G,' included Sindhupalchowk district; the eighth cluster, 'H,' included Khotang district; and the ninth cluster, 'I,' included Siraha, Udayapur and Morang districts. Altogether, four study teams were formed. Each team consisted of two or three research assistants and a research associate led by a researcher.

The research associates were selected with for their work experience and qualification in the fields of health education, child rights, and gender issues. The field study teams were assigned some enumerators to conduct field surveys under the supervision of each cluster team leader and the research associate. The enumerators were mainly responsible for administering the household survey whereas the research associates were responsible for collecting qualitative data from the field. After completing the first phase of field work, the study team again went to the rest of the clusters. This time, the researchers and research associates independently visited the clusters and assigned enumerators to gather the necessary information.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Socio–demographic information

3.1.1 Demographic information

a) Population distribution by district

The study included 649 households in 15 districts in different regions of Nepal. The distribution of the population in the sample households of each district is given in Table 2.

The sample households included total of 3765 people. Altogether, 17.6% of the population was urban. The largest populations were found in Morang and Kailali districts. Mustang and Mugu districts had the smallest populations.

b) Population distribution by caste/ethnicity

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (2003), the castes of Nepal can be divided into the following categories:

Hill upper caste: Adhikari, Bahun, Baisya, Baral, Basnet, Brahman, BhatTerai, Bista, Chhetri, Dahal, Dhakal, Gautam, G.C., Ghalan, Giri, Karki, K.C., Katuwal, Khadka, Khanal, Khatri, Koirala, Lamichane, Lamsal, Malla, Nepal, Neupane, Ojha, Pandey, Parajuli, Poudel, Pkhrel, Pudasaini, Rayamajhi, Sapkota, Shahi, Sharma, Silwal, Sutar Karki, Thakuri, Thapa, Upreti.

Hill janajati: Barghari, Bhujel, Bolon, Chepang, Guide, Gurung, Helmu, Janajati, Kirat, Lama, Limbu, Magar, Newar, Praja, Rai, Rumba, Ruwali, Shakya, Sherpa, Shrestha, Sunuwar, Tamang, Thakali.

Hill dalit: Biswokarma, Bohara, Darji, Dorje, Nepali, Panchkoti, Paraki, Pariyar, Pasi, Ranpaheli, Sarki, Swarika.

Terai caste: Baniya, Barahi, Chauhan, Chaurasia, Gaubel, Gupta, Jha, Kandu, Karmi, Kori, Kurmi, Madhesi, Mali, Sah, Sahani, Shah, Tamoli, Teli, Thakur, Yadav.

Table 2 Distribution of population in sample households by district

District	Population					
	Rural		Urban		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Morang	501	82.5	106	17.5	607	100
Khotang	144	100.0	0	0.0	144	100
Udayapur	144	73.8	51	26.2	195	100
Siraha	269	74.1	94	25.9	363	100
Rautahat	279	77.9	79	22.1	358	100
Sindhupalchok	179	100.0	0	0.0	179	100
Makawanpur	219	81.7	49	18.3	268	100
Mustang	40	100.0	0	0.0	40	100
Baglung	138	78.4	38	21.6	176	100
Kapilbastu	228	75.0	76	25.0	304	100
Kalikot	92	100.0	0	0.0	92	100
Mugu	55	100.0	0	0.0	55	100
Bardiya	216	79.7	55	20.3	271	100
Kailali	449	79.6	115	20.4	564	100
Doti	149	100.0	0	0.0	149	100
Total	**3102**	**82.4**	**663**	**17.6**	**3765**	**100**

Terai janajati: Badhai, Chaudhary, Danwar, Dhimal, Gari, Kahar, Kisan, Maghi, Mahato, Mahato Singh, Majhi, Rajbansi, Tharu.

Terai dalit: charmakar, dhobi, malah, tatma.

Muslim: Ali, Idishi, Khan, Khatun, Muslim, Naini, Shakarne.

The distribution of the major ethnic groups and castes among the sample households is given in Table 3.

Hill upper caste people constituted 32.5% of the total, followed by hill janajati (21.3%). Terai Dalits made up the smallest proportion (1.5%) (Table 3).

Table 3 Distribution of population by caste/ethnicity

District	N	%
Hill upper caste	1222	32.5
Hill janajati	803	21.3
Hill Dalit	560	14.9
Terai caste	555	14.7
Terai janajati	502	13.3
Terai Dalit	55	1.5
Muslim	68	1.8
Total	**3765**	**100**

Table 4 Distribution of respondents by religion

Religion	N	%
Hindu	3214	85.4
Buddhist	424	11.3
Christian	34	0.9
Muslim	84	2.2
Others	9	0.2
Total	**3765**	**100**

c) Population distribution by religion

The households observed five different religions, with Hinduism (85%) and Buddhism (11%) dominating (Table 4). Christians comprised the smallest proportion (0.9%).

The data is compatible with that of the 2011 NDHS, which recorded 84% Hindus, 9% Buddhists, 3.7% Muslims, and 1.7% Christians (MOHP, New ERA and ICF International Inc., 2012).

d) Population distribution by marital status

The marital status of the people in sample households is given in Table 5.

About 48% were unmarried and 52% married (including separated, divorced and widowed). Just under 49% lived a conjugal life living with their spouse. There were more widows (4.6%) than widowers (1.2%) (Table 5).

e) Population distribution by age categories and sex

Age determines the marital status and other marriage–related matters. The age and sex of the family members in the sample households is shown in Figure 1.

The population pyramid of the sample is slightly different than that of the national population pyramid of the 2001 census of Nepal. In this study the population of children under the age of 14 was significantly less (29.3%) than the national figure (39.3%) (CBS, 2003). Similarly, the proportion of senior citizens above the age of 60 in this study (7.75%) is greater than the national average (6.5%) (CBS, 2003).

A total of 1,566 people (41.6%) were under 19 years of age. The pyramid shows that after the age of 45. There are fewer females than males.

Table 5 Marital status of the people in sample households

Marital status	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Unmarried	1021	52.8	782	42.7	1803	47.9
Married	881	45.6	954	52.0	1835	48.7
Separated	3	0.2	8	0.4	11	0.3
Divorced	3	0.2	4	0.2	7	0.2
Widowed	24	1.2	85	4.6	109	2.9
Total	**1932**	**100**	**1833**	**100**	**3765**	**100**

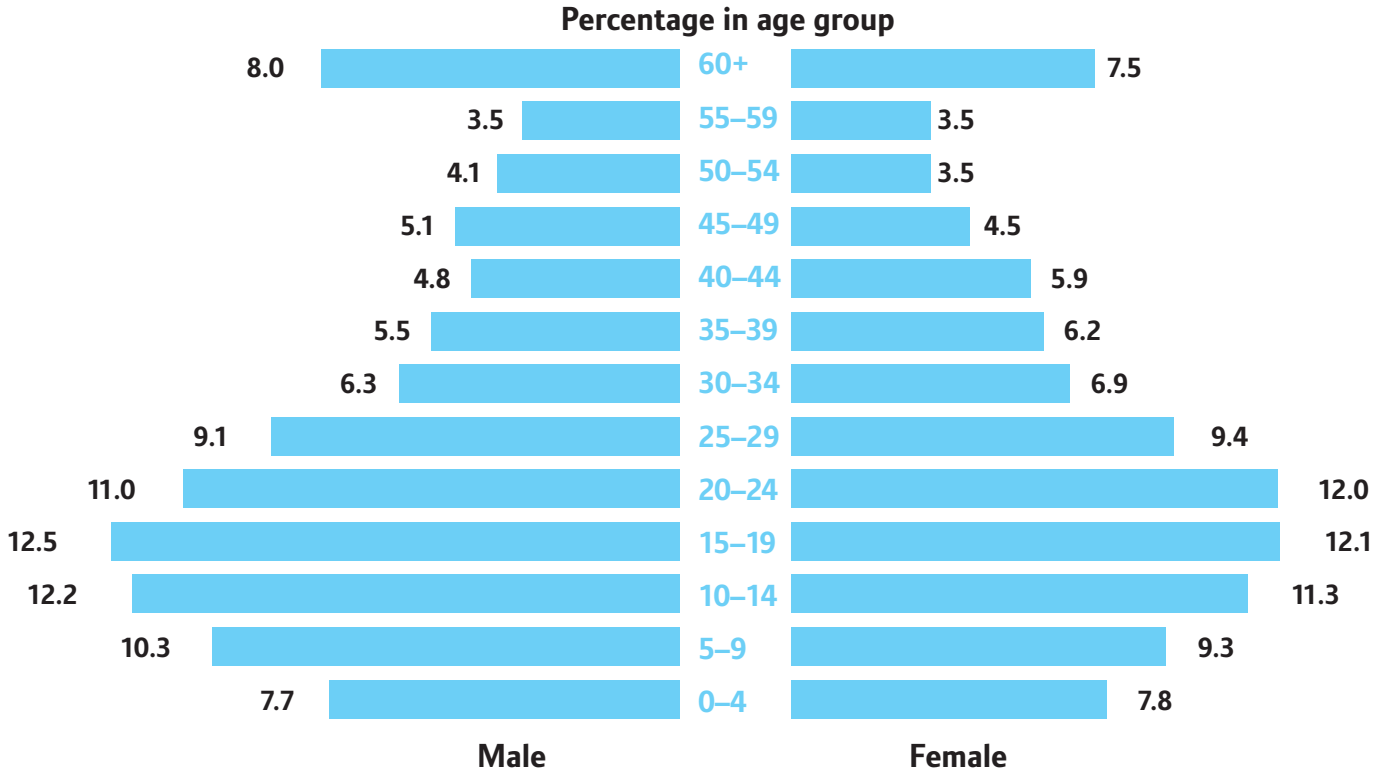


Figure 1 Population pyramid

The sex ratio of the sample population was 105.4 males to 100 females while the national average was 99.8 males to 100 females in 2001 (CBS, 2003). The dependency ratio was found to be 58.86, or almost 59 individuals depending on every 100 active individuals. This ratio is more favourable than that of 2001, 84.7 (CBS, 2003).

f) Population distribution by education

Education is one of the main factors affecting an individual's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours with regard to various aspects of life, including are at marriage. Table 6 shows the distribution of the educational statuses of the people in the sample households.

The total literacy rate of people above the age of five was 79%; the remaining 21% were illiterate. Among the educated, most (21%) had completed primary education. Almost three times as many females (31%) as males (11.4%) were illiterate (Table 6). The 2011 NDHS also shows that about 31% of women did not have any formal education, as compared to 14% of men (MOHP, New ERA and ICF International Inc., 2012).

Table 6 Educational status of the people

Educational Status	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Illiterate	198	11.4	514	30.9	712	20.9
Literate	196	11.3	222	13.4	418	12.3
Primary	404	23.2	305	18.4	709	20.8
Lower secondary	339	19.5	224	13.5	563	16.5
Secondary	312	17.9	221	13.3	533	15.7
Intermediate	166	9.5	122	7.3	288	8.5
Bachelor's	81	4.7	39	2.3	120	3.5
Master's and higher	44	2.5	15	0.9	59	1.7
Total	**1740**	**100**	**1662**	**100**	**3402**	**100**

Educational attainment in Nepal is very low among females, who are much more deprived than males. Except the just literate category, females were found in lesser percentage than the males. It shows that the educational difference still exist in the place.

g) Family structure of the people

The family structure of the people in the sample districts was found is given in Table 7.

The table 7 shows that the number of nuclear families is remarkable even among rural populations.

3.1.2 Composition of respondents who married young

a) Respondents who married young by district

During the household survey, male and female respondents who had married early were surveyed to find the causes and consequences of child marriage. Altogether 95 male respondents and 334 female respondents were surveyed.

Table 8 presents the composition of male and female respondents from all 15 sample districts.

Overall, about three and one-third times more females than males married early. No males who had married young were found in Baglung district because no males were at home during the household visits. Most were abroad, working. In terms of the gender perspective, the role of females is still limited to inside the house. It is males who work outside the house.

b) Respondents who married young by age

Table 9 presents the age composition of the respondents who had married young.

Table 9 shows that the composition of respondents ranges from below 19 years of age to above 60 years of age. This distribution follows the normal curve (Table 9).

Table 7 Type of family

Type of Family	N	%
Nuclear	2119	56.3
Joint	1646	43.7
Total	**3765**	**100**

Table 8 Distribution of respondents who married young by district

District	Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%
Morang	13	13.7	45	13.5
Khotang	1	1.1	7	2.1
Udaypur	2	2.1	15	4.5
Siraha	12	12.6	25	7.5
Rautahat	9	9.5	43	12.9
Sindhupalchowk	5	5.3	9	2.7
Makwanpur	10	10.5	26	7.8
Mustang	1	1.1	4	1.2
Baglung	0	0.0	14	4.2
Kapilvastu	15	15.8	34	10.2
Kalikot	4	4.2	9	2.7
Mugu	2	2.1	4	1.2
Bardiya	6	6.3	33	9.9
Kailali	13	13.7	49	14.7
Doti	2	2.1	17	5.1
Total	**95**	**100**	**334**	**100**

Table 9 Distribution of early married respondents by age category

Age category	Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%
19 and below	5	5.3	23	6.9
20-24	11	11.6	44	13.3
25-29	3	3.2	34	10.2
30-34	12	12.6	55	16.6
35-39	18	18.9	50	15.1
40-44	5	5.3	33	9.9
45-49	12	12.6	26	7.8
50-54	9	9.5	21	6.3
55-59	7	7.4	19	5.7
60 and above	13	13.7	27	8.1
Total	**95**	**100**	**332***	**100**

**Two female did not mentioned their age.*

3.1.3 Economic information

a) Population distribution by occupation

The CBS (2003) found that Nepal is largely an agricultural country though different people engage in different type of occupations to earn their livelihoods. Table 10 shows the major occupations of the people in the sample households.

This study found that almost 31% of household members were students and that 27.5% were involved in agriculture and animal husbandry. Only a few (2.8%) of active age were unemployed, more males than females. Moreover, the table illustrates that females were more involved than males in traditional jobs like agriculture and animal husbandry and housekeeping. Males, for their part, were more than twice as involved in service-related occupations and more than seven times as involved in foreign employment as females were (Table 10).

b) Food security by ecological region

Food security refers to the sufficiency of food produced on one's own land or the adequacy, availability, and accessibility of food. A household is considered food secure when its dwellers do not live in hunger or fear of starvation (Hunt, 2009, as cited in MOHP, New ERA and ICF International Inc., 2012). Food security normally depends on agricultural production in an area. Nepal's geographical differentiation has caused varying levels of food security as there is a difference in the fertility of the soil. The Terai is the grain house of Nepal with 88% of the fertile land and 23% of the total land. The hilly region, with 42% of the total land, is the largest area but it has only 10% of the total fertile land. The mountain region occupies 35% of the land but has little fertile land–just 2%.

In 1996, the World Food Summit defined food security as "the situation when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 2002, as cited in MOHP, New ERA and ICF International Inc., 2012). The interim constitution (2006-2007) of Nepal recognised food security as a fundamental human right for all citizens, a right reflected in the Three-Year Interim Plan (2010-2013). With respect to MDG 1, Nepal aims to reduce the proportion of the population living below a minimum level of dietary energy consumption to 25% by 2015 (NPC, 2010, as cited in MOHP, New ERA and ICF International Inc., 2012).

Table 11 shows the distribution of sample households by adequacy of food.

Table 11 demonstrates that food security by agricultural production in terms of its adequacy for consumption was unsatisfactory in all regions of Nepal: only 1.8% of all households had sufficient food production or access to food. All of them were found in the Terai region. In addition, 32% and 66% of all households had enough food for only 0 to 6 months and 7 to 12 months

Table 10 Major occupations of the people

Occupation	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Agriculture and animal husbandry	443	26.7	443	28.3	886	27.5
Service/teaching	113	6.8	48	3.1	161	5.0
Labor	79	4.8	18	1.1	97	3.0
Unemployed	55	3.3	35	2.2	90	2.8
Business	116	7.0	65	4.2	181	5.6
Wages	41	2.5	11	0.7	52	1.6
Housewife	0	0.0	421	26.9	421	13.1
Foreign employment	189	11.4	24	1.5	213	6.6
Others	82	4.9	51	3.3	133	4.1
Students	539	32.5	450	28.7	989	30.7
Total	**1657**	**100**	**1566**	**100**	**3223**	**100**

respectively. These families had to depend on sources other than their own production for survival.

The mountain region had the worst condition of food security as 40% can depend on their own agricultural production for less than six months. Households in the hills had the smallest proportion of severe food insecurity (about 28% compared to 40% in the mountains and 33% in the Terai).

c) Food security by age at marriage

When the relationship between food security and age at marriage is calculated, the following data is produced:

Interestingly, food security played a major role in determining age at marriage in the sample households. In those families where the food was adequate for a year or more 91% married at 19 and above years and the percentage of early marriages increased as food insecurity increased. The data reveals that food security has a positive impact on right age at marriage (Table 12).

3.2 Marriage-related information

3.2.1 Current marital status

Table 13 shows the current marital statuses of the respondents. Findings show that 26.7% of females but just 5.8% of males aged 15–19 years are already married. The data shows that child marriage among females is that of their male counterparts in the same age category.

Among respondents aged 20–24 years, 67.7% of females but 34.7% of males were already married. Child marriage is clearly more rampant among females than males.

Table 11 Food security by ecological region

Region		Duration of food security			
		0 to 6 Months	7 to 12 Months	More than 1 year	Total
Mountain	N	12	18	0	30
	%	40.0	60.0	0.0	100
Hill	N	50	130	0	180
	%	27.8	72.2	0.0	100
Terai	N	138	264	11	413
	%	33.4	63.9	2.7	100
Total	**N**	**200**	**412**	**11**	**623**
	%	**32.1**	**66.1**	**1.8**	**100**

Table 12 Food security by age at marriage

Adequacy of food	Age at marriage							
	18 and below years		19 and above years		Not stated		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
0 to 6 Month	87	44.6	107	54.9	1	0.5	195	100
7 to 12 Month	147	35.8	264	64.2	0	0.0	411	100
More than 1 year	1	9.1	10	90.9	0	0.0	11	100
Missing	6	24.0	19	76.0	0	0.0	25	100
Total	**1657**	**100**	**1566**	**100**	**3223**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Table 13 Current marital status of respondents

Age	Marital status of male					Percentage of respondents currently in union	Number of respondents
	Unmarried	Married	Separated	Divorced	Widowed		
15–19	94.2	5.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.8	242
20–24	65.3	34.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	34.7	213
25–29	30.3	69.1	0.6	0.0	0.0	69.1	175
30–34	7.4	92.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	92.6	121
35–39	1.9	97.2	0.0	0.9	0.0	97.2	107
40–44	0.0	100	0.0	0.0	0.0	100	92
45–49	1.0	96.9	0.0	1.0	1.0	96.9	98
50–54	1.3	93.7	1.3	0.0	3.8	93.7	79
55–59	1.5	89.7	1.5	0.0	7.4	89.7	68
60 and above	2.6	87.0	0.0	0.6	9.7	87.0	154
Total	**32.5**	**65.3**	**0.2**	**0.2**	**1.8**	**65.3**	**1349**

Age	Marital status of female					Percentage of respondents currently in union	Number of respondents
	Unmarried	Married	Separated	Divorced	Widowed		
15–19	73.3	26.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	26.7	221
20–24	31.4	67.7	0.0	0.0	0.9	67.7	220
25–29	13.3	85.5	0.6	0.0	0.6	85.5	173
30–34	0.8	98.4	0.8	0.0	0.0	98.4	127
35–39	0.9	94.7	0.9	0.0	3.5	94.7	114
40–44	0.0	98.2	0.9	0.0	0.9	98.2	109
45–49	1.2	91.5	2.4	0.0	4.9	91.5	82
50–54	1.5	76.9	1.5	0.0	20.0	76.9	65
55–59	1.6	81.3	0.0	1.6	15.6	81.3	64
60 and above	2.2	58.7	0.7	2.2	36.2	58.7	138
Total	**20.0**	**72.7**	**0.6**	**0.3**	**6.5**	**72.7**	**1313**

3.2.2 Type of marriage

A total of 1,962 people were married in the sample households. Table 14 presents the types of marriage.

Table 14 Type of marriage

	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Arranged	650	71.4	758	72.1	1408	71.8
Gandharva	45	4.9	51	4.9	96	4.9
Love	210	23.1	235	22.4	445	22.7
Others	6	0.7	7	0.7	13	0.7
Total	**911**	**100**	**1051**	**100**	**1962**	**100**

In the sample households, arranged marriages (72%) were practiced the most though 23% were love marriages and 5%, gandharva (winning a girl by impressing her with some performance) marriage. Interestingly, 13 other types of marriages were also noted.

The KII with the mukhiya of Kunjo VDC and the FGDs with boys and girls in Mustang district revealed that a unique type of marriage exists there. A boy who wishes to marry a girl meets her away from her family and describes how he will take care of her. Usually, a few of the boy's relatives also try to persuade the girl to run away with the boy. Finally, the girl becomes convinced and goes to the boy's home as his wife. There are no marriage rituals, no dowry, no involvement of the girl's family, no previous knowledge of the boy's status, no love, no dating, but, still, a married life is started.

FGDs with boys and girls of Udayapur revealed that mobile phones had caused early marriages where love is a common form of marriage. An 18-year-old Rai girl said that parents were educated so they wished to delay the marriages of their children but that the children themselves took part in love marriages.

Her observation suggests that the proportion of love marriages is increasing. The boys interviewed in Khotang also confirmed that the trend of child marriage is increasing largely due to love marriages. Girls, too, believed that love affairs started in school and that marriages occurred at an early age in Khotang. A 13-year-old Newar girl in the FGD explained that children forced their parents to organise marriage despite the fact that parents did not wish to do so. Her statement was validated by all the participants in the FGD.

In Kapilvastu district, too, love marriage among school–going teenagers seems to be the trend. FGDs with Muslim girls revealed that love marriage is even increasing among Muslim communities. They reported that one pregnant 15-year-old girl had committed suicide when she was not allowed to marry her lover and that this incident had intimidated parents into fulfilling the desires of their children. The Principal of Kapilvastu Multiple Campus confirmed that teenagers committed suicides for various reasons, including child marriage, and that, for this reason, parents accepted the demands of their children.

3.2.3 Prevalence of child marriage

Almost all participants in the FGDs with males and females in Mustang district reported that girls usually married at 14-16 years of age and boys at 16-18 years of age. This claim was confirmed during KIIs with the village mukhiya and the ex-chairman of ward no. 9 of Kunjo VDC. FDGs with girls in Morang revealed the same. One of the principals in Morang said the following regarding age at marriage:

It is a hopeless situation that many of our children, when they reach grade 8 or 9, starts to form romantic relationships and marry at an early age. Six months ago, one of my girl students in grade 6, at the age of 13, ran away with a boy aged 18.
(KII: Principal and health education teacher, Morang)

The FGD with girls in Makawanpur reported that the age at marriage was 9–18 years for both boys and girls. In an interview, the treasurer of PEACE Nepal in Makawanpur said that child marriage is more prevalent in the Tamang community, especially in western Daman (Budhichaur, Phaparbari). The person in charge of Basamadi Sub–Health Post in Makawanpur stated that child marriage is prevalent in the upper elevations of Basamadi among the Tamang community but that its prevalence was almost nil in urban areas.

However, one of the officers at Sindhuplchowk Women's and Children's Office said that while in the past people married before the age of 16, now they wait until they are 18-20 years of age. She did, however, acknowledge that child marriage was more prevalent in the Tamang,

Majhi and Dalit communities. The principal of Chautara Multiple Campus in Sindhupalchowk also agreed that in that past people married at 14–16 years of age and that the age is gradually increasing. The participants in the Doti, Morang, Kalikot, Rautahat and Mugu FGDs claimed that the age at marriage was increasing but those in Bardiya said it was decreasing. One of the girls in Bardiya reported:

Earlier our mothers used to marry before menstruation, but later our elder brothers and sisters married at 25– 30 years of age. Recently, however, our friends and younger sisters we have started to marry at 15–18 years of age. (FGD: Dhungana girl, 18 years, Bardiya)

At a FGD with girls in Kailali, one informant point out similar tapering and then resurgence in child marriage:

Child marriage was very prevalent 10 years ago. It was under control 5–7 years before and it is again increasing at present. (FGD: A 13-year-old Shetthi girl's claim based on her parents' experience, Kailali)

The girls gave as examples their own friends, who had recently married at the age of 15 years.

The resurgence in early marriage was confirmed by male participants in an FGD in Udayapur. One 16-year-old Rai boy said that he saw more love child marriages in recent times. Similarly, Jujubhai Maharjan of Plan Office in Biratnagar said that child marriages have increased of late because children themselves are getting involved. Ravindra Yadav, principal of and health education teacher at a school in Biratnagar sub-metropolitan city, Morang, also claimed that mobiles, television, and cinemas influenced children in such a way that they did not fear running away from home to marry.

Overall, these various findings show that patterns of early marriage exist in different forms in different parts of the country.

a) Median age at marriage by district

UNICEF (n.d.) says that about one-third of women aged 20–24 years old in the developing world were married as children. According to UNICEF, child marriage is most common in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, but there are big differences in prevalence among the countries of the same region. While data from 47 countries show that, overall, the median age at first marriage is gradually increasing, this improvement has been limited primarily to girls of families with higher incomes (as cited in UNICEF, n.d.). Overall, the pace of change remains slow. While 48% of women aged 45–49 years old were married before the age of 18, the proportion has only dropped to 35% aged 20–24 years old (UNICEF, Progress for Children, 2010) (as cited in UNICEF, n.d.).

The median age at marriage in the 15 districts is given in Table 15.

Findings reveal that the lowest median ages at marriage for both males and females are in Mustang (18 for male and 15 for female) followed by Kailali and Kapilbastu. The average median age at marriage for the sample as a whole is 20 years, 21 for males and 18 for females.

b) Median age at marriage by age category

The median age at marriage by age category is given in Table 16.

The median ages at marriage of the people who were currently in the age groups 15–19 and 20–24 were 16 and 19 years respectively. Interestingly, for all age groups above 25 years, the median age at marriage was more than 19 years. Even for those above 60, the median age at marriage was 20 years. This indicates that child marriage is more common today than it was in earlier generations. However, it might be due to small sample size and further research might require to confirm the phenomenon.

Table 16 also shows that the median age of females in all age categories is less than that for males. Nepali females usually marry earlier than males since males always look for much younger partners.

Table 15 Median age at marriage by district

District	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Total (N)
Morang	22	20	21	351
Khotang	22	20	21	57
Udayapur	21	18	20	97
Siraha	22	18	20	182
Rautahat	21	17	19	195
Sindhupalchok	23	20	21	101
Makawanpur	21	18	19	135
Mustang	18	15	17	22
Baglung	22	19	20	98
Kapilbastu	19	16	17	174
Kalikot	20	16	18	29
Mugu	23	20	21	27
Bardiya	22	18	20	143
Kailali	19	16	17	260
Doti	21	18	19	75
Total	**21**	**18**	**20**	**1946**

Table 16 Median age at marriage by age category

Age Group	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Total (N)
15-19	17	16	16	72
20-24	19	18	19	225
25-29	21	19	20	271
30-34	22	18	20	236
35-39	20	17	19	217
40-44	21	18	20	201
45-49	22	18	20	177
50-54	22	18	20	141
55-59	22	18	20	129
Above 60	22	16	20	277
Total	**21**	**18**	**20**	**1946**

c) Child marriage by education

Education plays a significant role in determining age at marriage. The educated are more likely to marry after the legal age of marriage than the uneducated and illiterate. Table 17 shows educational status and age at marriage.

Table 17 shows that 21.5% of illiterate males and 51% of illiterate females married under 19 years of age. These proportions were the highest of all categories of educational status, revealing that the occurrence of child marriage is most prevalent among the illiterate, especially females. The higher the education of respondents, whether male or female, is, the lower the occurrence of marriage under 19 years of age. For example, less than 2% of males and 1% of females who held Bachelor's or Master's degree married under 19 years of age.

Table 17 also shows that education is statistically significant in influencing age at marriage among females but not among males. Illiterate females do marry earlier than literate females and the correlation is not by chance.

In most FGDs, children said that education had reduced child marriage to its present level but also agreed that the greatest number of child marriages was due to love affairs in school settings.

Children are now aware of child rights through schools but they have used their rights to marry at an early age. (FGD: Basnet boy, 19 years, Khotang)

As earlier stated, a 13-year old girl in grade 6 ran away from school in Bardiya. It is a matter of concern to reduce marriage–related activities in schools.

d) Child marriage by migration

Migration is a form of geographical or spatial mobility between one geographical unit and another, generally involving a change in residence from the place of origin to the place of destination. It takes ordinarily takes place when people judge that there is a comparative advantage in terms of social, economic, environmental and political aspects in living in the place they would like to move over the current place of living. Migration statuses and age at marriage are as follows:

Table 18 shows that there was no relationship between migration status and age at marriage. The survey found that 42% of both migrants and non-migrants got married below 19 years of age.

e) Child marriage by location

The practice of child marriage is different in different places, including ecological region and rural–urban setting. The following table shows those differences.

Table 19 shows that the prevalence of child marriage varies in percentage in different locations but that the difference is not statistically significant. Marriages below 19 years of age were most prevalent in the mountains (47.4%) followed by the Terai (44.5%) and least in the hilly region (36.1%). The far–western development region of Nepal had the highest number (59%) of child marriages and the East had the least number (30.9%), but there is no statistically significant difference both areas need to be addressed similarly while providing anti-child marriage interventions.

In terms of rural-urban settings, the data is astonishing because the cases of child marriage seemed to be more in urban than rural areas. In rural and urban areas, 42% and 43.9% of people married under 19 years of age respectively.

Table 17 Percentage distribution of child marriage by educational status and sex

Educational Status	Male			Female		
	N	%	95%CI	N	%	95%CI
Illiterate	51	21.5	15.5–27.5	304	51.2	43.7–58.6
Literate	42	17.7	9.4–26.1	97	16.3	12.4–20.2
Primary	51	21.5	11.6–31.4	57	9.6	6.1–13.1
Lower secondary	46	19.4	14.6–24.2	63	10.6	7.6–13.6
Secondary	24	10.1	5.4–14.9	46	7.7	3.9–11.6
Intermediate	16	6.8	2.2–11.3	22	3.7	1.6–5.8
Bachelor's	3	1.3	-0.4–2.9	2	0.3	0.1–0.8
Master's and higher	4	1.7	0.5–2.9	3	0.5	0.3–1.3
Total	**237**	**100**		**594**	**100**	

Table 18 Age at marriage by migration status

Migration status	Age at marriage				Total	
	18 and below		19 and above			
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Non–migrants	651	42.8	870	57.2	1521	100
Inter–district Migrants	180	42.4	245	57.6	425	100
Total	**831**	**42.7**	**1115**	**57.3**	**1946**	**100**

Table 19 Percentage distribution of child marriage by location

Location		Child marriage			Total	
		N	%	95%CI	N	%
Ecological Belt	Mountain	37	47.4	24.8–70.1	78	100
	Hill	205	36.1	26.3–45.8	568	100
	Terai	589	44.8	32.5–57.0	1316	100
Development Region	Eastern	215	30.9	19.8–41.9	696	100
	Central	178	40.8	25.4–56.3	436	100
	Western	161	54.8	36.6–72.9	294	100
	Mid Western	78	39.2	15.6–62.8	199	100
	Far Western	199	59.1	39.9–78.1	337	100
Rural–Urban Settlement	Rural	680	42.0	34.2–49.8	1618	100
	Urban	151	43.9	32.3–55.5	344	100
Total		**831**	**42.4**	**34.5–50.2**	**1962**	**100**

f) Child marriage by age category and sex

The age category of early married population by sex is given in Table 20.

The information provided in Table 20 is quite astonishing as there is no significant difference between the percentage of males and females who married young in different age categories. Among the age groups of 15–19, 20–24, 25–29 and 30–34, in percentage, there is a big gap between the statuses of child marriage among males and females but statistically there is no significant difference. However, the age groups 35–39, 40–44, 45–49 and 50–54 show a significant difference in the prevalence of child marriage among males and females. The data proves that the status of females was poorer than that of males in the past. Moreover, this data also explains that the males and females of present time marry early but there is no any statistically significant different in male and female. Hence, the programmes of awareness and intervention should be equally focused among boys and girls.

To judge the prevalence of child marriage, we consider the incidence of child marriage in the age group 20–24 years. According to the above table, the prevalence for females was 52.3% and for males, 33.8% (46.2% for both sexes). This finding is compatible to UNICEF's estimation of 51% (UNICEF, 2011).

Overall 56.5% of females were married before 19 years of age, but just 26% of males were married at the age. About 16% of individuals aged 15-19 married below 19 years of age. Females were more than four times likely to have done so than males. Similarly, 46% of the total population aged 20-24 years married below 19 years of age. This is the second highest percentage in all age categories. A total of 33.8% of males and 52% of females currently aged 20–24 years were married before 19 years of age. The data is far worse for older females: 63.7% of those aged 35–39 years were married before they were 19. Less than half of that proportion (31%) of males of this age married so young.

Though the data varies, the 2011 NDHS found a similar trend. According to it, 28.8% of females and 6.9% of to were married by 15–19 years of age (MOHP, New ERA and ICF International Inc., 2012). Nepal is predominately a patriarchal society where women have a much lower status than men. It is girl children who suffer most from this

Focus group discussion with school children in Dahafatungaun, Kalikot

discriminatory attitude. In a male dominant country, females are being victim of various socio-cultural practices. Child marriage is seen more among females than males. In a society which has seemingly the highest rate of son preference in the world, girls are a liability from the time they are born. Sons continue the blood linkage; daughters do not. Sons look after their parents in their old age; daughters get married off somewhere. Consequently, daughters are somebody else's assets, to be somehow reared, brought up and given in marriage as soon as possible.

g) Child marriage by religion

Nepal is a country with various religious groups, each of which has a different attitude toward child marriage. The age at marriage by religion is shown in Table 21.

The table above shows that Muslims practice the greatest proportion (60.5%) of marriages below 19 years of age, followed by Hindus (43.5%). Christians practiced the least numbers. Findings show that in all religions, females married young more than males. There was statistically significant difference in the prevalence of child marriage among males and females in all religious groups except Christianity.

h) Child marriage by caste/ethnicity

Each ethnic group has different beliefs about the importance of early marriage. According to Dhital (2010), Majhi and Danuwar communities insist on the early marriage of their daughters because the death rituals demand the presence of married daughters who need to present the Holy Spirit with a pot of home-made whiskey and a chicken for the peace of the departed souls. Among the indigenous Ghasiyaran (grass cutters) and Chidimar (bird hunters) of Nepalgunj, child marriage for both sons and daughters is a social norm; there can be no other way. Among the orthodox Brahmins and Chhetris in the Karnali Zone

Table 20 Percentage distribution of child marriage among respondents by age and sex category

Age Category	Male		Female		Both Sexes		Total
	%	95%CI	%	95%CI	%	95%CI	
15–19	5.9	3.3–08.5	9.9	2.3–17.5	8.8	2.3–15.3	73
20–24	33.8	19.1–48.5	52.3	39.2–65.4	46.2	37.2–55.3	225
25–29	18.7	7.1–30.3	44.7	29.1–60.3	33.1	20.3–45.7	272
30–34	22.3	5.0–39.7	53.2	37.2–69.2	38.7	21.6–55.7	238
35–39	30.8	15.4–46.1	63.7	48.0–79.4	47.7	33.9–61.9	218
40–44	20.7	10.4–30.9	50.5	36.6–64.4	36.8	25.7–47.9	201
45–49	24.7	14.2–35.1	57.0	44.9–69.2	39.9	28.8–51.0	178
50–54	22.4	11.7–33.0	52.4	37.0–67.8	43.0	28.9–57.0	142
55–59	30.8	13.7–47.8	57.8	40.6–75.0	36.9	23.6–50.3	130
60 and above	23.7	15.3–32.1	59.3	44.7–73.8	40.0	29.8–50.3	285
Total	**26.0**	**16.9–35.1**	**56.5**	**45.7–67.4**	**42.2**	**32.2–52.4**	**1962**

Table 21 Percentage distribution of child marriage by religion

Religion	Male			Female			Total		
	%	95%CI	N	%	95%CI	N	%	95%CI	N
Hindu	26.6	16.9–36.2	764	58.4	48.2–68.6	891	43.1	33.9–53.6	1655
Buddhist	20.2	12.2–28.2	113	37.4	30.8–44.0	113	29.2	21.8–35.8	226
Christian	12.5	11.5–36.5	8	40.0	7.4–87.4	10	27.8	–	18
Muslim	36.8	24.5–49.2	19	79.2	73.2–85.2	24	60.5	58.2–62.8	43
Others	100		2	100			100		4
Total	**26.0**	**16.9–35.1**	**906**	**56.5**	**45.7–67.4**	**1040**	**42.7**	**32.3–52.5**	**1946**

of the Far-West, girls need to get married before they attain puberty to be socially accepted. The age at marriage of various castes is shown in Table 22.

Table 22 shows that 87% of Terai Dalits and 64.5% of Hill Dalits married before 19 years of age, suggesting that child marriage is most prevalent among Dalits. It is statistically significant that Dalits, both hill and Terai, married earlier than both hill upper castes and hill janajatis for both male and female categories.

Another statistically significant difference is that, among the hill upper caste, 15% of males and 51.5% of females were married below 19 years of age. In fact, the difference between females and males was statistically significant for all the other castes too. Even among Terai and hill Dalits, where large proportions of males marry early, the difference between males and females is significant.

FGDs with boys and girls and KIIs with distinguished persons in different districts identified the following castes as having the highest number of child marriages in their districts given in Table 23.

It is noticeable that all informants reported that Dalits and other disadvantages castes were more involved in child marriages than socio–economically advantaged ones. The Dalits of Nepal are a disadvantaged group facing several social and cultural biases. Their poor economic status has resulted in a high prevalence of child marriage among them.

Table 22 Percentage distribution of child marriage by caste

Caste	Male			Female			Total		
	N	%	95%CI	N	%	95%CI	N	%	95%CI
Hill upper caste	43	15	11.8–18.2	186	51.5	41.5–61.6	229	35.4	29.0–41.7
Hill janajati	40	19.7	12.8–26.6	81	37.9	28.9–46.8	121	29.2	21.3–36.7
Hill Dalit	53	45.7	28.9–62.5	114	79.2	68.1–90.2	167	64.5	52.3–76.2
Terai caste	52	36.1	19.1–53.1	109	70.3	60.3–80.4	161	53.8	40.7–67.0
Terai janajati	33	25.4	12.1–38.7	70	50	41.0–59.0	103	38.2	27.4–48.8
Terai Dalit	10	71.4	51.4–91.4	17	100	–	27	87.1	74.7–99.3
Muslim	6	35.3	20.4–50.1	17	85	77.8–92.2	23	62.2	59.8–64.5
Total	**237**	**26.0**	**16.9–35.1**	**594**	**56.5**	**45.7–67.3**	**831**	**42.7**	**32.3–52.4**

Table 23 Major castes involved in child marriage by district

	District	Caste
1	Morang	Terai castes (Yadav),
2	Khotang	Dalit
3	Udayapur	Rai, Chhetri
4	Siraha	Terai Dalit, Terai castes
5	Rautahat	Terai Dalits (Musahar), Muslim
6	Sindhupalchok	Dalit, Tamang, Majhi
7	Makawanpur	Dalit, Tamang,
8	Mustang	Dalit, Thakali
9	Baglung	Dalit, Bhramin, Chhetri, Magar
10	Kapilbastu	Muslim, Terai castes (Kurmi)
11	Kalikot	Dalit, Bhramin
12	Mugu	Dalit
13	Bardiya	Dalit
14	Kailali	Tharu, Dalit
15	Doti	Dalit, Chhetri

3.2.4 Decision–making role in marriage

The right to decide whom to marry and when to marry remains with those who are getting married. However, people think that parents (or other members of the family) should make the decision for their children.

All the FGDs revealed that nowadays boys and girls make the decision regarding their marriages themselves. One girl explained:

Earlier it was the right of fathers and mothers to organise the marriages of their children. The parents were illiterate, so they used to organise early marriages. Today everybody is educated and children are making their own decisions and marrying of their own choice but early. (FGD: Joshi Girl, 16 years, Bardiya)

However, many participants also said that their decisions were influenced by their spouse-to-be. One 15-year-old Mandal at a FGD in Morang claimed that some decisions were influenced by neighbours and relatives too. Neighbours start talking about marrying off a girl when she is grown up, so parents have to get their children, especially girls, married. In Baglung, FGDs with boys and girls revealed that decisions about marriages nowadays are made by children themselves, but in the case of girls, it is still parents who decide. Parents are insecure about their girl children and organise their marriages as soon as possible.

a) Decision-making role in marriage by sex

The males in Nepali families are empowered and can make their own decisions about marriage. When household heads were asked who decided the marriages of people in their families, the following data was obtained in Table 24.

Table 24 shows that the girls were more in the control of others than boys were with regard to decisions about their marriage. Overall, the major actor to decide upon the marriage of children was both parents (almost 60%). They decided in 63% of cases involving daughter and 55.9% involving sons. Females were less empowered than males in making decisions about marriages: overall, 25.4% their marriage on their own, 28.3% of males and 22.9% of females.

b) Decision-maker by age at marriage and sex

It is important to identify whether the decision-makers of the family in marriage-related activities influences early marriage. The decision-making role of different people by age at marriage of males and females is shown in Table 25.

Of the total marriages (N=1946) for which age was stated, the findings revealed that there was a difference in terms of decision-makers' roles in the child marriage of males and females. Most parents, grandparents and others were

Table 24 Decision–making role in marriage by sex

Decision–maker(s)	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Father	61	6.7	69	6.6	130	6.6
Mother	37	4.1	42	4.0	79	4.0
Both father and mother	509	55.9	662	63	1171	59.7
Grandmother	5	0.5	6	0.6	11	0.6
Grandfather	2	0.2	2	0.2	4	0.2
Both grandmother and grandfather	5	0.5	3	0.3	8	0.4
Friend	2	0.2	4	0.4	6	0.3
Self	258	28.3	241	22.9	499	25.4
Others	32	3.5	22	2.1	54	2.8
Total	**911**	**100**	**1051**	**100**	**1962**	**100**

Table 25 Decision–maker by age at marriage and sex

Decision–maker(s)	At the marriage					
	18 and below years			19 and above years		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
	%	%	N	%	%	N
Father	30.0	70.0	70	66.1	33.9	59
Mother	25.0	75.0	32	63.6	36.4	44
Both father and mother	27.6	72.4	533	57.2	42.8	629
Grandmother	44.4	55.6	9	50.0	50.0	2
Grandfather	33.3	66.7	3	100	0.0	1
Both grandmother and grandfather	25.0	75.0	4	100	0.0	4
Friend	50.0	50.0	2	25.0	75.0	4
Self	28.4	71.6	155	62.5	37.5	341
Others	43.5	56.5	23	71.0	29.0	31
Total	**28.5**	**71.5**	**831**	**60.0**	**40.0**	**1115**

found significantly higher in deciding upon the early marriages of females in the family. Even among those people who decided themselves to marry before 19 years of age, 71.5% were females. This data indicates that females, whether on their own or through others' decisions, were more likely to be married as a child than males.

c) Decisions about marriage of respondents who married young

Respondents who married young were asked who had made the decision about their marriages. As was analysed above, child marriage is considered a very bad practice by Nepali but it is not yet prevented. An attempt was made to collect information about who had decided that the respondents would marry young. Table 26 presents the decision-makers regarding the respondents' child marriage.

Table 26 also indicates that most decisions regarding Child marriage were taken by the father, mother or both. Only 24.4% of respondents reported that they had decided themselves. Other decision-makers were friends (1.5%) and others (4.6%).

Table 26 Major decision–maker regarding child marriage in family

Decision–maker(s)	N=418	Percent
Father	73	22.3
Mother	47	14.3
Both father and mother	198	60.4
Self	80	24.4
Friend	5	1.5
Others	15	4.6

**Multiple responses*

Table 27 Right to make decision of marriage

Decision -maker(s)	N=332	Percent
Father and mother	182	56.5
Relatives	4	1.2
Self	129	40.1
Others	7	2.2

The respondents were asked about who has the right to decide upon the marriages of people in the family. Table 27 lays out their responses.

About 56.5% respondents still believed that the right to make decisions about a child's marriage lies with the father and mother and 40.1% said the right is that of the individual involved. A very small percent said that the right to decide about child marriage belongs to relatives and others

The respondents were also asked about the decisions taken by women regarding different activities so that their gender roles could be examined. The Table 28 presents their responses.

It is evident from Table 28 that women have little involvement in taking decisions regarding economic business (20.6%), household and social work (36.6%), and education and training (44%). In other areas, such as child birth and caring of child and health matters their participation seemed to be satisfactory. The data clearly indicates that women should be made aware enough that they are empowered in decision-making.

3.2.5 Attitudes toward child marriage

a). Attitudes of household heads towards child marriage

The opinions of household heads about child marriage are important in the effort to prevent child marriage as well as to implement programmes on child marriage issues. The responses of those surveyed are presented in Table 29.

Table 28 Decisions regarding different activities by female

Activities	N=533	Percent
Childbirth and caring for a child	119	49.0
Health matters	168	69.1
Economic business	50	20.6
Education and training	107	44.0
Household and social work	89	36.6

**Multiple responses*

More than 90% of household heads said that child marriage is bad or very bad and only one person said that it is very good. Just 3.76% said that it is good. Clearly parents are not in favor of child marriage. However, given that only 18.1% condemned it as very bad, one must conclude that parents have only a weakly negative attitude towards child marriage.

The qualitative information of Makawanpur district supported the above analysis that most cases of child marriage occurring in the district without parental consent. Parents are aware that they should marry their sons and daughters only after they turn 20 years of age but youngsters marry (carry out love marriages) without informing their parents. None of the KII subjects supported the practice of child marriage but the village mukhiya of Kunjo VDC in Mustang did have a supportive voice. He said:

We should not try to prevent today's generation from fulfilling their desires. They are happy to have sex at an early age, and this can't be stopped. Our children are able to view porn films, have mobiles to contact their partners and after all this, they are aroused to have sex. The easiest way is to marry.
(KII: Village Mukhiya, Kunjo VDC, Mustang)

In contrast, ex-chairperson of one of wards in the same place, was against this practice and cursed his own grandson for marrying a Thakali girl at the age of 15 years. His grandson took away a girl who was returned by her parents not because she married early, but because she married a Dalit boy. This incident shows that child marriage is somewhat allowed in the area but that caste discrimination still exists. The field officer of the children's programme of KIRDARC office in Kalikot had a similar view:

The parents in the district let children marry themselves so that the police will not take action against them. Thus, they do not convince their children to marry at the right age.
(KII: Field Officer, Children's Programme, KIRDARC Office, Kalikot)

Household survey in Prempurgonahi, Rautahat

In contrast, most KIIs and FGDs show that parents now have a negative attitude towards the practice of child marriage.

b). Attitudes of people who married young towards child marriage

During the survey, an attempt was made to collect information on the attitudes of male and female respondents who had married early towards child marriage. Their opinions were scaled into four categories: good, indifferent, bad and very bad. Table 30 shows their opinion.

About 90% of respondents consider child marriage bad or very bad. In contrast, just 6.61% opined that it is good and 3.3% of males and 6.61% of females were indifferent. The percentage of people who were strongly against child marriage was only 13.5%, showing that they were only somewhat negative. In order to eliminate or lower the cases of child marriage, the community should have a strong aversion to it.

Table 29 Attitudes of household heads towards child marriage

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Very Good	1	0.16
Good	23	3.76
Indifferent	26	4.25
Bad	451	73.69
Very Bad	111	18.14
Total	**612**	**100**

Table 30 Attitudes of people who married young towards child marriage

Opinion	Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%
Good	6	6.5	20	6.0
Indifferent	3	3.3	22	6.6
Bad	74	80.4	247	74.0
Very bad	9	9.8	45	13.5

3.3 Causes of child marriage

Child marriage has several causes–social, cultural, religious, political, demographic and economic. In many cases, a mixture of these causes traps children in marriages without their consent. UNICEF (n.d.) says that, where it is prevalent, child marriage functions as a social norm. Marrying girls under 18 years old is rooted in gender discrimination, encouraging premature and continuous child bearing and giving preference to boys' education. According to UNFPA (2005), child marriage is a health issue as well as a human rights violation because it takes place almost exclusively within the context of poverty and gender inequality and also has social, cultural and economic dimensions. Child marriage is also a strategy for economic survival as families marry off their daughters at an early age to reduce their economic burden (UNICEF, n.d.).

There are many causes of Child Marriage in Nepal. Its socio–cultural, economic, political, geographical and educational aspects have helped in fostering it. The causes of child marriage identified from the FGDs and KIIs are listed in Table 31.

Table 31 shows the qualitative information on the causes of marriage in different districts. It illustrates that the trend of love marriage has been increased dramatically, thereby contributing to the prevalence of child marriage.

Laxmi Nepal, Child Rights Officer in Bardiya, found that the children of child clubs were also involved in child marriages after get involved in love affairs with their own members. She said sadly that they were provided with the information about their rights only and not about their responsibilities. Similarly, Purna Kumar Nepali, official of the WVIN office in Kailali said that because Tharus are economically poor and cannot organise the timely marriage of their children, children are compelled to marry on their own and that they usually do so at an early age. He said that the other major cause of child marriage is a cultural one, as the mukhiya's order to marry at an early age is followed by everyone. This was confirmed by Shanti Thakali, a Field Officer at the CARE Nepal office in Kailali. She said that there is a practice of organising marriage of girl early so that the parents can earn credit for piety (*punya*) after the *Kanyadan*.

Table 31 Causes of child marriage by district

S.N.	District	Major Causes of Child Marriage
1	Morang	– Love marriage – Influence of mobiles, the Internet and televisions on children – Some guardians become insecure about their daughters when they reach 8th or 9th grade – To save dowry money – Tradition
2	Khotang	– Love marriage – Influence of mobiles, the Internet and televisions on children – Poor control of parents over children
3	Udayapur	– Love marriage – Influence of mobiles, the Internet and televisions on children
4	Siraha	– Lack of education – Love marriage – Poverty – Influence of mobiles, the Internet and televisions on children – Tradition – To save dowry money in the case of a girl child
5	Rautahat	– To protect children from conflict – Could not raise the children at home due to poverty – Social pressure – Peer pressure – Illiteracy – A large number of children – To fulfil the need for human resources at home

S.N.	District	Major Causes of Child Marriage
6	Sindhupalchok	– To protect children from conflict – Could not raise the children at home due to poverty – Social pressure – Peer pressure – Illiteracy – A large number of children – To fulfil the need for human resources at home
7	Makawanpur	– Tradition of early marriage of girls – To fulfill the need for human resources at home – Generational respect (grandparents' wish to play with grandchildren) – To fulfil sexual desire – Poverty
8	Mustang	– Love marriage – Influence of mobiles, the Internet and televisions on children – Poverty – To fulfil sexual desire
9	Baglung	– Love marriage – Influence of mobiles, the Internet and televisions on children – Insecurity of parents about their daughters
10	Kapilbastu	– Love marriage – Influence of mobiles, the Internet and televisions on children – Tradition – Poverty
11	Kalikot	– Love marriage – Influence of mobiles, the Internet and televisions on children
12	Mugu	– Lack of awareness about the right age for marriage among parents – Poverty – To preserve social prestige; otherwise, children will bring a spouse of another caste
13	Bardiya	– Love marriage – Influence of mobiles, the Internet and televisions on children – Lack of love for girl children at home, so they run away with anyone who loves them – To protect tradition and protect family prestige
14	Kailali	– Love marriage – Children marry to show they are grown up – For sexual intercourse – To fulfil the need for human resources at home – To protect tradition and protect family prestige – Parents' and society's desire to organise the marriage of daughters immediately after menstruation – Lack of education
15	Doti	– Love marriage – Parental pressure – Poverty – To fulfil the need for human resources at home

3.3.1 Causes of child marriage among respondents who married young

The responses of male and female respondents who married early about the causes of such marriage are presented in Table 32 below.

Table 32 shows that more than half (52.7%) of the child marriages of males and 67.1% of those of females occurred because of parental pressure. Another leading cause among males was for support for household chores (45.2%) whereas this cause was insignificant (1.2%) among females. About 30% of child marriages among both sexes occurred due to cultural influences. Other responses, including personal volition, poverty and lack of education were not very significant. The analysis clearly demonstrated that child marriage in the past occurred due to parental desire rather than the desire of the individuals involved.

a) Reasons child marriages were organised by household heads

Household heads were asked why early marriages happened in their homes. Table 33 presents their responses.

It was found that most (32.1% each) child marriages happened because of either the willingness of the children themselves or family or social pressure. Poverty was a factor in only 6% of cases.

Table 32 Reasons behind early marriage by sex

Reasons	Male		Female	
	N=150	%	N=463	%
Parental pressure	49	52.7	222	67.1
Finding a good spouse	2	2.2	19	5.7
Self desire	13	14.0	50	15.1
Cultural influence/tradition	28	30.1	87	26.3
Social prestige	6	6.5	7	2.1
Support for household chores	42	45.2	4	1.2
Poverty	4	4.3	34	10.3
Lack of knowledge	5	5.4	34	10.3
Continuation of generation	1	1.1	0	0.0
Prevention from alleged marriage	0	0.0	2	0.6
Difficulty in raising many children	0	0.0	3	0.9
Don't know	0	0.0	1	0.3

**Multiple responses*

Table 33 Reasons of child marriage

Reasons	Cases	
	N=183	%
To support the family in household activities	23	14.2
Willingness of children/self desire	52	32.1
Family pressure	52	32.1
Poverty/couldn't raise them due to poverty	10	6.2
Lack of knowledge/lack of awareness	3	1.9
Right spouse was found	12	7.4
Social prestige	5	3.1
Tradition	17	10.5
NA	9	5.6

**Multiple responses*

The principal of Chautara Multiple Campus, Sindhupalchowk, said that parents who have many daughters still organise early marriages. The field officer of the CARE Nepal office in Doti also stated that child marriage was still prevalent among poor families in the district.

b) Reasons for not organising child marriage by households heads

Those household heads who had not organised the early marriages of their children were also asked the reasons why not. The findings are shown in Table 34.

It is evident from Table 34 that those parents who were aware of the rights of their children to education, livelihood and health delayed their marriages. The fact that about 42% parents did not organise the early marriage of their children in order to let them study indicates a good level of awareness among parents about the necessity of education for their children. Interestingly, poverty was a factor which both increased and decreased child marriages: just as it prompted 6% to arrange and early marriage, it also rendered 5% of parents unable to do so.

3.3.2 Knowledge of legal age of marriage among household heads

Knowledge of the legal age of marriage is an important factor that determines that marriage occurs at the right age. If people don't have this information, they are bound to practice their own culture and organise the marriages of their children at an early age. Household heads provided the following information regarding their knowledge.

Table 34 Reasons for not organising the early marriage of children

Reasons	N=882	%
To let them study	228	42.4
To prepare them for a livelihood	227	42.2
To protect their health	190	35.3
Right age yet to come	75	13.9
Poverty	27	5.0
Threat of law	25	4.6
Child's resistance	21	3.9
To protect from workload	19	3.5
Others	70	13.1

**Multiple responses*

Table 35 shows that about 53% of household heads had no knowledge about the legal age of marriage. This might be one cause of the prevalence of child marriages in the survey districts.

3.4 Consequences of child marriage

There are various negative effects of child marriage on the young couple, especially the girl. UNICEF (2006) links the consequence of child marriage with MDGs. According to it, child marriage is both a response to deprivation and a harmful practice that keeps families ensnared in poverty. Married children are generally isolated—removed from their immediate families, taken out of school and denied interaction with their peers and communities. For girls, early pregnancy leads to high risks, including death during delivery, and jeopardises the health of these young mothers and their babies. Teenage girls are more susceptible than mature women to sexually transmitted diseases. Because marriage before age 18 is very prevalent in many struggling countries, the practice becomes an obstacle to nearly every development goal–eradicating poverty and hunger (MDG 1); achieving universal primary education (MDG 2); promoting gender equality (MDG 3); protecting children's lives (4); and improving health (MDGs 5 and 6).

An attempt was made to find the consequences of child marriage from different perspectives. The respondents were asked some questions about the consequences of child marriage and their responses were presented under different headings. The major consequence perceived by the participants of the FGDs conducted in the 15 survey districts is given in Table 36.

Table 35 Knowledge of legal age of marriage among household heads

Knowledge	N	%
Yes	300	47.2
No	336	52.8
Total	**636**	**100**

Table 36 Consequences of child marriage witnessed by FGD participants

District	Health Aspect	Educational Aspect	Economic Aspect	Social Aspect
Morang	– Early pregnancy – Disabled children are born – Breast cancer – Stillbirth – Uterine prolapse – Early senescence – Risky labor	– Drop out of school – Poor education	– Large number of children	– Contribute to girl trafficking
Khotang	–	– Drop out of school	–	– Family conflict – Divorces
Udayapur	– Death of infant	–	–	– Family conflict
Siraha	– Death of mother and child – Weakness among females – Uterine prolapse – Early pregnancy – Malnutrition of mother and child	–	– Poor economy – Large family size	– Poor understanding between husband and wife – Hatred by husband in later life
Rautahat	– Damage to body – Miscarriage – Suicide	– Could not study well	– Low–paid jobs	– Increase in population
Sindhupalchok	– Damage to body of females – Miscarriage – Mental tension – Disabled children are born	– No schooling for daughters–in–law	– Increased workload for boys and girls – Poor economy – Large number of children	– Polygamy
Makawanpur	– Miscarriage – Problem in uterus	– Lack of Education	– Unemployment	–
Mustang	– Miscarriage – Maternal death – Problem in uterus	– Drop out of school – Poor education	– Cannot find a good job – Unemployed	– Family quarrel – Poor status in society
Baglung	– Mental tension – Weakness among females – Uterine prolapse	– Could not study well	– Increased workload for girls	–
Kapilbastu	– Miscarriage – Suicide – Mental tension	– Drop out of school – Poor education – No schooling for daughters–in–law	– Unemployed	– Family conflict – Poor involvement in social activities

District	Health Aspect	Educational Aspect	Economic Aspect	Social Aspect
Kalikot	– Miscarriage – Disabled children are born	– Drop out of school	–	–
Mugu	–	–	–	–
Bardiya	– Miscarriage – Poor health of mother and child – Uterine prolapse	–	–	– Family conflict
Kailali	– Miscarriage – Poor health of mother and child – Uterine prolapse Stillbirth	– Drop out of school	–	–
Doti	–	–	–	– Family conflict

Almost all of the adverse consequences identified by the FGD participants in the districts were related to females and most had to do with physical health. All the boys and girls said miscarriage was a problem among females who married young. A few cases the children had witnessed were very gloomy. One such case is narrated below.

A Case study of the consequences of child marriage for a girl

Rita (name changed) was born in 2053 B.S. in a middle–class Brahmin family in Chitwan. Her mother died soon after she was born. Her mother had married young. Her father married again. Ms. Rita somehow managed to live despite the hardships her stepmother subjected her to and continued her education up to grade 9. Then, a boy, Shyam (name changed) of Kailali proposed to Rita. She refused at first, but the boy promised to love her throughout her life and even allow her to study more. Because she was deprived of love and affection from her family, she believed his glib words. Rita ran away from her village with Shyam and came to Kailali in 2067 B.S. at the age of 14. She immediately became pregnant and delivered her first baby at the age of 15. Despite the workload and dropping out of school,all was somehow going well in the family until, accidentally, her baby died at the age of three months. Her husband and mother–in–law were angry and blamed her for the death of the child. Her in–laws started to hate her and pressured her to leave their home. She was later dragged out of the home. She is homeless and in big trouble at present.

The above mentioned case is an example of problem of child marriage, gender discrimination and violence in Nepalese society among females. The death of Ms. Rita's child was the consequence of child marriage as she became pregnant at 14 years of age. Because her previous life was also not good and she was deprived of basic needs, she was easily attracted by the love-making of a boy. She had to leave school, suffered ill health, and was compelled to live a miserable life.

One of the female community health volunteers and member of a child development centre in Siraha also witnessed the death of a mother and her child during labour. The girl had married at 14 years of age. Similarly, Laxmi Nepal, a child rights officer in Bardiya, said some parents treated daughters-in-law brought home by their sons with violence and rudeness. Surya Shahi, the president of a youth club in Mugu, had seen many families in which the husband and wife had frequent misunderstandings and clashes. He claimed that people dropped out of formal education due to early marriage. There is a discrepancy in social status and freedom after marriage between males and females in Nepal. One the VDC secretaries said: Some time after marriage, a boy somehow continues his education, but a girl cannot. Then boy then reaches college, and starts a love affair with another girl. Ultimately, he marries a new girl. The lives of two or more females are damaged by a boy.
(KII: Secretary, Pangretar VDC, Sindhupalchowk)

After a boy studies at a higher level, the chances of his disliking the girl he married when he was very young are great. The changed context, new relationships and differences created by time in terms of education, economic and social status and the attitude of the boy put the relationship in jeopardy of breaking up at any time or the male marries a second time. One such case is described below:

A case study of a married boy who doesn't want his wife to live with him

Ram (name changed) is 16 years old now and studies in grade 10 at Yashodara High School in Kapilbastu district. He is the eldest son from a poor Hindu family comprising of his father, mother, four sisters, and a brother. When he was eight years old, he was married to a seven-year-old girl. However, he thinks that he would have not married by then. He remembers that though one of his uncles opposed the marriage, his father insisted on organising it. He got married because of his parents' wishes even though he didn't know his wife at the time. He feels he was innocent and says that he had not had the wisdom to oppose the marriage at the time. The marriage was arranged by his relative, who was close to the girl's family too. The marriage ceremony, as far as he recalls and has heard from others, was attended by more than 400 guests. He says that dowry was taken at the time of marriage, but that he will get still more (probably the land and everything) because the girl has no brothers and sisters. She lives with her parents at present and is trying to come to Ram's home, but Ram feels very sorry about his marriage now and doesn't wish to let the girl live with him.

He says that he is one of the victims of the practice of child marriage by his caste. He did not see his wife for a long time after the marriage. He continued to study but she was unable to study well, so she dropped out of school after grade 7 and got involved in household chores. Moreover, when he met her the last year, he did not find her not pretty. She, drawing on cultural practices, wants to stay in his home as his wife, but Ram thinks they are poorly suited. His family also wishes to bring the girl to their home. They are putting pressure on him but he is resisting thus far. He plans to run away from his family if they give more pressure to bring her home. No matter what, he will not accept the girl as his wife. He knows, however, that his parents will not pressure him much till his SLC examinations. He emphasised that he would work on his own after running away from his family and that he would marry some other girl.

3.4.1 Consequences on health

Girls are especially unfamiliar with basic reproductive health issues, including the risk of HIV/AIDS, because many married adolescents are pulled out of school at an early age (UNICEF, 2005). According to UNICEF, there is a strong correlation between the age of a mother and maternal mortality and morbidity.

a) Deaths of females during pregnancy or delivery in the last year

Girls who marry between the ages of 10 and 14 are five times as likely to die during pregnancy or childbirth as women in their early 20s (Tristam, 2012). Maternal deaths related to pregnancy and childbirth are an important component of mortality for girls aged 15–19 worldwide, accounting for 70,000 deaths each year (UNICEF, State of the World's Children, 2009, as cited in UNICEF, n.d.). Household heads were asked whether any female in their household had died because of pregnancy or delivery. Only 14 answered affirmatively (Table 37).

Table 37 Death of female during pregnancy or delivery

Knowledge of legal age of marriage	N	%
Yes	14	2.3
No	596	97.7
Total	**610**	**100**

The respondents were also asked the age of the woman who died because of pregnancy or a pregnancy-related phenomenon. All 14 who died had married before 19 years of age. Though the number of deaths is insignificant, the cause of their deaths demonstrates the adverse consequences of child marriage on women's health.

The respondents were also asked the immediate cause of maternal death during pregnancy and pregnancy-related incidents. Their responses are presented in Table 38.

Table 38 indicates that about 30% died because of prolonged labor followed by haemorrhage, infection (21.7%) and eclampsia (21.7%).

b) Death of infants in the family in the last year

The death of an infant is also considered a consequence of child marriage. The infant of a mother under the age of 18 is 60% more likely to die in its first year of life than an infant born to a mother older than 19 (UNICEF, State of the World's Children, 2009) (as cited in UNICEF, n.d.). Even if the child survives, he or she is more likely to suffer from low birth weight, under nutrition and late physical and cognitive development (UNICEF, State of the World's Children, 2009) (as cited in UNICEF, n.d.). Table 39 presents the respondents' answers to the question about whether there had been any incidences of infant deaths in their families.

Table 39 shows that 18.5% of households had experienced an infant's death. It is evident from the above table that only 12.2% (N=606) had realised that they had faced an infant's death because of child marriage. About 28.5% percent of households reported an infant death where the age at marriage of females was below 19 years, a rate more than double that in households where females were married after they had turned 19 years. Child marriage results in more deaths of infants than marriage at a proper age.

c) Incidence of miscarriage or stillbirth in the family

Respondents were also asked about the incidence of miscarriage or stillbirth in their families. Their responses are presented in Table 40.

It is evident from the above table that about 14% of households had experienced miscarriages. More miscarriages had taken place in families where the age at marriage of females was below the age of 19. A total of 58% of families with age at marriage below 19 years had experienced a miscarriage as compared to 42% of families with age at marriage at or above 19 years (N=85). The above table indicates that child marriage can be taken as a leading factor for miscarriages.

The respondents were also asked the reasons for miscarriages during the survey. Their responses are presented in Table 41.

Table 38 Causes of maternal death

Causes	N=23	%
Haemorrhage	5	21.7
Infection	5	21.7
Labour	7	30.4
Eclampsia	5	21.7
Others	1	4.3

**Multiple responses*

Table 39 Death of infants in the family by age at marriage

Age at marriage	Infant death in family			Total
		Yes	No	
18 and below years	N	67	167	235
	%	28.5	71.1	100
19 and above years	N	45	325	370
	%	12.2	87.8	100
Total	**N**	**112**	**493**	**606**
	%	**18.5**	**81.4**	**100**

Table 40 Incidence of miscarriage or stillbirth in the family

Miscarriage	Age at marriage				% of the Total
	18 and below years		19 and above years		
	N	%	N	%	%
Yes	49	57.6	36	42.4	14.1
No	184	35.6	333	64.4	85.9
Total	**233**	**38.7**	**369**	**61.3**	**100**

d) Knowledge of consequences of child marriage on health among respondents who married early

Child marriage forces couples to get involved in sexual activity, which often ends up in early pregnancy of the female. Due to their physical immaturity, females have to face many problems during pregnancy. Male and female respondents were asked whether they were aware of the consequences of child marriage. Their responses are presented in Table 42.

According to Table 42, the health consequences of Child marriage are reported as poor maternal and child health (42.6% of males and 43.5% of females, weakness of mother (35% of males and 28.1% of females, too immature for childbearing (23.5% of males and 26.5 % of females) and so on. The analysis clearly indicates that people know that child marriage is harmful for immature girls in many ways.

3.4.2 Consequence of child marriage on education

Child marriage has significant implications for the educational status of children. On the one hand, child marriage prevents children from continuing their education, while on the other, lack of education leads to child marriage and, because young couples lack life skills, a vulnerable existence. UNICEF (2005) explains that there is correlation between girls' educational levels and age at marriage: a higher median age at first marriage directly correlates with higher rates school attendance. Conversely, getting and keeping girls in school may be one of the best ways to foster later, chosen marriage (UNICEF, 2005).

UNICEF (n.d.) gives evidence to show that girls who marry early often abandon formal education and become pregnant. Male and female respondents who married early were asked about the consequences of child marriage on their education. Table 43 presents their responses.

Table 43 shows that 67% of males and 33% of females discontinue their education after they marry. About 25% of males and 46% of females said that having a child prevented females from studying. The major reason for dropping out was the need for males to earn a living and for girls to do household chores. Other reasons for dropping out were the lack of a study environment at home and poor concentration on studies.

Table 41 Reasons for the miscarriage

Reasons	N	%
Hard labor and bleeding	12	19.7
Dependency on traditional healers	1	1.6
Dysmenorrheal	2	3.3
Lack of health institution/equipment	6	9.8
Twins born	1	1.6
Immature mother	5	8.2
Position of the baby	3	4.9
Improper care of mother	1	1.6
High blood pressure	1	1.6
Swollen body	1	1.6
Fever	3	4.9
Evil	2	3.3
Don't know	23	37.7
Total	**61**	**100**

Table 42 Knowledge of consequence of child marriage on health

Responses	Male		Female	
	N=83	%	N=336	%
Bleeding from vagina	1	1.5	5	2.0
Weakness	17	25.0	71	28.1
Lower abdominal pain among females	5	7.4	11	4.3
Uterine prolapse / problems	6	8.8	41	16.2
Poor maternal and child health	29	42.6	110	43.5
Too immature for childbearing	16	23.5	67	26.5
Death of mother / children	4	5.9	17	6.7
Mental problems	5	7.4	5	2.0
Miscarriage	0	0.0	4	1.6
Cancer (cervical / breast)	0	0.0	2	0.8
Menstrual problems	0	0.0	3	1.2

**Multiple responses*

Table 43 Consequences of child marriage on education

Responses	Male		Female	
	N=75	%	N=266	%
Poor environment to study	3	4.1	19	7.4
Poor concentration on study due to hard work	3	4.1	21	8.2
Not being able to study (due to child)	18	24.7	118	45.9
Getting less time to study	2	2.7	13	5.1
Dropped out from education	49	67.1	85	33.1
Could not educate children	0	0.0	10	3.9

**Multiple responses*

3.4.3 Social consequences of child marriage

Child marriage has been linked an increase in the risk of females facing divorce and long periods of widowhood (as their husbands are significantly older), both states which are likely to make them suffer additional discrimination in society. Only 40% of respondents shared their views, which are presented in Table 44.

Table 44 indicates that more than 75% of respondents said that females who marry young have to face social problems such as discrimination, poor socialisation, and lack of leadership. Some respondents (12.8% of males and 8.1% of females) also reported that such females have poor relationships with their families. The problem of being busy with household chores was stated more by females (about 19%) than males (about 8%). Only females and only 2.2% reported that second marriage was a consequence of child marriage; no male reported this as a problem, a reflection of the poor social status of females in Nepal due to child marriage.

3.4.4 Economic consequences of child marriage

The respondents' responses with regard to a question about the economic consequences of child marriage are presented in Table 45.

It is evident from the table that the economic consequences of child marriage are joblessness (65.1% of males and 20.4% of females), difficulty in earning a livelihood (36.5% of males and 39.8% of females), lack of money (9.5% of males and 10.4% of females), low income (19% of males and 12.4% of females), and an increase in expenses (19% of males and 15.9% of females). The percentage exceeds cent percent because of the provision of multiple responses.

Table 44 Social consequences of child marriage

Responses	Male		Female	
	N=39	%	N=138	%
Poor family relationship	5	12.8	11	8.1
Poor leadership	1	2.6	5	3.7
Lack of socialisation	8	20.5	21	15.6
Hatred in society	22	56.4	72	53.4
Engagement in household chores	3	7.7	26	19.3
Second marriage	0	0.0	3	2.2

**Multiple responses*

3.4.5 Other Consequences of Child Marriage

Child brides are at risk of violence, abuse and exploitation (UNICEF, State of the World's Children, 2009) (as cited in UNICEF, n.d.). It often results in separation from family and friends and lack of freedom to participate in community activities, which can all have major consequences on girls' mental and physical wellbeing (UNICEF, n.d.).

In addition to the above consequences among females,male respondents were asked about other consequences. Their responses are presented in Table 46.

The table shows that over 80% of males had experienced an increase in both workload and responsibility. Only a small proportion said that their workload and responsibility had decreased and about 9% said their was no change.

Table 45 Economic consequences of child marriage

Responses	Male		Female	
	N=65	%	N=208	%
Lack of money	6	9.5	21	10.4
Dependency	1	1.6	9	4.5
Jobless	41	65.1	41	20.4
Difficult livelihood	23	36.5	80	39.8
Low income	12	19.0	25	12.4
Increase in expenses	12	19.0	32	15.9

**Multiple responses*

Table 46 Change in workload and responsibility after marriage among males

Responses	Workload		Responsibility	
	N=65	%	N=208	%
Increased	77	81.1	83	87.4
Decreased	10	10.5	3	3.2
No changes	8	8.4	9	9.5
Total	**95**	**100**	**95**	**100**

**Multiple responses*

a) Relationship after marriage

Since a relationship should be based on mutual respect, which helps couples as well as family members to live happily, respondents were asked about their relationship with their spouse. Their responses are presented in Table 47.

Table 47 shows that about 80% of respondents have an amicable relationship with their spouse. Only 6.3% of males and 11.8% of females reported that they have some arguments in some cases and only 7.4% of males and 6.2% of females responded that they have indifferent thoughts. Female respondents were also asked about their relationship with their husband's family members. Their responses are presented in the following table 48.

The below table indicates that about 70% of females reported that they have good relations with their family members but that 12.5% face bad treatment and torture and 7.9%, hatred. The data reflect the gender-based discrimination that exists.

b) Problems of females after marriage

Table 47 Relationship between husband and wife

Relationship	Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%
Friendly	81	85.3	253	78.6
Argumentative	6	6.3	38	11.8
Indifferent	7	7.4	20	6.2
Others	0	0.0	11	3.4
NA	1	1.1	0	0.0

**Multiple responses*

Table 48 Relationship with family

Relationship	N=404	%
Hatred	26	7.9
Treated badly and tortured physically	41	12.5
Left hungry	13	4.0
Ignored	18	5.5
Given money to spend	14	4.3
Allowed to go to parents' home	15	4.6
Good relations	226	68.9
NA	51	15.5

**Multiple responses*

Male respondents were asked whether their spouses faced any problems after marriage. Their responses are presented in the following table. One-third agreed that their spouses do have to face problems. Table 49 presents their views.

Male respondents were also asked the types of problem their spouse have to face. Their responses are presented in Table 50 below.

Table 50 shows the health problems of females according to their spouses. More than 50% reported that they had seen health problems such as illness, sickness, and fever. Other problems include lower abdominal pain (27.3%), body swollen during pregnancy (18.2%), vaginal discharge (12.1%), uterine prolapse (12.1%) and so on. Minor problems reported include itching in genitals, anaemia, respiratory problems, and difficulty in delivery.

The same question was also asked to female respondents to triangulate the information. Table 51 below presents the health problems of women as they themselves identified them.

Table 49 Problems in wife's health after marriage

Presence of problem	N	%
Yes	32	33.7
No	63	66.3
Total	**95**	**100**

Table 50 Types of health problems faced by male's spouse after marriage

Problems	Responses N=50	%
Illness/weakness/fever	17	51.5
Menstrual problems	2	6.1
Lower abdominal pain	9	27.3
Body swollen during pregnancy/ body pain	6	18.2
Vaginal discharge/Bleeding	4	12.1
Itching in genitals	1	3.0
Uterine prolapse/problems	4	12.1
Anaemia	2	6.1
Respiratory problems	1	3.0
Difficulty in delivery	2	6.1
Loss of appetite	2	6.1

**Multiple responses*

Table 51 shows that one–third of females experience pain in the lower abdomen. Similarly, the respondents complained of irregular menstruation (20%) and foul–smelling vaginal discharge (18.5%). About 10% each reported that they bled from vagina during intercourse and suffered form a prolapsed uterus. A small number of respondents also complained about the problem of rashes around the genitals and fistula.

The respondents were asked about the psychological problems they faced. Their responses are presented in Table 52 below.

The above table suggests that women did not face any specific and significant psychological problems. This might be because they are unaware of them.

Females said that they have some sexual problems, including lack of sexual desire (59%) and painful intercourse (41%). The following table presents their sexual problems.

3.5 Changing paradigms and patterns of child marriage

A shift in marriage practices was noted in some places. The KIIs with the village mukhiya and the ex-chairperson of one of ward of Kunjo VDC of Mustang District revealed that in the past people were unable to marry young because of poverty. They said:

We were unable to look after the family in our days and were unable to marry. In those days many of our friends married only after the age of 40. However, presently, mobile phones, videos and television programmes have raised the interest of our children in sex. The need for sex has motivated our children to take part in sexual activities and, as a result, marry at an early age.
(KII: Purna Bahadur Sherchan, Mukhiya, Kunjo VDC, Mustang)

The FGD with boys in Mustang hinted that parents did not want their children to marry young, but that the children themselves forced the issue. They said that females were more involved in child as they were helpless in the face of males' enticements to marry and that they eloped because of poverty.

One of the girls said,
What can we do when our parents cannot organise our marriage? We have to elope to make sure we have a married life. If we wait until we are mature, nobody will then marry us for being old.
(FGD: B.K. Girl, 16 years, Kunjo VDC, Mustang)

One of the principals in Morang explained that if children decide to marry by themselves, they marry at the age of 13-15 but if parents organise their marriage, they will marry after 18 years.

Table 51 Health problems of women who married young

Health problems	N=332	%
Foul–smelling vaginal discharge	60	18.5
Bleeding from vagina during intercourse	31	9.5
Rashes around the vagina	21	6.5
Irregular menstruation	65	20.0
Pain in lower abdomen	114	35.1
Uterine prolapse	32	9.8
Fistula	9	2.8

**Multiple responses*

Table 52 Psychological problems

Responses	N=544	%
Like to stay alone	44	13.3
Do not like to participate in social activities	63	19.0
Increase in heart beat	82	24.7
Feeling that life is meaningless	59	17.8
Feeling disinclined to work	66	19.9
Loss of appetite	55	16.6
Don't know	61	18.4
NA	114	34.3

**Multiple responses*

Table 53 Sexual problems

Responses	N=332
No sexual desire	59
Painful intercourse	41
Total	**100**

**Multiple responses*

A female volunteer in Khotang had the following opinion:

Child marriage organised by parents has been abolished, but now child marriage occurs in the case of children getting married by themselves.
(KII: Female volunteer, Women's Development Office, Khotang)

The same information was obtained from another female volunteer in Udayapur. She said:

The age at marriage has risen to above 15 years from 7-13 years. Parents do not force their children to marry but today's children make love and marry early.
(KII: Female volunteer, Women's Development Office, Udayapur)

This same volunteer recognised a shift in parental awareness regarding age at marriage but she found that children themselves marry at an early age and leave school. The husband then goes abroad to earn and the wife gets involves in extra–marital relationships, ruining their marital life.

The boys who participated in the Morang FGD said that today parents organise the marriages of girls at 20 and boys at 24 years of age. They said that child marriage existed in the Madhesi community because of love marriage, a practice they said had decreased the importance of the dowry system. The girls who participated in the Morang FGD said that while parents used to organise early marriages, nowadays they educated their children, even their daughters. Unlike their male counterparts, they said that the dowry system still existed in the district and that the amount is determined by how educated the girl is. Most of the boys who participated in the FGD in Makawanpur confirmed that child marriage had not taken place in recent years.

Another shift was seen in child marriage by caste. Among Brahmins, Chhetris and other major castes, the incidence of child marriage has declined, but it has increased among Dalits and ethnic minorities. A female volunteer at the women's development office in Khotang said that child marriages used to prevail among Brahmin families, which aimed to marry them before puberty. Now this motivation has been adopted by Dalits and other poor and disadvantaged castes and communities. The secretary of Pangretar VDC in Sindhupalchowk District agreed that Brahmin and Chhetri castes once practiced child marriage but no longer do so. Instead, he claims, it is more prevalent among Dalits in the VDC., Kiran Shahi (name changed), the president of a youth club in Mugu, also believes that child marriages were prevalent earlier among Brahmin and Chhetri castes but nowadays it is more common among Dalits and very poor families. The girls who participated in the Kalikot FGD also said that child marriage was once common among upper castes and that now it still exists among Dalits because of poverty and lack of education.

The table below summarises the shifts in the paradigm of child marriage.

Earlier	Variable	Now
Parents and other relatives	Decision–maker	Children themselves
Arranged	Type	Love
Brahmins, Chhetris, and almost all other caste groups	Caste with highest incidence	Dalits, Tamangs and other ethnic minorities and disadvantages castes
Parental pressure, tradition, and cultural practice	Cause	Sexual desire and increasing trend of love marriage among children
Rural	Place of greatest prevalence	Urban and rural

3.6 Good programme designs, practices and initiatives against child marriages

UNICEF (2006) has suggested the following factors must be considered to build a protective environment for children:

Government commitment and capacity: The role of government and civil–society institutions is to develop and implement systems to prevent or discourage child marriage. Government action is required to review customary and civil law. Because child marriage is closely associated with poverty, government commitment to poverty reduction is likely to lead to a decrease in the incidence of child marriage.

Legislation and enforcement: Governments need to establish 18 as the legal age of marriage for girls as well as boys, and ensure the implementation of this provision. Promoting birth and marriage registration will help enforce these laws.

Attitudes, customs and practices: Ending child marriage is challenging because even parents who understand its negative impact may find it hard to resist economic and societal pressures and traditions. Addressing attitudes and customs that promote or condone the practice is vital to changing the acceptable age for marriage.

Open discussion: Marriage is regarded as a private subject in many cultures. Communication campaigns can help create circumstances in which traditional beliefs about marriage can be discussed and examined. To foster behavioural change from within communities, human rights, particularly those of women, should be emphasised, including rights to equality, access to education, and freedom from exploitation and discrimination.

Children's life skills, knowledge and participation: Expanding children's knowledge and empowering them is crucial, particularly for girls. Educated girls are less likely to agree to marry at a young age. Attempts to close gender gaps in education can include the establishment of child–friendly schools, cash incentives for parents and the expansion of non–formal education.

Capacity of families and communities: Community-level women's organisations need support to act as effective advocates and educators. Human rights-based development and education programmes can create dynamics leading to a change in customs, hierarchies, and prejudices linked to the tradition of child marriage.

Essential services, including prevention, recovery and reintegration: Counselling services on abuse, reproductive health and protection from HIV infection are imperative for young girls. Girls who run away from marriages need emergency support, as do those running away from parents forcing them into unwanted marriages.

Monitoring, reporting and oversight: Demographic health surveys and multiple indicator cluster surveys collect valuable data on the prevalence of and reasons for child marriage. Community-level monitoring systems can also help record the frequency of child marriage. Marriage registration should be promoted.

In Kalikot, child club members proudly related that they had prevented a possible child marriage three days before the ceremony after learning that their friend's parents planned to marry her off at the age of 16 years. They had participated in training organised by the NGO KIRDARC and had used their knowledge in their village. They played Deusi–Bhailo (demonstrations of song and dance in return for money) during the festival of Tihar, collected money, and bought materials needed for performing street dramas against child marriage. Children knew that a seven–point agreement between political parties and the local people of Kalikot was under the leadership of KIRDARC prevented political parties from interfering in the efforts of child clubs to control child marriages and promote women's development. The members of the child club are well empowered to take action against violations of children's and women's rights. Sisters' clubs and mothers' groups are active in building awareness against child marriage. Radio and cultural programmes are also organised frequently in Kalikot district by various NGOs. All these efforts have reduced the prevalence of child marriage in the district. The participants in the FGD gave other examples of stopping a planned marriage though the joint effort of child clubs and youths.

The police and NGO officials identified some marriages that were going to happen at an early age. They immediately found, counselled and made aware the girls

and boys who intended to marry. They told them about the consequences and assured them they could marry after they turned 20 years of age. Getting such assurance, the couple separated and married only after the age of 20.
(FGD: All participants, Kalikot)

This sort of intervention seems good because if they are forcibly separated, young children could do something wrong in annoyance. If they can be convinced, the problem can be managed. Otherwise, in the case of a love marriage, postponing marriage is difficult.

A similar incidence took place in Mugu, where girls, along with the local youth group, stopped a marriage two days before the wedding by threatening the parents with legal action. They informed the parents that the youth group in the village must provide a certificate of right age at marriage before a marriage could happen.

3.7 Suggestions from household heads to prevent child marriage

The practice of child marriage has many adverse consequences which should be prevented using various means, including developing the awareness of household heads and capitalising on the wisdom of their suggestions. The suggestions household heads had for preventing child are presented in Table 54.

The table 54 shows that 86% of household heads are in favour of educating people through awareness campaigns in order to prevent the problem of child marriage. Only a small proportion (11%) emphasised the enforcement of the law. Household heads were not aware of the importance of providing income-generating skills to the people. If people, especially females, are involved in such activities, they will be empowered and child marriage can be controlled. The analysis clearly indicated the importance of developing awareness programmes.

Table 54 Programmes to abolish child marriage suggested by household heads

Programmes	N=796	%
Awareness campaign	560	86.29
Income generation	20	3.08
Community initiatives	54	8.32
Law enforcement	72	11.09
Training to officials	3	0.46
Mobilisation of volunteers	5	0.77
Organisational capacity–building	9	1.39
Don't know	73	11.25

**Multiple responses*

a) Roles of different people in preventing child marriage

Household heads were also asked who should be responsible for abolishing child marriage in their communities. Their responses are given in Table 55.

Table 55 shows that two-thirds (67%) of household heads said that the person responsible for abolishing child marriage is parents and that about one-third (34.5%) assigned responsibility to the community. About 19% said it is the government's duty and 16% that the individual is responsible. These responses indicate that prevention of child marriage is the responsibility of all concerned people and agencies and that efforts to prevent it should be conducted jointly.

b) Measures to prevent child marriage

Child marriage is a bad practice from different perspectives and should be prevented at any cost. Respondents who had married early were asked to suggest measures to prevent child marriage. Their responses are presented in Table 56.

Table 55 Agent responsible for abolishing child marriage

Agents	N=994	%
Parents	412	67.0
Relatives/friends	14	2.3
Community	212	34.5
Organisation	41	6.7
Police/Administration	38	6.2
Government	119	19.3
Self	100	16.3
Everyone	6	1.0
Local leaders/teachers	26	4.2
Health institutions/workers	2	0.3
Don't know	24	3.9

**Multiple responses*

Table 56 shows that more than 90% of respondents are in favor of providing education and developing awareness as measures to prevent child marriage. About 10% said that community initiatives and strict regulation would prevent child marriage. Only a very small proportion said that the development of income-generating skills would prevent child marriage. It is evident from these responses that child marriage is not only a social problem but a crosscutting issue which should be addressed comprehensively through education, economy, social mobilisation and law enforcement as well.

Respondents who had married early were also asked who they though was responsible for preventing child marriage. Their responses are presented in Table 57.

Table 57 shows that about 70% believe that parents are the main agent responsible for preventing child marriage and that about 30% assign that responsibility to the community. Another 20% said individual him or herself was responsible. About the same proportion said that the government, police, and administrators are responsible for preventing child marriage.

In reality, child marriage is a personal concern first and then only is it a social issue. Family members, including parents, should be made aware of this fact. If family members are not willing to entertain child marriage, nobody will be compelled to marry.

Table 56 Measures to prevent child marriage suggested by respondents who married early

Measures	Male		Female	
	N=114	%	N=459	%
Provision of education	13	14.1	57	17.4
Income–generating skills	3	3.3	6	1.8
Parent awareness	21	22.8	103	31.5
Children awareness	12	13.0	58	17.7
Community initiatives	9	9.8	29	8.9
Strict regulation	8	8.7	31	9.5
Public awareness	41	44.6	102	31.2
Don't know	7	7.6	59	18.0
Others	0	0.0	14	4.2

**Multiple responses*

c) Knowledge about organisations working on child marriage issues

Household heads should be knowledgeable about organisations working on child marriage issues if they are to avail necessary services on such matters. Thus, they were asked whether they know of such organisations. Table 58 presents their responses.

Table 58 shows that only 85 household heads (about 13.1%) know of organisations which work on child marriage issues. This clearly indicates that they are deprived of services provided for preventing child marriage. Household heads were also asked the names of the organisations they knew. The results are shown in Table 59.

Table 59 shows that very few household heads know the names of organisations which are working on preventing child marriage. Only a few household heads in districts where Plan works knew that Plan was a leading organisation working on the field of child marriage issues. Some household heads were able to name local clubs which were working in the field of child marriage.

Table 57 Agent responsible for preventing child marriage

Responses	Male		Female	
	N=156	%	N=522	%
Parents	72	78.3	231	69.6
Relatives	2	2.2	9	2.7
Community	32	34.8	98	29.5
Organisations	4	4.3	8	2.4
Police/Administration	7	7.6	15	4.5
Government	15	16.3	52	15.7
Self	17	18.5	66	19.9
Local leaders/teachers	3	3.3	6	1.8
Everyone	2	2.2	11	3.3
Don't know	2	2.2	26	7.8

**Multiple responses*

Table 58 Knowledge of organisations working on abolishing child marriage

Response	N	%
Yes	85	13.1
No	525	80.9
Total	**610**	**94**

Table 59 Name of the organisations known by household heads

Name of organisation	Frequency	%
Women's and Children's Office	3	3.90
Mother's Group	5	6.49
PAF (Poverty Alleviation Fund)	2	2.60
Paran	1	1.30
HEIFER	1	1.30
TRDC	1	1.30
Inford Nepal	1	1.30
Plan Nepal	24	31.17
Maiti Nepal	4	5.19
UREC Nepal	2	2.60
Local clubs	15	19.48
District office	2	2.60
Save the Children	3	3.90
Saathi	1	1.30
Care Nepal	1	1.30
RRN	1	1.30
KIRDARC	1	1.30
Don't know	9	11.69
Total	**77**	**100**

However, the responses are insignificant and clearly indicate that people are not concerned about organisations working in child marriage issues.

The respondents were also asked the activities of those organisations which are working to abolish child marriage. The results are presented in Table 60.

Table 60 shows the activities carried out by different organisations. Most are involved in awareness development programmes.

The respondents were also asked whether they are benefitted by those activities. Out of 78 household heads, 63 said that had benefited. Household heads were also asked what they had learned from those activities. Their responses are presented in Table 61 below.

Table 60 Activities of organisations which work to prevent child marriage

Activity	Frequency	%
Training	15	19.5
Distribution of IEC Materials	6	7.8
Role play	8	10.4
Promotion of education	30	38.9
Provision of information on prevailing laws and regulations against child marriage	8	10.4
Rallis	3	3.9
Conduction of surveys	1	1.3
NA	6	7.8
Total	**77**	**100**

Of 63 respondents, 35 (55.5%) respondents learnt about stopping early marriage from the organisations, while 11 respondents said that they were oriented on how to educate children not to marry at early age, nine of them learnt about on the health consequences of early marriage, and eight others about laws regarding early marriage. These responses clearly indicate that organisations working on child marriage issues have to extend their programmes into the grassroot level.

Table 61 Learning from organisation's activities

Activity	Frequency	%
Education regarding child marriage	11	17.5
To stop early marriage	35	55.5
Education on health consequences of early marriage	9	14.3
Information on laws regarding early marriage	8	12.7
Total	**63**	**100**

3.8 Gaps in law enforcement regarding child marriage

The government of Nepal has made some legal provisions about age at marriage, and all forms of child marriage are called violence and, accordingly, are banned. Still, child marriage prevails.

Laxmi Nepal, a Child Rights Officer in Bardiya, said that the marriage of a 15-year-old girl had been prevented by the women's and children's office in Bardiya two years earlier but that they had not been able to prevent one in Ward No. 10 of Gularia because it was a love marriage and the girl refused to stop the marriage process though her parents were convinced to stop the marriage. The girl participants in the FGD in Siraha also said that if parents tell their children not to marry, their children oppose the advice and tell their parents not to interfere in their business. In his KII, Ravindra Yadav, the principal and health education teacher of a school in Morang, related the case of a girl who had committed suicide after being separated from her intended husband.

Recently, one of my 16-year-old students in grade 10 married a girl of the same age without parental consent. The girl's family filed a case with the police and the police and the girl's family separated them. After taking the girl home, parents yelled on her. Later the girl poisoned herself. The parents learnt a bitter lesson about separating them and are now apologetic about their mistake. This incidence has prevented parents and others from reporting or filing a case against child marriage.

These examples prove that it is difficult to stop child marriage by legal action when it is children themselves who decide to marry at an early age. To some extent, legal action can control cases of child marriage organised through parental pressure, but it cannot prevent love marriages. Forceful actions can bring about many harmful results in the live of those who marry for love. Instead, educational motivations can work.

3.8.1 Evidence of reporting against child marriage

A case was filed in the Supreme Court against the government claiming that the legal provisions made to end child marriage had not been implemented. The Supreme Court directed the government to act immediately and implement the legal provisions (Supreme Court of Nepal, 2063 BS).

Interaction with community people in Prempurgonahi, Rautahat

There was no genuine evidence that any reporting of cases of child marriage in the survey districts had taken place. The FGD participants in Kailali district know that they can report child marriages to the district administration office, but they felt it was impractical for children to file a case against their parents. Nevertheless, one boy related a case of a first information report being filed:

In a nearby village, a 14-year-old girl and 17-year-old boy were getting married. Someone informed the police and the marriage was stopped. They were taken to the police station. Nobody knows what happened there, but they are now married and are in living in the village.
(FGD: BK boy, 14 years, Dhangadi, Kailali)

One 16-year-old Basnet boy who participated in the FGD in Morang said that girls protect the boys if someone tries to take action against the boys.

Motilal Neupane, a Child Rights Officer in Kalikot, stated that no written cases were filed against child marriage but that the members of a child club worked on the basis of verbal complaints made at her office and had prevented two or three cases of early marriage.

3.9 Marriage registration

Registration of marriage can successfully reduce the incidence of early marriage as only one where both partners are of legal age can be registered. Making registration compulsory will promote marriage at proper age. Vital registration is the legal registration, statistical recording, and reporting of the occurrence of, vital events, i.e. live births, deaths, total deaths, marriages, divorces, and adoptions. It embraces the collection, compilation, presentation, distribution and analysis of statistics on these phenomena. It also legitimates and recognises annulments and legal separations. Marriage is one of the vital events registered. In 1981 the government of Nepal adopted regulations to make the registration of every vital event compulsory in all 75 districts. The responsibility for registration falls under the Ministry of Local Development.

a) Registration of marriage by location

The registration of marriage by rural-urban setting is given in Table 62.

Table 62 shows that 56% of people registered their marriages but the rest either did not or did not know about registration. There was no significant difference in marriage registration practices in rural and urban locations

Household Survey in Garuda, Rautahat

although urban populations were slightly more likely to register their marriages.

b) Registration of marriage by sex

The registration of marriage by males and females are given in Table 63.

Total marriage registration was 56%, but 23% had not registered their marriages (by choice) and almost 21% had no idea about marriage registration (and therefore did not register their marriages). Slightly more males (58%) than females (about 55%) had registered their marriages.

Table 62 Registration of marriage by location

Location	Marriage registered						Total	
	Yes		No		Don't Know			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rural	908	56.1	371	22.9	339	21.0	1618	100
Urban	198	57.6	79	23.0	67	19.5	344	100
Total	**1106**	**56.5**	**450**	**22.9**	**406**	**20.7**	**1962**	**100**

Table 63 Registration of marriage by sex

Sex	Marriage registered						Total	
	Yes		No		Don't Know			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	525	57.6	207	22.7	179	19.6	911	100
Female	581	55.4	242	23.1	226	21.5	1049	100
Total	**1106**	**56.5**	**450**	**22.9**	**406**	**20.7**	**1962**	**100**

4. OVERALL FINDINGS

This section presents the overall findings and conclusions of the study based on the objectives set. One of the major objectives of the study was to find out the prevalence and changing paradigms and patterns of child marriage in different geographical locations of Nepal. The relevant findings are described below.

- It was found that the median age at marriage for males is 21 and for females, 18. The median age of marriage in Mustang for both males and females is 18 years of age while it is 17 years of age for females in Kapilbastu, Kailali and Rautahat districts. The prevalence of child marriage among females is 52.3% and among males, 33.8%. Overall the rate is 46.2% at the current age group of 20-24. Child marriage is prevalent most among the illiterate, janjatis, and Dalits, especially females.

- Among the hill upper caste, just 15% of males but 52% of females were married below 19 years of age. This trend continued significantly in all other castes, too. Among Terai and hill Dalits, males, too, often married young, but still significantly less than females.

- Muslims had the greatest rate (60.5%) of marrying below 19 years of age, followed by Hindus (43.5%). Christians had the lowest rate of child marriages, but the number of Christians respondents was also low.

- The major actors in deciding on child marriage were both parents (almost 60%), with 63% deciding for their daughters and 56% for their sons. Females are less empowered than males in deciding on marriages. About 25% of people decided to marry on their own, more males (28%) than females (23%).

- The qualitative data revealed that parents were aware of the need to delay the marriages of their children but that children themselves got involved in love marriages. Love marriages among teenagers are increasing these days, though the total percentage of love-based child marriages is lower than that of arranged marriage.

- About 60% of respondents still believed parents have the right to decide a child's marriage and 40% that the individual him or herself had the right. A small proportion said that relatives and others had the right to decide. Just as in the past, people today still feel it is parents' right to marry their children.

- More than 50% of households did not know the legal age of marriage. Their ignorance may be one reason child marriage prevails.

- A paradigm shift was found in some aspects of child marriage, with decision-making moving from parents to children themselves and marriages changed from arranged to love.

- In addition, parental pressure is now less significant than love and fulfilment of sexual desire and the occurrence of child marriage has moved from exclusively rural settings to both rural and urban settings.

The next objective of the study was to find out the underlying causes and consequences of child marriage on girls and boys, especially with respect to their health and education. The relevant findings are below.

- Data from respondents who married young revealed that 52.7% of child marriages among males occurred because of parental pressure whereas in the case of female is the same rate was 67.1%. Another leading cause among males was support for household chores (45.2%) and about 30% of both sexes reported cultural influences as being the cause. About 8% each gave poverty and lack of awareness as reasons. According to household heads, family pressure and children's own desire each contribute 32% to child marriage.

- Qualitative findings and secondary data indicate that one of the major causes for child marriage in the Terai is to save dowry as the older a girl is the more dowry must be paid. Similarly, an educated female will expect to have an educated partner and her parents will have to pay more for that extra education.

- FGD and KII findings revealed that mobile phones and mass media had caused early love marriages among some children. It was also discovered that school serves as a place to form attachments and date. Children seem to use mobiles and mass media for courting and dating purposes rather than for increasing their knowledge.

- Respondents who had married early were most aware of the physical health-related consequences of early marriage. All 14 maternal deaths occurred among females who had married young. Over half (51.5%) of males who had married young reported that their wives faced illness, weakness and fever. Females who had married early said that they experienced pain in the lower abdomen (35.1%) and foul–smelling vaginal discharge (18.5%).

- The educational consequences of child marriage were attrition (67.1% of males and 33.1% of females dropped out) and not being able to study due to a child (24.7% among males and 45.9% among females).

- Early married females have to face social problems such as discrimination, poor socialisation, and lack of leadership as well as being divorced or widowed by their husbands, many of whom are older. These problems reflect the poor social status of women.

- The economic consequences of child marriage are found to be joblessness, difficulty in earning a livelihood, and an increase in expenses.

- The chances of a boy disliking a girl he marries young increase if he continues his studies, especially in an urban area. This consequence resulted in an increase in the incidence of second marriages.

The third objective of the project was to document good programme designs, practices and initiatives against child marriages. The following are the relevant findings.

- Those families where food was adequate for entire year married at 19 years and above. Food security has a positive impact on right age of marriage

- The members of child clubs, adolescents and girls themselves, in collaboration with the police and other agencies, prevented child marriages. They were also involved in conducting awareness development programmes in different communities which were very useful in preventing child marriage.

- More than 85% of household were not acquainted with organisations which work against child marriage. Their ignorance clearly indicates that organisations working on child marriage issues have to extend their programmes into the grassroot level.

Another objective of the study was to identify gaps in law enforcement in the area of child marriage.

- Forceful legal actions can have many harmful results in the lives of couples who marry young. Instead, educational motivations can work.

- There is no genuine evidence that people report cases of child marriage. In fact, people do not want to take the risk associated with reporting such cases.

- More than 50% registered their marriages but the rest either didn't register or didn't know about it. No significant difference in marriage registration practices was found between rural and urban locations.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the above findings, the following recommendations are suggested for ending Child Marriage in Nepal:

- As child marriage is widely prevalent in communities, especially among Dalits and other poor and marginalised people, community networks and vigilant groups comprising all concerned stakeholders can be formed and mobilised. Programmes for ending child marriage should be linked with livelihood opportunities made available in the concerned communities.

- Adolescent boys and girls should be empowered to manage their sexual and reproductive health issues through different approaches such as the peer-to-peer approach, comprehensive sexuality education in schools, life skills-based education, and youth information centres. The focus of the empowerment should be given on not marrying below the age of 18 and, if a child marries before 18, on delaying pregnancy and adopting safe sexual practices as a way of life. Adolescent–friendly health services and easy access to contraception and other health services reduce the consequences of unsafe sex. Therefore, in addition to empowering adolescent girls and boys in communities, their linkages to primary health service outlets in their communities should be strengthened so that they can utilise the existing health services as they need to.

- Child marriage is a worst form of gender–based violence. Girls, are more likely to marry young than boys and illiterate girls are significantly more at risk of child marriage. Therefore, programmes should be focused to enrol and retain girls in school. Programmes which follow the gender transformative approach should be designed.

- Ending child marriage requires the consolidated efforts of all organisations. Therefore, networks, the coordination and collaboration of different stakeholders, and organisations from community to national level should be strengthened. National responses to end child marriage should be linked with global partners such as Girls Not Brides, an initiative of the Elders.

- Ending child marriage should be established as a crosscutting issue and mainstreamed into all development works. It should be an important agenda of any development initiative.

REFERENCES

Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). (2003). *Population Monograph of Nepal,* Vol. 1. Kathmandu: Central Bureau of Statistics

Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, Inc. (CARE) (2009). *Child Marriage: a Promise of Poverty* [online]. Availabe from http://www.care.org/campaigns/childmarriage/downloads/CAREAnti-childmarriageadvocacy.pdf [Accessed April 2012]

Dhital, R. (2010). *Child Marriage in Nepal* [online]. Available from http://www.volunteeraidnepal.org/media/articles/child-marriage-in-nepal/ [Accessed April 2012]

International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) (2012). *Child Marriage* [online]. Available from http://www.icrw.org/whatwedo/adolescents/child-marriage [Accessed April 2012]

Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) [Nepal], New ERA, and ICF International Inc. (2012). *Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2011*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) [Nepal], New ERA, and ICF International Inc.

Poudel, J.P., Tandon, H., Tandan B. *et al.* (eds). (2010). *District Development Profile of Nepal 2010/2011.* Kathmandu: Mega Publication and Research Center

Supreme Court of Nepal (2063 BS). *Nepal Kanun Patrika,* 289–300.

Tristam, P. (2012). *Child Marriage: Facts, Causes and Consequences, Discrimination, Sexual Abuse, Trafficking and Repression* [online]. Availabe from http://middleeast.about.com/od/humanrightsdemocracy/a/child-brides.htm [Accessed April 2012]

UNICEF (n.d.). Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse: Child Marriage [online]. Availabe from http://www.unicef.org/protection/57929_58008.htm [Accessed April 2012]

UNICEF (2005). *Early Marriage: a Harmful Traditional Practice.* New York: UNICEF

UNICEF (2006). *Child Protection Information Sheet: Child Marriage* [online]. Availabe from http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/Child_Marriage.pdf

UNICEF(2011). *The State of the World's Children 2011.* New York: UNICEF

UNFPA (2005). Child marriage. In *State of World Population 2005: the Promise of Equality, Gender Equity, Reproductive Health and the Millenium Development Goals,* p. 53. New York: United Nations Population Fund

Wolff, H.K. and Pant, P.R. (2005). *Social Science Research and Thesis Writing,* 4th edn., p. 32. Kathmandu: Buddha Academic Enterprises Pvt. Ltd.

Appendix A Survey form for household

A. Personal and Demographic Information

District: ..... VDC: ..... Ward No.: .....

Village/Tole: ..... Caste: ..... Religion: .....

Family Structure: a). Nuclear b). Joint

Language: .....

Time of residence in current place: ..... years. , Place of Origin (before migration to current place):

Cause(s) of migration to present place: .....

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
SN	Name, Caste	Relation	Age	Sex 1 M 2 F 3 T	Have you registered your family members up to 18 years of age?	Class attending in school now	If not, when did s/he drop out?	Marital status	Major occupation	Age during marriage	Types of marriage	Who decided the marriage?	Was marriage registered?
01													
02													
03													
04													
05													
06													
07													
08													

3 Relation	6 Birth registration	9 Status of marriage	10 Major occupation	12 Types of marriage	13 Who decided the marriage?	14 Was marriage registered?
01 HH head 02 Husband or wife 03 Mother or father	00 NA for more than 18 years	01 unmarried	00 NA 01 Agriculture	00 NA 01 Arranged	01 Father 02 Mother	00 NA, 01 Yes, 02 No, 03 Don't Know

03 Mother or father 04 Brother or sister 05 Son or daughter 06 Daughter-in=law 07 Grand children 08 Father or mother-in-law 09 Brother or sister in law 10 Other	01 Regd. certificate showed 02 Regd. but certificate not showed 03 Not registered	03 Separated 04 Divorced 05 Widowed	02 Service/teacher 03 Labor 04 Unemployed 05 Business 06 Wage earner 07 House wife 08 Other	02 Gandarva 03 Love 04 Other	03 Both father and mother 04 Grand mother 05 Grand father 06 Both grand parent 07 Friend 08 Self 09 Other	

B. Economic

	Question	Answers	Code/s
1	How much agricultural land do you have?	a) Own	===== - in Bigha/Katha/Ropni
		b) Not registered	===== - in Bigha/Katha/Ropni
		c) Adhiya	===== - in Bigha/Katha/Ropni
		d) Landless	
2	What is the income source of your family?	a) Agriculture b) Wage earner c) Service d) Foreign employee e) Business f) Others specify	
3	For how many months' earnings from your regular income fulfil your basic needs (like food)?	.....in months If less than 12 months ask 3.2.	
3.1	If insufficient for the whole year, what is the annual saving? Use units according to the source e.g., agriculture product in quantity and service holder in Rs.	==========	
3.2	If it is not sufficient for whole year, then how do you manage to fulfill your needs?	==========	
4	Does any of your female family members is a member in saving and cooperative?	a). Yes b). No	
4.1	If yes, who is s/he?	a) Female b) Male c) Both	

4.2	If yes, did you get any help from this group/ cooperative in income generating activity?	a). Yes b). No	
	C. Child marriage Related		
5	When do you plan to marry your son or daughter? (Ask in those HH where Child marriage is not seen)	a) Son: At ..... years of age b). Daughter: At ..... years of age	
6	Do you know about the legal age at marriage in Nepal?	a). Yes b). No	
6.1	1 If yes, what is that age?	a) With parental consent..... years of age. b) Without parental consent..... years of age.	
7	Why did not you manage your son/daughter's marriage early?	a) b) c) d)	
8	(If children are married)... 3. Why did you organise the marriage of your children before 18 years of age?		
	Name of the children	Causes	
8.1			
8.2			
8.3			
8.4			

Others

9. What are the positive effects and consequences of Child marriage ?

SN	Description	Positive effects	Consequences
9.1	Health		
9.2	Education		
9.3	Social		
9.4	Economic		
9.5	Specify if others		

SN	Questions	Answers	Code/s
10	Who are the influencing people to compel for Child marriage in your community ? (Multiple response)	a) Father b) Mother c) Boy friend / Girl friend d) Self motivation e) Grant parent f) Others	
11	Who do you think has the total right to decide the time and person to marry ?	a) Parents b) Relatives c) Self (the person to marry) d) Others	
12	Was there any death of female in your family due to pregnancy or delivery ?	a) Yes b) No	
12.1	If yes what was the age of that female and when did she die ?	a) Age at marriage	
		b) Age at death	
12.2	Which was the leading cause of death ?	a) Bleeding b) Infection c) Prolonged labor pain d) Eclampsia e) Specify if othes	
13	Was there any child's death in your family before one year of age ?	a) Yes b) No	
13.1	If yes, what was the age of mother while delivering ?		
13.2	What was the cause of child's death ?		
13.3	Were there any cases of miscarriages or still birth in your family ?	a) Yes b) No	
13.4	If yes, what was the duration of pregnancy ?		

SN	Questions	Answers	Code/s
13.5	If yes, What was the age of mother while marrying and in what age miscarriages happen ?	a) Age at marriage	
		b) Age at death	
13.6	What are the causes of miscarriages ?		
14	Do you know any organisation working to eradicate Child marriage ?	a) Yes b) No	
14.1	If yes, Name the organisation.		
14.2	Which was the leading cause of death ?		
14.3	Did you learn anything regarding Child marriage from those organisations ?	a) Yes b) No	
14.4	If yes, what did you learn ?		
15	What is your concept on Child marriage ?		
16	What do you think to adopt the measures to eradicate Child marriage in your community?		
17	Who is responsible to eradicate Child marriage ?	a) Yes b) No	

Appendix B Questionnaire for early married female

1. Why did you marry early ?
   a)
   b)
   c)

2. Do modern devices like mobiles, internet encourage Child marriage ?
   a) Yes b) No

2.1 If yes, was it applied to you?
   a) Yes b) No

3. Do you know the legal age at marriage in Nepal ?
   a) Yes b) No

3.1 If yes what is the legal age of marriage ?
   a) With parental consent..... years of age.
   b) Without parental consent..... years of age.

4. Which of the following decides marriage ?
   a) Father b) Mother c) Both father and mother
   d) Self e) Friend f) Others

4.1 Whose right is that to decide whom and when to marry ?
   a) Parents b) Relatives c) Self d) Others

5. What are the positive effects and consequences of Child marriage ?

S.N.	Description	Positive effects	Consequences
a	Health		
b	Education		
c	Social		
d	Economic		
e	Specify if others		

6. Do you feel your work load and responsibility reduced and increased after your marriage ?
   a) Increased b) Reduced c) As before

7. How is your relationship with your husband because of Child marriage ?
   a) As a friend b) Quarreling c) Conflict of ideas d) Others

8. How do your family members behave ?
   a) Hatred in society b) Misbehave c) Beating
   d) Do not provide foods e) Careless f) Do not provide expenses
   g) Not allowed going to mother's h) Specify, if others

9. Are you involved in income generating activities ?
   a) Yes b) No

10. Which of the following physical problems have you faced due to Child marriage ? (multiple response)
   a) Vaginal discharge (white fluid)
   b) Bleeding from vagina after intercourse
   c) A foul-smelling vaginal discharge
   d) Abnormal bleeding from vagina
   e) Rashes around the vagina
   f) Irregular menstruation
   g) Specify if others

11. What psychological problems have you faced after Child marriage ? (multiple response)
   a) Like to stay alone b) Do not like to participate in social activities
   c) Increase in heart beat d) Feeling of life as meaningless
   e) Feeling not to work f) Loss of appetite
   g) Don't know

12. Do you have any sexual problems?
   a) Loss of sexual desire b) Painful intercourse c) Specify if others...

13. How many times do you feel sick within a year ?

14. In which age are you become pregnant for the first time? (If not applied ask Question 25)

15. How many times did you have prenatal check up during the first pregnancy ?

16. When did you have first baby after your marriage ?

17. Where did you deliver your first child ?
   a) Hospital/health center b) Home

18. What was the body weight of your first child during birth ?

a) ..... Kg b) Don't know

18.1 If you did not know the weight, how was your baby as compared to others ?

a) Normal b) Abnormal c) Over weight d) Less weight

19. How many times did you take you take your baby for postnatal check up ?

20. How many times do your baby become sick within a year ?

21. Describe about your own children.

Name	Current Age	Live	Dead	Handicapped

22. Do you think Child marriage brings problem ?

a) Yes b) No

22.1 If yes, what are the problems?

a) b)

23. What problems have you faced because of Child marriage ?

a) No problem b) Unemployment c) Underemployment

d) Don't know e) Problem of leadership f) Less participation in social activity

g) Lack social prestige h) Problem of school drop out i) Specify, if others...

24. Who decides the following activities?

S.N.	Activities	Who decides?			
		Self	Husband	Both	Other member of the family
a	Having and caring children				
b	About one's health				
c	Financial transaction				
d	Education and training				
e	Domestic and social work				

25. What is your concept on Child marriage ?

26. What do you think to adopt the measures to eradicate Child marriage in your community ?

27 Who is responsible to eradicate Child marriage ?

Thank you

Appendix C Questionnaire for early married male

1. Why did you marry early?
   a)
   b)
   c)

2. Do modern devices like mobiles, internet encourage Child marriage ?
   a) Yes b) No

2.1. If yes, was it applied to you?
   a) Yes b) No

3. Do you know the legal age at marriage in Nepal?
   a) Yes b) No

3.1 If yes what is the legal age of marriage?
   a) With parental consent..... years of age.
   b) Without parental consent.....years of age.

4. Which of the following decides marriage?
   a) Father b) Mother c) Both father and mother
   d) Self e) Friend f) Others

4.1 Whose right is that to decide whom and when to marry?
   a) Parents b) Relatives c) Self d) Others

5. What are the positive effects and consequences of Child marriage ?

S.N.	Description	Positive effects	Consequences
a	Health		
b	Education		
c	Social		
d	Economic		
e	Specify if others		

6. Do you feel your work load and responsibility reduced and increased after your marriage?
   a) Increased b) Reduced c) As befor

7. How is your relationship with your husband because of Child marriage ?

a) As a friend b) Quarreling c) Conflict of ideas d) Others

8. Did your family have any body's death because of Child marriage and early preganancy ? If yes mention.

a) Mother b) Child

9. Did your wife have any health problems after your marriage?

a) Yes b) No

9.1 If yes, what were the problems ?

a)

b)

c)

10. Did your wife have miscarriage ?

a) Yes b) No

.....

.....

11. Do you think Child marriage brings problem ?

a) Yes b) No

11.1 If yes, what are the problems ?

a) b)

12. What problems have you faced because of Child marriage ?

a) No problem b) Unemployment c) Underemployment

d) Don't know e) Problem of leadership f) Less participation in social activity

g) Lack social prestige h) Problem of school dropout i) Specify, if others

13. What is your concept on Child marriage ?

14. What do you think to adopt the measures to eradicate Child marriage in your community ?

15. Who is responsible to eradicate Child marriage ?

Thank you

Appendix D FGD guideline for boys and girls

Objective1. To find out the prevalence and changing paradigms and patterns of Child marriage in different geographical locations of Nepal.

Core questions	Prompts or additional questions	Response note
1. What is the current situation of Child marriage in your community ? 2. What was in the past ? 3. How has the pattern changed ? 4. Why has the situation of Child marriage not changed ? 5. Are there any pressures for Child marriage ? 6. Are there any changes in patterns of Child marriage in your community ? 7. What are the changes ?	- Age at marriage - Dahej/Tilak - Participation of local people in marriage - Types of marriage - Age difference between male and female during marriage - Religion, tradition, family practice, family and peer pressure, situation of women, gender equality, gender discrimination, daughter is taken as a burden, family education - Family composition, number of brothers, migration - Vital registration, political instability, local leadership, arm conflict - Effects of mass media, group dynamics	

Objective 2.To find out underlying causes and consequences of Child marriage son girls and boys.

Core questions	Prompts or additional questions	Response note
1. What are the causes of Child marriage in your community? - Socio-cultural - Demographic - Economic - Political/legal - Modernization 2. What are the consequences of Child marriage in your community? Educational, economic, social, demographic, political/legal, health	- Literacy, access to higher education, school dropouts, class repeaters - Unemployment, under employment, poverty, access to property rights - Violence against women, social participation, leadership, social prestige and respect, extramarital affairs and divorce - Prolapsed uterus, RTIs, fistula, STIs, cervical cancer, impotence, fear, anxiety, tension, suicide	

Objective 3. To document good/best design, practices and initiatives against Child marriages.

Core questions	Prompts or additional questions	Response note
1. How actively do you involve in preventing Child marriage ? Why ? 2. What will be the roles of children in preventing Child marriage ? 3. What will be the roles of parent in preventing Child marriage ?	- What did you do to prevent Child marriage ? Give example of your participation.	

Objective 4. To identify gaps in law enforcement in the areas of Child marriage .		
Core questions	**Prompts or additional questions**	**Response note**
1. What are the rights of children regarding marriage ? 2. What is the legal age at marriage ? 3. What should be done to apply the legal age at marriage ? 4. Are you noticed any actions taken against Child marriage in your neighbor? What are they ? 5. Are you noticed any oral/written reports against Child marriage ? 6. Are you noticed any punishment or legal treatment against Child marriage ? 7. Are there any barriers to follow the legal action against Child marriage ? 8. What will be the roles of individuals and civil society to follow the legal action against Child marriage ?	- The rights to decide when and whom to marry - The rights to education - The responsibility of parent to marry their children in an appropriate age (after 20 years) - Involvement of child clubs against Child marriage	
Objective 4. To identify gaps in law enforcement in the areas of Child marriage .		
Core questions	**Prompts or additional questions**	**Response note**
1. Are there any organisations working against Child marriage in your community ? 2. What are the activities of those organisations ? 3. What should those organisations do to prevent Child marriage ?	- organisations working against Child marriage and their functions - Are you involved in those organisations? - Are you benefited from those organisations ?	

Appendix E KII guidelines

Name of an Interviewee: District:

Designation: Organisation:

Objective1. To find out the prevalence and changing paradigms and patterns of Child marriage in different geographical locations of Nepal.

Guidelines	Summary of responses
1. What is the general trend of age at marriage in your community ? a. Age at marriage for female b. Age at marriage for male 2. In which community the Child marriage sare witnessed more and in which it is the least ? 3. Have you noticed the change in the age for marriage now and then ? (Causes/difference) Then: Now: 4. If change is noticed, what might be the causes of change ?	

Objective 2.To find out underlying causes and consequences of Child marriage son girls and boys.

Guidelines	Response note
1. What are the reasons behind Child marriage ? 2. What are the consequences of Child marriage ? 3. Does Child marriage contribute to increase school dropout especially in primary level ?	

Objective 3. To document good/best programme design, practices and initiatives against Child marriages.

Guidelines	Response note
1. Have you observed any best practices regarding the prevention of Child marriage ? 2. Are there any organisations that are actively contributing in preventing Child marriage ? 3. Which sort of activities are they doing? (Awareness development, law enforcement, campaign) 4. What are the programmes being conducted in your community to stop Child marriages ?	

Objective 4. To identify gaps in law enforcement in the areas of Child marriage.

Guidelines	Response note
1. What contributions can be made to prevent Child marriage ? 2. What can be done from your level? Community, VDC 3. What should a CBOs/NGO do? 4. What should the government do? DDC/Central government	

4. Have you noticed any reports against Child marriage ? 6. What hindrances are there to enforce laws against Child marriage ? 7. What roles can you play to prevent Child marriage ?	
Objective 5. To generate database on Child marriage sfor policy change/implementation, improving programme design and delivery, marketing, communication, advocacy and fundraising efforts.	
Guidelines	**Response note**
1. How do they mobilise funds for the programme? (Collection and utilisation) 2. What are the major advocacy and communication issues in terms of Child marriage ? 3. What types of programmes should be implemented to reduce Child marriage in your community ? 4. Do you have any suggestions to improve the ongoing programmes to prevent Child marriage ?	

Plan is an international humanitarian, child-centered community development organisation without religious, political or governmental affiliation. Child sponsorship is the basic foundation of the organisation. Plan's vision is of a world in which all children realise their full potentials in societies that respect people's rights and dignity.

Because I am a girl is Plan's campaign to fight gender inequality, promote girls right and lift millions of girls out of poverty. The campaign aims to support girls to receive the education, skills and protection they need to move from poverty to opportunity.

Save the Children is the world's largest non-religious, non political, independent movement for children's rights working in over 120 countries around the world. This gives us a strong and impartial voice when advocating for Children's issues. As advocates and promoters of child rights, we act as facilitators to influence policies and practices both at the community and national level. Save the Children listens to children, involves children and acts to ensure their views are taken into account.

Save the Children works for:

- A world which respects and values each child
- A world which listens to children and learns
- A world where all children have hope and opportunity.

World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. Motivated by our Christian faith, World Vision is dedicated to working with the world's most vulnerable people. World Vision serves all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.

Child Health Now is World Vision's global five-year campaign to end preventable deaths of children under five. The Child Health Now campaign has been launched in Nepal to contribute to reducing child mortality in disadvantaged areas of Nepal in line with MDG 4.

ISBN 9937-2-5417-5