Factors and Consequences of Early Marriage among Women in Community, Chitwan

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Abstract: *Child marriage in Nepal is considered a major barrier to the nation's social and economic development as well as a major women's health concern. The objective was to find out prevalence, factors and consequences of early marriage among women of Tharu and Bote community. Comparative descriptive research design was adopted and a total 144 married Tharu and Bote women were selected by quota sampling technique in Kalika municipality-5, Chitwan from 28 August to 4 September, 2018. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Descriptive (Frequency, percentage, median & quartile) and inferential statistics (Chi-square) was used to analyze data. Majority of married Tharu (72.2%) and Bote (90.3%) women had early marriage (Md: 17.50 years, IQR: 20-15) & (Md: 16 years, IQR: 25-18) respectively. Married Tharu (68.1%) and Bote (80.6%) women had early pregnancy (Md: 18, IQR: 20-16) & (Md: 17, IQR: 19-15.50) respectively. There was significant association between early marriage and illiterate (p=0.029), adult and basic education (p=0.001), business, daily wages, student and unemployed (p=0.026), not aware about legal age of marriage (p<0.001), not aware about consequences of early marriage (p=0.001), father's educational status: illiterate (p=0.015), parental income not sufficient to manage in home (p=0.050), husband having adult and basic education (p<0.001), husband's occupation: daily wages (p=0.043), at the time of marriage in Tharu women. There was significant association between early marriage and not aware about legal age of marriage (p<0.001), not aware about consequences of early marriage (p=0.015) at time of marriage in Bote women.*

Keywords: Early marriage, Early pregnancy, Consequences, Tharu, Bote

1. Introduction

Marriage is a social form that unites persons in a bonding form of mutual dependence for the intention of beginning and maintaining a family. Child marriage in Nepal is considered as great obstacles to the country's development and major women's health aspect.[1] The legal age of marriage in Nepal is 20 years for both sexes. The law states that punishment for child marriage is imprisonment for up to three years and fine of up to 10, 000 rupees.[2]

Worldwide, more than 700 million women alive today were married as children. More than 1 in 3 or 250 million were married before 15. Prevalence of marriage in world is varying (56%) in south Asia, (46%) west and central Africa, (38%) eastern and southern Africa, (30%) Latin America and the Caribbean, (24%) middle east and north Africa, (21%) east Asia and the Pacific and (14%) central eastern Europe and the common wealth of independent.[3] South Asia has the highest prevalence of child marriage in the world. Fifty six percent of women (20-49 years) were married before reaching 18. Countries within south Asia that are big contributors to young girls marrying include Bangladesh (52%), India (47%), Nepal (47%), and Afghanistan (33%).[4]

Almost 69% of women were married before 18 years of age in Morang, Nepal. Prevalence of child marriage was lower in Hinduism (68.9%) than in Christianity and Islam women (85.7%). Unplanned pregnancies were higher (70.6%) in early

age marriage. Early marriage was significantly associated with low education of wife & husband and low socio economic status.[5] Low socio-economic status, lack of accessibility to education, societal pressures, lack of accessibility to family planning information and contraceptive devices, dowry which causes child marriage in Nepal.

Uterine prolapsed and obstetric fistulas are major examples of maternal morbidity in Nepal. A review of Nepal government's data between 1995 and 2007, marriage of girls less than14 reduced by 57% in 14 years, and by 27% in 15 years. Marriage of girls age 16 to 17 increased by 11%, which accounted for an overall decline of 15% between 1995 and 2007 in girls marrying before the age of 18.[6] Maternal mortality is strongly associated with the age of mother and early conception. Mothers whose age is less than 18 years have 35-55% of higher chances of having preterm and underweight child than older mothers' child.[7]

Studying factors and consequences of early marriage will provide systematic information for local level planners to understand to what extent the child marriage prevalence in their area, and changes might be required to reduce the prevalence for the target population. Greater enforcement of existing policies are critical to prevent child marriage, education and support services for married adolescent females and their families are also important to reduce the reproductive health consequences of early marriage.

2. Methods and Materials

Comparative descriptive research design was conducted to find out prevalence, factors and consequences of early marriage among women of Tharu and Bote community of Kalika municipality -5, Chitwan. Quota sampling technique was used to select 144 married Tharu and Bote women. Data was collected from 28 August to 4 September, 2018. In a day, approximately 18-20 respondents were interviewed and about 25-30 minutes was taken to collect data from each respondent. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Ethical approval from Institutional Review Committee, Chitwan Medical College Bharatpur, Chitwan (CMC-IRC-2075/076-046) was taken for the study. Written consent was obtained from each respondent before data collection. Confidentiality was assured and maintained. Data was entered in statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 20 and analyzed and interpreted in terms of descriptive (Frequency, percentage, median & quartile) and inferential statistics (Chi-square).

3. Results

Out of 144 married Tharu and Bote women, majority of both (44.4%) & (50%) were in age group 20 to <30 years, (Md: 29 years, IQR: 41-24) & (Md: 28 years, IQR: 35.75-25) in Tharu & Bote respectively; Faith on Hinduism (98.6%) & (90.3%) respectively; nuclear family (59.7%) & (58.3%) respectively; married living together (100%) & (97.2%) respectively; love marriage (54.2%) & (65.3%) respectively. At time of marriage, 4-6 number of siblings (55.6%) & (55.6%) respectively; father had adult education (22.2%) & (20.8%) respectively; Mother were illiterate (81.9%) & (81.9%) respectively; parents' relationship was harmonious (88.9%) &

(83.3%) respectively; no cultural practice of early marriage in society (84.7%) & (80.6%) respectively; gender bias of cultural practice (13.9%) & (16.7%) respectively; marriage is not due to social pressure (88.9%) & (88.9%) respectively. Socio cultural factors (Marriage due to pressure of society) at time of marriage in both castes does not play significant role in early marriage. Whereas cultural practice of early marriage and types of cultural practice do not play significant role with early pregnancy in married Bote women. Gynaecological consequences (Stress incontinence of urine, lower abdominal pain, and vaginal discharge) do not play significant role with early marriage in married Tharu women. Social consequences (Adjustment problem in family, increase responsibility, economic dependent, poor decision making power, drop out from school) do not play significant role with early marriage in both castes married women. Whereas, domestic violence does not play significant role with early marriage in married Bote women. Baby consequences (Low birth weight) does not play significant role with early pregnancy in both castes married women. Whereas premature birth does not play significant role with early pregnancy in married Tharu women and infant mortality does not play significant role with early pregnancy in marred Bote women.

The findings of the study are presented in following tables. Status of marriage and age at first pregnancy of respondents (Table 1), Association between early marriage and personal factors of respondents at time of marriage (Table 2), Association between early marriage and parental & husband factors of respondents at time of marriage (Table 3), Association between early pregnancy and obstetric consequences (Table 4), Bivariate Analysis of early marriage and personal, parental & husband Variables (Table 5).

Table 1: Status of marriage and age at first pregnancy of Respondents

Variables	Tharu	Bote
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Status of marriage (n=144)		
Early marriage (< 20 years)	52 (72.2)	65 (90.3)
Late marriage (≥ 20 years)	20 (27.8)	7 (9.7)
	Md.= 17.50; Q_3-Q_1= 20-15; min.= 13; max.= 36	Md.= 16; Q_3-Q_1= 18-15; min.= 13; max.= 26
Age at first pregnancy (n=140)		
<20 years	49 (68.1)	58 (80.6)
≥20 years	22 (30.6)	11 (15.3)
	Md.= 18; Q_3-Q_1= 20-16; min.= 13; max.= 38	Md.= 17; Q_3-Q_1= 19-15.50; min.= 13; max.= 27

Table 2: Association between early marriage and personal factors of respondents at time of marriage

n = 144

	Early marriage					
Variables	Tharu		Bote		χ² Tharu/Bote	p-value Tharu/Bote
	< 20 years (%)	≥ 20 years (%)	< 20 years (%)	≥ 20 years (%)		
Educational status						
Illiterate	22 (88%)	3 (12%)	23(95.8%)	1 (4.2%)	4.752	**0.029**/ 0.412
Literate	30 (63.8%)	17 (36.2%)	42(87.5%)	6(12.5%)		є
Level of education						
Adult and basic	26 (78.8%)	7 (21.2%)	36 (90%)	4 (10%)	10.736/ 0.343	**0.001**/ 0.558
Secondary	4 (28.6%)	10 (71.4%)	6 (75%)	2 (25%)		#

Occupation						
Farmer	10 (52.6%)	9 (47.4%)	7 (70%)	3 (30%)	4.938/	**0.026**/ 0.079
Others*	42 (79.2%)	11 (20.8%)	58 (93.5)	4 (6.5%)	3.088	#
Aware about legal age						
Yes	13 (46.4%)	15 (53.6%)	8 (57.1%)	6(42.9%)	15.195/17.306	**< 0.001**/ <
No	39 (88.6%)	5 (11.4%)	57(98.3%)	1 (1.7%)		**0.001** #
Aware about consequences						
Yes	16 (51.6%)	15 (48.4%)	23(79.3%)	6(20.7%)	11.526	**0.001**/ **0.015**
No	36 (87.8%)	5 (12.2%)	42(97.7%)	1 (2.3%)		ε

Significance level at 0.05   ε Fisher Exact   # Continuity correction
*Others- Business, daily wages, student, unemployed

Personal factors (Type of marriage, number of siblings) at time of marriage in both castes do not play significant role in early marriage (not shown in table).

Table 3: Association between early marriage and parental & husband factors of respondents at time of marriage
n = 144

	Early marriage				χ^2 Tharu/Bote	p-value Tharu/Bote
Variables	Tharu		Bote			
	< 20 years (%)	≥ 20 years (%)	< 20 years (%)	≥ 20 years (%)		
Father's educational status						
Illiterate	31 (83.8%)	6 (16.2%)	36 (92.3%)	3 (7.7%)	5.871	**0.015**/ 1.000 ε
Literate	19 (57.6%)	14 (42.4%)	26 (89.7%)	3 (10.3%)		
Parental income sufficient						
Yes	35 (66%)	18 (34%)	37 (88.1%)	5 (11.9%)	3.829	
No	17 (89.5%)	2 (10.5%)	28 (93.3%)	2 (6.7%)		**0.050**/ 0.692 ε
Husband's level of education						
Adult and basic	30 (85.7%)	5 (14.3%)	46 (92%)	4 (8%)	14.868	
Secondary	7 (35%)	13 (65%)	5 (83.3%)	1 (16.7%)		**<0.001**/0.445 ε
Husband's occupation						
Daily wages	32 (82.1%)	7 (17.9%)	52 (89.7%)	6 (10.3%)	4.098/0.000	**0.043**/ 1.000 #
Others ø	20 (60.6%)	13 (39.4%)	13 (92.9%)	1 (7.1%)		

Significance level at 0.05   ε Fisher Exact   # Continuity correction

Ø Others- Farmer, business, service, abroad, student & unemployed

Father's level of education, father's occupation, mother's educational status, mother's occupation, parents' relationship at time of marriage in both castes do not play significant role in early marriage (not shown in table). Husband's educational status at time of marriage in both castes does not play significant role in early marriage (not shown in table).

Table 4: Association between early pregnancy and obstetric consequences
n = 140

	Early pregnancy				χ^2 Tharu/Bote	p-value Tharu/Bote
Variables	Tharu		Bote			
	< 20 years (%)	≥ 20 years (%)	< 20 years (%)	≥ 20 years (%)		
Caesarean section						
Yes	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	3 (60%)		0.169 ε /0.026 ε
No	47 (71.2%)	19 (28.8%)	56 (87.5%)	8 (12.5%)		

Significance level at 0.05   ε Fisher Exact   # Continuity correction   NA- Not applicable

Obstetric consequences (Abortion, heavy vaginal bleeding) does not play significant role with early pregnancy in both castes (not shown in table). Likewise, prolong labour does not play significant role with early pregnancy in Tharu (not shown in table).

Table 5: Bivariate Analysis of early marriage and personal, parental & husband Variables

n = 144

Variables	Unadjusted OR (95% CI)	p-value	Unadjusted OR (95% CI)	p-value
	Tharu		Bote	
Educational status				
Illiterate	0.241 (0.063-0.924)	0.038		
Literate	1			
Level of education				
Adult and basic	0.108 (0.026-0.449)	0.002		
Secondary	1			
Occupation				
Farmer	1			
Others*	0.291 (0.095-0.891)	0.031		
Aware about legal age of marriage				
Yes	1		1	
No	0.111 (0.034-0.366)	<0.001	0.023 (0.002-0.220)	0.001
Aware about consequences				
Yes	1		1	
No	0.148 (0.046-0.478)	0.001	0.091 (0.010-0.805)	0.031
Father's educational status				
Illiterate	0.263 (0.086-0.800)	0.019		
Literate	1			
Husband's level of education				
Adult and basic	0.263 (0.086-0.800)	0.019		
Secondary	1			

Significance level at 0.05   1-Reference group   *Others- Business, daily wages, student, unemployed

In married Tharu women, early marriage is 76% lower chances of having in illiterate as compared to literate followed by 90% lower chances in adult and basic education compared to secondary level education, 71% lower chance in others (business, daily wages, student, unemployed) as compared to farmer, 89% lower chances in those who had no awareness about legal age of marriage as compared to those who had awareness, 86% lower chances in those who had no awareness about consequences of early marriage as compared to those who had awareness, 74% lower chances of having in illiterate father as compared to literate, 74% lower chances of having in those husband who had adult & basic education as compared to secondary level education.

In married Bote women, early marriage is 98% lower chances in those who had no awareness about legal age of marriage as compared to those who had awareness, 91% lower chances in those who had no awareness about consequences of early marriage as compared to those who had awareness.

4. Discussion

In the study, married Tharu women having adult and basic education at time of marriage were 0.892 (p=0.002) times less likely to engage in early marriage than women with secondary level. It is due to women having adult and basic education is more as compared to secondary level. In contrast with the finding of Talukder, Hasan, Razu & Hossain (2020) revealed that women with a secondary education were 45% (UOR=0.552, p=0.000) less likely to engage in early marriage than women with no primary education.[8]

Study showed that married Tharu women whose parent's income were not sufficient to manage in home at the time of marriage (p=0.050) has significant association with early marriage. Similarly in the findings of Talukder, Hasan, Razu & Hossain (2020) showed that females who were in the middle (UOR=0.729, p=0.000) and rich wealth index levels were (UOR=0.373, p=0.000) less likely to be involved in early marriage.[8] Likewise, Berliana et al. (2018) found that underprivileged females tend to get married earlier than those with a high socio-economic status.[9]

In the recent study, married Tharu women who were not aware about legal age of marriage at time of marriage (p<0.001) and married Bote women (p<0.001) has significant association with early marriage. Married Tharu women who were not aware about consequences of early marriage at time of marriage (p=0.001) and married Bote women (p=0.015) has significant association with early marriage; which is supported by the study findings of Berliana et al. (2018) revealed that well-informed females tend not to get married as early as females who do not have access to media information.[9]

Study showed that married Tharu women (2.82%) and married Bote women (4.34%) had still birth, followed by 18.1% & 19.4% had abortion respectively, 19.4% & 15.3% had drop out from school respectively, and 68.1% & 80.6% had early pregnancy respectively as consequences of early marriage. Contradicts with the findings of Kamal (2011) 70.4 % and 23.4% of women had still birth and pregnancy termination as consequences of early marriage.[10] Again supported by the findings of Basazinewu (2018) showed that main consequences of early marriage are girls school dropout & early pregnancy.[11]

5. Conclusion

There was significant association between early marriage and illiterate, adult and basic education, business, daily wages, student and unemployed, not aware about legal age of marriage, not aware about consequences of early marriage, father's educational status: illiterate, parental income not sufficient to manage in home, husband having adult and basic education, and husband's occupation: daily wages, at the time of marriage in married Tharu women. Likewise, significant association between early marriage and not aware about legal age of marriage & consequences of early marriage, at the time of marriage in married Bote women.

Acknowledgment

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