

Early Marriage Impact on Female's Health and Their Satisfactory Level: A Distinctive Analytical Study in Bangladesh

Ishita Roy¹, Amit Kumar Sarker²

Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science & Technology University, Gopalganj-8100

Student of MBA, Department of Management Studies, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science & Technology University, Gopalganj-8100

Abstract: *Early or Child marriage is a strong social custom, particularly for girls in Bangladesh. Most societies have standards that set a minimum age for marriage. But in many communities this age requirement is too low - especially for girls and does not take their psychological or physiological readiness for marriage into consideration. Actually, the vital reasons of early marriage and that's why impact of it's on among them are poverty, superstition, lack of social security, education and lack of awareness. For this kind of facts of it creates also impact on female's health. According to UNICEF report, "the State of the World's Children, 2009", "Early marriage is pervasive in Bangladesh, with 64 percent of girls married before age 18. Early pregnancy often results from child marriage; one-third of girls aged 15 to 19 in Bangladesh are currently either mothers or pregnant." Although child marriage is prohibited legally, but incidences of child marriage through their impact of health are still happening in rural areas of Bangladesh. According to the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 the minimum legal age for marriage is 18 years for females in Bangladesh. Along with this Act of child marriage is punishable by law. The right to free and full consent to a marriage is recognized in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and in many subsequent human rights instruments. To prevent child marriage, a wide range of individuals and organizations need to create awareness among people why it's create devastating impact on women's health, particularly the poor. Especially, parents and government can play main role to reducing this kind of impact of through child marriage. An environment should be ensured where children get proper care and facility to grow up completely and properly.*

Keywords: Early marriage satisfaction, impact of early marriage, females of rural areas in Bangladesh, chi-square test and frequency distribution

1. Introduction

Children are dependent upon parents and others for growing up. As a social practice entered into through a public act, religious or traditional ceremony, it reflects the purposes, character, and customs of the society in which it is found. Many societies have norms that limit the age of young girls to enter into marriage, but in some cases the age limit does not take into consideration their physiological readiness for childbearing. Marriage often takes place at ages much earlier than the legally approved minimum age. Early marriage is the marriage of children and teenagers below the age of 18. The practice of early marriage is most common in Bangladesh and South Asia. In specific parts of Bangladesh, marriage before sexual maturity is not unusual. We see that in Bangladesh, and other parts of Asia marriage shortly after sexual maturity is common among those living traditional lifestyles. Marriages of female teenagers between sixteen and eighteen years of age are also common in parts of Bangladesh. Among those marrying early, some are forced into this union, others are simply too young to make an informed decision. Because the child does not have the opportunity to exercise her right to choose, early marriages are also referred to as forced marriages. In its most extreme form, forced marriages are the result of carrying of early marriage is also sometimes referred to as forced marriage, because children rarely consent freely, or understand the long-term implications of marrying young. Children may be coerced by their families to marry, or choose marriage themselves if they believe it will make their lives better.

Forced marriage also occurs between adults. For these reasons we use the term early marriage.

Girls are disproportionately affected and form the majority of child spouses. The younger the child, the greater the danger that marriage poses to their health and well-being. Seventeen per cent of girls in least developed countries are married by their fifteenth birthday and consequently suffer a range of acute negative physical and psychological impacts due to their immaturity.

- 1) International human rights instruments provide four main protections against early marriage. They:
- 2) Require the intending parties to exercise „free and full consent“ in the decision to marry
- 3) Set the minimum age of marriage at 18, the upper limit of childhood as defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- 4) Call on states to „ban harmful practices,“ including early marriage
- 5) Entitle children to special protections, including the right to express their views freely in all matters regarding their welfare; the right to education on the basis of equal opportunity; the right to protection from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation; and the right to health and access to health services.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) clearly states that "marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending parties", however,

in the case of early marriage, the child bride cannot give "free and full consent" to the marriage because the bride is either too young to be aware of what is happening or her opinion is ignored by those who have arranged the marriage. Not only does this practice violate an individual's rights, it snatches away the beauty of being a child and replaces it with the endless helplessness, psychological and emotional torment, sexual and physical abuse as well as social and economic conflicts that a forced, early marriage brings.

2. Reasons for Early Marriage

- 1) Poverty is by far the most obvious and prevalent reason for early marriage, particularly for girls. It is both a cause and effect of child marriage. Poverty creates a vicious cycle which self-propagates.
 - a) In underdeveloped countries in particular, poor parents cannot afford to educate their children resulting in illiteracy and ignorance, which stokes and continues the momentum of the poverty cycle.
 - b) Some parents feel that the feeding and upkeep of a girl is economically not fruitful as she is not likely to bring any income to the household. The size of families often leads to a shortage of food and the girls are first to be jettisoned. Any money spent towards education is for the son(s).
 - c) Girls growing up become targets for Romeos and hoodlums and it becomes risky for parents to protect them, especially when both parents work and the house is not secure. Many families believe that their daughter would be better off being married as her future is secured and the responsibility to care of her would be her husband's job. However, with girls being so young when married off, a husband, who is generally older, may become dominating causing his young bride to be submissive and powerless.
- 2) Ignorance of the dangers and harms brought on by child marriage, and lack of education, which is the driving force behind that ignorance, is possibly the second most important factor causing the propagation of the practice.
- 3) Adherence to misconceived notions of religion and discriminatory traditional and customary practices is another reason for child marriage.
- 4) Sexual harassment is a phenomenon newly recognised as being the cause behind early marriage of girls. This particular reason cuts across social boundaries, inasmuch as the girls in the middle and higher echelons of social and economic strata may also find themselves as targets of sexual harassment while in public places, for example on the way to and from school or work etc.
- 5) The fear of premarital sex and bearing children outside the marriage and the associated family honour often lead the family decision makers to take the decision for early marriage.

3. Deprivation of constitutional and legal rights

Young girls are subjects/objects of their parents' or guardians' whims and wishes and are powerless, especially due to their vulnerability as they are entirely dependent on them. They are not regarded as the holders of rights. Girls have no say: tender age/immaturity, physical size,

vulnerable position within the family, lack of education and no job prospect add up to no bargaining power.

After marriage a child's vulnerability does not change since a young bride struggles to be the ideal daughter-in-law and wife, or as I see it, the ideal slave. Value of virginity and the cost of loss of the treasure. Parents in Niger see early marriage as a way of keeping daughters' virginity until marriage. Girls regard it as giving them social status, which will ultimately improve their economic status. Mothers regard early marriage as a means to ensure their daughters are socially accepted. Modesty is the most precious thing for a girl. Losing it implies losing everything a girl has in her life" a thought which every person in the cultures that practice child marriage believe.

Tradition/custom

It's develop from socio-economic necessity. Generally people in Bangladesh in most of the rural areas, in particularly they pray for male children and there is female foeticide there. Scans to determine gender of unborn children are available in Bangladesh, but here religion plays a part in preventing destruction of life. It is a common belief that each child is born with his/her own „kismet“ (ration). However, in one region of Bangladesh parents wish for daughters because they can be sold into prostitution and the proceeds used to build the parents' house. In due course the girl will come back and will be married off.

4. Why is it bad?

Child marriage is injurious to health: The families of child brides are not only unaware that partaking in the harmful tradition will lead to poverty, but they are also in the dark about the potential harm to a child bride's health (or they simply choose to ignore the potential risks). Mothers know the risks well, but accept it as part of their life's lot. The tradition has become so ingrained that it has become the norm. The girls that are coerced and forced into early marriage are sometimes as young as four years old or have not gone through puberty and are almost always not physically, sexually or mentally prepared for the responsibilities a marriage brings. A newlywed bride is pressurized to have sex and bear children immediately after the wedding ceremony regardless of how physically immature she is. According to the International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC), girls younger than the age of 15 are at a much higher risk of experiencing complications during sexual intercourse, pregnancy and childbirth due to their underdeveloped bone structure, pelvis and reproductive organs, The IWHC also reports that younger pregnant adolescents almost always go through prolonged and obstructed labour that usually leads to haemorrhage, severe infection and maternal death and those who survive such complications are at a high risk of developing an obstetric fistula. The numbers of obstetric fistulas are rising by 75,000 new cases annually; and almost all of the girls are abandoned by their husbands. They are also socially isolated due to the stench caused by incontinence.

The only reality these girls know is what their mother told them, i.e. the norm is to marry girls off young to fulfil a burdensome duty, to alleviate household expenses and to

secure a happy life for them as soon as an opportunity arises. However, this misconception leads to a never ending poverty cycle. Unless the child brides are given education, poverty will continue to be a leading effect of the practice.

Child marriage results in a life of sexual and economic servitude for the girl. She has no idea that her immature physical development at the time of marriage will result in stunted growth due to strenuous work at early age; early pregnancy; child/mother mortality at childbirth; and malnourished children. Lack of education leads to a lack of appreciation of the benefits of education and creates education-less children. The economics of education to poor parents is least important when they live from hand to mouth and only worry about the next meal and investing in girls is a waste when they will be leaving the family after marriage.

The older a man is, the more sexually experienced he is either from paying for sex or previous marriages and therefore, there is a higher possibility of him having HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Many men in developing countries believe that having sexual intercourse with a “fresh girl” would cure their sexually transmitted disease. Therefore, they resort to marrying a young girl, unaware that they would only pass on the disease to the bride as well as their offspring. Along with health risks and a continuation of a vicious cycle of poverty, child marriage sometimes leads child brides to contemplate and commit suicide due to the sexual, physical and emotional abuse they face in their marital home.

5. Specific Reasons for Child Marriage in Bangladesh

According to a 2012 United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) report:

- 1) Bangladesh has one of the highest child marriage rates in the world, ranking fourth in the league table. About 66% girls will be married before their 18th birthday and in the western part of the country the figure may be as high as 74%. These figures are “much higher than the regional average for South Asia (46%).
- 2) Child marriage is associated with girls “who are the least educated, poorest and living in rural areas. The report goes on to say, “girls from the poorest 20% of the households were almost twice as likely to be married/in union before age 18 than girls from the richest 20% of the households.”

In Bangladesh, which has patriarchal social mores, some of the most prominent reasons for early marriage are poverty, superstition, and lack of awareness about laws. Tradition/religion as a factor in early marriage the religions practised by the citizens of Bangladesh do not advocate early marriage for boys or girls. However, a practice has developed to marry off girls as early as possible due, as has already been mentioned, to: Socio-economic reasons, including poverty, linked with the perception of girls as an economic burden, parental desire to safeguard girls against premarital sex and out-of-wedlock pregnancies and the menace of stalking and sexual harassment.

6. Data and Methods

This paper is a cross sectional studies involving 150 married women of 16 to 50 year ages who are actually engaged with marriage without considering maturity in Bangladesh. Data have been collected from different areas of Bangladesh like Dhaka, Khulna, Gopagonj, Jessore, Kushtia, Narail, Satkhira, Naogaon, Natore, Gaibandha, Rangpur, Bagerhat and etc. Data on some designated rural areas of Bangladesh and those have been collected through questionnaire method during September, 2015 to January, 2016. There are five scaling method in questionnaire. These are elaborated below.

1= “Strongly Agree”, 2= “Agree”, 3= “Neutral”, 4= “Disagree”, 5= “Strongly disagree”.

Here, Strongly Agree represent highly positive respondent to the interviewee. Agree represent positive respondent to the interviewee. Neutral represent no comment to the interviewee. Disagree represent negative respondent to the interviewee. Strongly Disagree represent highly negative respondent to the interviewee. Strongly Agree, Agree and Neutral are consider as positive response in calculation table. Disagree and Strongly disagree are consider negative response in calculation table.

To complete the experiment, descriptive statistics (frequency distribution) and chi-square test method have been utilized in this research. Initially descriptive statistics and after finally chi-square test method use to this papers equentially to measure the current situation of impact of early marriage in Bangladesh view point of female health. The estimations of the data have been finished by the statistical software SPSS-16 version.

7. Results & Discussion

The results of descriptive statistics have been demonstrates in table 1 where the frequency with percentage distribution of the selected individual level variables and early marriage satisfaction with impacts of early marriage on female’s health of different areas in Bangladesh is revealed.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution Related Characteristics of Level Variables Impacts of Early Marriage on Female’s Health of Different Areas in Bangladesh.

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Age		
16-47 years [ref.]	126	84.0
48 years and more	24	16.0
Total	150	100.0
Education		
Below PSC	90	60.0
PSC and more	60	40.0
Total	150	100.0
Age of Marriage		
10 to 13 years [ref.]	23	15.30
14 and more	127	84.70
Total	150	100.0
No. of Child		
0 to 3 [ref.]	104	69.30
4 and more	46	30.70
Total	150	100.0

Physical problem after marriage		
Yes [ref.]	89	59.30
No	61	14.70
Total	150	100.0
Enjoying sexual life		
Yes [ref.]	137	92.7
No	13	7.30
Total	150	100.0
Complicated child birth		
Yes	98	65.3
No	52	34.7
Total	150	100.0
Baby's problem		
Yes	94	62.7
No	56	37.3
Total	150	100.0
Unwanted pregnancy		
Yes	110	73.3
No	40	26.7
Total	150	100.0
Forced to marriage		
Yes	116	77.3
No	34	22.7
Total	150	100.0
Knowledge about Early Marriage		
Yes	76	50.7
No	74	49.3
Total	150	100.0
First Child Birth Decision		
Yes	98	65.3
No	52	34.7
Total	150	100.0
Satisfied with Husband		
Yes	119	79.3
No	31	20.7
Total	150	100.0
Overall Satisfaction on Early Marriage		
Yes	137	91.3
No	13	8.70
Total	150	100.0

It is observed from table 1 that most of the female's present age calculated on the basis of some particular area and from early marriage female's 84% peoples are belonged to the 16 years to 47 years and 16% women's in the 48 years and more of age respectively. There are 60% females who have under this category of below PSC and 40% PSC and more education. In this table from variables age of marriage we can see that 15.30% and 84.70% females are married when their age 10 to 13 years 14 and more (here meant that limited to 17 years) From these variables with percentage implies that higher education plays important role for reduction of early marriage and its impacts in Bangladesh. Number of child one of the fact or output basis of early marriage. According to health care institution and others public awareness builders on the basis of their co-curriculum activities they know what the actual impact of their when they provide service to the early married females. The problem mainly based on their physical condition and on the other hand few cases. Through this frequency table view point of number of child of females whose married occurred 10 to 13 years and 14 and more (17) years is 0 to 3 and 4 and more. Here percentage is 69.30% and 30.70%. By this table of frequency we give a statement that the age of marriage between 10 to 13 years who gives child birth frequently and 14 and more (17) years females gives child birth at

decreasing percentage rate of previous one. Sometimes physical problem after marriage come from early marriage of females. Yes is 59.30% and No is 14.70% female's physical problem. This percentage comes from those female whose age is under 18 year and from those whether whose are faced physical problem after marriage. According to a 2012 United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) report that are already said and the percentage rate of their married before their 18th birthday is 66%. It's come from previous analysis. Enjoying sexual life also goes with maturity and the. 92.7% is yes and No is 7.30% percentage rate goes with sexual life enjoyment from survey on early marriage impact. Oldest people are more experienced rather than youngest people so that's the reason of also enjoying sexual life basis on women's. Again from the variable of baby's problem that comes from early marriage and its impact. Here the percentage rate on the basis of yes and no is 62.7% and 37.3% that create also impact on female's health. The age of married also here the important fact from the view point of baby's problems. If the girl's marriage occurred within her inferior age they face some problems and birth complicated child. For this reason the child mentally and physically is not fulfil. Early marriage also responsible unwanted pregnancy. From the table of frequency we see that the percentage rate of yes 73.3% and no 26.7% goes with the early married female's opinion. Unwanted pregnancy is responsible for the child's death when the birth of child's time. Forced to marriage also responsible for early marriage. By this variable we can say that if the forced come from father-in-law to early marriage of girls they surrender to marriage whatever her age is. Yes is 77.3% and No is 22.7%. This percentage say about the marriage people whose are not prepared for the sex and for the birth of marriage. According to frequency table, the early married females sometimes deprived of their first child decision. The main cause of deprived of decision basically goes with husband's autocratic decision. Here the percentage rate of yes and no is 65.3% and 34.7%. Satisfaction level of females with her husband goes with their maturity. If they are not prepared for the early age sex they cannot satisfy. 79.3% and 20.7% rate interpret the satisfied with husband from the view point of females.

After above all sequential frequency distribution of elected variables now stand at overall satisfaction on early marriage that's depend on their view point and it's come from their maturity and previous all the stated variables. The percentage rate is 91.3% and 8.70% for Yes and No opinions. From this above all survey research we developed an opinion or statement that the percentage on the basis of this dependent variable out some points. These points basically give some information in which stage girls need to marriage and in which stage they need to take child with their physical condition. When they take child as a mother they know the risks well, but accept it as part of their life's lot. Sometimes in survey times they don't gives proper opinion according to their situational facts. That is the also issue of research. Child marriage results in a life of sexual and economic servitude for the girl. She has no idea that her immature physical development at the time of marriage will result in stunted growth due to strenuous work at early age; early pregnancy; child/mother mortality at childbirth; and malnourished children. The role of playing by the

government of Bangladesh need to implement properly with the analysis on early marriage and its impact. The reason of proper implementation of govt. rule play a vital role to reduce uncertain pregnancy, physical problem after marriage, child birth problem and other thing. If the government like to deduction of marriage year age they need to analysis those facts which are related to the female's health impact and previous all the independent variables. The table 2 represent that the percentage wise frequency distribution from selected independent variables and overall satisfaction among different early married female's view point.

Table 2: Results of Individual Level Variables on Impacts of Early Marriage on Female's Health of Different Rural Areas in Bangladesh

Variables	Early marriage impact on women		Total	% of impact	x ² Cal and p value
	Yes	No			
Age					
16-47 years	115	11	126	84.0	x ² = 0.004 p = 1.000
48 years and more	22	2	24	16.0	
Total	137	50	150	100	
Education					
Below PSC	80	10	90	60.0	x ² = 1.698 p = 0.245
PSC and more	57	3	60	40.0	
Total	137	13	150	100	
Age of Marriage					
10 to 13 years	21	2	23	15.30	x ² = 0.000 p = 1.000
14 and more	116	11	127	84.70	
Total	137	13	150	100	
No. of Child					
0 to 3	96	8	104	69.30	x ² = 0.407 p = 0.539
4 and more	41	5	46	30.70	
Total	137	13	150	100	
Physical problem after marriage					
Yes	80	9	89	59.30	x ² = 0.578 p = 0.561
No	57	4	61	14.70	
Total	137	13	150	100	
Enjoying sexual life					
Yes	129	10	137	92.7	x ² = 5.192 p = 0.056
No	8	3	13	7.30	
Total	137	13	150	100	
Complicated child birth					
Yes	89	9	98	65.3	x ² = 0.095 p = 1.000
No	48	4	52	34.7	
Total	137	13	150	100	
Baby's problem					
Yes	85	9	94	62.7	x ² = 0.262 p = 0.786
No	52	4	56	37.3	
Total	137	13	150	100	
Unwanted pregnancy					
Yes	98	12	110	73.3	x ² = 2.620 p = 0.168
No	39	1	40	26.7	
Total	137	13	150	100	
Forced to marriage					
Yes	107	9	116	77.3	x ² = 0.533 p = 0.492
No	30	4	34	22.7	
Total	137	13	150	100	
Knowledge about Early Marriage					
Yes	66	10	76	50.7	x ² = 3.926

No	71	3	74	49.3	p = 0.079
Total	137	13	150	100	
First Child Decision					
Yes	91	7	98	65.3	x ² = 0.829 p = 0.375
No	46	6	52	34.7	
Total	137	13	150	100	
Satisfied with Husband					
Yes	108	11	119	79.3	x ² = 0.242 p = 1.000
No	29	2	31	20.7	
Total	137	13	150	100	

The satisfaction with the shape of percentage of impact is like; for when their age of married categorical year wise 15.30% and 84.70%. The impact of per independent variables on overall early married female's satisfaction are different and also it differ from individual levels and its significant levels like strongly significant, significant and non-significant. From this table of variables on impacts of early marriage on female's health of different areas in Bangladesh.

In this table also say that the impact of age, education, age of marriage, number of child, physical problem after marriage, sexual life enjoyment, complicated child birth, baby's problem, unwanted pregnancy, forced to marriage, knowledge about early marriage first child decision, satisfied with husband on overall satisfaction of early marriage. By this table also we get some percentage of these independent variables like 84%, 60%, 15.30%, 69.30, 59.30%, 92.7%, 65.3%, 62.7%, 73.3%, 77.3%, 50.7%, 65.3%, and 79.3%. Through percentage we can developed an opinion that the percentage rate most of independent variables were significant with dependent.

The individual level of these variables create impact on dependent variables it is known but the actual results on the basis of those variables its collected from area wise survey and its significance really important for output or results. For this reason age, education, age of marriage, number of child, physical problem after marriage, sexual life enjoyment, complicated child birth, baby's problem, unwanted pregnancy, forced to marriage, knowledge about early marriage first child decision and others variable are relay on overall satisfaction and their percentage is important satisfactory. One the other view point with overall satisfaction goes with independent variables with percentages and those results between those variables differ from proper significant and its overall results impacts on early marriage satisfaction. Finally we can say that the individual level variables that are collected from different region of Bangladesh is totally up to date and it's also really helpful for government of Bangladesh.

8. Conclusion and Recommendation

In this study, it is found that the actual results on the basis of questionnaire survey two categorical variables, independent variables largely create impact on overall satisfaction of early marriage and the percentage rate is on the basis of table view 84%, 60%, 15.30%, 69.30, 59.30%, 92.7%, 65.3%, 62.7%, 73.3%, 77.3%, 50.7%, 65.3%, and 79.3%. This percentage have individual identity and significance

and that are come from variables age, education, age of marriage, number of child, physical problem after marriage, sexual life enjoyment, complicated child birth, baby's problem, unwanted pregnancy, forced to marriage, knowledge about early marriage first child decision, satisfied with husband on overall satisfaction of early marriage. There can be no doubt that the practice of child/early marriage is harmful in many ways. However, the deep-rooted traditions and customs compel specially the poor families in the urban and rural areas of Bangladesh to continue the practice of early marriage. The reason for early marriage is more social and economic than legal. To the poor and vulnerable section of the citizenry early marriage makes sense because it reduces the burden that poverty brings upon them and relieves the parents/guardians of the worries and agonies they face due to the insecurity and exposure to attacks upon their daughters. Those engulfed in cultures that practice child marriage are ignorant of the detrimental effects of the practice; they are frightened by their vulnerability; knowledge alone would help lessen the practice of child marriage. The State has a duty to impart such knowledge and give assurance about the safety and security of all citizens in every walk of life; only then the State can prosper. According to previous discussion and results we can say about this particular topic that government chose a satisfactory level of age and this age must be beneficial for females from all the side because once time the highlight news is reduction of marriage age. But, after scanning all about pros and cons with considering age and others variables that goes against early marriage. Because it create have long term effect one day with the traditional view point of early marriage can't be change. That is why at a time government can take proper steps to decrease early marriage's harmful impacts.

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EARLY MARRIAGE IMPACT ON FEMALE'S HEALTH&THEIR SATISFACTORY LEVEL

Questionnaire

Name:

1. Age:
2. Education:
 a) No education b) Bellow PSC c) PSC to JSC d) JSC to SSC e) SSC to Above
3. Occupation:
4. Age when you got married?
5. What's your opinion when it's okay to get married?
 a) 13-15 b) 16-18 c) 19-21 d) 22-Up
6. Did you accept your marriage proposal:
 a) Yes b) No
7. Did you face any complication with your first pregnancy?
 a) Yes b) No
8. Your total baby:
9. Do you know the effect of early marriage?
 a) Yes b) No

14.1: Please answer the following question:

Particulars	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Dis Agree	Strongly Disagree
Do you feel any physical problem after your marriage?					
Do you enjoyed your sexual life?					
Do you face any complicated child birth?					
Do you believe in family planning?					
Can you cope with your husband's parents easily?					
Is there any problem of your baby?					
Do you face unwanted pregnancy?					
Is there any social negativity toward you?					
Are you forced to marriage by your family?					
Do you have any knowledge the impact of early marriage?					
Do you birth your first child from your own desire?					
Do you get all type of support from your family?					
All of your children "planned"?					
Are you satisfied in a relationship with husband?					
Are you overall satisfied with your early marriage?					

Respondent's Signature: Mobile. No (Optional).