

## **Advantages and Disadvantages of Early Marriages in India**

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### **Abstract**

Marriage is celebrated and recognised as a major life event all across the globe. Too frequently, a child's childhood is cut short and their basic rights are jeopardised because of an arranged marriage. Because it is the way through which new families are formed, marriage is seen as one of India's most important social institutions. Various ceremonies and rituals give expression to this social institution. About 45 percent of females in India are married before they turn 18. The highest rate of marriages between minors (under the age of 18) occurs in Niger (74.5%), which is followed by Chad, Mali, the nation of Bangladesh, Guinea, and the Central African Republic. Most females who are married before the age of 18 come from low-income backgrounds. The majority of the girls have to deal with issues like sexual assault, teen pregnancy, and the loss of a parent. Birth-related deaths are more common among girls under the age of 15 than they are among women in their twenties. The fertility rate is highest among those under the age of 18. Feelings of despair, powerlessness, and severe depression are common among child brides who have experienced sexual abuse and PTSD. The pros and cons of getting married young are the subject of the current research.

**Keywords:** Early marriages, Child marriage, tradition

### **Introduction**

The legal marriage age in India is 21 for men and 18 for women. Despite this, millions of individuals continue to tie the knot when they're still young. Underage marriage is a major problem in many nations, including India. In the developing world, one-third of all marriages include a minor.

Leaders in the Southern Baptist Church have been pushing its congregants to tie the knot at a younger age in recent years. The secret to a good marriage is finding someone of a similar age. The Boko Haram situation has exacerbated the problem of underage marriage in Nigeria.

Child marriages (marriages between people extremely young) have historically been frequent in various Indian states, including Rajasthan. People under the age of 18 shouldn't be allowed to be married. There are a few causes for marriages to start so young.

Discrimination against women is an ongoing problem from conception to death. The effects of prejudice are seen in their professional and academic lives, as well as in their personal and social relationships. The child marriage system is also a reflection of these discriminations against women. Child marriages are caused by a variety of causes. These will be listed out in full:

- i. Many women and girls in rural regions still face discrimination because of their gender and age when it comes to accessing shared household resources because of poverty. Family poverty disproportionately affects female members, especially female children. Girls are more vulnerable in low-income households. The responsibility of having a girl kid is avoided at all costs. Child marriage is a common solution for low-income families who want to escape the financial, emotional, and social challenges of raising a girl.
- ii. One of the key socioeconomic issues that leads to child marriage is a lack of social security. Many believe that a married lady is protected from social wrongs more so than a single one. Crimes against unwed women are common because of the negative stereotypes that surround them. Because of the prevalence of violence, sexual assault, and verbal harassment directed at single women, many families feel pressured to marry off their daughters as soon as possible when they reach puberty, if not before.
- iii. Parents in rural regions sometimes marry off their girls at a young age in the mistaken belief that their boys are entitled to their part of the family's ancestral property. If girls are wed off as infants, society has less reason to demand that they contribute to the household. Females' entitlement to their part of family wealth explains why many children are married off at such a young age.
- iv. Avoiding financial commitments to girls' education is a common way that families show bias. Female children are seen as a burden because they do not need to work and have to take care of household duties before and after marriage, while male children are seen as an asset because they will work and earn money. For these reasons, girls' needs are often overlooked.

#### **Advantages of Early Marriage**

- i. Young couples do not have to hurry into everything, even starting a family, since they have plenty of time to prepare. Without worrying for the kids, they can relax and take pleasure in one other's company. They will be ready for parenthood and ready to take turns caring for the infant, particularly throughout the night, when the time comes.
- ii. By the time a man and a woman in their twenties get married, they will be capable adults who can provide for their children. This equips them with the mental and physical fortitude to raise healthy offspring. Additionally, younger parents might be seen as hipper parents.
- iii. Stability in one's financial situation: juggling work, family, and housework is no easy feat. In most cases, kids are old enough to handle life on their own by the time their parents finally hang up their work boots. Such parents, then, are financially secure and capable of providing adequately for their children. Being Patient and Thinking of Others: Newlyweds tend to offer each other more personal space. This will deepen their connection and increase their mutual understanding. That emotional fortitude will serve you both well in your relationships with your respective families. Couples that get married young tend to be more mature and responsible people because they have more time to devote to their roles as spouses and parents. If you want to improve yourself and your relationships with others, start by being a decent husband and father.

- iv. Marrying at a young age implies starting a family with less responsibilities than waiting until later in life. When compared to older marriages, younger ones had less unresolved issues stemming from previous breakups. Some individuals, for instance, put such a high value on chastity that the marriage bed is the only location they would ever engage in sexual activity. Some people would rather settle down and get married young than live their lives without the love they know they deserve.
- v. Marriage ensures a safe and fulfilling sexual life. In a good long-term relationship, both parties may learn about and satisfy the needs of their spouse. The dangers of STDs and other health problems are reduced by monogamy.
- vi. Many religions encourage early marriage as a social norm. In addition to strengthening their bond as a couple, a religious marriage may help them become closer to God and receive his benefits.

#### **Disadvantages of Early Marriage in India**

- i. Miscommunication: Couples who tie the knot at a young age often struggle to communicate with one another. Only in a mutually respectful setting can a couple grow to the point of understanding and patience with one another.
- ii. The success of every marriage depends greatly on the compatibility of the couple. Young couples often have little notion what each other likes and dislikes. As a result, the mental and emotional compatibility might suffer when you're forced to share living quarters. The infidelity or breakdown of a partnership is always a possibility.
- iii. Marrying early might be risky financially for men since they may not yet have established careers. Additionally, the cost, support, and safety of family responsibilities are borne financially. Likewise, issues with financial stability may occur due to a lack of information, education, or opportunity.
- iv. Women who get pregnant too quickly have an increased chance of miscarriage or abortion. This is because they are probably unaware of or forgetful about topics they should be cautious about. A miscarriage might also be caused by an unhealthy diet.
- v. Inadequate education: One of the difficulties that early marriage poses for women is the risk of their education being cut short. Every person has to have at least a basic education. Therefore, it is imperative that all children have a good education early on so that they may have successful marriages.
- vi. More knowledge is required: Young marriage poses risks for many teenagers. This is due to the fact that hasty nuptials often have unfavourable outcomes. When we're young, our preferences and interests are wide open, but as we mature, those things might shift dramatically. Both their degree of maturity and their outlook will shift as this process continues. This may lead to incompatibilities and potential disagreements.
- vii. Making concessions: young brides often have to abandon their chosen professions. Things might become worse if they have to forego further education or leave the workforce to focus on raising a family. The same holds true for husbands: when they're required at home to assist out the woman who can't handle everything on her alone, they have to sacrifice lucrative prospects.

viii. Marriage at a young age might stifle a woman's sense of independence since she will feel pressured to choose her husband's wants above her own. In the long term, this might lead to a rut that sparks tensions. Problems and disagreement inside the family may be a constant source of stress for married couples. Whether or not the two people come from different faiths, arguing about whose side is "right" may drain anyone's emotional reserves.

### **Some adverse Effects of Early age at Marriage**

- i. Many health problems might arise from an untimely pregnancy, which is common in child marriages. She will be unprepared for the physical and emotional shifts of pregnancy if she does not learn about and prepare for sexual activity and puberty. Even older ladies are unable to provide enough guidance for her nowadays. In the past, pregnant, labouring, and postpartum women were closely monitored by their elders. However, modern-day elderly ladies lack the information and confidence to seek help from qualified medical professionals as did their predecessors.
- ii. Marriage at a young age increases a woman's risk of unintended pregnancy and having a large family. Women are compelled to get pregnant and raise children because they lack access to contemporary medical services that would allow them to delay or prevent conception.
- iii. Young girls have less say in their families' daily routines, including what their children eat, how they stay healthy, and how they run their homes.
- iv. The physiological immaturity of young girls' sexual organs used to cause them a great deal of physical discomfort during sexual intercourse, which had a negative impact on their sexual and reproductive health. Perforation of the bladder or intestine, caused by protracted labour, HIV/AIDS, etc., is a common complication of teen pregnancies.
- v. As a result of society's fixation with having sons, young women are pressured to have as many children as possible in the hopes of having a male heir.
- vi. High age gap between the bride and husband: In most cases, the bride and groom have a wide age gap. The bride is often the younger of the two parties in a child marriage. It goes without saying that a young bride has no say in any household matters and must follow her husband's every command.

### **Child Marriages an Illegal Act**

It is widely agreed that child marriage is a societal ill that, without widespread effort, will not go away. While there have been calls to deem all child weddings null and invalid under the Prohibition of Child Weddings Act, this would be disastrous for the rights of the women who are victimised by this practise in India's unique and multifaceted culture. It's very uncommon for families to arrange arranged marriages for their daughters in the hopes that the older guy would provide financial support to the girl's family.

### **Conclusion**

Young brides are under a lot of pressure to have a family quickly. Adolescents who engage in sexual activity at a young age are at a higher risk of developing sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS. Pregnancy and childbirth at a young age is a leading cause of maternal death in India.

The goal cannot be achieved via law alone; societal endorsement is also required. A unified civil code might also aid in the fight against underage marriage. We hope you have a better understanding of the pros and cons of early marriage after reading this. It goes without saying that a person needs a spouse in order to feel whole. The decision of how young or old to tie the knot. Having said that, it's crucial to get into a union characterised by emotional stability, mental compatibility, and financial security.

It is clear from what has been said above that the reproductive and sexual health of young girls are negatively impacted the most by early marriage. There is a significant prevalence of miscarriages and stillbirths, as well as a higher mortality rate, preterm deliveries, and obstetric problems, among child brides. Pregnancy at a young age increases the dangers of an early marriage, and not only for the female child who becomes pregnant. Premature births and low birthweight babies are also common, and infant death rates are high.

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