

# Determinants of Early Marriage and Its Impact on Women Empowerment in AJK Pakistan

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<https://doi.org/10.62345/jads.2023.12.3.14>

## Abstract

*Early marriage violates human rights as it deprives the performer of fully compromising on the individuality, career, education, and self of the one performing it. The study explored the determinants and impacts of early marriage on women's empowerment. It also tested the relationship between early marriage and women's empowerment. Early marriage impact on women negatively and positively. Some reasons that affect women's lives badly. Poverty, lack of education, and exchange marriage is the main reason for early marriage. Parents early married their daughter because they could not afford her expenses. Early marriage also creates better communication and love between husband and wife. The research was conducted in District Sudhnoti, Tehsil Balouch, Azad Jammu Kashmir. The quantitative research design was married women, wherein 120 married females were interviewed through a questionnaire schedule. The sample was selected through the snowball sample technique. Later on, the data was codified and then analyzed through SPSS. The studies exposed that poor legislation, cultural support, and supposed value were some of the essential causes behind the menace. Furthermore, it contributed to their lack of education, poverty, illiteracy, over-population, family clashes, domestic violence, and patriarchal structure.*

**Keywords:** Early marriage, violation, expand, empowerment, legislation, determinants, cultural support, menace, family clashes, patriarchal.

## Introduction

Early marriage has many detrimental social, economic, physical, and health implications for adolescent girls and their children. Early marriage is against the law and a human rights violation. Female child marriage is a severe issue in Pakistan (Malik, 2022). The bride and groom form a precious bond via marriage. On the other side, early marriages provide challenges, particularly for women. A rapid shift in work, duties, or environment might result in stress. Due to their physical and mental immaturity, they cannot cope with new demands, which results in diseases like depression, sepsis, obstructed labor, HIV, etc. Although this issue is entirely preventable, it has a long history. Economic, social, and religious influences have long supported Pakistan's rural and semi-urban people (Rajwani, 2016).

Worldwide, millions of young men and women get married before turning 18, sometimes against their choice and in violation of human rights laws and treaties. These young brides have few possibilities for empowerment, education, and employment, making young women more susceptible to health issues. Ending child marriage can assist governments and communities in

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achieving their objectives in HIV/AIDS, maternal and child health, education, gender equality, and poverty.

In contrast to its urban regions, Pakistan's rural areas have much more lasting early marriages. In Pakistan, 58 percent of provincial women and 18 percent of rural men were found to have wed before age 20, compared to 27 percent of urban women and 5 percent of urban males, according to the study's evaluation of early marriage. Furthermore, there are notable variations in early marriage figures within and across Pakistan's four regions. According to the available data, Sindh has the highest rate of young romantic unions in the province, with a range of 72% of women and 26% of men married before the age of 20. Additionally, Sindh has a high incidence of girls who marry by age 20—36 percent. Baluchistan has the highest percentage of early urban unions, with 9 percent of guys and 56 percent of women being married before age 20, almost matching Sindh's rate of early provincial unions (22 percent of guys and 63 percent of women marry before age 20). Punjab stands out as the region where most women marry later in life in both rural and urban regions. According to UNFPA (2007), only 50% of Punjabi women in rural areas and 20% of Punjabi women in cities marry before the age twenty.

#### **A few determinants of early marriage**

Poverty is inspecting the purposes behind the pervasiveness of tyke relational unions in Pakistan; neediness develops as a broad cause. Young ladies, typically uneducated and restricted to the house, are considered a money-related weight. Securing their marriage diminishes the money-related weight of supporting their little girls. Additionally, marriage is regularly seen as a method for advancing fiscally, especially when a poorer family can wed its youngster into a wealthier one. To a great extent, the custom of endowment is rehearsed in Pakistan; the more established the young lady, the higher the settlement that is liable to be requested. More youthful young ladies, for the most part, run with lesser endowment and are, in this manner, to a lesser extent, a money-related weight to wed. Settlement is an endowment of cash or assets given by the group of the lady to the group of lucky men at the season of their marriage.

Young women in Pakistan are often taught to revere, submit to, and serve their spouses and in-laws. In rural Pakistan, females learn how to "demonstrate a demeanor of consideration and administration towards men" by age five. The younger the lady, the easier it will be to mold her to her in-laws' expectations and norms (Kamal, 2015).

Early marriage is a route for families and social orders to control young ladies' sexuality and secure family respect. 14 Once a young lady is endowed to her significant other, the guardians are free of the weight of guarding their little girls from unchastely. Should a young lady steal away, get to be included with a kid, or taint, the family's honor in the group is destroyed. Any youthful, alluring young lady is seen as the epitome of young men's desire and intrigue, and thus, to have her depend on a man legitimately is frequently the most secure arrangement (Brown, 2012).

Child marriage is a disaster for equity on all levels. It transgresses both human rights laws and laws protecting children's rights. A young marriage is one that occurs without the child's (children's) permission. It can be because the kid is only expected to concur, or it might be because the youngster is too young to have the capacity or maturity to decide. Early marriage stands out among the most predominant types of brutality against ladies. It prompts offense from family at an exceptionally young age, before a tyke is sufficiently solid to live independently from anyone else. It quells singular opportunity and abridges the privilege to seek after solid exercises. Youngster relational unions can reinforce work, bondage, sexual abuse, and abusive behavior at home. Fifty percent of the culprits of viciousness are male relatives (Raj, 2010).

Impacts of female strengthening as reflected in early marriage and on youngster passing. Various checks have uncovered a vigorous positive effect of early marriage on child mortality.

We should ensure that this impact does, without a doubt, reflect female strengthening. Ladies' haggling force and self-rule are at their most reduced when ladies are incredibly youthful, i.e., amid the central years of marriage. In the primary years, young ladies are damaged by the adjustment in their surroundings and feel forlorn as they have not adjusted to their new family or obligations. They will dynamically acclimate to their new life and conditions and become acquainted with their new family unit (Ikamari, 2018).

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. Explore the causes and types of early marriages among females.
2. Impacts of early marriage on women's empowerment. Impacts of early marriage on Relieving financial burdens on the family.
3. To see the relationship, if any, between early marriage and women's empowerment. It also explored that woman become empowered due to early marriage.

### **Review of Literature**

Early marriage of children is referred to as a union before age 18. It is religious, social, cultural, and economic. Early marriage is against human rights, international law, and US government decisions. Here are the figures for young marriages. Every year, almost 15 million girls get married before they reach 18. In underdeveloped nations, one in three girls loses out on opportunities to play, receive an education, and dream about the future. Their alternatives are limited, and their lives are predetermined for them to be child brides, child mothers, and domestic workers (Warner, 2014).

Due to the lifelong severe effects of early marriage on women and girls, including their social and economic vulnerability, poor physical health and well-being, and development outcomes, which are the primary causes of female poverty (ICRW, 2012; Khan & Mishra, 2008; NCSW, 2022; Nour, 2009; Raj et al., 2009), the issue has always been of particular interest to social scientists. The reasons for child marriage vary across countries and cultures. Among the potential factors include poverty, a lack of access to medical services, and social, cultural, ethnic, religious, and traditional beliefs and practices (Ayiga & Rampagane, 2013; Kamal et al., 2015; NCSW, 2022; Romaniuk, 2011; UNFPA, 2012; Unicef, 2001). Poverty is the primary driver of early marriages in rural areas, and these partnerships often feed the cycle of poverty, claim Mpilambo et al. (2017).

Every problem originates from poverty and poor levels of development, and early child marriage of girls is likewise a result of poverty. In low-income households, a daughter could be seen as an expense that has to be avoided by getting married as soon as feasible. In this way, poverty compelled people to marry off their young children. For low-income families, it serves as motivation (Mathur, 2006).

Early marriage is the most significant threat to children's safety and human rights. It denies the children a chance to develop and become independent. It violates the offspring of past marriages' fundamental rights. Compared to males, girls are coerced into marriage far more frequently, which has a more significant impact on them. Compared to girls from wealthy homes, the early marriage rate for impoverished girls is twice as high (Tangri, 2013). In Pakistani society, male dominance is another factor that contributes to child marriage since it limits the options available to girls. In many developing nations, the institution of marriage shapes how girls and women are viewed. Women are expected to behave well in society. Marriage is frequently the best option for families in deep poverty to protect girls' futures and reduce their financial burden. One mother in touch with Plan Egypt assured us that her daughter would be well cared for if she married a wealthy or skilled tradesman. She will feed her and dress her appropriately. Because of this, she will have the opportunity to look after the other siblings. Parents frequently tell their children they can only witness their daughters' marriages.

According to Plan, in a study done in 36 villages in Niger, the central justification girls offered for getting married young was that it would improve their social position and financial situation (Rowan et al., 2013).

Gender equality is one of the concerns that encourages people to marry off their daughters when they are still young. The idea that women should marry younger than males is further supported by the fact that some countries with the highest rates of early marriage, such as Niger and India, have different laws for boys and girls. In terms of marriage, sexuality, and reproductive health, local customary law and tradition lessen the negotiating power of women and girls (Sajid, 2011).

Marriage is the only option for families struggling to make ends meet to secure a girl's future and lessen their financial burden. One Egyptian mother claimed that if her daughter married a wealthy or well-educated man, she would be well cared for, fed, and clothed. Because of this, she would have the opportunity to look after her other siblings. Parents frequently think that their daughter's marriage is the only method to help them lower their financial load. These ideas are explored with their mother, sister, wife, daughter, and kids. According to some (Naveed & Khalid, 2015), marriage raises women's status within the family and community.

It is well-known that girls who have inadequate education are more likely to have children via marriage. It is a problem that affects many underdeveloped countries. Despite these issues, they encounter numerous difficulties, lack access to opportunities and resources, and have a high rate of child marriage. Because the fees for their daughters are too high, some parents decide to marry them young. Girls under these circumstances are not permitted to make their own marriage-related decisions. Young wives are similarly powerless in their Husband's households. According to a UNICEF survey of 42 countries, women between the ages of 20 and 24 who attended elementary school had a lower risk of being married by age 18 than women without a primary education. According to the same study (Hervish et al., 2011), secondary-educated women in Tanzania had a 92 percent lower likelihood of marriage by age 18 than primary-educated women.

According to Sofia and Khalid (2015), early marriage is linked to illiteracy or lower levels of education, particularly for girls. Parents are reluctant to support a daughter's education because they believe that any investment in her is a waste. After all, she must leave the family home when she marries. Due to her constrained mobility, family obligations, motherhood, and social expectations that marriage and study are incompatible, a girl's prospects of completing her education after marriage are likewise quite slim.

A girl's ability to develop skills, resources, knowledge, social support, and mobility is constrained by early marriage, which reduces her bargaining power with her spouse or in-laws. Girls are thus more likely to experience violence, abuse, divorce, or abandonment due to their heightened vulnerability (Naveed & Khalid, 2015).

Being uneducated or having little education makes child marriage more likely, but having more education reduces that risk, similar to economic status. In this context, education is emphasized as a protective factor. Higher-educated girls are less likely to marry early, according to studies. Women frequently lack education before being coerced into an early marriage by their parents (Jain & Kurz, 2007).

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **The Empowerment Theory**

Kabeer (1999) came up with the model of empowerment. This model helps to understand whether women's status is improving or changing or whether they experience change in their economic and social position. This model is composed of three elements, which will help us understand women's power.

#### 1. Resources

## 2. Agency

### 3. Achievement

The first element, resource empowerment, can be human, social, or material. An individual meets human resources comes from the person's skills, self-confidence, and knowledge. Social resources connected from one person to another increase the status of men in society, positively impacting their social status.

The second element is agency, which is a person's goal and act upon them. It has both negative and positive effects on the relation to power. On the positive side, when a person has a goal and is trying to achieve his or her goal, they face different opposition from different people, but this way, it increases the ability and skills of men. On the negative side, an actor can take priority over the agency of others through the use of power.

Agency and resources together constitute a third element, which is achievement.

### **Proposition**

1. In every society, there is power distribution; males take priority over women. The male position is higher in the decision-making process than women.
2. Women's social status increases when the Husband does not live with their wife. They know the value of education for their girls and the effects of early marriages.
3. Decision-making power increases the empowerment of women in society.

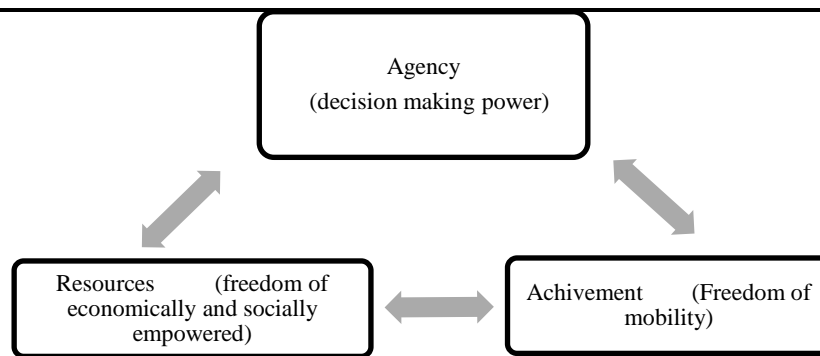
### **Application of theory**

The first dimension of empowerment is resources, which shows that the main head of the family is a man from all over the world. The man has all the resources, and for the women, it takes work to access them. Women depend on men in all spheres of life financially, economically, etc. Men have the power of decision-making. So when they decide on the marriage of their daughters, even if they do not ask them, they get their marriages early while using their resources to make their life independent after the marriages of their girls, and girls are bound to do all this.

The second dimension shows that when the Husband is not present with their wife, the wife's decision-making power increases. They decide on their children's education and their children's marriage. They know the harmful effects of early marriages. When their decision-making power is increased, they avoid the early marriages of their children, especially their girls. The decision-making was to increase the social status and empowerment of women.

The third element of achievement is when the Husband is outside of their home, and the woman becomes independent, so the women's social circle is increased as they participate in outdoor activities. When they interact with different people and know about women's power and rights, women become aware of the early marriages of the girls. They cannot do the marriages of their girls after knowing their values. This way, she gets autonomy, which is the achievement in the empowerment process.



**Figure 1****Hypothesis**

Alternative hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is a no relationship: between early marriage and women empowerment

Null hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): There is a strong relationship: between early marriage and women empowerment.

**Research Methodology**

A research methodology is a way for a researcher to explain how they intend to conduct their research. It is a deliberate, logical approach to a research problem. A methodology outlines a researcher's procedures to get reliable data to help them achieve their aims and objectives. The methodology of a study is its most crucial component. The study design, data collecting method, interview schedule, sampling method, sample size, pre-testing, editing, coding, and data analysis are all described in detail in this chapter.

**Research Design**

Research design is the first and most crucial stage in starting a research endeavor. In this study, the quantitative research methodology was applied. The quantitative technique is used in the current research since it is scientific, unbiased, impartial, neutral, and suited for the issue, allowing the researcher to generalize the findings to the entire population.

**Unit of analysis**

In this study, the units of analysis were the respondents who were married at a young age.

**Sample size**

The study's sample size revealed 120 respondents, who provided the means for gathering data. The central districts, Sudhnoti, Tehsil Balouch, and Azad Jammu Kashmir, are where data is gathered. Some people married prematurely.

**Method of sampling**

In social sciences, a variety of sampling strategies are employed. Purposive sampling and snowball sampling, two different sampling approaches, were employed in this research investigation. First, the researcher purposefully chose the sample, interviewing only women 18 years old or older and married. As a result, sampling became purposeful as respondents pointed the researcher toward other respondents during data collection, changing sampling to snowball sampling tactics.

### Technique for data collection

There are two data sources. Surveys and direct observation are two primary data-collecting methods. Secondary data collection guarantees that information is gathered directly from many sources. Data were gathered by primary data collecting. The respondents' age, location, and perceived social position were all considered while distributing the questionnaires.

### Pre-testing

Pre-testing is the test that was created to determine how the researcher's questionnaire is functioning and whether the scale or the applicable alternatives can prove the hypothesis correct or incorrect. Four to five surveys were adequate for the researcher to determine that the questionnaire's objective had been met.

### Data analysis

Data was statistically examined once the study was conducted. It uses a descriptive approach. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) data entry program was used to enter the data into the laptop and analyze it. The theory was then put to the test using cross-tabulation.

## Results and Discussion

In this chapter, the researchers displayed and explored the research findings and results.

**Table 1: Age distribution of the respondents at the time of marriage**

Category	Frequency	Percent
less than or equal to 13 years	12	10.0
14-18	108	90.0%
Total	120	100.0

This table depicts the age of respondents belonging to Kashmir city. The table shows that a significant Majority of the respondents, 90.0%, were in the age followers of 14-18 while 10.0% were in the age of less than or equal to 13 years. The respondents were moving the ages mentioned above when they were interviewed. However, they did the marriages, maximum respondents under 18, and minimum respondents were below the age of 13 or equal to 13 years.

**Table 2: Age distribution of the respondent at present**

Category	Frequency	Percent
14-18	1	.8
19-23	30	25.0
24-28	30	25.0
29-33	26	21.7
34-38	16	13.3
39 and above	17	14.2
Total	120	100.0

This table explains different categories with the mention of the age. The majority of the respondents, 25.0%, were between the age of 24-28 and 19-23, whereas the minimum age of the respondents was .8% with the age of 14-18. The respondent was carrying above the mentioned ages when they were interviewed and the respondent's current ages. All respondents were answered according to their different ages.

**Table 3: Type of marriage of the Respondents**

Category	Frequency	Percent
Endogamy	56	46.7
Exogamy	64	53.3
Total	120	100.0

The table highlights the types of marriages of the respondents. The majority of the respondents, 53.3%, were in the type of exogamy. Most respondents were married out of family and different castes. The lowest number of endogamy percentage is 46.7%. Thus, the statistics in the above table concluded that most respondents' type of marriage is exogamy.

**Table 4: Nature of marriage of the respondents**

Category	Frequency	percent
love marriage	25	20.8
arranged marriage	62	51.7
forced marriage	12	10.0
exchange marriage	21	17.5
Total	120	100.0

This table explains that the majority of respondents, 51.7%, were in arranged marriages, and 20.8% of the respondents said that they had a love marriage. Thus, the respondents above mentioned the nature of marriage when they were interviewed.

**Table 5: Education of the respondents**

Category	Frequency	Percent
Illiterate	14	11.7
Primary	28	23.3
Middle	25	20.8
Metric	38	31.7
Intermediate	7	5.8
Graduation	4	3.3
Masters	4	3.3
Total	120	100.0

This table explains the distribution of completed years of education of the respondents. The majority, 31.7%, of the respondents completed metric education. Some respondents answered that 3.3% had graduated entirely and had a master's during marriage. Thus, in the above table, statistics concluded that most respondents completed metric education.

**Table 6: Estimated monthly family incomes of the respondents**

Category	Frequency	Percent
Missing	1	.8
less than 15,000	16	13.3
15,001-30,000	58	48.3
30,001-45,000	25	20.8
45,001 and above	20	16.7
Total	120	100.0

This table explains the family monthly income of the respondents. Most respondents, 48.3%, had 15001-30000 monthly incomes. At the same time, 16.7% of the respondents answered that their monthly income was 45,001 and above. Furthermore, the lowest income, 8% of respondents, have no opinion.



**Table 7: Poverty became cause of early marriage**

Category	Frequency	Percent
to great extent	6	57.5
to some extent	35	29.2
not at all	16	13.3
Total	120	100.0

This table shows that the majority of respondents, 57.5%, replied that they thought poverty became the cause of early marriage to a great extent. However, the lowest ratio, 13.3% of the respondents, said poverty did not become the cause of early marriage. In particular areas, the majority of females said poverty became the cause of early marriage because their parents could not fulfill their requirements.

**Table 8: Girls from rich families less forced to marry early as compared to poor family**

Category	Frequency	Percent
Missing	1	.8
to great extent	58	48.3
to some extent	56	46.7
not at all	5	4.2
Total	120	100.0

This table indicates that out of 120 respondents 48.3% respondents' response in to great extent, 4.2% respondent's responses in not at all. The respondents answered poor families are forced to get early marriage as compared to rich families to great extent. Poor family's Parents marry off their daughter early because of some economic and social reasons.

**Table 9: Lack of education is the reason of female early marriage**

Category	Frequency	Percent
to great extent	63	52.5
to some extent	52	43.3
not at all	5	4.2
Total	120	100.0

This table explains that the majority, 52.5% of the respondents, answered remarkably because lack of education is the reason for female early marriage. In comparison, 4.2% of the respondents said lack of education is not the reason for early marriage. So, most respondents said that the reason behind early marriage is a lack of education.

**Table 10: Early marriage is a cause of girl's protection from stigma**

Category	Frequency	Percent
to great extent	57	47.5
to some extent	51	42.5
not at all	12	10.0
Total	120	100.0

Table highlighted that 47.5% of females thought to a great extent that early marriage is a cause of girl's protection from stigma while only 10.0% of respondents answered not at all. Because of their cultural construction, they feel unsafe, so they do their girl's marriage in early marriage.

**Table 11: Girls are forced for early marriage as compared to boys**

Category	Frequency	Percent
to great extent	51	42.5
to some extent	64	53.3
not at all	5	4.2
Total	120	100.0

The table shows that out of 120 respondents, 53.3% response to some extent, 42.5% respondent response into a great extent, and 4.2% answered not at all.

**Table 12: Reason behind early marriage in patriarchy society women inferior**

Category	Frequency	Percent
to great extent	48	40.0
to some extent	62	51.7
not at all	10	8.3
Total	120	100.0

This table described that 51.7% of the respondents answered that the reason behind early marriage is that in a patriarchal society, women are inferior to men, and 40.0% answered to a great extent. Only 8.3% answered not at all.

**Table 13: Exchange marriage reasons of early marriage**

Category	Frequency	Percent
to great extent	26	21.7
to some extent	55	45.8
not at all	39	32.5
Total	120	100.0

This table explained that most respondents answered that exchange marriage is one of the main reasons for early marriages to some extent. In our traditional setup, it is tough to build new trends, whereas some of them said that to a great extent because they faced some cases in their families.

**Table 14: Lack of awareness about women is a cause of females' early marriages**

Category	Frequency	Percent
to great extent	39	32.5
to some extent	71	59.2
not at all	10	8.3
Total	120	100.0

The table highlights that most respondents answered that lack of awareness about women is a cause of females' early marriages to some extent because they are not more aware of the consequences of early marriage. Furthermore, some replied that this is not the cause of early marriage because some parents are aware of the consequences of early marriage, but they are forced to marry their daughters at an early age.

**Table 15: Lack of awareness about right cause of female's early marriage**

Category	Frequency	Percent
Missing	1	.8
to great extent	51	42.5
to some extent	52	43.3
not at all	16	13.3
Total	120	100.0

This table describes the majority of the respondents who said that the lack of awareness about female rights caused females' early marriage to some extent because they were not more educated and did not know about the laws related to early marriage. Moreover, a few respondents replied that lack of awareness is not the cause of female early marriage.

**Table 16: Early marriages create better communication with husband and wife**

Category	Frequency	Percent
to great extent	54	45.0
to some extent	46	38.3
not at all	20	16.7
Total	120	100.0

This table showed that most respondents answered that early marriages create better communication between husband and wife to a great extent because, from a psychological perspective, when women get more attention from their husbands, they feel more secure and build better relations with their husbands. Whereas a small number take early marriage in a negative sense due to the harmful impact on health.

**Table 17: Early marriage create love between husband and wife**

Category	Frequency	Percent
to great extent	52	43.3
to some extent	49	40.8
not at all	19	15.8
Total	120	100.0

This table explained that most respondents said that early marriage creates love between husband and wife to a great extent because emotions quickly affect them at a young age. Moreover, a few respondents said that early marriage did not create love between husband and wife because the maturity level is too weak at this age.

**Table 18: Early marriage reduce economic burden**

Category	Frequency	Percent
to great extent	60	50.0
to some extent	48	40.0
not at all	12	10.0
Total	120	100.0

This table elaborates that the majority of the respondents replied that early marriage reduced the economic burden on the family to a great extent because low economic wages affect their socioeconomic status. In contrast, the lowest number of the respondents said that early marriage did not reduce the economic burden on the family because more earning hand in the family can improve the economic situation.

**Table 19: Early marriage effects on girl's education**

Category	Frequency	Percent
to great extent	48	40.0
to some extent	69	57.5
not at all	3	2.5
Total	120	100.0

The table showed that most respondents said that early marriage effect girls' education to some extent because the dropout ratio increases due to early marriage. Moreover, the lowest number of the respondents said that early marriage did not affect a girl's education because, in some situations, education is a matter of responsibility and passion.

**Table 20: Early marriage enables girls to better adopt the new environment.**

Category	Frequency	Percent
to great extent	41	34.2
to some extent	67	55.8
not at all	12	10.0
Total	120	100.0

The table shows that most respondents answered that early marriage enables girls to better adapt to new environments because that is the nature of human beings at a young age. They love visiting different places, so young girls quickly adopt new environments after marriage. Moreover, the lowest number of the respondents said that early marriage did not help girls adapt to the new environment.

**Table 21: Early marriage has impact on family adjustment**

Category	Frequency	Percent
Missing	2	1.7
to great extent	44	36.7
to some extent	65	54.2
not at all	9	7.5
Total	120	100.0

The table highlights that most respondents said that early marriage impacts family adjustment to some extent because new environments and new people sometimes become hurdles in family adjustment. Furthermore, a few respondents said that early marriage did not affect family adjustment because it depends on girls' socialization.

**Table 22: Early marriage safe honors of girls**

Category	Frequency	Percent
to great extent	61	50.8
to some extent	50	41.7
not at all	9	7.5
Total	120	100.0

Table elaborates that the majority of the respondents answered that early marriage is safe for girls' families' honor to a great extent because, in their traditional setup, they are more restricted towards their culture, and in the present era, saving the family honor girl's early marriage is more necessary. Moreover, a few respondents said that early marriage did not save the girl's family's honor because their egos were hurt when they were forced toward early marriage. They did not take care of the family's honor after marriage.

**Table 23: Early marriage is a mental violence on women**

Category	Frequency	Percent
to great extent	88	73.3
to some extent	29	24.2
not at all	3	2.5
Total	120	100.0

The table explained that a significant majority of the respondents replied that early marriage is mental violence against women because when young girls marry men over age, they face more psychological issues. In contrast, a few respondents replied that early marriage does not cause mental violence.

**Table 24: Early marriages means the end of the Development of women**

Category	Frequency	Percent
to great extent	47	39.2
to some extent	44	36.7
not at all	29	24.2
Total	120	100.0

Table elaborates that most respondents answered that early marriage immensely ends women's development because they were busy with their domestic affairs and did not work for their own choice. Furthermore, some respondents said that early marriage made them more developed and gave them more chances to improve their lifestyle.

**Table 25: Early marriage decision making power and household matter**

Category	Frequency	Percent
to great extent	47	39.2
to some extent	46	38.3
not at all	27	22.5
Total	120	100.0

Table highlighted that the majority of the respondents answered that early marriage affects the decision-making power of the females in the household to a great extent because they lose their self-esteem power due to their early marriage. A few respondents said that early marriage did not affect the decision-making power of the female in the household matter because they felt it improves decision-making power and household matters. They can make a better decision about their future.

**Table 26: Early marriages limited access to reproduction Health services**

Category	Frequency	Percent
to great extent	57	47.5
to some extent	54	45.0
not at all	9	7.5
Total	120	100.0

The table showed that most respondents said that early-marriage females had limited access to reproductive health services to a great extent because, in rural areas, they do not have access to family planning centers and are not more educated. Whereas some of the respondents answered that early marriage does not effect on female reproductive health.

**Table 27: Early marriage decrease women's freedom of mobility**

Category	Frequency	Percent
to great extent	69	57.5
to some extent	45	37.5
not at all	6	5.0
Total	120	100.0

The table explained that the majority of the respondents said that early marriage decreases women's freedom of mobility to a great extent because, in rural settings, women are under their men's laws, so they cannot easily visit any place of their own choice. Moreover, the lowest number of the respondents replied that early marriage did not decrease women's freedom of mobility. They were secure.

**Table 28: Woman becomes more socially empowered due to early marriage**

Category	Frequency	Percent
to great extent	41	34.2
to some extent	65	54.2
not at all	14	11.7
Total	120	100.0

The table describes that most respondents said that women become more socially empowered due to early marriage to some extent because they can easily visit everywhere when their husbands trust them. Furthermore, some respondents answered that they are not socially empowered due to early marriage.

**Table 29: Women becomes economically empowered due to early marriage**

Category	Frequency	Percent
to great extent	43	35.8
to some extent	63	52.5
not at all	14	11.7
Total	120	100.0

The table highlights that most respondents said that women become more socially empowered due to early marriage to some extent because their husbands give financial support. Moreover, some respondents said that women are not more socially empowered due to early marriage because they face a restricted environment toward their in-laws.

### Hypothesis Testing

Null Hypothesis H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relation between economic matters and women's empowerment in decision-making.

Alternative Hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>: There is a relation between economic matters and women's empowerment in decision-making.



**Table 30: Poverty became cause of your early marriage \* a woman becomes more socially empowered due to early marriage Cross-tabulation**

			Early marriage effect decision making power of female in household matter			Total
			To great extent	To some extent	Not at all	
<b>Lack of education is the reason of early marriage</b>	<b>To great extent</b>		26	27	10	63
			17	18	17	52
	<b>To some extent</b>		4	1	0	5
		<b>Not at all</b>	47	46	27	120

The above table shows that 63 respondents expressed that, to a great extent, lack of education is the reason for early marriage. While 52 respondents said to some extent, education is the leading cause of early marriage. The above question showed that when it had a question about the decision-making power of the females in the household matters, 47 of the respondents replied that, to a great extent, early marriage effect the decision-making power of the females. Moreover, 46 of their respondents answered that, to some extent, early marriage affects the decision-making power of household matters.

**Table 31: Chi-Square Tests**

		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>		8.474 <sup>a</sup>	4	.076
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>		9.065	4	.059
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>		.229	1	.632
<b>No of Valid Cases</b>		120		

The chi-square value is 8.474a, the degree of freedom is four, and the significance level is 0.076. The significance level is more significant than 0.05, meaning there was no association between the dependent and independent variables.

**Table 32: Poverty became cause of your early marriage \* a woman becomes more socially empowered due to early marriage Crosstabulation**

The		A woman becomes more socially empowered due to early marriage			Total
		To great extent	To some extent	Not at all	
Poverty became cause of your early marriage	To great extent	23	38	8	69
	To some extent	12	19	4	35
	Not at all	6	8	2	16
		41	65	14	120

above table shows that 69 respondents said that, to a great extent, poverty became the cause of early marriage. While 35 respondents said poverty is not caused by early marriage. The above question shows that when asked if women became more socially empowered due to early marriage, 41 respondents answered to a great extent. Whereas 65 respondents said that, to some extent, women become more socially empowered due to early marriage.

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	.140 <sup>a</sup>	4	.998
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	.139	4	.998
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	.034	1	.854
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>	120		

**Table 33: Chi-Square Tests**

The chi-square value is .140a, the degree of freedom is four, and the significance level is 0.998. The significance level is more significant than 0.998; there was no relationship between the dependent and independent variables. From the above table, it is concluded that there is no relationship between economic matters and women's empowerment in decision-making. The value of chi-square and cross-tabulation elaborates that there is no relationship between the dependent and independent variables, so the null hypothesis is accepted, and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

## Main Findings

Most respondents were aged 14-18, with a percentage of 90% when they married.

1. Most respondents, 52.5%, said that the lack of education is the reason for early Marriage.
2. The Majority, 57.5% of the respondents, were early married due to poverty.
3. The significant Majority, 59.2% of Respondents, were married with a lack of awareness about women's health.
4. Most respondents, 53.3%, said early marriage is a tradition in our society.
5. The Majority of the respondents said that the main reason behind early marriage in a patriarchal society (like our area) is that women are inferior to men.
6. The Majority of the respondents said that parents' sense of responsibility

- becomes the cause of female early marriage, with 56.7%.
7. The Majority of the respondents said that early marriage reduces the economic burden on the family, with 50.0%.
  8. The Majority, 42.5%, of the respondents answered that early marriage violates human rights.
  9. The Majority of the respondents said that early marriage affects a girl's education.
  10. The overwhelming majority, 79.2% of the respondents, said that early marriage is the reason for sexual violence against women.
  11. The Majority, 55.0%, of the respondents said early marriage increases domestic violence.
  12. The Majority of the respondents said that early marriage affects the decision-making power of females in household matters with a percentage of 39.8.
  13. The Majority, 52.5% of the respondents were, answered that women more economically empowered due to early marriage.
  14. 23. The Majority, 56.7% of the respondents, said that early marriage enables females to decide their future decisions.

### Recommendations

1. The government must intervene to firmly establish the rule of law in the region and get rid of the neighborhood *Jirgas or Panchaits*.
2. The legal age of marriage should be established and made explicit.
3. Boys and girls should have the same legal age of marriage.
4. A government-wide effort should be started to raise awareness of the negative impacts of early marriage.
5. Education for girls needs to be accessible.
6. The government should provide justice, health, and education services.
7. There should be an increase in the education budget.

### Conclusion

Early marriage is a phenomenon which exists in all over the world. In the past, early marriage was more common as compared to nowadays. The area which is selected for research is well-known for early marriages. This area is male-dominated, but women are also vital in their decision-making in household matters. Results showed no relationship between early marriage and women's empowerment. Early marriage did not affect women's decision-making. The data analyzed in SPSS showed that early marriage did not reduce women's empowerment. Results derived from this research show that early marriages increase women's mobility. She can easily visit their relatives, markets, and their friends. This phenomenon gives a reliable position to women in a patriarchal society where men dominate. So, the research concluded that early marriage enhances women's empowerment in decision-making in social, economic, and domestic affairs.

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