Knowledge Regarding Factors Contributing to Early Marriage and Its Consequences among Adolescence in Selected Rural Area, Dhangadhi

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ABSTRACT

Background: Marriage is an important part of human life, which is an association that demands maturity, ability and responsibility. 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.[1] This research study was conducted to assess the knowledge regarding factors contributing to early marriage and its consequences among adolescence in selected rural area, Dhangadhi.

Methods: A Descriptive cross-sectional research design was used and a total of 184 adolescences of Fulbari-18 rural area, Dhangadhi were selected by using Non probability Purposive sampling technique. Data was collected by using structured Interview schedule and analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

Results: The study revealed that majority (64.68%) of the respondents had inadequate knowledge whereas 35.32% of the respondents had adequate knowledge regarding factors contributing to early marriage and its consequences. An association was found between level of knowledge regarding factors contributing early marriage and its consequences with religion and total number of siblings with Chi-square 8.278 and 15.651 respectively at 0.05 level of significance.

Conclusion: Findings of the current study revealed that the knowledge regarding factors contributing early marriage and its consequences among adolescence was not satisfactory and had to improve significantly. Hence the efforts have to be made to improve the status of women through their increased participation in education.

Key words: Adolescence, Consequences, Early marriage, Factors contributing, Knowledge

INTRODUCTION

According to UNICEF (2001), child marriage is defined as marriage prior to age 18 years, is a reality for over 60 million women worldwide. Prevalence data from prior decade indicates that approximately 30-70% are young married women are below 18 years of age in South Asian nations i.e. Bangladesh, Nepal, India and Pakistan.[2]

Child marriage has existed from time immemorable in Nepal.[3] In Nepal, marriage before the age of 18 years is considered to be the child marriage. The civil code of 1963 (11th amendment) fixed the legal age for marriage is 18 for both boys and girls in parental consent and 20 years without parental consent in Nepal. In some communities, child marriage is a customary, socially established practice that has been carried on for generations. Religion has endorsed it and society has ensured its stability.[4]

Poverty, lack of access to education, child labor, social pressures, lack of access to family planning information, contraceptive supplies and harmful practices including dowry and beliefs about

menstruation and virginity typically drive child marriage in Nepal.[5]

According to National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS, 2011), 28.8% females and 6.9% males were married by the age of 15-19 years.[6]

Thirty-seven percent of girls in Nepal marry before age 18 and 10 percent are married by age 15, in spite of the fact that the minimum age of marriage under Nepali law is 20 years of age.[7]

Child marriage in Nepal is driven by a complex web of factors, but key among them is gender discrimination, especially when combined with poverty.12 million girls marry before the age of 18 each year, almost one every 2 seconds. If we don't act now, more than 150 million girls will become child brides by 2030.[8]

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Descriptive cross-sectional research design was used for the study to achieve the study objectives. The population included the adolescence between the ages of 13-19 years residing in Fulabari- 18 rural area, Dhangadhi. Non probability Purposive sampling technique was used for sample selection and the total sample size of 184 adolescences were selected. The adolescences who were willing to participate and who were available at the time of data collection was the inclusion criteria for the study. The researcher used structured knowledge related questionnaire to collect the data by using interview method. The content validity of the research instrument was ascertained before the data collection by extensive literature search, consultation with research advisors, a group of professionals and subject related experts. The reliability of tool was determined by pre-testing it in 10 samples (10% of total sample) and was tested by using Cronbach's alpha and the reliability value of the tool was found 0.89. The data collected period was from 17th March 2019 to 16th April 2019. The collected data was entered in MS Excel 2000. The analysis was done by using statistical software SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) 23 version. Chi-square test was applied to find out the association between level of knowledge and demographic variables. The probability of occurrence by chance is significant if $P < 0.05$ with 95% level of Confidence Interval.

RESULTS

Section A: Description of the demographic characteristics of the respondents

Date analyzed by descriptive statistics shows that majority 57.61% of the respondents was of 13-16 years of age and 42.39% were of 17-19 years of age. Most 73.91% of respondents were female and less 26.09% were male. Regarding religion, majority 66.85% belongs to Hindu religion whereas least 6.52% were from Muslim religion. Majority 69.21% of the respondents were having primary education and least 4.35% were illiterate. Regarding education qualification of father, half 50% were having primary education whereas least 3.26% had Bachelor degree. Among the respondents mother, majority 59.24% were illiterate whereas only 1.63% had secondary education. Majority 57.07% of the respondents had three siblings and least 12.5% had two siblings. Majority 79.35% of the respondents belongs to joint family and only 6.52% belongs to nuclear family. Regarding monthly family income, majority 67.93% had income more than or equal to Rs.15,000 whereas 32.06% had less than Rs.15,000.

Section B: Knowledge of respondents regarding factors contributing to early marriage and its consequences

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of level of knowledge regarding factors contributing to early marriage and its consequences
n=184

Level of knowledge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inadequate knowledge <=50%	119	64.68
Adequate knowledge >50%	65	35.32
	184	100

Section C: Association between the level of knowledge regarding factors contributing and its consequences among adolescence and selected demographic variables

Table 2: Association between level of knowledge regarding factors contributing to early marriage and its consequences and socio-demographic variable of respondents'
n=184

Variables	Frequency of Level of knowledge		χ^2	df	p-value
	Inadequate	Adequate			
Gender					
Male	32	16			
Female	104	32	1.770	1	0.124
Religion					
Hindu	76	47			0.025
Others (Muslim, Christian)	24	37	4.278*	1	
Educational qualification of the respondent					
Illiterate	6	2			
Primary education	82	45			0.321
Secondary education and above	31	18	2.372	2	
Educational qualification of father					
Illiterate	36	18			
Primary education	67	25			0.271
Secondary education	15	17			
Bachelor and higher	2	4	4.291	3	
Educational qualification of mother					
Illiterate	81	28			
Primary education	47	23			
Secondary education	2	1			0.063
Bachelor and higher	2	0	2.253	3	
Total number of siblings					
One	24	32			
Two	15	8			0.006
More than two	73	32	6.651*	2	
Type of family					
Nuclear	4	8			
Joint	107	39			0.273
Extended	17	9	3.404	2	
Family income (monthly)					
Less than Rs. 15,000	42	17			
More than or equal to Rs. 15,000	77	48	1.608	1	0.069

*P < 0.05 statistically significant values

Data presented in Table 2 reveals that, the calculated chi square value of Religion and total number of siblings is greater than that of the table value at 0.05 level of significance. Hence it is concluded that there is a significant association between level of knowledge regarding factors contributing early marriage and its consequences with religion and total number of siblings with Chi-square 4.278 and 6.651 respectively.

DISCUSSION

Child marriage has to be eliminated despite its strong hold in the society. Because, the majority of Nepal's population is illiterate, ignorant and disadvantaged, age old traditions and customs are not easy to do away with.[5] However, education and awareness among people especially those living in rural area can make a difference.

People will strive to eliminate child marriage from their society only if they are made aware of the devastating multipronged effects of early marriage.

Majority 57.61% of the respondents were of 13-16 years of age. Most 73.91% of respondents were female. Majority 66.85% belongs to Hindu religion. Majority 66.85% of the respondents were having primary education and least 4.35% were illiterate. Regarding respondents fathers' education, half (50%) were having primary education whereas regarding respondents mothers' education, majority 59.24% were illiterate. Majority 57.07% of the respondents had three siblings and 79.35% of the respondents belong to joint family. Regarding monthly family income, majority 67.93% had income more than or equal to Rs.10,000.

The study findings revealed that majority (64.68%) of the respondents had inadequate knowledge whereas 35.32% of the respondents had adequate knowledge regarding factors contributing to early marriage and its consequences. A significant association was found between level of knowledge regarding factors contributing early marriage and its consequences with religion and total number of siblings with Chi-square 8.278 and 15.651 respectively.

The present study contract the study conducted by Sah, Gaurav, Baral, Subedi, Jha and Pokharel (2014) to find out the Factors affecting early age marriage in Dhankuta municipality, Nepal. The total 246 households were taken as study subjects. The findings of the study indicated that early age marriage was associated with low education level and poverty.[9]

CONCLUSION

Child marriage has an ill effect on women, which can be eliminated by raising awareness campaigns regarding negative health outcomes of child marriage, implementation of strict laws against child marriage practice act, promotion of civil, sexual and reproductive health rights for women.

It's very important to end child marriage in Nepal as well as other suffering countries because child marriages are not only dangerous for girls and their babies, but they also enable the cycle of poverty and hinder the nation's development.[10]

People should also be made aware of human rights and child rights so that they are aware of their own rights and rights of their children. Only then parents will be motivated to ensure the right of their children to a childhood.[5]

Hence, organization and implementation of awareness programme regarding prevention of early marriage among adolescence is an utmost important so as to eliminate its adverse effects in physical, emotional as well as social health.

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