

RAJASTHAN CHILD MARRIAGE AND TEENAGE PREGNANCY

(AGE GROUP 15-19 YEARS)



FACTSHEET

Based on NFHS-4 (2015-16)

Introduction

In India, statistically, the incidence of child marriage has been declining slowly over time, but the number of girls and boys getting married before their respective legal age (18 years for girls and 21 years for boys) remains large with 12.1 million child marriages reported by ("**Census 2011**"). The causes of child marriage are complex and varied, based on various customs and traditions across contexts, and remain rooted in existing socio-cultural norms. Besides this, the economic and regional factors play a significant role in determining the magnitude of child marriage. While Census 2011, allows us to investigate incidence of child marriage, data from the National Family Health Survey 2015-16 ("**NFHS-4**") highlights the prevalence¹ of child marriage. Though it is acknowledged that child marriage persists amongst both boys and girls, this factsheet analyses prevalence of child marriage and teenage pregnancy only amongst girls in the age group of 15-19 years in the State of Rajasthan using NFHS-4 data. This factsheet also examines some factors related to child marriage and teenage pregnancy at the State and district level.

" Child marriage is a violation of child rights, and has a negative impact on physical growth, health, mental and emotional development, and education opportunities."

UNICEF, 2018

National Statistics

An overall comparison at the national level of the prevalence of child marriage amongst 15-19 year old girls between National Family Health Survey 2005-06 ("**NFHS-3**") and NFHS-4 shows a considerable decrease. The prevalence of child marriage as per NFHS-3 is 26.5% and as per NFHS-4 it has reduced to 11.9% (14.1% in rural areas and 6.9% in urban areas). It is important to note that the prevalence of child marriage differs substantially across the States of India. As per NFHS-4, there are 12 States in India, including Rajasthan, that show higher prevalence of child marriage than the national average (11.9%). Furthermore, there are 13 States in India, including Rajasthan, where more than 80% of the child marriages took place in rural areas (within their respective State).

It is observed that at the national level, child marriage is more prevalent amongst girls from bottom wealth tercile households (16.6%) and least prevalent amongst girls belonging to the top wealth tercile households (5%). Similarly, educational level is also negatively associated with the prevalence of child marriage amongst girls of this age group, i.e. higher the level of education, lower is the chance of child marriage. Findings show that completion of secondary education is much lower amongst married teenage girls than unmarried girls amongst 15-19 years age group across all States. Analysis related to teenage pregnancy reveals that 39.4% of child brides² aged 15-19 years have given birth to at least one child, with the highest prevalence in Goa (69.4%), Mizoram (65.6%) and Nagaland (65.5%).



¹ Prevalence refers to "the total number of individuals in a population who have a disease or health condition at a specific period of time, usually expressed as a percentage of the population". Whereas incidence refers to "the number of individuals who develop a specific disease or experience a specific health-related event during a particular time period (such as a month or year)". ([School of Public Health. Prevalence and Incidence Defined. Retrieved from Harvard University](#))

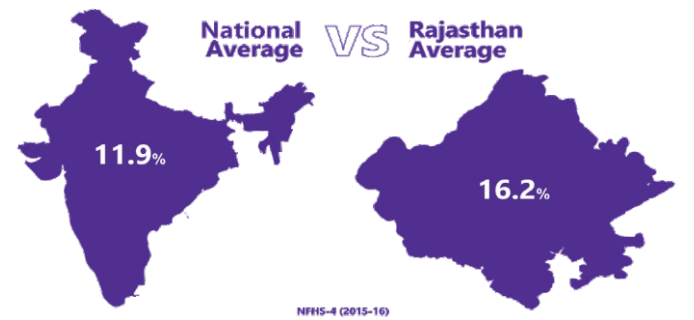
² Girls married before 18 years of age.

Rajasthan

Rajasthan is located on the north-western border of the country. It is the largest State in India by area (3,42,239 km²), supporting 68.5 million of the population. Majority of Rajasthan's population, i.e. 75.1%, resides in the rural areas. A significant proportion of these rural households belong to Scheduled Castes (17.8%) and Scheduled Tribes (13.5%), the most disadvantaged section of the society³. Rajasthan has the lowest literacy rate amongst women (52.1%) across all Indian States and UTs as per Census 2011. A majority of the workforce is engaged in agriculture and allied activities.

It is noteworthy that Rajasthan emerges as the State with the highest incidence of child marriage both amongst boys i.e. 8.6% (10 - <21 years) and girls i.e. 8.3% (10 - <18

Prevalence of Child Marriage Amongst Girls in the Age Group 15-19 Years

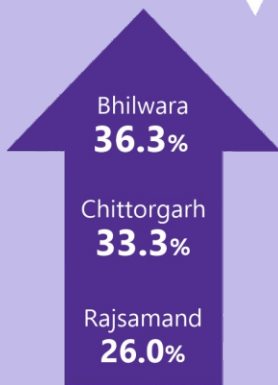


years) according to Census 2011. Using NFHS-4 data we find that prevalence of child marriage amongst 15-19 year old girls is 16.2% in Rajasthan, while it is 18.7% and 7.6% respectively for rural and urban areas.

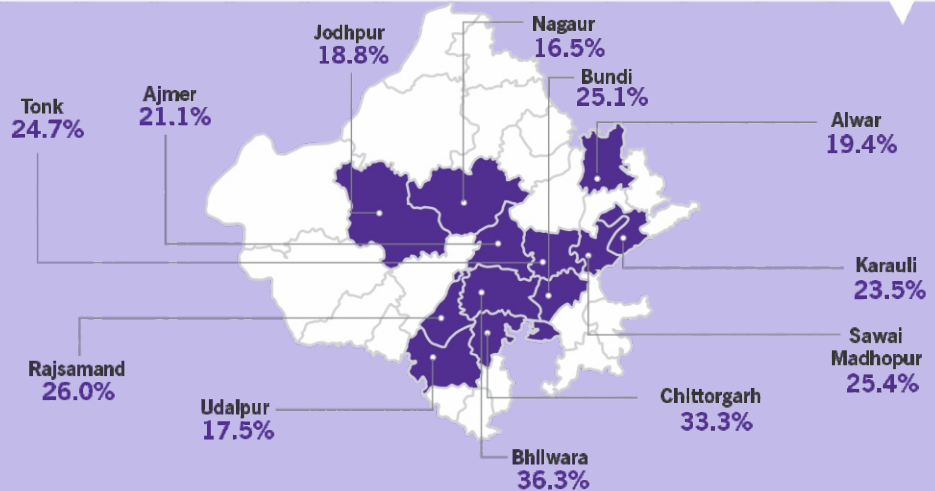
Child Marriage (District Level Findings)

The prevalence of child marriage differs substantially across districts in Rajasthan. While 12 districts in Rajasthan show higher prevalence of child marriage than the State average, other districts have a relatively lower prevalence. The top three districts with highest prevalence of child marriage amongst girls in the 15-19 years of age group are Bhilwara (36.3%), Chittorgarh (33.3%) and Rajsamand (26%).

Top Three Districts with Highest Prevalence of Child Marriage Amongst Girls in the Age Group 15-19 Years

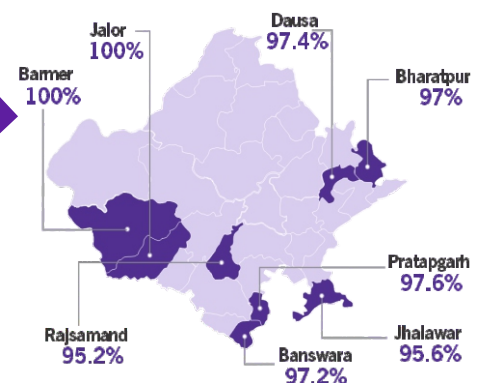
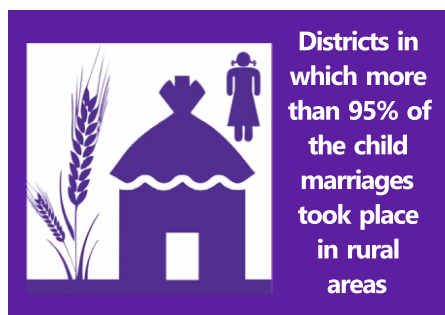


12 districts in Rajasthan Show Higher Prevalence of Child Marriage than the State Average of 16.2%

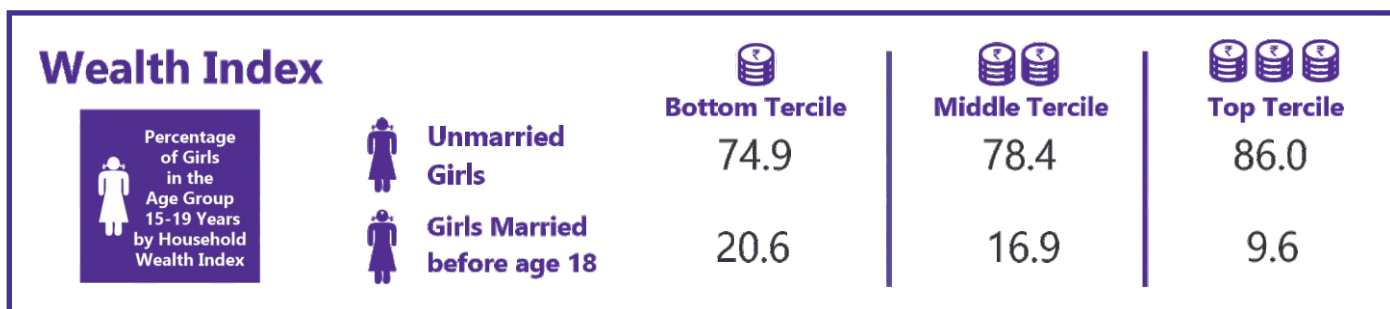


Location

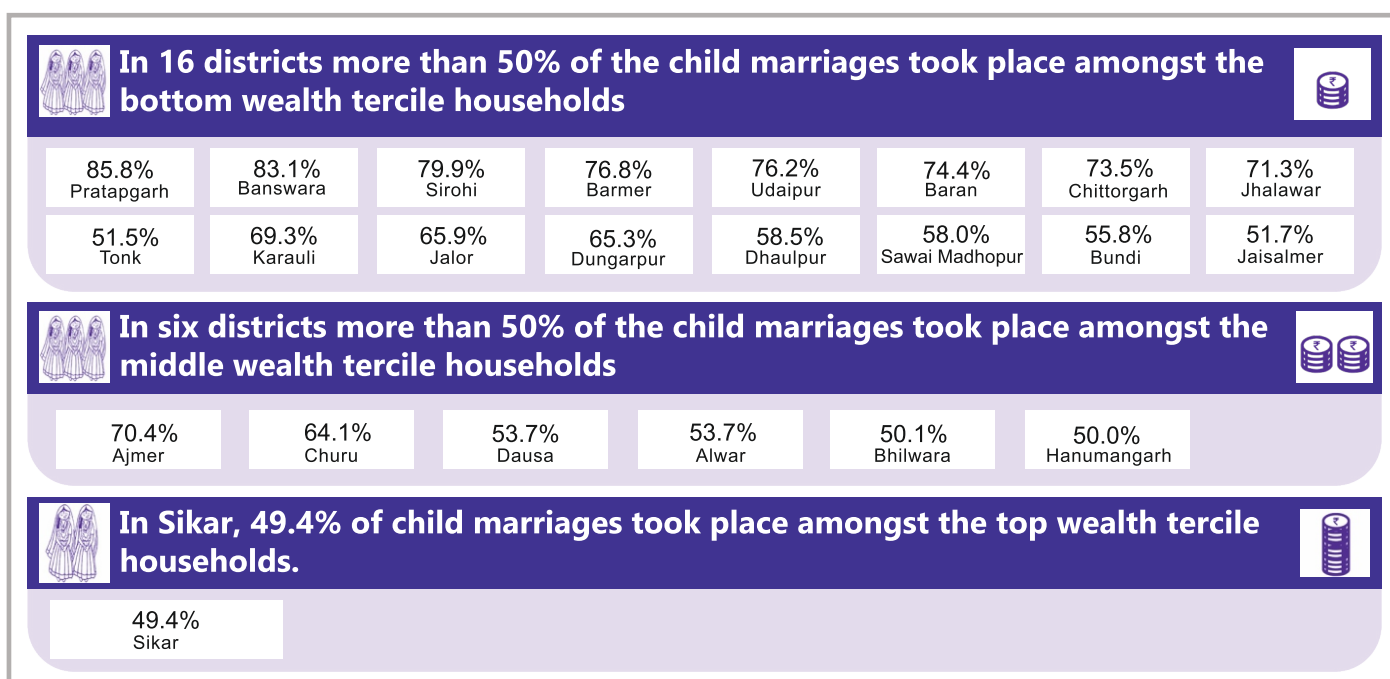
Findings reveal that prevalence of child marriage amongst girls in the age group 15-19 is significantly higher in rural areas of Rajasthan. These findings are particularly important since any intervention or campaign planned to prevent child marriage in Rajasthan must focus on rural areas.



³ Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises Development Institute. (2015). *State Industrial Profile 2014-15*. Jaipur: Government of India.



The relationship between child marriage amongst girls and household wealth index⁴ is significantly strong. It is evident from the findings that girls from poorer households are more likely to get married at a younger age than girls from wealthier households. At State level, 20.6% and 16.9% of the girls aged 15-19 years from bottom and middle wealth tercile households, respectively, are married as child brides, compared to 9.6% of girls from top wealth tercile households.



These findings have immense policy implications, indicating that households across wealth terciles must be addressed in order to reduce child marriage.

Educational Attainment

Education is essential for developing a sense of agency in young adults, especially in girls. It instils within them a confidence in their abilities and self-efficacy that can push them to achieve their goals. The established correlation between child marriage and the educational attainment of girls suggests that higher the level of education, lower is the chance of girls getting married before the legal age. In this context, the completion of secondary education amongst girls is found to be significant in delaying the age at marriage.

Findings show that the completion rate of secondary education is higher amongst unmarried girls (15-19 years) than married girls across all districts, except Barmer. For example, the secondary school completion rate amongst

unmarried girls in Ganganagar district is 54.5%, while it is only 13.4% amongst girls married before legal age. Another example can be drawn from Bhilwara district which has emerged as the district with highest prevalence of girl child marriage in the State. In Bhilwara, the secondary school completion rate amongst unmarried girls is 47.6% compared to only 13.8% amongst girls married before 18 years.

Making secondary school completion a fundamental right, and ensuring that girls from poor households are provided residential secondary schools may be considered as necessary steps to prevent early marriage in Rajasthan.

⁴ The wealth terciles are estimated based on the State level wealth index cut-offs to highlight the disparities within the State.

Conclusion

- As per NFHS-4 (2015-16), 16.2% of the 15-19 years old girls are married before the age of 18 years in Rajasthan, with variations across districts.
- There are 12 districts in Rajasthan that show higher prevalence of child marriage than the State average.
- Prevalence of child marriage amongst girls is found to be more common in rural areas than urban areas.
- Wealth index of the households is significantly related to child marriage amongst girls in Rajasthan. Poorer the households, higher the chance of girls getting married early.
- Educational attainment of girls is directly correlated to child marriage.
- Child marriage leads to early pregnancy which may cause poor health status of both, mothers and children.

CHILD MARRIAGE AND TEENAGE PREGNANCY IN RAJASTHAN AT A GLANCE



In **every district**, more than **60%** of the total child marriages amongst girls took place in rural areas and 8 out of 33 districts had more than **95%** of child marriages reported in rural areas.



The completion rate of secondary education amongst 15-19 years old girls who got married before legal age is **22%**. On the other hand, the completion rate is much higher at **43.4%** amongst those who remained unmarried in 15-19 age group.



In **22 districts** more than **40%** of the girls married before 18 are found to be underweight.



Of the child brides, **21.6%** had already given birth; **18.4%** had one child and **3.2%** had two or more children by the age of 19 years.