“Early Age Marriage Triad; Causes, Correlates and Consequences"

Abstract

Early age marriage has certain socio-economic, demographic and health outcomes and consequences. This study examines the trend and causes correlates and consequences of early age marriages in Pakistan using data from Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS). Along with trend analysis, bivariate analysis is employed to study the association of age at marriage with selected variables. Further Cox”s Proportional Hazards Model is applied to investigate the risk of early age marriage of girls in the country. The risk for getting married in early age (<19) is higher for women having low education, residing in rural areas, belonging to province of Sindh and falling in poorest quintile. Similarly, ethnicity plays a significant role and the girls coming from Seriaki and Pushto speaking background observe or face higher risk of early age marriages. Results are suggestive of poverty driven earlier marriages coupled with lowers level of literacy (education). Of the many, we studied the impact of early age marriages on fertility to be an increasing function of earlier age marriages and the women married at age less than 19 years were found having significantly higher fertility as compared to those married later. The findings suggest protecting women from negative consequences of early marriage, development interventions regarding the provision of universal education, employment opportunities and reproductive health should be ensured. Provinces need to make efforts to reduce the proportion of early marriages in the context of devolution.