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Common problems encountered by early married rural women of Parbhani district

Sana Kausar Mohammed Ali and Jaya Bangale

Abstract

A sample of 150 early married rural women age ranged between 15-20yrs were selected by following purposive random sampling method from 6 village of Parbhani District. The data pertaining to the study were collected by personally interviewing the early married rural women based on open ended interview schedule after seeking their consent and developing rapport with them. The result of the study showed that irrespective of SES 66.66 percent rural women could not continue further education due to their early marriage followed by having difficulty in carrying out household activities (54.00%), due to marriage they lost freedom (49.33%) and missed opportunities to spend time with friends (51.33%). About 41.66 percent of them also found to be suffered due to the irresponsible behaviour of husband like not sharing household responsibilities, shirking of financial burden of family, uncooperative in child care activities etc. In addition to these about 34.72 percent of them expressed that, they used to have conflicts in their families for sharing responsibilities as they belonged to large size families. While giving suggestions to the teenage girls, irrespective of SES, a higher percentage of sample rural women (90.00%) stated that for avoiding early marriages, girls must continue their higher studies. While 80.66 percent rural women suggested that teenage girls need to take special efforts for self-empowerment by enhancing their knowledge and skills, for career development.

Keywords: Child marriage, rural women, common problems

Introduction

In India according to the National Family Health Survey (2019-20), child marriage accounted for 23.30 percent of marriages (UN News, 2022) [8]. The term “child marriage” is used to refer to both formal marriages and informal unions in which a girl lives with a partner as if married before age of 18yrs (UNICEF, 2005) [9]. The factors usually put forward as reasons for the early marriage of girls are poverty, unwanted pregnancy, parental pressure, peer pressure and developmental stage among others. More so, it has a negative trend on the girl child which include emotional and mental distress, intolerance, school drop-out, Vesico Vaginal Fistula (VVF) disease, early widowhood, frustration and hatred for the man (Bala, 2003) [3].

Early marriage, they are far worse off, with the girl child required to enter into a sexual relationship resulting in early pregnancy, which can be both physically and psychologically damaging to the women. Teenage brides with much older husbands often have minimal capacity to negotiate a sexual relationship, contraception, and child bearing, as well as the burden of domestic chores. Domestic violence is a major consequence of child marriage. However, women who marry young are just as likely to be beaten and threatened by their husbands or families. Girls face violence at the hands of their husbands, fathers, brothers, uncles, and mothers-in-law across culture, religion, class, and ethnicity. The abuse—which can include psychological violence such as verbal abuse, harassment, confinement, and deprivation of physical, financial, and personal resources; physical violence; and sexual violence—is often accepted as customary of marital life. The young women are caught in a cycle of economic dependence, fear for their own and children’s lives, ignorant of their legal rights, lack of self-confidence, and family pressure (Gaffney-Rhys, 2010) [4].

Domestic violence has devastating repercussions on the young woman and her children. It may contribute to dysfunctional behaviors, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and somatization disorders. Adolescent mothers are more likely to experience fistula, pregnancy complications, and death during childbirth than older mothers. Such pregnancies have been consistently linked to increased risk of maternal and infant morbidity and mortality (Sah *et al.* 2014) [7].

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Materials and Methods

A sample of 150 early married rural women in the age range of 15-20 yrs were selected by following purposive random sampling method from 6 villages of Parbhani District. A house-to-house survey was conducted by the author herself. The data pertaining to the study were collected by personally interviewing the early married rural women based on open ended interview schedule after seeking their consent and developing rapport with them. The data thus collected were pooled, tabulated, statistically analysed and discussed.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 reveals about background information of early married rural women. It is obvious from the results that irrespective of SES, relatively a higher percentage of early married rural women (82.66%) were in the age group of 18-20yrs and a lower percentage of them (17.33%) were in 15-17 yrs.

With regard to their type of family, it was observed that 95.83 percent low SES and 87.17 percent middle SES, early married women belonged to joint families, where as a meagre percentage of them belonged to nuclear (2-9 %) and extended families (1-4%). Similarly a higher percentage of them (67-75%) were found to be hailed from middle size families followed by large (16-18%) and small size families (6-15%).

With respect to sample early married rural women's education, irrespective SES it was recorded that about (44-38%) of women were elementary school educated followed by high school educated (23-33%), primary school educated, (16-17%) and higher secondary school educated (05 -20%).

About rural women's age at the time of marriage, it was observed that irrespective of SES a higher percentage of (49.33%) early married rural women were in the age group of 13-15yrs old while remaining of them (50.66%) were in the age group of 16 to below 18 yrs.

Even though consanguineous marriages are proved to be hazardous due to its poor pregnancy outcomes, fertility issues and also have adverse effects on mothers, their children, family and community in general, 25.00 percent low SES and 38.46 percent middle SES early married women were found to have consanguineous marriages. Therefore this study indicates great need to develop awareness about detrimental effects of consanguineous marriages particularly in rural areas.

While studying about their present status, it was recorded that irrespective of SES, a higher percentage of them (32.66%) were newly married followed by mothers (36.00%) and pregnant women (31.33%).

Table 2 and figure 1 exhibit about problems reported by rural women due to their early marriage. About 75 percent low SES women reported that they could not continue further education followed by having difficulty in carrying out household activities (61.11%), due to marriage they lost freedom (58.33%) and missed opportunities to spend time with friends (44.44%). The corresponding percentages of their counterparts middle SES rural women were observed to be 58.97, 47.43, 57.69 and 41.02. In addition to these issues, irrespective of SES, about 36.66 percent of the early married rural women expressed that, after marriage they had compulsion on carrying out household work, and even they could not continue their hobbies (27.33). Further few of them (23.33%) also reported that after marriage they had difficulty

in carrying out farm and animal related activities like weeding, hoeing, cotton picking, keeping of livestock and its other associated activities as previously never they performed these, activities at their parental home. Beside these, 18.66 percent of early married rural women stated that after marriage, they were not having permission to eat food before the male members in family and had to control their hunger. Whereas a meagre percentage of them (11.33%) expressed that they had to wake up early at in-laws place.

It was observed that about 62.50 percent low SES and 48.71 percent middle SES rural women had increased responsibility in carrying out household chores and also, increased work load (64-41%). In addition to these changes, irrespective of SES, about 32.66 percent of the early married rural women expressed that, after marriage they had restrictions on wearing clothes/jewellery as per self-choice. Further irrespective of SES, 27.33 percent rural women expressed that they could not able to take decisions after marriage.

Based on SES except finding significant differences with reference to continuing education and hobbies, no significant differences were recorded among low and middle SES rural women. These results are in line with the results reported by Nguyen and wadon (2014) ^[5], Adekola, *et al.* (2016) ^[2], Abdulkadir *et al.* (2021) ^[11].

Unpleasant experiences reported by rural women after their marriage are depicted in Table 3 and figure 2. Considerably a higher percentage of low SES rural women (52.77%) stated that they had lot of trouble due to their husband's addiction like tobacco/chewing, guthka, smoking and alcohol consumption, Forty four percent of them told that, after marriage due to having insufficient family income they used to experience financial stress. About 41.66 percent of them also found to be suffered due to the irresponsible behaviour of husband like not sharing household responsibilities, shirking of financial burden of family, uncooperative in child care activities etc. In addition to these, about 34.72 percent of them expressed that, they used to have conflicts in their families for sharing responsibilities as they belonged to large size families.

On the whole, comparatively lower percentage of middle SES rural women had such unpleasant experiences in their families than their counterparts low SES rural women.

Table 4 shows General suggestions given by the early married rural women to the parents, in-laws and teenage girls. It is obvious from the results that, all the rural women suggested to parents that they must avoid doing early marriages of their daughters as it has adverse effects of them. Further while giving suggestions to the in-laws, all of them expressed that, they must give enough scope to their daughters in- laws for getting adjusted at in-laws place. Whereas while giving suggestions to the teenage girls, irrespective of SES a higher percentage of teenage girls (90.00%) stated that for avoiding early marriages, girls must continue their higher studies. While 80.66 percent rural women suggested that teenage girls need to take special efforts for self-empowerment by enhancing their knowledge and skills for career development. Further 71.33 percent rural women opined that teenage girls must improve the ability to resolve various problems which they come across in their day today life.

Except having suggestion to improve the ability to resolve the problems, all other suggestions reported by early married rural women were recorded to be non-significant.

Table 1: Background information of early married rural women

Background information of Rural Women	Percentage of rural women (150)		Percentages of Women irrespective of SES (n=150)
	Low SES (n =72)	Middle SES (n =78)	
Age (yrs)			
15 -17	09 (12.50)	17 (21.79)	26 (17.33)
18 -20	63 (87.50)	61 (78.20)	124 (82.66)
Type of family			
Nuclear	02 (02.77)	07 (08.97)	09 (06.00)
Joint	69 (95.83)	68 (87.17)	137 (91.33)
Extended	01 (01.38)	03 (03.84)	04 (02.66)
Size of family			
Small	05 (06.94)	12 (15.38)	17 (11.33)
Middle	54 (75.00)	53 (67.94)	107 (71.33)
Large	13 (18.05)	13 (16.66)	26 (17.33)
Education of women			
Primary School educated	12 (16.66)	14 (17.94)	26 (17.33)
Elementary School educated	32 (44.44)	30 (38.46)	62 (41.33)
High school educated	24 (33.33)	18 (23.07)	42 (28.00)
Higher secondary School educated	04 (05.55)	16 (20.51)	20 (13.33)
Couple's age at the time of marriage (yrs)			
Wife			
13 – 15	42 (58.33)	32 (41.02)	74 (49.33)
16 – Below 18	30 (41.66)	46 (58.97)	76 (50.66)
Husband			
26 – 30	42 (58.33)	37 (47.43)	79 (52.66)
20 – 25	30(41.66)	41 (52.56)	71 (47.33)
Type of marriage			
Non consanguineous	54 (75.00)	48 (61.53)	102 (68.00)
Consanguineous	18 (25.00)	30 (38.46)	48 (32.00)
Present status			
Newly married	19(26.38)	30 (38.46)	49 (32.66)
Pregnant	28 (38.88)	19 (24.35)	47 (31.33)
Mothers	25 (34.72)	29 (37.17)	54 (36.00)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

Table 2: Problems reported by rural women due to their early marriage

Problems reported by rural women	Percentage of rural women (150)		Percentages of Women irrespective of SES (n=150)	Z values
	Low SES (n =72)	Middle SES (n =78)		
Could not continue further education	54 (75.00)	46 (58.97)	100 (66.66)	2.24*
Difficulty carrying out household activities	44 (61.11)	37 (47.43)	81 (54.00)	1.73 ^{NS}
Missed opportunities to spend time with friends	32 (44.44)	45 (57.69)	77 (51.33)	1.61 ^{NS}
Lost Freedom	42 (58.33)	32 (41.02)	74 (49.33)	2.11*
Compulsion on carrying out household work	22 (30.55)	33 (42.30)	55 (36.66)	1.54 ^{NS}
No scope for continuing hobbies	11 (15.27)	30 (38.46)	41 (27.33)	3.35**
Difficulty in carrying out farm and animal related activities	17 (23.61)	18 (23.07)	35 (23.33)	NS
Have to control hunger	09 (12.50)	19 (24.35)	28 (18.66)	1.97*
Have to wake up early at in-laws place	07 (09.72)	10 (12.82)	17 (11.33)	0.61 ^{NS}
Increased responsibility	45 (62.50)	38 (48.71)	83 (55.33)	1.74 ^{NS}
Increased work load	30 (41.66)	50 (64.10)	80 (53.33)	2.89*
Restrictions on wearing clothes/ jewellery as per self-choice	28 (38.88)	21 (26.92)	49 (32.66)	1.58 ^{NS}
Could not able to take decisions	25 (34.72)	16 (20.51)	41 (27.33)	1.94*

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

* $p < 0.05$ level

** $p < 0.01$ level NS - Non Significant

Table 3: Unpleasant experiences reported by early married rural women

Particular	Percentage of rural women (150)		Percentages of Women irrespective of SES (n=150)	Z values
	Low SES (n =72)	Middle SES (n =78)		
Insufficient family income	32 (44.44)	35 (44.87)	67 (44.66)	NS
Husband's addiction	38 (52.77)	22 (28.20)	60 (40.00)	3.12**
Irresponsible behaviour of husband	30 (41.66)	28 (35.89)	58 (38.66)	0.27 ^{NS}
Conflicts due to large family size	25 (34.72)	20 (25.64)	45 (30.00)	1.21 ^{NS}
Domestic violence	12 (16.66)	17 (21.79)	29 (19.33)	0.79 ^{NS}
Insistence of in laws for giving birth to baby	04 (05.55)	01 (01.28)	05 (03.33)	1.42 ^{NS}

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

** $p < 0.01$ level NS - Non Significant

Table 4: General suggestions given by the early married rural women to the parents, in-laws and teenage girls

General Suggestions	Percentage of rural women (150)		Percentages of Women irrespective of SES (n=150)	Z values
	Low SES (n =72)	Middle SES (n =78)		
Suggestions to parents Must avoid doing early marriages of their daughters	72 (100.00)	78 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	NS
Suggestions to In-laws Must give scope to daughter in-laws for getting adjusted at in-laws place	72 (100.00)	78 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	NS
Suggestions to teenage girls Must continue their higher education	65 (90.27)	70 (89.74)	135 (90.00)	0.19 ^{NS}
Need to take efforts for self-empowerment	56 (77.77)	65 (83.33)	121 (80.66)	0.91 ^{NS}
Must improve the ability to resolve the problems	36 (50.00)	57(73.07)	107 (71.33)	2.92*

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

* $p < 0.05$ level Non Significant

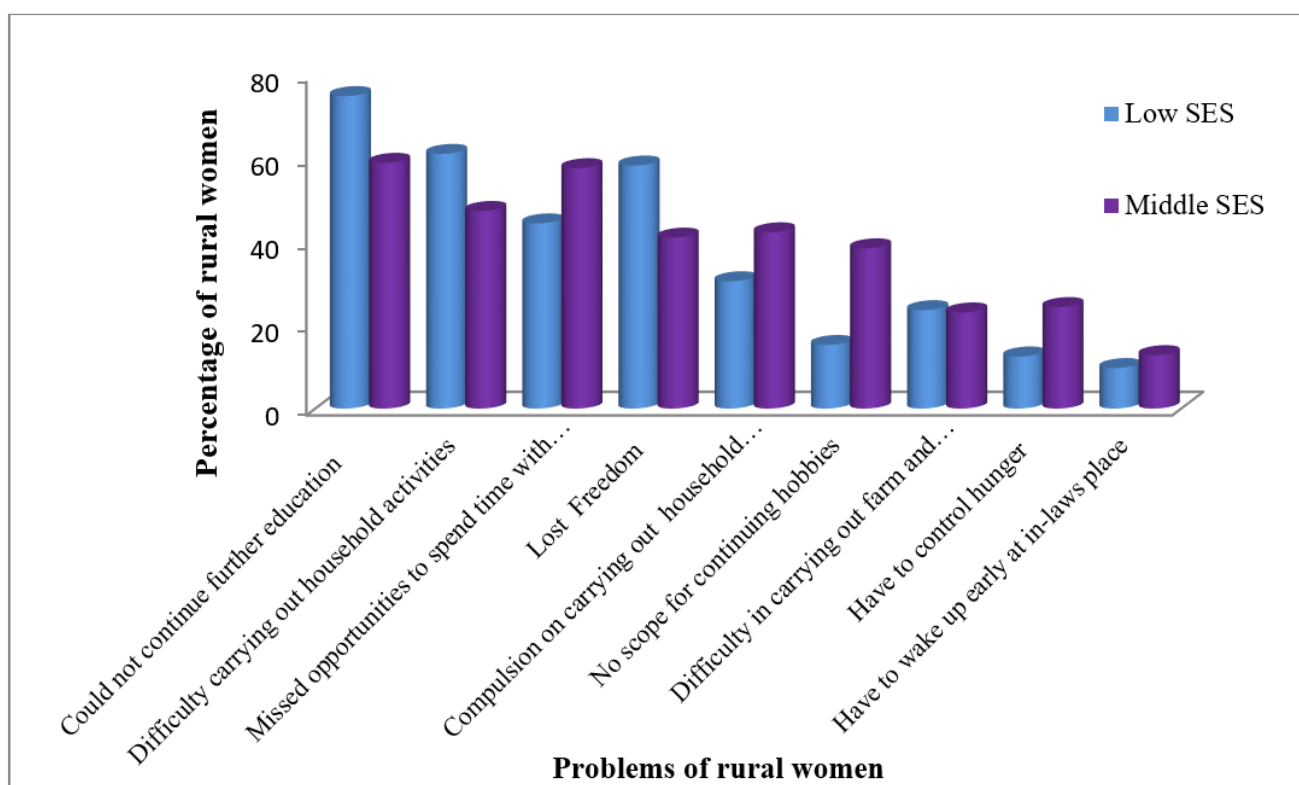


Fig 1: Problems encountered by the rural women due to their early marriage

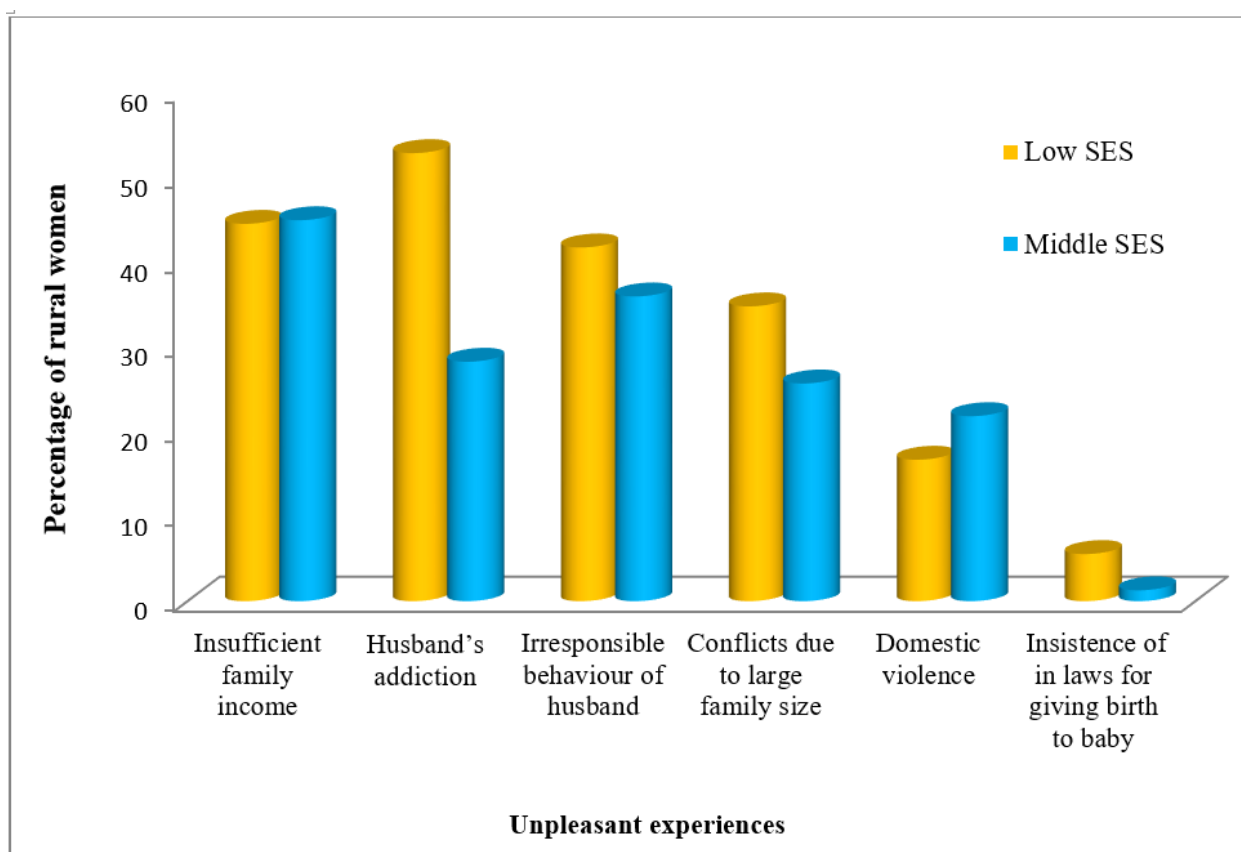


Fig 2: Unpleasant experiences reported by early married rural women

Conclusion

On the whole irrespective of the socio-economic status, the common problems for child marriage in parbhani District were found to be inability to continue further education (66%), difficulty in carrying out household activities (54%), missing opportunities to spend time with friends (51%), loss of freedom (49%) were recorded to be the major problems encountered by early married rural women. All the rural women opined that parents must avoid doing early marriages of their daughters for avoiding its adverse effects of them and girls must continue their higher studies for self-empowerment.

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