

Child Marriage in Nepal

World Statistics

- Child marriage is becoming less common overall, but the pace of change is slow. In the six countries where child marriage is most prevalent, more than 60 per cent of women 20-24 years old married as children.¹
- 11% in Eastern Europe and Central Asia between 2011 and 2020, more than 140 million girls will become child brides, according to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).¹
- If current levels of child marriages hold, 14.2 million girls annually or 39,000 daily will marry too young.¹
- According to United Nations Population Funds (UNFPA) Niger has the highest percentage of child marriage in the world (75%). In Niger one in three girls is married before the age of 15, and 75% of women aged 20 to 24 are married before age 18.²
- Global issue: one girl out of three will be married before the age of 18 respectively in developing countries (except China) – UNFPA³
- Some 750 million women will have been married as children – three quarters of a billion child brides.¹⁰

National Statistics

- Situation of Child Marriage in Nepal: ³
 - Eastern Region: 34%
 - Central Region: 40%
 - Western Region: 36%
 - Mid-western Region: 53%
 - Far-western Region: 48%
- Early and forced marriage has led to suicide among adolescent girls; suicide is in fact the leading cause of death for women of reproductive age in Nepal.¹
- Girls aged 15 - 20 are twice as likely to die in childbirth as those in their twenties.⁵
- Child marriage widely prevalent in low-income communities⁴

- Access to education of children (ages 5-14) by mother's education, %, 2010/11⁶

	<u>Unmarried</u>	<u>If Married</u>
Access:	87.2 %	66.6%
No Access:	12.8%	33.4%

Therefore, 20.6% are educationally deprived who would otherwise have access to education if unmarried.⁶

- The percentage of never-married women and men has increased in the past 10 years.⁷
- Among women age 15-19, this proportion has grown from 60 percent in 2001 to 71 percent in 2011; among men in the same age group, it has increased from 89 percent to 93 percent.⁷
- 37% of women were married by the age of 18 while 10% by the age of 15.¹¹
- The percentage of women married by age 15 declines from 24 percent among those aged 45-49 to 5 percent among those age 15-19. A similar trend is seen among men.⁷
- Nepalese men marry four years later than women. The median age at first marriage among women age 25-49 is 17.5 years, and the median age among men is 21.6 years.⁷
- Nepalese women generally initiate sexual intercourse at the time of their first marriage. In contrast, men initiate intercourse a year earlier than their first marriage.⁷
- Childbearing begins early in Nepal, with almost one quarter of women giving birth by age 18 and nearly half by age 20. Due to early marriage, girls often bear children at a young age, which has severe effects on their health and continuation of education.⁴
- 17% of adolescent women age 15-19 are already mothers or pregnant with their first child. In the last five years, teenage pregnancy has fallen by 10 percent.⁴
- Half of births occur within 3 years of a previous birth, with 21 % occurring within 24 months.⁴
- The subsequent Nepal Demographic and Health Surveys (NDHS) (2001, 2006 and 2011) has indicated a steady decrease in child marriages, but still it is very significant and largely prevalent in Terai districts:
 - NDHS (2001) - 40% of women aged 15-19 were married,
 - NDHS (2006) - 32.2% of women and 10.4% of men aged 15-19 were married and
 - NDHS (2011) - 28.8% of women and 6.9% of men aged 15-19 were married. 11.5 % of population were married below 14.

Population Census 2011 on child marriage

- Population census 2011 shows an overwhelming progress in literacy, the rate of which rose to 65.9 percent from the 57.4 in 2001.
- However, the marriage status still paints a gloomy picture.
- % of married population of age 10 and above who were married between 15 and 19 is 48.9% (Female-58.2%; and Male-37%).
- Of the women aged 20-24, 41% of them were married before 18 years of age and only 11% of men were married before the age of 16.
- More than 750,000 women in Nepal were married between 10 and 14 years of age. More than half of girls/women between 15 and 19 (2.7 million out of 4.3 million) reported they were married, meaning more than 73 percent of girls are married by the time they turn 19

Multiple Indicator Clusters System (MICS) Data has Shown Severity of the problem in Far and Mid-Western Region. ⁶

- Multiple Indicator Clusters System (MICS), 2010 - 60% of women aged 20-49 accepted that they were married before reaching the age of 18 years, and 16% before the age of 15 in Far and Mid Western Regions
- Almost one in six (16 percent) women aged 15–49 years was first married before the age of 15, and nearly half (49 percent) of women aged 20–49 years were married before the age of 18. Of women aged 15–19 years, 25 percent were already married.
- Rural women were more likely than urban women to be married before the age of 15 (17 percent compared to 10 percent)
- 27 percent of women with no education were married before the age of 15 compared to 2 percent of women with higher education
- It is predominantly parents who arrange child marriage
- Data suggest that the prevalence of early marriage has gradually declined: 54 percent of women aged 45–49 years were first married by the age of 18 compared to 37 percent of women aged 20–24 years. A similar trend was observed in marriage before the age of 15. The rate of decline has been steeper in urban areas than rural areas.

UNICEF's The State of the World's Children 2011 ranked Nepal among the top ten countries where child marriage occurs.¹

- Over half (51%) of the Nepalese women who are aged 20-24 years were married before they were 18 years old. ¹
- Nepal is in the top 20 countries globally with high prevalence of child marriage.¹

- It is expected that only around half of the marriages that took place is registered.¹
- There are unusual trend, however, that parents are delaying the marriage of their child but children themselves opting for marriage. ¹
- Prevalence of Child marriage is high among Hill/Terai Janjati, Hill/Terai Dalit and some Terai ethnic group¹
- Of the total female population of the age group 15-18, 23.1% of the girls are married.⁸
- According to the data from 2005 to 2013 of UNICEF, 10.1 % of children got married below the age of 15 and 40.7% of children got married below the age of 18.¹²

According to the Status of the rights of children(SOROC)2015 prepared by CWIN , 60 cases of child marriage were published of which 56 girls & 4 boys.⁹

Despite the occurrence of child marriage, there are no proper cases filed against them. In fiscal year 2070/71, only 23 cases of children has been in Nepal police.¹²

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