Research Article

A COMPARATIVE STUDY TO ASSESS KNOWLEDGE REGARDING EFFECTS OF EARLY MARRIAGE AMONG ADOLESCENT GIRLS (15-20 YEARS) IN GOVT. GIRLS HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL, NOWABAD, TALAB TILLO (URBAN AREA) AND GOVT. HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL, KOT BHALWAL (RURAL AREA), JAMMU

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Abstract

Marriage is "a process learning about one's self and one's spouse, about sharing, and growing up, being individuals within a family and being a member of the family team. In India adolescents girls face number of problems and are more prone for early marriage and are sexually active. Early (child) Marriage is one of the burning problems of Indian society. In India, despite amended laws advocating 21 as the legal minimum age at marriage for females, a substantial proportion i.e. every third adolescent girl in the age group of 15-19 year is married and every second married adolescent girl has given birth to a child[1]. **Objectives:** To assess the knowledge regarding effects of early marriage among adolescent girls of rural area and urban area. To compare the knowledge regarding effects of early marriage among adolescent girls (15-20 years) of rural and urban areas and to find out the association between knowledge regarding effects of early marriage among adolescent girls (15-20 years) of urban and rural area with their selected socio-demographic variables. **Method:** A quantitative approach, Comparative research design was adopted for this study. The sample consists of 50 adolescent girls (15-20 years) from urban and rural area. Samples were selected by using purposive sampling technique. Self structured knowledge questionnaire were used to assess the knowledge regarding effects of early marriage. **Results:** The result revealed that in rural area, 94% of adolescent girls had inadequate followed by 6% had moderate level of knowledge regarding effects of early marriage (1.06 ± 0.23). In urban area, 78% of adolescent had inadequate level followed by 22% had moderate level of knowledge regarding effects of early marriage (1.22 ± 0.41). Variables like education status of father, birth order in the family, mother age on marriage, type of family and area of residence were found to be statistically significant among rural adolescents i.e., $p<0.05$ whereas in urban area, variables like age, marital status, education status of mother, birth order in the family, working status of the mother, religion and type of family were found to be statistically significant i.e., $p<0.05$. **Interpretation and Conclusion:** Overall findings showed that there is knowledge deficit among the adolescents regarding effects of early marriage among adolescent girls.

Keywords: Knowledge, urban area, rural area, effects of early marriage, adolescent girls.

INTRODUCTION

The term adolescence is derived from the Latin word "adolescere" meaning to grow, to mature. It is considered as a period of transition from childhood to adulthood It is characterized by rapid physical growth, significant physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual changes[2]. India has 253 million adolescents, about a fifth of its projected population of 1.34 billion for 2020. The problems of adolescents are multi-dimensional in nature and require holistic approach[3]. According to studies, child marriage has a negative impact on children's health, education and personal development, as well as exposes them to emotional, physical and sexual violence. Pregnancy in adolescence is a risk factor for impaired education, future unemployment, sexually transmitted infections, HIV, preterm delivery, and poor mental health. Based on the United Nations, complications from pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death for 15 to 19 year old girls in developing countries. UNICEF estimates that of the 50,000 deaths, almost all occur in low and middle income countries[4]. In India, early pregnancy is there because of early marriage especially in rural areas, urban slums and low socio economic people. . The early marriage restrains act of 1978, the minimum age for marriage has been raised to 21 years for girls and 24 years for boys. Still the menace of early marriage has been continuing. In India nearly half of the women were married before the legal age of 21 years[5].

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Need of the study

Adolescent pregnancy is defined as pregnancy in girls aged 10 to 19 years. It is projected that approximately 21 million girls between the ages of 15 and 19 in the developing world become pregnant each year, and approximately 12 million of them give birth, and at least 777,000 girls under the age of 15 give birth each year which accounts for almost 11% of all births worldwide. More than 90% of these births occur in low- and middle-income countries[6]. Globally, the prevalence of child marriage among girls is likely to be six times higher than the prevalence of child marriage among boys (UNICEF 2019). The statistics are indicative of how child marriages disproportionately affect girls. Child marriage affects other aspects of a child's development, such as the right to express, development and education, develop full potential, protection from all forms of abuse and harmful traditional practices[7]. The main objective of this study on early marriage was to gather information on the knowledge of child marriages in rural and urban area of Jammu, as a basis for raising awareness on how children, particularly girls, are affected by the practice.

Problem statement

A comparative study to assess knowledge regarding effects of early marriage among adolescent girls (15-20 years) in Govt. Girls Higher Secondary School, Nowabad, Talab Tillo (urban area) and Govt. Higher Secondary School, Kot Bhalwal (rural area), Jammu.

Objectives

- To assess the knowledge regarding effects of early marriage among adolescent girls (15-20 years) in Govt. Higher Secondary School, Kot Bhalwal (rural area).
- To assess the knowledge regarding effects of early marriage among adolescent girls (15-20 years) in Govt. Girls Higher Secondary School, Nowabad, Talab Tillo (urban area .
- To compare the knowledge regarding effects of early marriage among adolescent girls(15-20 years) of rural and urban areas.
- To find out the association between knowledge regarding effects of early marriage among adolescent girls (15-20 years) of Govt. Girls Higher Secondary School, Nowabad, Talab Tillo (urban area) and Govt. Higher Secondary School, Kot Bhalwal (rural area), with their selected socio-demographic variables.

Assumption

The researcher assumes that Adolescent Girl's:

- ✓ May co-operate well for the data collection.
- ✓ Will have some knowledge regarding effects of early marriage.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ryskeldiyeva, K., Moldaliyev, I., Tuktibaeva, S., Nurkhassimova, R., Kurbaniyazova, S., Kushkarova, A., & Ramanova, S. et.al (2023) conducted a cross-sectional study to assess knowledge, attitude and practice of adolescent girls towards reproductive health in Turkistan region, Kazakhstan. A total of 1250 participants were included with a mean age of 17.3 ± 1.4 years, and >80% of the participants have completed high school. A total of 1191 girls had the onset of menarche at approximately 13.2 years old, and 85.7% reported menstrual disorder. This study concluded that there was poor knowledge and practice of reproductive health among participating adolescents. Alcohol consumption, high BMI, bad family relationships and lack of gynecological visits were found to negatively affect reproductive health [8].

Sreelekshmi G.S, Sisira P, Shalu Maria Shaji, Sharone Ann Shaji, Sherin Shaji, Shaji Shijil Kuriakose, et.al (2022) conducted a study to assess the effect of planned teaching programme on knowledge and attitude regarding early marriage and early pregnancy among adolescent girls in selected school at Meppadi, Kerala. The method of study was one group pre-test post-test design. A total of 50 adolescent girls were selected by using convenient sampling technique. The pre-test knowledge assessment was done with a structured interview schedule, attitude was observed by using semantic scale. Results revealed that the knowledge level of the subjects have enriched by 35.7% after planned teaching programme which has also found statistically significant (p<0.01). The attitude level of subjects have enriched by 21.8% after planned teaching programme which has also found statistically significant (p<0.01). This study concluded that there was significant association of knowledge and attitude with the selected demographic variables. This study reconfirmed that planned teaching programme are more effective to improve the knowledge and attitude of adolescent girls[9].

Ms Infant Rani Augustin, Miss Vanshita Bhardwaj, Vanshika Rajput, Varsha Singh (2021) conducted a study an aim to assess the knowledge regarding teenage pregnancy among adolescent girls in selected community at Merrut. Descriptive research design is used in this study. The sample size of 30 adolescents girls were selected by using purposive sampling technique and used self-administered knowledge questionnaires to assess their knowledge regarding teenage pregnancy. Result revealed that the Majority of samples (30%) were having excellent knowledge, (50%) were having adequate knowledge and (20%) were having poor knowledge and there is significant association between teenage girls knowledge with the age of demographic variables [10].

Mrs. Uma Kole and Dr.S. Anuchitra (2020) conducted a study to assess the knowledge and attitude, also to design and implement and to know the effectiveness of planned teaching programme on impact of early marriage, pregnancy among adolescent girls in selected rural high schools of Belgaum, Karnataka. This was a true experimental study conducted to assess the effectiveness of planned teaching programme among 60 adolescent girls (aged between 13 to 17year, either married and unmarried) who were studying in 8th, 9th and10th standard from selected rural high schools of Belgaum, Karnataka using Probability-simple random sampling technique. A questionnaire was designed to tap the information about on impact of early marriage, pregnancy and planned teaching program was been conducted to assess the knowledge and attitude of adolescent girls. Result revealed that significant gain in knowledge of experimental group after the planned teaching programme on impact of early marriage, pregnancy. The mean score of knowledge of experimental group is 33.03± 1.86 and mean score of knowledge of control group 23.86±3.44.The mean attitude score of experimental group is 37.93±4.78. It indicates that the knowledge of adolescents girls on impact of early marriage, pregnancy is positively correlated with attitude (r = 0.386 P>0.05). The findings of this study support the need of delaying early marriage for the better health of the mother as well as baby. The study proved that there was a significant correlation between knowledge and attitude of adolescent girls [11].

METHODS AND MATERIALS

In this study, a quantitative approach, comparative research design was adopted for this study. The sample consists of 50 adolescent girls (15-20 years) from urban and rural area. Samples were selected by using purposive sampling technique. Self structured knowledge questionnaire were used to assess the knowledge regarding effects of early marriage.

The tool consists of two parts

Part-I: consisted of 15 items related to demographic data of the subjects such as Age, Educational status, Marital status, Educational status of father, Educational status of mother, Birth order in the family, Fathers age on marriage, Mothers age on marriage, Working status of the father, Working status of the mother, Religion, Type of family, Area of residence, Monthly family income, Previous knowledge regarding effects of early marriage.

Part-II: Structured knowledge questionnaire consisted of 20 items on knowledge about effect of early marriage.

Criterion measure: Each self-structured multiple choice question has four choices out of which one was correct answer and remaining three were wrong answers. A score of "1" was allotted for each right answer and every wrong answer was given the score of "0". The maximum attainable score in the knowledge questionnaire was 20 and minimum score is 0. The level of knowledge is graded based on percentage of score obtained. To find out association with the selected variable, the knowledge aspect was categorised into 3 groups.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of urban and rural adolescent girls

N= 100

S. N.	Level of knowledge	Score	Percentage %
1	Inadequate	0 - 10	<50%
2	Moderate	11-15	51 – 75%
3	Adequate	16-20	Above 75%

Table 2. Level of knowledge regarding effects of early marriage among adolescent girls of rural area

N= 50

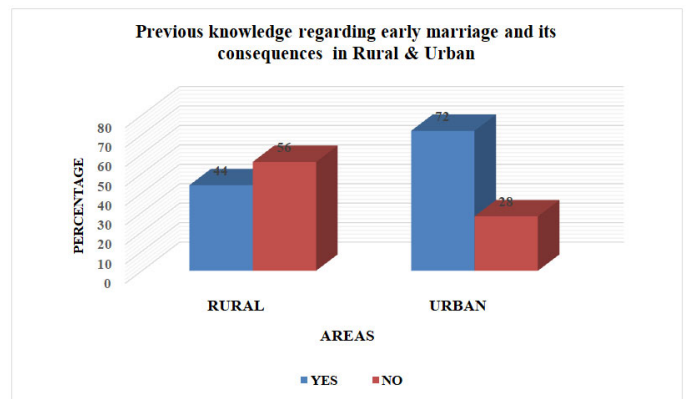| Sample characteristics	Rural N=50	Percentage	Urban N=50	Percentage
Age in years				
15-17yrs	48	96%	45	90%
18-20yrs	2	4%	5	10%
Educational status				
9th standard	21	42%	10	20%
10th standard	4	8%	8	16%
11th standard	24	48%	13	26%
12th standard	1	2%	19	52%
Graduation	0	0%	0	0%
Drop out ,if yes specify which class	0	0%	0	0
Marital status				
Unmarried	50	100%	50	100%
Married, if yes specify type of marriage	0	0%	0	0%
Education status of the father	9	18%	12	48%
1-5th class	37	74%	29	58%
6-12th class	2	4%	5	10%
Graduate	2	4%	4	8%
Post -graduate				
Education status of the mother	13	26%	9	18%
1-5th class	35	70%	33	66%
6-12th class	1	2%	7	14%
Graduate	1	2%	1	2%
Post -graduate				
Birth order in the family				
1st child	20	28%	15	30%
2nd child	18	36%	17	34%
3rd child	11	22%	9	18%
4th child	2	4%	9	18%
Father age on marriage				
13-17yrs	1	2%	3	6%
18-22yrs	22	44%	12	24%
23-27yrs	16	32%	16	32%
Above 28yrs	11	22%	19	38%
Mother age on marriage				
13-17yrs	9	18%	5	10%
18-22yrs	31	62%	22	44%
23-27yrs	8	16%	9	18%
Above 28yrs	2	4%	14	28%
Working Status of the father	4	8%	5	10%
Unemployed	33	66%	13	26%
Labour	7	14%	9	18%
Private Job	6	12%	12	24%
Govt. employee	1	2%	11	22%
Self- employee				
Working status of the mother	42	84%	42	84%
Housewife	4	8%	3	6%
Self employed	3	6%	2	4%
Private job	1	2%	3	6%
Govt. employee				
Religion				
Hindu	43	86%	46	92%
Christian	3	6%	1	2%
Muslim	4	8%	3	6%
Sikh	0	0%	0	0%
Other	0	0%	0	0%
Type of family				
Nuclear	23	46%	39	78%
Joint	27	54%	11	22%
Area of residence				
Urban	0	0%	50	100%
Rural	50	100%	0	0%
Monthly family income (In Rs/-)	31	62%	33	66%
Less than 9226 per month	10	20%	11	22%
9232-27640 per month	3	6%	3	6%
27654-46089 per month	3	6%	0	0%
46095-68896 per month	1	2%	2	4%
68967-92185 per month	2	4%	0	0%
921191-184370 per month	0	0%	1	2%
More than 184376 per month				
Previous knowledge regarding early marriage and its consequence			36	72%
Yes	22	44%	14	28%
No	28	56%		

Mean ± SD = 1.06 ± 0.23

Figure 1. Classification of previous knowledge regarding effects of early marriage in rural and urban area

Table 3. Level of knowledge regarding effects of early marriage among adolescent girls of urban area

N= 50

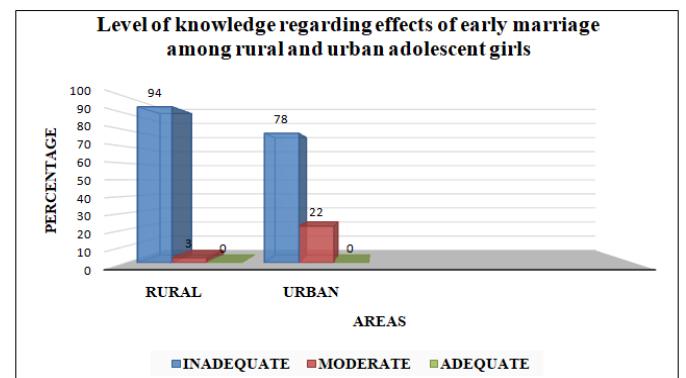| Level of knowledge	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate	0-10	39	78%
Moderate	11-15	11	22%
Adequate	16-20	0	0%

Mean± SD = 1.22 ± 0.41

Figure 2. Classification of adolescent girls on Knowledge level regarding effects of early marriage

Table 4. Association between level of knowledge of adolescent girls of rural and urban area with their selected soci- demographic variables

N=100

Socio-demographic variables	Level of Knowledge (Rural)			χ² df P	Level of Knowledge (Urban)			χ² df P
	Inadequate	Moderate	Adequate		Inadequate	Moderate	Adequate	
Age in years				0.13				0.9
15-17yrs	45	3	-	1	38	10	-	1
18-20yrs	2	0	-	0.7	1	1	-	0.3*
Educational status								
9th standard	18	2	-		19	1	-	
10th standard	5	0	-	1.09	4	1	-	7.0
11th standard	23	1	-	4	15	9	-	4
12th standard	1	0	-	0.7	1	0	-	0.07
Graduation	0	0	-		0	0	-	
Drop out ,if yes specify which class	0	0	-		0	0	-	
Marital status				1.3				0.5
Unmarried	45	3	-	1	37	11	-	1
Married, if yes specify type of marriage	2	0	-	0.7	2	0	-	0.4*
Education status of the father								
1-5th class	8	1	-	8.1	7	2	-	1.4
6-12th class	36	1	-	3	29	8	-	3
Graduate	1	1	-	0.04*	2	0	-	0.6
Post -graduate	2	0	-		1	1	-	
Education status of the mother								
1-5th class								
6-12th class	12	1	-		12	1	-	
Graduate	33	2	-	0.19	26	9	-	5.6
Post -graduate	1	0	-	3	1	0	-	3
	1	0	-	0.9	0	1	-	0.1*
Birth order in the family								
1st child								
2nd child	17	3	-		17	3	-	4.5
3rd child	18	0	-	4.7	13	5	-	3
4th child	11	0	-	3	9	2	-	0.2*
	1	0	-	0.1*	0	1	-	
Father age on marriage								
13-17yrs	1	0	-	1.1	0	1	-	6.6
18-22yrs	20	2	-	3	20	2	-	3
23-27yrs	15	1	-	0.7	21	5	-	0.08
Above 28yrs	11	0	-		8	3	-	
Mother age on marriage								
13-17yrs	9	0	-	7.9	7	2	-	1.8
18-22yrs	29	2	-	3	25	6	-	3
23-27yrs	8	0	-	0.04*	5	3	-	0.6
Above 28yrs	1	1	-		2	0	-	
Working Status of the father								
Unemployed	4	0	-		1	3	-	
Labour	30	2	-	1.5	28	4	-	9.1
Private Job	6	1	-	4	5	2	-	4
Govt. employee	6	0	-	0.8	4	2	-	0.05
Self- employee	1	0	-		1	0	-	
Working status of the mother								
Housewife	39	3	-		33	9	-	
Self employed	3	0	-	0.6	1	2	-	4.9
Private job	3	0	-	4	3	0	-	4
Govt. employee	1	0	-	0.9	1	0	-	0.2*
Religion								
Hindu	40	3	-		35	8	-	
Christian	3	0	-	0.5	1	2	-	3.7
Muslim	4	0	-	2	3	1	-	2
Sikh	0	0	-	0.7	0	0	-	0.1*
Other	0	0	-		0	0	-	
Type of family				0.5				0.5
Nuclear	21	2	-	1	19	4	-	1
Joint	26	1	-	0.4*	20	7	-	0.4*
Area of residence				1.3				0.2
Urban	15	0	-	1	11	4	-	1
Rural	32	3	-	0.2*	28	7	-	0.6
Monthly family income(In Rs/-)								
Less than 9226 per month								
9232-27640 per month	28	3	-		24	7	-	
27654-46089 per month	10	0	-	1.9	7	3	-	2.2
46095-68896 per month	3	0	-	5	2	1	-	5
68967-92185 per month	3	0	-	0.8	3	0	-	0.8
921191-184370 per month	1	0	-		1	0	-	
More than 184376 per month	2	0	-		2	0	-	
	0	0	-		0	0	-	
Previous knowledge regarding early marriage and its consequence	22	1	-	0.2	17	6		0.4
Yes	25	2	-	1	22	5		1
No				0.6				0.5

N= 100

* = Significant

Major finding

➢ Findings of the study revealed that maximum 90% adolescent girls in urban and rural area were belongs to the age group of 15-17 years, 48% were qualified up to 11th standard in rural area followed by 52% were qualified up to 12th standard followed by 26% were qualified up to 11th standard in urban area.

➢ Distribution based on the Education status of father revealed that majority 74% were qualified upto 6-12th in rural area followed by 58% were qualified up to 6-12th class in urban area. Distribution based on the Education status of mother revealed that majority 70% were qualified upto 6-12th in rural area followed by 66% were qualified up to 6-12th class in urban area.

➢ Out of 50 adolescent girls in rural area majority 36% were 2nd child followed by 34% were 2nd child of the family in urban area. Distribution based on the Father age on marriage revealed that maximum 44% were belongs to 18-22 year in rural area followed by 38% were belongs to above 28 year in urban area.

➢ Distribution based on the Mother age on marriage revealed that maximum 62% were belongs to 18-22 year in rural area followed by 44% were belongs to 18-22 year in urban area. According to working status of the father, majority 96% were laborer in rural area followed by 26% were in urban area. According to working status of mother, maximum 84% were housewife in rural and in urban area.

➢ Religion wise distribution revealed that majority 86% of adolescent girls were Hindu in rural area followed by 92% were Hindu in urban area. Distribution based on the type of family revealed that majority 54%were belongs to joint family in rural area followed by 78%were belongs to nuclear family in urban area.

➢ According to monthly family income, maximum 62% of the adolescents girls were belongs to families had less than 9226 per month in rural area followed by 66% of the adolescents girls were belongs to families had less than 9226 per month in urban area. Distribution based on the previous knowledge regarding effects of early marriage revealed that 44% of adolescent girls had previous knowledge regarding early marriage in rural area and 72% had previous knowledge regarding early marriage in urban area.

➢ The present study confirms that the overall knowledge in rural area, 94% of adolescent girls had inadequate and 6% had moderate level of knowledge regarding effects of early marriage (1.06 ± 0.23). In urban area, 78% of adolescent had inadequate level and 22% had moderate level of knowledge regarding effects of early marriage (1.22 ± 0.41).

➢ The present study confirmed that the variables like education status of father, birth order in the family, mother age on marriage, type of family and area of residence were found to be statistically significant among rural adolescents i.e., $p<0.05$ whereas in urban area, variables like age, marital status, education status of mother, birth order in the family, working status of the mother, religion and type of family were found to be statistically significant i.e., $p<0.05$.

DISCUSSION

Assessment of knowledge regarding effects of early marriage among adolescent girls (15-20 years) of rural and urban areas: The present study confirms that the overall knowledge in rural area, 94% of adolescent girls had inadequate and 6% had moderate level of knowledge regarding effects of early marriage (1.06 ± 0.23). In urban area, 78% of adolescent had inadequate level and 22% had moderate level of knowledge regarding effects of early marriage (1.22 ± 0.41). Our finding as were supported by similar study conducted by V. Vandana, K. Simarjeet, S. Manisha (2017) to assess the knowledge regarding early marriage and early pregnancy among adolescent girls. Result of that study revealed that majority of the school girls (85.5%) were having average level of knowledge followed by (7.5%) below average and least (0.7%) school girls had good knowledge regarding early marriage and early pregnancy [12].

Association between demographic variables and knowledge score: The present study confirmed that the variables like education status of father, birth order in the family, mother age on marriage, type of family and area of residence were found to be statistically significant among rural adolescents i.e., $p<0.05$ whereas in urban area, variables like age, marital status, education status of mother, birth order in the family, working status of the mother, religion and type of family were found to be statistically significant i.e., $p<0.05$. Our find were supported by similar study conducted by Sreelekshmi G.S, Sisira P, Shalu Maria Shaji, Sharone Ann Shaji, Sherin Shaji, Shaji Shijil Kuriakose, et.al (2022) to assess the effect of planned teaching programme on knowledge and attitude regarding early marriage and early pregnancy among adolescent girls in selected school at Meppadi, Kerala. Results revealed that the knowledge level of the subjects have enriched by 35.7% after planned teaching programme which has also found statistically significant ($p<0.01$). The attitude level of subjects have enriched by 21.8% after planned teaching programme which has also found statistically significant ($p<0.01$). This study concluded that there was significant association of knowledge and attitude with the selected demographic variables [13].

Conclusion

It was concluded that 94% of adolescent girls had inadequate regarding effects of early marriage in selected rural areas and 78% of adolescent girls had inadequate level of knowledge regarding effects of early marriage in urban area. The variables like education status of father, Birth order in the family, mother age on marriage, type of family, and area of residence were found to statistically significant among rural adolescent that is $P<0.05$ were as in urban area, variables like age marital status, education status of mother, birth order in the family, working status of the mother, religion and type of family were found to be statistically significant that is $p<0.05$. There is need to educate the community people regarding this burning topic and to conduct more qualitative studies to rule out the cause and effect of early marriages.

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