An inquiry into Spatial and Socio-Economic Aspects of Forced Marriages in India

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ABSTRACT

Marriage is the state of being united to a person of opposite sex as husband or wife in a consensual union and contractual relationship recognized by law. A hot discussion is always being carried out in India at the present time on the subject of child marriage. But no one talks about the forced marriage; itdoes not happen only in caseof below 18 years but also with more than 18 years. The issue of forced marriage is of both national and international interest and focus. Forced marriage is recognized as a human rights abuse, violating a number of international human rights norms , including the rights to freely enter into marriage, and to bodily and sexual integrity.In this study, overall prevalence of forced marriage is observed to be 40% and prevalence is seen across different socio-economic status and different states. The proportion of populaton in female below 18 have a great share in forced marriage.It is genrally observed in all the states and in all the socio-ecomoic status that under 18 yrs prevalence of forced marriage is high.

Keyword: - *Forced Marriage, Caste, Religion, Human rights abuse, IHDS.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Marriage is the state of being united to a person of opposite sex as husband or wife in a consensual union and contractual relationship recognized by law. The ceremony in which a marriage is enacted and announced to the community is called a wedding, and it is very important event of everybody life. In marriage selection of partner is an important issue. It can be done by parents alone or with the consent of their children which is to be marrying. Taking consent is an important issue in marriage and if consent is not taken from both bride and groom, arranged marriage changes to forced marriage. It is also seen that in forced marriage agreement is taken from both bride and groom under and coercion.

A hot discussion is always being carried out in India at the present time on the subject of child marriage. But no one talks about the forced marriage; itdoes not happen only in caseof below 18 years but also with more than 18 years. Sometimes females are not prepared physically or mentally for marriage and at that time of their marriage, but they are forced to marry, which creates feeling that they have no longer control over their own lives, some gointo depression, self-harming or, in the worst cases, even attempting suicide.Early marrige causes many health complications and higher child mortality and infant mortality.

The issue of forced marriage is of both national and international interest and focus. Forced marriage is recognized as a human rights abuse, violating a number of international human rights norms , including the rights to freely enter into marriage, and to bodily and sexual integrity. As early as 1948, the right to free and full consent to marriage was stipulated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[1]. In the UK, forced marriage amounts to a form of domestic voilence and/or child abuse. It can affect women and men as well as girls and boys from any community and background[2].

Forced marriage is wrong and cannot be justified on any religious or cultural basis. Emotionally blackmailing, physically threatening are use as a tool in forced marriage. Forced child marriage has a number of negative

consequences on the young bride. These girls are twice as likely to die during pregnancy as women between the ages of 20 and 24. Infants born to mothers under 18 are also 60% more susceptible to dying within their first year[3].

According to UNICEF, in South Asia 48% of women are forced to marry before they are 18. The average age difference in arranged marriage is that male is 4.5 years older. It means that half of women in India and south asia countries are marrying while they are in teens. Approximately 18% of girls are married before they are 15 years old. Consent is not taken from these teenage brides,and even if they did, one could easily argue that they are too young to make such choices and that they are coerced by the adults in their life.

1.1 Literature review

A forced marriage is one where one or both parties are coerced into a marriage against their will and under duress. Duress includes either physical and ∕ or emotional pressure. It is different from arranged marriage, where free and full consent is taken from both parties. [4]. According to the definition of Home Office, the distinction between arranged and forced marriage is based on "full and free consent". The definition does not specifically address the issue of age; with the implication that women and man of any age group can be forced into marriage. Research shows that forced marriage alludes to young girls under 18 years are primary victims, ingrained the issue of child marriage [5].Most of this marriage are set up by parents and girls rarely get chance to meet their future husband before wedding. [6]

However, in practice it can become difficult to accurately determine at what point emotional pressure becomes great enough to implicate genuine force in order to distinguish between forced and arranged marriages [7,8]. The overall prevalence of forced marriages is difficult to estimate, as victims rarely come forward. The practice is mostly hidden and incidences of forced marriage go underreported [9]. Forced marriage have detrimental health and social consequences. These unions hinder educational developemnt and limit the oppurtunities aslo affect their economical status.Due to which it exposes a lifetime of domestic voilence and abuse as they have lack of power and confidence within the houselhold [10].In many studies it is found that wide age gap between the spouses creates unequal distribution distribution of power, resulting total control over sexual relation and decision making. It creates communcation gap between the spouse and in many cases brides are not socially conditioned to question on their husbands authority, they often unable to use contraception of their choice or to plan their families [11]. This brings a wide range of health consequences, in which teenage womens bear the greatest burden. Forced sexual intercourse can lead to gyanecological problem. There is postive association found between coerced first sex and genital tract infection. Studies also report significant associations between sexual abuse and sexually transmitted infections, abnormal infection vaginal discharge, and psychological and mental disorders.[12]

When forced marriage is done to the females of below 18 years when their bodies are not fully developed, it causes higher maternal mortality rate and a higher risk of obstructed labour, postpartum and sepsis [6,13,14].Those who give birth under the age of 15 are five times more likely to die as compared to the women in their early 20 years of ages [13]. It is also found that in all the ages if forced marriage is done then women are almost three times more likely to experience partner voilence, including sexual voilence in the domestic household[15].

1.2 Need for study

Child marriage is always focused in thestudy as it is easy to trace them by spouses age at the time of marriage.In India, if any of the spouse ages is below 18 years then it is considered as child marriage. In some other nation this age is 16 and is some countries is also below this in some condition.Age is one of the important issues of marriage, and there is one more issue which is generally not focussed in study that is taking consent from both the partener. If it is not taken, then marriage become forced which is prevalent in girls below 10 years and the womens of age more than 30. There is hardly any studies is done on the forced marriage as it is not easily to trace.

2. OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the prevalence of forced marriage among states of India and different socio-economic status.
2. To analyze the association between forced marriage among different socio-economic status.

3. DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY

Indian Human development survey (IHDS) is the only survey which collected data on marital history. IHDS conducted two waves in 2004-05 and 2011-12 respectively. The survey was conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research and University of Maryland.

The second wave is collected in 2011-12 is a nationally representative surveys covering wide range of topic collected from 42,152 households in 1,503 villages and 971 urban wards/blocks across India. In IHDS-II almost 83% of the households are re-interviewed which is covered in IHDS-I. IHDS-II includes original IHDS-I households, households that splits from original households and a replacement sample of an additional 2,134 households. The methods of data collection for IHDS included cognitive assessment test, face-to-face interview, paper and pencil interview (PAPI).

The eligible women module was selected and the basic information on Marital history. In the survey data is collected from 39,523 women about their choice of partner, age when women get married, contact with husband before marriage are examined.

3.1 Measures and methods
In IHDS survey data is collected from married women under which some question is asked on the Marital history of women. One question is asked, "Who choose your husband?" , if the reply of this answer answer includes that respondent herself engaged in choosig the groom. Then this is not a case of forced marriage. But respondent herself was not enagage in choosing the groom; then a next question is asked correspond to that is "Did you have any say in choosing him?" if respondent herself reply positively then consent is taken but in the case respondent herself reply negatively it means that respondent herself does not agree with the marriage. But female ultimately had to be agreed by their family members coercively and it is a condition of forced marriage.

The women file is merged with the household file to generate wealth quantile. We categorizes forced marriage as below 18 years and above 18 years. Bi-variate analysis is used to see the prevalence of forced marriage is analyzed in diiferent socio-economic status and among the states of India.

Multivariate analysis(Binary logistic regression)is used to examine the association of forced marriage with all the predictor (socio-economic) variables.

4. RESULTS

Table no 1: Prevalence of forced marriage of above and below 18 years among different socio economic groups

Background characteristics	< 18 yrs.	>18 yrs
Place of residence		
Rural	51.52	29.38
Urban	50.99	26.35
Caste		
Others	43.82	25.86
OBCs	56.06	30.94
SCs	50.74	30.44

STs	47.31	24.68
Religion		
Hindu	53.27	28.16
Muslim	43.44	35.39
Others	28.44	22.17
Father level of education		
No Edu.	50.6	33.11
Formal edu.	53.09	25.91
Higher sec.	56.33	21.36
Grad &abv.	55.42	22.71
Wealth quantile		
Poorest	65.36	48.81
Second	53.85	33.57
Middle	51.91	31.41
Fourth	45.52	24.45
Richest	30.34	15.75
Based on Caste		
Same Caste	51.75	29.27
Not in same caste	46.01	21.87

According to Table 1, showing the prevalence of forced marriage across differet socio-economic background and it is observed that below 18 year the prevalence of forced marriage is almost same in both rural and urba n but in case of above 18 year it is slightly high in rural areas.When caste and religion is taken into consideration highest prevalence is found in OBCs and Hindus resp.When standard of living increases in terms of wealth quantile, forced marriage decreases as the wealth quantile increases.In same caste prevalence of forced marriage is high.

Table – 2: Prevalence of forced marriage of above and below 18 years among states of India.

States	<18 years	> 18 years
Jammu & Kashmir	45.93	38.05
Himachal Pradesh	29.03	13.67
Punjab	71.11	45.82
Uttarakhand	47.36	23.67
Haryana	75.03	45.51

Rajasthan	86.43	57.62
Uttar Pradesh	80.57	59.99
Bihar	68.35	56.56
Assam	9.5	10.87
West Bengal	20.31	12.57
Jharkhand	48.3	30.44
Orissa	77.5	63.49
Chhattisgarh	55.58	27.42
Madhya Pradesh	79.53	52.95
Gujarat	30.51	11.23
Maharashtra	38.23	24.48
Andhra Pradesh	15.61	5.48
Karnataka	23.19	14.47
Goa	22.72	23.21
Kerala	22.09	9.99
Tamil Nadu	6.47	4.15

Table 2 shows the prevalence of forced marriage across different states and highest prevalence is observed in Rajsthan with 86.43% followed by Uttar pradesh and Madhya Pradesh in case of below 18 years and in case of above 18 years, highest prevalence is observed in Uttar Pradesh with 60% percent followed by Rajsthan and Bihar. On the other hand, states like Tamil Nadu and Assam are the states with lowest prevalence of forced marriages in the age group below 18 years, whereas Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh are thr two states with lowest prevalence of forced marriage in the above 18 years age group.

Table – 3: Binary Logistic regression of women background characteristics and forced marriage

	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV
Marital age of women				
Under 18 years®				
Above 18 years			0.431***	0.443***
Place of residence				
Rural ®				
Urban	0.766***	0.848***	0.978**	0.972***
Caste				
Others®				
OBC				1.34***
SC				1.14***
ST				0.868***
Religion				
Hindu®				
Muslim				0.911***
Others				0.858***

Wealth quintiles				
Poorest®				
Second			0.657***	0.660***
Middle			0.569***	0.562***
Fourth			0.440***	0.432***
Richest			0.125***	0.242***
literacy of father				
Illiterate®				
Formal edu.		0.681***	0.886***	0.878***
Higher Sec.		0.558***	0.735***	0.736***
Grad and abv.		0.440***	0.616***	0.634***
Const.	.769	.914	2.33	2.08

® means reference category, ***$p<.01$, **$p<.05$, *$p<.1$

Results of binary logistic are seen in table 3.In different models, associations is seen betweeen forced marriage and socio-economic status. It is seen that as more variables are included the difference between of forced marriage in place of residence decreases.

5. DISSCUSSION

Overall prevalence of forced marriage is observed 40% and in this study, prevalence is seen across different socio-economic status and different states. It is observed that in all the socio economic status and states the prevalece of forced marriage is higher in the age group below 18 years than above 18 years.It is observed that prevalence of forced marriage is 51.3% in below 18 and 28.6% in above 18. There is very nominal difference in forced marriage in rural and urban in below 18 years, but difference is observed in case of above 18 years.Highest urban populaiton in Goa with 62.17% due to which the forced marriage is very less, it is only 22.7 and 23.2 percent in case of both below and above 18 years.Since the lowest urban population is in Himanchal Prdesh with only 10.2% percent of population is living in urban areas even though forced marriage is only 29 and 13.6 percnet in beow and above 18 years resp., this is due to the literacy level which is quiet high with 82.8%. Education is associated with greater autonomy in partner choice decision but it is most strongly associated with parent arranged marriages with Consent [16].Education plays an important role as it is seen that in below 18 years there is no impact of father education on forced marriage because where there is custom of child marriage. People go for child marriage and in most of the cases it is forced one. But in the case of women more than 18 years as the education level of father increases they are more likely to take consent from their daughter and the prevalence of forced marriage decreases.

It is also observed from the logistic table that if only place of residence is taken into consideration then there is less to have forced marriage in urban areas and as more the socio-economic variable is added to the value of odds ratio tends to one. In case of father level of education which is almost same in case of below 18 in all the groups but in case of above 18 years as the level of education increases people do not force their daughter for marriage.In wealth quantile as we move from poorest to richest forced marriage decreases in both below and above 18 age groups.It is also observed in the BIMARU and other poor states the forced marriage is higher than Goa, Kerala, tamil naidu. In caste and religion it is observed that highest prevalence is in Hindu and OBCs

Some states which should be disscussed are tamil Nadu which have very low forced marriage this is due to the 50% of the population is urbanised, 80% of the population is literate and in terms of income it came under 6th rank among the states per-capita income.Prevalence of child marriage,is highest in the central and western parts or india and lower in southern and eastern parts of the country[17]. In certain states, such as in Bihar and Rajasthan, approximately 60 per cent of females (aged 20-24) marry as children(UNICEF). As the prevalence of forced marriage is high among the child marriages.It is also observed that prevalence of forced marriage is high in Haryana, Punjab as these states are well in the human development index. There may be traditional or custom to marry girls forcely in lower ages as well as in high ages. Orissa is one state which is observed where prevalence of forced

marriage is highest among states in the age group of above 18 years. There is very less urbanization – only 16.5%, and literacy too is 73% – not so high. The situation of this state may be different from others states. Interesting result which is found that there also exist forced marriage in cases of inter-caste marriages and prevalence of forced marriage in below 18 years of age is more than double vis-à-vis prevalence in more than 18 years of age.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The proportion of populaton in female below 18 have a great share in forced marriage.It is genrally observed in all the states and in all the socio-ecomoic status that under 18 yrs prevalence of forced marriage is high. In case of under 18 years, where father education not play any important role, this may be due to any cultural and traditonal reason.As the person become economically well off the prevalence of force married reduced.When prevlaence of forced marriage is observed among the states of India then it is observed the some states which are very good in their development indicators are still having high prevalence of force marriage due to some other reasons.

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