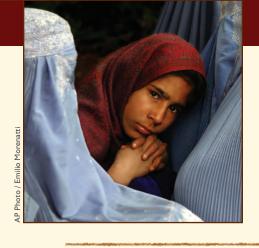
Child Marriage and DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



Child marriage limits young girls' skills, resources, knowledge, social support, mobility and autonomy. Young married girls have little power in relation to their husbands and in-laws. They are therefore extremely vulnerable to domestic violence, abuse and abandonment. Violence may include physical, sexual or psychological abuse.

CHILD MARRIAGE VIOLATES GIRLS' HUMAN RIGHTS

ICRW and its partners conducted a survey on the well-being of adolescents in the states of Bihar and Jharkhand, India in 2004. The survey found that girls who were married before 18 were twice as likely to report being beaten, slapped or threatened by their husbands than girls who married later. They were three times as likely to report being forced to have sex without their consent in the previous six months.²

The ICRW survey also revealed that girls who were married before 18 consistently reported being less able than young

women married after 18 to talk to their husbands about the use of contraception, when they wanted to have children and how many children to have.³ When asked if they never, sometimes or usually participated in decisions about aspects of their lives, women who had married as girls were more likely than those who married later to respond "never."⁴

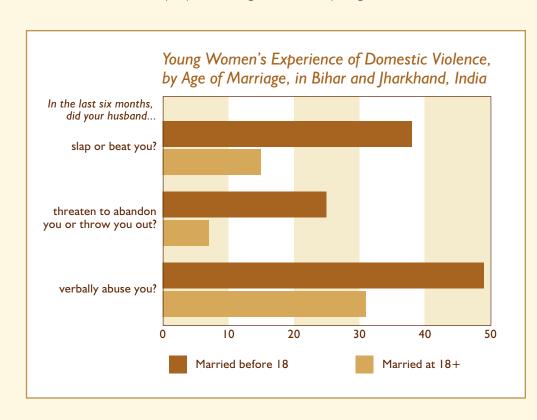
CHILD MARRIAGE IS COMMONLY ABUSIVE

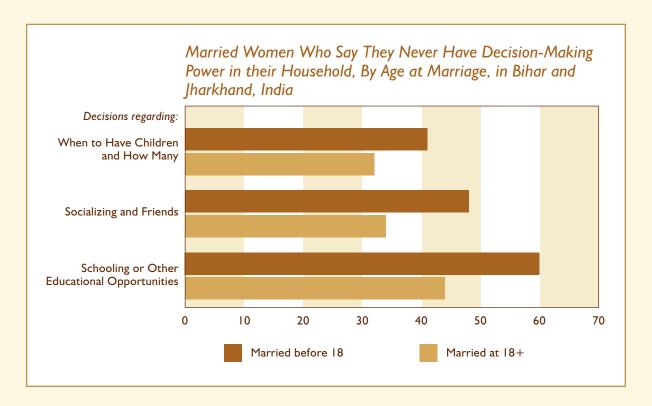
Other studies have also documented the link between child marriage and domestic violence:

• Girls who marry before 18 are more likely to experience domestic violence than their peers who marry later.⁵ For

example, in Peru, where more than half of women report having experienced physical or sexual violence, child marriage has been found to increase a woman's chances of being abused.⁶

- Girls who marry early are more likely to believe that a man is sometimes justified in beating his wife than women who marry later. For example, in Kenya, 36 percent of girls married before 18 believe that a man is sometimes justified in beating his wife, compared to 20 percent of married women.⁷
- Child brides often show signs symptomatic of child sexual abuse and post-traumatic





stress. Such symptoms include feelings of hopelessness, helplessness and severe depression.⁸

 Girls with low bargaining power in the household are more likely to experience violence by an intimate partner.
 Women with low levels of education and adolescents ages 15 to 19 are at higher risk of violence than better educated or older women.⁹

Ending child marriage must be a priority in the global effort to end violence against women.

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- ² ICRW (2005). Development Initiative on Supporting Healthy Adolescents (DISHA) Project. Analysis of quantitative baseline survey data collected in select sites in the states of Bihar and Jharkhand, India. Survey conducted in 2004. The percentage of young married women reporting domestic violence in the previous six months. Sample size (n) = 998

- ³ ICRW (2005).
- 4 ICRW (2005). The percentage of young married women reporting no sway in household decisions. Sample size (n) = 998
- ⁵ UNICEF (2005). Early Marriage: A Harmful Traditional Practice. UNICEF: New York. This analysis was conducted for Cambodia, Colombia, Haiti, India, Kenya, Peru, South Africa, Turkmenistan and Zambia. Among the countries in this study, India was found to have the highest overall rate of domestic violence.
- ⁶ Flake, D. (2005). "Individual, Family, and Community Risk Markers for Domestic Violence in Peru." Violence Against Women II(3): pp. 353-373.; WHO (2005). Summary Report: WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women. World Health Organization: Geneva.
- ⁷ UNICEF (2005).
- ⁸ Khan, N. and M. Lynch (1997). "Recognizing Child Maltreatment in Bangladesh." *Child Abuse and Neglect* 21(8) pp.815-818.
- ⁹ WHO (2005).

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