GUJARAT CHILD MARRIAGE AND TEENAGE PREGNANCY

(AGE GROUP 15-19 YEARS)

FACTSHEET

Based on NFHS-4 (2015-16)

Introduction

In India, statistically, the incidence of child marriage has been declining slowly over time, but the number of girls and boys getting married before their respective legal ages (18 years for girls and 21 years for boys) remains large with 12.1 million child marriages reported by "**Census 2011**". The causes of child marriage are complex and varied, based on various customs and traditions across contexts, and and remain rooted in existing socio-cultural norms. Besides this, economic and regional factors play a signicant role in determining the magnitude of child marriage. While Census 2011 allows us to investigate incidence of child marriage, data from the National Family Health Survey 2015-16 ("**NFHS-4**") highlights the prevalence[1] of child marriage. Though it is acknowledged that child marriage persists amongst both boys and girls, this factsheet analyses prevalence of child marriage and teenage pregnancy only amongst girls in the age group of 15-19 years in the State of Gujarat using NFHS-4 data. This factsheet also examines some factors related to child marriage and teenage pregnancy at the State and district level.

> " *It is important to change mindsets of communities which see future of girls being limited to that of child brides and mothers.*"
>
> *Young Lives, 2016*

National Statistics

An overall comparison at the national level of the prevalence child marriage amongst 15-19-year-old girls between National Family Health Survey 2005-06 ("**NFHS-3**") and NFHS-4 shows a considerable decrease The prevalence of child marriage as per NFHS-3 is 26.5% and as per NFHS-4 it has reduced to 11.9% (14.1% in rural areas and 6.9% in urban areas). It is important to note that the prevalence of child marriage differs substantially across the States of India. As per NFHS-4, there are 12 States in India that show higher prevalence of child marriage than them national average (11.9%). Furthermore, there are 13 States in India where more than 80% of child marriages took place in rural areas (within their respective State).

It is observed that at the national level, child marriage is more prevalent amongst girls from bottom wealth tercile households (16.6%) and least prevalent amongst girls belonging to the top wealth tercile households (5%). Similarly, educational level is also negatively associated with prevalence of child marriage amongst girls of this age group, i.e. higher the level of education, lower is the chance of child marriage. Findings show that completion of secondary education is much lower amongst married teenage girls than unmarried girls amongst 15-19 years age group across all States. Analysis related to teenage pregnancy reveals that 39.4% of child brides[2] aged 15-19 years have given birth to at least one child, with the highest prevalence in Goa (69.4%), Mizoram (65.6%) and Nagaland (65.5%).

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[1] Prevalence refers to "the total number of individuals in a population who have a disease or health condition at a specific period of time, usually expressed as a percentage of the population". Whereas incidence refers to "the number of individuals who develop a specific disease or experience a specific health-related event during a particular time period (such as a month or year)". (Source: School of Public Health. Prevalence and Incidence Defined. Retrieved from Harvard University)

[2] Girls married before 18 years of age.

Gujarat

Gujarat, which is also called 'The Land of the Legends', shares its border with Pakistan and Rajasthan in the north-east, Madhya Pradesh in the east, Maharashtra and the Union territories of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli in the south. The Arabian Sea borders the State both to the west and south west. It is the 7th largest State in India in an area of (196,024 km[2]), it supports a population of 60.4 million[3], and has literacy rate of 79.3% (Census 2011). According to NFHS-4, 29% of households in Gujarat do not use sanitation facilities and only 68% have piped water in their dwelling/yard/plot of the total population of Gujarat, 9.0% are in the age-group of 15-19 years, and the over-all infant and under-ve mortality rates are 34 and 43 (per 1,000 live births), respectively[4].

Gujarat is amongst the top 10 States with high prevalence of child marriage among girls aged 15-19 years at 13.2%,

Prevalence of Child Marriage Amongst Girls in the Age Group 15-19 Years

11.9% National Average VS Gujarat Average **13.2%**
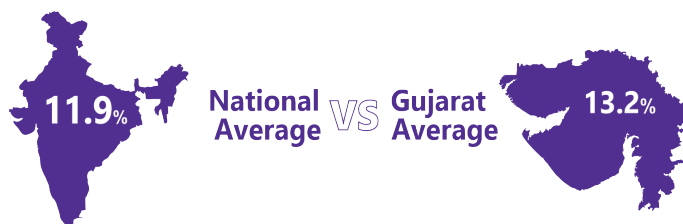
which is signicantly higher than the National average of 11.9%. Young Lives India also listed the top 100 districts with highest prevalence of child marriage in India, amongst which six districts are identied from Gujarat. While there are a plethora of reasons why large numbers of young adolescents are married before the legal age, this factsheet does not examine causality and only provides descriptive analysis related to child marriage and teenage pregnancy amongst the girls in the age group of 15-19 years in Gujarat.
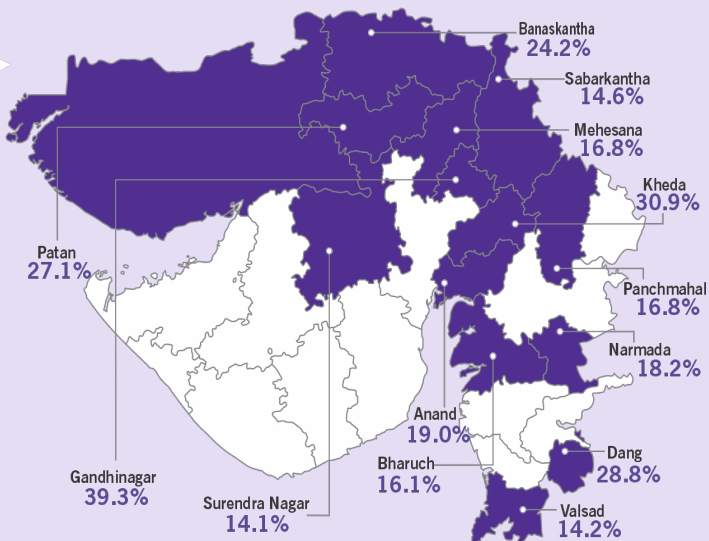
Child Marriage (District Level Findings)

Data collected from 26 districts[5] across Gujarat suggests that prevalence of child marriage differs substantially across districts. While 13 districts have a higher prevalence of child marriage among girls aged 15-19 years than the State average (13.2%), 13 districts fall below this average. The top three districts with highest prevalence of child marriages are Gandhinagar (39.3%), Kheda (30.9%) and Dang (28.3%), whereas the districts with lowest prevalence are Junagadh (0.5), Amreli (2.1%) and Rajkot (3.9%).

Top Three Districts with Highest Prevalence of Child Marriage Amongst Girls in the Age Group 15–19 Years

Gandhinagar **39.3%**
Kheda **30.9%**
Dang **28.8%**
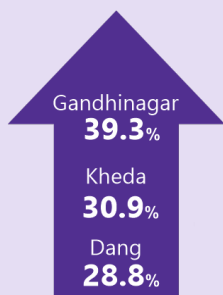
13 districts in Gujarat show higher prevalence of child marriage than the State average of **13.2%**

Banaskantha **24.2%**
Sabarkantha **14.6%**
Mehesana **16.8%**
Kheda **30.9%**
Panchmahal **16.8%**
Narmada **18.2%**
Patan **27.1%**
Anand **19.0%**
Bharuch **16.1%**
Dang **28.8%**
Gandhinagar **39.3%**
Surendra Nagar **14.1%**
Valsad **14.2%**

Location

Findings reveal that prevalence of child marriage in the age group of 15-19 years is signifcantly higher in rural areas across all districts of Gujarat except Surat, Junagarh, Rajkot and Ahmedabad. Nearly 74.5% of child marriages took place in rural Gujarat. These findings are particularly important since any intervention or campaign planned to prevent child marriage in Gujarat must focus on rural areas.

16 out of 26 districts in which more than 80% of the child marriages took place in rural areas are: Panchmahal (100%), Dohad (100%), Narmada (100%), Tapi (100%), Patan (94.2%), Banaskantha (93.9%), Navsari (93.5%), Mehesana (93.3%), Kheda (92.4%), Dang (90.1%), Suren-dranagar (90.0%), Bhavnagar (89.3%), Sabarkantha (87.6%), Bharuch (82.7%), Vadodara (81.6%) and Anand (80.5%).

Four out of 26 districts in which more than 70% of the child marriages took place in urban areas are: Junagadh (100%), Surat (100%), Rajkot (81.3% and Ahmedabad (76.2%).

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3. Source: Government of Gujarat. Gujarat Fact File. Retrieved from Government of Gujarat: https://gujaratindia.gov.in/about-gujarat/fact-file.htm
4. Source: International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and ICF. (2017). National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4), India, 2015-16: Gujarat. Mumbai: IIPS.
5. Following the Census 2011 district classification, NFHS-4 collected data for 26 districts in Gujarat during the period 30 January - 30 June 2016. Although seven new districts (Aravali, Botad, Chhota Udaipur, Gir Somenath, Mahisagar, Devbhoomi Dwarka and Morbi) were formed in August 2013.

Wealth Index

Percentage of Girls in the Age Group 15-19 Years by Household Wealth Index

	Bottom Tercile	Middle Tercile	Top Tercile
Unmarried Girls	77.1	83.5	91.6
Girls Married before age 18	19.2	12.2	6.0
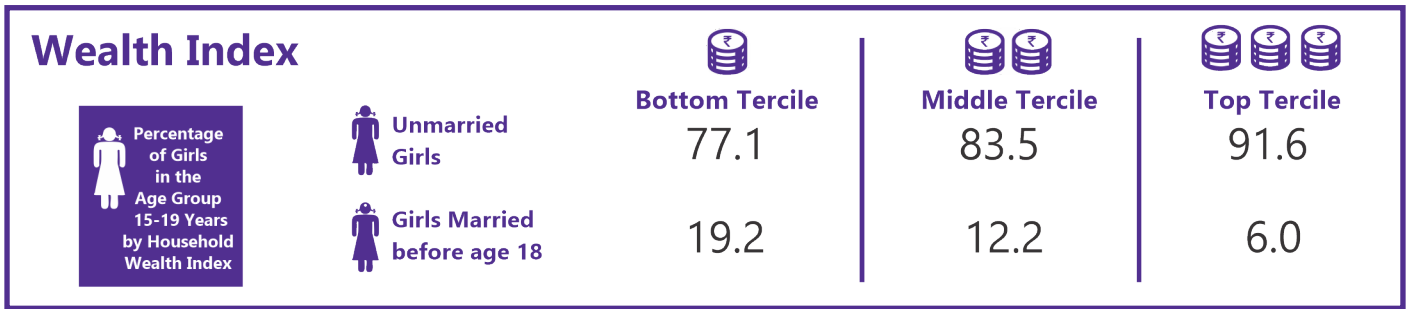
The relationship between girl child marriage and household wealth index[6] is significantly strong. It is evident from the findings that girls from the poorest households are more likely to get married at a younger age than girls from wealthier households. At State level, around one-fifth (19.2%) of the girls aged 15-19 years from bottom wealth tercile households are married as child brides, compared to 12.2% girls from middle wealth tercile and 6% from top wealth tercile households.

In eight districts more than 70% of the child marriages took place amongst the bottom wealth tercile households

88.8% Dohad	96.1% Dang	81.9% Panchmahal	87.8% Narmada	76.2% Banaskantha
81.9% Valsad	72.8% Sabarkantha	77.1% Amreli		

In three districts more than 50% of the child marriages took place amongst the middle wealth tercile households

100% Junagarh	62.1% Surendranagar	56.5% Probandar

In two districts more than 50% of the child marriages took place amongst the top wealth tercile households

81.3% Rajkot	56.1% Ahemdabad

These findings have immense policy implications, indicating that households across all wealth terciles must be adressed in order to reduce child marriage.

Educational Attainment

Education is essential for developing a sense of agency in young adults, especially in girls. It instils within them a confidence in their abilities and self-efficacy that can push them to achieve their goals. The established correlation between child marriage and the educational attainment of girls suggests that higher the level of education, lower is the chance of girls getting married before the legal age. In this context, the completion of secondary education amongst girls is found to be significant in delaying the age at marriage.

Findings show that the completion rate of secondary education is higher amongst unmarried girls (15-19 years) than married girls across all districts. For example, in Rajkot district, the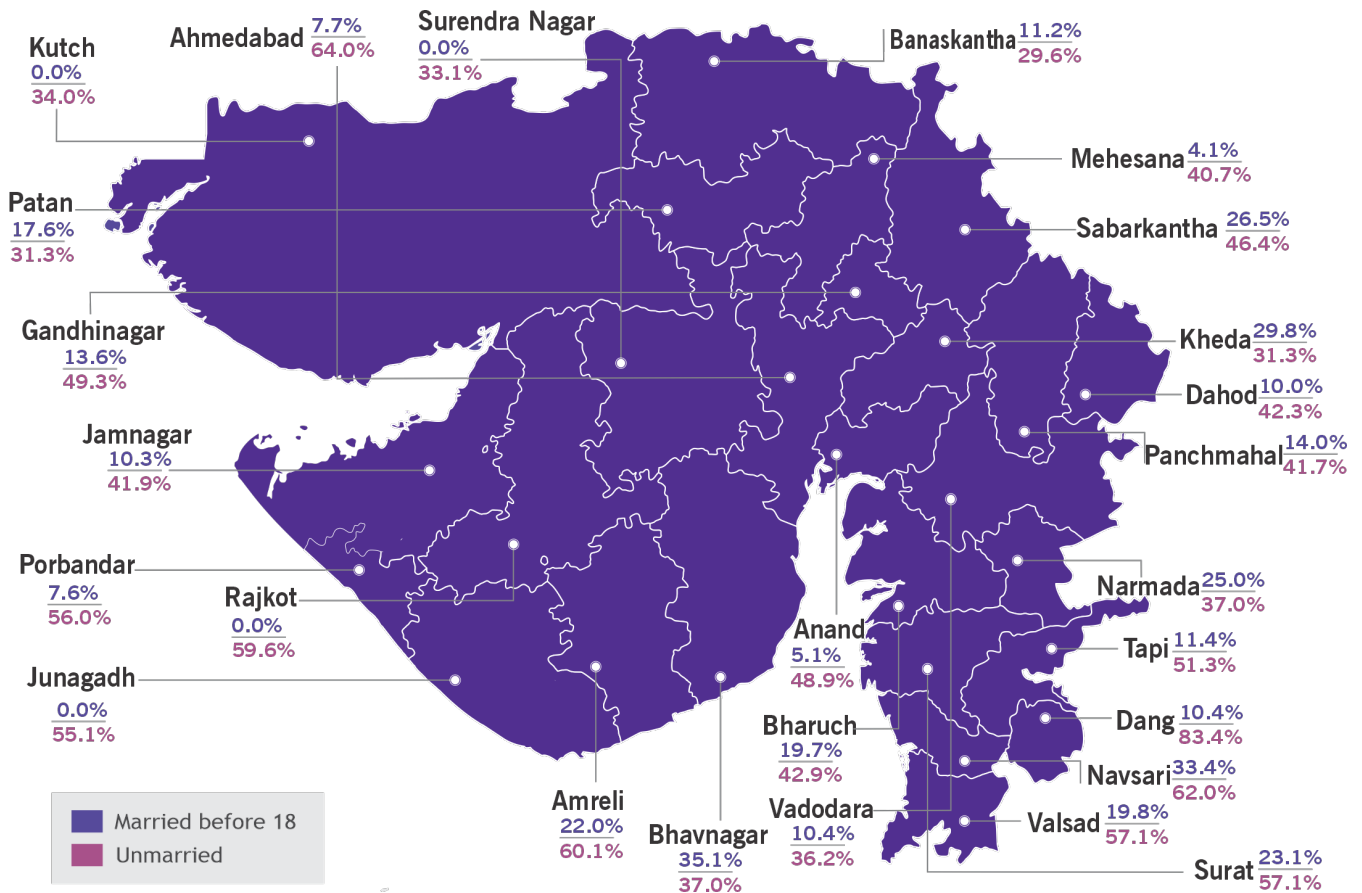 secondary school completion rate amongst unmarried girls is 59.6% compared to girls married before 18 years of age (0%). The similar pattern is seen in districts such as Gandhinagar with 49.3% of unmarried girls completing secondary education compared to only 13.6% completion rate amongst girls married before the legal age. It is worth mentioning that in the districts of Junagadh, Kutch, Rajkot and Surendranagar not a single child bride has completed secondary education.

Making secondary school completion a fundamental right, and ensuring girls from poor households are provided residential secondary schools may be considered as necessary steps to prevent early marriage in Gujarat.

6. The wealth terciles are estimated based on the State level wealth index cut-offs to highlight the disparities within the State.

Completion of Secondary Education by Marital Status Among 15-19 Years old Girls in Different Districts of Gujarat

Kutch
0.0%
34.0%

Ahmedabad
7.7%
64.0%

Surendra Nagar
0.0%
33.1%

Banaskantha
11.2%
29.6%

Mehesana
4.1%
40.7%

Patan
17.6%
31.3%

Sabarkantha
26.5%
46.4%

Gandhinagar
13.6%
49.3%

Kheda
29.8%
31.3%

Dahod
10.0%
42.3%

Panchmahal
14.0%
41.7%

Jamnagar
10.3%
41.9%

Porbandar
7.6%
56.0%

Rajkot
0.0%
59.6%

Narmada
25.0%
37.0%

Anand
5.1%
48.9%

Tapi
11.4%
51.3%

Junagadh
0.0%
55.1%

Dang
10.4%
83.4%

Bharuch
19.7%
42.9%

Navsari
33.4%
62.0%

Valsad
19.8%
57.1%

Amreli
22.0%
60.1%

Bhavnagar
35.1%
37.0%

Vadodara
10.4%
36.2%

Surat
23.1%
57.1%

Legend:
- ■ Married before 18
- ■ Unmarried

Pregnancy Amongst Child Brides

In the context of child marriage, it is also important to study when these child brides gave birth to their first child. Research in this area has revealed that child marriage is also associated with teenage pregnancy. According to NFHS-4, amongst girls married before the legal age in the age-group of 15-19 years in Gujarat, 31% of the sample girls are found to have given birth to at least one child, by the age of 19 years.
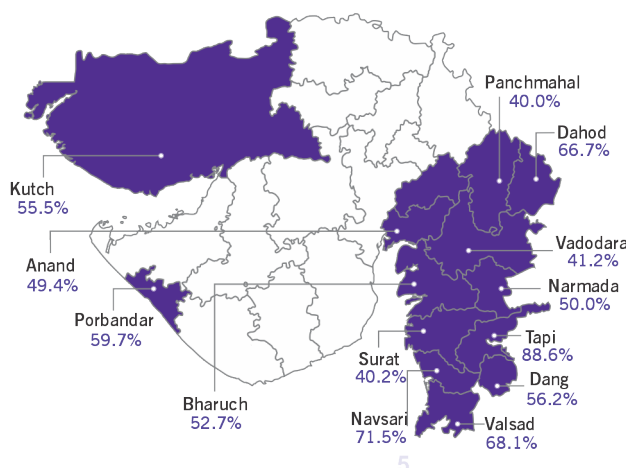
Percentage of Child Brides and Their Age at First Child-birth

0.7%	0.8%	4.7%	9.3%	14.2%	28.6%	33.6%	8.1%

Age: 12 & below, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
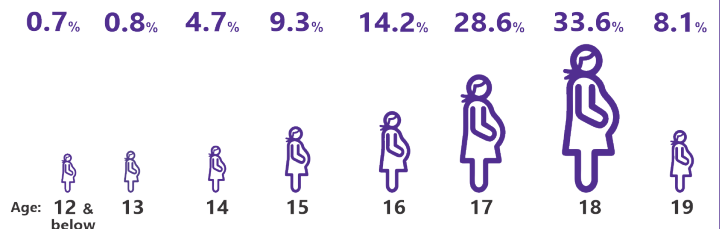
Children Born to Child Brides

Further analysis of number of children born to child brides reveals that 26.5% had given birth to one child, while 4.2% had given birth to two children and less than one percent (0.3%) had given birth to more than two children by the age of 19 years. Findings reveal that in 13 districts more than 30% of child brides have a child or more, with highest prevalence in Tapi, followed by Navasari and Valsad.

Districts with More than 30% Child Brides Becoming Teenage Mothers

Kutch 55.5%
Anand 49.4%
Porbandar 59.7%
Bharuch 52.7%
Surat 40.2%
Navsari 71.5%
Valsad 68.1%
Panchmahal 40.0%
Dahod 66.7%
Vadodara 41.2%
Narmada 50.0%
Tapi 88.6%
Dang 56.2%

Girl's Body Mass Index

It is also important to examine the health status of the girls who had early marriages. Analysis of Body Mass Index (BMI) shows that in 20 districts in Gujarat, more than 30% of girls married before 18 underweight. Some of these districts are Anand (79.2%), Ahmedabad (77.2%), Bharuch (60.5%), Vadodara (60%), and Dohad (59.8%).

Conclusion

- As per NFHS-4 (2015-16), 13.2% of the 15-19 years old girls are married before age of 18 years in Gujarat, with variations across districts.
- There are 13 districts in Gujarat that show higher prevalence of child marriage than the State average.
- Prevalence of child marriage amongst girls is found to be more common in rural areas than urban areas.
- Wealth index of the households is signifcantly related to child marriage amongst girls in Gujarat. Poorer the households, higher the chance of girls getting married early.

- Findings show that the completion rate of secondary schooling is considerably higher amongst unmarried girls aged 15-19 years.
- Child marriage leads to early pregnancy which may cause poor health status of both, mothers and children.

CHILD MARRIAGE AND TEENAGE PREGNANCY IN GUJARAT AT A GLANCE

In **16** districts, more than **80%** of the child marriages took place in rural areas.

The completion rate of secondary education amongst 15-19 years old girls who got married before legal age is **14.8%**. On the other hand, the completion rate is much higher at **47.3%** amongst those who remained unmarried in 15-19 age group.

In **20** districts of Gujarat, more than **30%** of the girls married before age 18 are found underweight.

Of the child brides, **31%** had already given birth; **26.4%** had one child and **4.5%** had two or more children by the age of 19 years.

YOUNG LIVES INDIA

This factsheet has been prepared by Young Lives India, New Delhi.

Photo Credit: Young Lives / Sarika