

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of two hands held palm-up. The right hand is heavily stained with bright red blood, with several large, irregular spots covering the palm and fingers. The left hand is clean. The hands are wearing black gloves with white fabric cuffs. The background is dark and out of focus.

## **INDIA CHILD MARRIAGE AND TEENAGE PREGNANCY**

Based on NFHS-4 (2015-16)



## Introduction

According to the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006, any girl married below 18 years of age and any boy married before 21 years, is considered “**child marriage**”, which is a cognizable offence. While child marriage has long term negative consequences for both boys and girls in terms of educational outcomes as well as transitions to the labour market and family formation, the adverse effect of child marriage on girls is grave. This includes early pregnancy, maternal and neonatal mortality, educational setbacks, lower employment prospects, exposure to violence and abuse, leading to negative physical and psychological outcomes. Besides the risk of early childbearing, many child brides have little agency within their marital households.

In India, child marriage has been declining slowly over time, but the number of girls and boys getting married before their respective legal ages remain large with 12.1 million child marriages reported by Census 2011. Causes of child marriage are complex and varied based on various customs and traditions across several contexts and is deeply rooted in existing socio-cultural norms with economic and regional factors playing a significant role in determining child marriages. While it is important to note that child marriage persists amongst boys, this factsheet draws upon NFHS-4 data (2015-16) related to prevalence of child marriage and teenage pregnancy amongst girls in the age group 15-19 years and 20-24 years in India.

## National Statistics

Unlike Census, which showed that at National level incidence of child marriage amongst girls aged 10<18 years was 4.5 per cent, National Family Health Survey - 4 (NFHS-4, 2015-6) data can only highlight prevalence of

child marriage as reported by girls in the age group of 15-19 years.

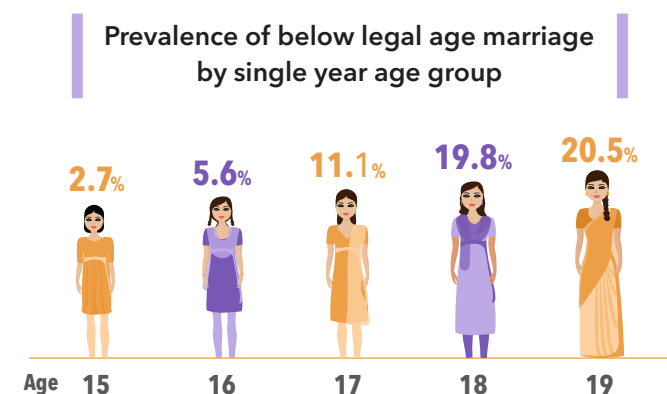
An overall comparison of prevalence of child marriage reported by 15-19 year old girls between NFHS-4 and NFHS-3 at national level shows that there is a considerable decrease in prevalence of child marriage since 2005-06.

## Country Level Findings

According to NFHS-4 data, it was found that prevalence of child marriage amongst 15-19 years old and 20-24 years old is 11.9% and 26.9% respectively for girls in India, highlighting a declining trend in child marriage.

The prevalence of Child Marriage in rural and urban India is 14.1% and 6.9% for the age group of 15-19 years and 31.7% and 17.6% respectively for rural and urban areas for the age group of 20-24 years.

The Prevalence of child marriage by single year age from 15 to 19 years is given below. Findings show that prevalence of child marriage is increasing as girls grow older and is highest at 19 (20.5%).



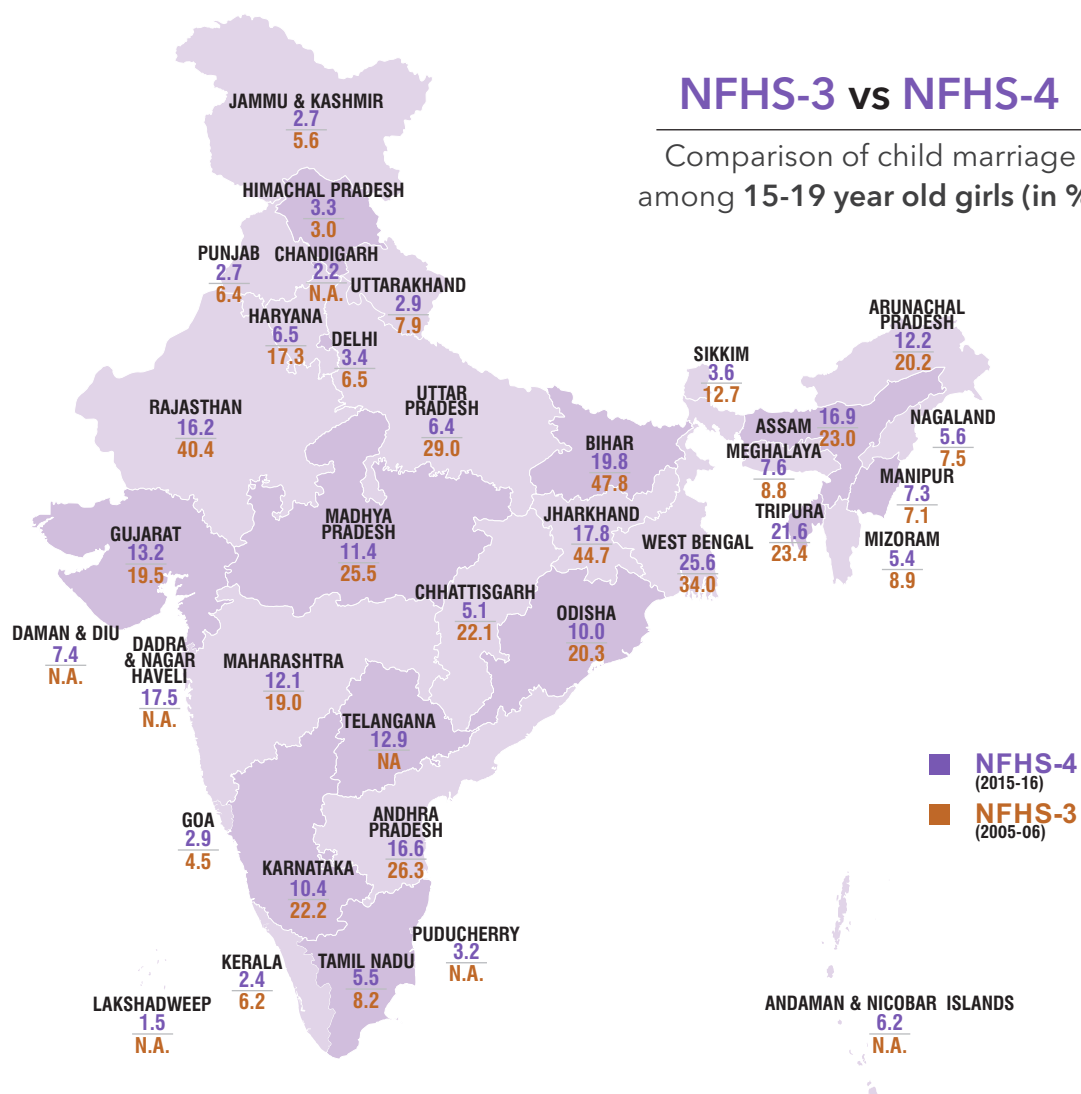
A comparison of below legal age marriage amongst girls aged between 15-19 years and 20-24 years by wealth index of the household shows that economic status of the households is negatively associated with the prevalence of child marriage across ages, though significantly more child marriages were reported amongst 20-24 year old women. It is observed that child marriage is more prevalent amongst women from bottom wealth tercile households for both age groups (16.6% and 41.3% respectively) and least prevalent amongst women from the top tercile households (5% and 12.5% respectively).

Wealth Index***	PREVALENCE OF CHILD MARRIAGE	
	Age 15-19	Age 20-24
Bottom Tercile	16.6	41.3
Middle Tercile	12.1	27.9
Top Tercile	5.0	12.5

Women's education***	PREVALENCE OF CHILD MARRIAGE	
	Age 15-19	Age 20-24
No Education	31.0	50.2
Primary Education	21.9	46.3
Secondary Education	10.2	28.4
Higher Education	2.4	3.9

Significance level: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Women's educational level is also found to be negatively associated with the prevalence of child marriage for both 15-19 years and 20-24 years age groups. Higher the level of education, lower is the chance of child marriage. For example, the prevalence of child marriage amongst women with no education amongst 15-19 years and 20-24 years age groups is 31% and 50.2% respectively. On the other hand, the prevalence of child marriage is substantially lower amongst women with higher education for both age groups (2.4% and 3.9% respectively).



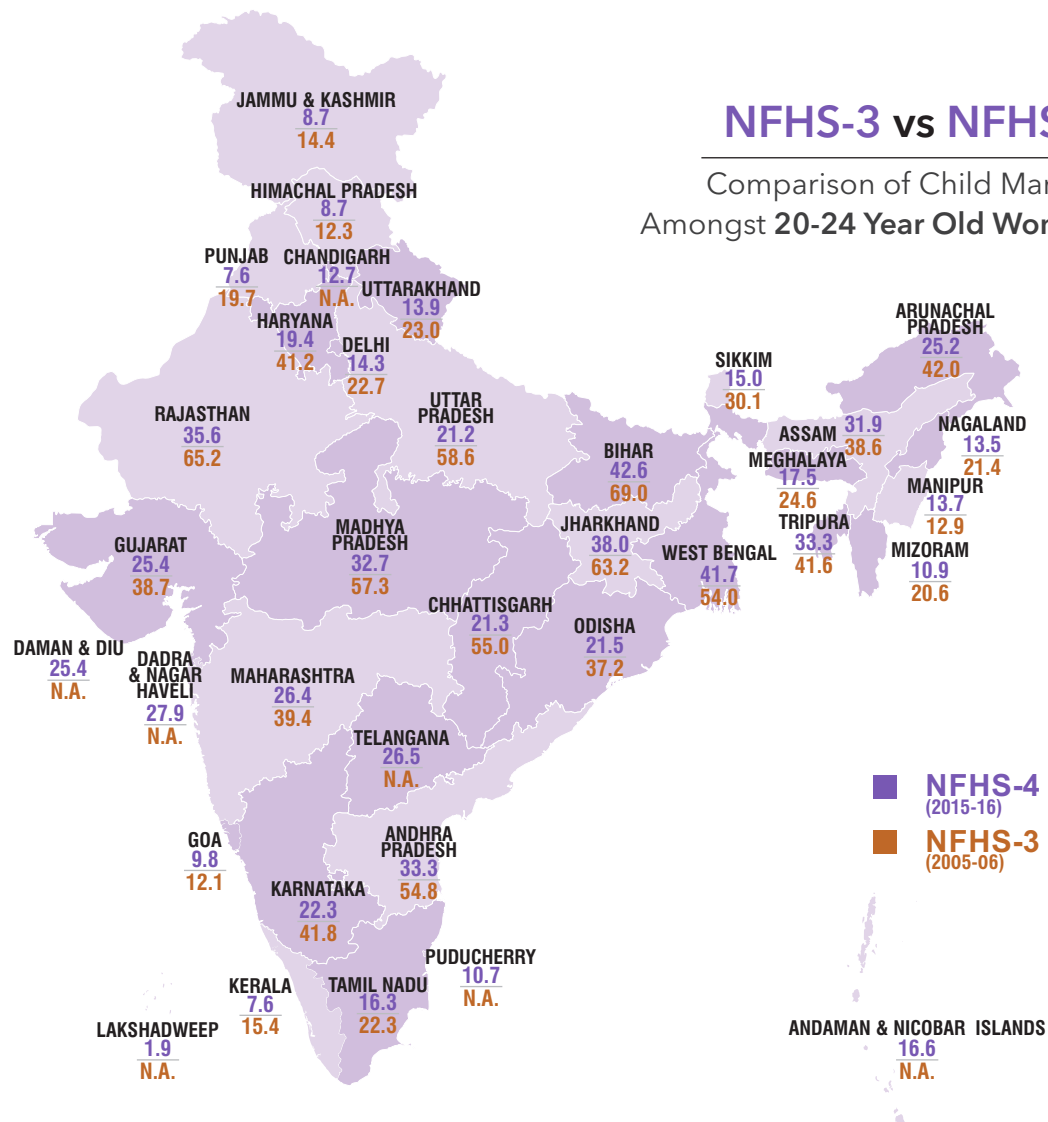
## Trend Analysis of Child Marriage Across NFHS-3 and NFHS-4

A comparative analysis of child marriage for 15-19 year old girls as reported in NFHS-3 (2005-06) and NFHS-4 (2015-16) reveals that overall prevalence of child marriage has reduced to a large extent in the last 10 years for a large number of States in India except marginal increase as observed in the States of Manipur and Himachal Pradesh. Substantial reduction of child marriage (more than 20 percentage points) is observed in the States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Similarly, a comparative analysis of child marriage as reported by 20-24 years old women between NFHS-3 (2005-06) and NFHS-4 (2015-16) reveals that overall prevalence has reduced for this age group in all States in India except Manipur which shows a marginal increase. More than 30 percentage points reduction of child marriage in this age group is observed in the States of

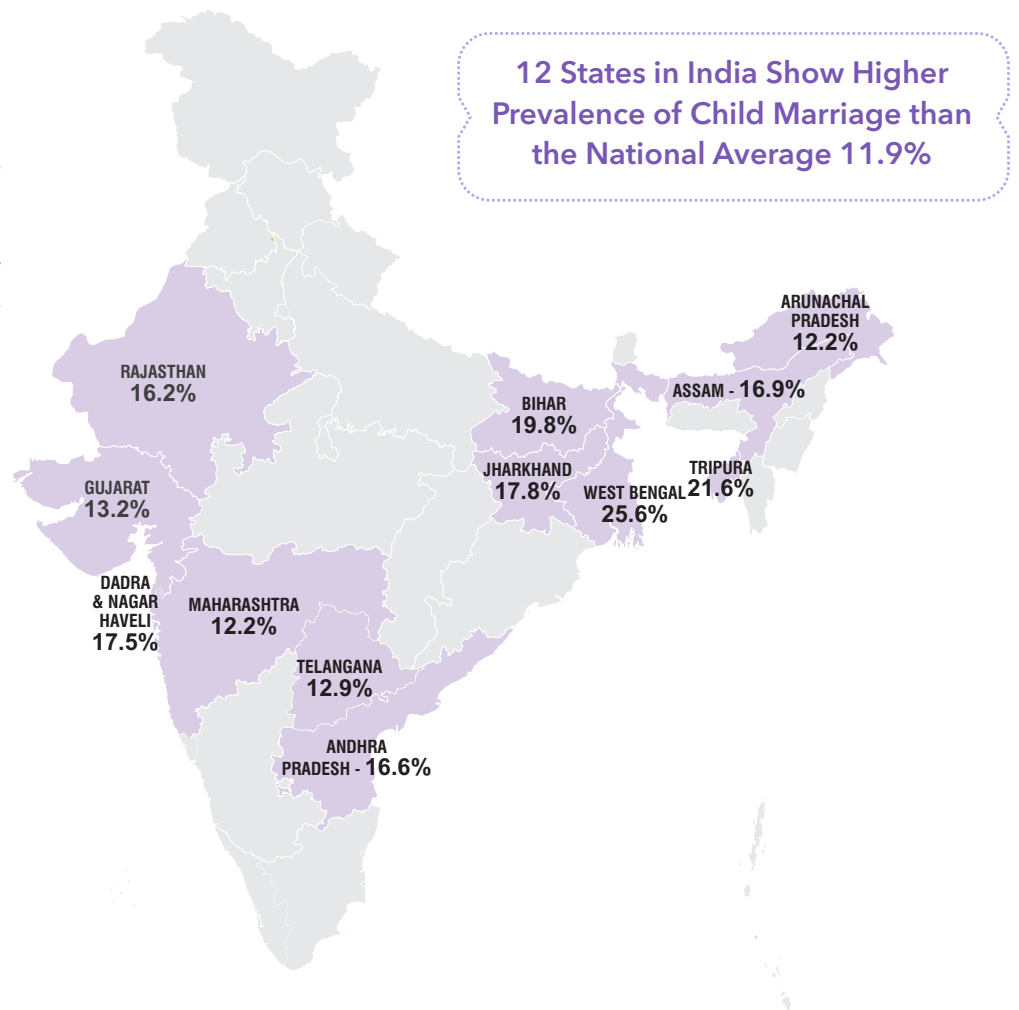


Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, whereas more than 20% points reduction is observed in States Bihar, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Haryana. The analysis clearly indicates a positive trend and gains from efforts being made by various States to prevent child marriage.



## State Level Analysis of Child Marriage

As mentioned before, overall 11.9 per cent of the 15-19 year old girls in India got married before the legal age. The prevalence of child marriage differs substantially across States. While twelve States in India show a higher prevalence of child marriage than the national average, other States have a relatively lower prevalence than the national average.






## Child Marriage is a Rural Phenomenon

At this juncture, it would be important to examine the factors that lead to early marriage in different States. Findings reveal that prevalence of girl child marriage in the age-group of 15-19 years is significant in rural areas. However, there are certain States including UTs which have large pockets of child marriage within urban areas. Some of these States are Haryana (41.2%), Tamil Nadu (36.5%), Maharashtra (33%) and Manipur (32%). The findings are particularly important because any campaign to prevent child marriage in India must focus on rural areas.

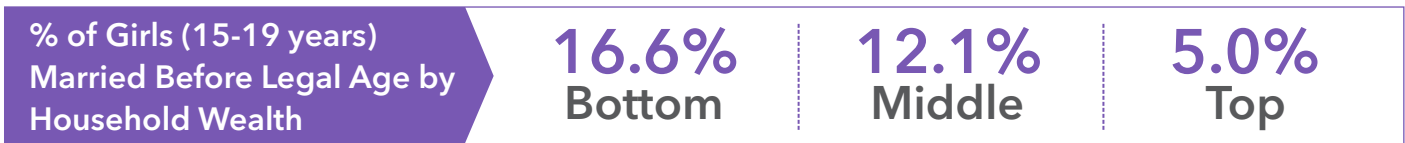
State	Age 15-19	
	Urban	Rural
Himachal Pradesh	1.3	98.7
Assam	6.6	93.4
Meghalaya	6.9	93.1
Bihar	8.6	91.4
Uttar Pradesh	8.9	91.1
Jammu and Kashmir	9.7	90.3
Rajasthan	10.6	89.4
Jharkhand	11.9	88.1
Madhya Pradesh	12.3	87.7
Odisha	13.9	86.1
Chhattisgarh	15.9	84.1
West Bengal	18.4	81.6
Nagaland	18.9	81.1
Andhra Pradesh	22.4	77.6
Tripura	24.6	75.4
Gujarat	25.5	74.5
Kerala	26.4	73.6
Sikkim	27.5	72.5

State	Age 15-19	
	Urban	Rural
Arunachal Pradesh	27.6	72.4
Karnataka	28.3	71.7
Telangana	30.0	70.0
Uttarakhand	30.1	69.9
Manipur	32.0	68.0
Punjab	32.1	67.9
Maharashtra	33.0	67.0
Tamil Nadu	36.5	63.5
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	39.9	60.1
Haryana	41.2	58.8
Lakshadweep	45.5	54.5
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	47.0	53.0
Mizoram	49.4	50.6
Puducherry	52.4	47.6
Goa	77.9	22.1
Daman and Diu	82.2	17.8
Delhi	96.9	3.1
Chandigarh	100.0	0.0



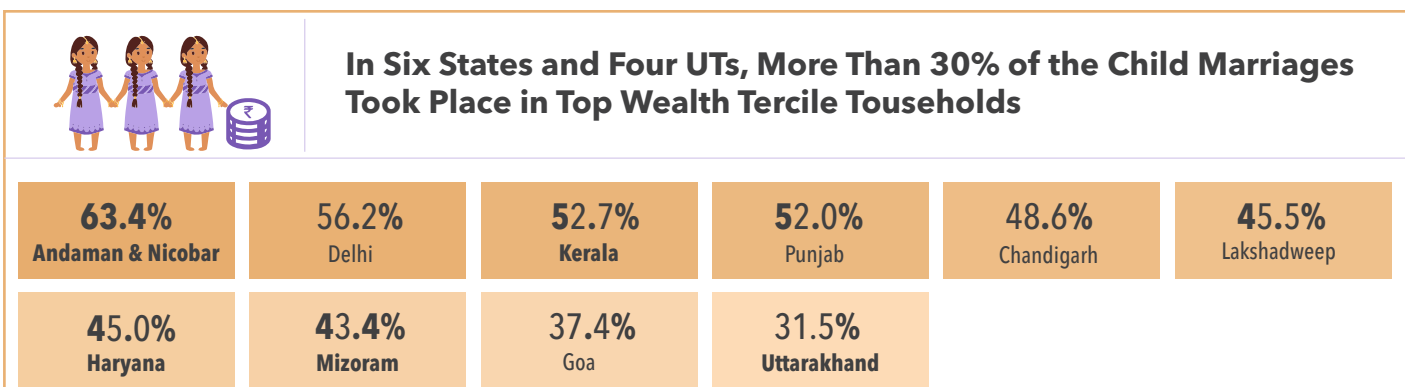
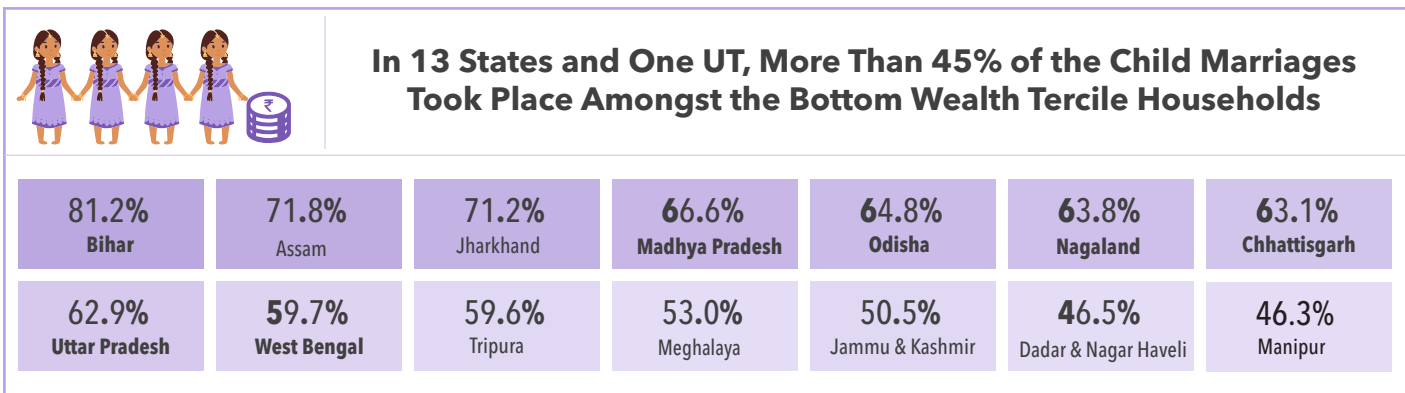
-  In 13 States, more than **80%** of child marriages took place in rural areas.
-  In 20 States, more than **70%** of child marriages took place in rural areas.
-  14 States report prevalence of more than **25%** child marriages in urban areas.

## Wealth Index



At the State level, the relationship between child marriage amongst girls and household wealth index<sup>1</sup> is also significantly strong. It is evident from the findings that a girl from a poor family is more likely to get married at a younger age than a girl from a wealthier family. The State level analysis also highlights that child marriage amongst girls is so entrenched in certain social groups that a substantial proportion of girls from middle and top wealth tercile households are also found to be married before age the legal age of 18.

### Four Out of Ten Child Marriages in 13 States and one UT Occur Amongst Poorest Households



<sup>1</sup>The wealth terciles are estimated based on the national level wealth index cut-offs to highlight the disparities between the States at the national level.

## Child Marriages by Caste Amongst Top 10 States with High Prevalence of Child Marriage

State	Scheduled Caste (SC)	Scheduled Tribe (ST)	Other Backward Caste (OBC)	Other Caste (OC)
Andhra Pradesh	22.4	7.0	57.6	13.0
Assam	12.2	14.7	27.5	45.6
Bihar	24.5	3.2	63.3	9.0
Gujarat	10.0	18.0	59.2	12.8
Maharashtra	19.8	23.0	18.8	38.4
Rajasthan	22.3	14.9	55.6	7.2
Tripura	23.7	40.6	24.7	11.0
West Bengal	40.0	10.8	12.8	36.4
Telangana	19.1	14.6	58.8	7.5
Arunachal Pradesh	7.2	72.6	6.2	14.0
<b>India</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>45.1</b>	<b>17.0</b>

Further analysis of NHFS-4 reveals that the highest prevalence of child marriage is reported amongst OBC girls (45.1%) followed by Scheduled Castes (24.9%). However, when we analysed child marriages amongst the top 10 States with highest prevalence of child marriage we find that this phenomenon is occurring across caste groups. For instance, in Arunachal Pradesh, 72.6% of the sample aged between 15-19 years who had

child marriages belong to Scheduled Tribes while 38.4% of the Other Castes girls in Maharashtra reported highest percentage of married girls before 18. Furthermore, while Bihar, Gujarat and Telangana report very high prevalence of child marriage amongst OBC girls, West Bengal has the highest prevalence of child marriage amongst SC girls.



## Secondary Education Completion Helps Reduce Child Marriage

Analysis of the State level data also reveals that similar to the national level (as shown before), there exist a correlation between early child marriage and the educational attainment of girls. We find that the completion of secondary education is found to be significant in delaying the age at marriage.

Findings show the completion rate of secondary schooling is considerably higher amongst unmarried girls aged 15-19 years in almost all States. Making secondary schooling a fundamental right and ensuring girls from poor households are provided safe learning environments as well as residential secondary schools for remote areas may be considered as necessary steps to prevent early marriage in Indian States. In India, the completion rate of secondary education amongst girls married before the legal age is only 28.6 per cent, compared to unmarried girls (52%).

State & UTs	Lowest Secondary Completion Rate by States Amongst Girls (15-19 years) Married Before the Legal Age	
	Married	Unmarried
Goa	0.0	63.2
Meghalaya	5.4	30.8
Nagaland	7.5	31.1
Sikkim	12.3	48.4
Madhya Pradesh	12.8	34.6
Assam	13.2	32.2
Gujarat	14.8	47.3
Manipur	16.4	35.0
Chattisgarh	18.5	40.5
Jammu & Kashmir	19.8	46.0

% of Girls (15-19 Years) Married Before Legal Age by Educational levels

**31.0%**  
No Education

**21.9%**  
Primary

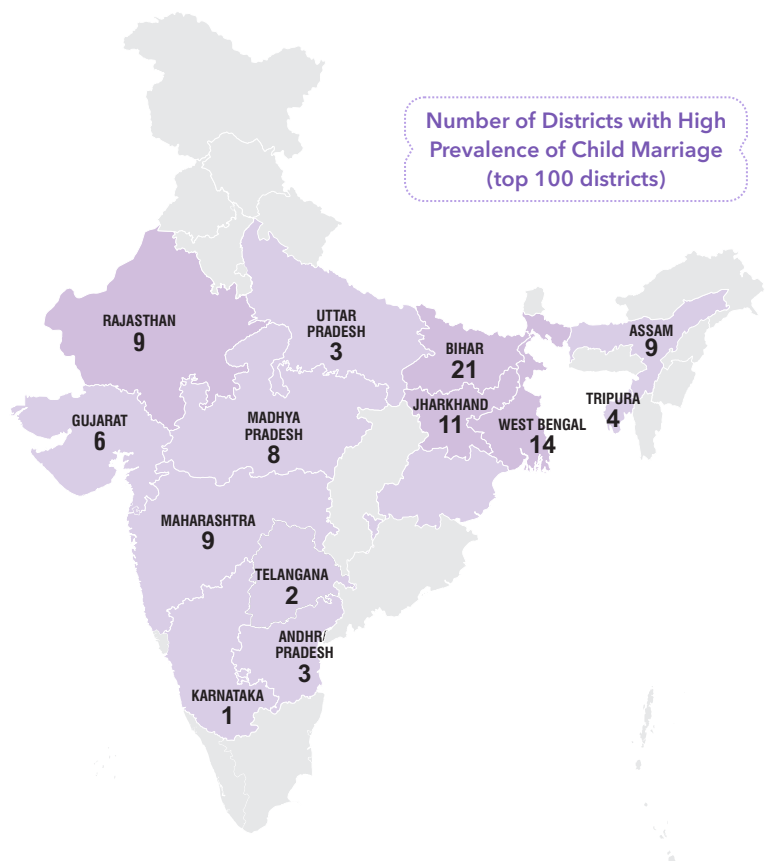
**10.2%**  
Secondary

**2.4%**  
Higher

## District Level Analysis of Child Marriage

District level analysis using NFHS-4 reveals that amongst all the districts in India, Murshibad (39.9%) in West Bengal shows the highest prevalence of child marriage amongst 15-19 years old, followed by Gandhinagar (39.3%) in Gujarat, Shrawasti (36.5%) in Uttar Pradesh, Bhilwara (36.3%) in Rajasthan, Birbhum (35.4%) in West Bengal, Goalpara (34.9%) in Assam, Khagaria (34.4%) in Bihar, Chittaurgarh (33.3%) in Rajasthan, Deoghar (32.7%) and Giridih (32.2%) in Jharkhand.

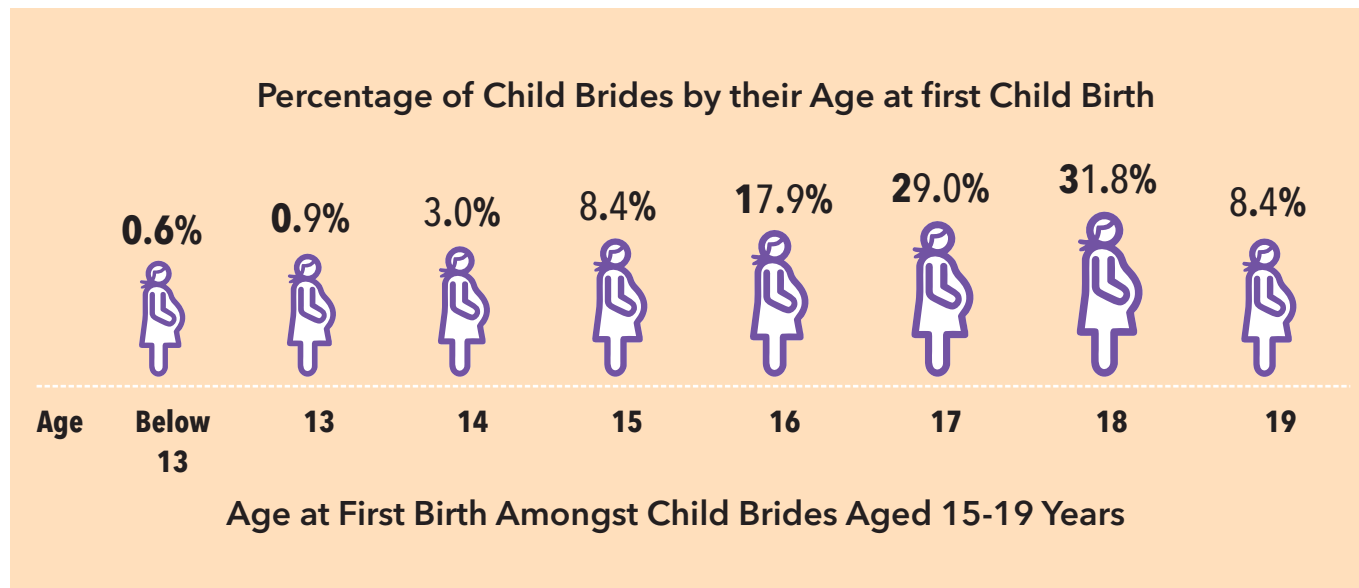
Analysis of top 100 districts based on the high prevalence of child marriage reveals that 13 States have these high prevalence districts. Bihar has the maximum number of districts with high prevalence (21), followed by West Bengal (14), Jharkhand (11), Rajasthan (9), Assam (9), Maharashtra (9), Madhya Pradesh (8), Gujarat (6), Tripura (4), Andhra Pradesh (3), Uttar Pradesh (3), Telangana (2) and Karnataka (1).





## Teenage Pregnancy

Since most child marriages results in teenage pregnancy due to societal pressure and lack of sexual and reproductive health knowledge, we analyse level of teenage pregnancy amongst 15-19 year olds. Analysis of NFHS-4 reveals that amongst child brides<sup>2</sup> aged 15 to 19 years in India, 39.4 percent of the sample girls in this age group are found to have babies. It is important to note that, almost 31% of child brides had given atleast one birth by the age of 16, whereas 29% had given first birth at the age of 17 years, and almost 32% had given first birth at the age of 18 years.

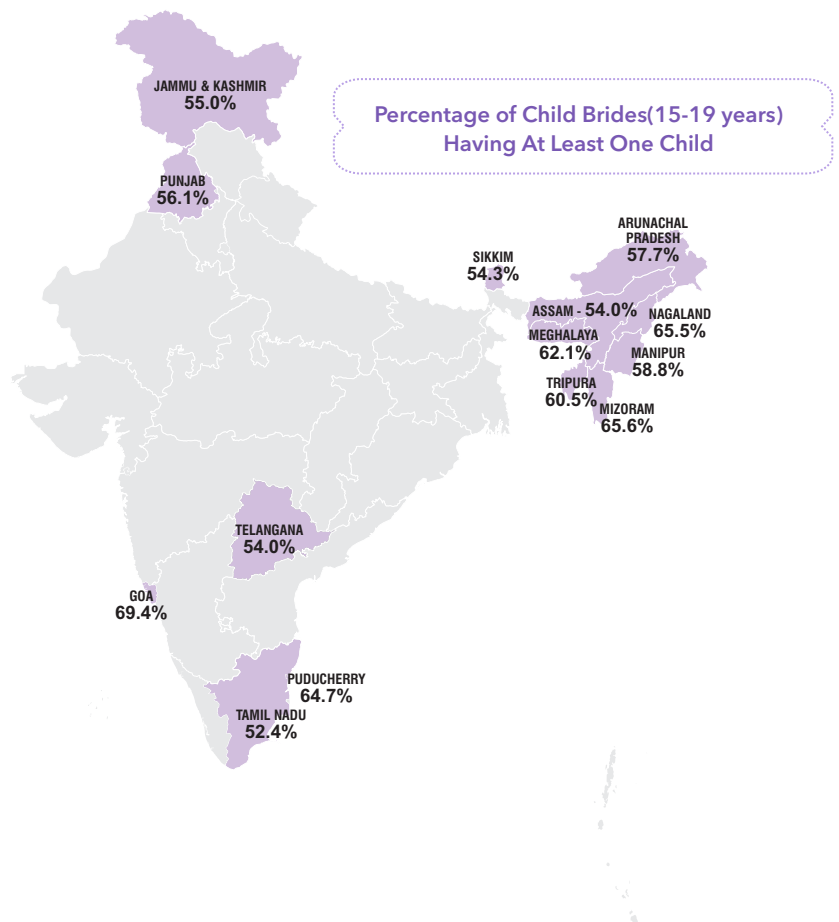


## More Than One Out of Three Child Brides Become Mothers

Further analysis of number of children born to child brides reveal that 33.8 percent have given birth to one child while 5.6 percent have 2 or more children.

The pattern of children ever born amongst child brides differ across States in India. Findings reveal that there are 14 States, where more than 50% of child brides have at least one child or more.

Interestingly, it was found that States such as Goa (69.4%), Mizoram (65.6%) and Nagaland (65.5%) have the highest prevalence of teenage pregnancy amongst child brides.



<sup>2</sup> Girls married before 18 years of age.

## Girls' Body Mass Index

It is also important to examine the health status of the girls who had early marriages because early marriage can result in poor nutritional status of teenage pregnant girls, which will in turn result in the birth of undernourished children. Analysis of Body Mass Index (BMI) shows that overall, 36.8% of married teenage girls (15-19 years) who had below legal age marriage are found to be underweight. State level analysis further indicates that prevalence of underweight amongst 15-19 year old married girls who had below legal age marriage are found higher in Dadra and Nagar Haveli (68.9%), Gujarat (52.4%), Rajasthan (44.8%), Daman and Diu (44%), Nagaland (41.6%), etc.

## Conclusion

As per NFHS-4 (2015-16), 11.9% of the 15-19 year old girls were married before age of 18 years in India, with variations across States. Substantial reduction of child marriage has been observed across states since 2005-06.

- There are 12 States and UTs in India that show higher prevalence of child marriage than the national average. These are West Bengal (25.6%), Tripura

(21.6%), Bihar (19.8%), Jharkhand (17.8%), Dadra and Nagar Haveli (17.5%), Assam (16.9%), Andhra Pradesh (16.6%), Rajasthan (16.2%), Gujarat (13.2%), Telangana (12.2%), Maharashtra (12.1%) and Arunachal Pradesh (12.2%).

- There are 100 districts located in 13 States that report the highest prevalence of child marriage across the country. These States are Bihar (21), West Bengal (14), Jharkhand (11), Rajasthan (9), Assam (9), Maharashtra (9), Madhya Pradesh (8), Gujarat (6), Tripura (4), Andhra Pradesh (3), Uttar Pradesh (3), Telangana (2) and Karnataka (1).
- Prevalence of girl child marriage is found more common in rural areas than urban areas.
- Wealth index of the households is significantly related to child marriage amongst girls in India. Poorer the households, higher the chance of girls getting married early.
- Completion of secondary education is much lower amongst girls married before the legal age than the unmarried girls amongst 15-19 age group.
- There are 14 States, where more than 50% of child brides have at least one child or more.

## Top 100 Districts with Highest Prevalence of Child Marriage

State	District	Prevalence of Child Marriage	State	District	Prevalence of Child Marriage	State	District	Prevalence of Child Marriage
West Bengal	Murshidabad	39.9	Bihar	Begusarai	27.2	Bihar	Banka	21.9
Gujarat	Gandhinagar	39.3	Jharkhand	Jamtara	27.2	Assam	Kokrajhar	21.6
Uttar Pradesh	Shrawasti	36.5	Gujarat	Patan	27.1	West Bengal	Uttar Dinajpur	21.6
Rajasthan	Bhilwara	36.3	West Bengal	Puruliya	27.0	West Bengal	Paschim Medinipur	21.4
West Bengal	Birbhum	35.4	Madhya Pradesh	Shajapur	26.7	Assam	Chirang	21.3
Assam	Goalpara	34.9	Uttar Pradesh	Bahraich	26.7	Rajasthan	Ajmer	21.1
Bihar	Khagaria	34.4	Bihar	Sheikhpura	26.3	Jharkhand	Saraikeela Kharsawan	21.1
Rajasthan	Chittaurgarh	33.3	Jharkhand	Garhwa	26.2	Bihar	Araria	20.9
Jharkhand	Deoghar	32.7	Madhya Pradesh	Rajgarh	26.1	Maharashtra	Osmanabad	20.9
Jharkhand	Giridih	32.2	Rajasthan	Rajsamand	26.0	Karnataka	Bagalkot	20.7
Assam	Dhubri	31.5	Bihar	Supaul	25.6	West Bengal	Bardhaman	20.7
Bihar	Jamui	31.5	Jharkhand	Dumka	25.4	Tripura	West Tripura	20.4
Jharkhand	Godda	31.4	Rajasthan	Sawai Madhopur	25.4	Andhra Pradesh	Krishna	20.3
Bihar	Gaya	31.4	Bihar	Samastipur	25.3	Bihar	Darbhanga	20.2
West Bengal	North Twenty Four Par	31.4	Madhya Pradesh	Mandsaur	25.3	Bihar	Vaishali	20.2
Maharashtra	Jalna	31.3	Bihar	Lakhisarai	25.2	Telangana	Khammam	20.1
Madhya Pradesh	Jhabua	31.2	Rajasthan	Bundi	25.1	Maharashtra	Bid	20.1
Gujarat	Kheda	30.9	Madhya Pradesh	Tikamgarh	25.0	Assam	Nagaon	19.9
West Bengal	Nadia	30.8	West Bengal	Hugli	25.0	Assam	Golaghat	19.8
West Bengal	Koch Bihar	30.7	Rajasthan	Tonk	24.9	Tripura	North Tripura	19.8
Bihar	Madhepura	29.7	Tripura	Dhalai	24.7	Andhra Pradesh	Prakasam	19.8
West Bengal	Maldah	29.7	Jharkhand	Kodarma	24.4	Madhya Pradesh	Shivpuri	19.7
Bihar	Purba Champaran	29.6	Bihar	Nalanda	24.4	Jharkhand	Chatra	19.6
West Bengal	South Twenty Four Par	29.5	Tripura	South Tripura	24.1	Jharkhand	Sahibganj	19.5
Bihar	Nawada	29.4	Bihar	Saharsa	24.1	Bihar	Madhubani	19.4
Gujarat	The Dangs	28.8	Gujarat	Banaskantha	24.2	Rajasthan	Alwar	19.4
Maharashtra	Solapur	28.8	Maharashtra	Ahmadnagar	24.0	Telangana	Nalgonda	19.3
West Bengal	Dakshin Dinajpur	28.8	Rajasthan	Karauli	23.5	Maharashtra	Latur	19.3
Jharkhand	Pakur	28.6	Maharashtra	Parbhani	23.3	Andhra Pradesh	Vizianagaram	19.3
West Bengal	Purba Medinipur	28.5	Uttar Pradesh	Siddharth Nagar	23.1	Madhya Pradesh	Ujjain	19.3
Maharashtra	Aurangabad	27.8	Bihar	Sheohar	22.8	Madhya Pradesh	Ratlam	19.1
Maharashtra	Hingoli	27.7	Assam	Morigaon	22.5	Gujarat	Anand	19.0
Bihar	Pashchim Champaran	27.3	Assam	Barpeta	22.2			
Assam	Bongaigaon	27.3	Bihar	Jehanabad	22.0			

# CHILD MARRIAGE IN INDIA AT A GLANCE



**There are 13 States in India, where more than 80% of child marriages in the age group of 15-19 years took place in rural areas whereas in 14 States, more that 25% of child marriages took place in urban areas.**



**Completion rate of secondary schooling is considerably higher amongst unmarried girls aged 15-19 years. 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 Indian States.**



**Analysis of top 100 districts based on the high prevalence of child marriage in the age group of 15-19 years reveals that in India, 13 States have these 100 high prevalence districts. Bihar has the maximum number of districts with high prevalence (21), followed by West Bengal (14), Jharkhand (11), Rajasthan (9), Assam (9), Maharashtra (9), Madhya Pradesh (8), Gujarat (6), Tripura (4), Andhra Pradesh (3), Uttar Pradesh (3), Telangana (2) and Karnataka (1).**



**Of all child brides aged 15 - 19 years, 33.8 percent have given birth to one child while 5.6 percent have two or more children.**

**The report has been prepared by Young Lives India in collaboration with National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), New Delhi India.**

**This report compliments the earlier publication of Young Lives and NCPCR entitled " A Statistical Analysis of Child Marriage in India - Based on Census 2011"**

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In collaboration with:



**Young Lives India**

47, Community Centre, Mezzanine Floor,  
Friends Colony, New Delhi 110 065

Email: [info@younglives.in](mailto:info@younglives.in)

Website: [www.younglives-india.org](http://www.younglives-india.org)