

TELANGANA CHILD MARRIAGE AND TEENAGE PREGNANCY

(AGE GROUP 15-19 YEARS)



F A C T S H E E T

Based on NFHS-4 (2015-16)

Introduction

In India, statistically the incidence of child marriage has been declining over time, but the number of girls and boys getting married before their respective legal age (18 years for girls and 21 years for boys) remains large with 12.1 million child marriages reported by Census of India, 2011 (“**Census 2011**”). The causes of child marriage are complex and varied, based on various customs and traditions across contexts, and remain rooted in existing socio-cultural norms.

Besides this, economic and regional factors play a significant role in determining the magnitude of child marriage. While Census 2011 allows us to investigate the incidence of child marriage, data from the National Family Health Survey 2015-16 (“**NFHS-4**”) highlights the prevalence¹ 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 Telangana using NFHS-4 data. This factsheet also examines factors related to child marriage and teenage pregnancy at the State and district level.

National Statistics

An overall comparison at the national level of the prevalence of 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, including Telangana, that show a higher prevalence of child marriage than the national average (11.9%). Furthermore, there are 13 States in India where more than 80% of the child marriages took place in rural areas (within their respective States).

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 the 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 the completion of secondary education is much lower amongst married teenage girls than unmarried girls in the age group of 15-19 years across all States. Analysis related to teenage pregnancy reveals that 39.4% of child brides² 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%).

“ Full time CMPOs need to be appointed in the States rather than other officials being given additional charge of enforcing the law against child marriage. ”

Young Lives, 2017



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.

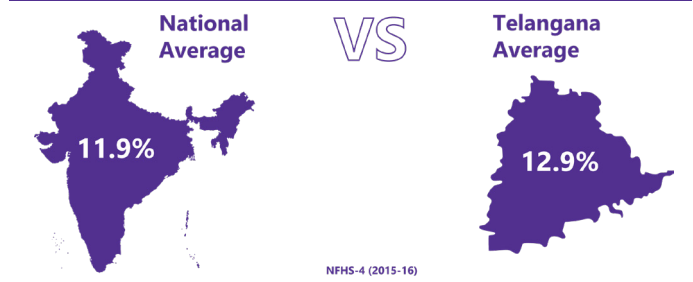
Telangana

Telangana is situated on the south-central stretch of the Indian peninsula on the high Deccan Plateau. It is surrounded by the States of Maharashtra to the north, Chhattisgarh to the east, Karnataka to the west, and Andhra Pradesh to the east and south. It is the 12th largest State in India in terms of both the area (1,12,077 km²) and the population size (35 million) in the country³. According to Census 2011, the literacy rate of Telangana is 66.54%. The literacy rates of males and females are 75.04% and 57.99% respectively⁴. The State ranks 22nd amongst all Indian States in the Human Development Index⁵.

According to NFHS-4, 50.5% of the households in Telangana have improved sanitation facilities and 77.9% have improved drinking water sources. Of the total population of Telangana, 7.9% is in the age group of 15-19 years, and the overall infant and under-five mortality rate as per NFHS-4 are 30 and 34 (per 1,000 live births), respectively⁶.

Telangana is amongst the top 12 States with a high prevalence

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

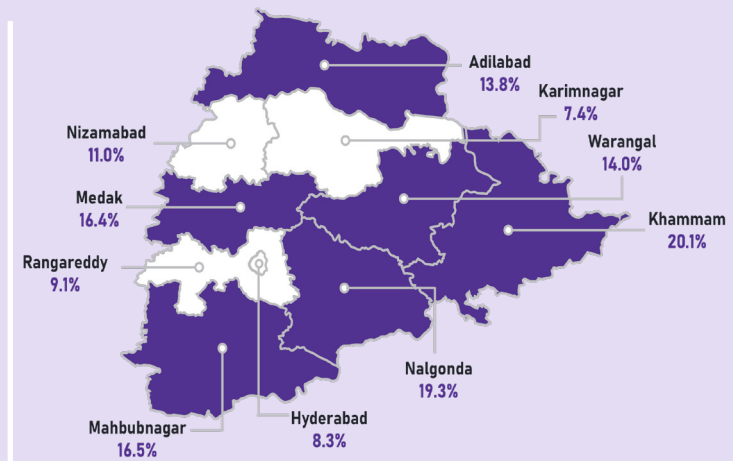
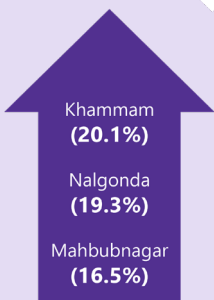


of child marriage amongst girls aged 15-19 years at 12.9% which is higher than the national average of 11.9%. Two of the 10 districts⁷ of Telangana, Khammam (20.1%), and Nalgonda (19.3%), feature in the list of top 100 districts with the highest prevalence of child marriage in India. While there are 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 Telangana.

Child Marriage (District Level Findings)

Data collected from 10 districts across Telangana suggests that the prevalence of child marriage differs substantially across districts. While six districts have a higher prevalence of child marriage amongst girls aged 15-19 years than the State average (12.9%), four districts fall below this average. The top three districts with the highest prevalence of child marriage in the 15-19 age group are Khammam (20.1%), Nalgonda (19.3%) and Mahbubnagar (16.5%), whereas lowest prevalence is found in Karimnagar (7.4%).

Top Three Districts with the Highest Prevalence of child marriages in the 15-19 age group

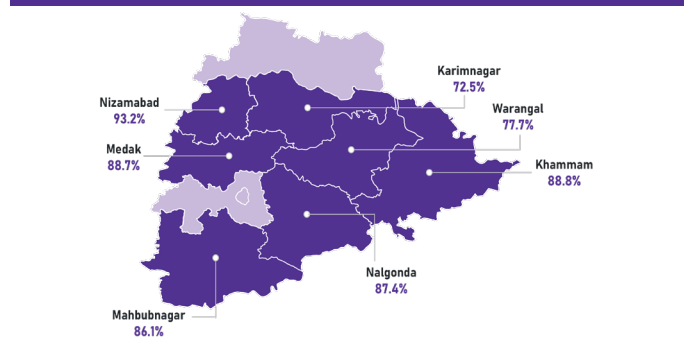


Six districts in Telangana Show higher prevalence of Child Marriage than the State Average of 12.9%

Location

Findings reveal that the prevalence of child marriage in the age-group of 15-19 years is significantly higher in rural areas (70%) of Telangana, except Rangareddy district where 61.6% of the child marriages took place in urban areas and Hyderabad district where all the child marriages took place in urban areas. These findings are important, since any intervention or campaign planned to prevent child marriage in Telangana must focus specifically on rural areas. Additionally, it must focus on the urban areas in the districts of Rangareddy and Hyderabad.

Districts in which more than 70% of the child marriages took place in rural areas



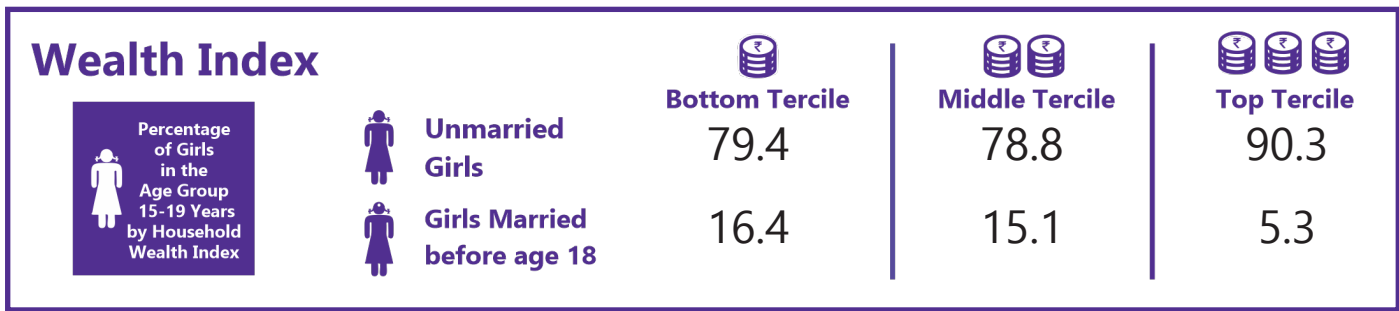
³ Directorate of Economics and Statistics. (2017). Statistical Year Book. Hyderabad: Government of Telangana.

⁴ Ibid

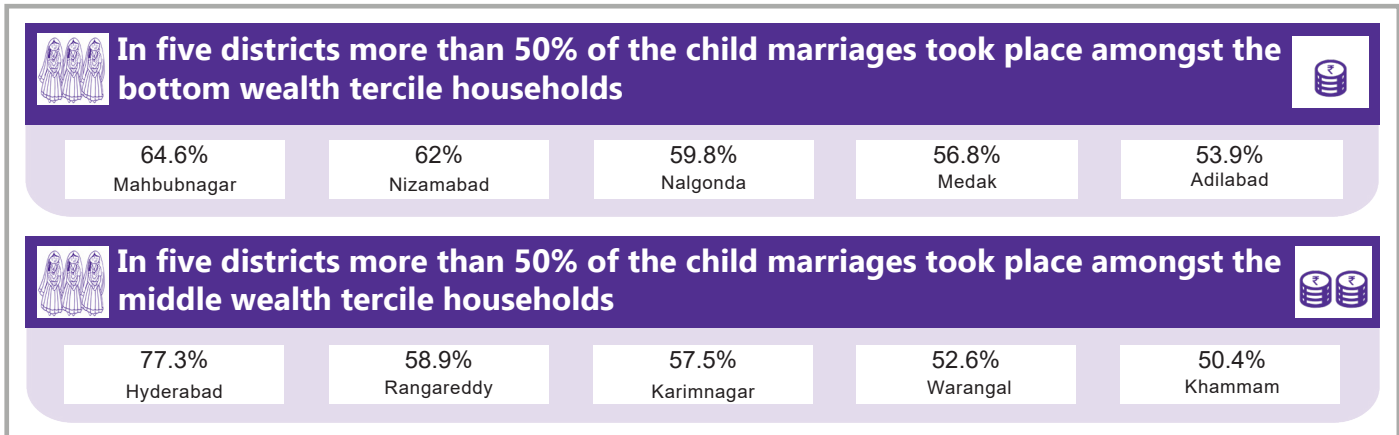
⁵ Radbound University. Subnational Human Development Index (4.0).

⁶ International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and ICF. (2018). National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4), India, 2015-16: Telangana. Mumbai: IIPS.

⁷ NFHS-4 captures information related to 640 districts as recorded by Census 2011. While NFHS-4 captured data from all the 10 districts of Telangana, the districts were further divided to presently stand at 33 districts across Telangana.



The relationship between child marriage amongst girls and household wealth index⁸ is significantly strong. It is evident from the findings that girls from the poorer households are more likely to get married at a younger age than girls from top wealth tercile households. At State level, 16.4% of the girls aged 15-19 years from bottom wealth tercile households are married as child brides compared to 15.1% girls from middle wealth tercile and 5.3% from top wealth tercile households.



These findings have immense policy implications, indicating that households across all wealth terciles must be addressed to reduce child marriage, with a special focus on poor and households income.



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, in general, the completion rate of secondary education is higher amongst unmarried girls (15-19 years) than married girls with an exception of four districts. For example, the secondary school completion rate amongst unmarried girls in the Hyderabad district is 66.1% while it is only 21.4% amongst girls married before the legal age. The same pattern is seen in

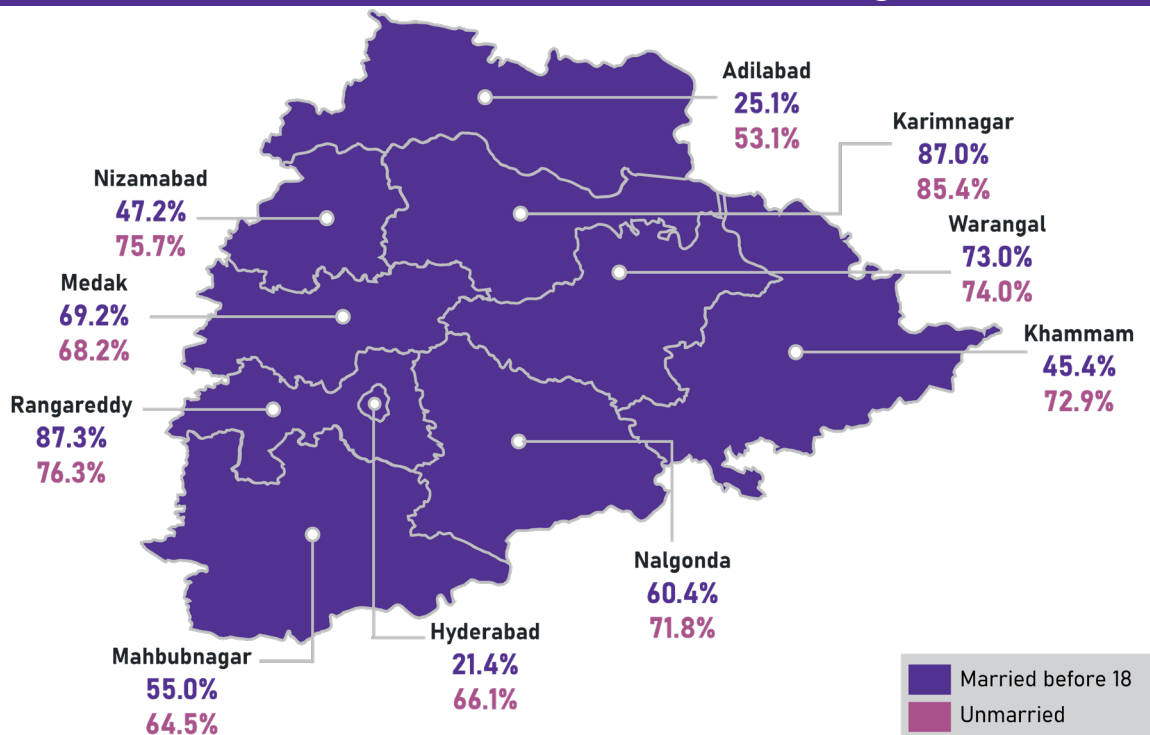
Adilabad district with 53.1% of unmarried girls completing secondary education compared to only 25.1% completion rate amongst girls married before the legal age. Interestingly, in Rangareddy district 87.3% of married teenage girls had completed their secondary education against the 76.3% of the unmarried teenage girls. A similar situation is seen in the districts of Karimnagar, Warangal, and Medak. Overall, in Telangana, the secondary school completion rate amongst unmarried girls in the age group of 15-19 years is 71.1%, while it is only 56.6% amongst girls married before the legal age.

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 child marriage in Telangana.

⁸ The wealth terciles are estimated based on the State level wealth index cut-offs to highlight the disparities within the State.



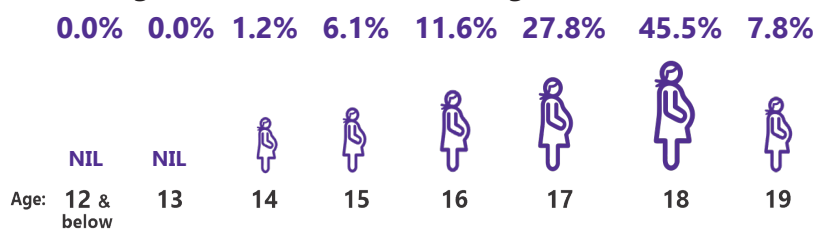
Completion of Secondary Education by Marital Status Among 15-19 Years Old Girls in Different Districts of Telangana



Pregnancy Amongst Child Brides

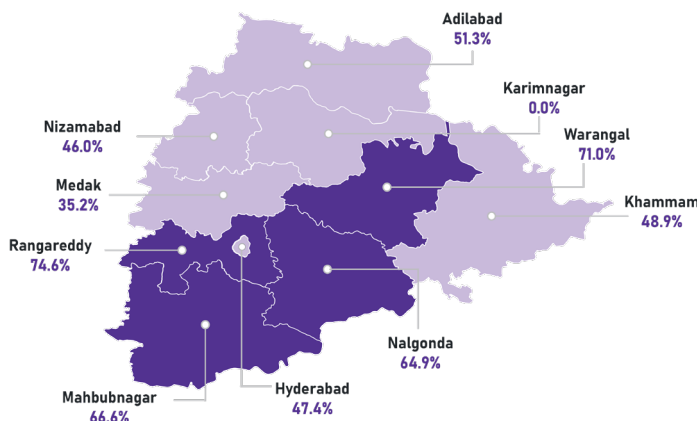
In the context of child marriage, it is important to study when child brides gave birth to their first child. Research in this area has revealed that child marriage is also associated with teenage pregnancy. Amongst girls married before the legal age in the age-group 15-19 years in Telangana, 54% of the sample girls are found to have given birth to at least one child, by the age of 19 years, according to NFHS-4.

Percentage of Child Brides and Age at First Child Birth



Children Born to Child Brides

Further analysis of the number of children born to child brides reveals that 43.6% of child brides had given birth to one child, while 10.4% had given birth to two children by the age of 19 years. Findings reveal that in nine districts, more than 35% of teenage married girls have one child or more, with the highest prevalence in Rangareddy (74.6%), followed by Warangal (71%) and Mahbubnagar (66.6%). It is relevant to note that none of the teenage married girls in Karimnagar had delivered a child.



Girls' Body Mass Index

Analysis of Body Mass Index (BMI) shows that more than one-third of the child brides (38.3%) in the age group of 15-19 years are underweight (below 18.5 kg/m²). There are four districts where underweight among child brides, in the age group of 15-19 years, is more than the State average. The highest prevalence of low BMI for girls married before the legal is found in Hyderabad (66.3%) while the lowest prevalence is found in Karimnagar district (15.3%).



Conclusion

- As per NFHS-4 (2015-16), 12.9% of the 15-19-year-old girls are married before the age of 18 years in Telangana, with variations across districts.
- There are six districts in Telangana that show a 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, with the exception of Rangareddy and Hyderabad districts in Telangana.
- Wealth index of the households is significantly related to child marriage amongst girls in Telangana. Poorer the households, higher the chance of girls getting married early.
- Findings show that, in general, the completion rate of secondary education is higher amongst unmarried girls aged 15-19 years.
- Child marriage leads to early pregnancy which may cause poor health status of both, mothers and the children.

CHILD MARRIAGE AND TEENAGE PREGNANCY IN TELANGANA AT A GLANCE



In **seven districts**, more than **70%** of the child marriages amongst girls took place in rural areas.



The completion rate of secondary education amongst girls (15-19 years) who got married before the legal age is **56.6%**, whereas, the completion rate is higher amongst unmarried girls, i.e. **71.1%**, of the same age group.



In **four districts**, the prevalence of underweight (based on BMI data) amongst girls married before the legal age is more than the State average.



Of the child brides, **54%** had already given birth; **43.6%** had one child and **10.4%** had two or more children by the age of 19 years.