

TRIPURA CHILD MARRIAGE AND TEENAGE PREGNANCY

(AGE GROUP 15-19 YEARS)



Based on NFHS-4 (2015-16)

Introduction

In India, child marriage has been declining slowly over time, but the number of girls and boys getting married before their respective legal ages (girls aged less than 18 and boys below 21 years) remains 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 various

contexts and is deeply rooted in existing socio-cultural norms. Besides this, economic and regional factors play a significant role in determining prevalence of child marriage. While Census 2011 allows us to investigate incidence of child marriage, National Family Health Survey data can only highlight prevalence rates of child marriage. Though we acknowledge that child marriage persists amongst both boys and girls, this report draws upon NFHS-4 data (2015-16) to analyse prevalence of child marriage and teenage pregnancy only amongst girls in the age group 15-19 in the state of Tripura. This report also examines some factors related to child marriage and teenage pregnancy in the state of Tripura as well as its districts.

Gendered social norms regulate women's roles in society, restrict their sexuality and agency, and determine the importance of certain attributes for marriageability

Young Lives 2016

National Statistics

An overall comparison in the prevalence rates 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 amongst 15-19-year olds, i.e., 11.9%, 14.1% and 6.9% respectively for overall, rural and urban areas. It is important to note that the prevalence of child marriage differs substantially across states. As per NFHS-4, there are 12 states in India including Tripura that shows higher prevalence of child marriage than the national average (11.9%). Furthermore, there are 13 states in India in which more than 80% of the child marriage took place in rural areas.

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 (5.4%). Similarly, women's 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 around 31.5% of married teenage girls aged 15-19 years, have given birth to at least one child with the highest prevalence in states of Goa, Mizoram and Meghalaya.



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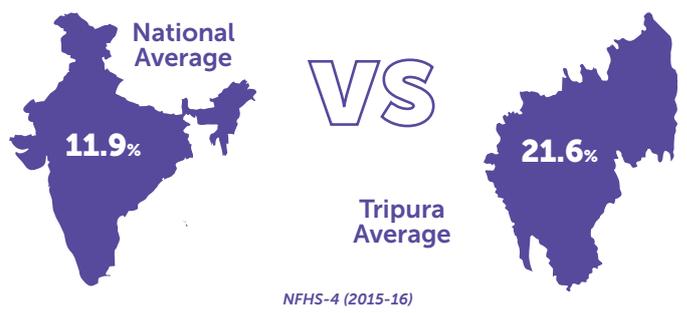
Tripura

Tripura is a state in North-East India. The third-smallest state in the country is bordered by Bangladesh to the north, south, and west, and the Indian states of Assam and Mizoram to the east. In 2011 the state had 3,671,032 residents, constituting 0.3% of the country's population. According to 2011 census, Tripura is one of the most literate states in India with a literacy rate of 87.8%. Tripura is an agrarian state with more than half of the population dependent on agriculture and allied activities. However, due to hilly terrain and forest cover, only 27 per cent of the land is available for cultivation.

According to NFHS-4, only 9% of households have piped water in their dwelling, yard or plot. One quarter of Tripura's population is under age 15 and the overall infant and under-five mortality rate for five-years preceding the NFHS-4 was 27 and 33 respectively (per 1,000 live births).

Tripura occupies the second position with respect to highest prevalence of child marriage amongst girls aged 15-19 years at 21.6%, which is significantly higher than

Higher Prevalence of Child Marriage among Girls aged 15-19 before the Legal Age

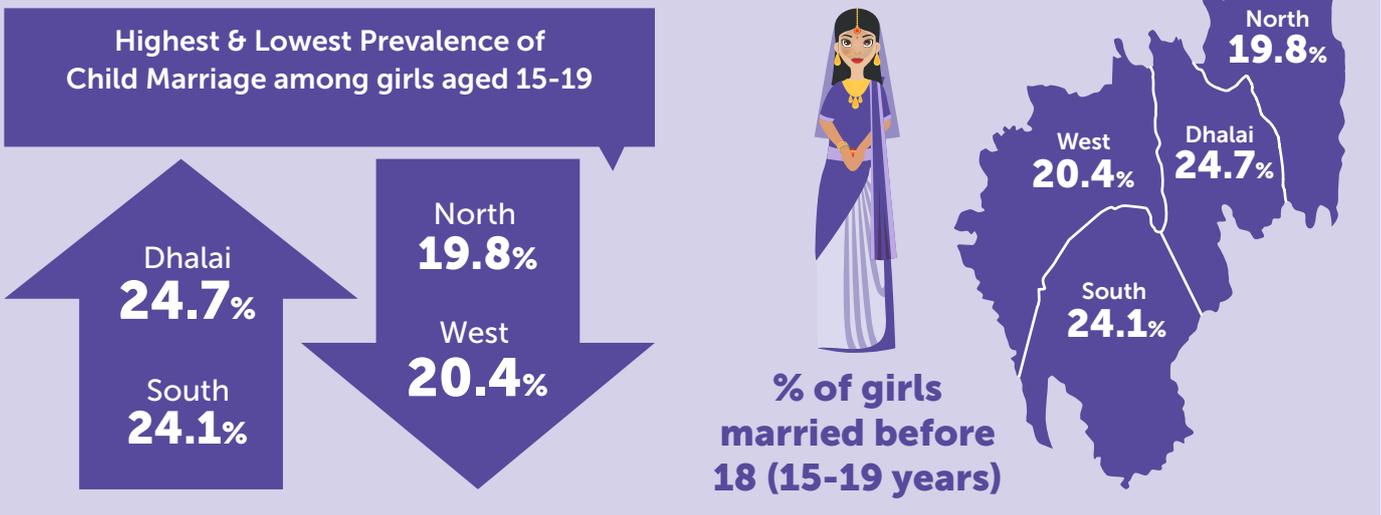


the national average of 11.9%. Young Lives also listed the top 100 districts with highest prevalence of child marriage in India, where all four surveyed districts were identified from the state of Tripura¹. While there is a plethora of reasons why large numbers of the young adolescents are married before the legal age, this factsheet does not examine causality and only examines the variation in child marriage prevalence across different subsets of young girls in Tripura.



Child Marriage in Tripura (District Level Findings)

Data collected from four districts across Tripura suggest that prevalence of child marriage differs substantially across districts. While two districts have a higher prevalence of child marriage among girls aged 15-19 than the state average (21.6%), two districts fall below this average. The districts with the highest prevalence of child marriage are Dhalai (24.7%), followed by South Tripura (24.1%) whereas the lowest prevalence is found in North Tripura (19.8%), followed by West Tripura (20.4%).



¹ Now Tripura has a total of eight districts

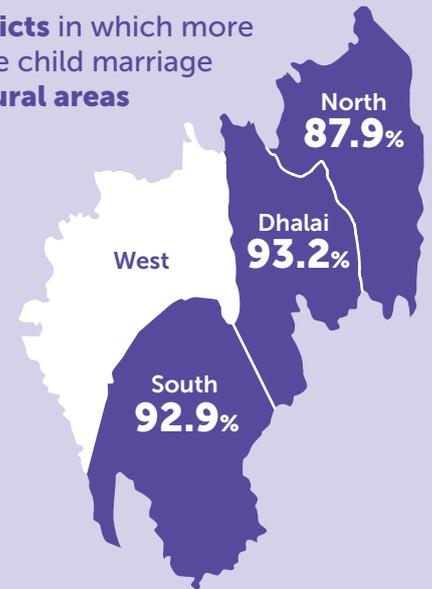
Location

Findings reveal that except for West Tripura, prevalence of child marriage in the age-group 15-19 is significantly higher in rural areas across all districts of Tripura. This finding is important, since any intervention or campaign planned to prevent child marriage in Tripura must focus on rural areas.

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3 out of 4 districts in which more than **80%** of the child marriage took place in **rural areas**



Wealth Index

Percentage of Girls aged 15-19 years by household wealth



Unmarried Girls

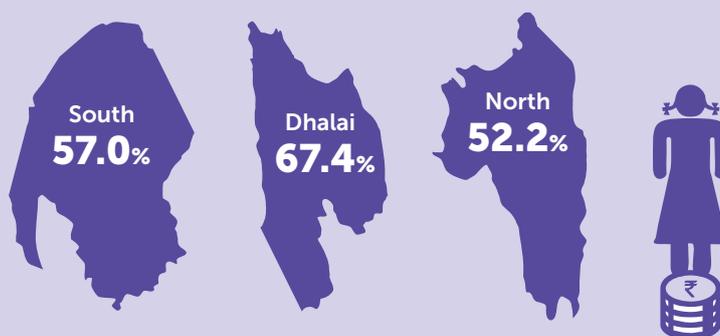


Girls Married before age 18

	Bottom Tercile	Middle Tercile	Top Tercile
Unmarried Girls	78.3	75.8	87.9
Girls Married before age 18	21.7	24.2	12.1

The relationship between girl child marriage and household wealth index is significantly strong. It is evident from the findings that girls from a poor and middle wealth tercile households are more likely to get married at a younger age than a girl from a top wealth tercile households. At state level, 21.7% and 24.2% of the girls aged 15-19 years from bottom and middle wealth tercile households were married as a child, compared to 12.1% of girls from top wealth tercile households.

In **3 districts** more than **50%** of the child marriages took place amongst the **bottom wealth tercile households**



In **1 district** more than **60%** of the child marriages took place in **middle wealth tercile households**



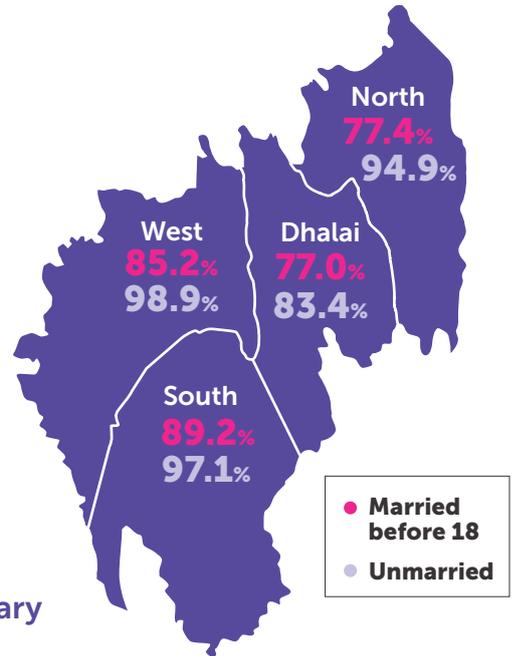
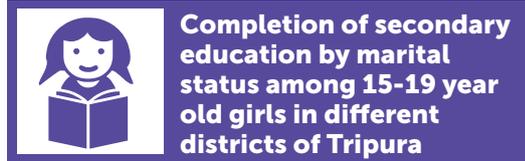
These findings have immense policy implications, given households across wealth terciles must be addressed in order to reduce child marriage.

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 early 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 schooling is considerably higher amongst unmarried girls aged 15-19 years across all districts. In North Tripura district, the secondary school completion rate amongst unmarried girls was 94.9% compared to girls married before 18 years of age (77.4%). The same pattern is seen in districts such as West Tripura with 98.9% of unmarried girls completing secondary education compared to only 85.2% completion rate amongst girls married before the legal age.

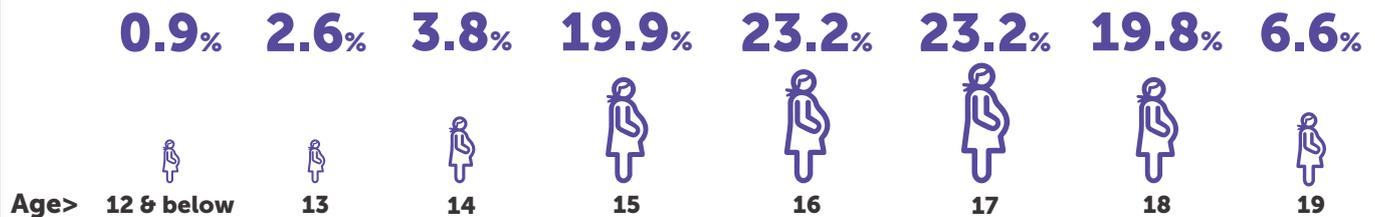
Making secondary school completion a fundamental right and ensuring girls from poor households are provided residential secondary schools may be considered as necessary steps to prevent early marriage in Tripura.



Teenage Pregnancy

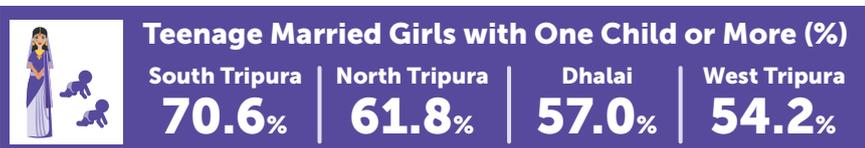
In the context of child marriage, it is always important to study when these young brides gave birth to their first child. Research in this area has revealed that child marriage is usually associated with teenage pregnancy. Amongst the married girls aged 15-19 years in Tripura, 52% of the sample girls in this age group are found to have given birth to at least one child, according to NFHS 4.

Percentage of Teenage Married Girls and Age at First Child Birth



Children Born to Teenage Mothers

Further analysis of number of children born to teenage mothers reveals that 52% percent of married teenage girls have given birth to one child while 45.6% of married girls had one child, 5.5% had 2 children and one percent had more than 2 children by the tender age of 19. The pattern of children ever born amongst teenage girls differ across different districts in Tripura. Findings reveal that there are 2 districts out of 4 districts where more than 60% of teenage married girls have a child or more with highest prevalence in South Tripura and North Tripura.



Girls' Body Mass Index

It is also important to examine the health status of girls who had early marriages, as 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 in 2 districts in Tripura, more than 20% of girls married before 18 are found to be underweight. These districts are North Tripura (33.1%) and South Tripura (22.9%).

CONCLUSION

- As per NFHS-4 (2015-16), 21.6% of the 15-19 years old girls were married before age of 18 years in Tripura, with variations across districts.
- There are 2 districts in Tripura that show higher prevalence of child marriage than the state average.
- 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 Tripura. 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 - the mothers and the children.



FINDINGS OF TRIPURA AT A GLANCE



In **3 districts**, more than **80%** of the total girl child marriages took place in rural areas.



The completion rate of secondary education amongst 15-19 years who got married before legal age was **83.8%**. On the other hand the completion rate was much higher—**96.0%** amongst those who remained unmarried in 15-19 group age.



In **2 districts** in Tripura, more than **20%** of girls married before age 18 are found to be underweight.



52% of married girls (15-19 years old) had already given birth, while **45.6%** of married girls had one child and **6.5%** had 2 children or more by the age of 19.

Funded by:



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