Assessment of the Knowledge and Attitude towards Early Marriage among Parents at Selected Rural Areas of Kolhapur District

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Abstract: *Background: Early marriage in India is a matter of serious concern. Child Marriage denies a child the basic right to good health, nutrition and education. It is widely acknowledged that early marriage makes girls more vulnerable to violence, abuse and exploitation. For both girls and boys, marriage has a strong physical, intellectual, psychological and emotional impact, cutting off educational opportunities and chances of personal growth. So it is more important to give the knowledge regarding early marriage to the parents. Methodology: The study was conducted in the selected rural areas of the Kolhapur district. The sample size taken for this study was 100 parents. Structured knowledge questionnaire and attitude scale was used to assess the knowledge and attitude of the parents towards early marriage. The data was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results: The result showed that majority of the subjects 86 (86%) had average knowledge and minimum 3 (3%) had poor knowledge and 11 (11%) had good knowledge. Regarding attitude, results showed that among parents majority of subjects had 87 (87%) Positive attitude score and minimum have 13 (13%) Negative attitude score. there was moderate positive correlation between knowledge score and attitude score towards early marriage. This showed that knowledge and attitude was correlated to each other. Conclusion: The present study revealed that majority of parents had average knowledge on early marriage and most of parents had positive attitude. Therefore, it was concluded that there is need to increase the knowledge regarding early marriage and negative attitude towards early marriage in some parents.*

Keywords: Parents; Knowledge; Attitude; Early Marriage

1. Introduction

Marriage is a social institution that unites people in a special form of mutual dependence for the purpose of founding and maintaining a family. Many societies have norms that limits the age of young girls to enter into marriage, but in some cases the age limit does not take into consideration their physical readiness for childbearing.[1]Early marriage, better known as child marriage is defined as marriage carried below the age of 18 years, before the girl is physically, physiologically and psychologically ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage and childbearing. Early marriage also means the individual becomes sexually active early, raising children while children themselves. The marriage of a young girl affects not only her life but that of the children she will bear.[2] According to the news report published in the leading newspapers of the world, each year there are around 80 million unwanted pregnancies, out of which 30 million of these are aborted. Early marriage of the teenagers is one of the main reasons for teenage pregnancies. Lack of proper sex education and counseling as well as poverty can be the major reasons as well[5]. Several states of India have introduced incentives to delay marriages. For example, the state of Haryana introduced the so - called Apni Beti, Apna Dhan program in 1994, which translates to "My daughter, My wealth". It is a conditional cash transfer program dedicated to delaying young marriages by providing a government paid bond in her name, payable to her parents, in the amount of 25, 000 (US$350), after her 18th birthday if she is not married.[3]

Mothers under the age of 18 have a 35% to 55% higher risk of delivering a preterm or low - birth - weight infant than mothers older than 19 years. The infant mortality rate is 60% higher when the mother is under the age of 18 years. Data demonstrate that even after surviving the first year, children younger than 5 years had a 28% higher mortality rate in the young mother's cohort.[4]Adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 years are twice as likely to die from complications in pregnancy as are women in their twenties. The youngest girls are particularly at risk; the mortality rate for those under 15 is four times higher than for those in their 20s.[5]

Early marriage is the most common problem in rural areas. Many physically and psychologically, socially consequences are faced by the girls, boys as well as their parents. If parents have proper knowledge and attitude about early marriage they can prevent causes of which lead to it. Therefore, this study was conducted to assess the knowledge and attitude of parents regarding early marriage so that it could enhance their knowledge and positive attitude.

2. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted after getting all the necessary permissions from the Institutional ethics committee as well as from gram panchayat of the Gud - mudshingi, Kolhapur district. Also, a written informed consent was obtained from the parents who participated in the study. A descriptive correlational design was adopted for the study. The sample size comprises of 100 parents residing in selected rural area of the Kolhapur district (Gud - mudshingi). To conduct the study two tools were prepared. **Tool I** was structured questionnaire which was used to assess the knowledge of parents regarding early marriage. It consisted of two parts, wherein the **Part I** included the demographic data such as age in years of mothers and age in year of fathers, religion, type of family, Mothers education, father's education,

occupation of fathers, monthly income in rupees, age at marriage of mothers, number of female child. Whereas, **Part II** consisted of structured knowledge questionnaire regarding early marriage. Totally the structured knowledge questionnaire consisted of 21 items and each of it are scored. Each correct answer was given a score of one and wrong answers score was zero. The total possible score of the structured knowledge questionnaire was 21. **Tool II** was the attitude scale developed for assessing the attitude of parents regarding early marriage. It had 20 items, out of which, 10 items were positive and 10 items were negative. Arbitrary classification on grading of attitude score was done as 'Strongly Agree', 'Agree', 'uncertain', 'Disagree', and 'Strongly Disagree'.

Reliability of the tool was assessed by administering the tool to 30 parents residing in selected rural area of the Kolhapur district. The reliability coefficient of rating scale and attitude scale was computed using split - half method and Karl Pearson Correlation co - efficient. The reliability was found to be 0.72 for the knowledge rating scale and 0.78 for the attitude scale. Hence, the tool was found to be reliable.
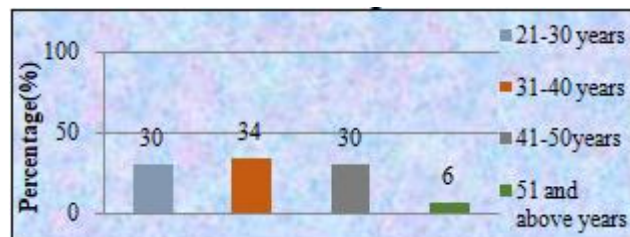
3. Results

Figure 1: Distribution of mother according to their age in year

Majority of mothers 34 (34%) belonged to the age group of 31 - 40 years.
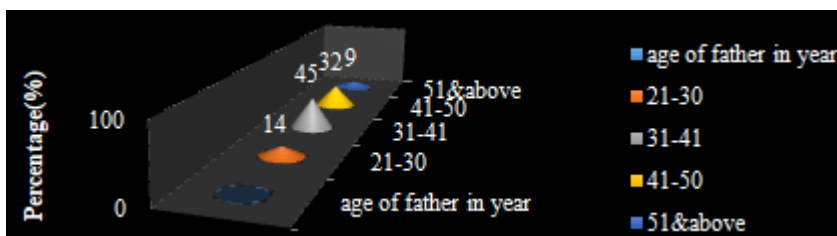

Figure 2: Distribution of fathers according to their age in year

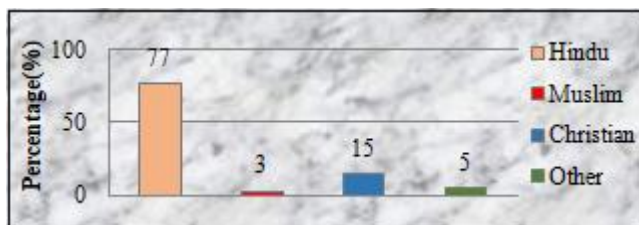Majority of fathers 45 (45%) belonged to the age group of 31 - 41 years.

Figure 3: Distribution of the subjects according to their religion

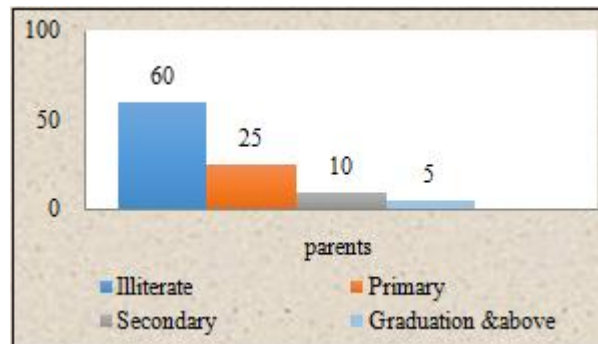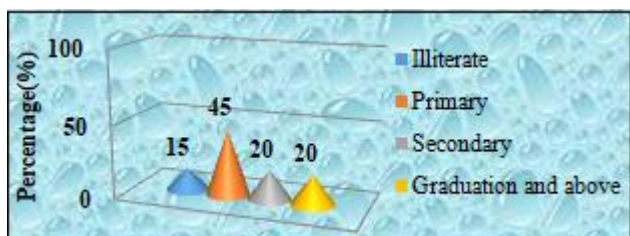Majority of subjects 77 (77%) belonged to the Hindu religion.

Figure 4: Distribution of fathers according to their type of education

Majority of fathers 45 (45%) had primary education.

Figure 5: Distribution of mothers according to their education

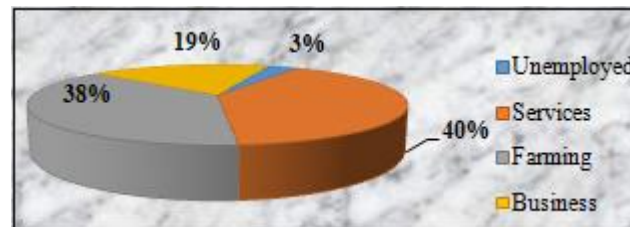Majority of mothers 60 (60%) were illiterate.

Figure 6: Distribution of fathers according to their occupation

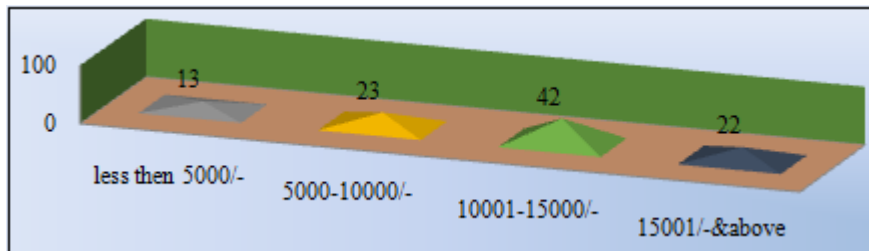Majority of fathers 40 (40%) were having service.38% did farming, 19% had business while the rest 3% were unemployed.

Figure 7: Distribution of the subjects according to the monthly family income in rupees

Majority of subjects 42 (42%) had monthly income of Rs.10, 000/ - 15000/ - , while 23% had income of Rs.5000/ - 10000/ - , 22% had monthly income of Rs.15001/ - and 13% had income less than Rs.5000/ - monthly.
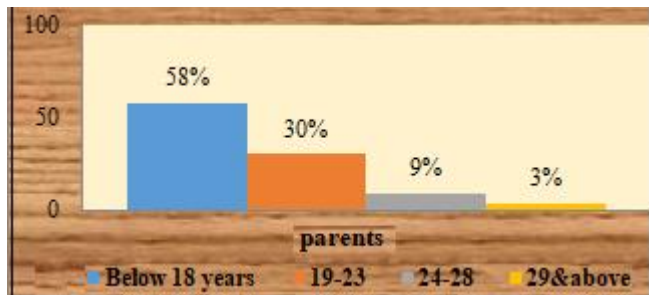

Figure 8: Distribution of mother according to their age at marriage

Majority of the mothers 58 (58%) were married below 18 years of age.30% of the mothers were married at the age of 19 - 23 years, 9% were married at the age of 24 - 28 years and 3% of them got married at the age of 29 and above.
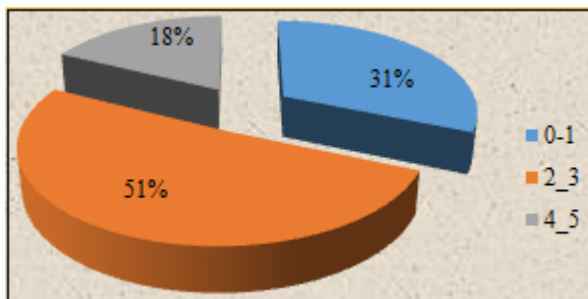

Figure 9: Distribution of the subjects according to their number of female child.

Majority of subjects 51% were having 2 - 3 female children, 31% had 0 - 1 female child whereas 18% had 4 - 5 female girl child.

Table 1: Findings related to frequency and percentage distribution of knowledge scores of subjects regarding early marriage, n=100

Knowledge score	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Poor (0 - 7)	3	3
Average (8 - 14)	86	86
Good (15 - 21)	11	11

The above table indicates that majority of the subjects 86 (86%) had average knowledge and minimum 3 (3%) had poor knowledge and 11 (11%) had good knowledge.

Table 2: Findings related to frequency and percentage distribution of attitude scores of subjects regarding early marriage,

Attitude score	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Positive attitude		
(61 - 100)	87	87
Negative attitude		
(20 - 60)	13	13

n=100

Table 2. indicates that majority of subjects had 87 (87%) positive attitude score and minimum have 13 (13%) negative attitude score.

Table 3: Findings related to Mean, Median, Mode, Range and Standard Deviation of knowledge scores of subjects regarding early marriage, n=100

Area of analysis	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard deviation	Range
Knowledge score	11.79	12	10	2.25	11

Table 3. indicates that, in knowledge score, Mean was 11.79, Median was 12 and Mode was10. Standard deviation was 2.25 Range was 11.

Table 4: Mean, Median, Mode, Range and Standard Deviation of attitude scores of subjects towards early marriage, n=100

Area of analysis Attitude score	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard deviation	Range
	69.35	69	69	7.08	31

Table 4. indicates that, in attitude score the Mean was 69.35, Mode was 69 and Median was 69, standard deviation was 7.08, Range was 31.

Table 5: Finding related to correlation between knowledge scores and attitude scores towards early marriage of subjects, n=100

	Karl Pearson Correlation Value	
Calculated value	Tabulated value	Df
0.821*	**0.152**	**98**

Table 5 indicates that, the calculated correlation value was (t_{cal}=0.821) greater than tabulated value (t_{tab}=o.152).

Karl Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation was used to find the correlation between the knowledge and attitude score of parents regarding early marriage. Therefore, the findings revealed that there was moderate positive correlation between knowledge score and attitude score towards early marriage. This showed that knowledge and attitude was correlated to each other. **Hence H₁ is accepted**. This indicated that there was a moderate positive correlation

between knowledge and attitude which was statistically significant at p<0.05 level, regarding early marriage.

4. Discussion

Association between knowledge scores towards early marriage among subjects with their selected socio - demographic variables.

In parents there was significant association between knowledge scores and selected socio demographic variables like age in years of mothers [$\chi 2$ cal= 5.526, $\chi 2$tab= 12.59], age in year of fathers [$\chi 2$cal= 6.404, $\chi 2$tab=12.59], religion [$\chi 2$cal= 6.517, $\chi 2$tab=12.59], education of fathers [$\chi 2$cal= 3.4857, $\chi 2$tab=12.59], education of mothers [$\chi 2$cal= 4.1456, $\chi 2$tab=12.59], occupation of fathers [$\chi 2$cal= 17.227*, $\chi 2$tab=12.59], monthly income of family [$\chi 2$cal= 4.446, $\chi 2$tab= 12.59], age at marriage of mothers [$\chi 2$cal= 3.881, $\chi 2$tab=12.59], total number of female children [$\chi 2$cal= 4.769, $\chi 2$tab=9.490] The calculated Chi - square values were greater than tabulated value at p < 0.05 level of significance. **Hence H_2 is accepted.**

Association between attitude scores towards early marriage among subjects with their selected socio-demographic variables.

There was significant association between attitude scores and selected socio demographic variables like age in years of mothers [$\chi 2$ cal= 2.114, $\chi 2$tab= 7.82], age in year of fathers [$\chi 2$cal= 2.406, $\chi 2$tab=7.82], religion [$\chi 2$cal= 2.249, $\chi 2$tab=7.82], education of fathers [$\chi 2$cal= 23.16*, $\chi 2$tab=7.82], education of mothers [$\chi 2$cal= 10.306*, $\chi 2$tab=7.82], occupation of fathers [$\chi 2$cal= 7.383, $\chi 2$tab=7.82], monthly income of family [$\chi 2$cal= 38.713*, $\chi 2$tab= 7.82], age at marriage of mothers [$\chi 2$cal= 19.333*, $\chi 2$tab=7.82], total number of female children [$\chi 2$cal= 5.051, $\chi 2$tab=5.99] The calculated Chi - square values were greater than tabulated value at p < 0.05 level of significance. **Hence H_3 is accepted**.

A descriptive study was conducted by Susheela Singh and Renee samara[6] to determine early marriage among women in developing countries. Data was obtained from 40 demographic and health surveys revealed that a substantial (The sample included 61) proportion of women in developing countries continue to marry as adolescents. The study findings revealed that: 20 - 50% of women marries or enters a union by age 18, and 40 - 70% does so by their 20th birthday. Early marriage most prevalent common in North Africa, middle east and southeast Asia. Women aged 20 - 24 are less likely to get married by age 20 than are women aged 40 - 44; the differential is at least 10 % points in most countries and reaches 30 - 40% points in some countries. Education and age at first marriage are strongly associated both at the individual level and at the societal level. Thus study concluded that a woman who has attended secondary school is considerably less likely to marry during adolescence, and in countries with a higher proportion of women with a secondary education, the proportion of women who marry as adolescents is lower.

Raising the level of awareness about negative outcomes of child marriage by intensifying the health education (IEC) activities should be done. In this modern society, the child marriages are following because of the customs and traditions followed in the community. Home deliveries are more which utmost leads to danger to the mother and child.

5. Conclusion

The present study revealed that majority of parents had average knowledge on early marriage and most of parents had positive attitude. Therefore, the revised conclusion now provides a more comprehensive summary of the findings and their implications, which enhances the overall contribution of the study to the field of knowledge and attitude of parents towards early marriage in the selected rural area of Kolhapur district.

6. Limitations

The study was limited to parents and to rural area of Kolhapur district. The study included only some of the selected socio - demographic variables such as age in years of mother and age in year of father, religion, type of family, Education of mother, Education of father, occupation of father, monthly income in rupees, ageat marriage of mother, number of female child.

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