

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ON THE PREVALENCE AND DETERMINANTS OF GIRLS CHILD MARRIAGE IN WEST BENGAL AND REST OF INDIA

PURNENDU MODAK¹

University of Calcutta, India
Purnendumodak8@gmail.com

Abstract

The present study aims to investigate the determinants of girl's child marriage in West Bengal and rest of India. The purpose of the study is to analyze various demographic, socio-economic, cultural and village level characteristics that are important in determining factor for child marriage in West Bengal and rest of India. The Binary logistic regression has been applied to analyze secondary data (DLHS-4) of 8509(125549) women in West Bengal (rest of India). In West Bengal, the Mean age at Marriage among women is lower than the other high prevalence state in India. In this study, I have shown, the largest drop in the prevalence of child marriage has been in the under-15 marriages, while marriages in the age group 15-17 years continue to occur quite common in a number of states in India (specially in West Bengal). As the present study shows, the Individual and household socioeconomic characteristics, such as place of residence, education, religion and caste are important in determining factor for child marriage (only females) in India as well as in West Bengal. Moreover, there is a greater tendency towards child marriage among rural women, irrespective of educational and wealth differences between rural and urban women in West Bengal and rest of India. However, wealth Quintile, village Infrastructure quintile and household BPL card (or not) are three crucial significant factor for child marriage in India, but not in West Bengal. Moreover, the girls with secondary and higher education had much lower chances of early marriage compared to illiterate ones. Thus, education and early marriage are closely linked. In this context, educational intervention (Balika Samridhi Yojana (1997)) and empowerment intervention (Kishori Sakti Yojana (2001)) by the Government of India and Kanyashree Prakalpa (girl's with secondary education, 2012) by the Government of West Bengal could be a good instrument to reduce the early age of marriage in India as well as in West Bengal.

Keywords: Child Marriage, Mean year of schooling, Village Infrastructure quintile, Wealth quintile

JEL classification: I10, I12, J15

¹ Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of Economics, University of Calcutta, India

1. INTRODUCTION

Marriage is an important institution for the Individual and the society at large. For the Individual, it is a significant and memorable event in one’s life cycle as well as the most important foundation in the family formation process. But, “Child Marriage is one of the most prevalent forms of sexual abuse and exploitation especially among the adolescent girls. It serves as a means of perpetuating power imbalances between men and women, both in the home and outside” (Ghosh, 2011, P.1). Child marriage has seriously affected Sustainable Development Goals and Millennium development Goals in under developed countries, including India. Within India, West Bengal is the most affected state in this regard Child marriage has five domains of impacts on adolescent girls: (i) fertility and population growth; (ii) health, nutrition, and violence; (iii) educational attainment; (iv) labor force participation, earnings, and productivity; and (v) decision-making and other areas. (Wodon et al, 2017).

According to the “Prohibition of Indian child marriage act 2006”, child marriage today is defined as one where the girls and boys who were married below the age of 18 and 21. The UNICEF’S (2008) report revealed that, India has the 12th highest rate of child marriage in the world. About 40 percent of the world’s child marriage occurs in India. Similarly, 47 percent of Indian women and 56 percent of rural women aged 20-24 year married below the age of 18.

Child Marriage is a serious problem in India. It is far more serious in West Bengal. A report of International Institute for Population Science (n.d) showed that the percentage of women aged 20-24 years married before the age of 18 years was highest (40.7 percent) in West Bengal. The districts of Bankura, Murshidabad, Paschim Medinipur, Bardhaman, Birbhum, Dakshin Dinajpur, Nadia and Purulia are areas with the highest incidence of child marriage in West Bengal.

Table 1: Percentage of Child Marriage in West Bengal and India

Prevalence of Child Marriage	Census 2011	DLHS-4 (2012- 13)	NFHS-4 (2015-16)
	Percentage of girls married less than 18 years (Ever- married women)	Currently Married women aged 20-24 years married before age of 18	Currently Married women aged 20-24 years married before age of 18
India	31.88	27.06	26.8
High Prevalence State in India			
West Bengal	43.04(2 nd Highest)	49.1 (Highest)	40.7 (Highest)

Source: (1) Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India for Census -2011 data,

(2) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India (2013) for DLHS-4(2012-13) data.

(3) International Institute for Population Science (IIPS). (n.d) for NFHS-4 Report

This paper is divided into six sections. The next section of the paper provides a brief discussion on the literature related to the reasons behind child marriage, The objectives of the study are spelled out in the following section. Section-4 of the paper discusses the data and methodology. Section-5 analyzes the results and discussion and .Finally, Section-6 provides a brief discussion on Conclusion, Policy Implication and Future Research Study

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Child marriage is one of the key factors which hinder economic development in many state in India. Within India, West Bengal is the most affected state in this regard. It makes a large section of women are vulnerable. Below we are representing some of the literature highlight the extent of reasons behind child Marriage among the adolescents girl's.

Poverty is one of the main determinants of early marriage. The poor parents think of girl's as an economic burden for families. They try to marry their daughters at an early age to reduce family expense and to minimize the cost of marriages (Nayan, 2015). Child marriage is still prevalent in India due to lack of education, enlightenment and awareness among the people (Nayan, 2015).The girl's with higher educational attainment will tend to postpone their marriage, in order to improve their chances of better economic livelihood and independence (ICRW, 2012).

In highly patriarchal societies, the husband's educational attainment is likely to matter as much as the wife's. Men from lower educational attainment have greater chances of having younger wives, who are performing more on traditional female roles. We, therefore, postulate that women with husbands with fewer years of schooling will have married earlier than are those with husbands with more years of schooling (Srinivasan et al, 2015).

In some religious communities tend to emphasize more on child marriage among females because of traditional customs that prevail in the communities. He further observed that, women from socio-economically underprivileged communities, namely Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), are more likely than those from other castes to marry at an early age because off cultural reasons (Srinivasan et al, 2015).

Researchers have shown that girl's who marry before 18 are more likely to be married to much older men. There is a strongly association between age gap and women's marriage at an early age (International Center for Research on Women, 2007), Age gap is regarded as a measure of equity between a woman and her partner. A smaller age gap indicates a higher status level for women (Amin and Cain, 1997).

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This paper is planned to attain the following objectives:

- 1) Using DLHS-4 unit level data, I have attempted to find the Prevalence and determinants of girls child marriage in West Bengal and rest of India.
- 2) To analyze the various demographic, socio-economic and cultural factors leading to girls child marriage in West Bengal and rest of India.
- 3) In this study we have tried to investigate if any relationship exist between the village Infrastructural development and prevalence of girls child marriage in West Bengal and rest of India.

4. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 DATA

In this study, DLHS-4 (2012-13) unit level data is used as our main data source. I have used unit level household data, ever married² women data and villages level data to identify the prevalence and determinants of girls child marriage in West Bengal and rest of India. I use DLHS-4 data as our main data source because this is the latest data and no other data source is available which gives information on the variable used in this paper. It's give information not only at the district level but also village level in India and West Bengal by which we can measure prevalence of child marriage in the village of West Bengal and rest of India. In Census-2011 and National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-4 data does not contain information on this variable.

4.2 METHODOLOGY

To get an idea about the determining factors behind the incidence of child marriage in West Bengal and rest of India. I have used a Logit model because my dependent variable is the dummy dependent variable which takes the value 1 if a woman had married below 18 and 0 otherwise. The age of marriage of a woman is given in the data for ever married women in the DLHS-4 data.

Three models of regression have been used to estimate the determinants of girls child marriage in West Bengal and rest of India. In the first Logit model to explain whether a girls marriage before eighteen or not is

$$P(y = 1 | x) = G(\alpha + \beta X + \mu H + \gamma Z) \quad (1)$$

² Ever- Married women are those persons who have been married at least once in their lives although their current marital status may not be “married”.

Where, P is the probability of a girl marrying before 18 and X is the vector of dummies for the woman's educational qualification (the educational dummies being primary, middle and higher education with illiterate as the reference category). Similarly, H is the vector of dummies for husband's educational qualification (the educational dummies being primary, middle and higher education with illiterate as the reference category). Another point Z is the vector of household Characteristics (Religion, locality, caste & wealth Quintile) and other women Characteristics (Age gap & occupation). β , μ , γ is the vectors of parameters associated with X, H and Z respectively and α is the intercept. The wealth quintile of a household is calculated from the data on household assets using Principal Component Analysis.

In the second model, the wealth quintile is substituted with some vital household characteristics like whether the household have a BPL card (or not), whether firewood is used as a fuel (or not), the structure of the house Pucca (or not), Source of Lighting, Types of Toilet and Drinking Water in the household. This is done to isolate, these very important characteristics which would go unnoticed if the wealth quintile is taken as a whole. The second model is thus specified as,

$$P(y = 1 | x) = G(\alpha + \beta X + \mu H + \gamma Z') \quad (2)$$

Where Z' is the new vector of household characteristics and rest are as in Model-2.

In the third model, we are incorporating village characteristics in addition to the educational dummies and household characteristics. The village characteristics are given in the village level data of the DLHS-4 and has been merged with the ever married women data to link every woman to the characteristics of her village. Thus the third model is written as:

$$P(y = 1 | x) = G(\alpha + \beta X + \mu H + \theta V + \gamma Z) \quad (3)$$

Here V is the vector of village Characteristics (i.e., village infrastructure quintile, Natural disaster, village with Mohila Mondal & SHG, Village with employment scheme and other scheme facility) and θ is the vectors of parameters associated with it. The rest of the variables are as described in Model-1. The village infrastructure quintile has been calculated from the village level data of the DLHS-4.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 RELATION BETWEEN CHILD MARRIAGE AND OTHER SOCIO ECONOMIC FACTORS IN WEST BENGAL AND REST OF INDIA

Needless to say, child marriage is a serious problem in India. It is far more serious in West Bengal. Here, I have examined the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of females such as place of residence, religion, caste,

and household wealth status as important variables to influence the age of marriage among women who are married below the age of 18. In **Table-2** shows the mean age at marriage of women (men) and percentage of women (men) getting married below the legal age at marriage in West Bengal and India. In India, the mean age at marriage for women is among the highest in Goa (25.3 years) and lowest in west Bengal (19.2 years). In DLHS-4 data, the mean age at first marriage among women varies widely across the states exhibiting a range of 6 years between Goa (25.3 years) and West Bengal (19.2 years). The highest proportion of marriage is below the legal age for women in West Bengal (31.6 percent). In West Bengal, the mean age at marriage for women is among the highest in Kolkata (23.4 years) and lowest in Murshidabad (18.3 years). The highest proportion of marriage is below the legal age for women in Bankura (40 percent). The poor performing districts in term of child marriage are Bankura (40 percent), Murshidabad (39.1 percent) and Paschim Medinipur (39.2 percent) and the relatively better performing ones are Kolkata (8.5 percent) and Darjeeling (10.2 percent).

Table 2: Mean Age at Marriage and Percentage of Marriages Below Legally Prescribed Minimum Age for Men and Women in West Bengal and India

Different State in India	DLHS-4 data		DLHS-4 data		Different District in West Bengal	DLHS-4 data		DLHS-4 data	
	Mean age at marriage		Percentage of marriages below legal age at marriage			Mean age at marriage		Percentage of marriages below legal age at marriage	
	Men	Women	Men less than 21 years	Women Less than 18 years		Men	women	Men less than 21 years	Women Less than 18 years
Andaman & Nicobar	24.9	21.1	3.8	7.8	Darjeeling	26.2	21.5	10.7	10.2
Andhra Pradesh	24.3	19.8	14.7	15.9	Jalpaiguri	26.8	21.4	8.8	16.9
Arunachal Pradesh	24.5	21.3	18.3	13	Koch Bihar	27	19.9	11.7	31.5
Chandigarh	25.3	22.5	11.5	1.9	Uttar Dinajpur	25.6	19.4	13.9	31.4
Goa	29.6	25.3	1.7	0	Dakshin Dinajpur	25.9	19.4	18.8	32.1
Haryana	23.8	20.8	17.3	5.9	Maldah	25.4	19.2	18	25.8
Himachal Pradesh	26.2	22.3	2.9	0.5	Murshidabad	24.4	18.3	24.6	39.1
Karnataka	26.4	20.5	7.2	14.1	Birbhum	23.9	18.5	25.7	35.2
Kerala	28.2	22.6	1	2.8	Bardhaman	25.4	18.7	15.1	34.3
Maharashtra	25.1	20.1	9.3	12	Nadia	26.2	19.3	10.5	31.2
Manipur	26.7	24	9.5	7	North 24 Parganas	26.5	19.8	13.4	29.7
Meghalaya	27.1	23.4	12.2	5.7	Hugli	26.9	19.7	7	25
Mizoram	26.1	23.1	13.5	6	Bankura	24.9	18.5	13.3	40
Nagaland	27.1	24.6	2.6	6	Puruliya	24.4	19.5	14	30.7

Puducherry	28.2	22.8	3.3	4.9	Paschim Medinipur	26.8	19.4	10.3	39.2
Punjab	24.6	21.9	11.7	3.9	Haora	26.7	20.3	11.5	20.6
Sikkim	24.6	22.8	15.5	8.3	Kolkata	28.3	23.4	6.5	8.5
Tamil Nadu	27	22	3.6	5.3	South 24 Parganas	24.4	19	21.3	29.1
Telangana	24	19.8	11.8	10.7	Purba Medinipur	25.9	19	13.6	26.5
Tripura	26.2	20.9	13.5	18.9					
West Bengal	25.4	19.2	15.8	31.6					
Rural Area	25.6	21.94	11.7 5	10.15	Rural Area	24.6	18.5	18.1	35.9
Urban Area	26.6	22.7	6.21	5.62	Urban Area	27.3	20.9	10.2	20.6

Source: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India (2013) for DLHS-4(2012-13) data

In order to map the improvement in the percentage of child marriage and also the progress made in reducing the proportion of those getting married below the legal age, a comparison that has been done between West Bengal and rest of India. **Table-3** shows, the largest drop in the prevalence of child marriage has been in the under-15 marriages, while marriages in the age group 15-17 year continue to occur quite common in West Bengal and rest of India. Here, we have seen that, Individual and household socioeconomic characteristics, such as place of residence, education, religion and caste are important in determining factor for child marriage in West Bengal and rest of India. In West Bengal, the percentage of child marriage among below 15 & 15-17 years age group has been found greater than the rest of India level. A higher proportion of girls from BPL families marry before 15 and 15-17 year age group in West Bengal and rest of India. In this tables, we can find, the West Bengal performing more worse off situation than the all other high prevalence state in India in term of marriage below eighteen in rural areas than the urban areas and also slightly higher among the Muslims than Hindus. A systematic drop in the percentage of child marriage among women can be observed as level of schooling rises. In West Bengal and rest of India, the percentage of child marriage is higher among the illiterate and primary educated women in below 15 & 15-17 year age group. The education level of the husband plays another important role in reducing the child marriage among women as level of schooling rises by husband. In case of rest of India, 9.45 and 27.78 percent of the women married before 15 and between 15-17 respectively had illiterate husbands, where as in west Bengal, 13.56 and 44.7 percent of the women married before 15 and between 15-17 respectively had primary-educated husband. A Wealth Index has been calculated from the household assets. We can see in case of West Bengal and rest of India, the percentage of child marriages is higher among the poorest household as compared to in richest household in below 15 & 15-17 year age group.

Table 3: Demographic and Socio-economic Characteristics of Women and Age of Marriage in Age Cohort 20- 24 Year in West Bengal & Rest of India

Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of women		Rest of India			West Bengal		
		Women Married			Women Married		
		Before 15 years	Between 15-17 year	Above 18 years	Before 15 years	Between 15-17 year	Above 18 years
Religion	Hindu	5.18	19.3	75.52	11.18	31.3	57.52
	Muslim	5.41	22.17	72.42	14.9	37.17	47.93
Caste	SC	5.28	20.5	74.22	11.32	41.13	47.55
	ST	5.39	22.22	72.39	10.22	37.98	51.8
	OBC	4.38	18.23	77.39	7.42	33.59	58.99
	OC	4.55	20.87	74.58	9.39	36.63	53.98
Type of locality	Rural	5.85	24.63	69.52	15.1	32.9	52
	urban	3.89	20.67	75.44	6.3	23.2	70.5
Highest education level of woman	Illiterate	10.11	29.09	60.8	17.33	42.13	40.54
	Primary	10.02	32.67	57.31	16.65	44.37	38.98
	Middle	5.57	29.45	64.98	7.74	42.56	49.7
	Secondary	2.91	22.03	75.06	3.25	32.92	63.83
	HS +	0.77	9.46	89.77	0.91	11.93	87.16
Highest education level of husband	Illiterate	9.45	27.78	62.77	10.13	38.12	51.75
	Primary	8.31	31.3	60.39	13.56	44.7	41.74
	Middle	5.51	26.73	67.76	8.92	39.43	51.65
	Secondary	3.24	22.07	74.69	4.03	38.08	57.89
	HS +	1.95	14.41	83.64	2.53	18.08	79.39
Having BPL card or Not	BPL	6.22	25.62	68.16	11.42	39.93	48.65
	APL	4.45	21.61	73.94	9.74	35.51	54.75
Wealth quintile index	Poorest	10.82	29.99	59.19	15.54	41.92	42.54
	Poor	7.91	26.24	65.85	13.3	39.05	47.65
	Middle	6.07	22.23	71.7	12.03	36.07	51.9
	Rich	4.01	18.46	77.53	7.89	28.52	63.59
	Richest	2.35	12.99	84.66	3.85	22.67	73.48

Source: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India (2013) for DLHS-4(2012-13) data, All figure are in percentage

Note: SC- Scheduled Caste, ST-Scheduled Tribe, OBC-Other Backward Class, OC- Other Caste, BPL-Below Poverty Line, APL-Above Poverty Line

It has been observed that child marriage has mostly occurred among the higher age gap category between husband and wife. Here I have tried to see whether such a pattern can be observed in the DLHS-4 data. I have examined the relationship between age gap and age of marriage among currently married women aged in different age cohort in West Bengal and rest of India. I have taken four categories of age gap: (i) when the age of the wife is greater than her

husband (in this case the age gap is less than zero) **(ii)** when the age of the husband is greater than her wife (in this case the age gap is zero to three year) **(iii)** when the age gap of the husband is much more greater than that of the wife (in this case the age gap is four to six year **(iv)** the age of the husband is far greater than that of the wife (in this case the age gap is more than seven years). It has been observed that the age gap is usually higher in case of child marriage women. Here I have tried to see whether such a pattern can be observed in the DLHS-4 data. From **Table 4**, I have shown the age gap has been declining over the years in India and West Bengal as the age gap was much higher in the age cohort above 40 years than in the age cohort 20- 24 years. Also, the age gap is higher for women married before eighteen in 4-6 years and above 7 years age group in both west Bengal and rest of India. It has been observed in West Bengal and rest of India, when age gap in marriage above 7 year, the percentage of child marriage has been found greater in urban area as compared to in rural area. In case of west Bengal, among different age cohort, the percentage of less than 18 year age gap (above 7 years) in marriage has been found greater than the rest of India. In West Bengal, among women above 40 years, more than 15 percent of those married before eighteen had an age gap over seven years. Though this gap has substantially decreased 12.25 percent in urban areas and 10 percent in rural areas in 20-24 age group. The gap is still slightly higher among those married below eighteen than those married above.

It has been observed in earlier research that child marriages are much more prevalent in backward areas. To examine this aspect, I have constructed a village infrastructure quintile through Principal Component analysis and divided the villages into five groups according to their infrastructure, Group-1 having the least infrastructure and Group-5 having the highest. In both West Bengal and the rest of India, we observe that proportion of below 15 and between 15 -17 marriages fall as the village infrastructure increases. In rest of India, 10.37 percent of women in the villages with least infrastructure marry before 15 and another 25.3 percent marry between 15-17 years. These figures are as low as 7.74 percent and 20.8 percent in the highest infrastructure villages. The same picture is observed in West Bengal, though the figures are much higher. In West Bengal, 20.81 percent of the women in the villages with least infrastructure marry before 15 and another 39.31 percent marry between 15-17 year. In the highest Infrastructure villages, the proportions are 14.23 percent and 29.14 percent respectively (**Table-5**).

Table 4: Age Gap and Age of Marriage Among Different Age Cohorts in West Bengal and Rest of India

Rest of India												
Age gap Category between Husband and wife	Percentage of currently married women aged 20-24 years				Percentage of currently married women aged 30-34 years				Percentage of currently married women aged above 40 years			
	Married less than 18year		Married more than 18year		Married less than 18year		Married more than 18year		Married less than 18year		Married more than 18 year	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
age gap less than zero	0.25	0.20	0.58	0.35	0.39	0.31	1.12	0.86	0.35	0.32	0.86	0.68
zero – three years age gap	6.67	5.42	8.6	7.85	5.49	4.68	7.82	7.65	4.47	3.85	6.45	6.22
four –six years age gap	8.7	8.06	8.2	7.75	8.60	8.08	6.97	7.15	8.45	7.65	6.6	6.62
above seven years age gap	9.6	11.25	7.5	9.02	10.51	11.91	9.02	9.3	11.6	13.12	11.1	11.44
Total	100				100				100			

West Bengal												
Age gap category between husband and wife	Percentage of currently married women aged 20-24 years				percentage of currently married women aged 30-34 years				percentage of currently married women aged above 40 years			
	Married less than 18 year		Married more than 18 year		Married less than 18 year		Married more than 18 year		Married less than 18 year		Married more than 18 year	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
age gap less than zero	0.22	0.08	0.49	0.21	0.29	0.07	0.46	0.27	0.24	0.11	0.37	0.22
zero – three years age gap	5.65	4.92	6.22	5.15	3.69	3.15	5	4.6	1.97	2.37	2.9	3.15
four –six years age gap	9.42	7.97	8.55	7.77	8.35	8.52	7.2	7.27	7.53	7.10	7.12	6.72
above seven years age gap	10	12.25	9.5	11.85	12.65	13.22	12.3	12.82	15.24	15.40	14.57	14.9
Total	100				100				100			

Source: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India (2013) for DLHS-4(2012-13) data, All figure are in percentage

Table 5: Percentage of Currently Married Women Aged 20-24 Years Married before the Age of 18 Years and Village Infrastructure Quintile in West Bengal and Rest of India

Rest of India		Married before 15 years	Married 15-17 years	Married at 18 year and above
Village Development and child Marriage Prevalence				
Village Infrastructure Quintile	1 (Least)	10.37	25.30	64.33
	2	9.85	24.46	65.69
	3	9.22	22.88	67.9
	4	9.01	21.65	69.34
	5 (Highest)	7.74	20.8	71.46
West Bengal				
Village Infrastructure Quintile	1 (Least)	20.81	39.31	39.88
	2	19.67	37.22	43.11
	3	17.81	36.26	45.93
	4	16.96	33.14	49.9
	5 (Highest)	14.23	29.12	56.65

Source: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India (2013) for DLHS-4(2012-13) data.

Education is a very important variable in determining the age of marriage among women. **Table 6** represents the rural (urban) classification of mean year of schooling in different social category and age group among female (married & unmarried) candidates in west Bengal and rest of India. In case of west Bengal, among female (married & unmarried) candidates, the mean year of schooling is lower than the rest of India in age group 12-17 and 18-23 years. In 12-17 age group, we have seen in case of West Bengal, the mean year of schooling for OBC is higher and for SC is lower among female (married & unmarried) candidates in rural as well as in urban areas. Similarly for rest of India, the mean year of schooling is higher for OBC and lower for ST, which implies that early marriage is more common among SC (ST) than OBC in West Bengal (rest of India) because mean year of schooling is lower among SC (ST). In West Bengal and rest of India among 12-17 age group, the mean year of schooling of the urban female (married & unmarried) candidates is higher than the rural female (married & unmarried) candidates. Similarly, mean year of schooling among urban unmarried female candidates is higher than the rural unmarried female candidates in all category and age group. Moreover, in 12-17 age group, among the married female (rural & urban) candidates, mean year of schooling is lower than the unmarried (rural & urban) female candidates in West Bengal and rest of India. So, we can conclude that, education is lower among the married female candidates. Moreover, early marriage is more common in rural area than in urban area because mean year of schooling is lower in rural area.

Table 6: Rural (Urban) Classification of Mean Year of Schooling in Different Social Category and Age Group Among Female (Married & Unmarried) Candidates in West Bengal and Rest of India

Rest of India																
FEMALE																
AGE	RURAL						URBAN									
	Married			Unmarried			Married			Unmarried						
	SC	ST	OBC	other	SC	ST	OBC	other	SC	ST	OBC	other	SC	ST	OBC	other
12-17	8.3 (2.5)	8.2 (2.3)	8.9 (2.3)	8.7 (2.5)	9.4 (2.1)	8.3 (2.2)	9.7 (1.8)	9.7 (1.8)	9.1 (2.2)	8.4 (2.9)	9.8 (2.3)	8.7 (2.5)	9.6 (2.2)	9.4 (1.9)	10.2 (1.7)	10.1 (1.85)
18-23	8.5 (3.3)	8.4 (3.4)	9.2 (3.5)	9.7 (3.4)	10.9 (3.1)	10.2 (3.2)	11.8 (3.1)	12.1 (2.6)	9.4 (3.5)	9.3 (3.4)	10.4 (3.4)	10.6 (3.5)	11.9 (3.1)	11.6 (2.8)	12.7 (2.9)	13.1 (2.6)

West Bengal																
FEMALE																
AGE	RURAL						URBAN									
	Married			Unmarried			Married			Unmarried						
	SC	ST	OBC	other	SC	ST	OBC	other	SC	ST	OBC	other	SC	ST	OBC	other
12-17	7.8 (2.2)	8 (2.9)	8.4 (2.4)	8.2 (2.2)	8.2 (1.8)	8.3 (2.3)	8.6 (1.9)	8.1 (2.1)	7.9 (1.9)	8.3 (4.1)	8.4 (2.4)	8.2 (2.3)	8.6 (2.1)	8.7 (1.6)	9.4 (1.7)	9.2 (2.1)
18-23	7.9 (2.9)	8.1 (3.1)	8.8 (3.2)	8.9 (3.1)	9.7 (3.4)	10.1 (3.5)	10.5 (3.8)	10.4 (3.2)	8.8 (3.3)	8.9 (3.8)	9.7 (3.4)	10.3 (3.2)	10.5 (3.4)	10.7 (3.5)	12 (3.2)	12.2 (3.1)

Source: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India (2013) for DLHS-4(2012-13) data
 Note: within bracket-SD & without bracket-Mean

In **Table 7** represents the rural (urban) classification of mean year of schooling in different religion category and age group among female (married & unmarried) candidates in west Bengal and rest of India. In case of west Bengal, among female (married & unmarried) candidates, the mean year of schooling is lower than the rest of India in age group 12-17 and 18-23 years. In West Bengal and rest of India among 12-17 age group, the mean year of schooling for Christian is higher and for Muslim is lower among female (married & unmarried) candidates in rural as well as in urban areas, which implies that early marriage is more common among Muslim than Christian because mean year of schooling is lower among Muslim. In West Bengal and rest of India among 12-17 age group, the mean year of schooling of the urban female (married & unmarried) candidates is higher than the rural female (married & unmarried) candidates. Similarly, mean year of schooling among urban unmarried female candidates is higher than the rural unmarried female candidates in all category and age group. Moreover, in 12-17 age group, among the married female (rural & urban) candidates, mean year of schooling is lower than the unmarried (rural & urban) female candidates in West Bengal and rest of India. So, we can conclude that, education is lower among the married female candidates. Moreover, early marriage is more common in rural area than in urban area because mean year of schooling is lower in rural area.

As girls are getting married early, they are compelled to stop their education and remain least qualified, therefore, it would be interesting to see whether the education gap between the husband and wife is greater among women who marry early. In **Tables 8**, I have analyzed the age gap and education gap among currently married women who were married below the legal age of eighteen. I have taken five categories of education gap: **(i)** when the education of the wife is much greater than her husband (the gap in mean years of schooling between husband and wife is greater than four years, in the table it is indicated as wife >> husband) **(ii)** when the education level of the wife is greater than her husband (the gap in the mean years of schooling between husband and wife is more than zero but less than four, in this table it is indicated as wife > husband) **(iii)** when there is no education gap between the husband and wife (in the table it is indicated as wife = husband) **(iv)** when the education of the husband is greater than that of the wife (the gap in the mean years of schooling between husband and wife is more than zero but less than four, in the table it is indicated husband > wife) **(v)** the education of the husband is far greater than that of the wife (in this case the gap in mean years of schooling between husband and wife is greater than four years, in the table it is indicated as husband >> wife). It has been observed that above 40 percent of the women married before the age of eighteen had an age gap of 7 years or above in both West Bengal and the rest of India. In India, 15.91 percent of the early marriages occurred among age group above 7 years and there was no education gap between the husband and wife, while in 14.82 percent cases, the husband was more educated than the wife and the age gap was more than seven years. West Bengal shows a very similar trend and the proportions are 17.75 and 13.68 percent respectively.

Table 7: Rural (Urban) Classification of Mean Year of Schooling in Different Religion Category and Age Group Among Female (Married & Unmarried) Candidates in West Bengal and Rest of India

Rest of India																
FEMALE																
AGE	RURAL					URBAN										
	Married		Unmarried			Married		Unmarried								
	H	M	C	O	H	M	C	O	H	M	C	O				
12-17	9.4 (2.4)	8.8 (2.5)	9.5 (2.8)	9.4 (1.8)	10.1 (1.9)	9.6 (2.2)	10.4 (2.1)	9.6 (2.2)	10.2 (2.4)	9.9 (2.6)	10.4 (2.2)	10.3 (2.3)	10.8 (1.7)	10.4 (2.1)	10.9 (1.8)	10.4 (2.4)
	9.5 (3.3)	9.1 (3.2)	9.7 (3.4)	9.5 (3.1)	11.9 (2.9)	11.2 (3.3)	12.3 (3.1)	11.6 (2.9)	10.7 (3.5)	10.3 (3.1)	10.9 (3.3)	11.7 (3.5)	13.1 (2.8)	12.1 (3.1)	13.2 (2.7)	12.8 (2.5)
West Bengal																
FEMALE																
AGE	RURAL					URBAN										
	Married		Unmarried			Married		Unmarried								
	H	M	C	O	H	M	C	O	H	M	C	O				
12-17	9 (2.3)	7.2 (2.5)	9.4 (2.5)	9.3 (2.4)	9.6 (2.1)	8.5 (2.5)	9.7 (2.3)	9.6 (1.2)	9.2 (2.1)	8.4 (2.7)	9.5 (2.4)	9.4 (2.3)	9.8 (1.2)	9.6 (2.2)	10.4 (2.3)	10.1 (2.4)
	9.4 (3.2)	7.5 (2.9)	9.5 (3.1)	9.4 (2.9)	11.1 (3.5)	9.4 (3.5)	11.4 (3.7)	11.2 (1.8)	9.3 (3.2)	8.6 (3.3)	9.7 (3.5)	9.6 (2.8)	11.8 (3.3)	11.5 (3.4)	12.7 (2.9)	12.5 (1.9)

Source: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India (2013) for DLHS-4(2012-13) data
 Note: within bracket-SD & without bracket-Mean, H-Hindu, M-Muslim, C-Christian O-others

Table 8: Relationship Between Age Gap & Education Gap Among Currently Married Women Aged 20-24 Years Married Before the Age of 18 Years in West Bengal and Rest of India

Rest of India						
Education Gap \ Age Gap	Wife >> husband	Wife > husband	Wife = husband	Husband > wife	Husband >> wife	Total
age gap less than zero	0.00	0.15	0.43	0.28	0.00	0.86
zero – three years age gap	0.05	4.82	10.85	9.10	0.20	25.02
four –six years age gap	0.07	7.56	13.03	11.99	0.40	33.04
above seven years age gap	0.15	9.91	15.91	14.82	0.28	41.08
Total	0.27	22.44	40.22	36.20	0.88	100
West Bengal						
Education Gap \ Age Gap	Wife >> husband	Wife > husband)	Wife = husband	Husband > wife	Husband >> wife	Total
age gap less than zero	0.00	0.05	0.33	0.16	0.00	0.54
zero – three years age gap	0.00	6.13	10.53	5.65	0.05	22.37
four –six years age gap	0.00	9.66	14.01	10.59	0.00	34.26
above seven years age gap	0.11	11.24	17.75	13.68	0.05	42.83
Total	0.11	27.09	42.62	30.08	0.11	100.00

Source: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India (2013) for DLHS-4(2012-13) data, All figures are in percentage

5.2 ECONOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF THE DETERMINANTS OF GIRLS CHILD MARRIAGE IN WEST BENGAL AND REST OF INDIA

In this section, I try to find the determinants of girls child marriage in West Bengal and the rest of India. To do so, I have done logistic regressions for West Bengal and the rest of India separately and tried to estimate the factors which determine the probability of a girl getting married into a family before the age of eighteen. **Model-1** is a basic model which considers the woman’s own education, husband’s education, religion, caste and wealth quintile of the household. (**Table-9**). It is observed that in West Bengal as well as the rest of India, Muslims have a higher probability for the girls getting married before the age of eighteen than

Hindu. While the Christians and other religions have a lower probability of child marriage than Hindu. Similarly, the Scheduled castes have a higher probability of early marriage in West Bengal than the general category, but a lower probability in rest of India. It is just the opposite for scheduled tribes. The OBCs are not statistically significant in West Bengal and rest of India. The probability of a girl with primary education getting married is not significantly different than that of an illiterate girl either in West Bengal or the rest of India. However, probability of child marriage decreases when the girl has education up to middle school or higher in both West Bengal and rest of India. The wealth index is an indirect indicator of socio- economic status of the women and their parents as well as their in-laws families. Our findings revealed that, in case of West Bengal, wealth Quintile does not play any significant role to reduce the child marriage, but it is significant in rest of India. This raises an important question of whether any policies which give cash transfers to households or improve the economic condition of the households would at all have any effect on reducing the extremely high rate of child marriage in West Bengal. To check the validity of this result, in **model-2**, I have substituted the wealth quintile with six important features determining the standard of living of a household. They are whether the family has a BPL card (or not), the type of house is Pucca (or not), the household uses firewood as a cooking fuel (or not), household have a electricity (or not), types of toilet and source of drinking water in the household,. The interesting result is that, the families with a BPL card and using firewood as fuel have a higher probability of girls child marriage in India and families with Pucca houses have a lower probability. However, in West Bengal, only the type of house is significant. Whether a family has a BPL card or whether they use firewood (or not), does not play a significant role in determining the probability of child marriage. This strengthens our conclusion that while poverty is a very important determinant of child marriage in the rest of India, it is not significant in West Bengal. In **Model-3**, I have retained the wealth quintile and brought in controls for village infrastructure. This is to test whether the prevalence of child marriage is higher in backward villages or not. The effect of the girl's education, husband's education, religion, caste and wealth quintile remains unchanged from Model- 1. The village characteristics throw up very surprising results for West Bengal and the rest of India. In the rest of India, the probability of child marriage falls as the village infrastructure improves. The villages with a greater number of women and child development schemes and other welfare schemes that have lower probability to child marriage in rest of India. In West Bengal, in contrast, none of the village characteristics other than the presence of self help groups have any significant impact on the probability of child marriage. This strengthens the result that I had obtained from **Models-1 & 2**, that lack of economic development is not an important determinant of child marriage in West Bengal though it is very important in the rest of India.

In order to examine whether the determinants of child marriage has changed over time, I conduct separate Logistic regression on two age cohorts (20-24 and 30-34) in West Bengal and the rest of India. Here again, I use the three separate models. **Table-10** gives the regression results in the two age cohorts for

West Bengal and the rest of India. Breaking up the regression gives some very striking results. In India, though probability of early marriage was higher among the Muslims than Hindus among the older age cohort, it is insignificant among the younger age cohort. The same is true for STs. Among the SCs, the probability of child marriage is higher than the general category in the 30-34 age cohort, but it is lower in the 20-24 age cohort. In India, the husband's education never play any role 20-24 and 30-34 age cohort, even primary education among women leads to lower the probability of child marriage among women between 30-34 age cohort, while girls with 20-24 age cohort only higher education is significant. In West Bengal, again, most of the factors are not significant and in the age group 20-24 year only higher secondary education significantly reduces the probability of child marriage. In India, **Model 2 (Table-10) shows**, families having a BPL card had a higher probability of child marriage among the women who are now 30-34 age cohort but does not have a significant impact on the younger age cohort. In West Bengal, however, in none of the age groups having a BPL card plays any role in determining the child marriage. From **Model 3 (Table-10)**, it is seen that while village infrastructure played an important role in reducing child marriage among women now 30-34 age cohort in both West Bengal and the rest of India, it does not play any role among the 20-24 age cohort. Importantly, in West Bengal none of the village characteristics are significant in determining the probability of child marriage among 20-24 age group, and many factors lose their importance among this age group in the rest of India as well.

Thus, it is seen that the determinants of child marriage is different in West Bengal and rest of India. While wealth of households and village infrastructure are important factors in the rest of India, they are not important in West Bengal. In fact, a separate analysis of two age cohorts reveal that village infrastructure is not significant for the younger (20-24 year) age group either in West Bengal or in the rest of India. Also, the women with higher education became a significant factor to be associated with reducing the child marriage among women, who are in younger (20-24 year) as well as in older (30-34 year) age cohort. This is partly because the prevalence of child marriage has been decreasing over the years. Thus, the high rates of child marriage in West Bengal cannot be attributed to lack of economic or infrastructure development in the state. These factors turn out to be insignificant. There are other factors, may be cultural which are responsible for the high rate of child marriage and very careful thought needs to be given to this issue.

Table 9: Determinants of Girls Child Marriage in West Bengal and Rest of India

	Model-1			Model-2			Model-3			
	WB	M.E	ROI	M.E	ROI	M.E	WB	M.E	ROI	M.E
Girls age of Marriage (less than 18)										
Religion (Reference³ Hindu)										
Muslim	0.36***	-0.89	0.21***	0.03	0.18***	0.03	0.36***	0.08	0.23***	0.04
Christian	-1.07***	-0.24	-0.77***	-0.11	-0.78***	-0.11	-1.09***	-0.24	-0.71***	-0.10
other	-0.82***	-0.19	-0.51***	-0.07	-0.57***	-0.08	-0.86***	-0.19	-0.48***	-0.07
Caste (Reference General)										
SC	0.20***	0.05	-0.05**	-0.01	-0.01*	0.01	0.18***	0.04	-0.01*	-0.01
ST	-0.21**	-0.05	0.12***	0.02	0.18***	0.03	-0.24**	-0.05	0.11***	0.01
OBC	-0.03	-0.01	0.00	0.01	0.03	0.01	-0.03	-0.01	0.02	0.01
Locality (Reference Urban)										
Rural	0.30***	0.07	0.20***	0.08	0.21***	0.07	0.29***	0.08	0.30***	0.07
Husband education (Reference illiterate)										
primary education	0.36	0.08	0.09	0.01	0.07	0.01	0.37	0.09	0.08	0.01
Middle education	0.32	0.07	-0.04	-0.01	-0.08	-0.01	0.33	0.08	-0.06	-0.01
Secondary & Higher education	-0.13	-0.03	-0.06	-0.01	-0.12	-0.01	-0.10	-0.01	-0.08	-0.01
primary education of Girls	-0.08	-0.01	-0.05	-0.01	-0.06	-0.01	-0.08	-0.02	-0.05	-0.01
Middle education of Girls	-0.53***	-0.13	-0.43***	-0.07	-0.46***	-0.07	-0.53***	-0.12	-0.42***	-0.07
Secondary & Higher education of Girls	-2.08***	-0.41	-1.52***	-0.19	-1.60***	-0.20	-2.06***	-0.40	-1.51***	-0.19

³ In logit model one value (typically the first, the last, or the value with the highest frequency) of the dependent variable is designated as the reference category. The probability of membership in other categories is compared to the probability of membership in the reference category

Age gap	0.08*	0.09	0.06**	0.09	0.10*	0.07	0.07**	0.07	0.09*	0.08	0.09**	0.08
Respondent Occupation (No Work Reference)												
Working	-0.13***	0.10	-0.13***	0.10	-0.11***	0.11	-0.11***	0.11	-0.12***	0.13	-0.12***	0.13
Wealth Quintile	-0.02	-0.01	-0.14***	0.11					-0.02	0.11	-0.13***	0.11
Types of Fuel (Reference Firewood)					0.05	-0.04	0.04**	-0.01				
Structure of House (Reference Pucca)					-0.15***	-0.03	-0.08***	-0.01				
Household BPL card (Reference APL)					0.04	0.01	0.21***	0.07				
Source of Lighting (Reference Electricity)					0.07*	0.02	0.22***	0.05				
Types of Toilet (Reference Pit latrine)					0.05	0.03	0.12**	0.01				
Source of Drinking Water (Reference Public tap)					0.04	0.02	0.19***	0.03				
Village Infrastructures Quintile									-0.01	-0.01	-0.03***	-0.01
Natural Disaster									-0.02	-0.01	0.13***	0.02
Village with Mahila Mandal									-0.03	-0.01	-0.04**	-0.01
Village with self help group									0.17*	0.02	-0.04**	-0.01
Women & child development scheme score									-0.03	-0.01	-0.28***	0.04
Other welfare scheme score									-0.08	-0.02	-0.34***	0.05
Cons	0.13***		-0.13***		0.08***		0.58***		0.05***		-0.36***	
No of observation	8344		115509		8509		125549		8280		114842	
Pseudo R ²	0.06		0.06		0.05		0.05		0.06		0.06	

*** significant at 1% level, ** significant at 5% level, * significant at 10% level

Source: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India (2013) for DLHS-4(2012-13) data,

Note: M.E-Marginal Effect, ROI-Rest of India, WB- West Bengal, SC- Scheduled Caste, ST-Scheduled Tribe, OBC-Other Backward Class, BPL-Below Poverty Line, APL-Above Poverty Line

Table 10: Determinants of Girls Child Marriage Among Two Different Age Cohorts in West Bengal and Rest of India

Girls age of Marriage (less than 18)	Model-1			Model-2			Model-3					
	WB	ROI	WB	ROI	WB	ROI	WB	ROI				
	20-24	30-34	20-24	30-34	20-24	30-34	20-24	30-34				
Religion(Reference Hindu)												
Muslim	0.10	0.36***	0.06	0.20***	0.11	0.37***	0.04	0.17***	0.12	0.33***	0.05	0.22***
Christian	-0.94*	-1.23***	-0.35***	-0.93***	-0.96*	-1.26***	-0.41***	-0.87***	-0.90*	-1.24***	-0.30***	-0.87***
other	-0.32	-1.04***	-0.34***	-0.62***	-0.36	-1.09***	-0.42***	-0.64***	-0.24	-1.09***	-0.31***	-0.57***
Caste(Reference General)												
SC	0.00	0.31***	-0.24***	0.07**	-0.02	0.26**	-0.16***	0.11***	-0.02	0.33***	-0.22***	0.11***
ST	-0.51***	0.11	0.03	0.14***	-0.55***	0.07	0.10*	0.19***	-0.50***	0.11	0.02	0.13***
OBC	0.00	-0.03	-0.08**	0.04	-0.01	-0.04	-0.04	0.05*	-0.01	-0.05	-0.08*	0.06*
Locality(Reference Urban)												
Rural	0.17*	0.12**	0.19**	0.22***	0.15*	0.13**	0.17**	0.20***	0.17*	0.14**	0.16**	0.21***
Husband education (Reference illiterate)												
primary education	0.62	0.37	0.20	0.05	0.64	0.38	0.18	0.04	0.69	0.39	0.21	0.04
Middle education	0.54	0.28	0.06	-0.12	0.57	0.31	0.01	-0.15	0.60	0.30	0.06	-0.14
Secondary & Higher education	0.23	-0.24	0.02	-0.13	0.27	-0.19	-0.06	-0.19**	0.29	-0.21	0.02	-0.16

	Model-1			Model-2			Model-3					
	WB		ROI	WB		ROI	WB		ROI			
	20-24	30-34	20-24	30-34	20-24	30-34	20-24	30-34	20-24	30-34		
Girls age of Marriage (less than 18)												
Education of Girls (Reference illiterate)												
primary education of Girls	0.46	-0.39	0.00	-0.16**	0.46	-0.38	-0.01	-0.24***	0.57	-0.43	-0.02	-0.16**
Middle education of Girls	0.07	-0.87***	-0.25	-0.64***	0.08	-0.84***	-0.29	-0.74***	0.18	-0.90***	-0.27	-0.64***
Secondary & Higher education of Girls	-1.49***	-2.78***	-1.22***	-1.89***	-1.46***	-2.71***	-1.30***	-2.02***	-1.40***	-2.79***	-1.23***	-1.87***
Age gap	0.08*	0.10**	0.08*	0.10**	0.09*	0.9**	0.09*	0.9**	0.10*	0.9**	0.10*	0.9**
Respondent occupation (Reference No Work)												
Working	-0.07***	-0.12**	-0.07***	-0.12**	-0.08***	-0.11**	-0.08***	-0.11**	-0.07***	-0.9**	-0.07***	-0.9**
Wealth Quintile	-0.02	-0.02	-0.16***	-0.08***					-0.02	-0.02	-0.14***	-0.07***
Types of Fuel (Reference Firewood)					0.13	-0.01	0.15***	-0.08***				
Structure of House (Reference Pucca)					-0.15	-0.24**	-0.15***	0.03				
Household BPL card (Reference APL)					0.04	0.07	0.04	0.23***				
Source of Lighting (Reference Electricity)					0.07*	0.06**	0.03**	0.07**				
Types of Toilet (Reference Pit latrine)					0.05	0.07	0.11	0.05**				
Source of Drinking Water (Reference Public tap)					0.04	0.03	0.15*	0.12**				

	Model-1				Model-2				Model-3			
	WB		ROI		WB		ROI		WB		ROI	
	20-24	30-34	20-24	30-34	20-24	30-34	20-24	30-34	20-24	30-34	20-24	30-34
Girls age of Marriage (less than 18)												
Respondent occupation (Reference No Work)												
Village Infrastructures Quintile												
Natural Disaster												
Village with Mahila Mandal												
Village with self help group												
Women & child development scheme score												
Other welfare scheme score												
Cons	-0.26***	0.26***	0.11***	-0.23***	-0.40***	0.25***	-0.33***	-0.40***	-0.82***	0.50***	-0.07***	-0.51***
No of observation	2424	2681	22758	48041	2425	2581	22766	44460	2403	2558	22595	47765
Pseudo R ²	0.06	0.07	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.07	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.08	0.05	0.06

*** significant at 1% level, ** significant at 5% level, * significant at 10% level

Source: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India (2013) for DLHS-4(2012-13) data,

Note: M.E-Marginal Effect, ROI-Rest of India, WB- West Bengal, SC- Scheduled Caste, ST-Scheduled Tribe, OBC-Other Backward Class, BPL-Below Poverty Line, APL-Above Poverty Line

6. CONCLUSION, POLICY IMPLICATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH STUDY

This study shows that the largest drop in the prevalence of child marriage has been in the under-15 marriages, while marriages in the age group 15-17 years continue to occur quite common in a number of states in India (specially in West Bengal). Moreover, the Mean age at marriage among West Bengal women is lower than the rest of India and the percentage of child marriage among women is higher in West Bengal than the all other state in India. So, Govt. has to take some policy to increase the level of demographic and socio-economic development among women at the district and state level in India and West Bengal. In the above tables, I have shown, the Individual and household socioeconomic characteristics, such as place of residence, education, religion and caste are important in determining factor for child marriage (only females) in India as well as in West Bengal. Moreover, wealth quintile and village infrastructure quintile are significant factor to be associated with child marriage in Rest of India. But, it is insignificant in West Bengal. As the present study establishes, there is a greater tendency towards child marriage among rural women, irrespective of education and wealth differences between rural and urban women in India and West Bengal, which suggests that marriage practices in rural areas are influenced strongly by traditional values.

In the above study finds that girls with secondary and higher education had much lower chances of early marriage compared to illiterate ones in both India and West Bengal. Thus, education and early marriage are closely linked. In view of these findings, special attention needs to be given to the issue of child marriage in India and West Bengal. A targeted policy is needed to create awareness about the negative consequences of child marriage in India as well as in West Bengal. In this context, educational intervention (Balika Samridhi Yojana) and empowerment intervention (Kishori Sakti Yojana) are two crucial policies by Government of India which should be continued and distribute at the grass root level in India. I observe that household wealth quintile (taken as proxy for household income) did not affect the chances of early marriage in West Bengal. This negates the perception that poverty is the driving force behind child marriage in West Bengal and therefore special targeted scheme would be needed to tackle this problem. In this context, the present conditional cash transfer scheme of the Govt. of West Bengal, specially, the Kanyashree Prakalpa (girl in secondary education) be a good instrument to reduce the child marriage in West Bengal.

One limitation of this study, when we are investigating the household and demographic characteristics in determine the probability of girl's child marriage analyzed. The characteristics are of those households who bring in child brides and not those households who marry of their daughter at a young age. The information about a married woman's parental household is not available in our data (DLHS-4) source. However, since the practice of child marriage depends on both the decision of the girl's parents as well as that of the groom's family. The bride family's

Characteristics is more important in performing the child marriage. This is the interesting research gap in our mind. Another limitation of this study, the education, occupation and Income of the respondent's parents was not included in the analysis because the DLHS-4 does not contain information on this variable. In fact, parents are the main decision-makers when arranging marriage for their daughters in West Bengal and rest of India. Therefore, parent's education should be considered as an important determinant of girl's child marriage in West Bengal and rest of India. Our Future research analysis would surely focus on this.

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