

Early Marriage and Women's Empowerment: The Case of Chil-bride in East Hararghe Zone of Oromia National Regional State, Ethiopia

Authors : Emad Mohammed Sani

Abstract : Women encounter exclusion and discrimination in varying degrees, particularly those who marry as minors. The detrimental custom of getting married young is still prevalent worldwide and affects millions of people. It has been less common over time, although it is still widespread in underdeveloped nations. Oromia Regional State is the region in Ethiopia with the highest proportion of child brides. This study aimed at evaluating the effects of early marriage on its survivors' life conditions - specifically, empowerment and household decision-making - in Eastern Hararghe Zone of Oromia Region. This study employed community-based cross-sectional study design. It adopted mixed method approach - survey, in-depth interview and focus group discussion (FGD) - to collect, analyses and interpret data on early marriage and its effects on household decision-making processes. Narratives and analytical descriptions were integrated to substantiate and/or explain observed quantitative results, or generate contextual themes. According to this study, married women who were married at or after the age of eighteen participated more in household decision-making than child brides. Child brides were more likely to be victims of violence and other types of spousal abuse in their marriages. These changes are mostly caused by an individual's age at first marriage. Delaying marriage had a large positive impact on women's empowerment at the household level, and age at first marriage had a considerable negative impact. In order to advance women's welfare and emancipation, we advise more research to concentrate on the relationship between the home and the social-structural forms that appear at the individual and communal levels.

Keywords : child-bride, early marriage, women, ethiopia

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