

Exploring Early Marriage in Mogadishu: A Qualitative Study on the Causes, Current Situation, and Socioeconomic Impact of Early Marriage

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Abstract: *Early Marriage is a pervasive issue in Mogadishu, Somalia, with significant socioeconomic consequences. This qualitative study explores the causes, current status, and socioeconomic consequences of early Marriage in the city. The research employed in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis to gather data from key stakeholders, including young brides, parents, community leaders, and experts. The findings reveal several interconnected factors contributing to the prevalence of early Marriage in Mogadishu. These include cultural norms and traditions, poverty, a lack of educational opportunities for girls, and insecurity due to ongoing conflicts. Early Marriage disrupts the lives of young girls, often resulting in limited educational attainment, restricted social mobility, and increased vulnerability to domestic violence and health issues.*

Keywords: Early Marriage, socioeconomic consequences, young brides, domestic violence

1 Introduction

Early Marriage violates girls' human rights and adversely affects their health and well-being (Amin, 2011). While the age of Marriage is increasing in most regions of the developing world, early Marriage persists for large populations. Worldwide, it is estimated that more than one out of three women aged 20-24 were married before age 18, and one out of seven were married before age 15 (Population Council analysis of 2006 DHS data). There is significant variation in early marriage practices across and within regions and between ethnic and religious groups. The highest proportions of child brides are typically found in West Africa and South Asia (see Table 1 for some regional hotspots of child marriage).

Early Marriage is a global problem but particularly prevalent in Somalia. According to UNICEF, an estimated 47% of girls in Somalia marry before the age 18. This is significantly higher than the global average of 25%.

Several factors contribute to early Marriage in Somalia, including poverty, cultural norms, and conflict (Wodon, 2017). Poverty is a significant driver of early Marriage. Families struggling to make ends meet may see early Marriage as a way to secure their daughter's future. They may believe a married daughter will be better protected from poverty and abuse.

Cultural norms also play a role in early Marriage. In some parts of Somalia, it is seen as the norm for girls to marry young. This is often due to the belief that girls are only ready to take care of themselves once they are married.

Conflict is another factor that contributes to early Marriage in Mogadishu. War and displacement can disrupt families and make it difficult for girls to continue their education. This can lead to early Marriage to provide stability and security.

Early Marriage has several negative socioeconomic consequences. Girls who marry young are likelier to drop out of school, experience domestic violence, and have health problems (Abeynayake et al., 2012). They are also more likely to live in poverty.

This qualitative study explores the causes, current status, and socioeconomic consequences of early Marriage in Mogadishu. The study will be conducted through interviews with girls, women, and community leaders. The study's findings will be used to inform interventions to address the problem of early Marriage in Mogadishu.

1.1 Background of the study

World Health Organization (2013) defined early Marriage, or child marriage, as the Marriage or union between two people in which one or both parties are younger than 18 (Palys & Daoutidis, 2020).

One of the most common human rights violations is the early Marriage of girls. It hinders social and economic advancement and is a result of gender inequality. In communities where child marriage is a regular practice, the low value placed on girls and women reinforces the conduct and makes child marriage acceptable. Any legal or customary relationship between a boy or girl under 18 is considered a child marriage (Jama, 2017).

Globally, more than 700 million women alive now in the world married formally before turning 18 years old. One in nine females in developing nations wed before age 15, and one in three girls wed before age 18. Girl child marriage is defined as a woman entering a legal union before the age of 18, which breaches the rights enshrined in international and regional human rights documents and has been linked to harmful behaviors and effects on one's health (Agege et al., 2018).

Social and cultural norms, including those related to faith, influence the age at which a girl is expected to marry. In

addition, socioeconomic status, education levels, and community context also influence the likelihood of a girl being married early. The poorest countries have the highest child marriage rates (Jama, 2017). Child marriage is most common among low-income people, who have fewer resources and opportunities to invest in alternative options for girls. Social norms around girls' education and women's participation in the formal labor force may mean that girls are not prioritized in a household's education investment decisions. (UNICEF, 2014).

Marriage-related financial transactions support the custom. Families may immediately profit financially from the Marriage of their daughters in situations where bridewealth or bride price is practiced (i. e., the groom or groom's family grooms to the bride's family in exchange for Marriage). Both Maggie Sexton and Jeffrey Edmeades (2015). Child marriage is founded on sociocultural customs and religious beliefs in many cultures. Still, beyond the simplified facts, the connections between faith and child marriage are nuanced and vary by society.

In Africa, Child marriage is most common in the world's poorest countries and is often concentrated among the poorest households. It is closely linked with poverty and low levels of economic development. In families with limited resources (Palys & Daoutidis, 2020), child marriage is often seen as a way to provide for their daughter's future. However, girls who marry young are likelier to be poor and remain poor (Especially in Uganda, Families face intense social pressure to fit in in areas where child marriage is common. Failure to comply frequently leads to jeers, condemnation, or familial embarrassment. Local views on the optimal marriage age and the urge to get married are invariable. Extensive family arrangements, submissive wives, and other customs are all codified in societal or religious laws. In many circumstances, a youngster. Patriarchy and related family systems legitimize Marriage by ensuring that Marriage shifts a female child's future child into the father figure role. The In some regions of Kasulu, child marriage or engagement is regarded as a means of fostering strong family ties to close land or other agreements, other assets, or even to resolve conflicts.

Early Marriage violates fundamental human rights and is considered a public health problem. It has profound physical, intellectual, psychological, and social consequences on teenage girls and their future children. (Abeynayake et al., 2012)

In Egypt, early Marriage Consequences in the Most Deprived Areas in Menoufia Governorate-Egypt: A Community-Based Survey. (Santhya, 2011)

Child marriage robs girls of the chance to lead their own lives on their terms. It also has devastating lifelong consequences. Girls who marry before the age of 18 are:

- Less likely to complete primary and secondary education,
- More likely to experience unwanted pregnancies,
- More likely to experience violence,
- More likely to remain poor,
- At more significant risk of death or injury in childbirth, complications from pregnancy and childbirth are a

leading cause of death for girls aged 15-19 in African countries.

Child marriage is a gross violation of girls' rights to life, health, and education. However, 14 million girls under 18 are married yearly, with parents often driving the decision (Suhariyati et al., 2019).

There is much pressure on parents to marry off their daughters quickly to avoid the shame of indulging in sexual behavior before Marriage. Marriage is often the deciding factor in a woman's place in society, so it is natural for parents to worry if their daughter is not married off according to societal norms. Marriage plays a significant role in many African cultures, cementing bonds between families, clans, and tribes (Agege et al., 2018).

In Somalia, Early Marriage, also known as child marriage, is a harmful traditional practice where one or both married couples are under 18. Forced Marriage is a marriage that is arranged without the consent of either one or both spouses, and it is always the girls who are the victims of this traditional practice and whose support is not respected. (The & Marriage, 2022)

Early Marriage alludes to occasions where one or both people cannot give their full and free permission to Marriage. The terms early and child marriage are too commonly utilized to allude to youthful individuals underneath the legitimate consent-giving age who are constrained into Marriage. This practice is frequently a result of social, devout, and indeed financial reasons and disproportionately influences young ladies and women. (Jisun, 2016).

Early Marriage, commonly called child marriage, is a global problem in many Latin American, Asia, and African regions. Even though Somalia is not an example, little is understood about the true causes and repercussions of this century's long-standing socioeconomic problems. It is a widespread destructive practice that has a significant negative impact on the lives of the many minor girls who are affected by it. This customary practice restricts young girls' physical, psychological, and economic growth, preventing them from reaching their full potential (Agege et al., 2018).

Poverty is one of the main factors influencing early Marriage, particularly in rural communities. Rural communities are prone to repetitive droughts and environmental degradation, which make many households vulnerable to poverty. In other words, extreme poverty pushes many parents to marry off their daughters to deal with the family problems of poverty (The & Marriage, 2022).

Moreover, interviewees argued that Marriage at a very young age is a survival strategy for young girls and probably many other female minors in some communities. In other words, some of the interviewed girls believed that early Marriage is a coping mechanism to break the cycle of poverty and sometimes support their education; for example, some young girls who are married under 18 attend

schools, their husbands being the school grantors, pay schools fees, uniforms, travel expenses, education materials and other expenses for another particular need for schooling. Some even suggest that these men support the families of the girl financially if they are poor, although this cannot be generalized. (Nadifa Jama Issei, causes and effects of early Marriage in Garowe district, Puntland state of Somalia, 2017) (Jama, 2017).

In Somalia, women and young girls are most affected by early Marriage, which hinders their access to education, limits their economic opportunities, and ultimately engulfs them in a cycle of poverty (Jama, 2017). Cultural norms and expectations contribute to early Marriage in Somalia (Judy & Akinyi, 2018), where society is organized around clans characterized by male dominance. Men are considered supreme over women, and there is little Respect for women's rights. Women are sidelined in societal decision-making processes and forced, and early marriages are arranged by clan elders or household heads, usually men. However, there are also instances in which women agree to early Marriage for their daughters due to social pressures for girls to marry as early as possible. (United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the Human Rights Support Mechanism (HRSM, 2021). Early and forced Marriage has been and proceeds to be practiced customarily in Somalia, where brides are traded between neighboring clans for the reason of building unions that allow getting to brush regions and water or fixing peace assertions. This thesis was concerned with the Hodon district of Mogadishu, Somalia. Where is it reported that Early Marriage causes severe problems? Therefore, that is why to address this study.

1.2 Problem Statement

To get a better solution for early Marriage must prohibit early Marriage a call policy policymakers place and enforce laws that prohibit Marriage before the age of 18 without consent. Keep girls in school - a need to increase education opportunities for girls, as this positively affects their health and decreases the chance of getting married. Influence cultural norms that support early Marriage, a need to work with all stakeholders to challenge and change norms around early Marriage.

In the case of East Africa, particularly Somalia, "nearly half of "the Somali girls are married by the time they are 18 years" (Brides, 2017) ". The legal age for Marriage in Somalia is 18 years for both females and males, but girls can get married at the ages of 16 and 14 with the consent of their parents. Furthermore, in Somalia, child marriage is widespread. There are situations of transactional Marriage where young girls are often married off to older men in exchange for financial resources, mainly camels, cows, or cash. To many, ending child marriage is ending the cycle of poverty. In other words, poverty will continue unless intervention is made in this harmful traditional practice that hinders young girls from taking charge of their own lives. (Nadifa Jama Isse, September 2017).

There still needs to be more knowledge due to little research on early Marriage's cause, current situation, and

socioeconomic consequences. However, the reasons and results of this early Marriage are still in a conflicting dilemma which has raised the interest in conducting a study based on the socioeconomic consequences that determine the causes of early Marriage among young girls in the Hodon district. This study examines the massive problem among young girls in Mogadishu, Somalia.

1.3 General Objective

The general objective of this proposed study was to investigate the causes, current status, and socioeconomic consequences contributing to early Marriage in the Hodon district.

1.4 Specific Objectives:

The particular aim of this proposed study was:

1. To examine causes of early Marriage in the Hodon district of Mogadishu, Somalia.
2. To find out the current status of early Marriage Hodon district
3. To explore the socioeconomic consequences of early Marriage in the Hodon district

1.5 Research Question

1. What causes early Marriage in Hodon district Mogadishu Somalia?
2. What is the current status of the early Marriage Hodon district?
3. What are the socioeconomic consequences of early Marriage in the Hodon district?

2 Literature Review

Early Marriage, the practice of marrying young girls before they reach the legal age for Marriage, is a prevalent issue in many parts of the world, including Mogadishu, Somalia. This literature review aims to synthesize existing research on the causes, current status, and socioeconomic consequences of early Marriage in Mogadishu. This review provides a comprehensive understanding of this social phenomenon's complexities by examining relevant studies, reports, and articles. The literature specifically focused on the effect a study causes, the current status, and the socioeconomic consequences of early Marriage.

2.1 Concept of Early Marriage in Mogadishu:

Girl child marriage and formal female unions before the age of 18 are still widespread in Sub-Saharan Africa. This study aims to determine how much female child marriage affects adult women's socioeconomic level and underweight, a sign of malnutrition. (Efevbera et al., 2019b) .

The literature also emphasizes the importance of geography in determining the likelihood of child marriage, with children living in rural areas at increased risk. In South Asia, rural areas suffer from a lack of economic opportunity and infrastructure, both of which are related to child marriage. Rural communities also lack educational options

for children, and families there are more likely to experience financial hardship, which may help to explain why child marriage rates are higher there. The socioeconomic position of a household is another element connected to child marriage. (Dietrich et al., 2022) .

Several factors motivate early Marriage, also known as child marriage in Somalia. There is an argument that suggests that cultural norms, gender inequality, poverty, and insecurity are the root causes of this traditional practice cuts live and the personal growth of many young girls in Somalia. (Nadifa Jama Isse, 2017) .

More than 700 million women alive today entered a legal union before turning 18 in the entire world. One in nine girls in developing nations wed before age 15, and one in three married before age 18. Girl child marriage, defined as a female in a legal partnership before the age of 18, is against international and regional human rights treaties and has been linked to unhealthy behaviors and outcomes in terms of health. Girl child marriage has been related to decreased antenatal care, reduced modern family planning, and fewer safe deliveries. (Efevbera et al., 2019b) .

Early Marriage is between a child or adolescent and a person under 18. In many cultures, females are compelled to marry at a young age for various reasons, such as receiving a dowry or some parents worry that their daughters will become pregnant while staying home. It was disgraceful for a girl to become pregnant outside of Marriage. Economic hardship and unequal power dynamics are further issues. (Michael, n. d.)

Child marriage is not isolated to any geographic region or defined by culture or religion. It occurs in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Brazil, Niger, Nicaragua, and Nepal. Although the most significant total number of child brides resides in South Asia, the majority of countries with the highest prevalence rates of child marriage (Petroni et al., 2017)

A kid "cannot be expected to understand the implications of accepting a lifetime partner, " according to "UNICEF, and even if that child has attained the legal age of consent to sexual activity, "this should not" be interpreted to suggest that they are ready to join Marriage, " it adds. (Livesey, n. d.)

Parents may sometimes allow their daughters to marry young to preserve their daughter's dignity. In addition, many parents allow their daughters to marry early because of issues like money, so they have faith that the man who would be their husband will take good care of her. Two types of early Marriage exist. (Ridzuan et al., 2018) .

In Somalia, the 1975 Family Code made Marriage before the age of 18 illegal (but note that Marriage at age 16 with parental consent was still permitted) and the Constitution. Marriage is legal once a man and woman reach the 'age of maturity. However, there needs to be a definition for what is intended by the age of maturity, which is not helpful in a complex legal system where customary law, Sharia law, and formal law intersect. (Kenny et al., 2019) .

Early Marriage is one of the problems in Indonesia and developing countries. It represents one of the violations of women's human rights. Early Marriage had negative physical, psychological, and social effects on the affected women. (Masters Program in Public Health, Universitas Sebelas Maret et al., 2019) .

The practice of getting a young girl (usually referred to as someone under the age of 18) married to an adult is known as child marriage. It is typically a young girl married to an older man. Female adolescents and teenagers married to adult husbands are in this circumstance. In these situations, the men are occasionally twice as old as the women, and the women end up marrying children. (Kyari & Ayodele, 2014)

2.2 Cause of Early Marriage

Early Marriage must happen because of social pressure; however, getting married does not make it better for young women; most choices come from families. Therefore, young girls cannot refuse Marriage as marrying and starting a family is vital to society. Refusing to marry a suitor chosen by the family exposes the girl to the risk of violence or abandonment by the family, making life difficult without the support of relatives or acquaintances. (Judy & Akinyi, n. d.) . It is one of a category of culturally affirmed violence against girls and women. (Livesey, n. d.)

2.2.1 Cultural Norms and Traditions

Studies have highlighted that deep-rooted cultural norms and traditions are central to perpetuating early marriage practices in Mogadishu. Societal expectations, family honor, and gender roles heavily influence parents' decisions to marry off their daughters at a young age.

For married and unmarried girls between the ages of 15 and 19, pregnancy-related deaths are known to be a prominent cause of mortality, especially for the youngest members of this cohort. Another motive for child marriage is to protect against HIV/AIDS. To preserve their daughters' honor and health, parents attempt to marry off their daughters. (Early Marriage, 2005) . Several causes of early Marriage were noted, and gender discrimination, ignorance, and some community beliefs in the traditional way parents can determine very decision-related marriage daughter's future evidence that men and women prefer husbands to earn higher wages than wives and females are less ambitious. (Agege et al., 2018) .

Parents may sincerely believe that providing their daughter with a typical male guardian will make her happier and safer. In a conflict-ridden For instance, some families in Northern Uganda marry their young daughters to militia members to uphold family honor or obtain "protection" for" both the "family and the girl. Girls in Somalia have experienced the same thing during the country's turmoil. (Early Marriage, 2005)

To date, forced Marriage is practiced in Somalia due to interweaving contributory variables counting social, social, financial, and political variables, and the cruel translation of the religion.

A few guardians do not inquire about their children for their supposition when considering Marriage fitting for their girl. Typically, most frequently the case. When youthful Somali young ladies are concerned, but too now and then with young men, since guardians consider Marriage a social act that's a matter for the atomic or expanded family and indeed the community, and they think it their obligation to have their children get married. (Judy & Akinyi, n. d.)

The literature also emphasizes the importance of geography in determining the likelihood of child marriage, with children living in rural areas at increased risk. In South Asia, rural areas suffer from a lack of economic opportunity and infrastructure, both of which are related to child marriage. Rural communities also lack educational options for children, and families there are more likely to experience financial hardship, which may help to explain why child marriage rates are higher there. The socioeconomic position of a household is another element connected to child marriage. (Dietrich et al., 2022) .

2.2.2 Poverty and Economic Factors

Due to the difficult economic circumstances, many Mogadishu families turn to Marriage at a young age. Families are encouraged to marry off their daughters early to alleviate financial strain and develop links with other, wealthier families.

Poverty is one of the major factors underpinning early Marriage. Where poverty is acute, a young girl may be regarded as an economic burden, and her Marriage to a much older - sometimes even elderly - man, a practice common in some Middle Eastern and South Asian societies, is a family survival strategy and may even be seen as in her interests. In traditional communities in Sub-Saharan Africa and some organizations, the independent sense of self that a girl may develop during adolescence is undesirable. (UNICEF, March 2001) .

Aligned with theory on social norms, evidence shows that community norms in support of child marriage often reflect parents' (and their daughters) normative beliefs, which perhaps reflect internalized social norms rather than merely social pressure to marry in India, Pakistan, Ethiopia, and Ghana. In some contexts, girls may desire to marry, perhaps reflecting social norms in Favor of Marriage and the lack of viable alternatives. The prevalence of child marriage is often erroneously equated with social expectations of child marriage, specifically when other norms around girls' education, women's employment, or girls' sexuality may be more relevant in Senegal, Zambia, Uganda, and Kenya. (Psaki et al., 2021) .

Asian groups, notably those of Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Indian descent, have been concerned about early Marriage and forced Marriage (Working Group on Forced Marriage 2000). Due to the influence of traditionalism, social pressure, and normalization (Julios, 2016; Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls, 2000), as well as the connection between early Marriage and forced Marriage, there are no clear distinctions between arranged marriages and forced marriages. (Livesey, n. d.) .

The majority of reasons cause early Marriage is Improving the family's financial position, Preserving and maintaining family wealth, Alleviating family poverty by reducing economic burden, protecting family honor, Respect for traditions and culture, preventing 'unsuitable' relationships, Controlling female behavior and sexuality, Transactional Marriage contracted for security in risky or unsettled situations, Ensuring that a girl is protected, Securing a good match, Maintaining the order of Marriage within siblings and Protecting the child from impacts of crises (Livesey, n. d.) .

Beyond bans and minimum age laws, it is also essential to focus on the underlying causes of early Marriage. In doing so, it is necessary to recognize and understand why households marry their daughters at a young age and the 'demand' side-that is, why men prefer younger brides. Both sides may be acting in ways that are 'rational,' given the prevailing economic, social, health, and political environment. (Jensen & Thornton, 2003) .

The impact on communities of feeling under scrutiny, which has a demonstrable effect on people's willingness to represent both past behavior and future intention accurately, is one of the challenges in understanding motivations (Cloward, 2014). As a result, people are more likely to give falsely compliant answers with dominant norms (against Early Marriage) when asked about their intention. (Livesey, n. d.) .

2.2.3 Lack of Educational Opportunities.

Limited access to education for girls in Mogadishu contributes to early Marriage. Families may prioritize early Marriage over education due to cultural beliefs that prioritize domestic roles for girls and the perception that education may not significantly improve their prospects.

The causes of child marriage are multifaceted and intersecting. Socioeconomic factors, such as rural residence, poverty, and education, have repeatedly been associated with the practice (Kenny et al., 2019) .

The groom or groom's family provides assets to the bride's family in exchange for Marriage), and families may reap immediate economic benefits from marrying their daughters. In such cases, families may obtain a more significant financial amount the younger the bride is. When a dowry is practiced (the bride's family provides assets to the groom's family), a more youthful and less educated bride may require a lower dowry, incentivizing parents to marry daughters at a younger age. (Parsons et al., 2015b) .

2.2.4 Insecurity and Conflict:

The prevalence of insecurity and ongoing conflicts in Mogadishu exacerbates the situation. Families may view early Marriage as a means to protect their daughters from violence or forced displacement.

Every society and culture has basic norms and beliefs that guide the people. In Nigeria, for instance, Northern Nigeria (Hausa-Fulani dominated) allowed the early Marriage of the

girlchild. Moreover, it argued that the reason for acceptance of early marriages in the Northern regions is to preserve the value of virginity, fears about marital sexual activity, reduces the girlchild's promiscuity, and other sociocultural and religious norms. However, due to their ignorance and selfish nature, more often than not, they forget the effect it has on the girlchild and their community development. It is worrisome that the girlchild has no power to resist the offer. The impact of early Marriage on the girlchild that affects her well-being and that of the society includes education, lack of economic empowerment, and lack of knowledge on reproductive health services, which will enable them to make informed decisions, enhance their ability to leverage resources and participate in community decision making. (Kyari & Ayodele, 2014)

Girls discussed several factors that influence when they get married, including the onset of puberty and associated concerns for their safety and security, fear of scandals or rumors, the attractiveness of women, receiving a marriage proposal that is "too good to refuse," and peer and community pressure. Girls talked about how parents worried about their daughters' reputations after puberty, especially if they found out that other men were showing interest due to worries about losing family honor if girls married in "love." Girls indicated that wayward girls unwilling to adhere to social norms are the only ones who choose such marriages, humiliating the family. (Psaki et al., 2021).

Every region of Somalia engages in early Marriage, and Mogadishu is no exception. Thought to be a long-standing issue, the key informant observed that it is unacceptably worsening now in rural areas and among IDPs. Child marriage is widespread, and it is perpetuated both through culture and religion. Although it has always been an issue, the situation is much worse today with increased radicalization and weak government. Many girls are married off today at age 14 - 16" (Hawa, 2016). (Nadifa Jama Isse, 2017)

2.3 Current status of early Marriage

Somalia, there has been an increase in female child marriage (FCM) from 1 in 4 girls to approximately early married, FCM is a violation of the fundamental human rights of young women, and the importance of ending child marriage was highlighted in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

2.3.1 Prevalence and Age Distribution:

Available data indicate that early Marriage remains widespread in Mogadishu. Girls as young as 12 or 13 are often married off, with prevalence rates varying across different regions and communities.

One such development is female child marriage (FCM). This phenomenon (FCM) refers to any formal marriage or informal union between a girl child below age 18 and an adult or child with or without consent. (Bolarinwa et al., 2022). There is strong evidence that FCM exposes girls to harmful health effects like maternal morbidity, pregnancy

complications, and delivery difficulties, and it is also the main factor in increased maternal mortality among adolescent girls.

2.3.2 Regional and Cultural Variations

Studies suggest that the prevalence of early Marriage may vary based on cultural and regional differences within Mogadishu. Specific communities may resist change due to more vital adherence to traditional practices.

School dropout, poor sexual and reproductive health, low birth weight, a 30% increased chance of premature birth, and subpar child nutrition and health outcomes are additional negative effects of FCM. According to data from Ghana, FCM increases girls' vulnerability to all types of violence (physical, emotional, and social). (Bolarinwa et al., 2022).

2.3.3 Impact of Intervention Efforts:

Various local organizations and international agencies have implemented interventions to address early Marriage in Mogadishu. The literature highlights the challenges in effectively implementing these interventions and the need for comprehensive, culturally sensitive strategies.

Any societal and financial factors fuel the harmful practice of child marriage. Poverty, one of the most common drivers, pushes families to use Marriage as an economic strategy to free up limited resources for the rest of the family. Families may be financially motivated to marry their daughters early when the exchange of bride wealth or dowry is practiced. Where virginity is strongly valued, parents may marry their daughters early to ensure they remain virgins until Marriage. Girls who become pregnant out of wedlock may be considered shameful and dishonorable to the family. Moreover, lacking viable alternatives could lead girls to marry early, mainly if they are not working or in school. (Chae & Ngo, 2017)

2.4 A socioeconomic consequence of early Marriage in Mogadishu.

The consequences of child marriage are strongly linked to early pregnancy (almost 90% of adolescent births worldwide occur in this setting¹³, and the body of research demonstrating how it affects reproductive, neonatal, and child health is growing. The effects of the practice on mental health, interpersonal aggression, and concerns about broader social, development, and gender equity outcomes are less clear. (Petroni et al., 2017).

2.4.1 Educational Attainment:

Early Marriage significantly disrupts girls' education, leading to lower educational attainment and limited opportunities for skill development. This perpetuates a cycle of poverty and hinders social mobility.

Weakness of women's autonomy and lowering of their economic standing. Lower socioeconomic status and diminished independence will influence women's nutrition,

exercise, and health-seeking behavior. Additionally, as women migrate into new social roles in their environments after Marriage, it directly impacts their physical activity levels. It is not yet apparent how the subsequent behavior changes in women might affect their nutritional condition. For children born to mothers who marry young, these mechanisms—early and multiple childbirth, lower socioeconomic position, and diminished autonomy—may further hurt their health and development. (Efevbera et al., 2019b).

2.4.2 Health and Well-being:

Young brides often face adverse health consequences, such as early pregnancies and increased risk of maternal mortality. Moreover, early Marriage exposes girls to a higher likelihood of experiencing domestic violence and psychological distress.

Women who happened early Marriage confronted high rates of poverty and vulnerability; the country is struggling to progress in most social indicators. While high vulnerability to various insecurity and climatic shocks has made it challenging to accelerate economic and social development in the country, different social norms also limit the fulfillment of fundamental human rights of women and children (especially girls). Limited voice of women in household and community decision-making, gender-based violence, and female circumcision is some of the critical outcomes of the pervasive social norms against women (Sulaiman et al., n. d.); A combination of problems has led to women getting married early and getting divorced with many children left uncared for therefore that it lead huge women living low social status and marginalized.

Child marriage undermines women's social, economic, and political empowerment. It limits their access to school and employment opportunities, violates their human rights, and often results in unwanted pregnancies and social isolation. Wed at a Young Age (Early Marriage, 2005).

Financial is one of the most pressing issues a new marriage must address. The most adorable young couple got a divorce, and it all came down to money. This is because of the current slowdown in economic growth, which will disproportionately negatively affect young couples. As a result of these constraints, the vast majority of people need help to secure long-term employment. Most households operate at or below the poverty line, and most teams view material possessions as essential. As reported by (Ridzuan et al., 2018).

Almost all the family members of early marriage actors will be adversely affected. However, this negative impact has the most significant effect on women. The negative influence of early Marriage can be seen in the women's station, health, economy, and empowerment, which will all lead to poverty. (Rahayu & Wahyuni, Ph. D., 2020)

Early Marriage is a powerful disincentive to their economic development and has a future impact; it is a threat to their reproductive health, and it is hazardous for both mother and child, for adolescent girls are physically, mentally, and

emotionally unprepared for childbirth. (Adam & Gichinga, 2018).

As stated earlier, early Marriage can adversely affect women along several dimensions, such as early termination of education and onset of childbearing, and women's status and position within the household. (Jensen & Thornton, 2003).

2.4.3 Economic Impact:

The economic consequences of early Marriage are multifaceted. Young brides may need more access to economic opportunities, leading to lower lifetime earnings and a higher likelihood of living in poverty. Their children's economic prospects are also compromised due to limited resources and access to education.

Because teenagers are not fully physically prepared to care for pregnancy, early Marriage puts them at risk. It also leads to early and frequent childbirth, which increases family size. Girls' rights to education, childhood, and the right to a partner of their choice and age are also violated by early Marriage. When young girls are compelled to wed adults who are older than they are, the likelihood that they will become widows at a young age is significant. However, the young mothers will not be the only ones left to care for the minor children independently. (Michael, n. d.). Although it has long been believed that child marriages are restrictive for "Child Brides," it is also true that child marriages frequently result in catastrophic outcomes for child grooms. Teenage females are fully aware of the effects of early Marriage. (Chauhan et al., 2020)

Men and their families may also view younger brides as more desirable because they are more easily controlled and less assertive because of their lack of physical, mental, and emotional maturity. Younger brides may therefore be viewed as more 'trainable.' They may also be better able physically to perform household activities. (Jensen & Thornton, 2003)

There are huge problems that a couple can face when Marriage happens at an early age, such as financial problems. Early Marriage occurs at the age of 16 years old to 25 years old, which means that a person has no strong finances to build a family yet. (Ridzuan et al., 2018).

Early Marriage can affect a girl's physical and mental well-being in several ways, some of which have been highlighted in previous sections—girls who are married young experience higher rates of malnutrition, isolation, and depression. (Parsons et al., 2015a).

3 Methodology

Research Design: This study adopts a qualitative research design to understand the causes, current status, and socioeconomic consequences of Early Marriage in Mogadishu. Qualitative methods allow exploring this social phenomenon's complexities and capturing key stakeholders' perspectives.

3.1 Sampling: The study will use purposive sampling to select participants with relevant experiences and knowledge of early Marriage in Mogadishu. Participants will include young brides, parents, community leaders, experts, and representatives from local organizations and international agencies working on gender issues and child protection.

3.2 Data Collection: Data will be collected through multiple methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the topic:

3.2.1 In-depth Interviews: Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with individual participants to explore their experiences, beliefs, and perceptions of early Marriage.

3.2.2 Focus Group Discussions: Focus group discussions will be organized to facilitate open discussions among participants and capture diverse viewpoints on early Marriage and its consequences.

3.2.3 Document Analysis: Relevant documents, reports, and articles related to early Marriage in Mogadishu will be analyzed to supplement the primary data and provide contextual background.

3.3 Ethical Considerations: Ethical approval from relevant institutional review boards will be obtained. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants before data collection, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity. Participants will be assured of their right to withdraw at any point without consequences.

3.4 Data Analysis: Transcripts from interviews and focus group discussions will be transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis. Data will be organized into themes related to the causes, current status, and socioeconomic consequences of early Marriage. Patterns and connections between pieces will be identified to understand the topic comprehensively.

3.5 Validity and Reliability: Triangulation will be employed to ensure the validity and reliability of findings. Data sources (interviews, focus groups, documents) and participant perspectives will be compared and cross-referenced to enhance the study's credibility.

3.6 Limitations: The qualitative nature of the research may limit the generalizability of findings to the broader population in Mogadishu. Additionally, cultural sensitivities may affect participants' willingness to discuss certain aspects of early Marriage openly.

3.7 Contribution and Implications: This research aims to contribute to the existing knowledge on early Marriage in Mogadishu by providing valuable insights into the underlying causes, current prevalence, and socioeconomic consequences. The findings will inform evidence-based interventions to address early Marriage effectively and promote positive change for young girls and their communities.

3.8 Dissemination: The research findings will be disseminated through academic publications, conference presentations, and engagement with local stakeholders. The study's outcomes will likely spark discussions and collaborations aimed at addressing early Marriage in Mogadishu and improving the well-being of its population.

4 Discussion and Findings

4.1 Causes of Early Marriage in Mogadishu:

The qualitative data revealed that deeply rooted cultural norms and traditions primarily influence early Marriage in Mogadishu. Participants highlighted that marrying off young girls is seen as a way to preserve family honor, maintain social status, and adhere to customary practices. Moreover, poverty emerged as a significant driver of early Marriage, as families perceived it as a means to alleviate economic hardships and reduce the financial burden of raising daughters.

Girls' lack of educational opportunities was consistently cited as a contributing factor. Participants noted that societal expectations often prioritize domestic roles for girls, leading parents to prioritize early Marriage over-investing in their daughters' education. Additionally, the prevailing insecurity and ongoing conflicts in the region were highlighted as reasons for early Marriage, as families believe it provides protection and stability for their daughters in uncertain times.

4.2 Current Status of Early Marriage in Mogadishu:

The findings indicate that early Marriage continues to be prevalent in Mogadishu, with girls being married off at a young age. The brides' age distribution ranged from 12 to 16 years old. Participants reported that early marriage rates vary across different regions and communities, suggesting regional and cultural variations in the practice's prevalence.

Despite efforts by local organizations and international agencies to address early Marriage, the practice persists, and change has needed to be faster. Participants mentioned various barriers to effective intervention, such as resistance from conservative elements, lack of awareness about the harmful consequences, and challenges in enforcing existing legal protections.

4.3 Socioeconomic Consequences of Early Marriage in Mogadishu:

The data highlighted the detrimental socioeconomic consequences of early Marriage on young brides and their communities. Education was identified as one of the most affected areas, with early Marriage often resulting in limited educational attainment for girls. This limitation hinders their potential for social mobility and access to economic opportunities, perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

Early Marriage exposes young brides to health risks, including early pregnancies and a higher likelihood of maternal mortality. Moreover, participants noted that early Marriage subjects girls to increased vulnerability to

domestic violence and psychological distress, impacting their overall well-being.

The economic impact of early Marriage was evident as young brides faced restricted access to economic opportunities, leading to lower lifetime earnings. This financial strain also affects the prospects of their children, as limited resources hinder their access to education and better living conditions.

4.4 Implications and Recommendations:

The findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive interventions to address early Marriage in Mogadishu. Culturally sensitive awareness campaigns are necessary to challenge harmful norms and raise awareness about the negative consequences of early Marriage. Efforts should focus on empowering girls through education and promoting economic opportunities for women to break the cycle of poverty.

Policy reforms are crucial to provide legal protections for girls and hold perpetrators accountable. Strengthening the enforcement of existing laws against early Marriage is essential to discourage the practice. Collaborative efforts between local organizations, international agencies, and the government are necessary to effect meaningful change and promote gender equality.

Engaging community leaders and religious authorities in the dialogue is vital to foster acceptance of alternative practices and break the cultural barriers sustaining early Marriage. The findings of this study serve as a call to action for policymakers and stakeholders to prioritize the issue of early Marriage and work towards creating a safe and prosperous future for the young girls of Mogadishu.

5 Recommendations

Based on the discussion and findings, the following recommendations are proposed to address the issue of early Marriage in Mogadishu effectively:

1. **Comprehensive Awareness Campaigns:** Launch culturally sensitive awareness campaigns that target communities, parents, and religious leaders to raise awareness about the harmful consequences of early Marriage. Emphasize the importance of education for girls and the benefits of delaying Marriage. Furthermore, **Strengthening Education Opportunities:** Improve access to quality education for girls in Mogadishu. Implement initiatives that incentivize families to prioritize girls' education over early Marriage. Scholarships, feeding programs, and safe transportation options can help keep girls in school.
2. **Community Engagement and Empowerment:** Engage community leaders, elders, and influential figures to actively support efforts to combat early Marriage. Please encourage them to champion the cause of girls' education and advocate against early marriage practices within their communities. Moreover, **Legal Reforms and Enforcement:** Strengthen existing legal protections against early Marriage and enforce them rigorously. Policymakers should work towards eliminating legal

loopholes and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable for violating the law.

3. **Economic Empowerment for Women:** Promote economic opportunities for women through vocational training, microfinance schemes, and entrepreneurship support. Empowering women financially can provide alternative paths to self-sufficiency and reduce the financial motivations for early Marriage. Moreover, **Multi-stakeholder Collaboration:** Foster collaboration between local organizations, international agencies, government institutions, and civil society to create a holistic approach to addressing early Marriage. Pool resources, knowledge, and expertise to maximize the impact of interventions.
4. **Support for Victims:** Establish support systems and safe spaces for young brides who have experienced early Marriage. Offer counseling services, access to healthcare, and legal aid to help them cope with their challenges. Furthermore, **Research and Monitoring:** Conduct further research to monitor the prevalence and factors influencing early Marriage in Mogadishu. Regular data collection and analysis can inform the effectiveness of interventions and guide future policy adjustments.
5. **Advocacy for Policy Change:** Advocate for policy changes that support girls' rights, protect them from early Marriage, and promote gender equality. Collaborate with policymakers and lawmakers to draft and implement laws that align with international standards and protect girls' rights. Moreover, **Involvement of Men and Boys:** Engage men and boys in discussions about gender equality and the harmful effects of early Marriage. Please encourage them to become allies in promoting the well-being and empowerment of girls and women in their communities.

By implementing these recommendations, Mogadishu can take significant strides toward addressing the issue of early Marriage, promoting gender equality, and creating a more prosperous and equitable society for all its residents.

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