

Improving Child Marriage Interventions in Bangladesh

A literature review

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Improving child marriage interventions in Bangladesh

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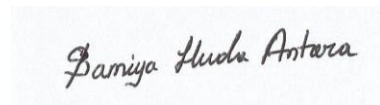
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Declaration:

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The thesis ""**Improving child marriage interventions in Bangladesh**"" is my own work.



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List of Abbreviations

ADP	Adolescent Development Program (ADP)
BSAF	Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BRAC IED	BRAC Institute of educational development
BNPS	Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys
DSK	Dushthya Shashthya Kendra
ELA	Empowerment and Livelihood of Adolescents
FAO	Food Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross domestic product
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
ICDDRDB	International Centre for Diarrheal Disease Research, Bangladesh
INGOs	International non-governmental organization
IMAGE plus	Initiatives for Married Adolescent Girls' Empowerment
KIT	Royal Tropical Institute
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
MOWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
PSTC	Population Services and Training Center
RHSTEP	Reproductive Health Services Training and Education Program
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SKS	Somaj Kollan Somiti
TDH	Terre des Hommes
U.S.	United States
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UBR	Unite for Body Rights

Executive Summary

Background and problem Statement

Child marriage is a problem globally but more for lower middle-income countries. Unlike her South Asian neighbors, Bangladesh has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world. Despite long standing interventions, the prevalence remains high in the country.

Study Aim

This thesis aims to understand the factors which are responsible for continuation of child marriage in the country and interventions that are addressing these factors. Along with the factors, it looked at the existing interventions in Bangladesh and interventions in other countries of South-Asia with similar context. Based on that, it suggested recommendations to reduce the rate of child marriage.

Methodology

The thesis is based on literature and desk study and findings were analyzed by using the "South-Asian framework to end child marriage" framework, proposed by UNICEF.

Results

Child marriage is both a social and a public health problem that continues to plague Bangladesh due to prevailing social norms, poverty, lack of security and climate change. There is also lack of awareness and enforcement of current laws against child marriage.

Conclusions

The fallout of child marriage brings forth a broad range of social and health complications for the individual, family, society as well as the entire nation. To achieve the SDG goals, we need to look at the initiatives of the past and build from that.

Recommendations

More scientifically sound research needs to be undertaken and interventions using mass media need to be encouraged.

Keywords - Child Marriage, Community, Social-norms, Poverty, Interventions, Bangladesh.

Word Count- 13049

Glossary

Child

For the purposes of this study, a child is defined as any person under 18 years of age. It is in accordance with international laws (1).

Marriage

Marriage is a social institution that stands for a union between two people and it allows some rights and responsibilities to the persons in the marriage (2). Marriage can be legally recognized or recognized culturally or both (3).

Child Marriage

Child marriage is defined as marriage where at least one party (either boy or girl) is below 18 years of age (4). In Bangladesh, the legal age of marriage for girls and boys are different. Child marriage is defined as marriage between a boy below 21 years and a girl below 18 years of age (5).

Gender

Gender is a social construct. It signifies the treatment, attitude and expectation of others in the society to a person based on his/her sex (6).

Slums

Slums are small urban spaces occupied by a large population, living in close proximity, characterized by small shanties and huts made of wood, plastic and sheet metal. In essence, they are temporary housing. Slums usually do not have access to safe water and sanitation options, have overcrowding and have frail housing (7).

Dowry

It is the system of exchange of property or valuables from the one family to the other family in marriage. Usually the practice is that property or valuables are exchanged from bride's family to the groom's family (8).

Misperception

It is the wrong understanding or judgement towards a subject matter often because of social or cultural biases. The Cambridge Dictionary defines it as "a belief or opinion about something that is wrong or not accurate" (9).

Introduction

Child Marriage is a multifactorial and multidimensional problem. It is both a social as well a public health problem. There has been multi-national agreement on elimination of marriage before 18 years and still child marriage is taking place around the world and millions of children and adolescents are suffering as a result (10). Child marriage is defined as “formal or informal union between a boy and girl where either or both parties are under the age of 18 years” (11). Child marriage affects girls and boys both, but girls are disproportionately more prone to be victims, as much as five times (12). According to UNICEF -state of the world's children report in 2017, stated that, between 2010 and 2016, 2% of adolescent boys and 26% of adolescent girls have been married as a child in the Low- and Middle-Income Countries (13). A UNICEF report published in 2018, delineated that the global estimate of child brides in 2018 was 650 million, of these the highest was in South Asia (285 million, 44% of the global burden) and the second highest was in Sub-Saharan Africa (115 million, 18% of global burden) (14).

Child marriage is an important problem in the context of Bangladesh. In 2018, Bangladesh had the fourth highest country-level rate of child marriage in the world, after Niger, Central African Republic and Chad (15). In the report of the 2014 Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey, cited that 22.4% under 15 girls and 58.6% of girls in total were married as children in Bangladesh (16). The issue of child marriage has been relevant in the era of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) due to its direct link with maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5.3 mandated elimination of child marriage as one of its targets by 2030. The latest Demographic and Health Survey (2014) showed that the prevalence of child marriage in Bangladesh is around 59% (17). Child marriage elimination is mandatory if Bangladesh wants to achieve the SDG targets.

For the last 5 years of my medical career, I was involved in the role of an educator, a part time medical specialist at an e-health platform and a physician at tertiary care hospital. No matter what my role have been, I have seen a commonly, the poor state of sexual and reproductive health of female. It starts from when a girl is at her parents and even after she becomes an adult and after marriage. She faces numerous challenges and violence in her lifetime. Of all these issues, child marriage makes the biggest impact on a girl's life, threatening to handicap her future. I have been working part time as a medical specialist answering queries regarding sexual and reproductive health of women and girls in Bangladesh. As a medical specialist, I used to give answers to the question related to SRHR issues. Most of the users were adolescent and I had to give accurate, empathic answers to them. Most of the queries were on contraception, menstruation hygiene, pregnancy related complications. In that period, we used to outreach for “SRHR rights for adolescents” in several secondary schools of the Bangladesh and found a smaller number of presence of girls in the school and they had lack of knowledge about consequence and interventions against child marriage. I also remember that while visiting my village, I saw a pale girl with a tiny child in her arms; I was told she got married when she was 14 and had a child when she was 16.

Experience from my work and personal life together have encouraged me to address child marriage in my thesis. Despite having long-standing program and policies, we still have high level of child marriage in the country. Hence, I wish to look at the interventions and what

more can be done. In addition, several other problems such as maternal malnutrition, child malnutrition, complications during pregnancy, maternal and child mortality are closely related to child marriage. Addressing child marriage can hopefully contribute to these problems as well. Therefore, through my thesis, I am trying to contribute to the knowledge and give evidence that can be readily taken up by program and policy towards ending child marriage.

Organization of Thesis

This thesis is organized in eight chapters. The first chapter lays out a brief introduction and a snapshot of the context in Bangladesh. Chapter two starts with the problem statement and justification. In this chapter, the objectives and details on methodology are also included, where I discuss, the system used for literature search as well as the theoretical and conceptual framework behind the thesis.

Chapter three outlines the findings in terms of extent of child marriage in other Asian countries and compares that with the prevalence of child marriage in Bangladesh. Chapter four discusses the factors that are contributing to the child marriage in Bangladesh.

Chapter five highlights the common interventions that have been ongoing in Bangladesh and tries to point to the shortcomings in these interventions. Chapter six outlines the key interventions that have been successful in reducing child marriage in other countries.

Chapter seven presents the discussion main findings, the study limitations and applicability of the conceptual framework. Finally, the thesis ends with the conclusion and recommendations for future interventions and adjusted policies to reduce child marriage.

Chapter 1 Background

The chapter sets the context where child marriage takes place. This chapter focuses on geography and demography of Bangladesh, socio-economic situation, administrative and political situation, literacy rate and health situation. In addition, to get oriented with the topic “Child Marriage” I have mentioned child and adolescent health indicators, sexuality education and government policy on child marriage.

1.1 Geography and demography of Bangladesh

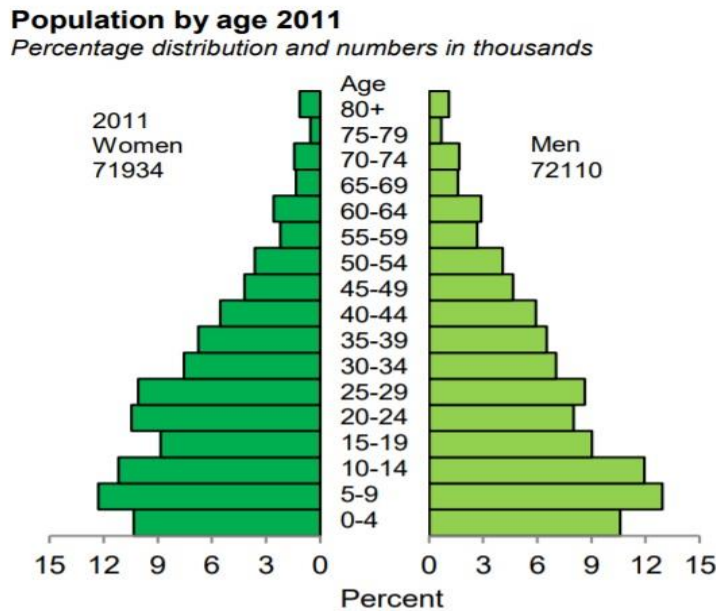
Bangladesh is a small South Asian country with a large population. It is bordered on three sides by India with a small gap in the South-East corner, where it shares border with Myanmar. The Bay of Bengal lies due South of Bangladesh. The total area of Bangladesh is 148,460 km² (18). Bangladesh sits in the largest delta system in the world composed of many major waterbodies (19). The land is mostly flat created by the silt deposit of the floodplains with some hilly regions in the eastern border with India and Myanmar (20, 21). A detailed map of Bangladesh geology can be found in figure -1.



Figure 1- Detailed administrative divisions' map of Bangladesh.
Source: maps of the world,
Accessed at <http://www.maps-of-the-world.net/maps-of-asia/maps-of-bangladesh/>

The climate of Bangladesh is tropical with average temperatures between 25°C -33°C. April is the warmest month with average temperature 33.7°C. January is the coldest month with the lowest average temperature (25.4°C) (22).

The population according to last census was 149,764,000 in 2011 and the projected population for 2016 and 2021 are 160,221,000 and 171,685,000 respectively according to the projection by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (23). The proportion of women to men in the population was nearly same in the last census carried out in 2011 (24). According to the Bangladesh Demographic and Health survey of 2011, the 28% of the population lived in urban area in 2011 (16). Life expectancy at birth is 71 years (69 years for men and 72 years for women) (16). Growth rate of population in 10 years (2001-2011) has been 1.37 percent only as a result of steady decline in fertility rate (3.3 in 1999-2000 to 2.3 in 2014) (16).



Source: Population & housing census 2011

Figure 2 - Population pyramid of Bangladesh

According to the latest Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2014 in Bangladesh, children under 15 years make up one third (33%) of the population and under 19 population are 44% of the whole population (16). While, more than one fifth are 10-19-year old boys and girls (16). The wellbeing of this large group of population is key to the progress of future of Bangladesh.

1.2 Socio-economic situation

Bangladesh is a secular nation with the majority of population belonging to Islamic Faith 86.6% followed by Hinduism 12.1%. Christianity, Buddhism and other faiths make up 1.3% of the population (25). Although the majority are Muslims, Bangladesh upholds the principles of secularism (26). Since August 2017, conflicts in Rakhine state saw exodus of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Refugees from Myanmar. The Rohingya number between 900,000 to 1,000,000 (26).

According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2018 by World Economic Forum, Bangladesh is among the top seven countries that were able to close more than 50% gender gap (27). That means, Bangladeshi women are now twice as likely than before to hold a job that had previously been dominated only by men. Women are working side by side in top positions in politics, law enforcement, military, public offices and diplomatic missions, other government and private organizations. In the report, Bangladesh ranked fifth among 149 countries in the world in terms of political empowerment of women. However, Bangladesh came in after 100 countries in the rest of the indicators (economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival) (27).

The World Bank classified Bangladesh as a Lower Middle-Income Country in 2015 (28). Bangladesh economy is largely agriculture based, with industrialization leading the way to further growth in the economy; the country is currently the second largest exporter of Ready-Made Garments (25). In the Fiscal Year 2011-2015, Bangladesh had an average GDP growth rate of 6.3% and per capita growth in GDP 4.9%. In the same time period, poverty ratio decreased to 24.8% (29). In Fiscal year 2017-2018, the per capita national income of Bangladesh reached US\$1,751 and the economy grew at 7.8% (30). Poverty and extreme poverty has been declining and in 2016 it was 24.3% down from 31.5% in 2010 (31).

1.3 Political and Administrative structure

Bangladesh gained its independence after a 9-month long war in 1971 with the oppressing forces of the-then West Pakistan (Current day Pakistan). Through the course of war, 3 million people became martyrs and hundreds of thousands of women suffered unimaginable degrees of violence (32, 33). Before surrendering, the enemies destroyed most of the infrastructures throughout the country and cold-bloodedly executed the most brilliant minds (teachers, artists, doctors and scientists) of the nation (34). After the war, the country was announced as a democratic republic and the constitution was written in 1972, which underwent 17 amendments as of 2019 (35). The first election was held on 7 March 1973 (36). Bangladesh is ruled by a democratic government, which serves for 5 years term each time. Elected representatives or Member of Parliament, who are chosen by the direct vote of the constituencies (37), forms the government.

The country is divided into 6 administrative divisions and 64 districts (figure 1 shows details of administrative divisions). The district commissioner, who preside over the local government structure (38), governs each district.

1.4 Literacy situation in Bangladesh.

The crude literacy rate is 64% with significant urban-rural (71% vs 59% respectively) and male-female (66% and 62% respectively) differences. Barishal division has the highest literacy rate (72.6%) while Dhaka division has the lowest literacy rate (62%) (39)

1.5 Health situation in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has achieved multiple Millennium Development Goals (MDG) set by the United Nations. Especially the indicators in Maternal and Child mortality have improved drastically. The population growth between 2001 and 2011 has been 1.37 percent (16). According to the Sample Vital Statistics 2017 Bangladesh has a crude birth rate of 18.5 per 1000 population, crude death rate of 5.1 per 1000 population, mean age at marriage for girls also increased to 18 years from 15 years in 2011 (39). According to the same report, access to safe drinking water went up to 98% (39). Since 2016, the Sustainable Development Goals have been brought into effect, where Bangladesh is also showing progress. The Bangladesh SDGs Progress Report 2018 states that Bangladesh is on track for reducing extreme poverty under SDG 1: End Poverty and reducing stunting from 2014 level (36.1%) and wasting (14.3%) under SDG 2: End Hunger. The 2020 targets for Under 5 mortality rate, neo natal mortality rate have already been achieved and other targets are close to achievement by 2020 under SDG 3: Healthy lives and Well-being. However, the disease burden of TB and malaria are still high and high prevalence of tobacco use is seen. HIV prevalence and incidence has been low. Under SDG 4: Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education, the gender parity in primary and secondary education has been achieved for decades. Progress has been also made on SDG 5: Gender Equality and Women Empowerment where Bangladesh ranks 48th in the world, which is far better compared to other South Asian countries. There have been also accomplishments in SDGs 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 7 (Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy) and 8 (Sustained, Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth and Decent Work). There is need for improvement in the rest of the SDGs, for which enhanced international support and cooperation has been recommended in the report (40).

Please refer to Annex 1 for the basic key indicators.

1.6 Child and Adolescent Health Indicators in Bangladesh

According to the latest census, the number of people aged between 5-17 years old are 39.65 million (41). There is widespread malnourishment among the children. According to FAO, in 2010 around 9.5 million children were stunted and a similar number were underweighted. (42). And nearly 1.3 million children in 2011 were engaged in hazardous child labor (41). The median age of marriage for women is still at 15.5 years (41). According to the Demographic and Health Survey 2014, one fourth of the total fertility is contributed by adolescents between 15-19 years of age (28). Compared to other countries in South Asia the adolescent birth rate is remarkably high (one in three girls in Bangladesh become mothers before their 15th birthday compared to one in 10 elsewhere in South Asia) (43,44). This high rate of adolescent childbearing is to a great extent caused by the high prevalence of child marriage in the country (45,46).

According to the Bangladesh Demographic Health Survey of 2011, girls as young as 14 years and boys as young as 15 years have been reported to have been engaging in sexual intercourse (47). So, it is important to ensure proper reproductive and sexual health services for them. The provision of services for adolescents in Bangladesh started only after 2015 whereby a few Adolescent Friendly Corners were set up at first and now the Government has a few such centers in different upazillas. According to the Adolescent Health Newsletter of 2016, the number of such centers numbered 101 across 13 districts (48).

1.7 Sexuality Education of Adolescent

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in the National Strategy for Adolescent Health 2017-2030, recommended circulation of accurate and appropriate information regarding adolescent reproductive health through national curriculum (49). But, due to the cultural context, the teachers have been found to be unwilling to teach it in schools and also the parents are sensitive towards teaching their children these topics (50). This picture is also similar for schools which receive NGO support for sexual health education by specially trained sexuality health education trainers (51).

1.8 Government Policy on Child Marriage

Legislature are important to restrict the prevalence of child marriage. The UN general assembly in its 71st session adopted a second resolution to end child marriage, in which it urged the member states to update or adopt laws and policies that can stop child marriage (52). The laws and policies in Bangladesh that are related to abolish child marriage and uphold the rights of children are briefly discussed below.

1.8.1. Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2017

In Bangladesh, the legal age of marriage is 21 for boys and 18 for girls. However, the not so before enacted "Child Marriage Restraint Act of 2017" included a special provision that is, to allow marriage of a boy or girl in exceptional cases at an age below the statutory age limit (5). A 2004 law stipulated the need to submit a birth certificate at the time of marriage (53).

1.8.2. The Children Act, 2013

Definition of child in Bangladesh context is defined differently by law and by social norms. When a boy or a girl are old enough to earn a living and reproduce, they are regarded as adults in society. With the enactment of the child act, the law of the land recognizes anyone under 18 years old as children (54).

However, there are no provision for trial for sexual violence against a child except rape (55) also the court has reservations in accepting children as witness (56). This creates legal barriers for seeking justice in harassment cases against children.

Chapter 2 Problem Statement, Justification, Objective, Methodology and Theoretical perspective

This chapter starts with an overview of the causes of child marriage and why this thesis is undertaken. It also goes on to lay out the objectives and elaborated on the methodology. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks are also discussed in this chapter.

2.1 Problem Statement and justification

Globally child marriage is defined with a cutoff age of 18 years (57). The age of 18 years is set in the context of attainment of majority. Most of the countries in the world defined adulthood as over 18 years of age. However, in case of Bangladesh, the definition had different age limits for boys and girls. The Majority Act of 1875 of Bangladesh gave a definition of adulthood as 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys. In line with this law, the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 2017 defined child marriage as 'marriage between a boy and a girl where one or both are underage, as in boy under 21 years of age and/ or girl under 18 years of age' (5). However, this very law also came with a legal loophole. According to the section 19 of this law, "a special provision" was included, which would allow children to be married off at any age in a special circumstance. The special circumstance was defined as one in which "the marriage is not regarded a crime when it is in the best interest of the child, directed by the court, agreed by the parents and maintains all the legal procedures" (5, 58). However, there have been no reported cases of child marriage taking place using this provision till date.

The factors behind child-marriage are numerous and context-specific. Social norms, poverty are some of the key factors which have been linked with child marriage around the world (59). The latest Demographic and Health Survey (2014) stated that the prevalence of child marriage in Bangladesh is around 59% (16). Which was more than 75% in 2011 (60). There have been improvements in child marriage over the past decades in Bangladesh as well as in the region. A study with Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) data from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan between 1991 and 2007 to assess whether prevalence of girl child marriage had changed over the past 17 years in these four South Asian nations found that prevalence of girl child marriage decreased in these four countries between 1991–1994 and 2005–2007. The study concluded that improvement in girls' education and increasing rural to urban migration may have furthered reductions in child marriage. It further highlights that the progress in delaying marriage have occurred among younger adolescent-girl group but not among older adolescent-girl population in the South Asian region (61). However, the burden of child marriage remains high for this region due both to the legacy of how common child marriage was in previous generations and to the region's large population (62).

The link between child marriage and maternal and infant mortality has been established by various studies (63-67). Kamal and Hassan in their study with the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2011 data found that risk of stillbirth and miscarriage was nearly twice as high in mothers having married as a child compared to those not married as child (64). Another prospective cohort study conducted in Northern Bangladesh also found child marriage contributing to obstetric complications and adverse pregnancy outcomes among women (65). Child marriage also impacts the mother's nutrition and ultimately wellbeing (66). This is not a separate incident only in Bangladesh. A multi country study with data from countries in

Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East also found the link of child marriage and adverse outcomes in pregnancy (67).

Bangladesh has done very well in multiple indicators of maternal and child health (62). In the span of just 10-year between 2001 and 2010, maternal mortality (MMR) fell from 322 to 194 per 100,000 live births (62). In recent years however, Bangladesh's has not been able to continue the achievement in maternal mortality (62) and the infant mortality is improving very slowly. According to the Bangladesh Maternal Mortality and Health Care Survey 2016, maternal mortality in Bangladesh is now 196 per 100,000 live births. This figure is similar to the 2010 level, so we can understand that the progress has now stalled (68). This can be linked with the high prevalence of child marriage in the country.

Before 2015, reduction of child marriage contributed to achieving the MDG goals 1-6. A 2012 UNFPA report stated the linkage between different MDG goals with child marriage (69). This is important as the momentum of MDG is carried unto the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and child marriage continues to remain important in achieving SDG targets related around poverty and hunger, education, gender equality, child and maternal mortality and HIV and other diseases (69). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5.3 also mandated elimination of child marriage as one of its targets by 2030. In fact, if we are unable to bring down the prevalence of child marriage, we will not be able to meet 8 of the 17 SDGs (70). In the next fifth year strategic plan of the government, the SDGs have been given top priority (29). If Bangladesh is to achieve the SDG milestones and ultimately the SDG goals, it is imperative that child marriage be eliminated in the country. Eliminating child marriage is an important step towards making visible gains in maternal and child health.

According to the recently published data from UNICEF database, the prevalence of marriage before 18 years in Bangladesh being 59% was the fourth highest in the world and the highest rate was recorded at 76% in Niger (71). But this may come as a surprise to many since there have been interventions against child marriage going on for decades in the country. The first law against child marriage in Bangladesh was enacted before the birth of the nation in 1929. Interventions against child marriage in Bangladesh have been in place for a decade. The first intervention started as early as 1974 when Ministry of Social Welfare introduced interest free loans to groups of 20 people who would vow to never engage in child marriage (72). The first adolescent clubs were initiated in 1991 by BRAC (72). Nearly a century after the law was passed and decades after the first intervention, Bangladesh is still behind ending child marriage. The other countries which are among the top five having highest rates of child marriage, were all from Africa. These countries also experienced different humanitarian emergencies currently or in the recent past (73-76). Niger is facing terrorism from the Boko Haram terrorists (73, 74). According to UNHCR since 2016 there have been ongoing inter-community violence in the Lake Chad basin which includes Niger, Chad and Central African Republic (75). Guinea is also faced with inter-communal violence from neighboring Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone and Liberia as well as Ebola outbreak in 2014 have created humanitarian emergency situation in this West African country (76, 77). There is evidence from humanitarian emergency in the Middle East that it can cause child marriage (78). Furthermore, these countries are far behind in economic and health indicators than Bangladesh (79). So, it is important to understand why despite the progress Bangladesh is

still seeing high rates of child marriage. Progress in child marriage reduction and elimination in Bangladesh has been much less compared to its neighbors. This jeopardizes future development of Bangladesh. So, there is a need to critically look at the evidence related to the interventions to see where there is scope for improvement in Bangladesh. There is currently a gap in knowledge regarding the current challenges and learning which is needed for course correction of the interventions.

2.2 Objectives

General Objective

To describe the factors contributing to persistence of child marriage in Bangladesh and finding the gaps in existing interventions in order to provide recommendations for interventions to improve the current situation of child marriage in Bangladesh.

Specific objectives

1. To describe types of child marriage and the magnitude of child marriage in Bangladesh and South-Asia for comparison.
2. To review factors contributing to persistence of child marriage in Bangladesh and the role of different actors in its causation.
3. To describe common interventions implemented to prevent child marriage in Bangladesh and to look at replicable interventions in other countries in South Asia.
4. To make recommendation for individual, family, community and policy makers to improve current initiatives in child marriage.

2.3 Methodology

Study Method

This study was designed as a review of existing literature and desk study from databases of Google Scholar and PubMed Central between February 2019 to July 2019. The method of literature review was used since it expands on previous work through merging and saturating what is known and helps identify gaps in knowledge. This method also allows for inclusion of documents of varied levels of data; given that we need to correlate with grey literature as well, this method is most suited for the study (80).

A literature search strategy was used to find records from both Google Scholar and PubMed Central. A total of 50064 (31664 from PubMed Central and 18400 from Google scholar) records were identified using the keywords.

Search Strategy

In the first step, only the main keywords were used, in the second step, secondary keywords were used and records identified with the help of secondary keywords. Total number of records were obtained by adding up the records obtained by using each keyword. After all the records were identified, a duplication removal was conducted with the help of Mendeley. Finally, 1832 articles were found pertaining to the issues. A primary screening of abstracts was done, which removed 851 articles. Further screening was done after downloading the full-text of all articles. Finally, analysis was done with 75 articles. Data from reports, policy documents and guidelines were also used to see the existing interventions along with different kinds of grey literature of the organizations or NGOs who are working on child marriage (search strategy for these articles is mentioned separately in Chapter Five).

Information regarding marriage (first age at marriage, percentage of child marriage) and women's empowerment were also retrieved from Bangladesh demographic and health survey (16), 2014.

Included Literatures

After reading the abstracts the literatures were chosen based on-

- Literatures only which were written in English, as the thesis is written in English as well.
- Articles which were on child marriage.
- Both peer reviewed articles and grey literatures published between 2009 and 2019, although some articles which were published before given time period for the relevance of data.
- Literatures which belong from the same-socio economic background of Bangladesh and other LMICs

Excluded Literatures

- Literature which only had the word child marriage but was not on child marriage.
- Literatures where the child marriage was a secondary topic.
- Literatures which were not fully accessible.
- Literature written in other languages.

Table 1 Literature Search Strategy

Sources	Keywords used for search strategy			
	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4
<p>Search engine and databases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Google scholar - PubMed <p>Websites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GirlsNotBrides - UNICEF - MOH Bangladesh - UNDP - Plan International Bangladesh <p>Journals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lancet - Journal of Adolescent Health 	<p>Keywords</p> <p>'Child Marriage' AND 'Bangladesh' OR 'India' OR 'Nepal' OR 'Sri Lanka' OR 'Afghanistan' OR 'Pakistan' OR 'Bhutan' OR 'Maldives'</p> <p>Secondary Keywords</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Types - Prevalence - South Asia 	<p>Keywords</p> <p>'Child Marriage' AND 'Bangladesh'</p> <p>Secondary Keywords</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family - Friends - Community leaders - Government - Service providers - Program people - Adolescent - Community - Young people - Poverty - Education - Female - Male - Gender - Sex - Pregnancy - Religion - Knowledge - Social norms - Values 	<p>Keywords</p> <p>'Child Marriage' AND 'Bangladesh'</p> <p>Secondary Keywords</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interventions - Reducing 	<p>Keywords</p> <p>'Child Marriage' AND 'Asia'</p> <p>Secondary Keywords</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - India - Nepal - Sri Lanka - Afghanistan - Pakistan - Bhutan - Maldives

2.4 Theoretical Perspective

The conceptual framework used in this thesis is based on the theoretical perspectives of Gender Stereotypes, Investment in human capital, family honor, power relation between members of the family and social norms.

2.4.1 Gender Stereotypes

In traditional societies there are stereotypical gender norms. These norms suggest women should be engaged in childbearing, child care, and household chores. While men are supposed to be able to economically support the family. Goody in 1990 theorized that this is linked with a demand for young brides who would be obedient and will easily take up the rules of the in-laws' household. Bergstrom and Bagnoli in 1993 described that the timing of perceived attainment of these roles is linked with the timing of marriage. While men's role as a provider is not established until they start to earn, it is understood that when a girl reaches physical maturity (reaching puberty), they are able to perform their roles already (81).

2.4.2 Human Capital and Investment

Another closely related issue with gender stereotype is the investment in human capital. This is explained by the human capital theory first by Becker and Mincer in 1975. The theory explains that education and training for an individual is dependent on the individual's pattern of lifetime earnings. So, in case of societies where stereotypically man is the provider, education and training investment are less likely to go towards girls. As a result of this, women or minority communities may be less likely to get education and training, so they may tend stay in poverty (82).

2.4.3 Family honor and security

According to Ortner's 1978 article, in many cultures, the honor of a family is dependent on the purity of their women and in 1988 Kandiyoti showed that this honor system is present in the context of many Muslim majority countries. Rozario described in 1992 that this purity is a perceived notion that is threatened as the girl starts to enjoy more mobility in her environment. Hence, in the context of a social structure where the purity of women is related to honor of a family, child marriage is encouraged indirectly so that the girl is married before her purity is questioned, which upholds the honor of both the bride's and the groom's family (81).

2.4.4 Power relation

Sidanius and Pratto in 1999 described the power relation between man and women and provided empirical evidence to substantiate their argument. Throughout history, the authors argue, men's dominance over women have been closely seen as their reproductive success. On the other hand, for women, the obtaining of resources through submission to men has been seen as the reproductive strategy of female (83).

2.4.5 Social Norms

The 'Social Norms Theory' was first described in 1986 by author Alan D. Berkowitz to describe alcohol consumption among college students (84). It describes one's understanding around the perceptions and actions of another member of the society or the perception of peer's attitude and behavior. The theory is described with a few simple terminologies: perceived norms, actual norm and misperception.

Perceived norms influence peers. It is what people actually view rather than the reality. It is caused by the unequal representation of problem behavior in the population. Where, actual norm is the real belief and the action of the population. Again, misperception is a state where there is a gap between perceived and actual norm, which creates the base for social norm approach. Misperception is quite common for people to have inaccurate perception of what the actual norm is. Here in misperception, People are more likely to over-estimate the number of peers who are engaged in problem behavior (e.g. smoking) and under-estimate the number of people who engage in healthy behavior (e.g. no-smoking). This misperception leads to perceiving the problem behavior as the norm among peers (85).

The social norm theory states that, overestimation of perceived norms in problem behavior may cause increase problem behavior among the population. Similarly, underestimation of perceived norms in good behavior can cause decrease of that behavior in the population. Thereby, misperceptions are responsible for difference between actual norms and perceived norms (85,86).

2.4.5.1 Social norms marketing interventions

Interventions to address social norms are called social norms marketing interventions (Annex-2). Social norms marketing interventions try to disseminate among the population, the true state of the actual norms and remove the misperception (e.g. only a small percentage of people drink excessively). Social norms interventions are different from other health advisory as it does not stigmatize the behavior or use scare tactics.

2.4.5.2 Limitations of social norms marketing

The mainstay of social norms theory is that perceived norms are over-estimation of problem behavior. If in reality, the society encourages and supports problem behavior, then in that case, social norms theory is not applicable.

2.4.5.3 Application in child marriage

Social norms marketing can be applied as a child marriage intervention as it highlights people who are already in the community and talks about real people. By highlighting the majority of people who do not support child marriage, it is made easier for the rest to follow.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

In this thesis, the conceptual framework is adapted from South Asia Framework to End Child Marriage by UNICEF South Asia (87). The research objectives are focused on the interventions to eliminate child marriage and its outcome, which is already included in the framework. Hence, it is used without any alteration.

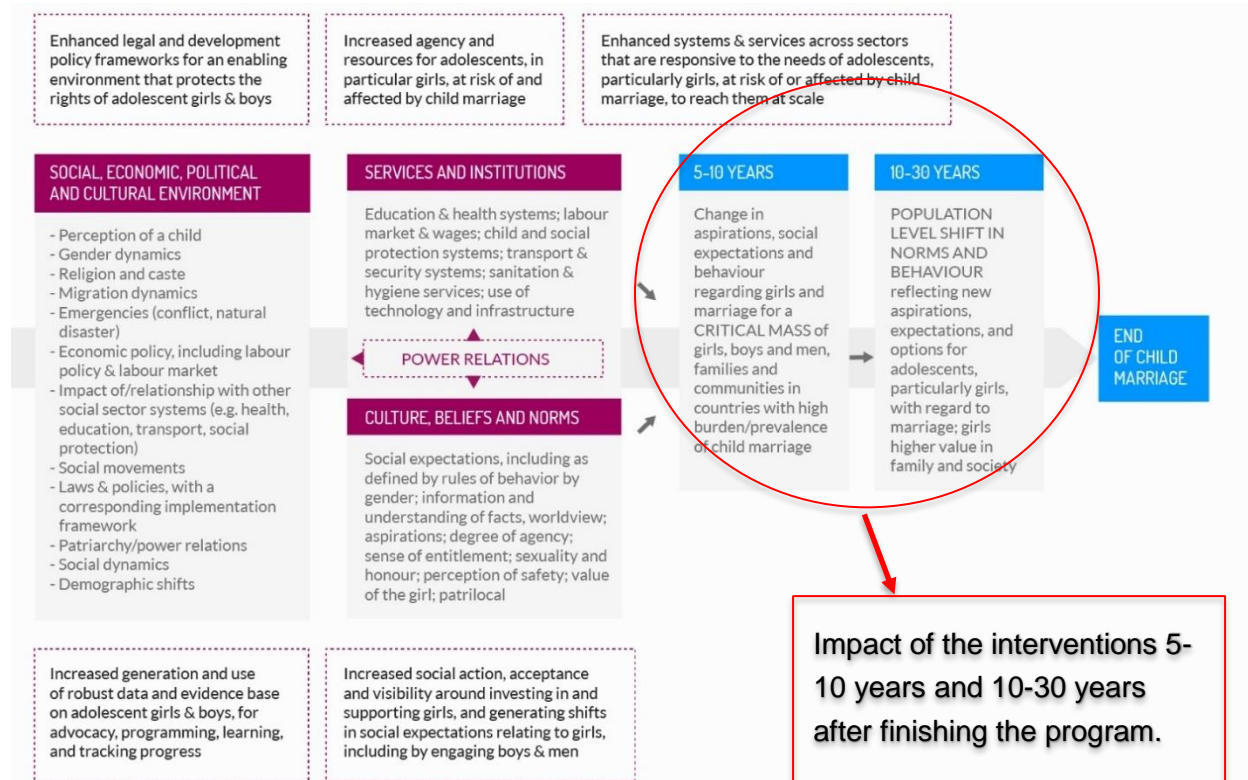


Figure 3: South Asia Framework to End Child Marriage

The framework explains the different factors that is contributing to the persistence of child marriage in South Asian countries. The theories elaborated in our theoretical perspective has been linked and described in this conceptual framework.

2.5.1 Components of framework

Social, Economic, Political and Cultural Environment

First of all, there are the factors that are related with stereotypical gender roles for example perception of girls' and boys' maturity and marital age. Then there are also socio-cultural factors like security and purity of a girl which are also related to gender.

Services and institutions

Then there are the services like education and health, which allow for better health and prosperity for the individual. This is again closely related to the gender roles and explained by the human capital investment elaborated in the theoretical perspective.

Cultural belief and norms

The third component in this framework is the social norm. The misrepresentation of actual norm causes increase in the problematic norm. This is also explained under the social norms explained in the theoretical perspective.

Power Relations

Finally, all the different components are interlinked and they interact by means of power relations. This power relation between the sexes is explained also in the theoretical perspective.

Thus, this conceptual framework binds together the concepts of the theoretical perspective and helps to analyze the causation of child marriage as well as the role of actors in the causation. The background understanding of factors and the role of actors enables us to go on to analyze the interventions and address their gap. It also incorporates the interventions and their impact. As such, this is the best model that fits our theoretical background and all our objectives appropriately.

The conceptual framework has informed the study starting from the selection of literature to the analysis phase. The factors listed in the conceptual framework guided the search of literature through broadening the keywords base regarding factors and interventions of child marriage. The conceptual framework was also useful during analysis, as it helped combine the ideas around the relation between different factors and how power affects this relation. Ultimately the linkage between factors and the interventions and outcome from interventions was also easily understandable since the conceptual framework explains it.

2.5.2 Prioritization of selected framework over others

In this thesis, the conceptual framework of Steinhaus et al. in 2016 regarding pathways of child marriage is not taken. Steinhaus (Annex-3) only focused on the factors and how they cause child marriage. However, the interventions are not included in this framework. We have also not taken the framework proposed by Wodon et al. (Annex -4). Since it is focused on the economic benefits of interventions and fails to adequately accommodate the objectives of looking at pathways of child marriage and the actors behind child marriage. Another framework which is similar to the one proposed by Steinhaus et al. is the one proposed by Bajracharya et al. in 2019 (Annex-5). This framework is not used in this thesis as it does not explain the pathways between different factors. It serves more as a map of interplay of different factors of child marriage. Another framework that explains the interplay of factors is the one used in the UNICEF Report titled "Key Drivers of child marriage in South Asia" (Annex – 6). This framework is not chosen for use because just like the framework by Bajracharya et al., it only serves as a map of interplay between the factors and fails to include the intervention aspect.

Chapter 3 Types of Child Marriage and Magnitude of Child marriage

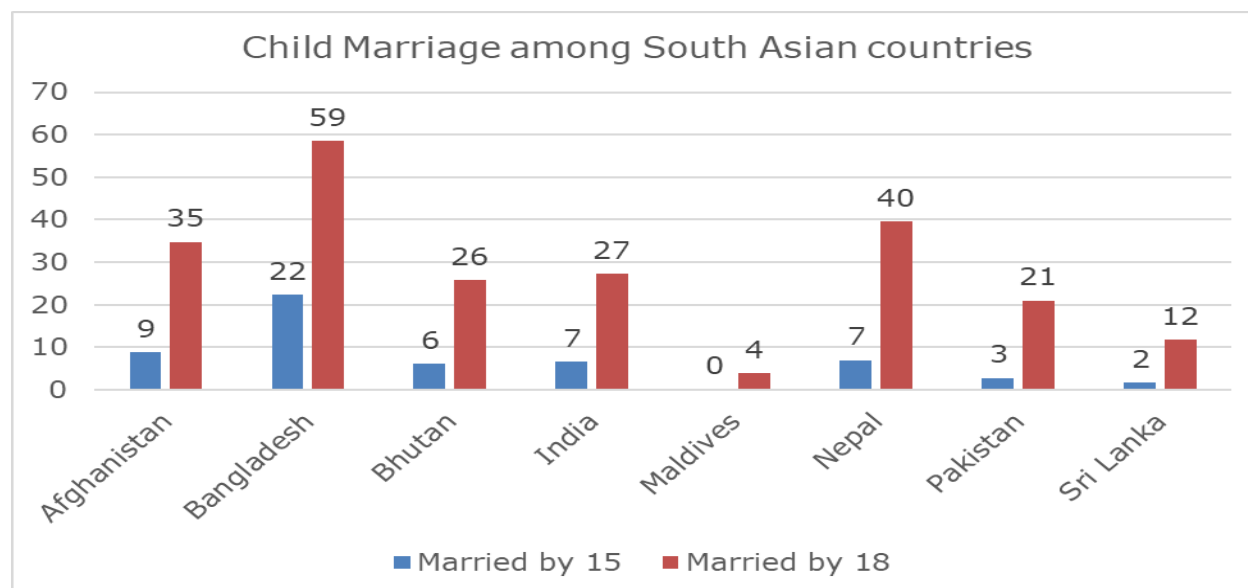
3.1 Types of Child Marriage in Bangladesh

Traditionally there are two types of marriage in Bangladesh. Arranged Marriage and Love Marriage.

Arranged marriages are fixed by the parents of the bride and groom. It is the most prevalent form of child marriage in South Asian countries as well as in Bangladesh (88). Arrange marriages have been the main form of child marriage in Bangladesh in the past. Love marriages are becoming an increasingly common type of child marriage in recent time. Love marriage are when a boy and girl become involved in an affair and as a result the families fix the alliance out of fear of promiscuity or defamation of the girl. Sometimes the children may even elope somewhere else to get married and start a family (89, 90).

3.2 Prevalence of Child Marriage in South-Asia

Culturally, child marriage has been practiced in different South Asian nations for long (62). A comparative study between four South Asian nations using the Demographic and Health Survey data (Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan) first looked at the trend of child marriage in this region (61). The study found that the trend saw a decline between 1991-1994 and 2005-2007. This decline was attributed to the improving girls' education and urban migration seen in these four countries (61). Comparisons involving all the South Asian countries found child marriage to be on the decline since 1995 (87). In 2015, nearly a third of all women in a sample of South Asian women aged between 20 and 24 reported having married before 18 years of age (87). The latest data available from UNICEF database (71) shows the latest observed prevalence of child marriage across the different South Asian countries, which is graphically represented below.

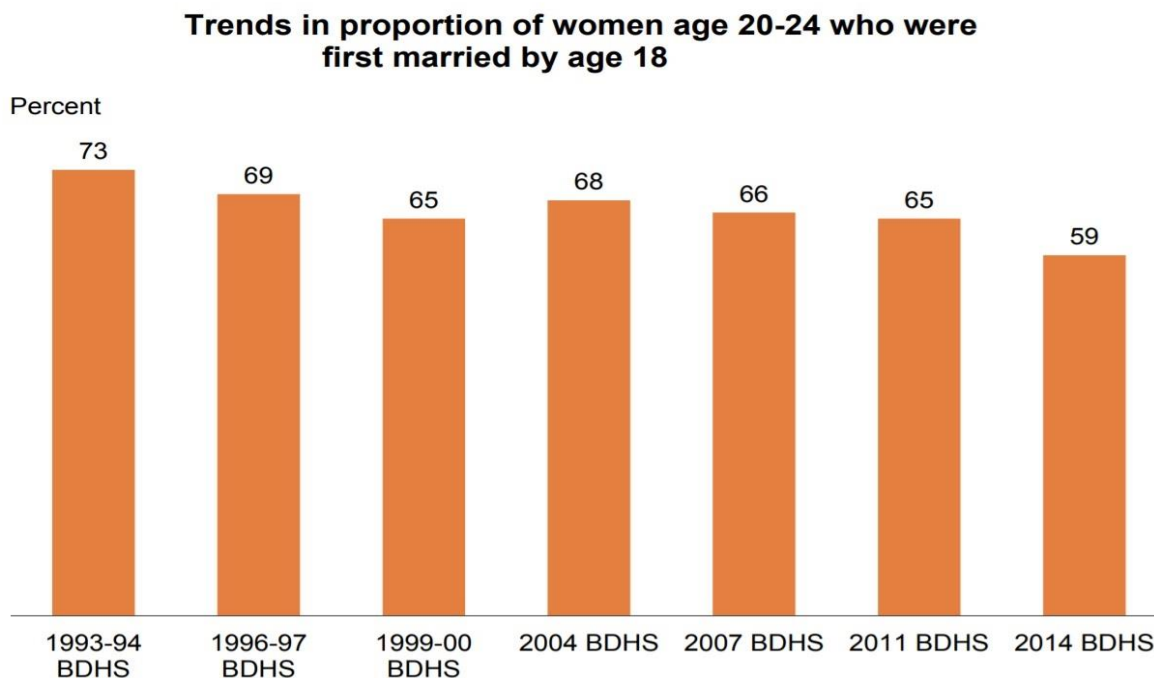


Source – Graphical representation of child marriage in South Asia; Data from UNICEF Data updated march '18

From the graph above, we can see Bangladesh having the highest rate of child marriage among the South Asian countries followed by Nepal and Afghanistan. India, Bhutan and Pakistan have similar rates of child marriage followed by Sri-Lanka. Maldives have the lowest rates of child marriage among all the South Asian countries. However, the point in time is not same for all the countries in this graph, it is made with the last available national level data from each country (Afghanistan 2015, Bangladesh 2014, Bhutan 2010, India 2015-2016, Maldives 2009, Nepal 2016, Pakistan 2012-2013, Sri-Lanka 2006-2007). This is important to note while interpreting the data, as there is considerable difference in time of data collection between the oldest and latest data points (Sri-Lanka 2006-2007 and Nepal 2016; nearly 10 years) (71).

3.3 Magnitude in Bangladesh

According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2012-2013, among the women who are currently married, 34.3% of them are within the 15-19 years age group. In case of women 20-24 years 18% were married by 15 years and 52% before 18 years. For women between 20-49 years, this rate was found to be 27% and 63% respectively. This finding indicates that the rate of child marriage under 15 has gone down significantly compared to marriage under 18 (90). The latest Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2014 found the rate of girls married before 15 was 22% and those married before 18 is 59% (16). The next report of MICS in 2019 and DHS in 2017-2018 are still in process, when published these reports will give the most up to date information (91).

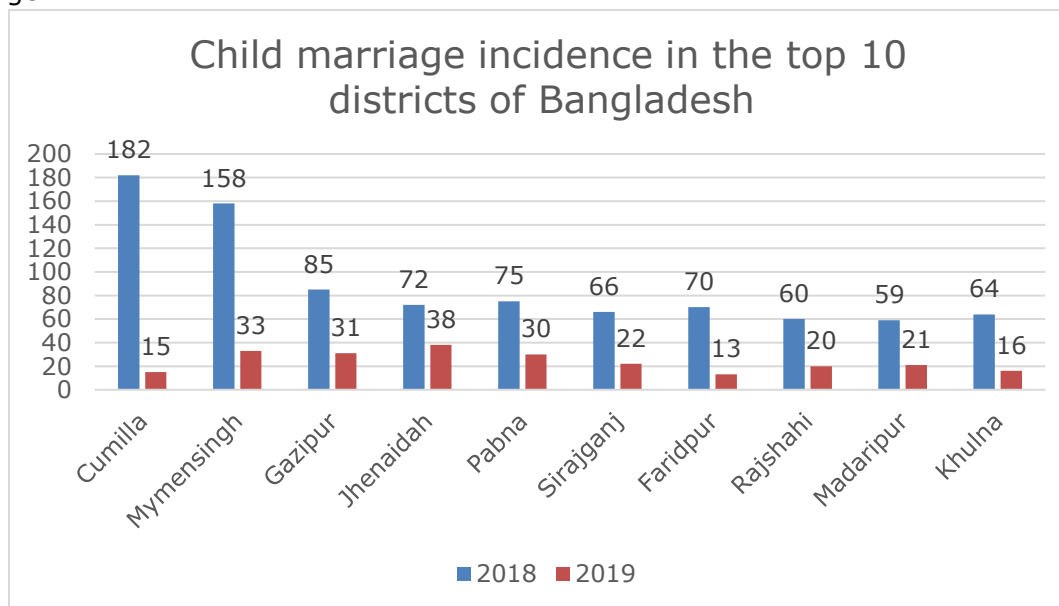


Source: Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2014

From the figure above, we can see the trend of child marriage among women between 20-24. Between 1996-1997 and 2014, the percentage has been changing within 2-6 percentage points. The trend suggests that the progress on child marriage decline is very slow in Bangladesh (16).

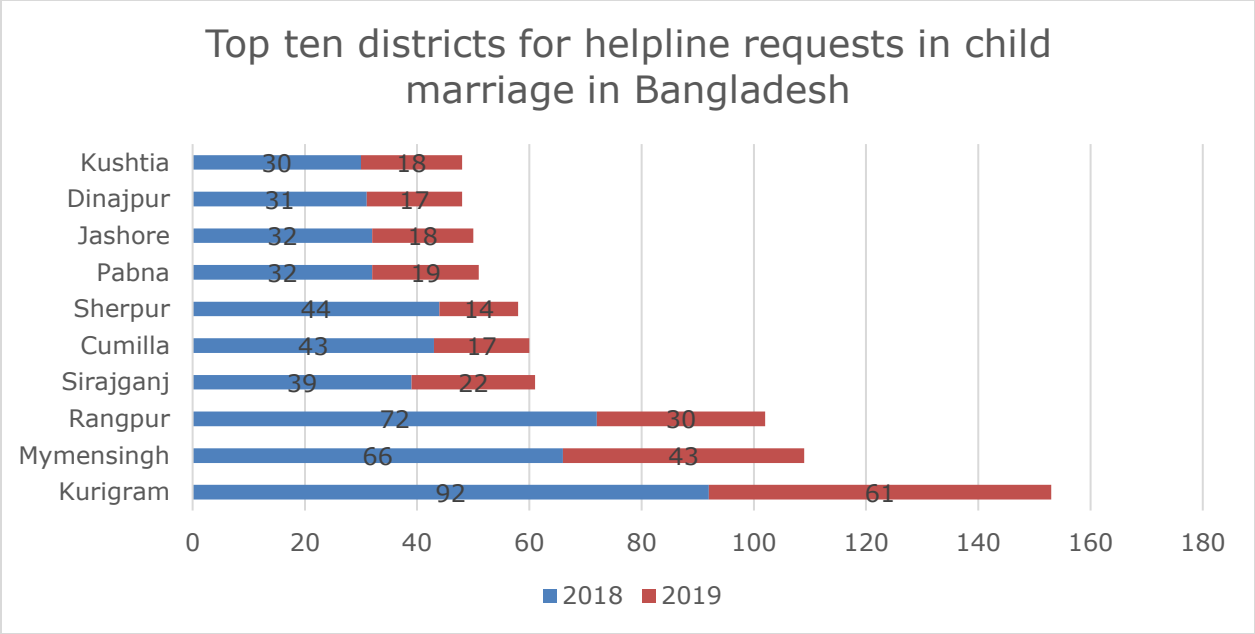
Besides national level estimates, there have been also estimates of child marriage of child marriage done according to selected locations under a few studies. A research carried out in 2014-2015 with 18246 respondents from three districts in the south of Bangladesh (Narail, Khulna, and Satkhira) under the BALIKA project in 2017 found child marriage rates between 17.5% to 20.5% with a mean of 19% among the girls of 12-18 years age (92). This rate is less than the nationally representative rate of child marriage among 15-19-year-old girls (45.2%) in 2014 (16). Another study conducted with 1613 women above 18 years of age, recruited between 2008-2011 from the northern district of Pabna, found prevalence of child marriage at 45% (93). This was lower than the national average (74%) of women aged between 20-49 at that time (60).

Since January 2018, the national child marriage MIS¹ (Management Information System) has been active. It is recording reported cases of child marriage in all 64 districts of the country. The MIS database logs both helpline requests for preventing child marriage as well as actual incidences of child marriage. This data has been used to generate a graph of top ten districts for incidence of child marriage and top ten districts for helpline request to prevent child marriage.



Source: National Child Marriage MIS Bangladesh, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs

¹ MIS stands for Management Information System which is the computer-based system to organize, evaluate and efficiently manage the departments in an organization.



Source: National Child Marriage MIS Bangladesh, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs

The graphs above show that Mymensingh district has both high incidence of helpline request (trying to get children married) and actual incidence of child marriage (actually conducting child marriage). While Kurigram has high incidence of helpline request but not actual incidence of child marriage. Cumilla has high incidence of child marriage but comparatively lower incidence of request (94).

Chapter 4

Factors that contribute to sustaining child marriage and actors role in child marriage

In this chapter, different factors will be presented which are responsible for child marriage to be still prevailing. In this chapter, we also discuss the roles of different actors in sustaining child marriage. The role of each actor will be discussed under the factors and how it is propagated.

Table 2- list of factors and actors behind child marriage

Factors	Actors behind it
Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government,• NGOs and CSOs,• People of the Community
Socio-cultural norm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents,• Community people
Security and Family honor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Groom,• Community people,• Local govt. and Law enforcement agencies,• The Qazi
Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community People,• Government,• International community

4.1. Poverty

Bangladesh is moving up the ladder to become a lower middle-income country, however, there are still a large group who are facing poverty. According to the Bangladesh Economic Review 2018, income poverty in Bangladesh is still at 24.3% (30). Largely because of the growing inequality, the poverty remains in the shadows. Poverty itself is a cause of child marriage directly also by means of dowry system. Since dowry increases with a girls age, poor parents tend to marry off their daughters soon (95).

Although Bangladesh has seen drastic improvement in its economy, there are still many of the people who still cross paths with poverty (62). Poverty is a crosscutting issue and there are many actors behind it. We are trying to cover some of the actors behind poverty in this brief section.

Another very closely related factor with poverty is the system of dowry. Through dowry, there is an exchange of valuables from the girl's parents to the boy's parents (96). This dowry is also linked with the perceived 'purity' of the bride. After menarche, the more time a girl spends unmarried, the less pure she is perceived to be, owing to her increased mobility outside home (95). As discussed in our theoretical perspective, it has been also found in a large survey in 2013 in Bangladesh that, dowry is a major cause of child marriage and dowry increases with age. So, poor families who cannot afford to pay the high dowry for an older girl marry their daughters at a young age (96).

4.1.1 Actors behind Poverty

Government

The government is an important factor in overcoming poverty. Through building infrastructure, ensuring and education health for the citizens and proposing poor friendly budget, the government has significant impact on the lives of the people living in the country. The government gives small loans to individuals for coming out of poverty.

Poverty and inequality are more rampant in places where governance and rule of law is weak. Right now, transparency and good governance scores for Bangladesh is appalling. With improved transparency and good governance in public institutions poverty reduction would have been more accelerated (97).

NGOs (Non-Government Organization) and CSOs (Civil Society Organization) NGOs and CSOs can play a very important part in overcoming poverty. Bangladesh has been an incubation center for micro-credit. Which has revolutionized the poverty reduction effort throughout the world. At the same time, microcredit programs have encouraged women empowerment (98). In 2018, two of the biggest NGOs with large microcredit programs, BRAC and Grameen Bank reported loans disbursement of total 1,86,416.13 crore and 1,77,445.98 crore Bangladesh Taka (BDT) respectively (30).

However, there have been debates around sustainability of microfinance and its true ability to reduce poverty. Author Sana Khan in her 2009 article argued that microfinance does not account for the market size and hence may in turn merely redistribute the poverty between those borrowing from microcredit programs and those who are not (99).

People of the Community

The people of the community are community leaders, neighbors and relatives, who can help each other to overcome poverty through forming community societies. These societies lend out small loans to individuals to help them establish their business and promote entrepreneurship within the community. Thus, individuals and families come out of poverty (100). Most importantly, it is the community people who need to change their view on girls as burdens to their families. The economic prosperity of Bangladesh has been driven by the role of women in the economy, garments workers coming from supportive rural families and communities have been the driving force in changing the lives of their families as well as the nation (101).

In Bangladesh, the community leaders, neighbors and relatives impose strict sanctions on women's work. As evidence from a study with female garment workers in Bangladesh found that women working outside home was seen as a threat to the gender hierarchy. In many incidents, the hierarchy was enforced with violence sexual assault by the intimate partners (102). Through aiding in such act, people of the community discourage women empowerment and discourage coming out of poverty.

4.2. Socio-Cultural Norm

Some of the factors responsible for child marriage is to do with deep embedded rituals within the social and cultural mindset of the people. These normative understanding is linked with the social position of a girl in the society. We have grouped such factors under the socio-cultural norm. It is not that the norms and understanding are always popular, but the misperception of these norms being popular opinion influences the increase of these problematic norms. As discussed in the theoretical perspective, the positive social norms are not widely advertised and hence its prevalence is under-estimated. While the deviant behavior is more advertised and hence over-estimated in the society. This creates a problem because people accept the deviant behavior for the norm although it is not in reality.

Socio-cultural norms can be broadly described by the following sub-themes-

A. Age at Menarche

According to research carried out in other countries of South Asia (103-105), age at menarche is an important predictor of child marriage. This is linked with the social norm of a girl being regarded as an adult as soon as she starts to menstruate. Researchers from Harvard University using data from Bangladesh found that age at menarche was also a factor in child marriage in case of Bangladesh (106). In other studies from South Asia (103-105), it was seen that age at menarche can be a cause of child marriage, alone or in conjunction with drop out from school (girls may drop out from school at the start of menstruation for lack of hygiene facilities or cultural factors surrounding menstruation).

B. Religion

Religion is another area where there are multiple misperception and wrong social norms exist which are especially related with child marriage. In Bangladesh, it is resulted that, there are many misconceptions around religion and people follow their religion mostly with little understanding around their actions. The practice of child marriage has also been validated by false religious sentiments which makes it hard to repel and contributes to its continued propagation (60, 107).

C. Gender Roles

Strong socio-cultural norms regulate gender roles in the family and society (60). Gender roles are responsible for sustaining child marriage. Parental attitude towards education of boys and girls are differently informed by gendered values and norms as shown by research conducted in Bangladesh (93). It has been also found that in Bangladesh, a female child is more likely to face absenteeism compared to a male child for household work (108). This gender role ultimately causes dropout of girls from school and ultimately early marriage of the girl (109, 110).

D. A girl's attractiveness

In Bengali, there is a saying "Kuritei Buri" (meaning- girls are old when they turn 20). In Korean men (both old and young), a preference for young and fertile female is seen among men who have the power over women by paying "bride price" (111). However, this pattern was not found to be true for those who did not follow the practice of bride price. A meta-analysis of published literature from 2014 showed similar trends of men's preference for younger and more beautiful women while women preferred older and more wealthier men (112). In Bangladesh, there is a social idea of teenage girls being desirable (113). The reason

a teenage girl is thought to be attractive in the context of Bangladesh needs to be explored with narratives from grooms and their family.

E. Better opportunity for girls

One of the reasons the girls' family want to marry them off early is because at the end of the day, there is limited option for the girl to engage in a job with good earning potential. There is also an understanding that it is natural to have to give bribe to get employment and, in this case, this bribe is thought as more of an investment (96).

The social norm dictates that it is okay to invest for the future of the boy but not the girl.

4.2.1 Actors influencing socio-cultural norms

The most influence that actors within a society can exert are through creating and sustaining different socio-cultural norms.

Child marriage is thus regulated by different actors who contribute to the socio-cultural norms. The actors under this heading will be discussed from the most proximal to most distal.

Parents

Parents are the most important actors when it comes to transmitting as well as acting on the social norms. Many a times, they may negate the girls voice because of the patriarchal norm. In this sense, the issue of whether or not a woman consents to marriage becomes almost meaningless, because it is recognized that a woman would never contradict a choice. Also, the norm around marriage is that parents decide marital alliances for their children and the children do not have any say in this matter. Even for adult woman, the suitor is chosen by parents (114). It was true even for people who shared the same cultural background but emigrated to other countries (115).

Community People

Community people (Leaders in the community, relatives and neighbors) also influence and impose social norms on parents. It has been seen in different research that the people in the community start to talk about a girl's purity or whether she has a bad omen (96). Thus, the people in the society continue to nurture a norm of marrying girls early.

4.3. Security and family honor

In Bangladesh, violence against women are still not widely shunned. A study conducted among men looked at their opinion on domestic violence on their spouses found that most men seem to think of it as not a crime and part of their right as a man (116). Similarly, the lack of initiative from male onlookers in incidents of street harassment and other violence against women bear testament to the fact that there is need for more work on violence against women in Bangladesh. According to the latest reports by Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF), a total of 496 children have been victim of rape in 2019. In 2018, the number of children facing such violence was 351 (117). Such huge increase of violence against children has put parents in fear of their child's safety. Security of the girl child is an important predictor of child marriage. According to a study carried out by Plan International and ICDDRDB in 2013, many parents prefer arranging early marriage for their daughters since it is a normative understanding in society that marriage ensures the daughters security (96). In Bangladesh, there is also a culture of impunity when it comes to violence against women, coupled with victim shaming and victim blaming, people do not feel interested to pursue the legal system for these matters (118).

4.3.1 Actors influencing security and family honor

The aspect of security is a very wide and complex one. It is the preservation of oneself as well as the preservation of the image of self. So, security does not only mean protection from physical harm but also harm on the abstract image in the mind of others.

The Groom

Boys seem to have higher decision-making authority in the scheme of marriage relative to women, particularly when they are financially independent and help the family financially (96).

Community People

In the South Asian culture, much of the honor is controlled by the society (119). Even when the girl is a victim of harassment, she is almost in all cases also blamed to have fallen victim to the crime and can even drop out of school because of the barrage of victim blaming by the people in the community (120).

Local Government and Law enforcement authorities

There are also local government authorities and law enforcement agencies who have an important role to play to both ensure that the cases of harassment and other kinds of violence are brought to book as well as ensure no man can marry underage girls.

The Qazi

In Bangladesh, marriage is officiated by a state appointed Qazi² and marriage registrar. Their role is huge in legalizing the marriage. Although, it is possible to be only married by religion, unless a marriage is officiated by a qazi, it is not legally acknowledged. Hence, marriages are almost always conducted by a qazi. The qazi is also a member of the community and hence carry the same socio-cultural values within. He is an important actor to emit and change the socio-cultural norms on child marriage. In many cases, the Qazi's do not demand the birth

² Qazi: is the person in Muslim personal law who can execute judicial and extra-judicial laws like marriage.

certificate for groom or the bride. They are in most cases indifferent of the age of the people in marriage (121). By asking to show birth certificate, they confirm the age of the bride and groom.

4.4. Climate Change

Climate change is an important factor that is behind the sustaining of child marriage in Bangladesh. Climate change causes extreme weather events, for instance drought, flood, heavy rainfall, riverbank erosion, saltwater encroachment and submersion in coastal areas etc., which causes the loss of valuable assets like land or house, domestic animals and causes internal migration of population which ultimately leads to poverty. A review of literature from disaster prone areas around the world, done by Holy Atkinson and Judith Bruce found that climate change made adolescent girls the most vulnerable to different kinds of human rights violation including child marriage (122). In Bangladesh, there has been research conducted on some disaster effected settings. Research carried out in Sunamganj and Brahmanbaria District have established the link between child marriage and flood (123,124). There are also published grey literature that highlight the empirical data of internally displaced people due to climate change. A UNICEF report titled "A Gathering Storm" highlights case studies of child brides who are victims of climate change and the poverty that follows. Because of climate change families face poverty. In search of a better survival, they abandon their homes and try to find a living in big cities as internally displaced people. However, the poverty and insecurity of life in a temporary housing (slum) in the urban space creates even more threats to the girl, who is ultimately married off as a child (125).

4.4.1 Actors influencing effect of climate change

Community People

People living in a community, through helping each other and improving their capacity to adapt with changing climate, neutralize the effect of climate change. In case of a rural Bangladeshi community living close to the river, this adaptability is again dependent on education, social network, livelihood strategies etc. (126). By enhancing capacity and being oriented with innovations that allow them to sustain in their environment, the communities prevent poverty and internal displacement because of climate change.

Government

The government is the most important actor when it comes to climate change. The government agencies which deal with environment and people afflicted with natural disasters contribute to climate resilience through building climate resilient infrastructure and investing in research and innovation in climate resilience (122-125).

International community

Through multilateral and bilateral cooperation, the international community focused their effort on Low- and Middle-Income Countries which are facing the brunt of the climate change. They have built consensus for climate justice and making efforts to hold those accountable. Industrialized nations by supporting capacity building as well as research and innovation in climate resistant communities in coastal and other disaster-prone areas of lower income countries, contribute to reduce the effect of climate change on communities (127).

Chapter 5

Common interventions in Bangladesh

Efforts to reduce child marriage in Bangladesh has been ongoing for a long time. The first law criminalizing child marriage was passed in 1929 as the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929. The latest revision is done in 2017 (5). Despite having law and policies for nearly 90 years, child marriage is still prevalent in the country. There are different government and non-government projects which have been carried out on child marriage.

The literature review of published and grey literature containing the details of different ending child marriage initiative in Bangladesh was done at the beginning of the thesis. This helped identify 17 peer-reviewed and grey literature which helped identify the interventions that have been ongoing between 2009-2019. The search strategy is shown in the methodology section with objective three being relevant for this chapter.

We have tried to group the most common of the 22 initiatives thematically in this chapter, starting with the most common theme and ending with the least common theme for any intervention. The grouping is shown in Table 2.

5.1 Description of Most common themes and approaches that are identified

5.1.1. Women and girls' capacity building Intervention

The most recurring theme (11 out of 22 interventions found) of the interventions were capacity building and life-skills training. There are both interventions from Government as well as Non-Government Actors. The interventions in this category are based on the development of skills within the adolescent and children so that they can pursue a successful career, thus increasing the value of the girl's child in a society where they are by default seen as lesser than boys. The interventions range from incentives for education to increasing their capacity through life skills training, education and peer support network etc. Several of the interventions in this category have long standing impact on child marriage and social development. The Female Secondary Stipend Program (FSSP) was such a program that has been carried out in Bangladesh by the Government. The first pilot of this project began in 1982 with eight thana out of 500 in Bangladesh. Since 1994, it started full-fledged across the country. Under this program, secondary education expense for all girls were supported by the government. In addition to the direct cost, indirect cost was also covered with a fixed stipend for books and other expenses related to attending school. It was different from Food For Education (FFE) started in 1993, because under FSSP, boys were not eligible for the stipend and unlike FFE the stipend was given to the student (128). Other government interventions such as establishment of Adolescent Clubs also work on improving the capacity of adolescents. Under this program, the government has established 870 clubs in Dhaka and Barisal. These clubs have 21196 members, of which 11488 are girls and 9537 are boys. The clubs have prevented 895 child marriages (129).

Among the capacity building projects by NGOs in Bangladesh, the Adolescent Development Program (ADP) is the oldest. ADP first started in 1993. Under the program, adolescent girls are aimed at improving literacy and life skills training among adolescents. With this aim

adolescent clubs were established across Bangladesh and till date there have been 9000 adolescent clubs established throughout the country (130). Another project by BRAC is the Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescents (ELA) which established safe spaces for teens to discuss their problems with peers (131).

5.1.2. Social awareness Intervention

The next most common theme in interventions identified was social awareness and community engagement. Both Government and NGO actors also work on various strategies to involve the community. Under this theme the interventions range from discussion with influential within the community to challenging gender norms through mass media, local media and innovative role play (e.g. men in cooking competition) etc. The Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP) Information, Education and Motivation (IEM) unit has been producing materials to build awareness on this issue (132).

5.1.3. Services for adolescents

Another common theme among the interventions was the provision of services for adolescents. The services can range from reproductive health to legal counselling. These services aim to reduce child marriage that is often caused by the girl being engaged in an affair with a boy or becoming pregnant. Sometimes child marriages also result from violence against girls, which can be addressed by legal services for adolescent and children (133-136).

5.1.4. Implementation of laws and policies

Bangladesh revised the child marriage restraint act of 2014 and enacted the child marriage restraint act of 2013. However, the implementation of the act is the one that is lacking the most. Other policies that govern child marriage are Birth and Death registration project that aims to reduce child marriage by introducing real time verification of birth date. There is also National Children Policy 2011 which is yet to be implemented in all levels. Under this policy, the government aims to protect the rights of all children from threats such as violence, child marriage, trafficking and forcing into commercial sex (137).

5.1.5. Rehabilitative Interventions

We found only one intervention that worked towards improvement of the quality of life for married adolescent girls. The IMAGE Plus project worked towards improvement of the the adolescent married girls through livelihood training and other capacity building activities (138).

5.1.6. Interventions with both capacity building and social awareness component

There have been also interventions that contain both capacity building and social awareness components. Accelerating Protection for Children is such an intervention, which has both capacity building and awareness raising components. In Bangladesh, children have been trained on online safety by a leading telecommunication company, training 400000 students and 73000 parents and teachers. This project has also established child welfare boards in 52 upazillas, which will help in the identification and transfer of conditional cash transfer for at risk children (139). Another such project in Bangladesh is the program on Accelerating Action to End Child Marriage. It is part of the Global Program to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage (GPECM) undertaken in 12 high prevalence countries with child marriage. Through this program, 13000 girls have been trained in life skills and education in Bogura and Jamalpur between 2016-2019. The girls were selected from 72 communities of these two districts. The aim of the project is to find sustainable ways to integrate community engagement in the capacity building of girls and thus create sustainable programs for ending child marriage

(140). Among interventions of non-government organizations, Shouhardo incorporates both capacity building and social awareness components. The project established EKATA groups who directly stopped child marriage in their community (141).

5.1.7. Interventions with both social awareness and service component

My literature review found one intervention which contain both social awareness and service components. This intervention, Growing up Heathy and Safe (SAFE), was implemented in three slums of Dhaka city. It involved group sessions to raise awareness, community mobilization campaigns, health and legal aid services and networking and advocacy. The intervention was successful in bringing down prevalence of marriage before 15 in the intervention area as well as incidence of multiple marriages, compared to baseline levels (142).

This table number three is prepared by analyzing the activities of the 22 interventions and grouping it thematically.

Table 3 -Interventions to reduce child marriage in Bangladesh

	Capacity Building/ Life skills training	Social Awareness	Services (Health, Legal)	Implementati on of laws and policies	Rehabilitatio n of married girls
Government Intervention	1. Female secondary school stipend program 2. Adolescent Club	1. Awareness, Sensitization and Motivation by Information, Education and Motivation (IEM) unit	1. Multi-Sectoral Program on Violence Against Women 2. Reproductive and Adolescent Health Program	1. Birth and death registration project. 2. National Children Policy 2011 3. Child Marriage Restraint Act 2013	
	1. Accelerating Action to End Child Marriage in Bangladesh 2. Accelerating protection for children.				
NGO Intervention	1. ADP/ELA (BRAC) 2. Girl Power Programme (Plan) 3. Kishoree Kantha (Save The children)	1. Gender Quality Action and Learning (BRAC) 2. Tipping Point (CARE)	1. UBR 2 project (RHSTEP, PSTC, DSK, BNPS and BAPSA, BracIED, Bandhu and Nairipokkho) 2. Hello I Am project (RHSTEP, PSTC, DSK, BBC media action bangladesh.		1. IMAGE Plus project (TDH foundation, SKS foundation)
	1. Souhardo (CARE) 2. BALIKA (Population Council) 3. KAISHAR adolescent program (Save the children)				
		1. SAFE project (icddrb, BLAST, Nari Maitree, Marie Stopes, Pop Council and We can campaign)			
	1. Asia Child Marriage Initiative (Plan)				

A detailed list of the interventions found in Bangladesh that have been mentioned here with their key activities, achievement and year of operation can be found in the Annex-7.

5.2 Gaps and limitations in Interventions

The interventions in Bangladesh against child marriage work specifically on the girl child. It does not focus on the prospective groom, many of whom may be themselves children as well. It is important to target the parents as well as the boy child as well in order to prevent this from happening (143).

Limitations of Interventions

Factors like, poverty, climate change and social security cannot be addressed in a single intervention. Cross cutting factors such as these require multilateral engagement and development in a global scale. It is also not possible for one actor to work on these issues alone and needs a multi-actor involvement. In case of climate change, the problem is even bigger than actors within the constraints of a geographic location. Here, it is more a worldwide collaboration and cooperation that is needed to reduce the impacts on women and children and to repel the threat of child marriage.

Interventions which are now working on child marriage, be it from the government or the non-government side, are mostly funded through foreign aid and donor funds. The problem with such funds is that it is highly volatile and results tend not to be sustainable due to the short duration of the projects. There is a lack of research and interventions initiated by in country funds.

5.3 Replicable interventions from other countries is South-Asia

Different initiatives have been successful in reducing child marriage in our neighboring countries. It is important to look at those practices and take the practices, which can be replicated in our context. Among the countries of South-Asia, Bangladesh has close cultural linkage with India, Nepal and Pakistan. We will therefore be mainly focusing on interventions that are taking place in India, Nepal and Pakistan.

Here table number 4 represents, thematic grouping of the interventions in surrounding countries on prevention of child marriage. The full list of interventions with key activities, achievements and duration can be found in Annex – 9.

Table 4 Interventions in other South Asian Countries

	Capacity Building/ Life skills training	Social Awareness	Services (Health, Legal)	Implementation of laws and policies	Rehabilitation of married girls
Government Intervention	1. Community based rural livelihood project – Afghanistan 2.		1. National Adolescent Health Strategic Plan 2013-2014 – Bhutan 2. Rashtriya Kisho Swasthya Karyakram 2014 – India 3. National Adolescent Health Strategy, 2014 – India	1. Mandatory birth registration – Afghanistan 2. National Youth Policy 2014 – Afghanistan 3. Law on elimination of violence against women in Afghanistan 4. Child care protection act 2011 – Bhutan 6. Prohibition of child marriage act – Government of India	
	1. National Strategy Document on Prevention of Child Marriage 2013 - India 2. Apni Beti Apni Dhan - India				
	1. Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG)/ SABLA - India				
NGO Interventio	1. Mahila Samyakkha Sangha - India				
	Asia Child Marriage Initiative - India				

A detailed list of the interventions of South-Asian countries that have been mentioned here with their key activities, achievement and year of operation can be found in the Annex-8.

Below some interventions among those in the table, have been chosen to be discussed due to the innovative nature of the interventions and those which can be replicable in the context of Bangladesh.

5.3.1 Building Children Organizations

Through the Asia Child Marriage Initiative, Plan International has been working on creating children organizations in India. This has been a success as these organizations are building the capacity of children so that they can work to prevent child marriage on their own (144).

5.3.2 Residential Secondary Education for girls

Organizations in India have established secondary education camps for girls. These camps allow the girls to be educated in secondary education in a residential environment and have been seen wide acceptability from the parents (145). These residential camps are an important intervention as it can be an answer for security issues that the girls face while their way to schools.

5.3.3 Child Grooms as advocates

Tipping Point project in Nepal is introducing former child grooms as allies to ending child marriage. Such practice can also be replicated in Bangladesh. It is important to motivate the men by highlighting the ills of marriage at an early age. Programs in Bangladesh have failed to include the men in prevention of child marriage. As a result of which, there is still a demand for child brides in the country. It is important to engage the men and their parents as well in intervention so that they decline to marry underage or marry a girl who is underage (146).

Chapter 6 Discussion

This section describes the primary results of the thesis in relation to the theoretical framework components. The debate related aspects such as measures, results and impacts of contextual variables in Bangladesh and South Asian nations. In addition, a reflection is produced on the relevance of the structure and the constraints of the research.

6.1 Key Findings

Literature published till date shows high prevalence of child marriage in South Asia. However, the prevalence is going down although slowly. In South Asia, Bangladesh has the highest prevalence among all other countries followed by Nepal. The latest figures on child marriage are being compiled at the moment in DHS surveillance for 2017-2018 which are supposed to give more up to date accurate data. The national prevalence according to latest data from Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey is 59% (16), the countries which have similar prevalence of child marriage are plagued with volatile socio-political condition such as (civil war, terrorism etc.) whereas, Bangladesh is having such a high rate of child marriage despite not having faced such humanitarian crisis. This is important to note because while civil war and terrorism can have temporary rise of child marriage, it is reversible. However, when a country has other long-standing causes behind child marriage, it takes longer to bring the prevalence down. So, it is important to focus on Bangladesh if we want to achieve the SDG goal.

The Literature review highlighted also factors that are responsible for child marriage. Among factors, there are Socio-cultural norms which promote child marriage. Such socio-cultural norms include understanding around age at Menarche. In the South Asian culture, age at menarche is a special point where there are several socio-cultural norms that support child marriage. Adulthood in case of the girl is understood as closely related to menstruation. Besides these, there are gender stereotypical norms which are also important to note as they predict the girl child's chance of getting an education or being equipped to earn a living by herself. Ultimately, it results in child marriage. Religion and false religious explanations also aid child marriage. This factor is seldom targeted and intervention designed for its rectification. There are also socio-cultural norms that associate a girl's attractiveness with her age. In Bangladesh, older age girls are thought to have become too old to be beautiful. There is also disparity with regard to legal age of marriage, which subconsciously gives the understanding that a bride should be younger than the groom. Hence, the younger the groom, the younger the bride is searched, thereby it promotes child marriage. The socio-cultural factors need to be addressed with large scale communication campaigns which can have an impact on the thinking of the community. Because, people will only change their practice when they are educated of the ills and they can see the benefits. When many people change their practice, they ultimately change the social norm.

Besides norms that promote child marriage there are other factors such as security, climate change and poverty which are important when looking at the sustenance of child marriage. Social security is also an important factor for child marriage. Because of the lack of security and the understanding that marriage brings security in a girls life, parents are arranging their daughters to be married off as children. To counter this trend, effective measures against gender-based violence need to be in place. The laws on violence against women and children have been enacted already, what we need further is implementation of the law and proper education to both boys and girls to stop violence in the society.

Climate change is a global phenomenon the effect of which transcends national boundaries. With more years of inaction, the effect of climate change is increasing by geometric proportions. Climate change causes natural disaster or extreme weather conditions, which pushes families into poverty and thereby cause child marriage. This is becoming more prominent factor for coastal and families on the margin. To counter the damages of climate change, a much larger force is required than just the community or the government of the country. Firstly, because the perpetrators of climate change are not the people who are being victims of climate change. People of low-lying countries such as Bangladesh are victims of climate change. The industrialized countries who have been emitting greenhouse gases need to take responsibility of their actions towards climate change and help the climate-afflicted people to improve their livelihood. They need to invest in climate proof infrastructure and sponsor building climate resilient communities.

There have been different types of interventions ongoing in Bangladesh. Many of these interventions are targeting to prevent child marriage through addressing different factors. The interventions can be grouped according to the factors addressed. For poverty, interventions like stipend program and female education programs are important. To address social norms, a mix of social awareness and capacity building interventions are necessary.

To prevent girls from initiating marriage themselves and for improving their self-esteem, girl advocate groups and capacity building interventions are necessary as well as extending sexual and reproductive health services towards them. However, religion and use of religion to validate child marriage have not been explicitly targeted by any of the interventions that have been found in Bangladesh. Also, many of the interventions have been traditionally targeted only girls. Only one intervention (Tipping Point) out of all the programs had some activities of male involvement in their structure. These were a few of the limitations among the interventions in Bangladesh.

Another problem with interventions in Bangladesh is the tubular vision while designing and implementing interventions. Child marriage does not occur in vacuum with factors only impacting child marriage. There are many cross-cutting factors such as climate change and poverty, which are issues related to development and progress of a country. Interventions hence need to have social, economic, health and all the different perspectives to it so that there is a holistic improvement in the quality of life of the community.

Published literature indicates also that initiatives to decrease violence against women in Bangladesh need to be strengthened and needs much more awareness targeted towards the people who are nearby.

6.2 Research Gap

Research carried out on child marriage in this region as well as Bangladesh have almost always focused on the factors that push a girl towards child marriage. It is also important to understand the demand side characteristics of child marriage. Research has not really looked into why a groom or their parents are choosing a young bride.

6.3 Relevance of the conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for this study has been adapted from Asia Child Marriage Initiative framework as it was the most suitable, containing both the factors of child marriage as well as the interventions aspect. This framework has been proposed by UNICEF South Asia Office (87). The framework binds together the theoretical perspectives described in Chapter 2.4. The framework helped during analysis of the factors that are responsible for continuation of child marriage in Bangladesh. It also helped to look at the interventions as they target the factors. The framework contains a list of positive changes on the right-hand side. These are the necessary changes in social norms and personal understanding that contribute to long term impact. However, where this framework still has a lacking is in addressing the different actors. This framework does not help to visualize the role of different actors in the prevalence of child marriage or their role in making these interventions successful.

6.4 Strength and Limitations of the Study

The study incorporates literature from both published peer review journal as well as other grey literature. This is itself both a strength and a limitation of this study. Because of using grey literature such as reports and website resources, the methodological rigor of this study has been compromised. Again, since this study is not only limited to peer reviewed articles, it is also encompassing important insights from the programmatic aspect, which is important when discussing an issue such as child marriage, on which many interventions have been going on for so long. These documents hold important lessons learnt, which have been incorporated in this thesis.

The literature review also only includes articles that are written in English. There may be important insights from other LMIC countries, which may have been missed due to not looking at other language documents.

Chapter 7 Conclusions and Recommendations

This section provides the main observations and proposals based on analysis of the review and also, the conceptual framework.

7.1 Conclusions

Despite extensive attempts and important investments in both program and policy levels across the country, child marriage still remains a gross breach of human rights of girls in Bangladesh. This thesis aimed at summarizing the causes of sustenance of child marriage in Bangladesh.

Through literature review, it identified these factors and linked with the common interventions that have been carried out in the country.

The replicable interventions from other countries were also included within the review. The interventions show an innovative addition to current programs ongoing in Bangladesh. For example, the provision of residential secondary education addressed both education and security, a barrier to education for girls in Bangladesh, at the same time. Again, interventions around raising awareness have been in place in Bangladesh. But involving child grooms and sharing their stories can attract male inclusion in the programs which have been missing in case of Bangladesh. This way, the innovative interventions address the root cause and include the important actors in eliminating child marriage. This will hopefully give future directions for implementation of the recommendations. Poverty, socio-cultural norm, social- security, climate change are the identifiable major responsible factors for still persistence of the problem. On top of that, there is insufficient monitoring and evaluation, resource constraints and weak enforcement of law, which have all helped the problem to persist.

The review found that mass communication campaign, enactment and implementation of appropriate law and measure against child marriage and gender-based violence (GBV) and finally building capacity of girls are important interventions to eliminate child marriage. Capacity building interventions include creating advocacy group, educational and vocational program for girls and stipend programs. However, the deeply embedded socio-cultural norms are most likely to limit the participation of girls in capacity building programs. In order to face this challenge, child marriage needs to be addressed in conjunction with raising awareness on harmful social norms and gender roles.

At the same time, along with formal and informal education, extended information and accessibility to SRHR services are needed. Through improving accessibility of SRHR information and services, children and adolescents become more aware of their reproductive and health choices and are in a better position to make informed decisions. Parents must be included in the awareness intervention as traditionally marriage is arranged by parents of boys and girls.

The findings suggest, that interventions in the context of Bangladesh have been mostly donor funded and for short duration. We need to explore ways to make this more sustainable through improving community and state ownership of such programs.

The fallout of Child marriage brings forth a broad range of social and health complications for the individual, family, society as well as the entire nation. If Bangladesh is to move ahead with development and achieve the SDG goals, then we need a multispectral approach to eliminate child marriage. In order to take precise and effective decision, we need to look at the initiatives of the past and build from that.

7.2 Recommendations

The following proposals address the indicators, which have been discovered to contribute to child marriage attitudes and practices. Recommendations include actions involving policy makers, community level, family level and individuals. Proposed suggestions are given based on the factors such as-

To eliminate poverty, to protect security and family honor, to bring a change in socio-cultural norm in the society and to survive from the disastrous aftermath of climate change.

7.2.1 Recommendations for policy level:

1. Improve the **safety net** around poverty and violence in the society. **State ownership** of poverty reduction strategies that have been refined by NGO and CSOs.
2. Govt. to sponsor **research and innovation** on factors driving child marriage.
3. **Encouraging school-based interventions** which provide legal & sexual and reproductive health services to adolescents. **Implementing** sexual and reproductive health education under government curriculum and have **session on sexual and reproductive health** in Parent-Teacher meetings.
4. **Firm implementation of birth registration and marriage registration** by linking other public services with it. Introducing **stricter punishment** for violence against children. Adopting **zero tolerance for sexual violence** against children.
5. **Strengthen anti-corruption commission and improve transparency** within the government. Ensure best use of tax payers money to build infrastructures throughout the country.
6. Demand **climate justice** at International Court of Justice. **Support climate affected population** to adapt and avoid sliding into poverty.

7.2.2 Recommendation for intervention level

7. Implement **innovative as well as proven ways** for reducing poverty and child marriage. Develop interventions which are **multifaceted and address more than one factor** at a time and implement such interventions with the help of the government and other actors. Raise awareness in the community by using **popular theater** etc. as well as have **influential leaders as champions** for the cause. **Include boys** in adolescent clubs. Take up **innovative education (e.g. Edutainment, Residential camps) projects** for children and adolescents.

8. Integrate **implementation research** within the interventions to generate evidence and create better interventions in future. **Close monitoring** of interventions and important indicators of child and adolescent health and rights.

9. **Extensive cooperation** with government agencies, other NGOs and UN agencies in order to avoid duplication and maximize result.

10. **Support families** by raising funds inside community to ensure the girl child stays in the school and the family can come out of poverty. Create a system for young boys and girls to pick up **practical life skills** by working in different community institutions as apprentice. **Create formal and informal adolescent networks** for boys and girls to be aware of and take action to stop violence and child marriage in their community. Create **dialogue** between parents and teachers to stop child marriage. Meaningful participation of children and adolescents in the decision making and governance of local government institutions. Support victims of violence by creating victim support groups and **publicly shaming the perpetrators**.

7.2.3 Recommendations for research

More scientifically sound research needs to be undertaken on the effectiveness and impact of different interventions in Bangladesh. Interventions need to be inbuilt with scientific learning and adaptation mechanisms in order to create better outcome at the same time be part of the evidence for future reference

There is an urgent need for further research to help nations to raise resources to combat child marriage and work with government authorities and communities to guarantee early and forced marriage eradication. Research must be conducted keeping in mind –

1. Active participation of adolescent in research
2. Research on disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalized adolescents
3. Research on enabling and protective system for adolescents

Lastly, we can say, practices based on evidence will help unite and build capacity across global and regional platforms to reduce child marriage in Bangladesh.

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Annex- 1

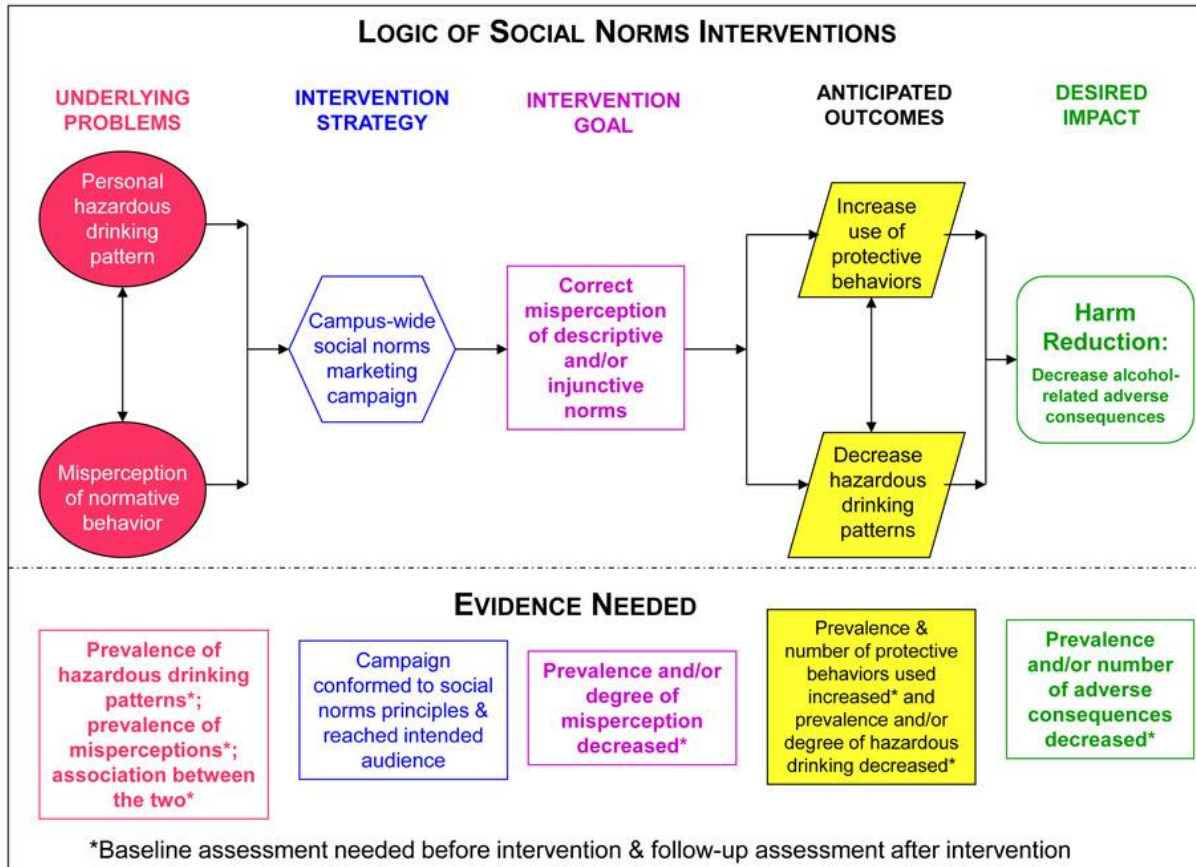
Key indicators: Bangladesh	
WHO region	South-East Asia
Child health	
Infants exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life (%) (2014)	55.3
Diphtheria tetanus toxoid and pertussis (DTP3) immunization coverage among 1-year-olds (%) (2017)	97
Demographic and socioeconomic statistics	
Poverty headcount ratio at \$1.25 a day (PPP) (% of population) (2010)	43.3
Gender inequality index rank (2014)	111
Human development index rank (2014)	142
Health financing	
Total expenditure on health as a percentage of gross domestic product (2014)	2.82 (Bangladesh note)
Private expenditure on health as a percentage of total expenditure on health (2014)	72.10 (Bangladesh note)
General government expenditure on health as a percentage of total government expenditure (2014)	5.66 (Bangladesh note)
Health systems	
Physicians density (per 1000 population) (2015)	0.472
Nursing and midwifery personnel density (per 1000 population) (2015)	0.267
Mortality and global health estimates	
Neonatal mortality rate (per 1000 live births) (2017)	18.4 (Both sexes)
Under-five mortality rate (probability of dying by age 5 per 1000 live births) (2017)	34.7 (Male)
	30.0 (Female)
	32.4 (Both sexes)
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100 000 live births) (2015)	176 [125 - 280]
Sustainable development goals	
Life expectancy at birth (years) (2016)	71.1 (Male)
	74.4 (Female)
	72.7 (Both sexes)
Births attended by skilled health personnel (%) (2017)	67.8
World Health Statistics	
Population (in thousands) total (2016)	162 952
Population proportion under 15 (%) (2016)	28.9
Population proportion over 60 (%) (2016)	33.7
Literacy rate among adults aged >= 15 years (%) (2007-2012)	58

Source – GHO | Key Country Indicators | Bangladesh - key indicators

Accessed at- <http://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.cco.ki-BGD?lang=en>

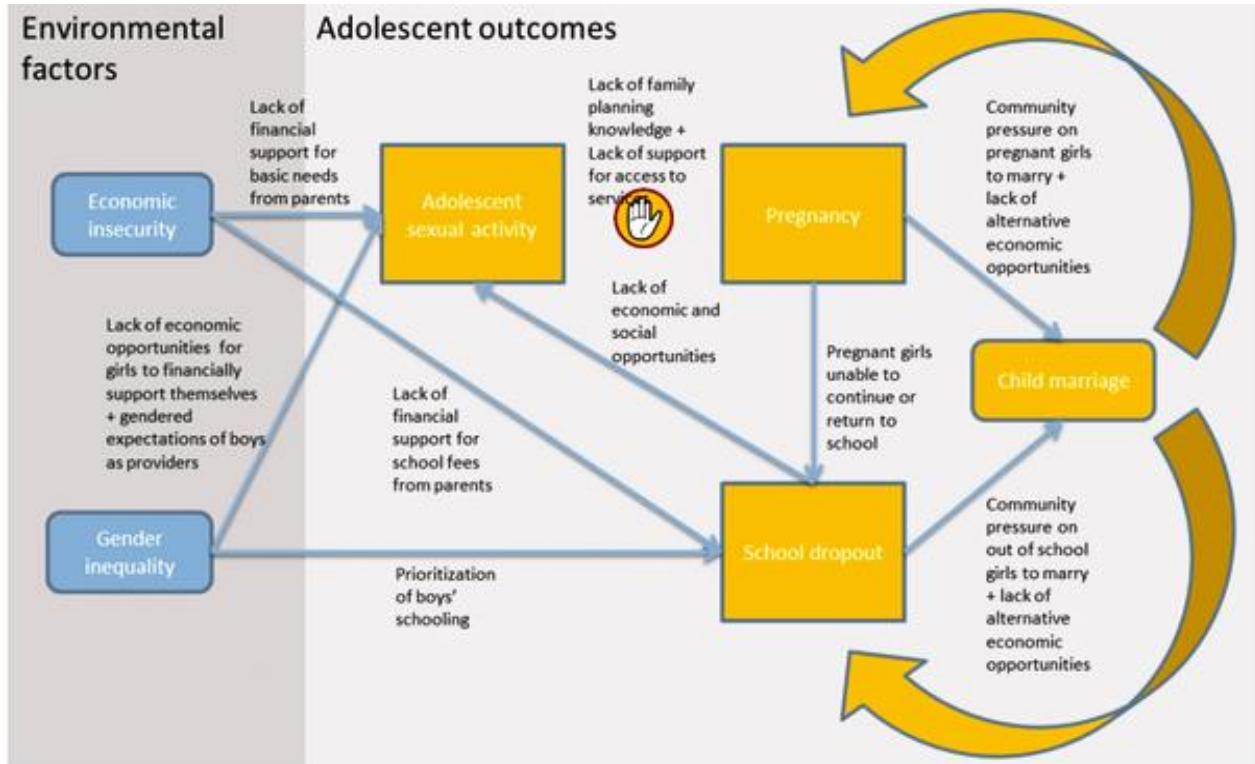
Annex-2

Logic behind Social Norms Intervention.



Source: Keller, A., & Bauerle, J. A. (2009). Using a logic model to relate the strategic to the tactical in program planning and evaluation: An illustration based on social norms interventions. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 24(2), 89-92.

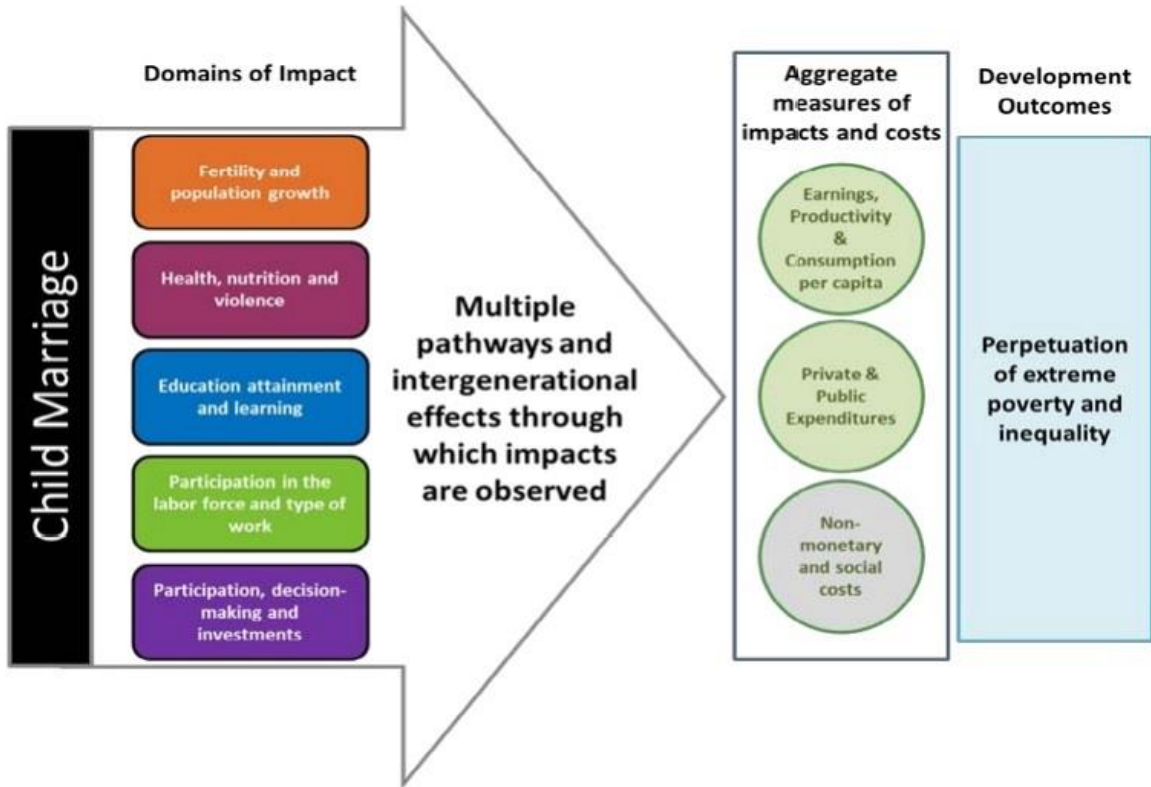
Annex 3
Pathways to child marriage and ways to disrupt them by ICRW



The ICRW report condenses researchers findings into a map showing the pathways to child marriage and ways to disrupt them. (ICRW)

Source – Steinhaus, M., Gregowski, A., Stevanovic Fenn, N., Petroni, S. 2016, "She cannot just sit around waiting to turn twenty": Understanding why child marriage persists in Kenya and Zambia. Washington: International Center for Research on Women

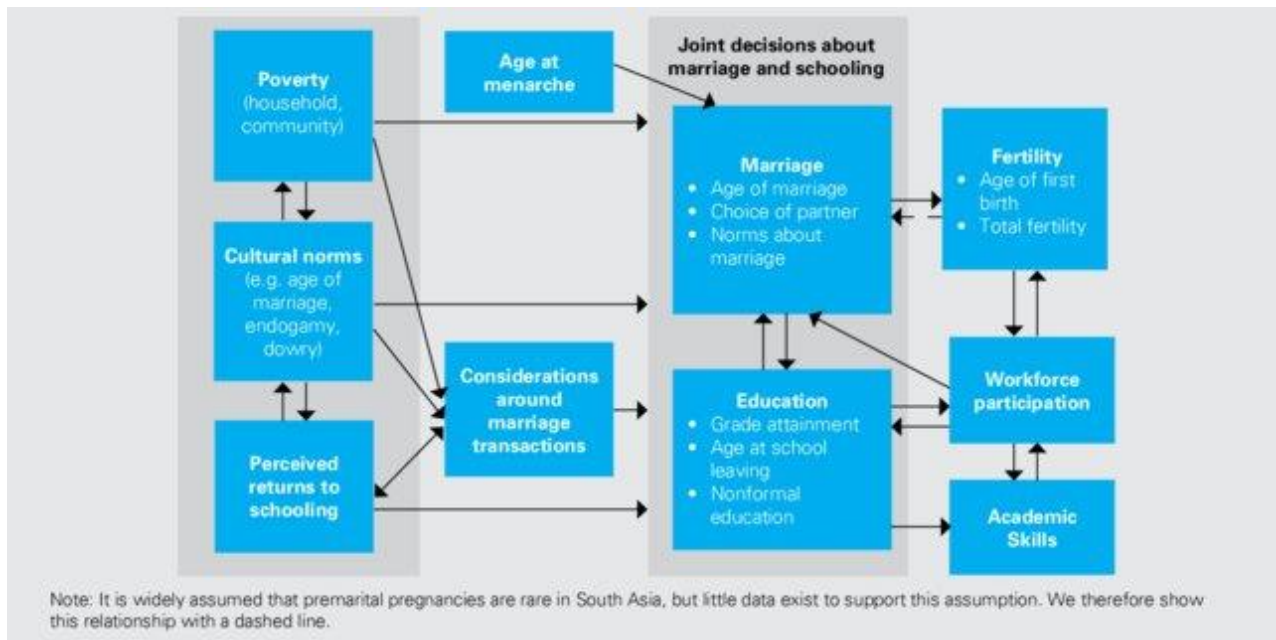
Annex-4
Framework for economic effect of child marriage



Source - Wodon, Q., Petroni, S., Male, C., Onagoruwa, A., Savadogo, A., Edmeades, J., Kes, A. and John, N., 2015. *Economic impacts of child marriage: Preliminary findings from analyses of existing data.*

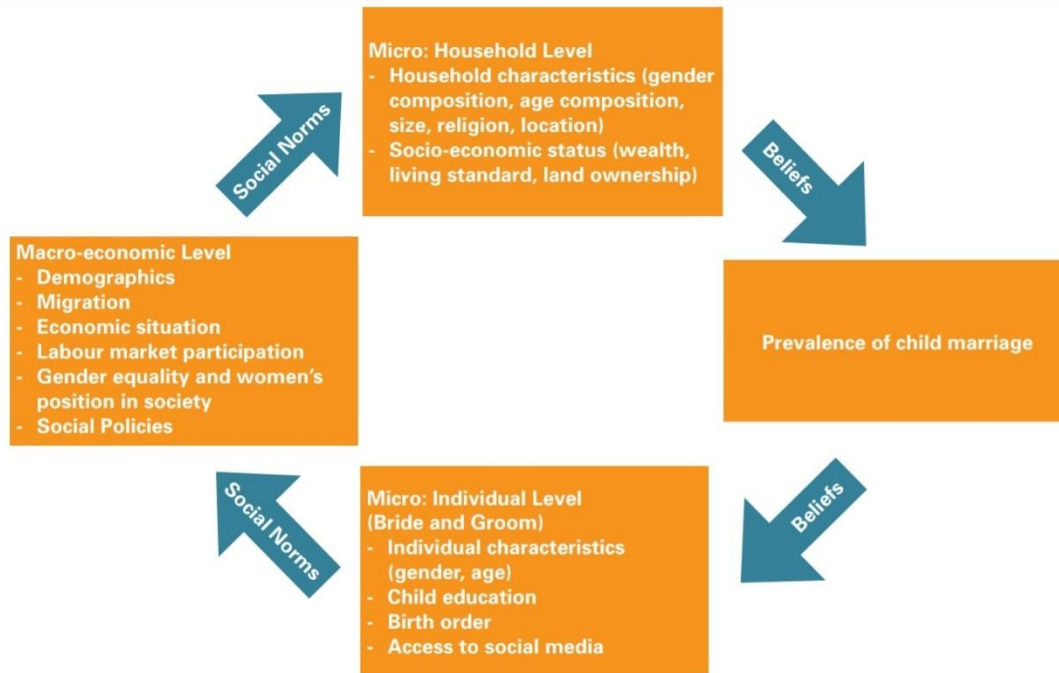
Annex-5

Conceptual framework representing the relationships between schooling, child marriage and pregnancy for adolescent girls in South Asia



Source – Bajracharya, A., S. R. Psaki and M. Sadiq, *Child marriage, adolescent pregnancy and school dropout in South Asia, report by the Population Council for the United Nations Children's Fund Regional Office for South Asia, Kathmandu, Nepal, 2019*

Annex – 6
Key Drivers of the Changing Prevalence of Child Marriage, UNICEF



Source – United Nations Children’s Fund and United Nations Population Fund, *Key Drivers of the Changing Prevalence of Child Marriage in Three Countries in South Asia: Working Paper*, UNICEF, Kathmandu, 2018.

Annex – 7

List of interventions in Bangladesh focusing on eliminating child marriage

Intervention	Organization	Key Activities	Achievement	Year
Female Secondary School Program	Government of Bangladesh	The intervention supported secondary school education of the girls. The girls got a stipend for having attendance of more than 2/3 rd , passing the annual school exams and remaining unmarried.	At the time of initiation, secondary school participation of girls was very low which is more than 1 currently.	1994-2008
Birth Registration	Government of Bangladesh	Birth registration has been made mandatory and birth registration online site has been created.	Anyone can check birth registration online and know the true age of the bride or groom.	2001- continuing
Multi-Sectoral Programme on Violence Against Women	Government of Bangladesh	-Capacity building of stakeholders and professionals. -Coordinating within government and non-government agencies. -Spearheading implementation of national action plan	Establishment of- - One stop crisis center - National center for gender-based violence	2004-2021
Reproductive and Adolescent Health Program	Government of Bangladesh	- Capacity building of health providers - Providing reproductive health services to adolescent boys and girls. - Counselling session with adolescent girls regarding menstrual hygiene.	Budgetary allocation to respective directorates has been done.	2011- continuing
Accelerating protection for children	Government of Bangladesh	- Coordination between agencies - Focusing on SDG 16.2 - Raising awareness on violence against children - Humanitarian action and child protection in emergencies	- Establishment of child welfare boards in 52 upazillas of 26 districts. - Capacity building on child online protection	2017-2018
Awareness, Sensitization and Motivation	Government of Bangladesh	- Preparing BCC/ IEC materials - Building awareness among the mass people - Creating awareness material for mass media	N/A	N/A
Accelerating Action to	Government of Bangladesh	- Capacity building on girls - Community engagement and awareness	- Skill building of girls aged 10-19	2016-2019

End Child Marriage in Bangladesh			years in Bogura and Jamalpur	
Adolescent Club	Government of Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To build capacity among adolescents on child marriage, nutrition, HIV/AIDS and risky sexual behavior - To increase peer support network among adolescents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of 870 clubs in Dhaka and Barisal - 895 child marriage stopped by the clubs 	2012-2020
National Children Policy 2011 by GoB	Government of Bangladesh	- The right of protection of the adolescents shall be ensured by protecting them from violence, marriage, trafficking and forcing into commercial sex etc	N/A	2011- continuing
Child marriage restraint Act 2017	Government of Bangladesh	- Criminalizing child marriage	N/A	2017 - continuing
Adolescent Development Program	BRAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaching life skills to girls - Providing education to girls 	- Establishment of around 9000 adolescent clubs across Bangladesh	1993 - continuing
Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescents by BRAC	BRAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Livelihood training for girls - Loans for girls 	N/A	2010 - continued
Souhardo	CARE Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness raising - Capacity Building 	Establishment of EKATA group in the communities	2004 - 2015
Kishoree Kantha	Save The Children	- Capacity building and support for attending school	N/A	2006 -2010
Tipping point	CARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating social awareness - Changing gender norms in society 	N/A	2013-2023
Asia Child Marriage Initiative	Plan International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding the process of child marriage - Building capacity of girls - Awareness raising in the community - Ensuring services for adolescents 	N/A	2010 - continuing
KAISHAR program	Save the Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sensitization of parents and influential persons of the community - Building capacity of health providers - adolescent information corners in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvement in adolescent service uptake. - improved knowledge on menstrual hygiene and other reproductive health issues 	2003 - 2008

Growing Up Healthy and Safe (SAFE)	icddr, BLAST, Nari Maitree, Marie Stopes Bangladesh, Population Council and We can campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness raising sessions - Community campaigns - Activism of community members - Easy access to legal and health services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child marriage related awareness increased in the group and marriage before 15 years declined significantly in three urban slums of Dhaka. 	2012-2014
Unite for Body Rights project	RHSTEP, DSK, PSTC, BNPS, BAPSA, BRAC-IED, Naripokkho, Bandhu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Empower young girl and woman by providing SRHR education - Provision of SRH services which are accessible, affordable and acceptable - Community sensitization program to support SRHR 	N/A	2011-2015
Hello I Am project	PSTC, RHSTEP, DSK, BBC Media Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raising awareness - Creating champions to stop child marriage. 	N/A	2017-2020
IMAGE Plus project	TDH foundation and SKS foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Services for adolescent girls - Support for adolescent girls in their life after marriage 	currently reaching out to 9000 girls in 6 unions of 3 northern districts Kurigram, Gaibandha and Nilphamari in Bangladesh.	2014 - Continuing

N/A-Few achievements are not found or not mentioned here due to continuation of the interventions.

Annex – 8

List of interventions in other South-Asian countries focusing on eliminating child marriage

	Intervention	Organization & Country	Key Activities	Achievement	Year
	Registration of children at birth	Government of Afghanistan - Afghanistan	Mandatory registration of children at birth	- Over 90% of children born in the hospitals of Kabul were registered 2018 - continuing	2018 - continuing
	National Youth Policy 2014	Government of Afghanistan - Afghanistan	Raise public awareness on the adverse effects of early marriage	N/A	2014 - continuing
	Law on Elimination of Violence against Women in Afghanistan	Government of Afghanistan - Afghanistan	- Criminalizes buying women for marriage, forced marriage, marriage before legal age	N/A	2009 - continuing
	Community-Based Rural Livelihoods Programme	Oxfam - Afghanistan	To reduce vulnerability of the poor through implementing an integrated programme focusing on livelihoods, health, education, gender and governance.	- positively influence attitudes and behavior to girl's education, and public health practices	2003-2006
	Child Care and Protection Act of Bhutan, 2011.	Government of Bhutan - Bhutan	Marriage or sexual intercourse with a child is criminalized as rape.	N/A	2011 - continuing
	National Adolescent Health Strategic Plan 2013-2018	Government of Bhutan - Bhutan	- Support adolescent mothers in education - Provide health and counselling service to adolescents	N/A	2013-2018
	The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006	Government of India - India	- Criminalizes child marriage in India	N/A	2006 - continuing
	National Strategy Document on Prevention of Child Marriage 2013	Government of India - India	- Capacity building (e.g. vocational training) of adolescents. - Awareness raising and changing social norms	N/A	2013 - continuing

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formation and strengthening village education committees - enforcement of child marriage prohibition law 		
	Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram, 2014	Government of India - India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing reproductive health services to adolescents. - 	N/A	2014 - continuing
	National Adolescent Health Strategy, 2014	Government of India - India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing reproductive health services to adolescents. - 	N/A	2014 - continuing
	Asia Child Marriage Initiative	Plan International - India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve knowledge attitudes and practices in child marriage - Track percentage of child marriage in working area 	- Promotion of secondary education through residential education camps.	2010 - continuing
	Conditional cash transfer - Apna Beti Apna Dhan	Government of India - India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 500 Indian Rupees within 15th day - bond worth 2500 INR, which would go up to 25000 INR if girl is unmarried at 18 	Program enrollment positively affects the completion of 8th grade	1994-1998 girls turned 18 between 2012-2013
	Mahila Samyakkha Sangha	Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad - India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sangha members create awareness and stop child marriage through gram panchayat 	N/A	2014
	Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG) SABLA	Government of India - India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nutritional and Health Education - Life Skill education - Vocational Training using NSDP 	N/A	2011 - continuing
	Tipping Point	CARE - Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raising awareness through gender transformative approach - engaging communities in awareness raising and capacity building activities 	N/A	2014 - 2020

N/A -Few achievements are not found or not mentioned here due to continuation of the interventions.