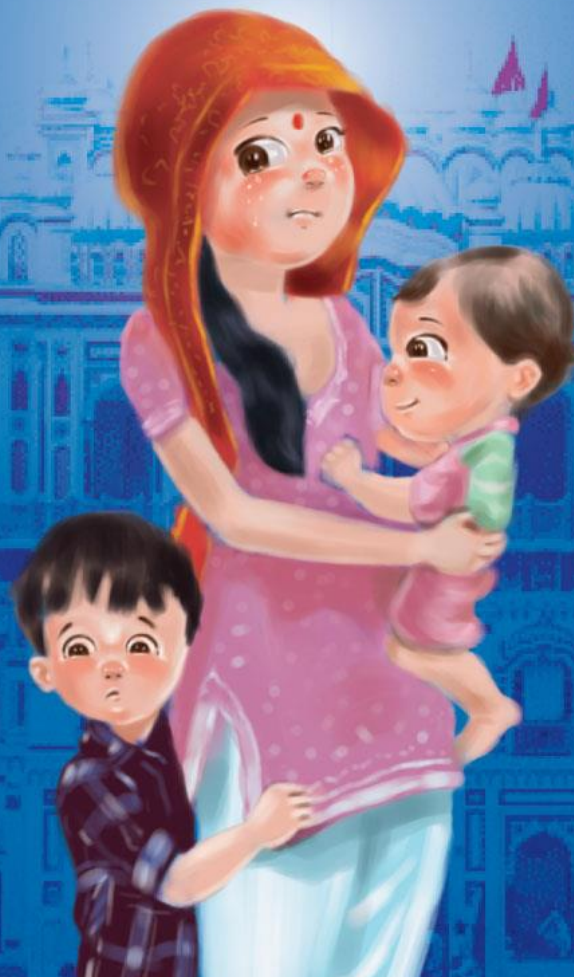


# **TREND AND PATTERN OF CHILD MARRIAGE**

## **in Dhanush District of Madhesh Province, Nepal**



**Prepared by**  
Santosh Kumar Mahato,  
Phd Scholar, Education  
Studies, GSE TU

## Background

This study is a part of the project “Ending Child Marriage through Promoting Girls Education” implemented by LIFE Nepal in Dhanusha district of Madhesh Province, Nepal with the technical and financial assistance of Girls First Fund. Because it mainly contributes to measure the indicator of the project i.e., *“No evidence of child marriage captured in wards or Palikas”* for impact of the project *“A gender responsive and sensitive (child protection friendly) environment enabled at local level”*. For that, LIFE Nepal has been conducting a survey in the targeted Palikas annually by mobilizing girls’ champion. The result shows that the incidence of child marriage has been decreasing from 2019 to 2021, however, patterns of child marriage is shifting, hence, this study was required.

## Objective

The overall objective of the study was to explain the trend and patterns of child marriage in Dhanusha district of Madhesh Province, Nepal. The specific objectives were:

- To find out the trends and patterns of child marriage
- To determine the causes and consequences of child marriage
- To explain the role/decision of families in the child marriage

## Methods

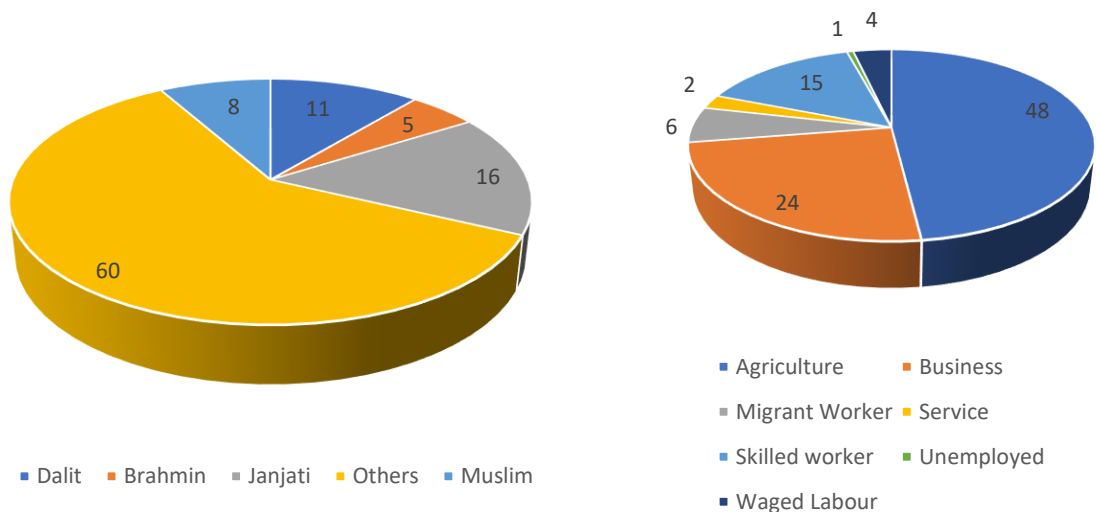
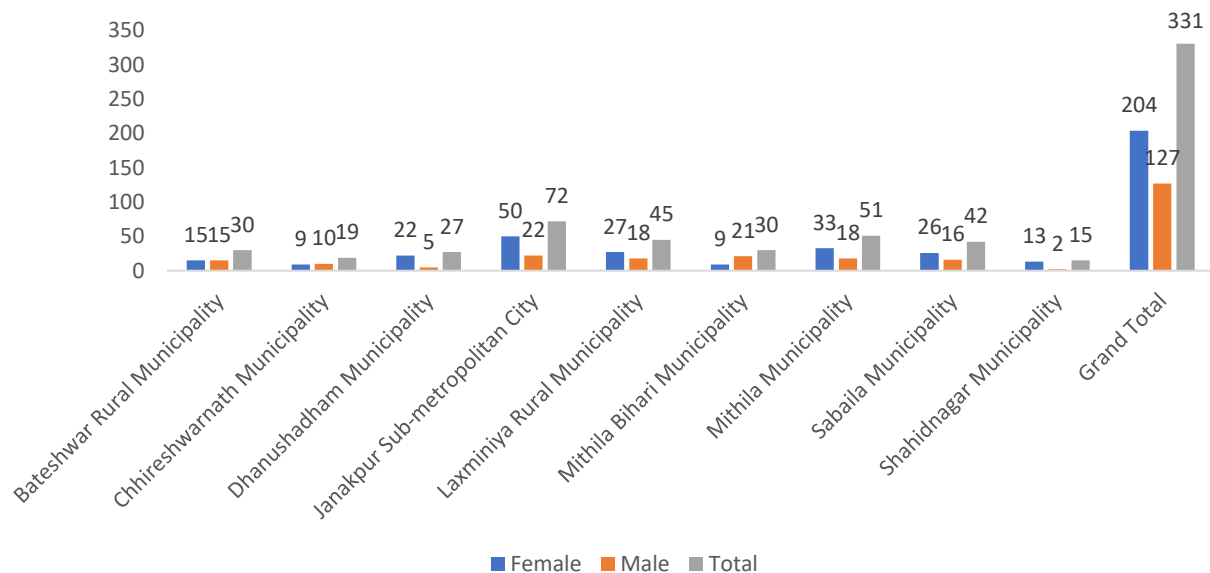
A study was quantitative in nature. The study was conducted in Dhanusha district of Madhesh province, Nepal from November 2021–February 2022. Ten focus toles (high prevalence of child marriage, high girls’ dropout or out of schoolgirls, marginalized populations dalit, Muslim, economic deprivation, illiteracy) of 10 schools catchments area from 10 project Palikas were the study area. Data was collected through a check list by mobilizing trained project staff and volunteer from the households where marriage takes place within a year (Mansir 2077 BS–Mansir 2078 BS) purposely (a purposive sampling techniques was used).

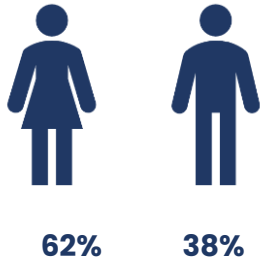
As the population for marriage was unknown, Cochran’s formula i.e.,  $n_0 = Z^2 pq / e^2$  was used to determine the sample size of 385 where “ $e=0.05$ ” is the desired level of precision (i.e., the margin of error),  $p=0.5$  is the (estimated) proportion of the population which has the attribute in question,  $q$  is  $1 - p$ , and  $Z$  value=1.96. However, during the data collection only 331 households were found where marriages took place

last year in the targeted area, hence, only 331 households were considered for the data analysis. While descriptive analysis (bar chart, pie chart, percentage) was done in advanced excel.

## Results with Discussion

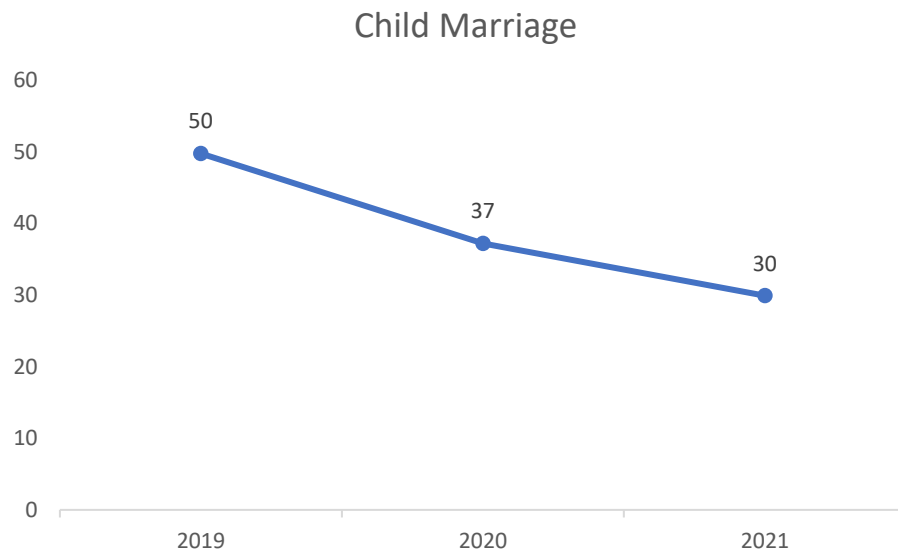
### Demographic Distribution





In this study, there were participation of 62% female (n=204 out of 331), 38% male, Dalit 11% (n=36), Janjati 16% (n=54), and Muslim 8% (n=27). In addition, there was participation of 5% Brahmin and 60% from another caste/ethnicity. Dalit, Janjati, and Brahmins consisted of both hill migrants and the Terai people. Also, they were from having different occupations like agriculture (48%), business (24%), migrant workers (6%), service (2%), skilled workers (15%), waged labor (4%) and unemployed (1%). Hence, the participation was inclusive.

## Trend of Child Marriage



2019	50%
2020	37%
2021	30%

The incidence of child marriage has been in decreasing order because the prevalence of child marriage

decreased from 50% in 2019 to 37% in 2020 and 30% in 2021.

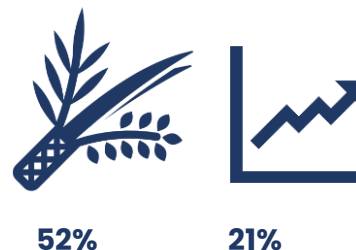
## Pattern of Child marriage

Out of 99 cases of child marriage, 92 cases of girls and 7 cases of boys found. It means incidence of child marriage was 93% in girls and 7 % in boys. Hence, there were high prevalence of child marriage was in girls.



Prevalence of child marriage was also found in the Terai dalit (17.2%), Terai Janjati (17.2%), Hill Janjati (4%), Muslim (14.1%), others (44.4%). It means high prevalence of child marriage was in other caste or ethnic communities. Though the number or percentage of prevalence of child marriage is low, it has been practiced in Terai Brahmin (2%) and Hill Brahmin (1%) also.

Similarly, high prevalence of child marriage was seen in people engaged in agriculture and holding business as incidence of child marriage was 51.5% in people having agriculture as an occupation, 21.2% in people holding business, 4% in migrants' workers, 13.1% in skilled worker, 8.1% in waged labor, and 2% in unemployed persons.



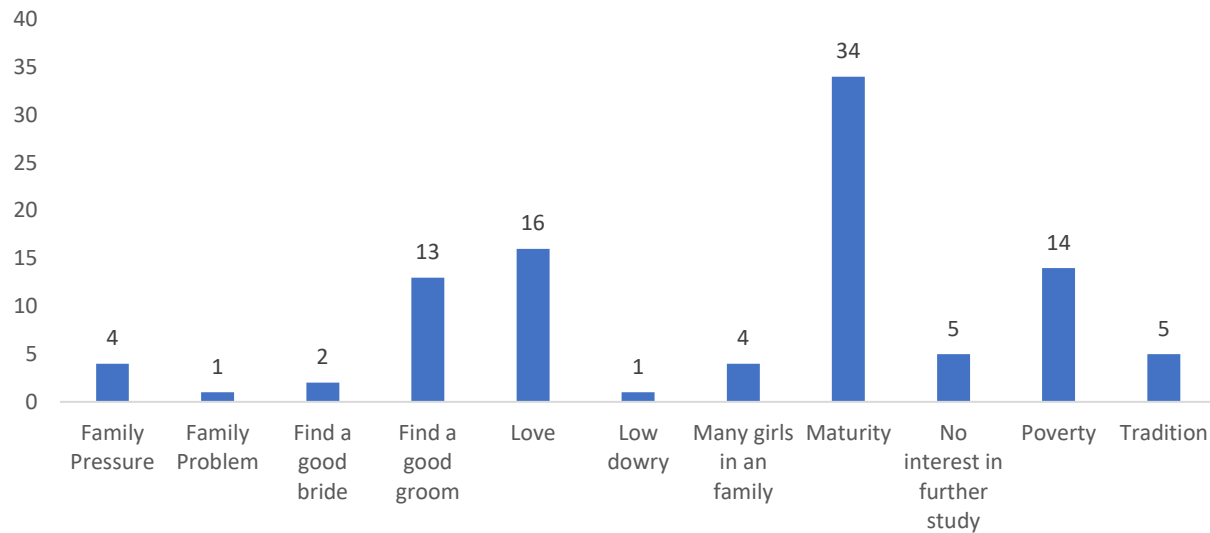
Furthermore, high prevalence rate of child marriage found in secondary and higher secondary education level as incidence of child marriage was 39.4% in secondary, 33% in higher secondary level. However, it is 16.2% in basic level and 10% in illiterate people.



In the same way, the prevalence rate of child marriage was high in the people who have more annual income than the poverty threshold i.e., NPR 19261.00 as it was 87% while the child marriage prevalence was 17% in people living under poverty line. It means child marriage is not only practiced by the poor people but highly practiced by the people with income more than the poverty threshold.

Also, prevalence of child marriage was high in arrange marriage as it was 86%, however, child marriage was seen in elope (8%) and love (6%) marriages.

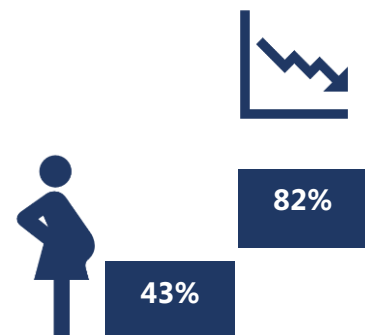
## Causes of Child Marriage



There are so many reasons of child marriage, however, 34.3% people married early because of having perception that they were matured for marriage, however, they were unmatured. Also, 15% of people married early because they found either a good bride or groom. Similarly, 16% of people married early due to falling in love. Only 5 % people married early due to tradition and 14 % people because of poverty.

## Consequences of Child Marriage

Due to child marriage 82% people dropped their education while 43% girls became either pregnant or lactating child (22% girls became pregnant after marriage and 21% were young women). In addition, they faced problems like abuse (n=1, out of 99), back pain (n=2), closure of business (n=1), deprived from government service (n=1), excess bleeding during menstruation (n=2), family tension (n=2), financial problem (n=2), headache (n=1), lower abdomen pain (n=9), sickness (n=5), and weakness (n=11).





## Role of Families in Child Marriage

The main role of deciding marriage early in the family was parent because in 81% child marriage decision was taken by parents (mother 47%, father 34%). In addition, in 3% child marriage cases decision was made by aunt (1%), sister (1%), and a sister-in-law (1%), however, in 15% cases, girls or boys decided self for the marriage.



81%

## Conclusions

The incidence of child marriage found in decreasing order, however, there were high prevalence of child marriage in girls. Due to the child marriage most of the girls dropped their education while they became either pregnant or lactating mother. It means girls are the main survivor of child marriage. Also, high prevalence of child marriage was in other caste or ethnic communities in comparison to Dalit, Janjati, and Muslim. Child marriage was found in Brahmins and likewise in the Terai and Hill Migrants communities. It means child marriage is not only the problems of marginalized communities or in the Terai but also the problems for other communities and hill migrants. In the same way, high prevalence of child marriage was seen in people engaged in agriculture and holding business. Furthermore, high prevalence rate of child marriage found in secondary and higher secondary education level compared to basic level. It means people are educating boys or girls up to basic level, however, marry them at secondary or higher secondary education. Hence, secondary, or higher secondary boys and girls are on high risk of child marriage. The prevalence rate of child marriage was high in the people who have more annual income than the poverty threshold. Child marriage is not only practiced by the poor people but highly practiced by the people with income more than the poverty threshold means poverty is not only the causes of child marriage. Prevalence of child marriage is high in arrange marriage. In addition, people married early because of the perception that they were matured for marriage, however, they were unmatured. Also, some people married early because they found either a good bride or groom. Very few people married early due to tradition or poverty. The main role of deciding marriage early in the family is the parent. Hence, key actors who can play a vital role in reducing child marriage are parents. In this way, though the incidence of child marriage is in decreasing trends, the patterns of child marriage is shifting in terms of gender, ethnicity, community, occupation, level of education, income, and types of marriage despite of having ill effects on health and education.

## Recommendations

- Though girls are the main survivor of child marriage in terms of dropping their secondary or higher secondary education, girls' higher education should be promoted to reduce child marriage.
- Most of the people have the perception that they are matured to marry before 20 and, hence, they are aware and sensitized about the reproductive health consequences occurring by early pregnancy on girls and children.
- Parents are the key actors who can play a vital role in reducing child marriage, hence, they are aimed through the targeted interventions.
- The patterns of child marriage are shifting in terms of gender, ethnicity, community, occupation, level of education, income, and types of marriage despite of having ill effects on health and education, hence, targeted interventions are required by the concerned agencies or authorities.





## Field Survey Glimpse