

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

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ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	Should we care: A qualitative exploration of the factors that influence the decision of early marriage among young males in urban slums of Bangladesh.
AUTHORS	Biswas, Subas; Karim, Shuchi; Rashid, Sabina Faiz

VERSION 1 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Song-Lih Huang Institute of Public Health National Yang-Ming University Taiwan
REVIEW RETURNED	06-May-2020

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>This is an interesting paper with an emphasis on the narratives of young males in the slums in Bangladesh about their considerations while committing themselves to marriages. The authors provided some insights into this decision-making process, and can contribute to our understanding of early marriage among those living in quarters of lower socio-economic status within large cities. However, I believe that more can be obtained out of this very rich source of information by better arrangement of the themes and subthemes (please see comment 3 below).</p> <p>I have several comments and questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The authors started by stating that most previous studies on early marriage focused on girls and young females, while this study focused on their male counterparts. To put this into perspective, it is helpful to add some information in Section 1 about some background information, for example, <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Who do these young girls marry to (how many of them are married to young men below 18)? B. What is the usual process of decision making in arranging a marriage by the parents of the boy/young men? It seems that the opinion of the young man is not asked at all, but is this process changing, given their increasing economic independence in cities (as compared to reliance on land) and increasing opportunities of getting acquainted with girls not from the same neighborhood? C. What are the usual factors that the parents take into consideration when seeking a bride for the boy/young man? (Who would be the ideal bride for him?) This piece of information is important in understanding the need for the young couple to elope. That is, why cannot the relationship between colleagues between young couples be blessed by the parents? The answer to these questions would hopefully provide the context to better understand the narratives.
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	<p>2. Early marriage may be initiated by the parents or by the young males, and different considerations are involved in the processes. Some explanation in the beginning of Section 4 might be helpful.</p> <p>3. A follow-up question is that, in organizing the themes, the views of parents and young men are mixed within the same subthemes. This arrangement may reflect the fact that everything is “family decision”, but it loses the opportunity of examining the potentially conflicting views between the two generations, and falls short of giving a picture of the complex dynamics in decision-making.</p> <p>A. For example, subtheme 2.1 included “parents prefer to send their young sons to work” and “generating income for a household also translates into a sense of agency”. These are ideas distinctive enough to deserve separate treatment.</p> <p>B. Again, the cases of Saiful (p. 7) and Asad (p. 8) provide very different views on early marriage and may not fit into the same subtheme.</p> <p>C. Likewise, the quote on the top of page 9 seems to fit better in subtheme 2.4 rather than subtheme 2.2. The quote of Fahim (line 39, p. 9) speaks something of a nature that is distinctive from “social and economic stability” or “building kinship”. A separate treatment may be better.</p> <p>D. On a related note, in theme 3, and views/powers of parents and the neighbors/community seem to be elements different enough to be separated.</p> <p>4. Question regarding theme 2.1 and 2.4: Income generation is the primary concern for many family issues. What usually happens to the girl’s job when she got married? The arrangement for the best economic outcome seems to be for the girl to continue to earn income for the husband’s family. Is that usually the case?</p> <p>5. Question regarding theme 2.3: This question follows the previous one, that is, for the best economic outcome, wouldn’t it be for the young wife not to have children and continue to work? How is “fulfillment of sexual desire” related to family income and family planning?</p> <p>6. Suggestions on writing:</p> <p>A. The “Results” in abstract should refer to the themes and subthemes.</p> <p>B. The short paragraph at the beginning of Section 4 mentioned only theme 1 and 2 and neglected theme 3.</p> <p>C. While reading I was distracted by the many grammar problems.</p> <p>7. Final Comment: I can appreciate the difficulty in squeezing the incredible amount of information from a qualitative research into a limited space, but I think that better organized themes can do justice to the very rich database.</p>
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REVIEWER	Shahina Begum ICMR-NIRRH, Mumbai, India
REVIEW RETURNED	06-May-2020

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>This protocol seems to me quite well written and quite clear. Please note the date of the study is missing.</p> <p>Throughout: Needs tidying up and a careful review of punctuation and spacing.</p> <p>Page 5, Line 12-15: The DHS data suggests a recent trend during 2011 whereas in the data stated here is most likely prevalence. These two statistics are probably not comparable.</p> <p>It would be great if the authors can create a location map of the study area.</p>
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	<p>The methodology should be briefly explained in methods section. The sampling design needs to be explained in the methods section.</p> <p>Socio-demographic background of the respondents can be presented in the paper for better understanding of the findings. Is it ethical to share the name of the respondent in the research paper? Do the authors have necessary ethical permission for the same? If yes, the authors should mention the same in the manuscript.</p> <p>The authors have beautifully explained how marriage at right age with economic capabilities helps in fulfilling social norms and disciplines life whereas early marriage brings distress. Have they come across distress of being separate from parents due to deaths, migration and remarriages, forcing early marriage? How does the familial support benefit with marrying at right age?</p>
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VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer Comments, Author Responses and Manuscript Changes

(Please find the changes in the 'Marked copy')

Reviewer: 1

Please state any competing interests or state 'None declared':

none declared

Response: Competing interests is mentioned in the page 21, line 1

Please leave your comments for the authors below

This is an interesting paper with an emphasis on the narratives of young males in the slums in Bangladesh about their considerations while committing themselves to marriages. The authors provided some insights into this decision-making process, and can contribute to our understanding of early marriage among those living in quarters of lower socio-economic status within large cities. However, I believe that more can be obtained out of this very rich source of information by better arrangement of the themes and subthemes (please see comment 3 below).

I have several comments and questions:

1. The authors started by stating that most previous studies on early marriage focused on girls and young females, while this study focused on their male counterparts. To put this into perspective, it is helpful to add some information in Section 1 about some background information, for example,
 - A. Who do these young girls marry to (how many of them are married to young men below 18)?

Response: Agreed and thank you for your clarification. The information is added in page 4, line 1-3 (with citation and reference)

- B. What is the usual process of decision making in arranging a marriage by the parents of the boy/young men? It seems that the opinion of the young man is not asked at all, but is this process changing, given their increasing economic independence in cities (as compared to reliance on land) and increasing opportunities of getting acquainted with girls not from the same neighborhood?

Response: Thanks for your point. The related information of the usual process of marriage decision is added in page 15, line 16-25.

- C. What are the usual factors that the parents take into consideration when seeking a bride for the boy/young man? (Who would be the ideal bride for him?) This piece of information is important in understanding the need for the young couple to elope. That is, why cannot the relationship between colleagues between young couples be blessed by the parents?

The answer to these questions would hopefully provide the context to better understand the narratives.

Response: Agreed and the background context that the parents take into consideration when seeking a bride for the boy/young man is added in page 15, line 16-20.

2. Early marriage may be initiated by the parents or by the young males, and different considerations are involved in the processes. Some explanation in the beginning of Section 4 might be helpful.

Response: Agreed, some explanations are added at the beginning of the section 4, Page 16, line 25-29.

3. A follow-up question is that, in organizing the themes, the views of parents and young men are mixed within the same subthemes. This arrangement may reflect the fact that everything is “family decision”, but it loses the opportunity of examining the potentially conflicting views between the two generations, and falls short of giving a picture of the complex dynamics in decision-making.

A. For example, subtheme 2.1 included “parents prefer to send their young sons to work” and “generating income for a household also translates into a sense of agency”. These are ideas distinctive enough to deserve separate treatment.

Response: Thanks for your observations. We might present it separately; however, we think it is important for us to have both young men and parents’ perspectives in the same analytical section.

We present that power relations between parents and children plays a major decision making processes involving marriage. In the slum context, “parents prefer to send their young sons to work” expecting some financial support for the family and this income generation capacity of young males also into some sense of agency i.e. taking decision of marriage. On the other hand, if a young male has no income, he has a little space in the family hierarchy. Therefore, the focus on young men’s decision making of marriage cannot be understood in isolation. In south Asian traditional societies, people formulate and live their identities not as individuals, but rather in a relational dynamics, and agency/free will etc. are exercised within those relations.

B. Again, the cases of Saiful (p. 7) and Asad (p. 8) provide very different views on early marriage and may not fit into the same subtheme.

Response: Agreed, Page 10, Line 19-25 under section 2.1 are deleted as it is a different issue not to be adjusted here.

C. Likewise, the quote on the top of page 9 seems to fit better in subtheme 2.4 rather than subtheme 2.2. The quote of Fahim (line 39, p. 9) speaks something of a nature that is distinctive from “social and economic stability” or “building kinship”. A separate treatment may be better.

Response: Agreed, the quote from section 2.2 (page 11, line 11-14) is replaced into section 2.4, page 13, line 36-37 and page 14, line 1-2

For second point, we presented described ‘Desire for family formation, building kinship and expansion of social networks: Marriage as a medium of social and economic stability’ under section 2.2, where we put the quote of Fahim (previously in line 39, p. 9), is now in page 11 (line 38-39) and 12 (line 1-2). We might present it in a separate treatment, however, we think, it is also justifiable to keep this information under this section. However, as reviewer mentioned, we described the context of this argument (page 11, line 34-36) under section 2.2 to make a clear understanding and to support our argument.

D. On a related note, in theme 3, and views/powers of parents and the neighbors/community seem to be elements different enough to be separated.

Response: We appreciate this comment and it might be presented differently. However, parents’ decision are also influenced by the community attitude and expectations, social norms. Therefore, we would like to present parental and community perspectives under same theme and discuss their influences one by one towards the decision of early marriage of young males.

4. Question regarding theme 2.1 and 2.4: Income generation is the primary concern for many family issues. What usually happens to the girl's job when she got married? The arrangement for the best economic outcome seems to be for the girl to continue to earn income for the husband's family. Is that usually the case?

Response: Agreed, we added information in page 11, line 34-36.

5. Question regarding theme 2.3: This question follows the previous one, that is, for the best economic outcome, wouldn't it be for the young wife not to have children and continue to work? How is "fulfillment of sexual desire" related to family income and family planning?

Response: It is a good point to discuss. However, in this paper, we have discussed the underlying reasons that influence the decision of early marriage. And here, we found that many young males willing to marry earlier being aspired to fulfill sexual desire as young males can get easy access to wife to have sex. But after marriage, how they think about their life and practice are not discussed in this paper as it is not the main objective. Therefore, we left this issue here.

6. Suggestions on writing:

A. The "Results" in abstract should refer to the themes and subthemes.

Response: Agreed, Abstract is edited and themes and sub-themes are referred in the result section (Page 2, in abstract, line 17-22).

B. The short paragraph at the beginning of Section 4 mentioned only theme 1 and 2 and neglected theme 3.

Response: Agreed, we revised the beginning paragraph of section 4, and now, theme 3 is mentioned in the beginning of the section 4, page 16, line 33-36.

C. While reading I was distracted by the many grammar problems.

Response: We have checked the full manuscript and carefully adjusted grammatical errors.

7. Final Comment: I can appreciate the difficulty in squeezing the incredible amount of information from a qualitative research into a limited space, but I think that better organized themes can do justice to the very rich database.

Reviewer: 2

Please state any competing interests or state 'None declared':

Response: We incorporated this information in page 21, line 1 (previously page 18, line 45)

Please leave your comments for the authors below

Comment: This protocol seems to me quite well written and quite clear. Please note the date of the study is missing.

Response: The date of the study is mentioned in the 'Section 2: Methods' (Page 7, line 1-2) (previously, Page 6, line 3-4)

Comment: Throughout: Needs tidying up and a careful review of punctuation and spacing.

Response: we carefully gone through entire document and fixed the punctuation and spacing errors.

Comment: Page 5, Line 12-15: The DHS data suggests a recent trend during 2011 whereas in the data stated here is most likely prevalence. These two statistics are probably not comparable.

Response: Agreed, we therefore revised this statement and did not compare two statistics (page 4, line 21-24).

Comment: It would be great if the authors can create a location map of the study area.

Response: It would be a good idea, however, adding the location map of the study area would also increase the length and we think, it would not add that much information/value. If anyone is willing to know these locations, s/he would easily get access to information through internet.

Comment: The methodology should be briefly explained in methods section. The sampling design needs to be explained in the methods section.

Response: Agreed. The sampling design is added in the method section (page 6, line 16-17)

Comment: Socio-demographic can be presented in the paper for better understanding of the findings.

Response: Agreed. Therefore, we added a table of Socio-demographic characteristics. We referred many types of respondents; In-Depth Interviews (IDI) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with married and unmarried adolescent and young males and parents, key-informant interviews (KIIs) with community leaders. However, we only present socio-demographic characteristics of married and unmarried adolescent and young males with whom IDI were conducted as they were the target respondents of this article (page 6, line 10-15, table 1)

Comment: Is it ethical to share the name of the respondent in the research paper? Do the authors have necessary ethical permission for the same? If yes, the authors should mention the same in the manuscript.

Response: Agreed. We mention "Pseudonyms are used for all of the names of the respondents to maintain confidentiality" in section 4, page 7 line 13 (previously, page 6, line 20-21). We further checked that pseudonyms are used in whole text.

Comment: The authors have beautifully explained how marriage at right age with economic capabilities helps in fulfilling social norms and disciplines life whereas early marriage brings distress. Have they come across distress of being separate from parents due to deaths, migration and remarriages, forcing early marriage? How does the familial support benefit with marrying at right age?

Response: We appreciate this idea. However, this paper focused mainly the reasons and decision making process of early marriage among young males in urban slums. Therefore, we did not put that much emphasis on the impact of early marriage, how early marriage brings distress in their lives.

FORMATTING AMENDMENTS (if any)

Required amendments will be listed here; please include these changes in your revised version:

- Please complete your reporting checklist by indicating the page number where each point can be found.

Response: Each point of reviewer's comment are addressed and listed.

Editorial Requests:

- Please work to improve the quality of the English throughout your manuscript. We recommend asking a native English speaking colleague to assist you or to enlist the help of a professional copyediting service.

Response: We have checked the full manuscript carefully and adjusted to improve the quality of language.

- Please reformat the main text so that it follows the structure recommended in the journal's instructions for authors. See: <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/pages/authors/#research>

Response: We followed journal instructions to structure the text.

- Please provide more detail about the consultations meetings in your Patient and Public Involvement statement.

Response: we provided patient and public Involvement statement in page 7, line 6-10.

- Please ensure that you have fully discussed the methodological limitations of the study in the discussion section of the main text.

Response: Agreed and we discussed study limitations in the section 4 (Discussion), page 19, line 22-29.

- Please revise your checklist so that the page numbers and lines in your manuscript where the relevant information can be found are listed.

Response: We revised the checklist and included page numbers and lines where changes were made to get easy access of the relevant information.

-To response editorial comment, we added **a title page** at first of the document (page 1)

VERSION 2 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Song-Lih Huang Institute of Public Health National Yang Ming University Taiwan
REVIEW RETURNED	17-Jul-2020
GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>The revised version is much clearer.</p> <p>Several suggestions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The first paragraph of results (p. 6, line 27), there is no mentioning of theme 3. 2. The paragraph that mentioned early fatherhood (p. 11, line 22) could perhaps be moved to theme 2.3. 3. In the discussion on limitations, the authors said "many of the respondents might be conservative to express their views and practices or might change some information", please give an

	estimation of how this would have affected the results, and how much. 4. The writing needs another proofreading; there are still errors.
REVIEWER	Shahina Begum ICMR-National Institute for Research on Reproductive Health, Mumbai
REVIEW RETURNED	09-Jul-2020
GENERAL COMMENTS	The authors have addressed most concerned raised.

VERSION 2 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer: 1

Comment: Please state any competing interests or state 'None declared': None declared

Response: In the page 19, line 15, in Competing interests "There are no competing interests for any author" is mentioned

Suggestion 1. The first paragraph of results (p. 6, line 27), there is no mentioning of theme 3.

Response: Thanks for notifying this point. Theme 3 is now added in the first paragraph of results (p. 6, line 28-29)

Suggestion 2. The paragraph that mentioned early fatherhood (p. 11, line 22) could perhaps be moved to theme 2.3.

Response: The paragraph mentioned early fatherhood is now moved to the theme 2.3 (page 12, line 22-25).

Suggestion 3. In the discussion on limitations, the authors said "many of the respondents might be conservative to express their views and practices or might change some information", please give an estimation of how this would have affected the results, and how much.

Response: Addressed. In page 18, line 2-8, we added information how this conservativeness of respondents might affect result and how we minimized it.

Suggestion 4. The writing needs another proofreading; there are still errors.

Response: Addressed, we further checked the whole manuscript and fixed the errors.

Reviewer: 2

Comments: Please state any competing interests or state 'None declared': None

Response: In the page 19, line 15, in Competing interests “There are no competing interests for any author’ is mentioned