

## The Problem of Early-Age Marriage in Afghanistan

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### ABSTRACT

Early marriage is an ongoing problem in Afghanistan, as is the case in many other countries around the world. This situation has also led to many social, legal, and moral problems. In this study, as a result of the statistical analysis obtained from the surveys, it is understood that the phenomenon of early marriage in Afghanistan continues to be a widespread cultural issue. However, in Afghanistan, it is difficult to say whether there are sufficient sociological studies on the causes and consequences of this problem. Accordingly, elements that demonstrate the originality of our research and some of the causes and results that may contribute to the literature are indicated as results and recommendations. Among the main causes of early marriages in Afghanistan are poverty, pressure from parents, the economic situation, education level, and traditional cultural values. In addition, findings from the interviews show that environmental pressure is very strong. As can be seen in some examples, marriage candidates feel obliged to accept early marriage because they feel unable to deal with oppression. While the impact of the ceremonial and tribal phenomena in the region has weakened, the influence of the tribal structure in the region continues to be seen.

**Keywords:** Afghanistan, Early Marriage, Famile, Education, Culture, Tradition

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## 1. Introduction

The Family is the most important social institution created and developed by human beings throughout history for their biological and social existence and continuity. Early marriage, or the marriage of underage children, remains a social problem in some societies today. Therefore, the focus of the problem of this article is the phenomenon of marriage at an early age. This phenomenon continues in Afghanistan, as in many other countries around the world. In fact, this situation is expressed by the expression of an Afghan student whose mother was married at 14 years old; which is an inevitable way to protect. This dramatic example has also been a stimulating and guiding reason for our work. However, for a marriage to take place, a person's level of physical and mental maturity is regarded as one of the vital conditions that are stressed by the experts of the area (Parsons et al, 2015; Pandey, 2017; Muharry et al, 2018). Moreover, the religious literature and moral values in this regard also indicate that a marriage without understanding the values, aims, and philosophy of the matter and without the consent of the parties has no legal validity. In other divine religions, such as the Islamic religion, the phenomena of the birth, marriage, and death of a person are precious and sacred enough to reach divine dimensions. In addition, marriage, an important phenomenon in civilized human communities in our age, has special traditions and customs that show its importance for creating a healthy society and for the birth and upbringing of a valuable generation.

However, under the influence of various historical, cultural, and economic factors, the phenomenon of early and young marriage in Afghanistan remains a common practice. Economic and social problems stemming from political and military instability in Afghanistan have caused the problem of early marriage to continue under the influence of many factors in Afghan society. This article first attempts to identify the causes of the social phenomenon in question and then focuses on some ways and methods of solving the phenomenon. Until when the Taliban re-captured the administration in 2021, for 20 years, girls and women had witnessed fundamental and positive changes in terms of legal and social rights. However, in Afghanistan, which is under the influence of highly sophisticated historical and social problems, many families are forcing underage children to marry. Until 2022, educational opportunities for women significantly improved in Afghanistan, although they were affected by some deep-rooted cultural factors that are relatively independent of these effects.

During this period, Afghanistan also made considerable progress in enhancing women's education, health, early marriage, and other cultural rights. However, as in all countries with weak economies, these challenges affect and aggravate human rights, especially women's rights and education (Tomar et al, 2021). For the solution to these problems, programs supported by international organizations can and do offer important contributions. Nevertheless, these solutions remain temporary or superficial. In order for more permanent solution mechanisms to be established and to make them continuous, the actions that need to be undertaken must take the internal dynamics of society into account and determine multifaceted and profound solutions on how they can be executed.

The subject of this article is to get to the roots of the marriage problem at an early age, which is still a common problem in Afghanistan, and to reveal the reasons for early marriages (Tomar et al, 2021), the biological, psychological, and social situations of individuals, and their life experiences. In addition, this article aims to discuss possible solutions to prevent such marriages that cause many difficulties for young girls and women who marry at an early age.

The purpose of this article is to analyze this problem in detail, to understand its root causes, and to create possible solutions. It is especially important to understand how young people who marry at an early age evaluate their current situations. For this purpose, it is thought that including the narratives and feelings of women who are married early will play a stimulating role in producing correct and immediate solutions.

Regarding the significance of the article, in addition to making a considerable contribution to the literature in the field because of the limited number of academic studies on early marriage in Afghanistan, the data obtained from this study are crucial. By merging local knowledge with general principles of social service, it is expected that this information will help shape social policies for individuals who need support due to early marriage, aligning with fundamental human rights.

The results of this research are significantly important in shaping local policies on early marriage. They provide valuable scientific data that can aid public institutions, government entities, and non-governmental organizations in this field. The findings are instrumental in guiding the development and implementation of services related to early marriage.

The research universe consists of men and women who were married at an early age in the vicinities of Kabul, Wardak, Logar, Ghazni, Jalalabad, and Khost, Afghanistan. This study examines the lives of women in these regions, particularly those who were married at an early age. With the help of many captivating narratives, this research aims to investigate the causes of early marriage. Besides explores the effects of early marriage on the lives of both women

and men after marriage. The purpose of this study is to clarify the thoughts and expectations surrounding marriage experiences and develop solutions aimed at preventing early marriage.

The research employs qualitative methods with comprehensive and interpretive approaches. However, to better understand the problem by supporting the facts, along with the literature research; both the survey and interview techniques were used. The interviewees were asked 26 Questions. Through these surveys, data were collected from people living in different villages and cities in Afghanistan. In the data collection process, taking into account the sensitivity of the political and security situation in Afghanistan, some people were surveyed, and others were interviewed face to face. Face-to-face interviews were conducted using online techniques. Open-ended questions were preferred so that participants could express themselves more easily. The survey was sent to 150 people, 114 of whom answered completely. While 17 respondents answered some of the questions, 19 never answered any of the survey questions.

Hence, the research aimed to employ a more profound and detailed approach. Ultimately, during the analysis of the survey responses, a method was used to establish consistency among the answers. The conclusion section discusses all the data in an explanatory manner. As a result, the information acquired through quantitative measurement techniques is interpreted alongside insights from interviews, which represent a qualitative approach.

Regarding some of the challenges and limitations of the research, the entire survey could not be conducted face-to-face because current managers in Afghanistan do not allow women to work. To overcome these difficulties, some negotiations have been held using communication technologies as much as possible. However, the lack of primary education among some female participants and their lack of literacy, as well as access to the internet to read and answer online survey questions, has also made this process difficult. Some participants who simply entered the online survey were unable to complete the survey. Some participants tried to participate through their relatives. The fact that there are different ethnic groups in Afghanistan and that they speak different languages also created some obstacles during the research. Before the study, the literature on the subject was reviewed; thus, the study attempted to determine the causes of early marriage in different countries worldwide. This information was compared with data on the status of women in Afghanistan.

## **2. Early Marriage Problems in the World and Afghanistan**

Afghanistan has a different structure from the surrounding countries in terms of political culture and social traditions (Sirat, 2016); it has serious problems with regard to the civil rights of individuals and groups in society, especially the rights of girls. For example, girls' education is often seen as a defect in Afghan society. Therefore, for girls in relation to this, problems in many areas can be seen as inevitable. The best thing about these problems is that girls are forced to get married at an early age.

As in Afghanistan and many other countries of the world, marriage before the age of 18 is still a social reality for many young women. According to UNICEF data from February 2021, Niger has the highest proportion of child marriages at 76.3%, with a 15-year-old child being married at 28. Niger is followed by the Central African Republic (Rost et al, 2022; Zaman & Koski, 2020), Chad, Mali, Mozambique, Burkina Faso, South Sudan, and Bangladesh. In a study (Yiğit, 2017; Yorgun, 2019) in Latin America, the rate of early marriage among women was 8.9. The demographics show that among the black community, American Indians/Native Alaskans, and education- and income-low southern and rural areas, such marriages are common. Afghanistan ranks 202nd in the report on the rates of children marrying before the age of 18, with 14.7. In the same report (Efevbera & Bhabha, 2020), when examining the rates of children married at the age of 15 and before (UNICEF, 2021), it is important to note that child marriages are primarily due to traditions, economic reasons, and a misinterpretation of religious information. In addition, the state of education, gender inequality, migration, and social and domestic pressures on parents are cited as influential factors.

In addition to these factors, the solution to this problem, which continues due to historical and cultural factors, constitutes a fundamental human rights issue. In Afghanistan, in areas with a strong traditional family structure, the opinions of individuals about marriage are often not considered. Traditional steps, thoughts, and beliefs play an important role in the marriage process. There are various forms of marriage in Afghanistan (John et al, 2018; Reiss, 2017). In rural Afghanistan, another type of marriage called "marriage for money" is common in low-income circles. This means that school-age children are not allowed to attend school, or their education is abandoned and they are married with money in return. These children are sold to people who are old and/or who have special needs. In addition, some wealthy people who have settled in big cities and have high incomes prefer to marry their children with special needs in exchange for money with the daughters of families living in low-income rural areas.

A common form of marriage in rural Afghanistan is called bardel marriage. In this type of marriage, two married boys exchange wives for each other. Two families, old and close together, get along and give their daughter to the family of the girl they want. Often, families without title solvency want to marry their marriage-age son or daughter, and they

prefer this form of marriage by contracting a family with the same condition (Groot et al, 2018). If, after the marriage has taken place, one of the girls dies, the wife has the right to marry the deceased's brother. If the wife marries another person, the deceased spouse has the right to ask for the title from his family (Aktepe & Inci 2017).

When the reasons for the realization of marriages at an early age are examined, factors such as false traditions and religious beliefs, low education levels, economic problems, domestic violence, and social pressure are seen as prominent. The socioeconomic status of families, cultural values, and educational levels of parents are factors that promote early marriage. In families struggling with poverty and experiencing unemployment, girls are seen as a source of income, and they are married at an early age in exchange for title money. Children who grow up in unfavorable family conditions and do not receive enough love can decide to get married at an early age based on the idea that the conditions in which they live are difficult (UNICEF, 2011). Thus, Marriages can take place in either form: Girls run away from home, or they obtain the consent of their family. Because the parents in question themselves got married at an early age, early marriage is perceived as normal.

Studies have revealed a strong association between economic problems and early marriage (Yigit, 2017). Families do not tend to marry their children at an early age when their income levels are not low (TBMM, 2010). In Afghanistan, income distribution varies by region. Early marriages are more common in rural areas where development levels are further behind and economic problems are more frequent. This situation causes women to become economically dependent on their partners, in particular, and to experience poverty.

Families with low socioeconomic status withdraw their daughters from school for the purpose of marrying them before they finish school or do not send them to school at all. These individuals, whose educational rights are violated, are denied the right to have a job and work. Women, in particular, may face the risk of entering the cycle of uneducated poverty and spouse/family addiction without adequate economic resources (TBMM, 2009).

While the consequences of early marriage are primarily felt at the individual level, other effects such as deep and far-reaching effects on national and global levels of lost gains and the intergenerational transfer of poverty are ignored (Parsons et al, 2015).

Whereas the results of early marriage are primarily experienced at the individual level, the intense and far-reaching effects on national and global levels, including lost gains and the intergenerational transfer of poverty, are often ignored. Families can marry their daughters at a young age because of the high costs associated with raising children. In traditional societies, children may also tend to be married at an early age to prevent relationships that are not considered legitimate before marriage. Girls raised in this way may be afraid of staying at home if they do not get married at an early age and may choose this approach, thinking they will never be able to get married again. As a result of traditional beliefs, established practices, and customs, early marriage has become widespread and ongoing. This approach is especially effective for girls (TBMM, 2009).

Misunderstanding religious beliefs and personal interpretations can accelerate marriage at an early age. In many parts of the world, including Afghanistan, early marriage has been legitimized on religious grounds. For example, Islamic law recognizes the marriage contract as a trust agreement in which spouses fulfill their mutual responsibilities and undertake to perform these duties. Therefore, the official wedding, which fulfills the aforementioned religious conditions, also fulfills the provisions of religious marriage.

In the emergence of early marriage, alongside factors such as social, cultural, economic, education, and gender discrimination, we see other factors like wars and natural disasters. Civil wars, natural disasters, and pandemics in countries have led to an increase in IN marriages at an early age. For example, conflicts in Afghanistan have been known to leave children vulnerable to the risk of marriage at an early age, resulting in individuals marrying at a young age (Shaheen et al, 2022). Factors such as the economic and cultural chaos caused by forced migration, abuse, and assault of girls, and the risks of escaping or abduction of children lead to such marriages, while fast marriage is resorted to as a solution. (Gül, 2022). Displaced persons, even with similar socioeconomic conditions, face the risk of child marriage at an early age compared with their host peers.

### **3. Consequences of Early Marriage**

Early marriage has many consequences. Among these results, the most prominent and important are the disruption of education for people who marry early and the fact that women who give birth at an early age experience various problems resulting from a lack of knowledge in the aftermath. Early marriages cause the educational rights of children in childhood to be lost; children who are far from the educational process are deprived of their work life by being denied the opportunity to have a profession. In addition, early marriage is more common in families with parents with low educational levels (Nasrullah et al, 2014).

Too many health problems occur among individuals who marry at an early age. These consequences include a move away from the social environment after marriage, a desire to be alone, a lack of self-confidence, and a reluctance to participate in social activities. In addition, children who have not yet completed their physiological and psychological development may face various diseases and disorders. Girls who are married at an early age are at risk of violence because they are too young to protect their rights and are married without being informed by their parents. This type of marriage can include domestic violence and disharmony, leading to divorce or suicide (TBMM, 2010).

Since girls have not yet completed their biological, psychological, and social development, having children in this process prevents them from developing in a healthy way and gaining a questioning and solution-oriented perspective on events. The stress and distress experienced by mothers who have been married at an early age leads to the inability to want or provide adequate care for their children, which means that these parents can experience depression and therefore exhibit overreactive, hostile, or over-controlling behaviors in their relationships with their children (Yorgun, 2019).

This can leave scars on children. Even if they have not been directly exposed to violence in childhood, individuals who witness violence are at risk of engaging in violence against their spouses and children when they become adults. Children who marry at an early age have higher rates of psychiatric disorders throughout life and over the past 12 months than women who have married at an adult age. In addition, those who marry at an early age are more likely to be in need of health services. Those who marry at an early age are less fortunate in terms of sexual and reproductive health than their peers who marry at a later age (Roost et al, 2022).

Studies have shown that early marriage has a devastating effect on individuals and that marriage leads to biopsychosocial problems and even increases suicidal tendencies (Groot et al, 2018). It is observed that child marriages cause individuals to experience unhappiness and serious problems. This type of marriage causes significant difficulties, such as violence, lack of education, diseases, and unemployment. A problem that still remains important in Afghanistan is the fight against early marriage so that mortality rates can be reduced and a healthy generation can be created (Yorgun, 2019). These early marriages affect not only married individuals. Over time, this problem has become a large and complex social problem affecting all society.

The problem of marriage at an early age cannot be solved by simply looking at a single dimension or the aspects that appear. In order to correctly intervene in this problem, different studies on social services are required. For example, the problems faced by an individual who is married early and whose education is halved are not solely due to his or her parents being uneducated. For example, the problems faced by an individual who is married early and whose education is halved are not solely due to his or her parents being uneducated. In order to better understand these problems, they need to be addressed through more comprehensive studies. With the system approach, social workers should focus on the root cause of the early marriage problem. In this focus process, work must be done with individuals, families, groups, institutions, communities, and society. In addition, the focus should be on the connections among these systems.

It can be said that individuals who have experienced marriage at an early age do not have control over their lives and cannot determine their own destiny; they require an empowerment approach. This approach recognizes that families and communities have various strengths and resilience mechanisms in preventing early marriage (Muchacha & Matsika, 2017). A specialist working to solve the problem of early marriage in the context of an empowerment approach should focus on the current problems facing this individual. It should help individuals cope with their own difficulties and problem-solving skills by reminding them of their strengths and resources.

#### **4. Analysis of Early Marriage in Afghanistan**

To test and make comparisons based on the literature, quantitative information based on survey data will be included under this heading. A survey of 26 questions was conducted in different provinces, tribes, and languages. Given the current situation in Afghanistan, there are many obstacles to this questionnaire, but to obtain a strong result, it is worth noting that the majority of participants were women, especially those who were victims of early marriage.

The people who suffered the most in this regard answered survey questions to be able to contribute more to the research, showing that their answers and all the negative effects in their lives were more remarkable. According to the answers given to the questions, the age of the respondents, the age of education, the regions in which they lived, and the satisfaction rates of marriage were given as a percentage. The percentage distributions of the answers that collected information about the gender, marriage age range, and education levels of the participants are shown in the tables, and then the answers are displayed in the graphs.

**Table 1.** General Information about the Participants

Gender		Marriage Age			Where He Lives	
Ms.	Mr.	13 -18	18-25	25+	City	Village
69%	31%	47%	42%	11%	36%	64%

Taking into account that the percentage of early marriage in Table 1 in Afghanistan, the majority of the victims were women, and about 47% of them were married between the ages of 13-18 and 42%’s, 18-25, it shows that marriage at an early age has a very large rate. It is also understood that early marriage is more common in rural areas than in urban areas.

**Table 2.** Training Information According to Answers

First Child			Education Level				Satisfaction with Marriage		
-18	18-25	+25	High School	Bachel or	Master's Degree	None	Yes	No	50/50
32%	36%	32%	26%	13%	6%	55%	29%	52%	19%

When examining the results and percentages obtained from the survey in Figure 2, it is clear that early marriage has noteworthy implications for health, combined with lower levels of education. The table also shows that a considerable majority of individuals are not content with marriage in the early stages. This has certainly had a lot of negative effects on their lives. Participants were asked a series of questions to evaluate the readiness of Afghan society for early marriage (Nour, 2009). With the help of these inquiries, initiatives aimed at improving societal awareness concerning the phenomenon of early marriage were explored. The public was asked to evaluate awareness levels regarding early marriage and the roles played by key figures, particularly family members and other social groups. When examining the groups expected to contribute and endorse public awareness against the phenomenon of early marriage, the actions of parents have the highest expectation level. Afterwards, there is a remarkable emphasis on the modification of established information. The third group that makes up the highest level of expectations appears as imams of mosques. It is seen that because they are closer to people and hold religious roles, they are associated with confidence.

**5. Factors Affecting Early Marriage in Afghanistan**

To identify the causes of early marriage in Afghanistan, some questions were asked the respondents. According to the responses of the interviewees, the decisions of the parents, poverty and ignorance are the most influential factors. Family decisions here and acceptance of economic factors are very close to each other, which can explain why the two elements are interconnected. It can be said that the war and instability in Afghanistan, which has been ongoing for many years, have aggravated the situation. Another challenge arises from the difficulties related to the functioning of safety and production consumption mechanisms, which further complicates this process. As understood from the answers given by the interviewees, lack of education and cultural and social factors are seen as having less of an impact. This supports the conclusion that, apart from basic human needs, other elements have a lesser impact. The phenomenon of poverty in Afghanistan has led to forced marriages with underage children in many parts of the country. In some areas, poor families, due to the limited availability of their economic resources and facilities, are forcing their daughters to marry in exchange for money, food, or to marry their adult daughters (UNICEF, 2007). Another phenomenon associated with this is the ignorance of families. Although it can be viewed as related to ineducation, in Afghan society, ignorance, which is a public expression, has a wider meaning than ineducation. Many parents living in remote areas are unaware of the health, social, and economic consequences that their underage children may experience because of marriage.

With the influence of patriarchal culture, traditions, and customs, male dominance, and some cultural acceptance and social attitudes toward women, in most cases lead to the disregarding of the rights of women (Raj, 2010). For example, from the moment she reaches a certain age, keeping a girl at home is considered shame. Along with the societal conception of keeping girls at home, factors such as the misinterpretation of religious rules, the illiteracy of girls in reading and writing, as well as parental illiteracy, make early marriage an inevitable choice on the part of parents.

According to the literature on the subject, education is often seen as the key to preventing child marriage (Omari, 2002; Saqqizi, 2010). For example, in the 42's of the countries analyzed, women who attended primary school between the ages of 20 and 24 are less likely to marry than those who did not reach the age of 18. The preventive effect of education is stronger in the fact that those who go to elementary school marry at an earlier age than those who are more educated; those who do not go to school seem to get married earlier than all of them. Education is the most important method that can effectively eliminate certain basic human rights traditions. According to Omari (2002), for example, early marriage is a violation of rights; thus, in societies with low educational levels, the number of early marriages has been high. The results obtained from this study on Omariin and from our data support each other.

In most cases, social violence and armed conflict force families to enter wrong *marriages* (ICRW, 2007). Social norms, as well as tribal codes, indicate what behaviors or attitudes are socially acceptable or acceptable. These norms strongly influence a community's attitudes toward child marriage and gender inequality.

The topic under this subheading was about how some influential groups in this society were influential in traditional culture (UNICEF, 2004). The following subheading will examine the problems faced by victims of early marriage.

## **6. The Consequences of Early Marriage in Afghanistan**

Some of the most obvious and important results of early marriage are that people face health problems if their education is disrupted and they give birth prematurely. The level of education arises as both a cause and result of early marriage. Early marriages lead to the removal of the rights to education and training in the period of child development; children are deprived of education and opportunities to have a job and participate in business life. Individuals who marry early often display a tendency to detach themselves from their social environment. This is accompanied by a lack of self-confidence and unwillingness to participate in social activities. At the same time, children who have not completed their physiological and psychological development may develop various diseases and disorders (Nguyen & Wodon, 2012).

Individuals who are married at an early age are at risk of being exposed to all forms of violence by their partners. In such marriages, domestic situations such as domestic violence and disharmony can arise, potentially leading to divorce or even suicide. In fact, similar to the conclusion we have reached (Zaman & Koski, 2020), Zaman and Koski stated that marriage at an early age is associated with negative health outcomes throughout life. Girls who marry at a young age are more likely to experience partner violence and its effects on health (UNICEF, 2017).

It seems that women who marry at an early age face more problems as their children grow up. It has been concluded that the number of children, the fact that they are young and have diseases that affect them, and their children have an adverse effect on their lives. Due to all these factors, the number of marriages without consent in the absence of physical and mental maturity in Afghanistan is quite high, which brings about many social, legal, health, and moral problems. According to the results of the study, early marriage in Afghanistan is caused by various factors. These factors include poverty, parents' wrong decisions, poor economic situation, lack of education, safety anxiety, patriarchal culture, and traditional family lifestyle.

## **7. Conclusions and Suggestions**

Following a brief review of various studies on the underlying causes of early marriage in Afghanistan, this article examines whether these causes stem from transient factors or are linked to specific geographical areas or ethnic groups within the country. Extensive research has been conducted to encompass all victims of early marriage in Afghanistan, addressing the diverse regions and geographical areas where different ethnic groups reside within their communities.

While some studies have identified the patriarchal culture in Afghanistan as a primary cause of early marriage, our research findings suggest that the influence of this culture is more limited, being primarily associated with certain regions and specific communities. Some research indicates that early marriage in Afghanistan is closely linked to poverty. However, the results of our study indicate that the reasons for early marriage are multifaceted, encompassing factors such as economic conditions in various provinces and tribes, parental decisions, poor economic status, and a lack of education, cultural awareness, and family lifestyles.

Regarding the manner in which individuals enter into early marriage, it is often concluded that such decisions are made by families. Families are also observed to support marriages between relatives. The early marriage of relatives can lead individuals to conceal their struggles and feel unable to share their problems with others. The fact that only two participants expressed a desire to marry and did so of their own accord highlights the significant influence of family elders in these decisions. This emphasizes that family decisions play a crucial role in the phenomenon of early

marriage, as these choices often give rise to the issue. Although some women seek assistance from official institutions when faced with problems, it is believed that such support is not yet at the desired level.

Several factors contribute to child marriage, with poverty being the foremost among them, alongside parental illiteracy, economic inefficiency, and the circumstances of families in rural areas. Economic hardships often drive families to seek financial relief by marrying off their daughters. Additionally, a lack of education and awareness remains a significant issue in Afghan society. The findings indicate that the education level of parents is a vital factor influencing child marriage; for instance, parents who are not literate tend to marry their daughters off at younger ages. The disparity between urban and rural living standards also plays a critical role in the prevalence of child marriage, with such marriages being more common in rural areas.

Child marriage results in various negative and unexpected consequences, including the spread of diseases, an increase in divorce rates, and instances of girls running away from home. This study concludes that many of these factors are interconnected with the issue of child marriage. Factors such as poverty and a lack of adequate family responsibility can lead to early marriages, which in turn can hinder girls' access to education and economic advancement.

One key finding of this study is that the tradition of early marriage remains prevalent in Afghanistan, driven by various causes and factors. Therefore, immediate and long-term measures must be implemented to address the elements associated with early marriage. Addressing poverty appears to be the most significant step in combating early marriage, as it must be eradicated. To combat ongoing unemployment and poverty in Afghanistan and enhance employment opportunities, it is essential to improve government effectiveness in the economic sector to the greatest extent possible. However, this issue is also linked to the development of international, political, and diplomatic efforts beyond Afghanistan's borders.

If some of the primary causes of early marriage can be mitigated or eliminated, it can be more effectively demonstrated to Afghan society—especially to parents—that early marriage exacerbates poverty and increases economic challenges. Religious leaders, health workers, authorities, and charitable organizations can play a crucial role in conveying this message to individuals, particularly parents, highlighting how early marriage contributes to various economic difficulties. Implementing screening and interview programs within health institutions, along with health workers, can effectively communicate the health risks associated with early marriage and its potential impact on future generations.

The government and non-governmental organizations can raise awareness about the disadvantages of early marriage through seminars, media campaigns, and other outreach methods. This issue could greatly benefit from long-term, international sociological studies, which can provide valuable insights and contribute to the development of effective solutions.

To reduce the incidence of early marriage in Afghanistan and employ effective strategies to eliminate it, it is essential to examine similar cases of early marriage in different countries and regions around the world.

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