

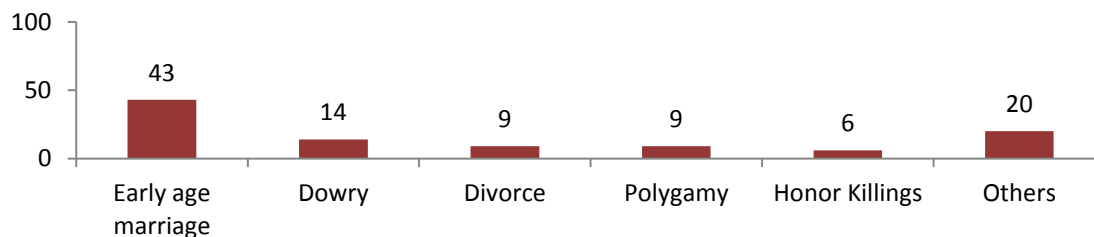
End child marriage on paper and in practice

According to PCSW's Economic and Social Well-being of Women Survey Punjab 2018, **14.8% of women aged 20-24 were married before they were 18 years of age**. This is legal: the current age of marriage for women is 16 years in Punjab.¹ However, **a large body of research demonstrates that early age marriage harms young women and their families:**

- Lower schooling²
- Reduced physical growth of children³
- Lower social status in husbands' families⁴
- Higher rates of maternal mortality⁵
- Higher rates of domestic violence⁶

PCSW proposes to address child marriage in Punjab by **raising the legal age of marriage for women from 16 to 18 years**.

To make this **effective in practice**, the law should **require Nikkah Registrars to verify age documentation** at the time of marriage. Nikkah registrars recognize child marriage as a problem: in a survey of 2422 Nikkah Registrars in Punjab, **40% of them chose "Child Marriage" as the most important social issue**.



Source: Survey 2017-18 conducted by PCSW/CERP evaluation team

Note: Graph shows proportion of 2153 Nikkah Registrars who responded to survey question

¹ Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929

² Field, E., & Ambrus, A. (2008). Early marriage, age of menarche, and female schooling attainment in Bangladesh. *Journal of Political Economy*, 116(5), 881-930.

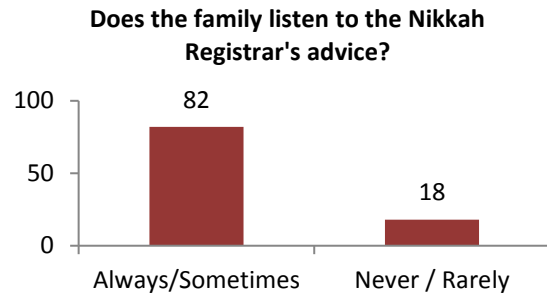
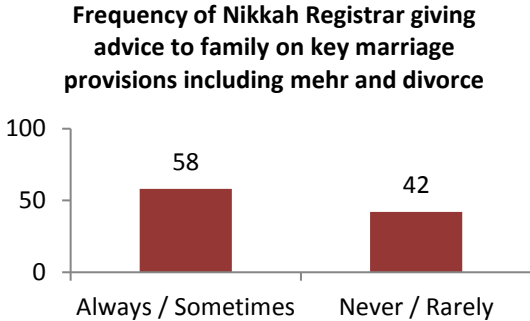
³ Chari, A. V., Heath, R., Maertens, A., & Fatima, F. (2017). The causal effect of maternal age at marriage on child wellbeing: Evidence from India. *Journal of Development Economics*, 127, 42-55.

⁴ Marphatia, Ambale & Reid (2017) Women's marriage age matters for public health: a review of the broader health and social implications in South Asia. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 5, 269.

⁵ Raj, A., & Boehmer, U. (2013). Girl child marriage and its association with national rates of HIV, maternal health, and infant mortality across 97 countries. *Violence Against Women*, 19(4), 536-551.

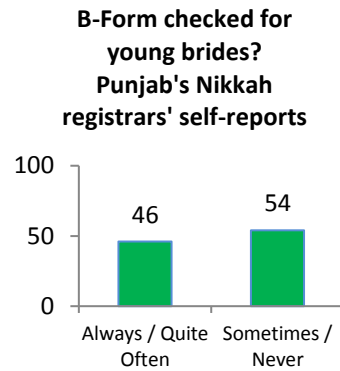
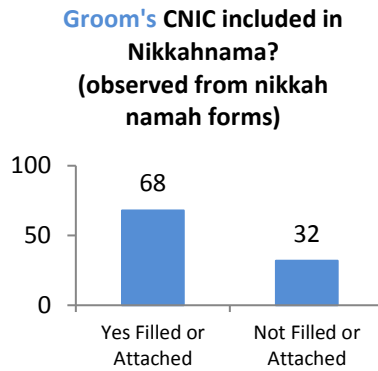
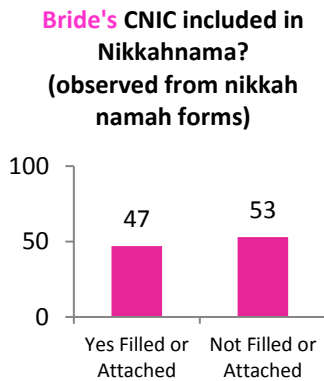
⁶ Jensen & Thorton (2003). Early female marriage in the developing world. *Gender & Development*, 11(2), 9-19.

Nikkah registrars already **advise families on key decisions about marriage contracts, and families listen to their advice**, so they can influence what families decide about the age of marriage.



Source: Self-reports by Nikkah Registrars - Survey 2017-18 conducted by PCSW/CERP evaluation team

To enforce the age of marriage, nikkah registrars should check the bride's CNIC or B-form to confirm whether she is of age to be married. However, they report that **in most cases they do not do so**. Under the proposed new law, registrars would be **required to check the CNIC or B-form to confirm the bride's age**.



Sources: 14,082 nikkahnamas scanned from UC offices of Lahore District; Survey of 13,900 nikkah registrars conducted by PCSW / CERP evaluation team 2017-18

This fact sheet was prepared in collaboration with PCSW by members of the Center for Economic Research in Pakistan Institutional Reform and de Facto Women's Rights research team, including Hassan Mahmood, Hana Zahir and Kate Vyborny.