

Banned But Not Broken:

CHILD MARRIAGE IN PAKISTAN TODAY



**GIRLS
NOT
BRIDES**

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE & CHILD BRIDES

According to UNFPA, 1 in 3 child brides in South Asia, including Pakistan, experience domestic or sexual violence. Married girls are often isolated from their peers, with limited legal or social protection mechanisms.

Source: UNFPA



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The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage



HEALTH RISKS OF EARLY PREGNANCY

Girls under 18 are 2–5 times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes compared to women in their 20s, says WHO. In Pakistan, early pregnancy is linked to high rates of maternal mortality, especially in underserved districts of South Punjab.

Source: WHO



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REGIONAL HOTSPOTS

Data from the Girls Not Brides Atlas shows that child marriage in Pakistan is

- concentrated in specific districts that have long faced underinvestment in education and economic opportunity, like parts of South Punjab.

Source: Girls Not Brides Atlas



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DOWRY AND MARRIAGE PRESSURES, POST-DISASTERS

After natural disasters like the 2022 floods, dowry amounts fell by up to 40%, prompting families to arrange earlier marriages. In flood-hit parts of Punjab and Sindh, this economic incentive led to a spike in marriages among girls aged 14–17.

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UNICEF REPORTS

29% of girls in Pakistan are married before 18, and 4% before 15, while Save the Children documented an 18% increase in child marriages after the 2022 floods.

Source: UNICEF



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LACK OF BIRTH REGISTRATION & AGE VERIFICATION

✓ A 2019 UNICEF report showed that only 42% of children under age 5 in Pakistan had their births officially registered. This lack of documentation makes it easy to falsify age and marry girls before the legal age of 18.

Source: UNICEF




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AGE

 In 2025, Pakistan passed the Child Marriage Restraint Bill, setting the legal marriage age at 18 for all genders. But in many rural communities, this law remains distant from daily life.

Source: Girls Not Brides

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SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

SDG GENDER INDEX

According to the 2024 SDG Gender Index by Equal Measures 2030, Pakistan ranks 137 out of 139 countries, with an overall score of 45.8 and just 38.1 for SDG 5 (Gender Equality).

Source: 2024 SDG Gender Index by Equal Measures 2030



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IMPACT OF EARLY MARRIAGE ON EDUCATION

Girls who marry before 18 are 60% more likely to drop out of school, according to UNESCO. In Pakistan, the dropout rate for girls increases sharply after puberty, with only 13% enrolled in grade 10 in many rural districts.

Source: UNESCO

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MENSTRUAL HEALTH & CHILD MARRIAGE

✓ A 2023 study by Rutgers Pakistan found that 71% of married adolescent girls lacked basic menstrual health education. In early marriages, girls often face stigma and confusion around reproductive health, which increases health risks and lowers their self-esteem.

Source: Rutgers Pakistan