



Causes and Consequences of Early Marriage in the Amhara Region

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BACKGROUND

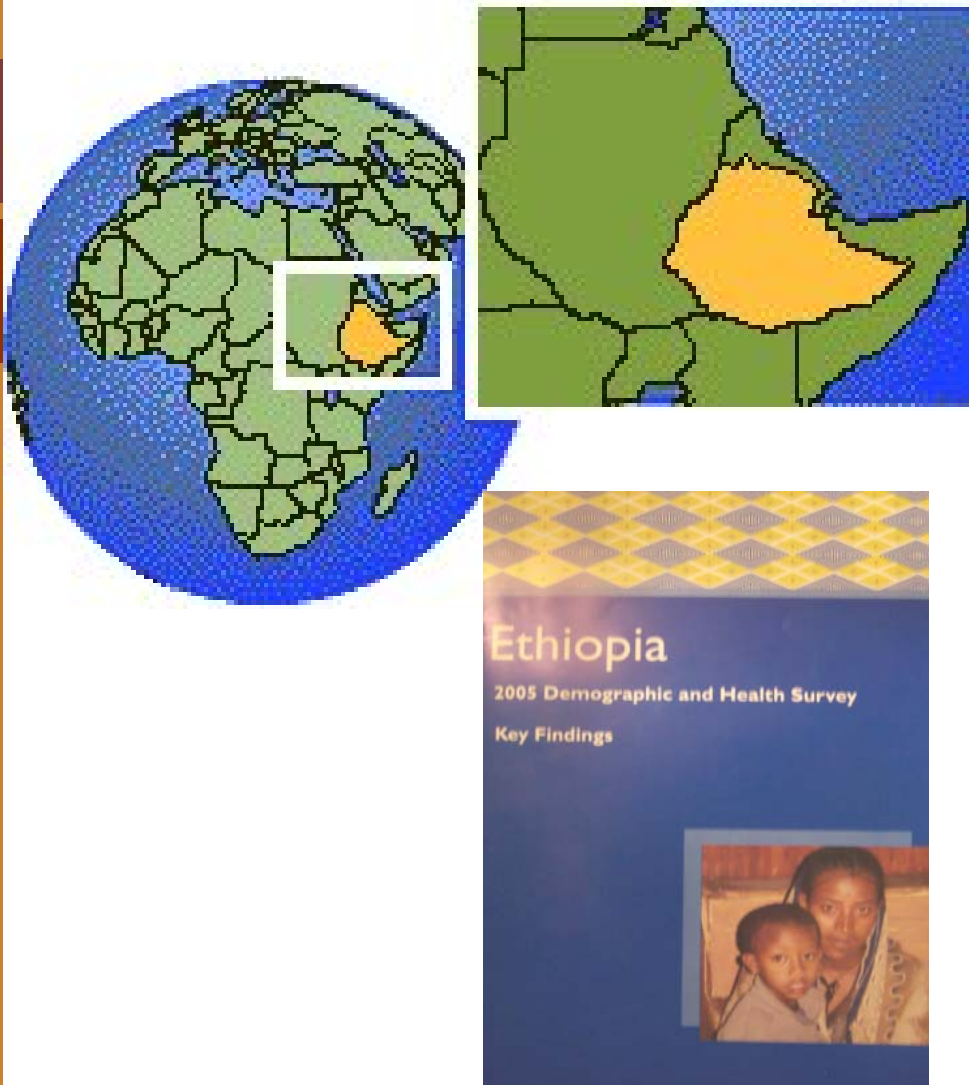
Marriage

- Social Practice
- Public act
- Religious or traditional Ceremony

Early Marriage:

- Is the marriage of children and adolescents below the age of 18

BACKGROUND



Total Pop. = 77 million

Pop. Under 15 = 44%

TFR = 5.4

CPR for all methods = 15%

MMR= 673/100,000

Marriage by age 15 = 13%

Marriage before age 18 = 66%

Median Age at Marriage = 16



BACKGROUND

Perceived Causes

- Improve economic status
- Strengthen family ties
- Maintain virginity of girls
- Avoiding undesirability of girls

Perceived Effects

- Increased maternal morbidity and mortality
- Obstetric fistula
- High school drop outs/Denial of education
- Low autonomy and decision making power
- Gender based violence
- High rate of HIV infection

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Generate information and to critically examine causes and consequences of early marriage in the Amhara region of Ethiopia

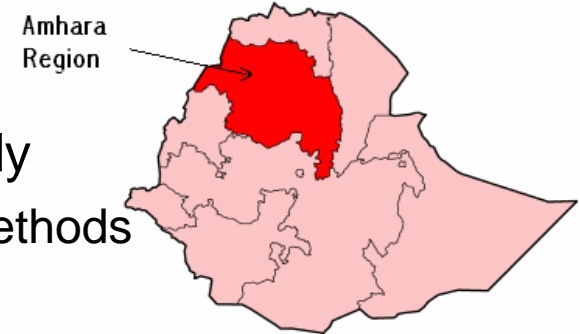
- **Estimate the current prevalence of early marriage and mean age at first marriage**
- **Identify demographic, cultural, socio-economic and other factors leading to early marriage**
- **Examine the reproductive health, physiological, psychological, socio-economic, and demographic consequences of early marriage**
- **Make programmatic recommendations**



MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Type

- Community-based, cross-sectional study
 - quantitative and qualitative research methods



Sampling

- Quantitative data (multistage Sampling)
 - 1,700 households and 2,072 women aged 12-49
- Qualitative Data
 - FGDs – 20 Groups (8-12 Members)
 - Key Informant Interview- 20 KIs

Data Analysis

- Statistical analysis for quantitative data
- Triangulation for qualitative data

FINDINGS

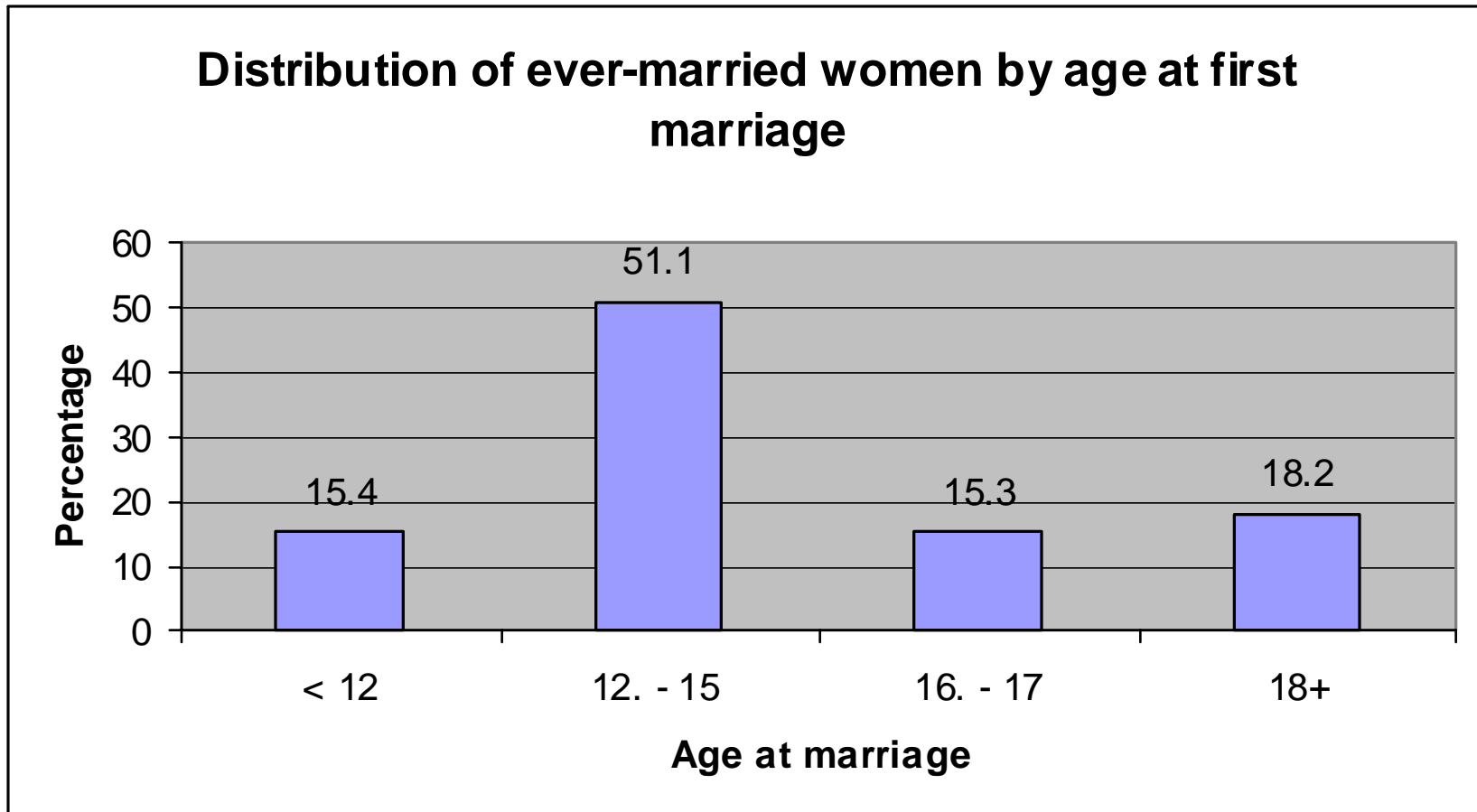
- **10% of sample women were aged 12-14 years**
- **35% were 15-24 years old**
- 26% were 25-34 and
- 29% were 35 and older

- **60% of women had no education**
- About a quarter had primary education and
- Only 15% had secondary or higher education
- **Only 23% are currently attending schools**

- 54% of the respondents were currently married
- 22% of the respondent had dissolved their marriages
- 25% of the respondents were single
- Among currently married and age 24 or younger only 9% attend schools

- Only 46% of the respondent were engaged in economic activity for generating income

FINDINGS- AGE AT MARRIAGE



Mean age at first marriage was 14.46 and median age of 14

FINDINGS

- Among those currently married and not attending school (12-24 years)
 - 28% dropped out due to marriage
 - 19% looking after children
 - 14% parents/guardian disapproval
- Among the ever married, a quarter of them married twice and 14% had married three or more times
- Major reasons for dissolution of first marriage
 - 38% too young for marriage
 - 18% lack of interest in the marriage
 - 17% domestic violence
 - 6.5% death of husband
 - 3.5% infertility

FINDINGS-Associated Factors

Education

- **> 80% of girls with no education married before age 18.**
- **68% of girls with primary or higher education married before age 18.**
- **More than 90% of girls whose parents had no education married before age 18.**
- **Only 20% of girls whose parents had primary or higher education married early.**

Residence

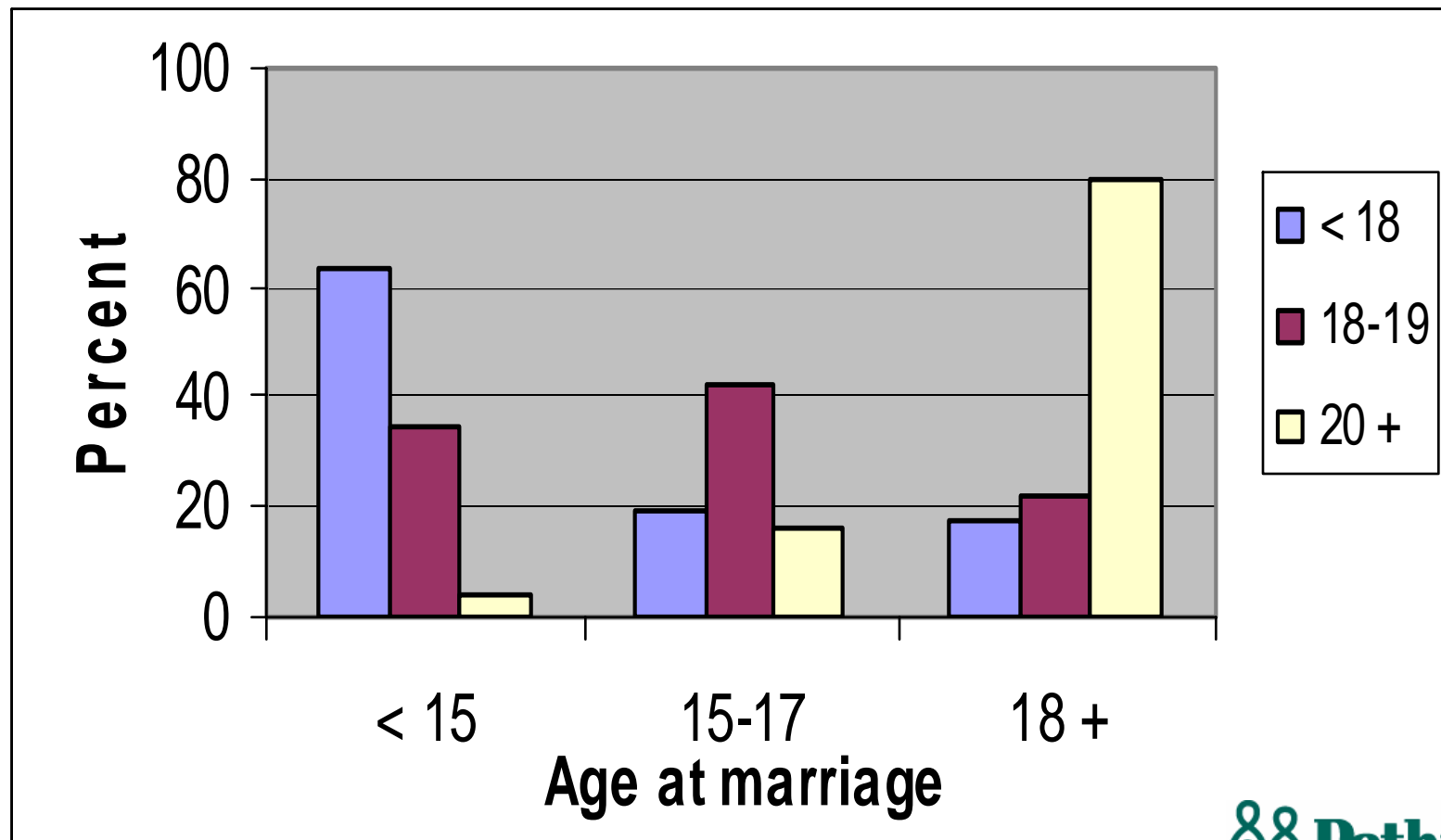
- **94% of girls brought up in rural areas were married before age 18.**
- **Only 34% of girls brought up in urban areas married early.**

Access to Media

- **84% of girls in households without access to radio married before age 18.**
- **68% of girls with access to radio married early.**

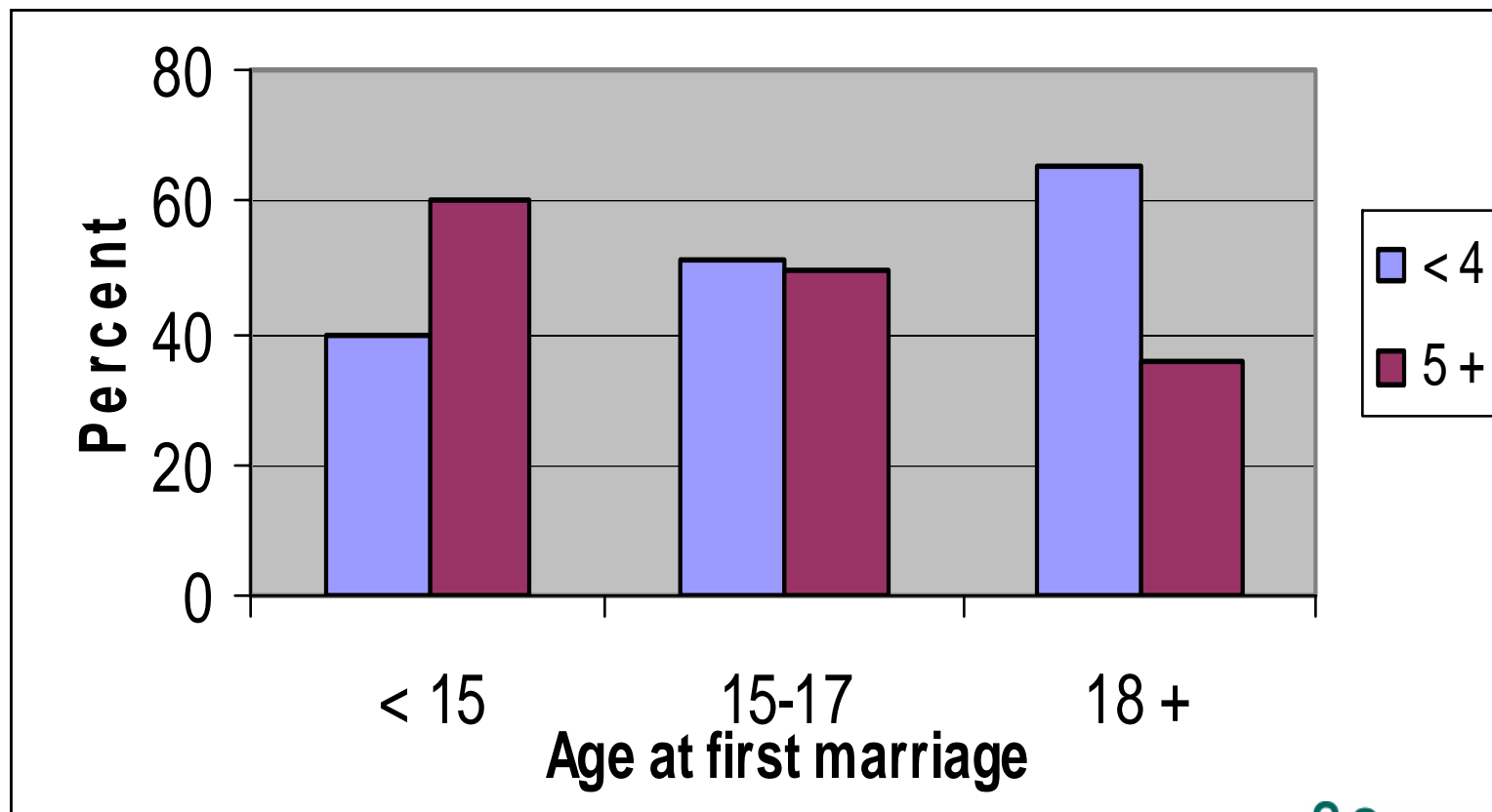
EARLY CHILDBEARING

Age at First Marriage by Age at First Birth



INFLUENCE ON FERTILITY

Children Ever Born by Age at First Marriage



FINDINGS

Marriage characteristics

- 73% of the ever married women were married to older men
- In almost 50% of the cases the age difference was ten or more years
- One in five reported that their husband had been previously married
- 60% of ever married women stayed at the husband's parents after marriage
- 55% of the ever married women reported being pressured into marriage
- In over 85% of the cases parents chose husbands, make decisions and arrange marriages
- 60% of the were not informed about the wedding before decision is made
- 3/4th of the women in the rural areas didn't know the person prior to the wedding

REASONS FOR EARLY MARRIAGE

- Prestige -39%
- **Strengthen ties between the families- 45%**
- Ensure virginity of girls before marriage -21%
- Avoiding the possibility of a girl not being marriageable later in life -29%
- **Tradition and/cultural values-82%**
- To collect Dowry- 21%

CONSEQUENCES OF EARLY MARRIAGE

Engocha married at the age of 12, gave birth to a dead child at the age of 16, and developed a fistula due to prolonged labor.



CONSEQUENCES OF EARLY MARRIAGE

*Belaynesh, who is 23 yrs, was **married at the age of 11** and gave birth at 12 to a son. However, the **birth trauma** resulted in a paralysis of her left side of the body. As a result her husband sent her to her parents and **abandoned her** completely take another wife. After years of suffering her health improved but she **found life extremely difficult**. Leaving her son with her parents, she moved to a town and ended up as a **sex worker**. Now she is **HIV positive**.*

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Cultural values and norms are more important than economic reasons in determining early marriage. Therefore, to reduce early marriage we need to**
 - Raise the awareness of parents, children and the community about the health, psychological, and physiological consequences of early marriage;
 - Publicize the laws and policies against the practice of early marriage; and
 - Strengthen law enforcement mechanisms.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Attitudes need to change.**
 - Even where parents and children understand the negative implications of early marriage, **societal pressure to conform** is great.
 - The media can play an essential role in challenging the attitudes and customs that underpin early marriage.
- **Strengthen partnership in the fight against the practice.**
 - Support community members and organizations in the fight against early marriage
 - Empower the youth.
 - Raise their awareness and teach them how to defend their rights.
 - Focus on schools, this has proved to be very effective in fighting against the practice.

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