

Estimation of the Impact of Sensitization on the Knowledge and Practices of Parents in the Face of Early Marriage in the Urban Commune of Koniakary

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Summary

Introduction: Child marriage is any legal or customary union involving a boy or girl under the age of 18. The study we conducted aimed to assess the knowledge and practices of parents with regard to early marriage. *Method and materials:* This was an action research study that took place in three phases, the first consisted of an initial assessment to take stock of knowledge on early marriages and the development of the plan. of action. The second phase was devoted to the implementation of the action plan for improving knowledge about these marriages through information, education and communication sessions. Finally, the third consisted of a final evaluation to observe the evolution after the action plan over a period of four months from April to July 2017 in the urban municipality of Koniakary/Region of Kayes. 99 people participated in this study during the evaluations. *Results:* The most represented age group was 41-45 years with 40.3% of cases. The primary evaluation made it possible to identify shortcomings and relative exact answers were provided. This led us to have a great progress in the secondary evaluation: the knowledge on the age of the marriage evolved favorably because 78.8% thought that it was less than 14 years for the age of marriage at the beginning of the study against 10.1% at the final evaluation. The main reasons for these early marriages mentioned were the eviction of illegitimate pregnancies in 58.6% of cases. The decision makers in these marriages were the father and the other men in the family in 62.6% of cases. *Conclusion:* The decision-makers of these early marriages were male adults who did not know the age of marriage according to the texts in Mali nor the dangers that young people faced in early marriages. Thus the action plan that we have implemented has improved the knowledge of those surveyed in relation to early marriage.

Keywords: Knowledge; Practices; Early Marriages; Koniakary

Introduction

Child marriage is any legal or customary union involving a boy or girl under the age of 18. However, this marriage cannot be the free and informed consent of both spouses. This definition is based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which defines a child as any human being under the age of 18 [1]. Insofar as no person under the age of 18 is able to give valid free and informed consent, i.e. truly autonomous and responsible, child marriage can be considered as forced marriage [1].

Child marriage is recognized as a human rights violation for girls as well as boys, but it is perhaps the most widespread form of early sexuality and exploitation of girls [2]. Separation from family and friends, deprivation of freedom to interact with peers and participate in community activities, and restriction of educational opportunities are among the negative consequences of such marriages. Child marriage can also lead to forced labor and slavery, commercial sexual exploitation and violence [2]. Because they cannot refuse sex or demand the use of condoms, married girls often face serious health risks, such as early pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and growing plus HIV/AIDS [2].

Attitudes, customs and practices

Ending child marriage is difficult because even parents who understand its negative repercussions sometimes find it difficult to resist economic, social and traditional pressures [2]. To change the age at which it is acceptable to marry, it is essential to combat the mentalities and customs that favor or sanction this practice.

In some cases, parents authorize the marriage of their children out of economic necessity. Marriage can also be seen as a way to put a girl under the guardianship of a man, to protect her from possible sexual assault, to avoid pregnancies outside marriage, to extend the period of procreation or to guarantee submission. to the husband's household [2].

Every minute, 27 girls under the age of 18 are forced into marriage around the world [3].

The majority of them live in sub-Saharan Africa (West Africa in particular) and South Asia. They generally have a low level of education and live in rural areas in very poor families. Figures and studies prove it: child marriage has disastrous effects on girls and society in general [3]. Despite this observation, the international community and donors have remained largely silent on this issue for several decades [3].

It is very difficult to determine the prevalence of early marriage due, among other things, to the fact that a large number are neither registered nor official and therefore do not appear in any usual data collection system [4]. There are very few national data on marriage under 14 and even less on those under 10, except in Bangladesh where the 1996-1997 Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) revealed that 5% girls aged 10-14 were married [4].

In sub-Saharan Africa, trends have been carefully examined using data from global fertility surveys and DHS [5]. The analyzes identified two groups of countries:

- Those where the age of marriage is rising such as Senegal, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Uganda;
- And those where there has been little change, including Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Lesotho; Liberia and Mali [5].

Early marriage is generally more prevalent in Central and West Africa, affecting 40% and 49% of girls under the age of 19, respectively, compared to 27% in East Africa and 20% in North and South Africa [6]. A large number of these young brides enter as 2nd or 3rd wives in polygamous households.

In the Middle East and North Africa, early marriage is less common than in South Asia or sub-Saharan Africa. Despite the limited data available, we know that in the United Arab Emirates 55% of women aged 20 are married, and this figure is 42% in Sudan [6].

If the marriage on little girls and little boys is considered catastrophic. The consequences range from severe sexual and reproductive complications to increased infant mortality, domestic violence, social isolation and extreme poverty. These impacts are compounded in contexts weakened by weak systems and the inability of governments to protect and respect the rights of its citizens. Child marriage presents a worrying challenge for the poorest developing countries and their hard-won gains.

However, in the face of these proven facts and the almost systematic condemnation of this practice, early marriage continues to prosper [7].

While the tendency to marry later is evident in sub-Saharan Africa, much progress remains to be made to eradicate this practice.

- ✓ Despite the texts and laws enforced against early marriages by the Malian authorities, in Koniakary this practice continues.
- ✓ The low level of parental knowledge of early marriages, their inadequate attitudes and practices have an influence on the occurrence of cases of psychosis and consequences on reproductive health among adolescent girls under 18 in the urban commune of Koniakary.

Methodology

Our study was carried out in the urban commune Koniakary. It was an action research study based on knowledge, attitudes and practices over a period of four months from April to July 2017. 99 people participated in the study, distributed as follows: four from the men's group, four from the women, three customary chiefs in nine districts, for a total of eleven people per district. The study concerned men whose age was greater than or equal to 30 years and women whose age was greater than or equal to 12 years. Our study took place in three phases, the first consisted of an initial assessment to make an inventory of knowledge on early marriage and the development of an action plan. The second phase was devoted to the implementation of the action plan for improving knowledge about these marriages through information, education and communication sessions. Finally, the third consisted of a final evaluation to observe the evolution after the action plan.

The data was collected on a survey form. Then they were entered and analyzed by Epi info. Our study was conducted in compliance with the ethical rules related to research on human subjects in force.

Strengths of the study: Our target in the general population and followed at the CSCom-U of Koniakary, the relevance of the research subject and the adherence of the people concerned to this study.

Limits of the study: the multiple concerns of people during the morning constituted an obstacle to our study.

Results

The study was carried out on 99 people, with a sedentary lifestyle at 69.7% and a nomadic lifestyle at 30.3% during the two evaluations (Table 1).

Both sexes participated in this study, including 52.5% for the female and 47.5% for the male during the two evaluations (Table 1). The most represented age groups were 41 to 45 years with 40.3% of cases followed by that of 36 to 40 years with 25.2% of cases the initial and final evaluation (Table 1). The primary education level was the most represented with 49.5%, no level of education with 30.3%, secondary level with 19.2%, higher level with 1% during the two evaluations (Table 1).

<i>Socio-demographic characteristics</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Sex		
Masculin	47	47,5
Feminine	52	52,5
Age range		
30-35	21	21,3
36-40	25	25,2
41-45	40	40,3
46 years and older	13	13
Lifestyle		
Sedentary	69	69,7
Nomad	30	30,3
Level of education		
None	30	30,3
Primary	49	49,5
Secondary	19	19,2
Tertiary	1	1

Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics.

At the start of the study, the people surveyed thought that the age of marriage was less than 14 years at 78.8%, between 14 and 17 years at 1%, no response at 20.2% (Table 2). After the action plan, this knowledge on the age of marriage was for less than 14 years with 10.1%, between 14 to 17 years with 62.6%, 19.2% of respondents said from 18 years and no response at 8.1% (Table 2).

<i>Age of marriage according to respondents</i>	<i>Before</i>		<i>After</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
under 14 years	78	78,8%	10	10,1%
between 14 and 17 years old	1	1,0%	62	62,6%
From 18 years old	2	2,0%	19	19,2%
don't know	18	18,2%	8	8,1%
Total	99	100,0%	99	100,0%

Table 2: Knowledge of the age of marriage.

The criteria for marriage was physical constitution plus height was the most represented with 57.9%, weight with 26.3%, weight plus height 13.1%, menstruation 2.7%. Relatives in the village/fraction found these marriages were not precocious at 52.5% at initial assessment. After the action plan at the final evaluation only 4% of parents found that these marriages were not early and 96% thought the opposite.

The reasons for these early marriages were to avoid illegitimate pregnancies 58.6%, to reduce family responsibilities 12.1%, to respect religious precepts 10.1%, to ensure virginity 7.1%, to better educate the daughter 6.1%, honor the family social rank 5%, perpetuate the family line 1%.

The decision makers in these marriages were the father and other male relatives 62.6%, fathers and mothers 20.2%, single father 13.2%, other 2%, mother and other female relatives 1%, mother only 1% (Table 3).

<i>Marriage decision-maker</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Single mother	1	1,0%
Mother and other women families	1	1,0%
Father alone	13	13,1%
Father and other male family	62	62,6%
Fathers and mothers	20	20,2%
Other	2	2,0%
Total	99	100,0%

Table 3: The decision makers of these marriages.

At the initial assessment, knowledge of the official age of marriage in Mali was not known by 44.4% of cases, 17.1% said less than 15 years old, 15.2% said 15 years old, 12.2% said 18 and over, 10.1% said between 15 and 18 and others were 1%. After the action plan, knowledge of the official age of marriage in Mali had improved, 36.2% said over 18 years old, 24.1% said between 15 and 18 years old, 17.4% said 15 years old, did not know was 14.2%, under 15 years old 7.1% and others at 1%.

At the initial assessment, 94.9% of respondents found no particular consequence for early marriage and 5.1% found a risk of infant mortality against 35.3% who found no particular consequence and 64.7% found a risk of infant mortality at final assessment (Figure 1).

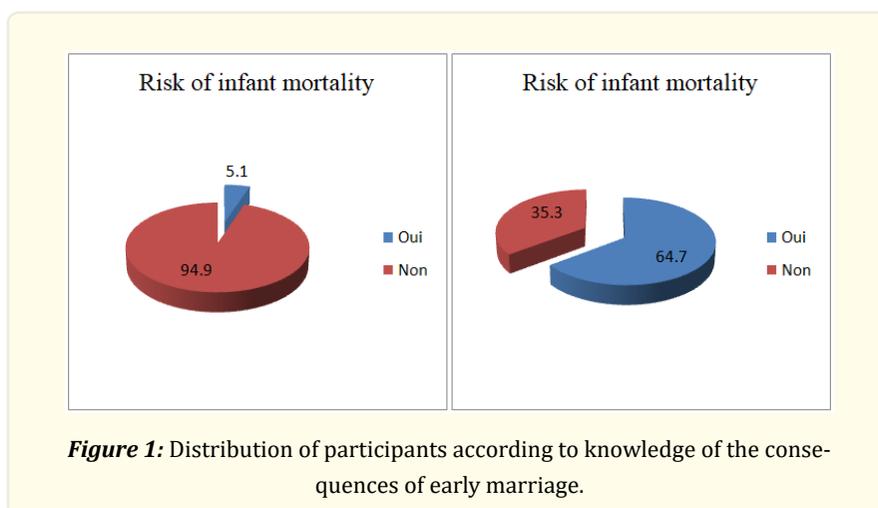


Figure 1: Distribution of participants according to knowledge of the consequences of early marriage.

To prevent these early marriages, the respondents had recommended education for girls 84.8%, sensitization of parents 13.1% and 2% had made no suggestion. The majority of participants appreciated the content 100% at the secondary evaluation against 88.9% during the first survey.

Discussion

The study was carried out among 99 people, with a more sedentary lifestyle of nomads during the evaluations. This result testified to the urbanization of the commune of Koniakary.

Both sexes participated in this study, with a female predominance during the two evaluations. This female predominance reflected the very state of the population of Mali where there is a predominance of the female sex, moreover the men worked and were often absent at home at the time of the survey.

The most represented age groups were 41 to 45 years old with 40.3% of cases followed by 36 to 40 years old with 25.2% of cases. And from 30 to 35 to 21.3% of cases at the initial and final evaluation. This would mean that this layer would be the decision makers of these early marriages.

The primary level of education was the most represented, followed by those with no schooling. This demonstrated the lack of awareness of the advantages of higher education by this population.

At the start of the study, the majority of respondents believed that the age of marriage was less than 14 years. After the action plan, this knowledge on the age of marriage was more improved with 14 years to 17 years as the age of marriage. While the majority of women in the sample could not identify the legal age of marriage of 16 years for girls in Mali [8].

The criteria for marriage was build plus height, followed by height. The majority of parents in the village/fraction believed that marriages performed in the village were not performed early at the initial assessment, after the final assessment action plan this result was the opposite. could cause these marriages in this locality on the one hand and on the other hand the parents did not take into account the other criteria of marriage. On the other hand, the Unicef survey in 2009 found 72% of these early marriages in Mali [7].

The reasons for these early marriages were to avoid illegitimate pregnancies, reduce family responsibilities, respect religious precepts, ensure virginity, better educate the girl, honor the family social rank and perpetuate the family line. This showed that traditions and customs were strong in this region but that with awareness, we could bring about change. On the other hand, FONDJO NGUEMEGA Armelle Patricia had found as the main reasons for these early marriages, the eviction of illegitimate pregnancies (42.80%), the preservation of the girl's virginity (16.70%), the education of girls (10.9%) and the reduction of the family burden (8.6%) [9].

The decision makers of these marriages were the father and the other men of the family in most cases. In this study, we again saw that neither the opinion of women nor their agreement were fully taken into account in marriage.

At the initial assessment, knowledge of the official age of marriage in Mali was not known by the respondents. After the action plan, knowledge of the official age of marriage in Mali had improved with 36.2% over 18, 24.1% said between 15 and 18, 17.4% said 15 years old, did not know 14.2%, under 15 7.1% and others 1%. The knowledge of the age of marriage in Mali by the population and the risks of these early marriages would perhaps allow a reduction of this scourge.

At the start of the study, the respondents did not find any particular consequence for these early marriages and, on the other hand, finally, 64.7% said of the risks of maternal and child mortality. Knowledge of these dangers by decision-makers and parents would reduce early marriages. While FANKOU SIMO TAGNE FREDDY had found childbirth difficulties in Mopti, the risks of maternal and infant mortality were the most cited by women respectively 35.3%; 26.9% and 23.7% as risk related to early marriage [10].

Conclusion

Early marriage therefore poses a serious threat to the well-being of children. If this practice concerns girls and boys, it is however the most fundamental rights of the child bride in terms of survival and development that are ignored. the period and frequency of her maternity wards.

In this study, the decision makers of these early marriages were mostly male adults with primary education. They did not know the age of marriage according to the texts in Mali nor the dangers that young people faced in early marriages. They set aberrant criteria for giving these young people in marriage. Thus the action plan that we have implemented has improved the knowledge of those surveyed in relation to early marriage. This action plan must be followed and sustainable.

Conflict of interest

None.

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