

Nepal 2024-25



Child Marriage

Multiple Indicator
Cluster Surveys

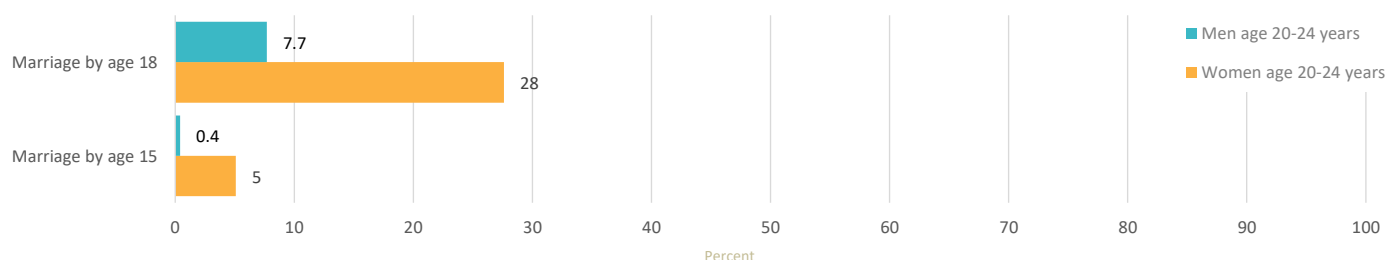


Government of Nepal
Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers
National Statistics Office



Child marriage: Levels and Disaggregates

Marriage before Age 15 & Age 18 among women (SDG 5.3.1*) and men

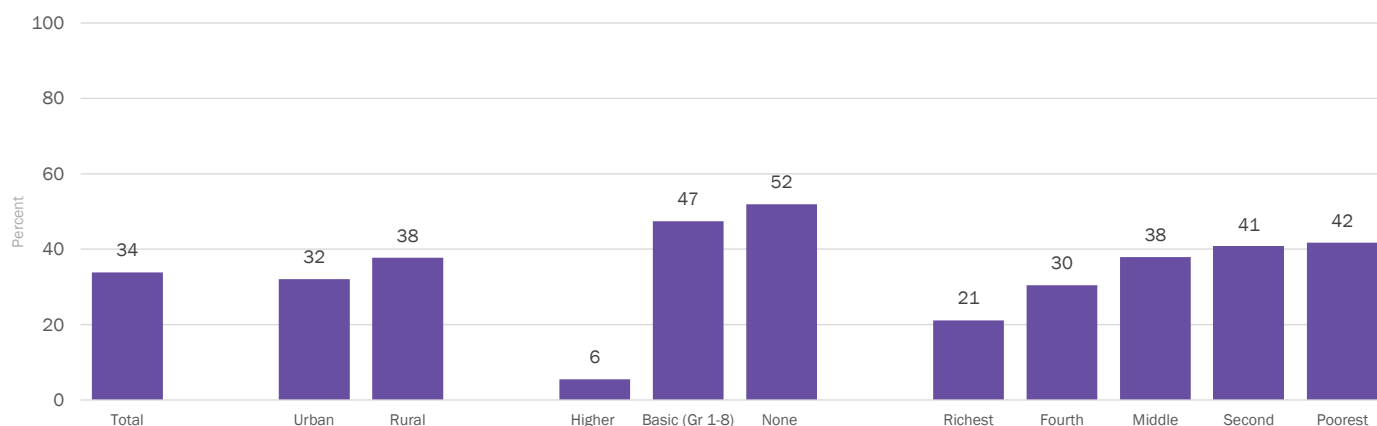


Percentage of women and men age 20-24 years who were first married or in union before age 15 and before age 18

The above chart refers to women and men age 20 to 24 years to align with the standard for reporting on SDG 5.3.1. This age cohort recently completed exposure to the risk of marrying in childhood, thus giving a closer approximation of the current prevalence of child marriage. The following charts, which show disaggregation by background characteristics, refer to the full cohort of women and men aged 18 to 49 years.

* SDG indicator 5.3.1 refers only to child marriage prevalence among girls: "Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18"

Disaggregates in Marriage Before Age 18 Among Women



Percentage of women age 18-49 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by residence, education, and household wealth quintile

Key Messages

- In Nepal women are far more likely to marry young than are men. Five percent (5%) of women aged 20-24 years were married before the age of 15 and 28% were married before they turned 18. Data for men indicate that 0.4% of men aged 20-24 were married before the age of 15 and 5% before the age of 18.
- Level of education is strongly associated with the prevalence of child marriage.
- Women with no or basic education are far more likely to be married before the age of 18.
- Women from the richest households were less likely to be married before the age of 18 (21%) compared to women in the fourth, middle, second and poorest households (ranges from 30-42%).
- There are disparities in prevalence of child marriage amongst provinces in Nepal. Prevalence of marriage before the age of 18 is highest among women aged 18-49 in Madhesh (46%) and lowest in Bagmati (26%)

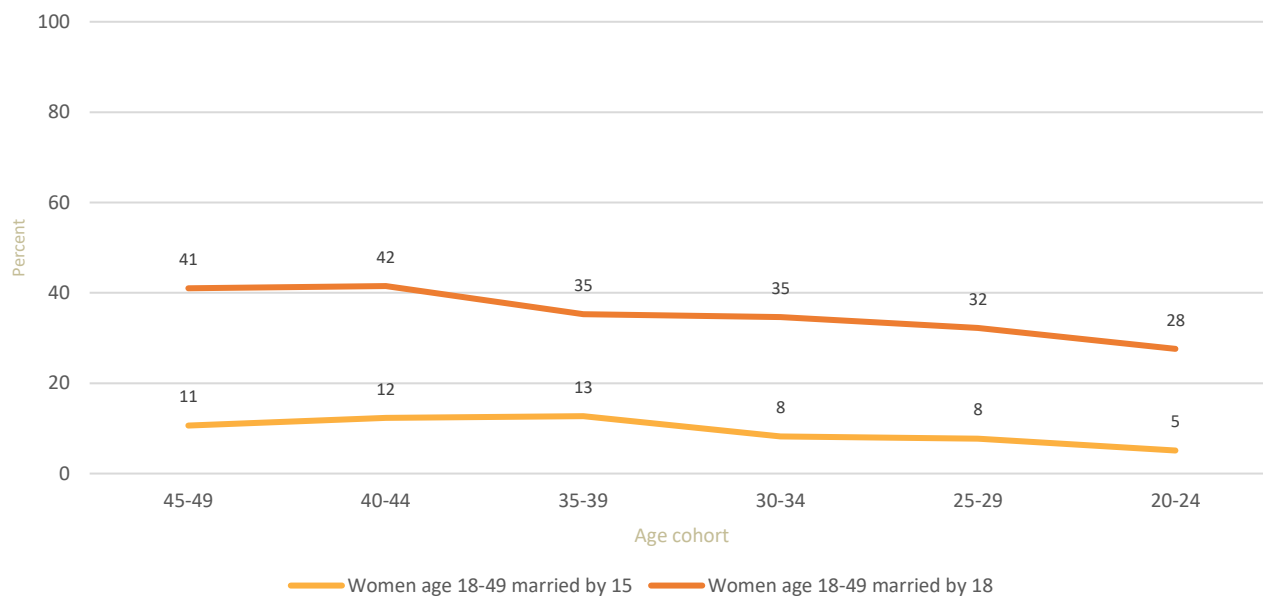
Region	Marriage by age 18
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Nepal	33.8
Koshi	26.9
Madhesh	46.3
Bagmati	26.2
Gandaki	30.2
Lumbini	32.5
Karnali	43.4
Sudurpashchim	37.9

Marriage before the age of 18 is a reality for many young girls. In many parts of the world parents encourage the marriage of their daughters while they are still children in hopes that the marriage will benefit them both financially and socially, while also relieving financial burdens on the family. In actual fact, child marriage is a violation of human rights, compromising the development of girls and often resulting in early pregnancy and social isolation, with little education and poor vocational training reinforcing the gendered nature of poverty. The right to 'free and full' consent to a marriage is recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - with the recognition that consent cannot be 'free and full' when one of the parties involved is not sufficiently mature to make an informed decision about a life partner. Child marriage, while less common among boys, is similarly a violation of their rights, and forces them to take on adult responsibilities for which they may not be prepared.

Percentage of women age 18 to 49 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by region

Trends in Child Marriage



Percentage of women (age 20-49 years who were first married or in union before age 15 and before age 18, by age cohort

The Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) was carried out in 2024-25 by the National Statistics Office as part of the global MICS programme. Technical support was provided by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). UNICEF and Government of provided financial support.

The objective of this snapshot is to disseminate selected findings from the Nepal MICS 2024-25 related to Child Marriage. Data from this snapshot can be found in table PR.4.1W and PR.4.1M in the Survey Findings Report..

Further statistical snapshots and the Survey Findings Report for this and other surveys are available on mics.unicef.org/surveys.