ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE IN INDIA
Drivers and strategies

Shireen J Jejeebhoy

AKSHA Center for Equity and Wellbeing

unicef
for every child

Contents

Abbreviations

AFHC	Adolescent Friendly Health Clinic
AFHS	Adolescent Friendly Health Services
BBBP	Beti Bachao Beti Padhao
BPO	Business Process Outsourcing
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CPC	Child Protection Committee
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FMP	Families Matter! Program
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HIC	High Income Country
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IIPS	International Institute for Population Sciences
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGO	International Non-Government Organization
IVRS	Interactive Voice Response System
LMIC	Low and Middle Income Country
NAP	National Action Plan
NCRB	National Crime Records Bureau
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NYKS	Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan
PCMA	Prohibition of Child Marriage Act
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
RKSK	Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram
SAG	Scheme for Adolescent Girls
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMC	School Management Committee
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
ToC	Theory of Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

1

Background and objectives

India has articulated its commitment to eliminating child marriage through numerous policies, laws and programmes; yet, more than one in four young women aged 20-24 was married in childhood (below age 18), and lack of voice in marriage-related decision-making abounds. The persistence of child marriage remains a potential deterrent to India's likelihood of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5 by 2030. A key challenge underlying the gap between policy and programme commitments and the realities of child marriage in India is our limited understanding of effective programme strategies that delay marriage and offer girls a greater role in marriage-related decision-making.

While many programmes have been implemented with the aim of preventing child marriage, many are doing so without an explicit Theory of Change (ToC) or a rigorous evaluation component. A systematic ToC is important because it provides a comprehensive description of the pathways through which to change a particular behaviour in a particular context, outlines the problem and factors that contribute to this problem, and informs the development of activities or strategies that are intended to reduce or eliminate obstacles, and finally, articulates the shorter-term, intermediate and longer-term outcomes of these strategies. The lack of a conceptual framework or ToC in the area of child marriage has thwarted efforts to guide programming in an evidence-informed way.

In recognition of these limitations, UNICEF-UNFPA developed and modified a Global Programme ToC for ending child marriage. This ToC, while comprehensive, is not specifically India-focused. It recognises that discrimination against girls and women and gender roles that restrict girls' ability to exercise agency and voice are key barriers to delaying marriage of girls. Included as barriers are structural factors such as limited economic opportunities for girls, for the poor and for the rural, the structure of the economy which does not allow for job creation at scale, poor access to and poor quality of educational and health facilities for girls, and poor implementation of laws and policies intended to protect adolescents. It advocates five broad strategies to end child, early and forced marriage:

(a) empowering girls with information, skills and support networks;

(b) engaging and mobilising families, boys and men, youth, community members and leaders more generally to adhere to gender egalitarian norms and uphold attitudes that reject child, early and forced marriage;

(c) promoting gender responsive social protection and incentives for girls and their families and foster economic empowerment of girls;

(d) enhancing the accessibility, referral and quality of education and training, adolescent sexual and reproductive health (SRH), child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) services for girls; and

(e) fostering an enabling legal and policy environment for effective actions to end child marriage. It also advocates improving the knowledge and evidence base. Several of these strategies have been implemented in India, but few have been rigorously evaluated.

Five broad strategies to end child, early and forced marriage

Empowering girls with information, skills and support networks — **1**

Engaging and mobilising families, boys and men, youth, community members and leaders more generally to adhere to gender egalitarian norms and uphold attitudes that reject child, early and forced marriage — **2**

Fostering an enabling legal and policy environment for effective actions to end child marriage — **5**

Promoting gender responsive social protection and incentives for girls and their families and foster economic empowerment of girls — **3**

Enhancing the accessibility, referral and quality of education and training, adolescent sexual and reproductive health (SRH), child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) services for girls — **4**

Much remains to be done in order to better understand what works to eliminate child marriage. The aim of this review is to answer the following questions: Is the child marriage programme ToC used by UNICEF India based on the latest literature, noting that over the course of this century, a wealth of new evidence on child, early and forced marriage, its prevalence, patterns and drivers, has become available, and much of this evidence comes from India? What are the pathways of causality supported by the literature? And how can the child marriage programme ToC be adjusted to respond to the country context more accurately?

In addressing these questions, this review pulls together and synthesises the available evidence to better understand the drivers of child marriage, as well as what works or may work to prevent child marriage in India; and, in light of findings from this synthesis, makes efforts to inform UNICEF's ToC, and comment upon whether and how it may be modified to better capture the situation in India. In doing so, we also explore the evidence related to forced marriage in India, which we define as marriage without meaningful consent of the girl (and boy) involved.

This section has provided the rationale for and objectives of this review. Subsequent sections describe the methodology used to synthesise the available evidence (Section 2), establish the levels, trends and patterns of child marriage in India and its states as available from various national and state-representative surveys (Section 3), outline areas of the global ToC that may require adaptation for the Indian context (Section 4), synthesise what is known about factors influencing the persistence of child and forced marriage so as to inform our understanding of key drivers (Section 5), about promising strategies to address these drivers (Section 6), and about likely outcomes (Section 7). Conclusions and limitations are presented in Section 8.

Synthesis methodology

To synthesise the available evidence, we have reviewed the evidence on national levels, trends and patterns in child marriage, as well as on formative research outlining the context of child marriage in India, and evaluations of what works to prevent child and forced marriage. Drawing on the global evidence as well as data from national surveys and evaluations of programmes in India, we have highlighted key factors that drive child and forced marriage and need to be addressed in programmes intended to prevent child marriage in India.

In conducting this review, various sources of information were consulted. Focusing on India, adolescents and youth, search terms included 'child marriage,' 'early marriage,' 'forced marriage,' 'arranged marriage,' 'age at marriage' as well as 'empowerment,' 'agency,' 'girls' education,' 'gender attitudes,' 'patriarchal attitudes,' and 'adolescent-friendly services,' for example.

Searches of peer reviewed literature relied on JStor, PubMed, POPLINE, MEDLINE and Google Scholar and studies published in the last 20 years (approximately 2000 to 2019) with a special focus on India. We also conducted a search of reports and other studies, through Google Scholar as well as the websites of key international organizations (UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women), international non-government organizations (INGOs) and non-government organizations (NGOs) (Population Council, ICRW, Girls Not Brides, Young Lives, MAMTA, HAQ, PLAN International, Save the Children, C3 India, Pathfinder, Plan India for example). Also, we explored available libraries that house literature on social sciences and human development (Tata Institute of Social Sciences for example) and other research institutes, again, with a focus on reports shedding light on the situation in India.

Several surveys have provided a wealth of information on adolescents and youth, and these reports were widely consulted. To understand the situation and needs of the young, as well as levels, trends and patterns of child marriage and forced marriage, we consulted the reports of, for example, the National Family Health Surveys (NFHSs) of 1992-93, 1998-99, 2005-06 and 2015-16, as well as the *Youth in India: Situation and Needs* study, a sub-national study conducted in six states of India (Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu) in 2006-07 (IIPS and Population Council, 2010), state-representative surveys of adolescents (10-19 years) in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh (Santhya, Acharya, Pandey et al., 2017a; 2017b) and a state-representative survey of the situation of adolescents (10-21 years) in Jharkhand (Jejeebhoy, Raushan, Gupta, Bhattacharya, 2019).

Finally, we consulted available public sector and NGO programme documents, as well as colleagues working in specific areas of adolescent health and development. Given the intention of accessing a broad range of evidence, a wide net was cast in terms of methodologies employed, and studies that employ a variety of designs, including formative studies, pre-post and post intervention only designs, as well as those using quasi-experimental designs, panel designs and randomised trials.

It is important to note that this is not a systematic review, and that no specific criteria for eligibility or relevance to select articles were adopted. While our search yielded a large number of articles, we pared these down, based on the title and abstract to those that appeared most relevant for this review. While no formal efforts were made to ensure that the review contains only strong evidence-based findings, the review did exclude

several articles judged to be based on shaky evidence, unjustified interpretations or poor quality data. Further, the review has benefitted from two rounds of review, one internal to UNICEF, UN Women and UNFPA, and the second external, in order to ensure as much objectivity as possible in a non-systematic review.

To review the global ToC for Ending Child Marriage, we drew on the synthesis of evidence that emerged from this review, as well as previous reviews of promising approaches to address child marriage (Lee-Rife, Malhotra, Warner, McGonagle-Glinski, 2012; Kalamar, Lee-Rife, Hindin, 2016) and other available theories of change (for example, DFID, Girls Not Brides). Evidence-informed recommendations for modifications to the global ToC were made so as to make it – notably the drivers, promising strategies and outcomes – more responsive to the Indian context.

Levels, trends and patterns in child marriage

The policy and programme scenario related to child marriage has expanded considerably in India over the course of this century. For example, several national policies, including the National Population Policy 2001, the National Youth Policy 2014, the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, and most relevant, the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006 – have advocated special programmatic attention to helping young women delay marriage and to enforcing existing laws against child marriage. In addition, several national flagship programmes, including the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme, the Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG) (previously known as SABLA), the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) (adolescent health) programme, various national- and state-level conditional cash transfer (CCT) programmes for girls, as well as numerous civil society initiatives have been implemented to prevent child marriage. Moreover, India is committed to achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 that calls for the elimination of child and forced marriage by 2030.

Despite these commitments, substantial proportions of young women continue to marry during adolescence, a finding corroborated by both Census and survey data, even though indicators used differ. The indicator used to assess child marriage from Census data focuses on the percentage of girls married before age 18 among those who married 0-4 years prior to the Census (Kumar, 2019; Zavier et al., 2019). Evidence from Censuses of 2001 and 2011 show that using this definition, child marriage rates fell from 32.1 to 17.2 (Kumar, 2019).

The NFHS, in contrast, typically employs a different measure, namely the proportion of 20-24 year old young women who married before age 18 (International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and ICF, 2017). Using this definition, as recently as 2015-16, more than one in four women aged 20-24 – 27% – reported having married before age 18 in India as a whole. Findings from NFHS surveys over the period of about a quarter of a century (1992-93 to 2015-16), show that percentages of young women who married in childhood have halved (from 54 to 27%), and the pace of decline has increased in the last decade. As clear from Figure 1, the period between 1992-93 and 2005-06, roughly 13-14 years, witnessed a modest decline of just seven percentage points. In contrast, the decline during the recent decade, 2005-06 to 2015-16, was far steeper: 20 percentage points.

Wide rural-urban disparities persist, and it is clear that it is the steep decline in child marriage in rural areas that is driving the overall recent decline. In 2015-16, 32 percent of rural young women aged 20-24 had married below age 18, compared to 18 percent of their urban counterparts. While the decline in percentages married in childhood in rural and urban areas were similar in the period 1992-93 to 2005-06 (seven and four percentage points, respectively), they were wide over the decade 2005-06 to 2015-16 (24 versus 11 percentage points).

In contrast to the situation of girls, few boys marry in childhood, for example, just four percent of young men aged 20-24 had married below age 18, and 10 percent had married below age 20. Among those aged 25-29, 20 percent had married below age 21, the legal minimum age at marriage for males (IIPS and ICF, 2017).

Figure 1
Child marriage (1992-93 and 2015-16), India

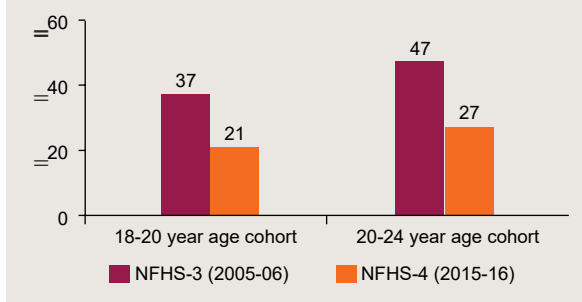**% young women aged 20-24 who married below 18 years of age (rural and urban)**
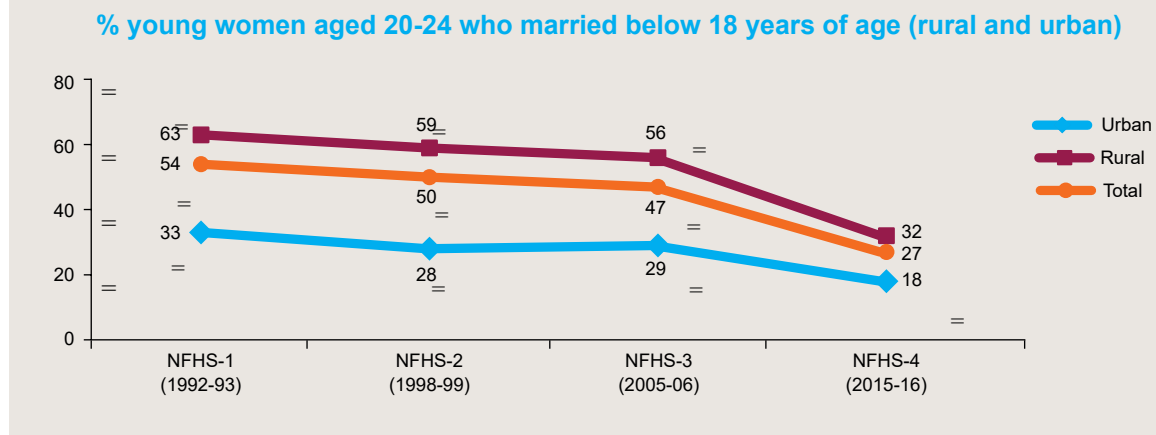
As seen above, the usually used indicator of the extent of child marriage is the proportion of females aged 20-24 who married below age 18. However, a more current indicator has been proposed, namely the proportion of girls aged 18-20 who married below age 18 (Kumar, 2019). A further analysis of NFHS data from 2005-06 and 2015-16 found a substantial difference in the extent of child marriage, depending on whether the indicator used was the percentage of females married below age 18 from among those aged 20-24 and 18-20 respectively, as shown in Figure 2 below. At both times, the more recent measure yields a smaller proportion married in childhood: 37 percent versus 47 percent in 2005-06 and 21 percent versus 27 percent in 2015-16. The considerably lower rates observed among the younger cohort appears to be consistent with a

steep decline in child marriage, although some recall bias may also account for the difference observed. Projections of various child marriage scenarios using data from various NFHSs for successive cohorts of young women aged 20-24 who married in childhood suggest that if progress over the past quarter century continues, nine percent of young women aged 20-24 will have married in childhood by 2050; if the progress made during 2005-06 to 2015-16 continues, this proportion will fall to four percent; however, corresponding proportions by 2030 are about 18 and 15 percent, respectively (UNICEF, 2019).

State-wise variation in percentages of young women who had married in childhood is considerable (Figure 3a). In 2015-16, percentages of women aged 20-24 who married before age 18 ranged from 8-10 percent in Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir to 35-44 percent in Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and West Bengal. The variation in 2005-06 was even wider: from 12-14 percent in Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala and Manipur to 50-59 percent in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, to as much as 63-69 percent in Bihar, Jharkhand and Rajasthan.
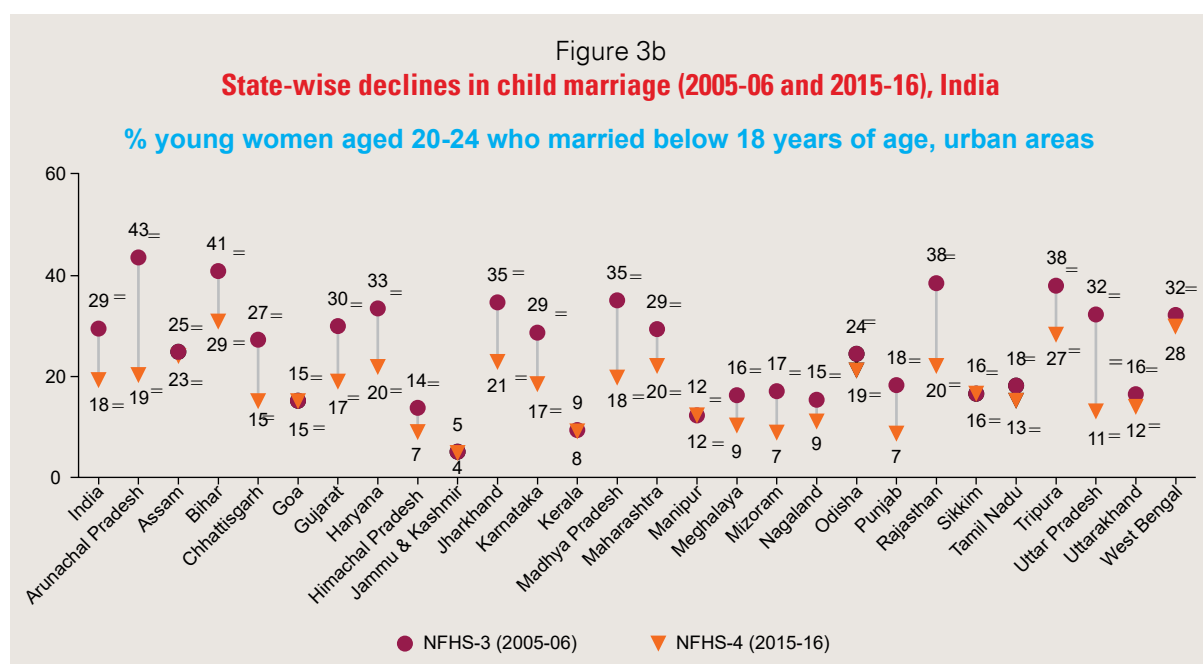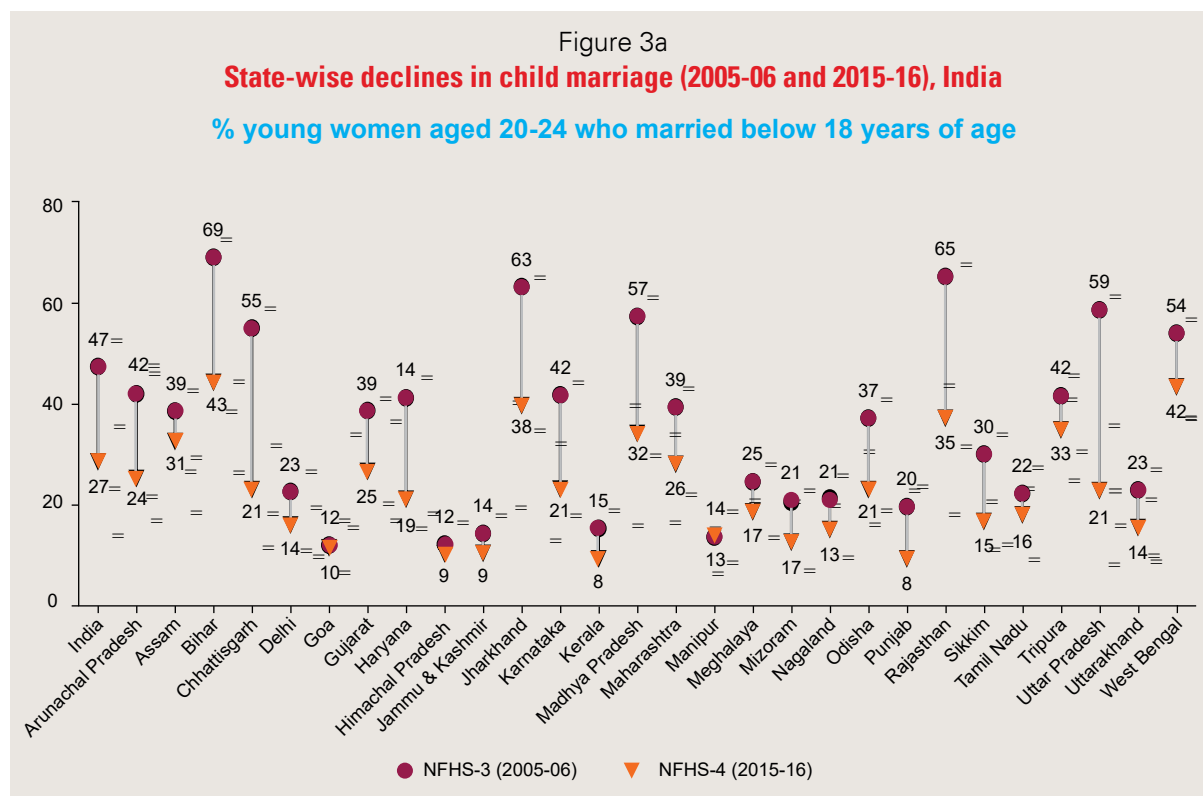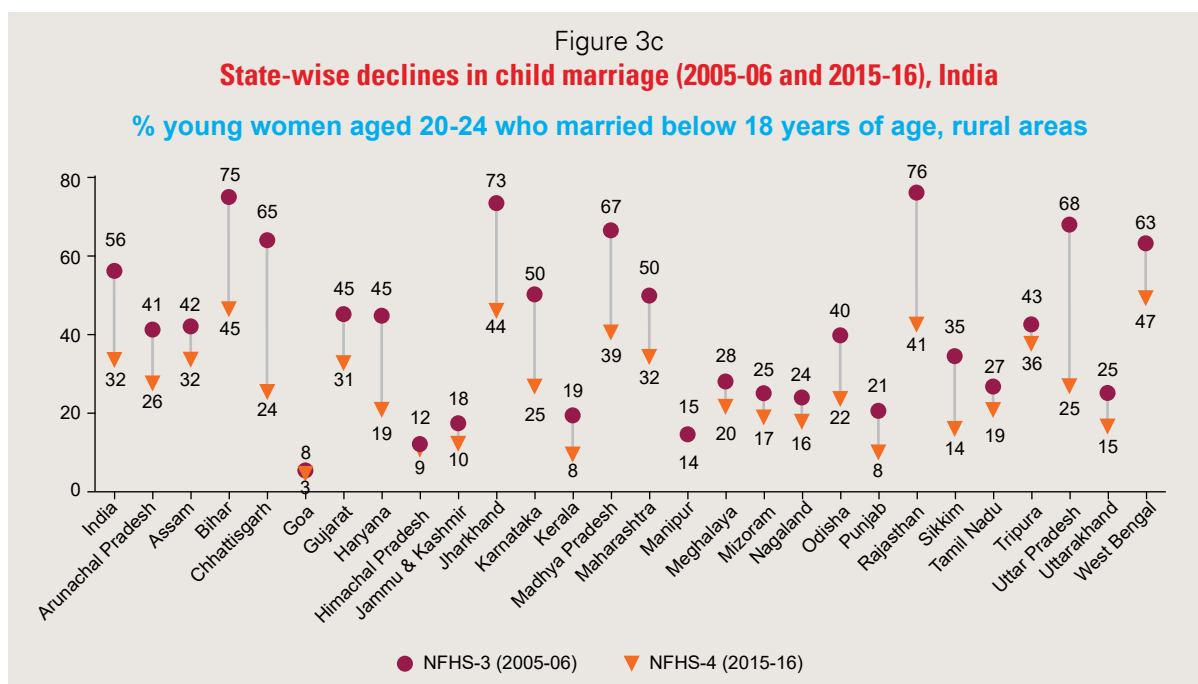
Also, displaying wide state-wise variation is the pace of the decline in child marriage witnessed in the decade 2005-06 to 2015-16. As expected, states in which 2005-06 levels ranged between 12 percent and 14 percent experienced

Figure 2
Child marriage (2005-06 and 2015-16), India

% women aged 18-20 and 20-24 respectively who married by 18 years of age

Source: Sanjay Kumar, 2019

declines of seven or fewer percentage points. In comparison, among the states in which 2005-06 levels exceeded 50 percent, declines were steeper for the most part. Six of these states experienced declines of more than 20 percentage points, the only exception was West Bengal, in which the decline from 2005-06 to 2015-16 was modest (just 12 percentage points).

Figures 3b and 3c show changes by state in urban and rural areas, respectively. As expected, percentage point declines in rural areas are greater than those in urban areas. Of note are particularly large declines in rural areas of Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh (of 35-43 percentage points).

Figure 3a
State-wise declines in child marriage (2005-06 and 2015-16), India

% young women aged 20-24 who married below 18 years of age

● NFHS-3 (2005-06)   ▼ NFHS-4 (2015-16)

Figure 3b
State-wise declines in child marriage (2005-06 and 2015-16), India

% young women aged 20-24 who married below 18 years of age, urban areas

● NFHS-3 (2005-06)   ▼ NFHS-4 (2015-16)

Figure 3c

State-wise declines in child marriage (2005-06 and 2015-16), India

% young women aged 20-24 who married below 18 years of age, rural areas

● NFHS-3 (2005-06)   ▼ NFHS-4 (2015-16)

Note: *No data available in NFHS 3 for: Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep, Puducherry. **No data in NFHS 3 for Urban and Rural areas of Delhi; ***No rural data for Chandigarh in NFHS 4. Figures 3a-c exclude Andhra Pradesh and Telangana as NFHS 3 data are available only for undivided Andhra Pradesh.

Child marriage is also closely associated with women's residence in rural and urban areas, their educational attainment levels and household wealth status. Figure 4 presents the proportions of girls aged 18-23 who married below age 18 according to their residence in rural and urban areas, their educational attainment level and their household economic status.

Findings show that in 2015-16, percentages of 18-23 year olds residing in rural areas were considerably greater than their counterparts in urban areas. While 27 percent of those in rural areas had married in childhood, 15 percent of those in urban areas had done so. Differences were wider in 2005-06, with 49 percent of girls from rural areas compared to 37 percent of those in urban areas marrying below age 18.

Figure 4 also shows that percentages of 18-23 year olds who were married below age 18 fell from 45 among those who had no formal education, to 40 among those who had a primary school education, to 23 and three, respectively, among those who had completed secondary and higher education. Corresponding percentages in 2005-06 were 69, 54, 29 and three. Further analysis of NFHS-4 data observed moreover, that one unit increase in years of

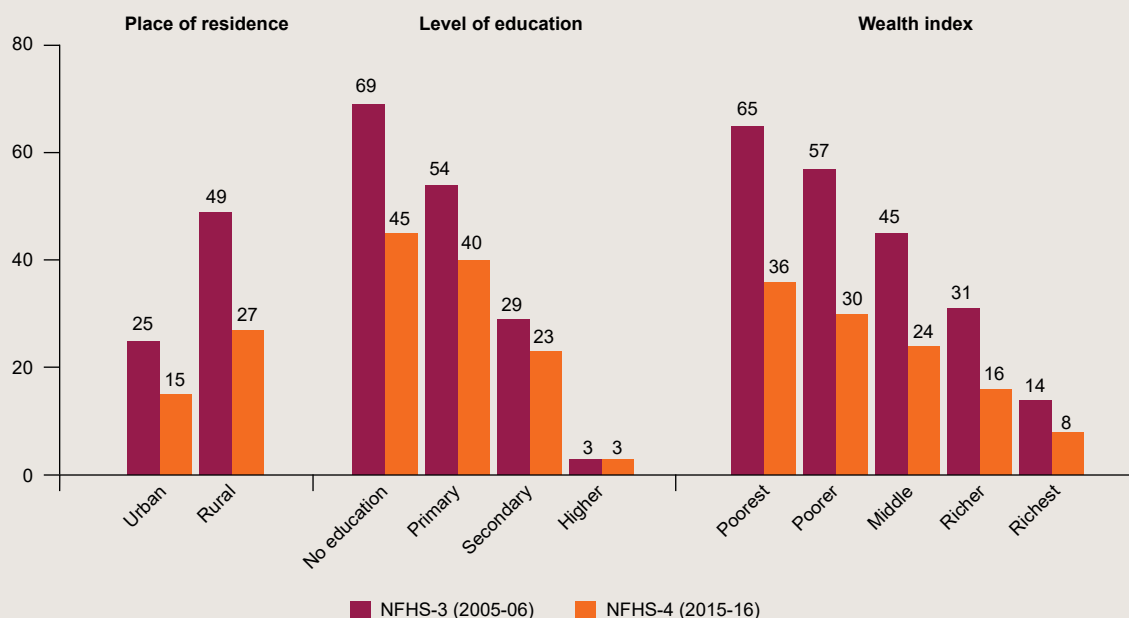schooling completed was associated with an increase of 0.36 years in age at marriage (Kumar, 2019).

With regard to disparities by household economic status, findings display a similar association. In 2015-16, 36 percent of 18-23 year olds from the poorest households married before they were aged 18, compared to systematically fewer among those from progressively better off households (30, 24, 16 and 8% respectively).

Evidence suggests, moreover, that over the 2005-06 to 2015-16 decade, proportions of girls who married below age 18 (of those aged 18-23) had declined across the board, irrespective of level of educational attainment and wealth status (Kumar, 2019). Notably, the steepest declines have taken place among the least educated women and those from the poorest households (24 and 29 percentage points, respectively). Clearly, part of this steep decline among the least educated and poorest may be attributed to their far larger proportions in 2005-06, but there is also the possibility that aspirations for children, and seizing of newly introduced entitlements may also have contributed to this steep decline.

Figure 4
Socio-demographic differences in child marriage among women aged 18-23 (2005-06 and 2015-16), India

% women aged 18-23 who married below 18 years of age

Place of residence   **Level of education**   **Wealth index**

Urban: 25 (NFHS-3), 15 (NFHS-4)
Rural: 49 (NFHS-3), 27 (NFHS-4)
No education: 69 (NFHS-3), 45 (NFHS-4)
Primary: 54 (NFHS-3), 40 (NFHS-4)
Secondary: 29 (NFHS-3), 23 (NFHS-4)
Higher: 3 (NFHS-3), 3 (NFHS-4)
Poorest: 65 (NFHS-3), 36 (NFHS-4)
Poorer: 57 (NFHS-3), 30 (NFHS-4)
Middle: 45 (NFHS-3), 24 (NFHS-4)
Richer: 31 (NFHS-3), 16 (NFHS-4)
Richest: 14 (NFHS-3), 8 (NFHS-4)

Legend: NFHS-3 (2005-06), NFHS-4 (2015-16)
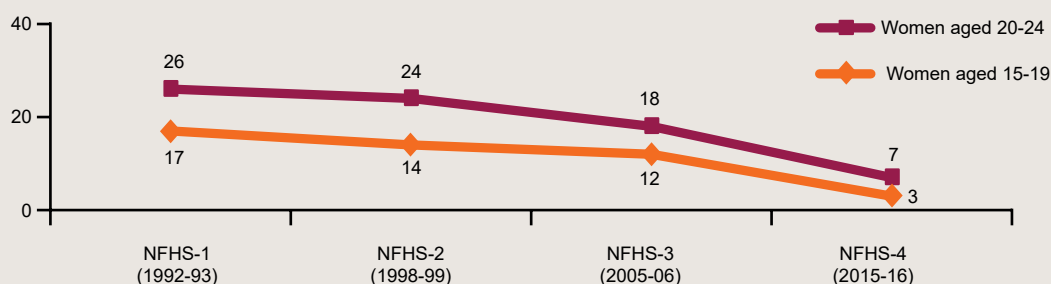
Source: Sanjay Kumar, 2019

Marriage in very young adolescence, that is, below age 15, has declined in a similar way to what was observed. Indeed, in the early 1990s, 26 percent of girls aged 20-24 had married by age 15 – a figure similar to percentages of girls in 2015-16 who married before age 18. Declines were steady up to the mid-2000s, after which there was a steep further fall, from 18 percent in 2005-06 to seven percent in 2015-16. A similar pattern is observed, at much lower levels, for marriage below age 15 among those aged 15-19 – from 17 percent of girls aged 15-19 to three percent by 2015-16, as seen in Figure 5.

In short, declines in child marriage over the 2005-06 to 2015-16 decade have been steep at national level, in most states of India, as well as in urban and rural areas of the country and irrespective of educational attainment and wealth status. Even so, child marriage remains high, and in some states, notably West Bengal, the decline is modest.

Figure 5
Marriage among young adolescents (1992-93 and 2015-16), India

% young women aged 20-24 and 15-19 respectively who married below 15 years of age

Women aged 20-24: NFHS-1 (1992-93) = 26, NFHS-2 (1998-99) = 24, NFHS-3 (2005-06) = 18, NFHS-4 (2015-16) = 7
Women aged 15-19: NFHS-1 (1992-93) = 17, NFHS-2 (1998-99) = 14, NFHS-3 (2005-06) = 12, NFHS-4 (2015-16) = 3

Forced marriage or marriage without meaningful consent: Evidence from India highlights that typically, parents and extended family are involved in the screening of potential spouses for their children, and marriage is still perceived as a union between two families and not just between two individuals. Family-arranged marriage remains the norm – in one form of family-arranged marriage, the girl is not at all involved, or, at best, provides just passive assent without ever having met her fiancé, while in the second, the girl has some say in making the choice and/or is given an opportunity to meet her fiancé prior to the wedding. Self-arranged or love marriage in which young women select their husband independently remain rare (see, for example, Jejeebhoy, Santhya, Acharya and Prakash, 2013; Jejeebhoy and Halli, 2005; Desai and Andrist, 2010).

Evidence, though sparse, highlights the persistence of family-arranged marriages without meaningful consent. Evidence on marriage type and the extent to which young people participate in marriage-related decisions is not available at the national level. However, the state-representative Youth in India surveys in Bihar and Jharkhand (IIPS and Population Council, 2009; IIPS and Population Council, 2010), and state-representative surveys in Bihar (Santhya, Acharya, Pandey et al. 2017a) and Jharkhand (Jejeebhoy, Raushan, Gupta, Bhattacharya, forthcoming) do provide state-representative

evidence from these two states at two points in time, roughly a decade apart, about the prevalence of self- and family-arranged marriages.

Findings presented in Table 1 confirm that the practice of denying girls a meaningful role in marriage-related decisions persists. Large proportions of young people continue to be denied opportunities for pre-marital acquaintance with their fiancé and making their own decision in an informed way. Shifts over time are however evident. For example, in both states, there has been an increase in the proportion of married girls reporting that they had a chance, before marriage, to meet or talk with their fiancé in privacy (from 2 to 23% in Bihar, and from 9 to 37% in Jharkhand). Correspondingly, there has been a decline in the proportion reporting that they met their husband for the very first time on the wedding day (from 95 to 77% in Bihar, from 81 to 58% in Jharkhand). However, family-arranged marriages continue to be the norm, with or without the girl's involvement, and in Bihar there has actually been an increase in the percentage of girls reporting "no say" in decisions about their marriage. On the other extreme, self-arranged or "love" marriages have increased, from one percent to six percent in Bihar, and from eight percent to 18 percent in Jharkhand. Further research is needed to explore reasons underlying these diverse trends and patterns in marriage-related decision-making.

Table 1

Participation in marriage-related decisions, Bihar (2007, 2015-16) and Jharkhand (2006, 2018)

	Bihar		Jharkhand	
	2007 **ages 15-19**[1]	**2015-16** **ages 15-19**[2]	**2006** **ages 15-21**[3]	**2018** **ages 15-21**[4]
Type of marriage				
Self-arranged marriage ("love")	0.7	5.9	6.9	17.9
Family-arranged marriage, with respondent's approval of choice of husband	52.6	33.6	51.6	55.6
Family-arranged marriage, without respondent's approval of choice of husband	46.7	60.5	41.5	26.5
Pre-marital acquaintance				
Ever had a chance to meet/talk with fiancé alone	2.3	23.4	8.9	36.9
Met husband for the first time on wedding day	95.4	76.8	81.4	57.8
Number	842	3,408	1,641	1,999

[1] IIPS and Population Council, 2010 (Bihar), reanalysed by Zavier, 2019 (personal communication)
[2] Santhya, Acharya, Pandey et al. 2017a. (Bihar)
[3] IIPS and Population Council, 2009 (Jharkhand), Zavier (personal communication)
[4] Jejeebhoy, Raushan, Gupta, Bhattacharya, forthcoming.

Supporting evidence of the vulnerability and lack of choice of girls who married in childhood comes from a study drawing on a newly married cohort from the Young Lives longitudinal study in rural Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Among girls who married below age 18, 45 percent had no say in choosing their husband, 45 percent made the decision together with their parents or family members and 10 percent were able to choose themselves. Qualitative investigations confirmed moreover, that even where some girls had been asked about their preferences, it did not necessarily mean they were able to express their preferences or provide meaningful consent. Rather, they tended to simply acquiesce to the decision of their parents. Meaningful consent is hardly possible. For example, girls who reported that their family had sought their consent were asked to explain their role in marriage-related decisions. Responses included: *And I told them, 'If you are willing then I don't mind and you may please go ahead with that and I am also willing for that.',* and *They asked me one day before the engagement whether I would like to marry him. I said I will accept their decision. I also said*

that in the future if I have any problem with him, they have to stand up for me and they have to take the responsibility. They agreed and the marriage took place. Clearly, girls fear that if they contradict their parents' preferences, they may compromise their chances of securing support of their natal family, in case of marital strife (Crivello et al., 2018).

That child marriage goes hand in hand with girls' exclusion from marriage-related planning and compromises marital relations for girls, is evident from a study that compared, among 15-24-year-old married girls, those who married as children (below age 18) with those who married later, in five states in which large proportions continue to marry in childhood (Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Rajasthan). Findings stress that child marriage is significantly associated with denial of any decision-making role in marriage planning: just 10 percent were consulted about when to marry and 36 percent about the choice of husband (compared with 27 and 63%, respectively among girls who married later), and just eight percent of those marrying

in childhood, compared to 20 percent of those marrying later had met their husband before marriage. Huge differences were observed, moreover, in the quality of marital relationships, with those marrying as children significantly less likely than others to exercise agency in everyday life, less likely to communicate and interact with their husband and more likely to experience physical and sexual violence. These associations remained significant even when confounding factors were controlled (Santhya, Ram, Acharya, Jejeebhoy et al., 2010).

A second study, also using the Youth in India survey data confirms that life experiences of young women who had no say in marriage-related decisions were more compromised than those who had participated in marriage-related decisions, even after confounding factors were controlled (Jejeebhoy, Santhya, Acharya, Prakash, 2013). Findings from a multivariate analysis showed that young women in self-arranged marriages, and also those in semi-arranged marriages in which they had participated in marriage-related decisions, had experienced closer spousal communication and interaction, and higher levels of agency, than their counterparts in traditional family-arranged marriages. Authors hypothesise that the opportunity to interact with their husband-to-be may have enabled these young women to become better acquainted with the husband and better understand what marriage to him would entail, may have been one factor that resulted in a more companionate and equitable marital relationship, and greater agency in daily life.

Photo Credit: © UNICEF/Ashima Narain

Involvement of boys in marriage-related decisions, while also compromised, is however far greater than that of girls. For example, the Youth in India survey shows that just 11 percent of married young men aged 15-29 – typically the husbands of young women aged 15-24 (for example, the median age at marriage among those aged 25-49 was 18.7 years for women and 24.5 years for men IIPS and ICF, 2017) – reported that their marriage had been fixed without their approval, compared to 25 percent of young women aged 15-24; more young men than women reported, conversely, a family-arranged marriage in which their consent was sought (84 versus 70%). However, a similar proportion – 64 percent of young men versus 68 percent of young women met their spouse for the first time on the wedding day (IIPS and Population Council, 2010).

A study of middle class young men and women in Mumbai reports that of married young men, although the majority were college educated (73%), 71 percent had a parent-arranged marriage and 74 percent met their wife through their family connections; fewer unmarried young men expected to have an arranged marriage (59%) (Mathur, 2007). This study found that stronger financial and kinship ties between parents and sons increased the likelihood of an arranged marriage, and that those whose parents were involved in the selection of their wife were significantly less likely to marry college-educated women or women engaged in the labour force, even after controlling for individual and family characteristics. Unfortunately, evidence about boys' own preferences, notably about their attitudes about marrying a child bride, and about the acceptability of self-selected marriage and pre-marital acquaintance with their fiancée, is not available. However, the recent qualitative study discussed earlier that drew on a newly married cohort from the Young Lives longitudinal study in rural Andhra Pradesh and Telangana highlights that parents are more likely to seek, and abide by the opinion of young men than young women in marriage-related decision-making (Crivello et al., 2018).

Factors contributing to the decline in child marriage over the 2000s: Few analyses have explored the factors influencing the relatively steep decline in child marriage over the intercensal period (2001-2011) or the period between various NFHSs. One such study (Zavier et al., 2019) drew on district-level data from the 2001 and 2011 Censuses and other sources,[1] and applied regression-based decomposition methods to estimate the contribution of explanatory variables to the decline in the prevalence of child marriage between 2001 and 2011. The outcome indicator was the prevalence of child marriage in 2011, that is, the percentage of women who were married before 18 years of age in 2011 among those who got married in the five years prior to the Census to measure the prevalence of child marriage in the district. Explanatory variables included in the regression analysis were female education, female labour force participation, household size, female-headed households, marriage squeeze, urbanisation, economic progress as measured by village electrification and the poverty head-count ratio, and atrocities against women and girls. In this model, findings from the regression-based decomposition exercise showed that improvements in female education were most strongly associated with reductions in child marriage between 2001 and 2011 (52% of the decline). Reduction in poverty and fertility made the second largest contribution, associated with a reduction in the prevalence of child marriage of 20 and 19 percent, respectively. In contrast, factors such as the narrowing of the marriage squeeze (ratio of 20-24-year-old unmarried men to 15-19-year-old unmarried women (per 1,000), increase in female-headed households, urbanisation and the increase in reported atrocities against women and girls (per 100,000) were marginally but positively associated with child marriage. The study clearly points to the powerful role played by improvements in educational attainment in accounting for the decline in child marriage.

A multivariate analysis of the determinants of early marriage in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, using the longitudinal data drawn from the Young Lives study, has underscored the powerful role that education plays in delaying marriage. The analysis explored the effects of education on child marriage, controlling for such confounding factors as household wealth status, caregiver education, caste, age, urban/rural residence,

---

[1] Note that this analysis reflects changes over time using Census and other data, as against the cross-sectional woman-level data from NFHSs discussed earlier, and the two analyses are therefore not directly comparable.

household composition, menarche, parental expectation for age at marriage and parental and child aspirations for education. Findings showed that even after controlling for other confounding factors, it was enrolment at the age of 15 that had the largest and most significant (negative) impact on the probability of teen marriage (-0.322***). In other words, it decreased the likelihood of adolescent marriage by 32.2 percent (Roest, 2016; Singh and Revollo, 2016).

Demographic factors also play a role in determining trends in marriage age. From 1921 onwards, for example, the surplus of women in the marriageable population led to widespread dowry and also pushed up women's age at marriage (see, for example, Bhat and Halli, 1999). Since the 1980s, however, rapid fertility decline and the prevalence of gender biased sex selection and corresponding abortion of female foetuses have led to a skewed sex ratio in favour of males. This imbalance in the sex ratio at birth may have an effect on marriage practices, which may become visible 15-20 years later as each surplus-male cohort reaches marriageable age, resulting in a shortage of brides and a 'male marriage squeeze' (Kaur et al., 2017). Settings in which gender biased sex selection is widespread and sex ratios at birth highly skewed may respond to bride shortages by reducing the female age at marriage to select brides from younger age groups or modifying social norms and seeking brides from settings in which the sex ratio at birth has not been affected by gender biased sex selection. Both strategies result in mitigating the negative marriage effects of a higher sex ratio at birth (Kaur et al., 2017).

The global ToC and areas for possible adaptation for the Indian context

The ToC is a systematic depiction of the scenario of child marriage in the global context. It begins with an overarching statement of the problem that is relevant globally, and for India, namely, *Child marriage and early union (of girls and boys) persists and is associated with a combination of structural, economic, socio-cultural factors and broader gender inequality. Lack of locally acceptable alternative life opportunities pushes girls and boys into marriage.* Likewise, the impact and gender transformative vision described in the ToC are also unchanged.

The ToC presents an array of factors that drive child marriage, and an array of strategies that will together overcome these drivers. While this is a good global blueprint, there are clearly wide differences in the structure, patterns and drivers of child marriage across settings, and call for country-specific strategies that are contextualised and localised. Evidence from India, highlighted in this review, suggests that contextualising the ToC for India may need to incorporate the following:

- Currently the drivers and strategies are broad and general, perhaps too broad and too general to be useful for programming. What we need is to identify the manifestations of poverty, and unpack the drivers addressing gender norms ("gender roles that restrict girls and women to family and household roles and boys and men as breadwinners"), so that strategies and approaches may be tailored to address them. For example, the powerful role of dowry and wedding expenses as a driver of child marriage or the perceived lower value of girls compared to boys are not explicitly

stated in the global ToC, although they have much relevance in driving child marriage in the Indian context.

- Missing from the ToC is the issue of forced marriage or marriage in the absence of meaningful consent: In the Indian context, the absence of meaningful consent about when and whom to marry is widespread. As stressed once again in the SDGs, the lack of meaningful consent is not only a barrier to girls' wellbeing, but also a human rights violation; our evidence has shown the synergies between child marriage and marriage without meaningful consent. Lack of meaningful consent – or forced marriage – needs to be incorporated in the India-focused ToC.

- In India, more than one in four girls (and more in some states) continue to marry in childhood, and the pace of decline in child marriage remains gradual (although vastly increased in the 2005-06 to 2015-16 decade). Married girls continue to be a significant minority of the overall population, and continue to be more disadvantaged than unmarried girls in many ways. A reference to married girls and their disadvantaged status needs to be incorporated within an India-focused ToC.

- The ToC is girl-focused, which is perhaps appropriate given that few boys marry in childhood or even adolescence.[2] However, boys are vulnerable too, and their situation needs to be reflected far more emphatically

---

[2] Four percent of males aged 20-24 had married in childhood (below age 18) and 10 percent in adolescence (below age 21) in India in 2015-16, compared to 27 percent and 48 percent, respectively of females (IIPS and ICF, 2017).

than in the global ToC. For example, many boys play no role in decisions on the timing of their marriage or choice of their wife (see, for example, IIPS and Population Council, 2010, discussed later in this report). Even though more boys than girls participate in household decisions, few make attempts to stop dowry negotiations or refuse to marry a child bride; on many issues, boys continue to adhere to traditional norms of masculinity and femininity and on many, they are far less likely than girls to express egalitarian gender role attitudes (IIPS and Population Council, 2010); Santhya et al., 2016; (Jejeebhoy, Raushan, Gupta, Bhattacharya, forthcoming). Fears about harassment, teasing and abduction of girls by boys are often argued as a factor driving child marriage of girls. Boys cannot be neglected, and the ToC needs to recognise the importance of incorporating a focus on

boys, and programming that expose them, in boy-friendly ways, to adhere to egalitarian notions of masculinity and femininity, to reject attitudes condoning the acceptability of harassment of and violence against women and girls, and that at the same time, empower them to refuse to marry an under-age girl, insist on pre-marital acquaintance with their wife-to-be, and stop their parents from accepting dowry.

Other more specific concerns are discussed in subsequent sections. Tables 2 (pages 25-26), 3 (page 41), 4 (pages 43-44) and 5 (pages 46-47) summarise the drivers, strategies and outcomes, as articulated in the global ToC and the India ToC recommended in this report.

The problem, impact and vision statements are globally relevant, including for India, and have been marginally reworded to suit the India context.

Factors influencing the persistence of child and forced marriage in India

As the ToR and the ToC have suggested, child marriage is perpetuated for a range of reasons, ranging from poor implementation of the law to the context of poverty and persistence of patriarchal gender norms that discriminate against women and girls. A review of the evidence has suggested that child, early and forced marriage in India result from a range of drivers and causes that may not be as relevant in the global context, and are thus not emphasised in the global ToC. Conversely, they exclude drivers identified in the global context that are not found to be key drivers in India. Table 2 summarises the key conditioning factors and drivers identified in the recommended India ToC, and corresponding drivers in the UNICEF-UNFPA ToC (2019).

Conditioning factors

Specifically, the India ToC suggests that there exist **three overarching factors** at the societal level that condition the strength with which a variety of drivers affect child marriage:
- household poverty
- structure of patriarchy and gender inequality
- humanitarian crises or conflict and natural disaster situations

Poverty and patriarchy and the structure of social norms, in particular, lie at the heart of the persistence of child marriage. Each of these factors is manifested in somewhat different ways in different cultural contexts within India and are expected to condition the extent and pace of improvements in delayed marriage and meaningful consent for marriage. As an example of their conditioning effect, our ToC hypothesises that in settings characterised by high overall levels of poverty, the low value

assigned to girls compared to boys or the lack of economic opportunities for women and girls will have a more modest effect on reducing child marriage than in those characterised by moderate levels of poverty. Likewise, we argue that the strength with which patriarchal social norms are upheld will condition the strength of the relationship between individual level drivers and marriage patterns. Strategies such as those described below that are intended to address child marriage will need to recognise that these conditioning factors will affect marriage outcomes, and require a broader awareness of wider social institutions and structures.

Likewise, in humanitarian crises or conflict and natural disaster situations, hierarchical gender norms may become more stridently upheld, education more inaccessible for children and adolescents, the environment even more unsafe for girls, and the wage-earning potential of women and girls even more constrained. As a consequence, families may be pushed into adhering even more strongly than ever to gender unequal norms, and perceive child marriage as a way to cope with economic hardship and to "protect" girls from violence (Girls Not Brides, 2016).

As the Girls Not Brides report observes, much of the available evidence on conflict situations comes from sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, and highlights the extent to which child marriage is perceived as a means of protecting girls from sexual violence and abduction. With regard to child marriage in disaster situations, Girls Not Brides has documented incidents from India and other parts of Asia demonstrating that in natural disaster situations (flood, earthquake, drought) families – who might not have otherwise

– had resorted to child marriage so as to "protect" girls from sexual violence, or to free themselves from providing for girls with their meagre resources. Because humanitarian crisis situations exacerbate traditional hierarchical gender norms that drive child marriage, there is a rationale for including it in the ToC as a conditioning factor rather than as a direct driver of child marriage.

The India ToC specifically identifies these three dimensions of context as conditioning factors, and, at the same time, depicts the manifestations of both poverty and patriarchy and gender inequality as drivers of child marriage at the household level. The global ToC does not make this distinction.

Drivers of child marriage

Drivers of child marriage, that is, those that more directly affect child marriage at household,

individual, community and facility levels, include the manifestations of poverty and patriarchy, described above, at household and individual levels, as well as the quality of and accessibility to facilities and services, and, more specifically related to child marriage, community level knowledge of the law, and implementation by authorities of the PCMA which are described below.

A key difference between the drivers identified in the India ToC and the global one is the identification of specific dimensions of patriarchal norms and practices that impinge on child marriage, namely, those relating to discriminatory gender roles and gender-specific barriers, the perceived lower value of girls than boys, the prohibitive costs of dowry and weddings, controls on girls' sexuality, and fears for girls' safety. The global ToC, in contrast, would package all of these somewhat unique drivers in the Indian context into two drivers

about restrictive gender roles and gender inequality.

A second key difference is the exclusion in the India ToC of the driver relating to adolescent pregnancy, as included in the global ToC. We have excluded it because the evidence from India suggests that while adolescent pregnancy levels are disturbingly high, they take place almost entirely within the context of marriage and are hence a consequence and not a driver of child marriage.

Below we elaborate, with evidence from India, on each of these drivers. A total of ten drivers have been identified. Not only is their effect on child marriage conditioned by poverty, social norms and, if appropriate, conflict and disasters, but also each driver is interlinked with others.

Manifestations of poverty at family level

Poverty is both a conditioning factor and a community or household level factor (the global ToC combines these into a single driver). Here, we emphasise that community-level poverty and household poverty both drive child marriage at community and household levels. The limited infrastructure in poor villages or districts affects access to and quality of facilities such as schools, health centres, and even programme events. Studies have shown that marriage of young girls is most likely to occur in rural and especially disadvantaged areas (Raj et al., 2012), and study after study has shown that better educated young women, those from economically better off households, and those from urban areas are far less likely to experience child marriage than others (see, for example, IIPS and Population Council, 2010; Santhya, Acharya, Pandey et al. 2017a., 2017b). A longitudinal study (Young Lives) from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana has shown that although there was a consistent inverse association between schooling and child marriage, where household resources were limited, gender gaps in enrolment were wide, parents invested scarce resources in their sons and disadvantages faced by girls were

prominent, and resulted in greater adherence to early marriage and early child-bearing norms (Roest, 2016).

Poor families have been found to marry off their daughters whenever resources are available, sometimes together, irrespective of their age, and agrarian crises and radically changing markets may thus result in the persistence of child marriage among poor households (Nirantar Trust, 2015). Poverty limits the household's economic choices and marriage allows families to transfer the economic burden of daughters to the husband's family (UNICEF ROSA and UNFPA, 2018). Moreover, since the father of the bride bears the costs of the wedding, poor families who have many daughters may be motivated to marry them off early and together, irrespective of their ages, in order to economise on wedding expenses (Nirantar Trust, 2015). Of course, changing aspirations for children, better access to facilities, and the availability of schooling entitlements for girls have likely succeeded in reducing child marriage even among the most disadvantaged, thereby narrowing disparities in child marriage across those at different levels of educational attainment.

Household level poverty places greater labour demands on adolescent girls, to collect water and firewood, to take care of younger siblings and tend the home while their mother is working; indeed, a leading reason for girls who drop out of school prematurely is that they are needed for household chores (see for example, IIPS and Population Council, 2010; Santhya, Acharya, Pandey et al. 2017a; 2017a). Moreover, as many have noted, marrying a daughter in childhood relieves poor parents of the economic responsibility of rearing them (see, for example, Lee-Rife et al., 2012).

Discriminatory gender roles, norms and gender-specific barriers

Gendered norms about masculinity and femininity emphasise obedience, submissiveness and self-sacrifice among girls, and entitlement

and power among boys. Girls who marry as children are perceived as more malleable and can be more easily moulded into displaying these desirable traits (G.B. Pant Institute of Studies in Rural Development, 2013). A recent comparative study of two districts of Rajasthan, one in which child marriage was widely prevalent and the other in which it was less so, found that in the district in which child marriage was more prevalent, girls were far less likely to make decisions, including those related to the timing of marriage (27 versus 38%) (Santhya, 2019).

Inegalitarian gender role attitudes are widespread and held by the young as well, and more so among young men than women. The Youth in India study found that just 57 percent of young men aged 15-24, compared with 74 percent of young women believe that a girl should be allowed to decide about her own marriage, and only 28 percent and 35 percent, respectively, believed that a woman should not have to obtain her husband's permission for most things (IIPS and Population Council, 2010). Evidence from the baseline survey for an intervention focused on boys aged 13-21 who were members of youth clubs in Bihar, found that just about 10 percent of boys rejected the idea that a woman should obtain her husband's permission for most things, 38 percent justified a boy's right to exercise controls over his sister's behaviour (for example, which friends she can or cannot interact with) and just 45 percent agreed that girls should be allowed to decide when they want to marry (Jejeebhoy, Acharya, Pandey Santhya et al., 2017).

Deviation from deeply entrenched gender norms and pressure to abide by these norms present an enormous challenge, even to families who are convinced about the importance of delaying girls' marriage. A qualitative study in rural Rajasthan that included girls and their parents observed that pressure included repeated enquiries about why the daughter remained unmarried, rumours and nasty comments levelled against the girl and her family, and repeated offers of finding a husband for unmarried girls. One father noted: *Everyone knows that getting married at an early age is bad. But even then, everyone does it… People are scared to violate this custom… 90 percent of the villagers think that early marriage is a social custom. If anyone tries to violate this, then he will be despised by the community.* Clearly, with such strongly enforced norms, deviation imposes an insurmountable social cost (Santhya, Haberland and Singh, 2006).

Perceived lower value of girls than boys

There is a widely-held social norm, prevailing at parental, family and community levels, that investments in girls yield no returns (see for example, Mathur, Greene and Malhotra, 2003; Khanna, Verma, Weiss, 2013). Hence, investment in girls' education and access to services, even nutrition is more limited than corresponding investments in boys. Traditionally, once a girl is married, she ceases to be a member of her natal family and bears no responsibility for caring for her parents. Hence, she is seen as an economic burden that yields no returns, and child marriage is a strategy whereby natal families reduce their further financial responsibility toward the girl. Indeed, almost one in four girls married as children justified child marriage because they agreed that girls are *paraya dhan* (another's property) and a burden on their natal families (UNICEF and UNFPA, 2018; Jha et al., 2016; G.B. Pant Institute of Studies in Rural Development, 2013).

A study of factors underlying adolescent marriage in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana found a strong association between parental aspirations for the education of their daughter in interviews held in childhood and both the educational attainment level of their daughter and her risk of marrying in adolescence (Singh and Revollo, 2016). A worrying more recent manifestation of this norm is bride trafficking from poorer states such as Jharkhand and West Bengal to well-developed states such as Haryana and Punjab, which are characterised by a deficit of girls of marriageable age because of their histories of gender-biased sex selection and skewed sex ratios (see, for example, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2013).

Prohibitive costs of dowry and huge wedding expenses

Marriages of daughters are expensive, and lavish weddings are seen as important to maintain family honour (Jha et al., 2016; G.B. Pant Institute of Studies in Rural Development, 2013). Moreover, marrying a daughter involves large dowries. Rising costs of dowry for older girls has been noted in several studies (Lee-Rife et al., 2012; Nour, 2009; Singh and Vennem, 2016; UNICEF and UNFPA, 2018), and fears of prohibitive dowries that increase with the age and educational attainment level of the girl remain a leading reason for the persistence of child marriage (Jha et al., 2016; G.B. Pant Institute of Studies in Rural Development, 2013; Bhat and Halli, 1999). Dowries demanded are much higher for older than younger girls, as older girls are perceived to be less malleable and therefore less desirable than younger girls, and older girls require even older grooms, who are likely better educated and therefore more sought after and can demand larger dowries, than their younger or lesser educated counterparts; in contrast, younger brides are perceived to be more docile and less resistant to marital family demands, thereby attracting a lower dowry (Nirantar Trust, 2015).

In a recent study of girls, mothers and fathers in Bundi and Chittaurgarh districts of Rajasthan, many held the view that most people in their community believe that more dowry needs to be paid when a girl's marriage is delayed (16-21% of girls, 19-23% of mothers and mothers-in-law, and 13-15% of fathers), and many more believed that some in their community adhered to this perception (34-44% of girls, 36-37% of mothers, and 28-37% of fathers). Hints that this practice may be declining were also noted in this study; several key informants suggested that dowry amounts are not as strongly related to the girl's age as to the family's economic condition (Santhya et al., 2019).

Controls on girls' sexuality

Virginity is highly prized and even the slightest suspicion of a girl-boy relationship is enough to destroy the family *izzat* or honour and the girl's

marriage prospects (see, for example, Jha et al., 2016; Khanna, Verma and Weiss, 2013; Lee-Rife et al., 2012; UNICEF and UNFPA, 2018). Fears that girls whose marriage is delayed may find opportunities to engage in pre-marital romantic and sexual relations, select their own husband (or refuse to accept their family's choice of husband) or elope are often cited as reasons for marrying girls in childhood. Delaying marriage is perceived to place girls at an increased risk of deviating from traditional chastity norms, and threatening their marriageability (UNICEF and UNFPA, 2018; Roest, 2016).

A study of child brides across ten states of India notes that one in eight girls justified child marriage because it prevented girls from going "astray" (G.B. Pant Institute of Studies in Rural Development, 2013). Likewise, a qualitative study in six states of India of parent-child interaction concluded that most parents refrained from providing their adolescents with information on SRH matters as they believed that any such discussion would lead adolescents 'astray' or lead them to believe that their parents were encouraging them to engage in sexual relations, and thereby spoil the family's reputation (Santhya and Jejeebhoy, 2015).

The longitudinal study of factors underlying adolescent marriage in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, discussed above, found that an earlier experience of menarche significantly raised the probability of an earlier marriage; parents of girls who experienced early menarche were more likely, when their daughter was 12, to express a desire for their daughter to be married in adolescence than other parents, and adolescent marriage was closely correlated with this expectation (Singh and Revollo, 2016).

This fear of loss of family *izzat* is evident also in a study of marriage patterns and perspectives in two districts of Rajasthan. Findings reiterate that large proportions of girls (91%), mothers (83-84%) and fathers (76-81%) reported that most or some people in their village believed that girls who remain unmarried will develop relationships with boys and may bring dishonour to their family;

many key informants reported familiarity with incidents of elopement in their village in the recent past, and agreed that such incidents brought disrepute to their families (Santhya, 2019).

Controls on girls' sexuality are so rigid that many girls face backlash from family and communities for defying traditional norms, displaying agency or developing romantic relations with a boy. A recent survey of youth-serving organizations observed large proportions of these organizations were familiar with such incidents of backlash against girls who exercised agency as forced withdrawal from school, programmes or outdoor sports, or punishment and denial of money or access to communications media (mobile phone or social media). As many as three in four organizations reported familiarity with an incident of backlash against girls who had a romantic partner or was even rumoured to have a romantic partner. Backlash was observed in the form of forcible seclusion and forced marriage. More than half of responding organizations reported familiarity with an incident in which a girl was beaten or denied food for refusing to marry against her will or for making attempts to gain livelihood skills or pursue a career, or even for wearing "unacceptable" clothes, expressing opinions contrary to traditional norms, demanding rights, or refusing to do housework (Jejeebhoy, Raushan, Gupta, Bhattacharya, forthcoming).

In short, a leading driver of child marriage is the belief that the sooner a girl is married, the sooner she is safe from pre-marital sexual activity and self-selection of her spouse, and conversely, that the longer she remains unmarried, the greater are the chances that she will 'stray," her sexual purity will be questioned and thereby her family's reputation will be maligned.

Fears for girls' safety in public spaces

Closely related to the importance assigned to girls' virginity, are fears about girls' safety in public places, and the need to protect unmarried girls from rape (see, for example, Khanna, Verma and Weiss, 2013; Raj, 2010). Incidents of verbal harassment and unwanted touch of girls and stories of rape, trafficking and abduction lead

parents to fear for their safety and opt for child marriage as a means of prevention. A study of child brides and parents of child brides across ten states of India reported that this was a key reason offered by both groups for the marriage of girls in childhood (G.B. Pant Institute of Studies in Rural Development, 2013). A recent study in Rajasthan also notes that those parents who justified child marriage explained that the situation in their villages was unsafe for unmarried girls, they recounted incidents in which girls had been trafficked, abducted or raped, and justified child marriage as a form of protection against such incidents (Santhya, 2019). Others have also noted the perception that child marriage protects girls from rape (see for example, Nour, 2009).

Exclusion of girls and boys from marriage-related decision-making

Forced marriage, that is marriage without the individual girl's or boy's consent is widespread in India. Large proportions of married young people report no role in marriage-related decisions and no acquaintance with their husband until the marriage ceremony (see Youth in India survey; UDAYA surveys). A recent study assessing differences between girls and young women who married before and after they were aged 18 noted that child brides were significantly less likely than adult brides to have been consulted about the timing of their marriage or choice of husband (Santhya et al., 2010). Even among those who reported being consulted, consent was not informed, as many were not given a chance to interact with their husband prior to marriage. "Love" marriages or marriages in which the spouse is selected by the girl or boy independently are rarely observed, although a few state-representative surveys have observed a small increase in percentages reporting self-selection of spouse over a 10-12 year period (Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Santhya et al., 2016; Jejeebhoy, Raushan, Gupta, Bhattacharya, forthcoming).

For the most part however, parent-arranged marriages continue to be the norm. The ten-state study of child brides and parents reported that the majority of parents had taken marriage-related decisions for their daughter (G.B. Pant Institute

of Studies in Rural Development, 2013). A recent survey of girls in two districts of Rajasthan, one in which child marriage declined at a faster pace than the other (Bundi and Chittaurgarh, respectively) found that far more girls in Bundi than Chittaurgarh exercised decision-making authority in personal matters (52 versus 41%), and more reported that their husband-to-be was selected by themselves or by their parents with their consent (45 versus 37%) (Santhya et al., 2019), In focus group discussions conducted as part of this study, girls' narratives highlighted that the exclusion of girls from marriage-related decisions persists. They described incidents of girls becoming aware that they were to marry when clothes and jewellery were purchased, or when they overheard their parents discussing their upcoming marriage, and emphasised that girls' opinions were rarely sought (Santhya, 2019).

Limited paid work opportunities for women and girls

Gender norms restricting girls' freedom of movement and participation in mixed-sex settings pose huge obstacles to girls' ability to access livelihood skills training and productive employment opportunities away from the natal home, forcing girls into poorly valued and poorly remunerated activities, which in turn perpetuates the (mis) perception that girls have limited value, and reinforces the belief that girls are a liability and cannot contribute economically to the natal family. Indeed, fears that girls' employment outside the home creates opportunities for the formation of romantic partnerships or threaten their physical security – and the resulting aspersions that may be cast on girls in the marriage market – may strongly deter parents from enabling unmarried daughters to take advantage of livelihood skill and employment opportunities.

The lack of meaningful alternatives to marriage makes it difficult for parents to envisage alternatives to marriage for their young daughters (Lee-Rife et al., 2012). Parental aspirations for their daughters are far more likely to centre around marriage and motherhood than career and employment. For example, an evaluation of an intervention that built livelihood skills and

provided placement opportunities for girls in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector in Andhra Pradesh recognised that parents did not consider opportunities outside of the natal village appropriate for girls, and as a result, made special efforts to convince parents to allow their daughters to take advantage of these opportunities (Jensen, 2012).

Fewer girls than boys participate in paid work and fewer working boys than working girls report skilled occupations. For example, the sub-national *Youth in India: Situation and Needs* study found that while 30-31 percent of married and unmarried girls aged 15-24 had worked for wages in the 12 months preceding the interview, 53 percent of boys of the same age had done so; moreover, while 44 percent of boys engaged in wage work in the year preceding the interview reported occupations falling under administrative, clerical and managerial, business or skilled manual work or operating machinery, just 31 percent of unmarried girls and 17 percent of married girls reported these occupations (IIPS and Population Council, 2010).

Young women have a more difficult school-to-work transition than young men. The percentage of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) in India ranges from eight percent among young men aged 18-24 to 49 percent among their female counterparts (International Labour Organization (ILO), n.d.). While gender norms play a large part in limiting girls' access to decent and safe paid work, supply side factors, such as, for example, the reluctance of employers to hire women and girls, also play a part.

Poor quality and inaccessible facilities and services

Limited access to services and entitlements also acts as an obstacle to delaying marriage. For example, in many states, while primary schools (up to Class 8) are available at village level, secondary schools are not, and poor physical access to schools can be a reason for school discontinuation and deter the transition from primary to secondary school, and, as noted above, can serve as a trigger for child marriage.

Even parents who wish to educate their girls are deterred by long distances to school (see, for example, Nirantar Trust, 2015). Poor quality education and resulting poor learning outcomes, moreover, compromise opportunities for girls to access meaningful pre-marriage employment. At the same time, limited access to entitlements (school related bank accounts, bicycles, free text books, uniforms and livelihood training opportunities) limit choices for girls, especially those in marginalised communities. All of these factors thus pave the way for an early marriage. Once girls are withdrawn from school, there are few alternatives perceived by parents other than marriage.

Preventing school drop-out is closely associated with school quality and learning outcomes; for example, the UDAYA study in Bihar notes that lack of interest in studies (14-18%), poor quality of school facilities and teaching (4-9%), and failure (5-7%) were leading reasons for school discontinuation in Bihar (Santhya et al., 2016). A recent study comparing two districts of Rajasthan with differing child marriage rates found wide variation in perceptions about access to schooling facilities and responses about how easy it is to complete Class 10. Far more girls and mothers in the district in which child marriage rates were lower (Bundi) than the one in which child marriage rates continued to be high (Chittaurgarh) reported that it was very easy for a girl in their district to complete Class 10 (40 versus 24% of girls; 40 vs. 30% of mothers), and interviews with key informants reiterated that girls in several villages in Chittaurgarh district faced difficulty accessing facilities for secondary education (Santhya et al., 2019).

This study also found that the reach of efforts to inform girls and their parents about the importance of delaying girls' marriage was not universal, with between one in ten and two in five of these groups unreached by either a teacher or a frontline worker (Santhya et al., 2019). Key informants in these districts outlined the different forms of awareness raising initiatives in each district: in Bundi where child marriage declined more rapidly, initiatives included the formation of Child Protection Committees, the Gram Bal Sabhas, distribution of pamphlets about the helplines, public pledges in schools, engaging teachers to monitor children who may be at risk, and so on. In Chittaurgarh, where the decline was modest, awareness raising was largely in the form of traditional inter-personal communication.

Poor awareness and implementation of the PCMA

Awareness of the PCMA is generally poor. What is well known is that the minimum legal age at marriage is 18 for girls; far less known is that 21 is the minimum legal age at marriage for boys (IIPS and Population Council, 2010; Santhya, Acharya, Pandey et al. 2017a; 2017b). Even more vaguely understood are the details of the law; for example, the study in Bundi and Chittaurgarh notes that just 20-26 percent of girls were aware of the extent of punishments imposed on those who violate the Act. Other issues were better known, yet far from universal: that a girl who marries in childhood can go to court to dissolve the marriage (62-67%), that a person can be punished for giving or demanding dowry (78-80%), that it is mandatory to register marriage (56-68%) and that there are helplines or control rooms where child marriage may be reported (28-33%) (Santhya et al., 2019).

Evidence of the implementation of the PCMA comes only from the annual report of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), and it is clear from these reports that few cases of child marriage reach the justice system. Indeed, the NCRB reported just 280 crimes under the PCMA Act in 2014, 293 in 2015 and 326 in 2016 in India as a whole (NCRB, 2017). There is some evidence that the law has been misused with 69 percent of cases filed under PCMA, filed by parents whose adolescent daughters had eloped and married. The law has become a tool through which parents penalise both the boy (jail) and the girl (shelter home), rather than a tool to stop the prevalence of parent-initiated child marriages (Partners for Law in Development, 2019).

Political patronage and interference in efforts to implement the law have also impeded the

effectiveness of the law. Media reports have recorded incidents of stone-pelting and other acts of violence against police authorities who sought to confirm the age of brides in a mass marriage in Rajasthan (NDTV, 2012). Mass marriages organized by political leaders for popularity and caste Panchayat interference also weaken the authority of local enforcement agencies; a nexus between violators and the police further weakens implementation (see, for example, Jha, 2016). Informal discussions with law enforcement authorities suggest that influential politicians have been known to thwart efforts to arrest those conducting a child marriage, by threatening police officers with job transfers and other penalties.

Table 2
Suggested India-focused drivers and causes of child marriage, and comparisons with those recommended in the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme ToC for Ending Child Marriage

Suggested for India ToC	Corresponding Recommendations in the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme ToC for Ending Child Marriage (2019)
Factors conditioning child marriage	**Drivers**
Multidimensional poverty in general	Manifestations of multidimensional poverty; material deprivation to meet basic needs, social isolation, inequality, exclusion and powerlessness, denial of fulfilment of one's capabilities, physical and psychological ill-being
Structure of patriarchy and gender inequality	Covered above
Conflict and natural disasters	Conflicts, natural disasters, displacement, lack of respect of international humanitarian laws
Drivers and causes of child marriage	
Manifestations of poverty at household level	Not bifurcated
Discriminating gender roles, norms and gender-specific barriers	Gender norms that restrict girls and women to family and household roles and boys and men as breadwinners
Perceived lower value of girls than boys	Gender inequality and control of adolescent girls' sexuality
Prohibitive costs of dowry and huge wedding expenses	Not covered
Controls on girls' sexuality	Not covered
Fears for girls' safety in public places	Not covered
Exclusion of girls and boys from marriage-related decision-making	Not covered
Limited paid work opportunities for women and girls	Lack of economic opportunities, disruption of the economy
Poor quality and inaccessible facilities and services	Inaccessible and/or low quality health (including SRH), education, social protection and child protection services
Poor awareness and implementation of the PCMA	Lack of implementation of laws and policies that protect girls
Excluded: Not a prominent driver in India	Adolescent pregnancy

Promising practices and strategies to address child, early and forced marriage

Several global reviews have been undertaken that aim to determine evidence-informed strategies to reduce child marriage. These have not necessarily been systematic reviews, and the populations covered in the successful interventions described are not representative of the country in which the studies were based more generally. Even so, they emphasise strategies that have shown positive outcomes – building agency, changing gender inegalitarian attitudes, keeping girls in school, in particular – across many settings. Very few have demonstrated a direct impact on delaying the age at marriage, perhaps because few studies are able to follow intervention participants long enough to directly observe a change in marriage age. One such review of interventions to prevent child marriage identified 22 such interventions spread across 13 low- and middle-income countries that had been evaluated using randomised controlled trials, quasi-experimental designs or natural experiments, including a total of four from India, two of which focus on the empowerment approach, and two with focus on a combined empowerment and community mobilisation approach.

Authors note that interventions typically fell into four broad approaches: empowerment and life skills education, community-level programming including community dialogue and street theatre, efforts to keep girls in school, through, for example, the provision of free school supplies and tutoring, and economic approaches, focused largely on unconditional and CCTs. The review concluded that the empowerment approach was both the most popular intervention used, and also the most successful, while ambiguity existed with regard to the effectiveness of the remaining approaches. Even so, authors caution that there is a need to strengthen and better document the evidence base of what works and what does not work to delay child marriage (Chae and Ngo, 2017).

Earlier reviews have pointed to similar approaches. For example, one review of 23 evaluation studies published between 1991 and 2011 identified five key approaches: empowering girls with information, skills, and support networks, educating and mobilising parents and community members, enhancing the accessibility and quality of formal schooling for girls, offering economic support and incentives for girls and their families, and fostering an enabling legal and policy framework. Of the 23 evaluation studies reviewed, five were from India, and of these, four interventions employed an empowerment and community mobilisation approach, while the fifth focused on economic empowerment. This review acknowledged, however, that many of the evaluations reviewed had methodological weaknesses (some did not even have a comparison group), most showed effects on outcomes such as knowledge and attitudes, rather than on marriage age itself because of their inability to follow girls up in the longer term (Malhotra, Warner, McGonagle, Lee-Rife, 2011; Lee-Rife, Malhotra, Warner, Glinski, 2012).

Below we present the available evidence from evaluations of successful interventions intended to support transitions from adolescence to adulthood that have focused largely on low and middle income country (LMIC) contexts (see also Jejeebhoy, 2017 for a review of evidence informed leads for investment). Evidence comes from evaluations of programmes conducted

in various settings, and from both quantitative and qualitative assessments. While efforts have been made to identify evidence from India for each strategy proposed, we note that in some instances (for example, the effect of CCTs or comprehensive sexuality education), stronger evidence comes from other settings, and this evidence has been presented as well as what is available from India. In some instances, there is a strong rationale, based both on theory as well as the evidence presented earlier on key drivers of child marriage, for a particular strategy (for example, engaging families) but sparse evidence exists to guide programme implementers regarding the design of effective programmes.

Finally, in India, a number of national, state-level and NGO-led schemes and initiatives exist that may – directly or indirectly – affect child marriage (see Jha et al., 2016, for a list), notably in the areas of life skills education and CCTs and other entitlements. Evaluations of these programmes have not been conducted, and therefore evidence of their effects is unavailable. Nevertheless, these programmes are delivered at scale, and offer a unique opportunity for investment both in terms of programme input and evaluation.

Table 3 summarises these strategies, and this section outlines what is known about their effectiveness. While strategies are general and likely applicable in all socio-cultural contexts, we note the huge cultural diversity that exists across regions and states, sometimes even districts in India. In addition, deeply entrenched social norms surrounding gender roles and power relations that pervade the country, such as, for example, those relating to forced marriage or dowry, are admittedly challenging, and denting them may require specially tailored strategies. These contextual differences will likely shape the ways in which each strategy is operationalised at state and district levels. Given evidence that poverty and humanitarian situations exacerbate adherence to traditional gender inegalitarian norms also calls for special efforts to support households facing disasters or other shocks to ensure that households experiencing such shocks can avoid marrying off daughters as a coping mechanism.

Keep girls in school and ensure that all complete secondary school

Completion of at least secondary school education is a key marker of successful transition to adulthood. More specifically for this review, strong and consistent evidence suggests a positive association between years of schooling and age at marriage, and to a lesser extent, participation in marriage-related decisions (see, for example, IIPS and Population Council, 2010; Jejeebhoy, 1995). Better educated girls are more likely than others to hold egalitarian gender norms, express agency, participate in marriage-related decisions, be aware of their rights and entitlements, and have the livelihood skills and agency to access paid work opportunities and demonstrate their economic agency.

Evidence of successful models to achieve secondary school completion for all girls do exist globally and in India. A number of investments are needed to ensure that girls (and boys) remain in school, make the transition from primary to secondary school, and complete secondary education. To do so, proactive efforts are needed to ensure that girls are not only enrolled, but also attend school regularly, that they find curricula interesting and useful, and that the concerns of parents about safety and relevance of education are addressed.

Many models have shown promise in keeping adolescents in school. Improving school amenities – toilets, water, libraries, playgrounds and so on – are expected to improve attendance, but global evidence suggests that effects are inconsistent (Glewwe and Muralidharan, 2015). Provision of educational materials and improving student-teacher ratios showed promise in some Indian studies (Chin, 2005, as in Glewwe and Muralidharan, 2015; Muralidharan and Sundararaman, 2013). Perhaps the most promising models for retaining girls (and boys in school) include supplementary coaching on the one hand and provision of bicycles on the other. Both of these have been observed to have a significant positive effect on keeping girls in school, removing impediments such

as poor learning outcomes and long distances to school (Banerjee, Cole, Duflo, and Linden, 2007; Mitra and Moene, 2017). Also promising, although evidence comes largely from settings outside India, are the provision of conditional and unconditional cash transfers to students, and teacher incentives for example (see Jejeebhoy 2017 for a review). These models need to be replicated and tested for cost effectiveness and scalability.

In India, structures such as School Management Committees (SMCs) exist and may be a useful mechanism through which to convey the importance of schooling for girls. However, models demonstrating effective ways of empowering and motivating SMC members to take on this task seriously, while much needed, are not available.

Prepare older adolescent girls for livelihoods and school-to-work transitions

Efforts to provide livelihood training and employability skills to older girls, within or outside the educational system, can also act as an alternative to child marriage, and respond to a common question posed by parents about what their daughter will do if not married. Girls who access livelihood skills training and related earning opportunities demonstrate that like their brothers, they too are economic assets, defying commonly held misconceptions about the limited value of girls.

Global evidence suggests that for girls (and also vulnerable boys), it is not sufficient to simply provide livelihood skill building training. For example, a review of available evaluations concludes that in LMICs, programmes that supplement skills training with other supportive activities lead to better outcomes than simply providing skills training (Kluve et al., 2016). Positive findings also come from the World Bank's Adolescent Girls Initiative, launched in 2008 to support adolescent girls to make the transition from school to work in such settings as Afghanistan, Jordan, Lao PDR, Liberia, Haiti, Nepal, Rwanda, and South Sudan (World Bank, 2016).

What is needed are core employability skills that combine exposure to a vocational skill with 'softer' life skills attributes, such as, for example, problem solving, information and communications technology (ICT) and communication and language skills. The huge percentages of young women who are NEET (ILO, n.d.) call for greater programme and policy efforts focused on enabling girls to access employability skills and employment opportunities, including market scans that highlight the labour market gaps and the kinds of skills for which there is a demand, and vocational training programmes that are integrated into the school curriculum. Doing so would not only empower girls and young women but have synergistic effects on enabling them to delay marriage and childbearing. What are needed are comprehensive interventions that combine skills training with other activities such as life or soft skills training, career counselling, job search support and job related mentoring (Betcherman et al., 2007) that keep adolescents informed about market demand, and available training and employment opportunities. Indeed, a review of available evaluations concludes that in LMICs, programmes that supplement skills training with other supportive activities lead to better outcomes than simply providing skills training (Kluve et al., 2016).

Evidence of the effects of comprehensive interventions comes from studies conducted in a number of settings. For example, in the World Bank's Adolescent Girls Initiative to support adolescent girls to make the transition from school to work, girls were provided life skills, combined with the provision of an array of technical, vocational, and business development skills, as well as post-training support to connect them with economic opportunities. Findings in settings as diverse as Liberia and Nepal suggest that the programme succeeded in enhancing employment and earnings, as well as producing positive effects that went beyond the economic realm: greater decision-making, freedom of movement and self-confidence, larger social networks, greater life satisfaction and greater entrepreneurial self-confidence (World Bank, 2016).

In India, too, a project that aimed to link rural girls and young women to new sectors, namely the BPO industry through agents who informed and mentored those in the ages 18-24 from relatively remote rural areas to access labour market opportunities in the BPO sector had promising results. Exposure to the intervention resulted in considerable increases in employment in the BPO sector and in girls' aspirations for a career prior to marriage; it also resulted in delaying marriages, as compared with a control group (five percentage points) (Jensen, 2012). In short, livelihood skill building initiatives will be unsuccessful if they do not ensure that girls complete the training, are equipped with soft skills and knowledge about available opportunities, and are linked to these opportunities, and supported in making the transition to work life.

The Government of India has invested considerably in building livelihood skills, through, for example, the National Skill Development Mission. Programmes typically provide technical but not the softer skills, and do not necessarily recognise the unique constraints faced by girls in accessing post-training employment or the opportunities available for employment of girls in sectors for which they have received training. Moreover, evaluations of how access to skill building has affected careers and employment are rare. Strategies that expand the scope of available training programmes to incorporate such an approach need to be developed and their effect assessed.

Build girls' agency and empower them to exercise life choices

Access to gender transformative life skills education or comprehensive sexuality education has been observed to build awareness, change attitudes, develop agency, communication and negotiation skills, expand social networks, and empower adolescents (notably girls) to adopt health-promoting practices and make informed life choices, including in the marriage arena. In humanitarian crisis situations, too, programming for girls has included the provision of safe spaces and life skills education tailored to their own vulnerabilities (Girls Not Brides, 2016).

Such education is typically delivered at school or community levels, and school-based CSE programmes have shown consistent positive effects on knowledge, attitudes and safe sex practices globally as underscored in the report of the Lancet Commission on Adolescent Health (Patton et al., 2016). Unfortunately, there exist few high-quality studies that observe a link between gender transformative life skills education and delayed marriage (Patton et al., 2016; Lee-Rife et al., 2012; Malhotra et al., 2011; Chae and Ngo, 2017). The Lancet Commission report concludes, however, that life skills education is most effective when focused also on schooling matters, social support and skills development, and has a strong effect on knowledge and attitudes (Patton et al., 2016). A review of evaluations of some 23 programmes intended to delay marriage notes that the vast majority (18 of 23) focus on building the life skills of girls, that is, providing training and communication and negotiation skills, sharing information, creating safe spaces and developing support networks. Several of these documented notable changes in knowledge, attitudes and even behaviour related to child marriage within only a few years, although most evaluations were not robust enough to be able to attribute change to the intervention (Malhotra et al., 2011; Lee-Rife, Malhotra, Warner, Glinski, 2012).

A number of gender transformative life skills education projects have been implemented in India, using different designs, curricula and formats. While these projects are well-known and appear promising, evaluations of their impact and acceptability are relatively sparse and their effect on delaying marriage is, by and large, inconclusive, although they have resulted in significant changes in other practices. For example, evaluations using rigorous designs have observed fairly consistent effects of community- and school-based life skills education interventions on raising awareness, changing gender role attitudes, and building adolescent agency, factors hypothesised to empower girls to resist child marriage (see, for example, Kalyanwala and Sebstad. 2006; Acharya, Kalyanwala, Jejeebhoy, 2009; Dhar, Jain, Jayachandran, 2018; Pandey, Jejeebhoy,

Acharya, 2016). A few have demonstrated positive effects on delaying marriage and childbearing (see, for example, Daniel, Masilamani, Rahman, 2008; Mehra, Sarkar, Sreenath, Behera et al., 2018), including a UNICEF supported programme (Deepshika) in Maharashtra (as reported in Jha, 2016) but in general, there are few rigorous evaluations that have shed light on the effect of exposure to such programmes on delaying marriage.

While most programmes conducted in India have conveyed the minimum legal age at marriage for girls and boys, few have discussed adolescents' right to enter into marriage with free and full consent about when and whom to marry. Programmes must incorporate messages about this right, while equipping adolescents with the skills to negotiate consent on the one hand and take action to avoid an undesirable marriage on the other.

Age-segmented programming that acknowledges the different contexts, needs and preferences of younger (aged 10-14) and older (aged 15+) adolescents is essential. By focusing, in age-appropriate ways, on girls' right to make their own life choices, the importance of completing at least secondary education, having career aspirations and acquiring livelihood skills and the importance of savings and control over their own savings, will go a long way in empowering girls not only to delay marriage age to the legal minimum, but ensure that marriage timing reflects their decision and not that of their parents' and families.

Encourage access to positive role models

Positive role models from within the community have been found, anecdotally and in a few studies, to be successful in empowering girls to adopt new models of behaviour, and accept new norms of masculinity and femininity, hold new aspirations and exercise voice in marriage-related practices.

Evidence from several settings points to the importance that role models play in encouraging positive deviance, both among girls themselves

and their family. For example, in a rural setting in Vietnam, girls who had completed secondary education and had demonstrated their ability to secure employment in well-paying occupations, while at the same time demonstrating that they had not gone 'astray' convinced other families and girls to invest similarly in girls' education. In Nepal, teachers who were actively engaged in efforts to end discrimination against girls served as key role models for girls, who in turn, themselves became agents for change among their peers (Watson, 2014).

In India, several programmes for adolescents, including those implemented by the government and NGOs are based on the premise that peer mentors or peer educators, typically those drawn from their communities who display leadership skills, can lead change among groups of adolescents at village level and serve as role models for their peers (see, for example, RKSK programme evaluations, Pravah, 2017; Mehra et al., 2018). Evidence of their effect is based, thus far largely, on observation and anecdotal evidence. However, there is evidence from a different type of project, namely, the project described earlier that enabled girls to access labour market opportunities in the BPO sector. This project succeeded not only in empowering these girls, but in holding them up in their communities as role models about what is possible for other girls, and encouraging behaviour change among other girls as well (Jensen, 2012). Findings from what is available suggest that concerted efforts are needed to identify, support and publicly recognise these role models, and their families, to legitimise new norms and behaviours in communities at large.

Leverage social protection programmes, notably CCTs and other entitlements

Globally, there is a consistent body of evidence that shows that cash transfers and other entitlements that are linked to school attendance have a strong effect on school completion; several have also found a strong effect of transfers and entitlements on child marriage. The Lancet Commission report, for example, found moderate quality evidence for the impact

of both unconditional and CCTs with payments linked to school attendance on delaying marriage and pregnancy (Patton et al., 2016). A second review of seven studies found that among the four studies that revealed a significant impact on delaying marriage, three had provided some type of economic incentive to remain in school, notably CCTs and payment of school fees (Kalamar et al., 2016).

A school voucher programme in Colombia, a CCT programme in Mexico (Oportunidades), and entitlement programmes in Zimbabwe (school fees and supplies) and Ethiopia (Berhane Hewan which provided households with a goat) have all resulted in a notable decline in the proportion of girls married or an increase in marriage age (Kalamar et al., 2016; Malhotra et al., 2011). Notably, all of the CCT programmes that have been found to keep adolescents in school (Oportunidades for example) have been associated with short term pay-outs, on a monthly basis or at the completion of each school term. In a successful CCT programme in Bangladesh, conducted over a two-year period, girls who were proven to be unmarried were provided free cooking oil every four months; this short-term transfer succeeded in reducing child marriage rates considerably (UNICEF and J-PAL, 2017). These examples suggest that CCT programmes are most successful when they involve short-term pay-outs.

In contrast to programmes described above from other settings, in India, CCT programmes, were, until recently, implemented with the aim of delaying marriage age, and not necessarily intended to ensure school continuation or attendance (the bicycle scheme is an exception, as are recent programmes implemented at state level in West Bengal and Bihar). For example, in the Apni Beti Apna Dhan programme implemented in Haryana, enrolment took place at birth or shortly thereafter and benefits were transferred only if the girl remained unmarried at age 18 – implying a much longer time horizon than the programmes described above. Evidence from India on the effect of these cash transfer programmes is sparse. One such evaluation of a CCT programme (Apni Beti Apna Dhan) found that

participation in the programme had no effect on child marriage, that is, on the proportion marrying before they reached the age of 18, with 13-17 percent of beneficiary and non-beneficiary girls marrying in childhood (Nanda et al., 2016). It also noted that more beneficiary than non-beneficiary girls married immediately after they reached age 18 and before they reached age 19 (59 versus 45%), and qualitative data suggest that the cash transfer was used for marriage-related expenses rather than as a form of security for the girl herself (Nanda et al., 2016).

A recent qualitative study in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana that explored the experiences of girls who availed of other CCT schemes, and stakeholders engaged in facilitating access to the scheme, concurs with this perception. Most respondents perceived that access to the schemes had an effect on raising age at marriage to 19-20 years, but maintained that the cash transfer would be used to defray wedding expenses and dowry, and many believed that this payment was the government's way of helping parents to arrange their daughter's wedding (Vindhya, Ray and Ponniah, 2019). From both of these studies, it appears that the transfer, while having an ambiguous effect on raising marriage age, may serve to reinforce traditional practices such as dowry, and amounts may be appropriated by families rather than enable the girl's control over economic resources.

Findings also raise questions about whether the amount and the delayed receipt of the transfer were sufficient to change parental attitudes about secondary school completion and delaying the marriage of their daughter. Indeed, a study conducted in Haryana (Jejeebhoy et al., 2015) observed that several parents and stakeholders argued that the transfer amount was insufficient to change practices relating to gender biased sex selection, and may have a similar lack of effect on delaying the age of marriage.

Other concerns also arise. For one, schooling linked CCT programmes may ignore those out-of-school, and ways need to be devised through which the provision of CCTs are extended to those who have discontinued their education,

that support them to return to school or link them to livelihood opportunities.

Second, some have raised questions about whether CCT programmes on their own are sufficient to ensure that girls (and boys) remain in school till they complete secondary education or delay marriage till at least age 18.They argue that in order to be successful, CCT programmes must be implemented together with other programmes that alleviate non-financial and structural barriers, such as, for example, behaviour change communication, psycho-social support, linkages to other services, such as livelihood training and work opportunities, other activities intended to empower girls, and change parental and community norms. Programmes that combine CCTs with other programmes are known as 'Cash Plus' programmes and have been implemented in settings such as Ghana, Chile and Tanzania, in partnership with UNICEF (see, for example, Roelen, Devereux, Abdulai et al., 2017; TASAF, TACAIDS, MoHCDGEC, UNICEF, n.d.).

In India, various state governments have initiated 'cash plus' programmes (for example, the Mukhyamantri Kanya Utthan Yojana in Bihar, and the Kanyashree Prakalpa programme in West Bengal). Unfortunately, these programmes are of recent origin and their effects on empowering adolescents and other target populations that they address are unclear. Available assessments of the Kanyashree Prakalpa, based on a one-time survey of girls, along with interviews and discussions with girls and various stakeholders do suggest some increase in percentages of girls aged 13-18 attending school or college, and also suggest that many girls displayed aspirations for a college education and a career and so on, but it is difficult to attribute these findings to the programme, given the limitations of the study design (Pratichi Institute, 2017; KADENCE KP, n.d.).

Support more gender equal families

Parents are in a unique position to influence young people's health and personal development, and their transition to adulthood

(World Health Organization, 2007; Kågesten et al., 2016). Many of the drivers of child marriage are parent-initiated, and programmes that inform, sensitise, change attitudes of and open new horizons for parents may go a long way in changing perceptions about the limited value of girls versus boys, and the importance of controls on girls' sexuality, and encouraging them to recognise the importance of educating daughters and their access to employment. Unfortunately, examples of parenting programmes are sparse globally and in the Indian context, and, for the most part, evidence of these effects is not available.

Adolescent serving programmes today rarely focus on parenting or changing parental norms about the socialisation of their sons and daughters, and many have noted the dearth of research on the nature of parental influences and of programmes that explore promising parenting practices. What is available comes largely from high income countries (HICs) and among LMICs, from sub-Saharan Africa, and focuses largely on parenting of children and not of adolescents (see, for example, Knerr, Gardner, Vluver, 2013). These lacunae have been recognised, and several reviews call for the inclusion of a strong focus on the family and community in multi-component interventions that aim to change social norms and practices, and for the implementation and evaluation of family and parenting support interventions that aim to improve interaction between parents and their adolescent children (Patton et al., 2016; Banati, 2016; World Health Organization, 2007; 2011; Kågesten et al., 2016; Malhotra et al., 2011).

Promising examples of effective parenting programmes come from sub-Saharan Africa although without a focus on child marriage. The Families Matter! Program (FMP), designed for implementation in the US but adapted for adolescents in rural Kenya (Vandenhoudt et al., 2010), and the TOSTAN programme implemented in Senegal (Diop and Diagne, 2008) had some success in building parental awareness of adolescent health and development, enhancing gender egalitarian socialisation of sons and daughters, and

enabling parents to communicate better with their adolescent children, particularly about sexual and reproductive matters. Likewise, reviews of parent-youth programme evaluations from the US found positive results on reducing risky behaviours, increasing condom use and/or reducing unintended pregnancies, as well as on improving adolescents' social competence and school performance (Fish et al., 2014; Jackson et al., 2012). Notably, none of these was implemented in an early marriage setting and hence were not concerned with delaying age at marriage, or measuring effects on child marriage.

In India, most programmes have acknowledged the role of parents, but have traditionally included them only peripherally in life skills and other programmes, for example by conveying the benefits of enrolling adolescents in a programme and seeking their consent and cooperation.

Men remain the key decision makers with regard to the timing of their children's marriage, and the strongest guardians of hierarchical gender norms and expectations. Yet, interventions aimed at reaching men with gender transformative messaging have been largely unsuccessful in reaching and engaging them on gender related issues such as child marriage. Few interventions have addressed parents and family seniors. One pilot, implemented by the Population Council and C3 India, explicitly focused on strengthening parental engagement in building more supportive parent-child relationships and developing more gender egalitarian socialisation practices. It engaged mothers and fathers of adolescents aged 13-17 in rural Bihar through group sessions that made efforts to:
- sensitise them about equitable child rearing practices
- break down traditional inhibitions about communicating with adolescents about sexual and reproductive health matters
- expose them to new ideas about the advantages of delaying marriage
- explain the effect of spousal violence on adolescents and the importance of maintaining close relations with children.

The evaluation of this intervention highlighted that attendance at group sessions was erratic, especially among fathers, and many did not find the content useful, and effects particularly among fathers, on changing awareness, attitudes or socialisation and communication practices were mild and inconsistent (Jejeebhoy, Zavier, Santhya, et al., 2014).

Notwithstanding this lack of evidence in India, because of the important role that family plays in our context, much more attention needs to be paid to parents – both mothers and fathers – and senior family members in order that child marriage is eliminated. Programmes are needed that address fears about girls going "astray", concerns about the spiralling costs of marrying an "older" daughter, and attitudes about the limited value of girls that continue to drive child marriage. Parents must be sensitised about the importance of obtaining meaningful consent from their sons and daughters, and must recognise the human rights violations of marrying off their children without such consent.

At present, little is known about how best to reach parents and different models need to be tested, including, for example, the acceptability of home-based interactions versus group meetings. Given the paucity of evidence-informed models, pilots are needed that explore gender-specific strategies that reach men and women in forums in which they are likely to participate. These may try to address the potential for engaging mothers through self-help group meetings, fathers through farmers' forums, saving and loan forums, and both parents in the course of parent-teacher meetings and other school-based interactions, meetings held by locally elected representatives [Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)] and so on. Indeed, a review of organizations working on child marriage in India noted that some organizations have formed groups with farmers, which inform participants about both agricultural as well as social issues, including child marriage (Nirantar Trust, 2015). These forums may provide a promising venue through which to impart gender equitable norms and raise awareness of child marriage laws among fathers.

Sensitise influential community members

It has been increasingly observed that influential community members – religious leaders, caste Panchayat members, locally elected representatives (Panchayat members) – also reinforce traditional norms, hold judgmental attitudes against the young, react negatively to adolescents who deviate from traditional norms, or deliberately overlook violations of the law. These influential community members, together with other informal leaders may themselves hold attitudes that justify child marriage and discrimination against girls. Therefore, programmes are needed that convey new ideas of masculinity and femininity to them, and:

- raise their awareness about laws and entitlements
- build their capacity to convey these in the communities that they serve
- convince them of the importance and benefits of delaying marriage and the need for their participation in upholding the law, and
- solicit their cooperation in changing norms in the communities in which they reside.

Community level action – for example, public pledges to make villages child marriage-free – has shown success in delaying marriage. For example, in Senegal, the TOSTAN programme succeeded in village-level pledges in over 300 villages, and reports that child marriage did indeed decline following this collective action (Diop and Diagne, 2008). Community rallies and pledges have been initiated in UNICEF and UNFPA-supported programmes, and now need to be evaluated and their effectiveness and challenges documented (UNFPA-UNICEF, 2017). In India, the study that compared two districts in which child marriage rates were high and low respectively, noted that the one in which child marriage rates were low was far more likely to be characterised by such activities as the distribution of pamphlets about the availability of helplines and other issues related to child marriage, public pledges in schools, and engagement of community and religious leaders in advocating for preventing child marriage (Santhya, 2019). Efforts to upscale these

activities, document their progress and evaluate their effects would be useful.

Suggesting the power of religious leaders in changing traditional norms in India too, a study that compared gender biased sex selection practices in two districts of Haryana noted that one important factor distinguishing the district with more balanced child sex ratios from the one with a skewed child sex ratio was community exposure to discourses by religious leaders (Jeejeebhoy, Acharya, Basu et al., 2015). In the area of child marriage as well, successful programmes have worked with religious leaders, informing them of the risks they face if they conduct a child marriage, and eliciting an undertaking that they would refuse to perform the wedding of an underage boy or girl and would counsel parents about the inauspicious nature of such a marriage. Others have sensitised the police and other administrative authorities to take action in non-threatening ways, such as, for example, extracting an oath from parents who are known to be planning an underage marriage, making phone numbers of local authorities available, or disseminating information about child helplines run by the state or NGOs (Nirantar Trust, 2015).

Community level mechanisms such as Child Protection Committees (CPCs) and Gram Bal Sabhas exist in India but have been under-utilised. Indeed, a comparative study of two districts with differing child marriage rates showed that the district characterised by low child marriage rates was far more likely than the other to have active CPCs and/or Gram Bal Sabhas (Santhya et al., 2019), and efforts to empower these committees would be useful.

Enhance boys' understanding and support for gender equality

Boys are socialised from an early age to believe that they are more entitled than their sisters, have more voice and power within the household than their sisters, and have the right to control and dominate their future wife. These unbalanced perceptions and practices have severe implications for the persistence of child marriage of girls. At the same time, as seen in

earlier sections, many dimensions of agency are compromised for boys. For example, the *Youth in India* study found that just two in five (43%) boys aged 15-19 independently made decisions affecting their everyday life (choice of friends, spending money, buying clothes for themselves), and two-thirds of married young men aged 15-29 had not defied traditional norms, and had met their wife for the first time during the wedding ceremony (IIPS and Population Council, 2010). Gender transformative life skills education to build boys' agency and instil positive gender role attitudes, is as essential for boys as it is for girls, but has generally been overlooked.

Promising evidence is available that shows that participation in boy-responsive models has succeeded in changing boys' traditional attitudes about masculinity and femininity and in empowering boys to reject violence against women and girls, and intervene to stop incidents of harassment and violence that they may witness (see, for example, Marcus, Stavropoulou, Archer-Gupta, 2018). A review of evidence from 36 studies and 34 programmes (two-thirds from sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia) working with adolescent boys and young men to promote more gender-equitable masculinities notes that most studies measured effects in the short-term, with only three studies reporting on findings a year or more after boys had stopped participating. Most worked with groups of boys, with a focus on personal transformation as a route to social change, and more specifically, consent in sexual relationships, positive masculinities, and GBV, together with health education and communication skills training or sports. The review concluded that programmes had considerable effects on boys' adoption of gender-equitable attitudes or behaviour, notably with regard to GBV, gender roles and division of labour. While just a few evaluations covered attitudes to child marriage, girls' education, and attitudes to girls doing sports, more than three-quarters of these reported that changes were positive (Marcus, Stavropoulou, Archer-Gupta, 2018).

Evidence from India is limited but also strong. For example, in one school-based programme implemented in Haryana, a total of 27 sessions

were conducted over a two-year period among girls and boys in Classes 7-8 at the beginning of the two-year programme. Findings from a randomised controlled trial suggest that exposure to this programme had increased boys' (and girls') support for gender equality significantly, and boys were also more likely to report more gender-equitable behaviours, such as helping out with household chores (Dhar, Jain, Jayachandran, 2018).

A second intervention implemented among rural boys belonging to Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) youth clubs in Bihar focused on changing attitudes and behaviours relating to violence against women and girls, using a boy-friendly format, namely a combination of cricket coaching and gender transformative life skills education. Its findings suggest not only that this format was acceptable to boys but also that, even after controlling for confounding factors, boys who had participated in the intervention were significantly more likely than those in the control clubs to uphold gender egalitarian attitudes, believe that boys would be respected by their peers for behaving in non-traditional ways, rejecting men's right to exercise controlling behaviours over their sister, wife or girlfriend, and denouncing a man's right to perpetrate violence against women and girls (Jejeebhoy, Acharya, Pandey, Santhya et al., 2017). Opportunities for replicating these, perhaps with greater emphasis on the benefits of delayed marriage for spousal compatibility and intimacy, skills to counter parental insistence on dowry and child marriage, and so on, need to be explored.

Address the vulnerability and social isolation of married adolescent girls

Married girls are even more vulnerable than the unmarried; they have less freedom of movement, are less likely to display agency, have fewer friends, face intimate partner violence from early on in married life, and face many restrictions on behaviour. While theoretically eligible for all the services accorded to married adult women, the compromised situation of married girls inhibits their access to available services for adults. At the same time, interventions for adolescents have generally approached married girls as they

do the unmarried. As a result, it is likely that the specific needs of married adolescents are neither addressed in services for married women nor in interventions aimed at adolescents in general.

Despite their vulnerability, there have been few interventions aimed at empowering this group, partially because negotiating with stakeholders to permit access to married girls often fails, and because married girls hesitate to participate in activities involving the unmarried as well. The few that have done so have worked through individual counselling and/or formation of groups of married girls, providing information, skills, and a forum for social networking (Sarkar et al., 2018; Santhya et al., 2008). A systematic review that addressed this group found a total of eight community based reproductive health interventions that met quality criteria (Sarkar et al., 2018). Approaches described in these interventions included counselling of married young women and their husbands, other family members and communities, home visits by healthcare workers, and capacity building of health workers. Effects were observed in terms of increasing contraceptive use, delaying second and subsequent pregnancies and improving pregnancy and newborn care related outcomes.

A few projects in India have focused exclusively on married girls. For example, the First Time Parents project, implemented in settings in Gujarat and West Bengal aimed to reduce the social isolation of married adolescent girls, increase their ability to act in their own interest and improve their reproductive health (Santhya, Haberland, Das, 2008). As such, it provided reproductive health information to married young women, their husbands and influential adults in their families; made efforts to make existing maternal and child health services more sensitive to the needs of married adolescents; and empowered young women through group formation and other social networking activities. The project mobilised more than 1,000 young newly married young women into groups, and exposed them to topics ranging from literacy and vocational skills to pregnancy and postpartum care, contraception and gender issues. The project was evaluated using a

quasi-experimental study design, and showed a significant, independent effect on indicators reflecting married young women's autonomy, social support networks, partner communication and support (Santhya et al., 2008).

A second project with focus on married young people was the PRACHAR programme, implemented in settings in Bihar. Its main target audience was youth aged 15-24 and, to a lesser extent, older women and the community at large. This project was directly focused on improving SRH outcomes and its components included the provision of information and counselling to young women, group discussions of SRH issues, and orientation of healthcare providers. Findings from a longer-term evaluation using a quasi-experimental design found that the intervention was not only associated with increased contraceptive knowledge and use in the short term, but also that the short-term gains were sustained years later (Jejeebhoy, Prakash, Acharya, Singh, et al., 2015)

Enhance implementation and knowledge of laws concerning gender equality, and notably child marriage

Although laws exist (child marriage, dowry, inheritance, for example), they are poorly implemented, and community level awareness about these laws and the penalties for violation advocated in these laws is limited. Little is known, moreover, about the effect of enforcement on deterring others from the practice of child marriage, and about the extent to which there exists a comprehensive understanding of laws and penalties for violation, and whether a comprehensive understanding would reduce the practice. Indeed, global reviews caution that laws on their own do not contribute significantly to discouraging or eradicating child marriage (Chandra-Mouli, Lane, Wong, 2015). These reviews point out that just three of 12 African countries that recorded a more than 10 percent decline in early marriage had a strong legal framework (Lee-Rife et al., 2012). There is even some evidence that where it has been implemented, punitive actions and criminalisation may have adversely affected girls and their

families, including encouraging clandestine child marriages and deliberate misreporting of the age of the bride (UNICEF GPECP Evaluation Questions document). Indeed, the need for further research is widely acknowledged, including research that addresses what works to effectively implement relevant laws, and that explores the risks and benefits of sanctions versus incentives (Svanemyr, Chandra-Mouli, Raj, Travers, Sundaram, 2015).

Few studies in India have shed light on the role of the law in preventing child marriage. The comparative study of girls, mothers and fathers in contrasting districts in Rajasthan highlights that significantly more girls and parents in Bundi, the district with more rapid decline in child marriage, than Chittaurgarh, where decline was modest, were aware of cases in which parents were punished for marrying their daughters early (18 versus 10% among girls; 18 versus 10% among fathers). They were also more likely to know of people in their village who had informed the police or people in authority about an impending child marriage (23 versus 12% among girls; 27 versus 13% among fathers). Likewise, more reported awareness of incidents in which parents had been made to sign an agreement not to marry their daughter before she turned 18 (13 versus 11% among girls; 24 versus 17% among fathers) (Santhya et al., 2019).

A review of organizations working on child marriage issues reported that these organizations used the law to inform communities that child marriage is illegal and a punishable offence – for example, they used the law to inform communities about the risks faced not just by parents but also by others involved in conducting a wedding ceremony – caterers, tent rental companies, and even religious leaders – if complicit in performing a child marriage (Nirantar Trust, 2015). Findings suggest that initiatives that use the power of the law as a deterrent to prevent child marriage, without punitive action and criminalisation of families may be both effective and acceptable to communities and families.

The police and local administrations, similarly, need to be better informed about the law,

and sensitised about using their authority to ensure that child marriages are stopped. Indeed, they are not always fully aware of the legal provisions of the Act, and many are unconvinced about the need to implement it or their duties in implementing it (GB Pant Institute of Rural Studies, 2013). Training of law enforcement agencies is urgently needed, that both aims to change prevailing norms about the acceptability of child marriage, and apprises those in authority about the law, its provisions, and their responsibilities.

While enforcing the law in a punitive way is unlikely to be successful in ending child marriage and may well drive child marriage underground, softer efforts to use the power of the law to deter child marriage – such as ensuring that parents sign an oath promising not to marry off their daughter of marriageable age, or spreading awareness about the wide spectrum of individuals, aside from the parents, who may be penalised for participating in a child marriage – may be more useful and acceptable.

Several organizations also use the law to mobilise the police and other administrative authorities. Members of these organizations have convinced the police to accompany them to stop the marriage ceremony of an underage girl. They distribute pamphlets and place wall paintings prominently to provide phone numbers of local authorities and local helplines, encouraging community members to report a child marriage. However, they too stop short of filing a case under the Act, rather they use the power of the law to prevent or stop a child marriage through threats or counselling. Although organizations may have some measure of success, authors of a child marriage investigation report that families may have found ways of conducting the marriage of a minor clandestinely, perhaps enhancing the risk faced by the girl (Nirantar Trust, 2015).

The establishment of confidential or anonymous reporting chains may be a useful option. Such chains would enable girls to report an impending child marriage to teachers or frontline health workers in complete confidence, and they in turn would be able to convey such

information confidentially to law enforcement officials. Unfortunately, there is little evidence about the extent to which these innovative interventions have actually succeeded in changing community attitudes or halting a child marriage (Nirantar, 2015).

Enhance the reach and quality of facilities, services and entitlements

The reach and quality of facilities, services and entitlements remain limited. For example, despite evidence of a strong association between school continuation and accessibility of facilities and perceived quality of education, secondary schools remain physically inaccessible to many girls and the quality of teaching remains insufficient to ensure age-appropriate learning outcomes (see, for example, ASER, 2019). In the health arena, relatively few girls (and even fewer boys) have been exposed to interpersonal communication offered by a frontline worker about any SRH issue, including about child marriage and its consequences (see, for example, Santhya et al., 2017a; 2017b; Jejeebhoy, Raushan, Gupta, Bhattacharya, forthcoming). The reach and quality of facilities, services and entitlements play an important role – both directly and indirectly – in delaying marriage and ensuring that adolescents make a successful transition to adulthood.

Frontline workers are ideally placed to identify girls at risk of child marriage and take steps to prevent it, as well as to inform households about the consequences of child marriage and the law and penalties for violating it. They should be encouraged to target these messages to households with adolescent daughters and sons. RKSK offers a unique opportunity, despite the paucity of evidence of its effectiveness, to encourage frontline workers to take on the role of reaching unmarried girls. For example, the community outreach programme of RKSK envisages that peer educators will form groups of adolescents and convey new gender-related and health-promoting ideas among them, and that these peer educators are mentored by frontline workers who are expected to support the groups and serve as a link between adolescents in

the community and Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (AFHCs). In view of the fact that there have been no evaluations thus far of the RKSK programme, it would be useful not only to strengthen the delivery of this component but also test its effectiveness and acceptability.

Teachers too, are critical in conveying new ideas at the school level. Several states, for example, Bihar and Jharkhand, implement the Adolescence Education Programme, whose curriculum includes a focus on health promoting information, including about child marriage, as well as changing traditional gender norms, building agency and enhancing communication and negotiation skills. These programmes are delivered to adolescents by trained teachers (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2019). In some settings, moreover, teachers have been engaged in monitoring children likely to drop out of school in order to marry, as reported in the study exploring factors distinguishing districts with high and low prevalence of child marriage, respectively (Santhya, 2019), and efforts to institutionalise the practice would be useful. Indeed, an assessment of adolescence education programmes in several states found that awareness of and attitudes about delaying marriage and childbearing were indeed enhanced by exposure to the programme (NCERT and UNFPA, 2011).

More indirectly, accessibility to and quality of facilities and services have an important bearing on reducing child marriage. In the education area, keeping girls in school is closely associated with enhanced age at marriage, For example, available global evidence suggests that building new schools and improving existing ones are the most consistently effective supply side intervention for enhancing enrolment and attendance in schools in LMICs (Glewwe and Muralidharan, 2015). In India, evidence is available that shows that the provision of toilets, predominately sex-specific latrines, substantially increased the enrolment of upper primary school aged girls (Adukia, 2014). Investment in teacher training, use of ICT in schools, provision of supplementary coaching for disadvantaged students, and provision of CCTs, bicycles

and so on for school going adolescents have all been found as effective mechanisms for keeping adolescents in school (see, for example, Banerjee, Cole, Duflo, and Linden, 2007; Glewwe and Muralidharan, 2015), and as we saw earlier, keeping girls in school is a powerful strategy for delaying marriage.

In the health arena, evidence suggests that very small proportions of adolescents are aware about the availability of counselling and services in the country that are dedicated to adolescents and youth, and even fewer have made use of the services offered by AFHCs (Santhya et al., 2014; Jejeebhoy, Santhya, Singh, Rampal et al., 2014). However, insights about the indirect effects of access to and quality of health services on health promoting practices of adolescents are available from a scoping review of some 30 studies published between 2000 and 2014 that evaluated Adolescent Friendly Health Services (aFHS) initiatives in India (Hoopes et al., 2016). While not directly focused on child marriage effects, this review suggests that these programmes resulted in increased knowledge about SRH matters, both among providers and adolescents, and increased contraceptive practice and use of sanitary napkins; a couple also demonstrated an effect on raising age at first birth at the community level (Hoopes et al., 2016).

Multi-stakeholder engagement and engagement with committed civil society organizations (CSOs) are essential. An evaluation of a district-level, government-led multi-sectoral intervention to address child marriage in settings in Bihar and Rajasthan notes that the programme succeeded in stimulating more concerted action at block and village levels, displaying effective intersectoral convergence at the village level, highlighting the contribution of the CSO

in designing a programme that responded to socio-cultural context. Even so, this evaluation notes that challenges persisted. Child marriage did not become a priority for authorities, and a willingness to work across sectoral boundaries was difficult to institutionalise. The evaluation notes that strategies must include the incorporation of clear directives and institutional support for collaboration, and strong monitoring mechanisms, and concludes that despite the challenges faced, there is huge potential for multi-sectoral approaches to prevent and respond to child marriage in India (Chandra-Mouli, Plesons, Barua, Sreenath, Mehra, 2018).

Harness the potential of the media to promote gender equality

Social and behaviour change communications have relied on the media – both traditional and increasingly social and new media. Television remains a widely used medium, and edutainment programmes that disseminate social messages, including about child marriage, have a wide audience. For example, the Population Foundation of India's trans-media series [Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon (I, A Woman, Can Achieve Anything)] utilise television, radio, Internet and mobile phones to spread messages challenging prevailing social and cultural norms, including about early marriage. Social media platforms and digital campaigns have also been used to connect with communities. Use of social media, Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) and simple texting on mobile phones if internet is not available may be useful ways of communicating messages relating to new norms and behaviours in a way that is accessible to and resonates with adolescents and communities. The effect of these programmes has however not been well evaluated.

Table 3
Suggested India-focused strategies for reducing child, early and forced marriage, and comparisons with those recommended in the UNICEF-UNFPA GLOBAL Programme ToC for Ending Child Marriage

Suggested for India ToC	Corresponding Recommendations in the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme ToC for Ending Child Marriage (2019)
Keep girls in school and ensure that all complete secondary school	Not directly covered
Prepare older adolescent girls for livelihoods and school-to-work transitions	Not directly covered
Build girls' agency and empower them to exercise life choices (age-segmented and age-appropriate gender transformative life skills education and comprehensive sexuality education)	Empower girls (in and out-of-school) with information, skills, and support networks, including on gender equality and healthy relationships
Encourage access to positive role models	Not directly covered
Leverage social protection programmes, notably CCTs and other entitlements	Promote gender-responsive social protection incentives for girls and their families and foster economic empowerment of adolescent girls
Support more gender equal families	Engage and mobilise families, boys and men, youth, community members and leaders for gender equality
Sensitise influential community leaders	Addressed in the above
Enhance boys' understanding and support for gender equality	Addressed in the above
Address vulnerability and social isolation of married girls	Not covered
Enhance implementation and knowledge of laws concerning gender equality, notably child marriage	Foster an enabling legal and policy environment in line with international standards, and government leadership, financing and accountability for effective actions to end child marriage
Enhance reach and quality of facilities, services and entitlements	Enhance accessibility, referral and quality of formal and informal education and training, adolescent SRH, child protection and GBV services for girls, especially the most marginalised
Harness potential of the media to promote gender equality	Not covered
Not covered	Improve knowledge and evidence base through research, evaluations and data related to child marriage and gender equality

Note: Evidence base should be a given across drivers, strategies, outcomes and impact indicators

The strategies proposed in this section are based on promising evidence from other countries as well as from India. Table 4 summarises the strength of the available evidence summarised in this section using two criteria: the number of programmes that have been evaluated, and the strength of the evidence presented in these evaluation studies. As is evident from the discussion above and Table 4, in many areas, the number of studies conducted are limited. Moreover, many evaluated interventions are based on relatively small geographic settings, and their generalisability has not been established. Several have methodological limitations, including weak designs that detract from the robustness of their findings. Finally, in some instances, strategies have been proposed that are based on limited evidence but a strong socio-cultural or programme rationale, such as, for example, the need to engage parents, and to use the opportunity presented in RKSK strategies to improve adolescents' interaction with the health system.

Table 4 makes clear that globally, just a few strategies may be considered a 'best' practice – that is, they are based on a diverse set of geographic areas, rely on sound evaluation methodologies, and show positive effects on one or more markers of a successful transition to adulthood. These include those that aim to keep girls in school, those that offer comprehensive sexuality education, and those that provide CCTs for meeting various milestones, largely in the area of schooling (see Patton et al., 2016; Glewwe and Muralidharan, 2015). Others, including most that are focused on addressing the situation of young people in India, and are discussed here, are hugely promising, but based on a limited number of high quality studies, or, as mentioned above, based on a strong socio-cultural or programme rationale.

The 12 strategies proposed therefore call for an emphasis on improving the knowledge and evidence base through research, evaluations and further analysis of available data related to child marriage and other markers of a successful transition to adulthood. While this review has noted a number of evidence-based leads for investment, the need for investment in sound evidence that highlights what works cannot be underestimated.

Table 4
Strength of evidence about the effect of proposed strategies on markers of a successful transition to adulthood, including direct and indirect effects on child, early and forced marriage

Suggested for India ToC	Global Evidence[1,2]	India Evidence[1,2]
Keep girls in school and ensure that all complete secondary school	Many studies Strong evidence	Few studies Strong evidence
Prepare older adolescent girls for livelihoods and school-to-work transitions	Some studies Strong evidence	Few studies Strong evidence
Build girls' agency and empower them to exercise life choices (age-segmented and age-appropriate) ● gender transformative life skills education ● comprehensive sexuality education	 Some studies; mixed evidence Many studies; strong evidence	 Many NGO studies; methodological limitations; some evidence Few studies; methodological limitations; mixed evidence
Encourage access to positive role models	Few studies Some evidence	Few studies (usually merged with above) Some evidence
Leverage social protection programmes, notably CCTs and other entitlements	Many studies Strong evidence	Few studies Some methodological limitations Weak evidence
Support more gender equal families	Few studies Weak evidence	Few studies Some methodological limitations Weak or mixed evidence
Sensitise influential community leaders	Few studies Weak evidence	Few studies Weak evidence, much is qualitative
Enhance boys' understanding and support for gender equality (boy focused interventions)	Some studies Strong evidence	Few studies Strong evidence
Address vulnerability and social isolation of married girls	Few studies Moderate evidence	Few studies Mixed evidence
Enhance implementation and knowledge of laws concerning gender equality, notably child marriage	None NA	Few studies (usually merged in other interventions) Weak evidence

Suggested for India ToC	Global Evidence[1,2]	India Evidence[1,2]
Enhance reach and quality of facilities, services and entitlements	Many studies for education, fewer for health Strong evidence (stronger for education than health)	Some studies on education; few on health Weak evidence
Harness potential of the media to promote gender equality	Some studies Some evidence (not reviewed here)	No completed recent studies

Note: [1]While assessments are subjective, 'many,' 'some,' 'few,' and 'none' refer to the number of evaluation studies available on the subject, and may loosely be defined as more than five, 3-5, 1-2 and no such studies.

[2] Strength of evidence is defined as follows: strong evidence refers to findings of evaluations conducted through randomised controlled trials, quasi-experimental designs, and more rarely, pre- post- and other designs, and consistently providing evidence of effect; some evidence refers to findings of evaluations using these methods, but providing weak effects overall; mixed evidence refers to findings of evaluations using these methods that sometimes show positive effects and sometimes no or weak effects.

NA: not applicable, no studies identified

Outcomes

Outcomes of the strategies outlined above emerge, correspondingly, at individual girl, family and community levels, at system and institution levels and at government and political levels. Key outcomes are at the girl level: girls' own exercise of agency and choice, a successful transition to the completion of at least secondary school education, and greater preparedness for a school-to-skilled work transition. Important also are the engagement of boys, notably a transformation of gender role attitudes, and display of behaviour reflecting new notions of masculinity.

At parent and family level, notable outcomes are their demonstration of gender-equal socialisation practices and investments in sons and daughters, a greater value assigned to daughters, as well as positive gender-role attitudes and behaviours and a commitment to preventing child marriage. At community level more generally, outcomes may include both the sensitisation of and commitment to preventing child marriage among influential adults, and through their actions, the community at large.

At the system level, three outcomes are noted. The first of these is improvements in the areas of education, health, and skill building, and more specifically, in the health system's ability to address adolescent needs, the school sector's ability to deliver high quality and safe education to meet the needs of adolescent girls, the reach of skilling opportunities to girls, that is, the systems' ability to provide girls easy access to facilities, services and entitlements.

The second refers to a greater awareness at community level about the PCMA and other laws that protect girls, as well as more effective use of the PCMA, in terms of apprising communities as well as CSOs and law enforcement authorities about penalties for violation, using the law to prevent child marriage, and if that cannot be avoided, taking punitive action against violators; to raise people's awareness of its conditions and penalties for violation, to uphold the law.

The third refers to the media, that is, focused interest displayed by all media in changing gender norms and preventing child marriage. Ideally, efforts are needed that build their capacity for understanding patriarchy and issues around control of girls' sexuality and common messaging on the issue.

A final outcome refers to government commitment to eradicating child, early and forced marriage in particular, and meeting SDGs 3, 4 and 5 more generally, with strong political support for positive policies, tracking progress made and evaluating programme outcomes.

Photo Credit: © UNICEF/Siddhartha Hajra/2018

Multi-level outcomes of strategies

System level

a. Improvements in areas of education, health and skill building

b. Greater awareness at community level about PCMA and other laws that protect girls and more effective use of PCMA

c. Focused interest of all media in changing gender norms and preventing child marriage

d. Government commitment to eradicating child, early and forced marriage in particular, and meeting SDGs 3, 4 and 5

Community level

a. Sensitisation and commitment to preventing child marriage among influential adults and community at large.

Parent and family level

a. Demonstration of gender-equal socialisation practices and investments in sons and daughters

b. Greater value assigned to daughters as well as positive gender-role attitudes and behaviours

c. Commitment to preventing child marriage.

Individual level

a. Girls' own exercise of agency and choice

b. Successful transition to completion of at least secondary school education and greater preparedness for school-to-skilled work transition

c. Engagement of boys, notably transformation of gender role attitudes and display of behaviour reflecting new notions of masculinity.
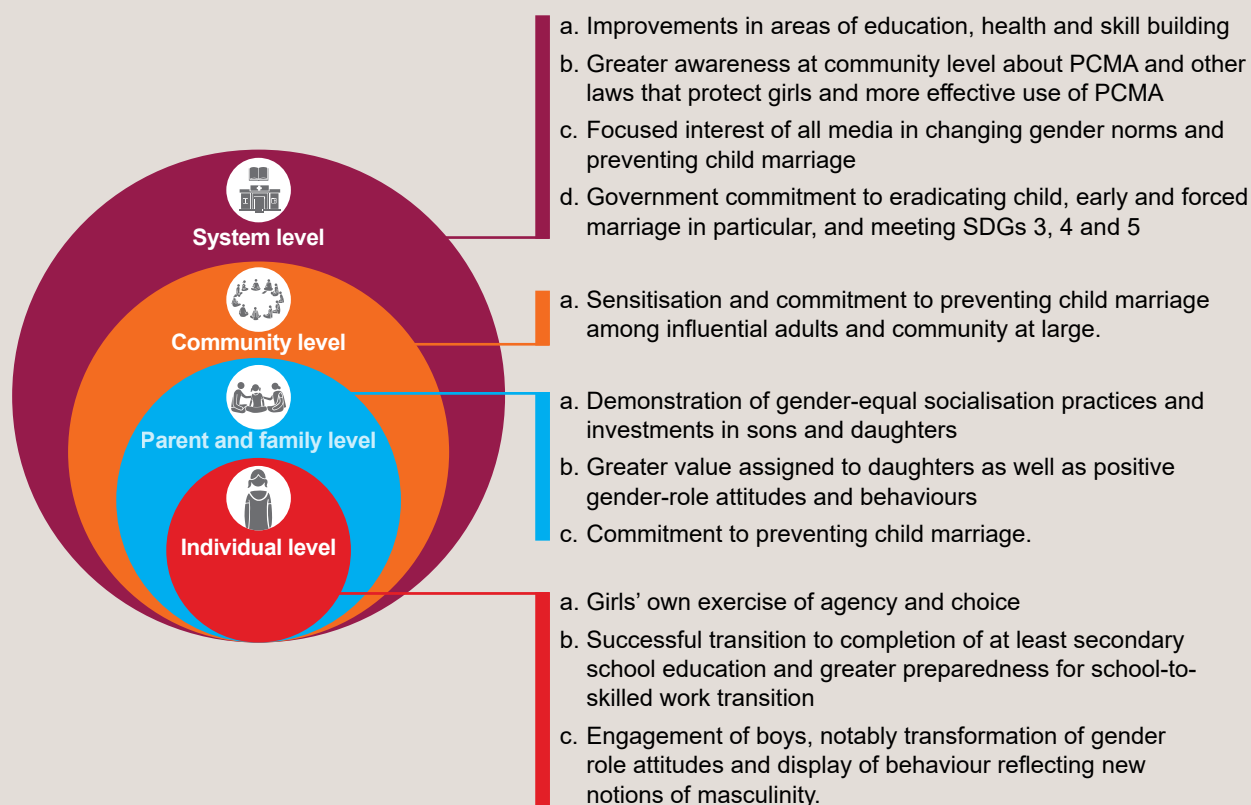
Table 5 outlines these India-focused outcomes, along with those identified in the global ToC. As Table 5 notes, there is a close correspondence between the two ToCs, however, constructs have been modified to be more specifically India-focused, as opposed to the more general global ToC.

Table 5

Suggested India-focused outcomes emerging from strategies outlined for reducing child, early and forced marriage, and comparisons with those recommended in the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme ToC for Ending Child Marriage

Suggested for India ToC	Corresponding Recommendations in the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme ToC for Ending Child Marriage (2019)
1. Girls have agency, hold egalitarian attitudes, have access to mentors and role models, and exercise life choices	Adolescent girls at risk of, affected by or who choose child marriage are better able to express and exercise their choices and agency
2. Girls complete secondary school with good learning outcomes	Implied above

Suggested for India ToC	Corresponding Recommendations in the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme ToC for Ending Child Marriage (2019)
3. Older adolescent girls transition from school to work, accessing livelihood skill building and employment opportunities	Girls and families enjoy economic autonomy and empowerment
4. Boys understand and support gender equality, hold gender egalitarian attitudes and display behaviours reflecting new notions of masculinity	Men and boys demonstrate and promote positive masculinity, positive attitudes and behaviours
5. Parents and families support gender-equal socialisation practices and investments in sons and daughters, discard traditional hierarchical attitudes about the value of girls	Families, communities and gatekeepers demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviour regarding gender equitable attitudes and behaviours
6. Married girls are supported, empowered, have expanded peer networks, and are aware about health promoting practices and rights and entitlements	Implied in bullet 1 above
7. Influential adults in the community are sensitised about the need to change community norms and practices, and take action to do so	Implied in bullet 4 above
8. Action is taken to inform communities about the PCMA and penalties for violation, CSOs as well as police and administrative authorities are sensitised about the law and ways of using the law to prevent child marriage	National laws, policies, national action plans (NAPs), frameworks and mechanisms to protect and promote girls' and boys' rights and wellbeing are in line with regional and international standards, contextualised, adequately resourced and implemented
9. Structural impediments to girls' use of facilities, services and entitlements are reduced	Relevant systems converge and deliver gender-responsive and cost-effective convergent services for adolescent girls at scale, leveraging government and civil society initiatives
10. The media are proactive about messaging to change gender norms and prevent child marriage	Not addressed
11. Government is committed to eradicating child, early and forced marriage in particular, and meeting SDGs 3, 4 and 5 more generally, with strong political support for positive policies, tracking progress made and evaluating programme outcomes	Governments and other stakeholders generate and utilise robust data and evidence to inform policy and programme design, track progress and document lessons

PROPOSED THEORY OF CHANGE
for UNICEF and UNFPA's Global Programme to Accelerate Action to END CHILD MARRIAGE IN INDIA *(Adapted from GPECM Phase I Global TOC)[1]*

IMPACT

By 2024, in India, more girls (married and unmarried) experience healthier and more empowered lives, free from violence, with more assets and opportunities, so that they can make informed choices and decisions about their career, education and health including sexual reproductive health, sexuality and relationship formation

OUTCOMES

Girls have agency, hold egalitarian attitudes, have access to mentors and role models, and exercise life choices	Girls complete secondary school with good learning outcomes	Older adolescent girls transition from school to work, accessing livelihood skill building and employment opportunities	Boys understand and support gender equality, hold gender egalitarian attitudes and display behaviours reflecting new notions of masculinity	Parents and families support gender-equal socialisation practices and investments in sons and daughters, discard traditional hierarchical attitudes about the value of girls	Married girls are supported, empowered, have expanded peer networks, and are aware about health promoting practices and rights and entitlements	Influential adults in the community are sensitised about the need to change community norms and practices, and take action to do so	Action is taken to inform communities about the PCMA and penalties for violation, civil society organisations as well as police and administrative authorities are sensitised about the law and ways of using the law to prevent child marriage	Structural impediments to girls' use of facilities, services and entitlements are reduced	The media are proactive about messaging to change gender norms and prevent child marriage	Government is committed to eradicating child, early and forced marriage in particular, and meeting SDGs 3, 4 and 5 more generally, with strong political support for positive policies, tracking progress made and evaluating programme outcomes

STRATEGIES*

Keep girls in school and ensure that all complete secondary school	Prepare older adolescent girls for livelihoods and school-to-work transitions	Build girls' agency and empower them to exercise life choices (age-segmented and age-appropriate gender transformative life skills education and comprehensive sexuality education)	Encourage access to positive role models	Leverage social protection programmes, notably conditional cash transfers and other entitlements	Support more gender equal families	Sensitise influential community members	Enhance boys' understanding and support for gender equality	Address the vulnerability and social isolation of married girls	Enhance implementation and knowledge of laws concerning gender equality, and notably child marriage	Enhance the reach and quality of facilities, services and entitlements	Harness the potential of the media to promote gender equality

DRIVERS & CAUSES

Manifestations of poverty at household level	Discriminating gender roles, norms and gender specific barriers	Perceived lower value of girls than boys	Prohibitive costs of dowry and huge wedding expenses	Controls on girls' sexuality	Fears for girls' safety in public places	Exclusion of girls (and boys) from marriage-related decision making	Limited paid work opportunities for women and girls	Poor quality and inaccessible facilities and services	Poor awareness and implementation of the PCMA

CONDITIONING FACTORS

Multidimensional poverty in general	Structure of patriarchy and gender inequality	Conflict and natural disasters

PROBLEM

Early forced and child marriage; no choice in whether to marry or choice of partner, among girls (but also some boys)

* Evidence base should be a given across drivers, strategies, outcomes and impact indicators

[1] UNFPA-UNICEF India have revised the GPECM ToC based on the recommendations provided in this paper.

Conclusions and limitations

This review has suggested a few modifications in the global UNICEF-UNFPA ToC to end child marriage in order to respond better to the India country context. As seen in Tables 2, 3 and 4, these changes are suggested with regard to drivers, strategies and outcomes. As mentioned, the problem, impact and vision statements are globally relevant, including for India, and have not been modified.

Available evidence from India and elsewhere suggests a host of practices that may hold promise for denting the strength with which the drivers of child marriage persist. Twelve strategies have been identified that are hypothesised to delay marriage, either directly (such as completing secondary education) or, more often, indirectly (such as changing gender norms at individual, family and community levels, for example). The majority of strategies identified are based on evidence obtained from India, and if unavailable, other LMICs. In many instances, associations have been observed repeatedly in different socio-cultural settings, lending support to their soundness. Yet, not all of these, we acknowledge, are based on strong evidence from India, or on strong evaluation designs, and most have affected knowledge and attitudes rather than the marriage age itself. As such, we must label them as strategies that may hold promise but are not yet best practices. A few strategies proposed are based on a strong rationale but limited evidence of effect (for example, enhancing the reach and quality of

services and entitlements, spreading awareness of penalties for violating the law, and focusing on creative ways of using the law to prevent child marriage rather than punish offenders). There is a need therefore, where these strategies are implemented, to judiciously determine which strategies should first be implemented as pilots that are soundly evaluated, and which may be implemented at scale, using available resources (programmes, schemes, facilities, entitlements). Investment in a rigorous evaluation of both their implementation and their effect is essential.

Attention must be paid to operationalisation of proposed strategies. The 12 strategies outlined above show that investment is needed at many levels, with many different stakeholders, targeting all of the barriers to preventing child marriage, in order that the practice is eliminated rapidly. State and district authorities need to be engaged in designing and recognising the potential effect of each strategy, and in making decisions on how to prioritise or phase the implementation of different strategies. Efforts need to be made to identify and engage various departments (health, education, women and child development, but also skills missions) in implementing these strategies, with a coordinated operationalisation structure. Multi-stakeholder engagement is important, and partnerships must be forged with CSOs that generally work at ground level and have insight into how to shape programmes in different socio-cultural contexts.

References

Acharya, R., Kalyanwala, S., and Jejeebhoy, S.J. 2009. *Broadening girls' horizons: Effects of a like skills education programme in rural Uttar Pradesh*, India New Delhi: Population Council.

Adukia, A. 2016. *Sanitation and Education*. Accessed on 24 May, 2017 at http://scholar. harvard.edu/files/adukia/files/adukia_sanitation_and_education.pdf.

ASER Centre. 2019. *Annual Status of Education Report (Rural) 2018, Provisional*. New Delhi: ASER Centre.

Banati, P. 2016. "Initial Research Findings on Adolescent Well-being from the Office of Research–Innocenti." *Innocenti Research Brief*, 2016-09.

Banerjee, A., Cole, S., Duflo, E. and Linden, L. 2007. Remedying Education: Evidence From Randomized Experiments in India. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 122(3): 1235-1264.

Betcherman, G., Godfrey, M., Puerto, S. et al. 2007. A Review of Interventions to Support Young Workers: Findings of the Youth Employment Inventory. *SP Discussion Paper Number 0715.* World Bank: Washington, DC.

Bhat, P. N. M. and Halli, S.S. 1999. Demography of Brideprice and Dowry: Causes and Consequences of the Indian Marriage Squeeze. *Population Studies* 53 (2): 129-148.

Chae, S. and Ngo, T.D. 2017. The Global State of Evidence on Interventions to Prevent Child Marriage. *GIRL Center Research Brief No. 1*. New York: Population Council.

Chandra-Mouli, V., Plesons, M., Barua, A. et al. 2018. How can collective action between government sectors to prevent child marriage be operationalised? Evidence from a post-hoc evaluation of an intervention in Jamui, Bihar and Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan in India. *Reproductive Health,* 15: 118.

Chandra-Mouli, V., Lane, C. and Wong, S. 2015. What Does Not Work in Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health: A Review of Evidence on Interventions Commonly Accepted as Best Practices: Commentary. *Global Health: Science and Practice*, 3(3): 333-340.

Chin, A. 2005. Can Redistributing Teachers Across Schools Raise Educational Attainment: Evidence from Operation Blackboard in India. *Journal of Development Economics,* 78(2): 384-405.

Crivello, G., Roest, J., Vennam, U. et al. 2018. *Marital and Fertility Decision-making: The Lived Experiences of Adolescents and Young Married Couples in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, India*. Research Report, Oxford: Young Lives.

Daniel, E.E., Masilamani, R. and Rahman, M. 2008. The Effect of Community-Based Reproductive Health Interventions on Contraceptive Use Among Young Married Couples in Bihar, India. *International Family Planning Perspectives*, 34(4):189–197

Dasra. 2019. *Action/Reaction: Understanding and overcoming backlash against girls' exercise of agency in India*. Mumbai: Dasra.

Desai, S. and Andrist, L. Gender scripts and age at marriage in India. Demography, 47(3): 667–687.

Dhar, D., Jain, T. and Jayachandran, S. 2018. *Reshaping Adolescents' Gender Attitudes: Evidence from a School-Based Experiment in India.* (unpublished paper).

Diop, N. J and Diagne, A. 2008. *Improving the communication between parents and adolescent in reproductive health and HIV/AIDS*. Final Report. Dakar: Population Council.

Fish, H., Manlove, J., Moore, K.A. and Mass, E. 2014. What works for adolescent sexual and reproductive health: lessons from experimental evaluations of programs and interventions. *Child Trends*, Publication # 2014-64, December.

Girls Not Brides. n.d. *A theory of change on child marriage*. London: Girls Not Brides.

Girls Not Brides. 2016. Child Marriage in Humanitarian Crises. Accessed on 1 June, 2019 at https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Child-marriage-and-humanitarian-crises-June-2016.pdf.

G.B. Pant Institute of Studies in Rural Development. 2013. *Child Marriage in India: A Study of Situation, Causes & Enforcement of Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, Final Report (sponsored by Planning Commission, Government of India)*. Lucknow: Pt. G.B. Pant Institute of Studies in Rural Development.

Glewwe, P. and Muralidharan, K. 2015. Improving School Education Outcomes in Developing Countries: Evidence, Knowledge Gaps, and Policy Implications. *Research on Improving Systems of Education* (RISE) *Working Paper* No.15/001.

Hoopes, A.J., Agarwal, P., Bull, S. and Chandra-Mouli, V. 2016. "Measuring adolescent friendly health services in India: A scoping review of evaluations". *Reproductive Health*, 13:137.

IIPS and Macro International. 2007. *National Family Health Survey, India (NFHS–3), 2005-2006, India: Volume 1.* Mumbai: IIPS.

IIPS and Population Council. 2009. *Youth in India: Situation and Needs, 2006–2007, Jharkhand.* Mumbai: IIPS.

IIPS and ICF. 2017. *National Family Health Survey, India (NFHS–4), 2015-2016.* Mumbai: IIPS.

IIPS and Population Council. 2010. *Youth in India: Situation and Needs, 2006–2007.* Mumbai: IIPS.

ILO. n.d. Accessed on 3 March, 2019 at http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/oracle/webcenter/portalapp/pagehierarchy/Page3.jspx?MBI_ID=20.

Jackson, C.A., Henderson, M., Frank, J.W. and Haw, S.J. 2012. An Overview of Prevention of Multiple Risk Behaviour in Adolescence and Young Adulthood. *Journal of Public Health*, 34 Suppl 1:i31-40.

Jejeebhoy, S.J., Raushan, M.R., Gupta, S. and Bhattacharya, S. 2019. *The Situation of Adolescents in Jharkhand: Findings from the Dasra State-wide Survey*. Mumbai: Dasra.

Jejeebhoy, S.J., Santhya, K.G., Acharya, R. et al. 2013. Marriage-related decision making and young women's marital relations. *Asian Population Studies*, 9(1): 28-49.

Jejeebhoy, S.J. and Halli, S.S. 2005. Marriage patterns in rural India: influence of socio-cultural context. In Jere Behrman, Cynthia Lloyd, N Stromquist, B Cohen (Eds) *Studies on the Transition to Adulthood in Developing Countries* (Washington DC: National Academy of Sciences).

Jejeebhoy, S.J., Acharya, R., Basu, S. et al. 2015. *Addressing gender-biased sex selection in Haryana, India: Promising approaches*. New Delhi: Population Council.

Jejeebhoy, S.J. 1995. *Women's Education, Autonomy, and Reproductive Behaviour: Experiences from Developing Countries*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Jejeebhoy, S.J., et al. 2014. *Promoting parent-child interaction and communication for health development of adolescents: Lessons from a pilot project in rural Bihar.* New Delhi: Population Council.

Jejeebhoy, S.J., Prakash, R., Acharya, R. et al. 2015. "Meeting Contraceptive Needs: Long-Term Associations of the PRACHAR Project with Married Women's Awareness and Behavior in Bihar". *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 41 (3):115–125.

Jejeebhoy, S.J. 2016. *Young people's sexual and reproductive health and sexuality education. Thematic Assessment of UNFPA India's Country Programme 8.* New Delhi: UNFPA (unpublished).

Jejeebhoy, S.J., Acharya, R., Pandey, N. et al. 2017. *The effect of a gender transformative life skills education and sports coaching programme on the attitude and practices of adolescent boys and young men in Bihar*. New Delhi: Population Council.

Jejeebhoy, S.J. 2017. *Supporting Transitions from Adolescence to Adulthood: Evidence-informed leads for investment.* New Delhi: The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Jejeebhoy, S.J., Santhya, K.G., Singh, S.K. et al. 2014. *Provision of adolescent reproductive health services in India: Provider perspectives.* New Delhi: Population Council.

Jensen, R. 2010. The (perceived) returns to education and the demand for schooling. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 125(2): 515-548.

Jensen, R. 2012. Do Labor Market Opportunities Affect Young Women's Work and Family Decisions? Experimental Evidence from India. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 127(2):753-792.

Jha, J. et al. 2016. *Reducing Child Marriage in India: A Model to Scale-up Results*. New Delhi: Centre for Budget and Policy Studies and United Nations Children's Fund.

KADENCE KP. n.d. *Rapid Assessment of Kanyashree Prakalpa 2016-17: Report*. KADENCE KP, Unpublished.

Kagesten, A., Gibbs, S., Blum, R.W. et al. 2016. Understanding factors that shape gender attitudes in early adolescence globally: A mixed methods systematic review. *PLoS ONE* 11(6): e0157805

Kalamar, A.M., Lee-Rife, S. and Hindin, M.J. 2016. Interventions to Prevent Child Marriage Among Young People in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Systematic Review of the Published and Gray Literature. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 59: S16-S21.

Kalyanwala, S. and Sebstad, J. 2006. *Saving and borrowing: perceptions and experiences of girls in Gujarat*. New Delhi: Population Council.

Kaur, R., Bhalla, S.S., Agarwal, M.K. et al. 2017. *Sex Ratio Imbalances and Marriage Squeeze in India: 2000-2050*. Technical Report. New Delhi: United Nations Population Fund.

Khanna, T., Verma, R., and Weiss, E. 2013. *Child marriage in South Asia: realities, responses and the way forward.* New Delhi, International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW).

Kluve, J., Puerto, S., Robalino, D. et al. 2016. *Interventions to improve the labour market outcomes of youth: a systematic review of training, entrepreneurship promotion, employment services, and subsidized employment interventions*. Geneva: ILO.

Knerr, W., Gardner, F. and Vluver, L. 2013. Improving positive parenting skills and reducing harsh and abusive parenting in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review. *Prev Sci.* 14(4):352-63.

Kumar, S. 2019. *Experiences from Research on Child Marriage and Evaluation of the Interventions in India.* Presentation at the Design Workshop for the Second Phase of the Global Programme on Ending Child Marriage (GPECM), 17 – 23 February 2019, Jaipur, India.

Lee-Rife, S., Malhotra, A., Warner, A. and McGonagle-Glinksi, A. 2012. What works to prevent child marriage: A review of the evidence. *Studies in Family Planning*, 43(4): 287-303.

Malhotra, A., Warner, A., McGonagle, A. and Lee-Rife, S. 2011. *Solutions to End Child Marriage: What the evidence shows*. Washington, D.C: ICRW.

Marcus, R., Stavropoulou, M., Archer-Gupta, N. 2018. *Programming with adolescent boys to promote gender-equitable masculinities: A rigorous review*. London, Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE).

Mathur, D. 2007. *What's Love Got To Do With It? Parental Involvement and Spouse Choice in Urban India.* University of Chicago: Department of Economics.

Mathur, S., Greene, M. and Malhotra, A. 2003.*Too Young to Wed: The lives, Rights and Health of Young Married Girls.* Washington DC: International Center for Research on Women.

Mehra, D., Sarkar, A., Sreenath, P. et al. 2018. Effectiveness of a community based intervention to delay early marriage, early pregnancy and improve school retention among adolescents in India. *BMC Public Health* 18, 732.

Mitra, S. and Moene, K. 2017. *Wheels of power: Long-term effects of targeting girls with in-kind transfers*. London: International Growth Centre.

Muralidharan, K. and Sundararaman, V. 2013. *Contract Teachers: Experimental evidence from India*. J-PAL Working Paper.

National Crimes Records Bureau (NCRB). 2017. *Crime in India 2016: Statistics.* New Delhi: National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs.

Nanda, P., Datta, N., Pradhan, E., Das, P. et al. 2016. *Making Change with Cash? Impact of a Conditional Cash Transfer Program on Age of Marriage in India.* Washington, D.C.: International Center for Research on Women (ICRW).

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). 2019. *Adolescence Education Programme*. Accessed on 23 October 2019 at http://www.aeparc.org/pages.php?id=aboutlse&ln=en.

NCERT and UNFPA. 2011. *Concurrent Evaluation of the Adolescence Education Programme (2010-2011)*: Executive Summary. New Delhi: NCERT and UNFPA.

NDTV. 2012. *Officials attacked while stopping child marriage in Rajasthan*. Accessed on 24 March, 2019 at http://www.ndtv.com/cities/ officials-attacked-while-stopping-child-marriage-in-rajasthan-477999.

Nirantar Trust. 2015. *Early and Child Marriage in India: A Landscape Analysis*. New Delhi: Nirantar Trust.

Nour, N.M. 2009. Child Marriage: A Silent Health and Human Rights Issue. *Rev ObstetGynecol 2*(1):51-56.

Pandey, N., Jejeebhoy, S.J., Acharya, R., et al. 2016. *Effects of the Prachar project's reproductive health training programme for adolescents: Findings from a longitudinal study.* New Delhi: Population Council.

Partners for Law in Development. 2019. *Why girls run away to marry: adolescent realities and socio-legal responses in India.* New Delhi: Partners for Law in Development.

Patton George C., Sawyer, S.M., Santelli, J.S., Ross, D.A., et al. 2016. Our future: A Lancet commission on adolescent health and wellbeing. *The Lancet* 387(10036): 2423–2478.

Pratichi Institute. 2017. *Assessment of Kanyashree Prakalpa*. Kolkata: Pratichi Institute.

PRAVAH. 2017. *Rapid Appraisal of Peer Education component in Rashtriya Kishore Swaathya Kariyakram*. New Delhi: PRAVAH.

Raj, A. 2010. When the mother is a child: the impact of child marriage on the health and human rights of girls. *Archive of Diseases in Childhood*, 95(11): 931-935.

Raj, A., McDougal, L. and Rusch, M.L.A. 2012. Changes in Prevalence of Girl Child Marriage in South Asia (Research Letter). *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 307 (19): 2027-2029.

Roelen, K., Devereux, S., Abdulai, A.G., et al. 2017. How to Make 'Cash Plus' Work: Linking Cash Transfers to Services and Sectors, *Innocenti Working Paper* 2017-10, UNICEF Office of Research, Florence.

Roest, J. 2016. *Child Marriage and Early Child-bearing in India: Risk Factors and Policy Implications*, Policy Paper 10, Oxford: Young Lives.

Santhya, K.G., Prakash, R., Jejeebhoy, S.J. and Singh, S.K. 2014. *Accessing adolescent friendly health clinics in India: The perspectives of adolescents and youth*. New Delhi: Population Council.

Santhya, K.G. and Jejeebhoy, S.J. 2015. Parent-child communication and sexual and reproductive health matters. In A.K. Shiva Kumar, Preet Rustagi, and Ramya Subrahmanian, (Eds). *India's Children: Essays on Social Policy* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Santhya, K.G., Haberland, N., Das, A. et al. 2008. *Empowering married young women and improving their sexual and reproductive health: Effects of the First-time Parents Project*. New Delhi: Population Council.

Santhya, K.G., Haberland, N. and Singh, A.K. 2006. *'She knew only when the garland was put around her neck': Findings from an exploratory study on early marriage in Rajasthan*. New Delhi: Population Council.

Santhya, K.G., Francis Zavier, A.J., Patel, P. and Shah, N. 2016. *Engaging parents to promote girls' transition to secondary education: Evidence from a cluster randomised trial in Rural Gujarat, India*. New Delhi: Population Council.

Santhya, K.G., Acharya, R., Pandey, N. et al. 2017. *Understanding the lives of adolescents and young adults(UDAYA) in Bihar, India.* New Delhi: Population Council.

Santhya, K.G., Ram, U., Acharya, R. et al. 2010. Associations between early marriage and young women's marital and reproductive health outcomes: Evidence from India. *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 36(3): 132-139.

Santhya, K.G., Acharya, R., Pandey, N. et al. 2017a. *Understanding the lives of adolescents in Uttar Pradesh*. New Delhi: Population Council.

Santhya, K.G., Acharya, R., Pandey, N. et al. 2017b. *Understanding the lives of adolescents and young adults (UDAYA) in Bihar, India.* New Delhi: Population Council.

Santhya, K.G., Francis Zavier, A.J., Singh, S. et al. 2019. *What works to reduce child marriage? Findings from a comparative study of successful and not-so-successful districts in Rajasthan, India.* Research Brief, New Delhi: Population Council.

Santhya, K.G. 2019. *Perceptions of young adolescent girls on marriage*. Research Brief, New Delhi: Population Council.

Sarkar, A., Sreenath, P., Behera, J., et al. 2018. Effectiveness of a community based intervention to delay early marriage, early pregnancy and improve school retention among adolescents in India. *BMC Public Health*, 18:732.

Singh, A. and Espinoza Revollo, P. 2016. *Teenage Marriage, Fertility, and Well-being: Panel Evidence from India*. Working Paper 151, Oxford: Young Lives.

Singh, R. and Vennam, U. 2016. *Factors Shaping Trajectories to Child and Early Marriage: Evidence from Young Lives in India*. Working Paper 149, Oxford: Young Lives.

Svanemyr, J., Chandra-Mouli, V., Raj, A. et al. 2015. Research priorities on ending child marriage and supporting married girls; Commentary. *Reproductive Health*, 12:80.

TASAF, TACAIDS, MoHCDGEC and UNICEF. n.d. *Cash Plus: An Adolescent Livelihood, Health and Well-being Intervention as part of Tanzania's Productive Social Safety Net Programme*, Accessed on 21 May 2019 at https://www.unicef-irc.org/files/upload/documents/Cash%20Plus%20Project%20Brief%20Eng.pdf.

UNICEF and J-PAL. 2017. *Supporting adolescent transitions to adulthood: What works and what doesn't.* New Delhi: UNICEF and J-PAL (unpublished).

UNICEF. 2019. *Ending child marriage: A Profile of child marriage in India.* New York: UNICEF.

UNFPA-UNICEF. 2017. *Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage, Progress Report 2016*. New York: UNFPA-UNICEF.

UNODC. 2013. *India country assessment report: current status of victim service providers and criminal justice actors on anti-human trafficking.* New Delhi: UNODC.

UNICEF and UNFPA. 2018. *Key Drivers of the Changing Prevalence of Child Marriage in Three Countries in South Asia*. Working Paper, UNICEF, Kathmandu. Nepal, Kathmandu: UNICEF.

Vandenhoudt, H.A., Miller, K. S., Ochura, J. et al. 2010. Evaluation of a US evidence-based parenting intervention in rural Western Kenya: From Parents Matter! to Families Matter!. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 22(4): 328–43.

Vindhya, U., Ray, N. and Ponniah, U. 2019. *Conditional cash transfer schemes and child marriages in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana: An exploratory study*. Hyderabad: Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

Watson, C. 2014. *Understanding changing social norms and practices around girls' education and marriage: Lessons learned and emerging issues from year-2 of a multi-country field study.* London: Overseas Development Institute.

World Bank. 2016. *Learn. Work. Thrive: Adolescent Girls Initiative Pilots Help Young Women Transition to Productive Employment.* Accessed on 13 April, 2017 at http://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2016/05/09/learn-work-thriveadolescent-girls-initiative-pilots-helpyoung-women-transition-to-productiveemployment.

World Health Organization (WHO). 2007. *Helping parents in developing countries improve adolescents' health.* Geneva: World Health Organization.

World Health Organization (WHO). 2011. *WHO guidelines on preventing early pregnancy and poor reproductive health outcomes among adolescents in developing countries*. Geneva: World Health Organisation.

Zavier, A.J.F., Basu, S. and Santhya, K.G. 2019. *Factors associated with decline in child marriage in India: Findings from a district-level analysis.* Research Brief, New Delhi: Population Council.

unicef

for every child