Gender and Population in Africa:
The Case of Child Marriage Prevention in Amhara Region, Ethiopia
Child Marriage Prevention in Amhara Region, Ethiopia

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Problem

- In 2005, almost half of Ethiopian women aged 20-24 married before age 18
- Adverse outcomes of child marriage for women, children and society
- Little information on:
  - Knowledge and beliefs of individuals who negotiate children’s marriages
  - What might work for child marriage prevention
Objectives

- Examine influence of mass media and interpersonal communication exposure on knowledge, beliefs and attitudes related to child marriage prevention
- Examine whether marriage-related beliefs and attitudes among parents/guardians are subject to social influence
- Examine whether the above effects vary by sex
Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Knowledge → Persuasion → Decision → Implementation → Adoption → Continue

Discontinue
Diffusion of Innovations Contd.

Nature of innovation

- Relative advantage over what is being replaced
- Compatible with values of intended users
- Easy to use
- Opportunity to try innovation
- Tangible benefits
Diffusion of Innovations Contd.

- Communication channels
  - Mass media (enhanced by listening groups and face-to-face approaches)

- Social system:
  - Identify influential networks to diffuse innovation
    - Health systems, schools, religious and political groups, social clubs, and informal associations
  - Identify opinion leaders, peers
Social Influence Theories

- Social norms
  - Perceptions of acceptability and prevalence of child marriage will lead to adoption of attitudes supportive of child marriage
  - Perceptions may be accurate or inaccurate

- Social pressure
  - Social inoculation approach to prevention
  - Attitudes/behaviors influenced by explicit social pressure from peers in group context
Social Influence Theories Contd.

- **Media exposure theory**
  - Frequent exposure to media messages on child marriage prevention would lead to more favorable attitudes about delayed marriage

- **Social communication theory**
  - Discussions about child marriage prevention between parent/guardians and key agents in community will communicate social norms and values in direction of delayed marriage
Context: Communication Interventions

- Radio serial dramas
- House-to-house visits (SDAs, CBRHAs)
- Local campaigns
- Community conversations
- School-based peer education
- Public forums with traditional leaders
- Religious leader advocacy
Context: Legal Interventions

- **Ethiopia Revised Family Code of 2000**
  - Legal Minimum Age at Marriage (LMAM) of 18 years

- **New Criminal Code of 2005**
  - Prison sentences for Grooms
    - Bride 13-17 years old: 3 years max
    - Bride < 13 years old: 7 years max
  - Persons officiating marriage, family members, and witnesses
    - 3 years max or 5000 Birr fine (approx. $366)
Data

- 2007 household survey in Amhara Region
  - To document coverage of child marriage prevention activities implemented by the USAID-funded CGPP & EFPRHP
- Three-stage cluster sampling design
- One eligible adolescent per household regardless of sex
  - Females aged 10-19
  - Males aged 15-24
- One co-resident parent/guardian (N=4894)
Dichotomous Outcomes

- Knowledge outcomes
  - Knows LMAM is 18 years (33%)
  - Knows 2+ categories of individuals punishable by law for violating the LMAM (16%)

- Ideational outcomes
  - Perceives that marriage < 18 is “too early” (42%)
  - Believes daughters have right to choose marriage age (67%)
  - Believes daughters have right to choose marriage partner (75%)
Key Individual-level Variables

- No. of mass media channels on early marriage prevention
- No. of interpersonal channels on early marriage prevention
- Perceives most people in community approve of early marriage/family arranged marriage
- Perceives favorable reactions of salient others if respondent advocates against early marriage
- No. of perceived benefits of delayed marriage
Key Community-level Variables

- **Social pressure**
  - Among girls aged 10-17 in community who ever heard formal engagement/marriage was being planned, % who reported community members contacted families to discuss stopping the marriage

- **Social coercion**
  - % of parents/guardians who knew a community member who was legally punished for involvement in early marriage

- **Influence of opinion leaders**
  - % of parents/guardians reporting religious leader advised them & families against early marriage
Confounding Variables

- Residence
  - Program areas
  - Urban areas
- Education
- Age
- Age at first marriage
- Sex
- Employment past year
- HH ownership of bank account
- HH ownership of radio
- HH ownership of TV
- Religion
- Frequency of religious event attendance (ideational outcomes only)
Methods

- Multilevel Models
  - Level 1: parents and guardians (N = 4,445)
  - Level 2: kebeles/districts (N = 120)
- Two random slopes
  - Mass media exposure
  - Interpersonal communication exposure
- Instrumental variable probit for endogeneity
- VIF and tolerance for multicollinearity
- LR chi-square test for significance of random slopes
- STATA 10.1, GLLAMM command
## Background Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Mean/Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean no. of mass media channels</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean no. of interpersonal channels</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean no. of perceived benefits of delayed marriage</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived community approval of early marriage</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived community approval of family arranged marriage</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived approval of parents/guardians’ advocacy against early marriage by salient others</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lives in high religious leader advocacy community</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lives in high social pressure community</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lives in community with high awareness of marriage law enforcement</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Adjusted Odds Ratios: Knowledge Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Exposure</th>
<th>LMAM</th>
<th>Legal Consequences of Early Marriage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of mass media channels</td>
<td>1.304 ***</td>
<td>1.352 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of interpersonal channels</td>
<td>1.306 ***</td>
<td>1.227 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass media * interpersonal channels</td>
<td>0.959 ***</td>
<td>0.977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.673 ***</td>
<td>0.643 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Likelihood</td>
<td>-2429.18</td>
<td>-1603.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p < .001  ** p < .01  * p < .05
## Adjusted Odds Ratios: Ideational Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Marriage &lt; 18 is “too early)</th>
<th>Daughters’ right to marriage age choice</th>
<th>Daughters’ right to marriage partner choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of mass media channels</td>
<td>1.089</td>
<td>1.277 ***</td>
<td>1.206 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of interpersonal channels</td>
<td>1.090 **</td>
<td>1.106 ***</td>
<td>1.097 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass media * interpersonal channels</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.980</td>
<td>0.990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived benefits of delayed marriage (#)</td>
<td>0.989</td>
<td>1.147 ***</td>
<td>1.139 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Likelihood</td>
<td>-2736.89</td>
<td>-2613.50</td>
<td>-2321.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p < .001  ** p < .01  * p < .05
### Adjusted Odds Ratios: Ideational Outcomes Contd.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Influence Measures</th>
<th>Marriage &lt; 18 is “too early)</th>
<th>Daughters’ right: marriage age choice</th>
<th>Daughters’ right: marriage partner choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceives community approves of early marriage.</td>
<td>0.686 *</td>
<td>0.698 *</td>
<td>0.637 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived favorable reactions from salient others to EMA</td>
<td>1.836 **</td>
<td>1.800 **</td>
<td>2.261 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High vs. low religious advocacy</td>
<td>0.953</td>
<td>0.661 *</td>
<td>0.827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High vs. low social pressure</td>
<td>0.912</td>
<td>1.528 **</td>
<td>1.207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High vs. low community awareness of law enforcement</td>
<td>1.136</td>
<td>1.992 **</td>
<td>1.388</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p < .001  ** p < .01  * p < .05
Other Results

- Significant variations across communities for associations of mass media & interpersonal communication exposure with:
  - Knowledge of the LMAM
  - Perception that marriage before age 18 years is “too early”
- Women are significantly less likely than men to:
  - Be affected by salient others’ reactions when it comes to belief in daughter’s rights to choose marriage age & partner
- Association of perceived benefits of delayed marriage with belief in daughters’ rights to choose marriage partner depended on level of education
Program Implications

- Disseminate child marriage prevention messages through multiple channels
- Stimulate discussions about child marriage prevention between parents/guardians and key community members
- Provide guidelines on how key agents (religious leaders) should communicate norms/values supportive of delayed marriage
- Modify social images about marriage timing in “healthier” direction
Program Implications Contd.

- Correct erroneous perceptions of social norms (e.g., community support for child marriage) by using real data
- Encourage community mobilization to stop planned child marriages
- Greater effort needed to strengthen public understanding of marriage laws (especially among women) and acceptance of daughters’ rights to marriage choice (especially among men)
- Understand the uniqueness of each community in terms of cultural attitudes, socioeconomic conditions, etc.
Limitations

- Cross-sectional study design; no comparison group
- Endogeneity not fully addressed
  - Strong instruments could not be found
- Communication exposure could not be assigned to specific programs
- Lack of data on recall of specific slogans
- Data not regionally representative
- Unmeasured factors (e.g. message quality/content)
References


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