

Child Marriage and Early Childbearing in India

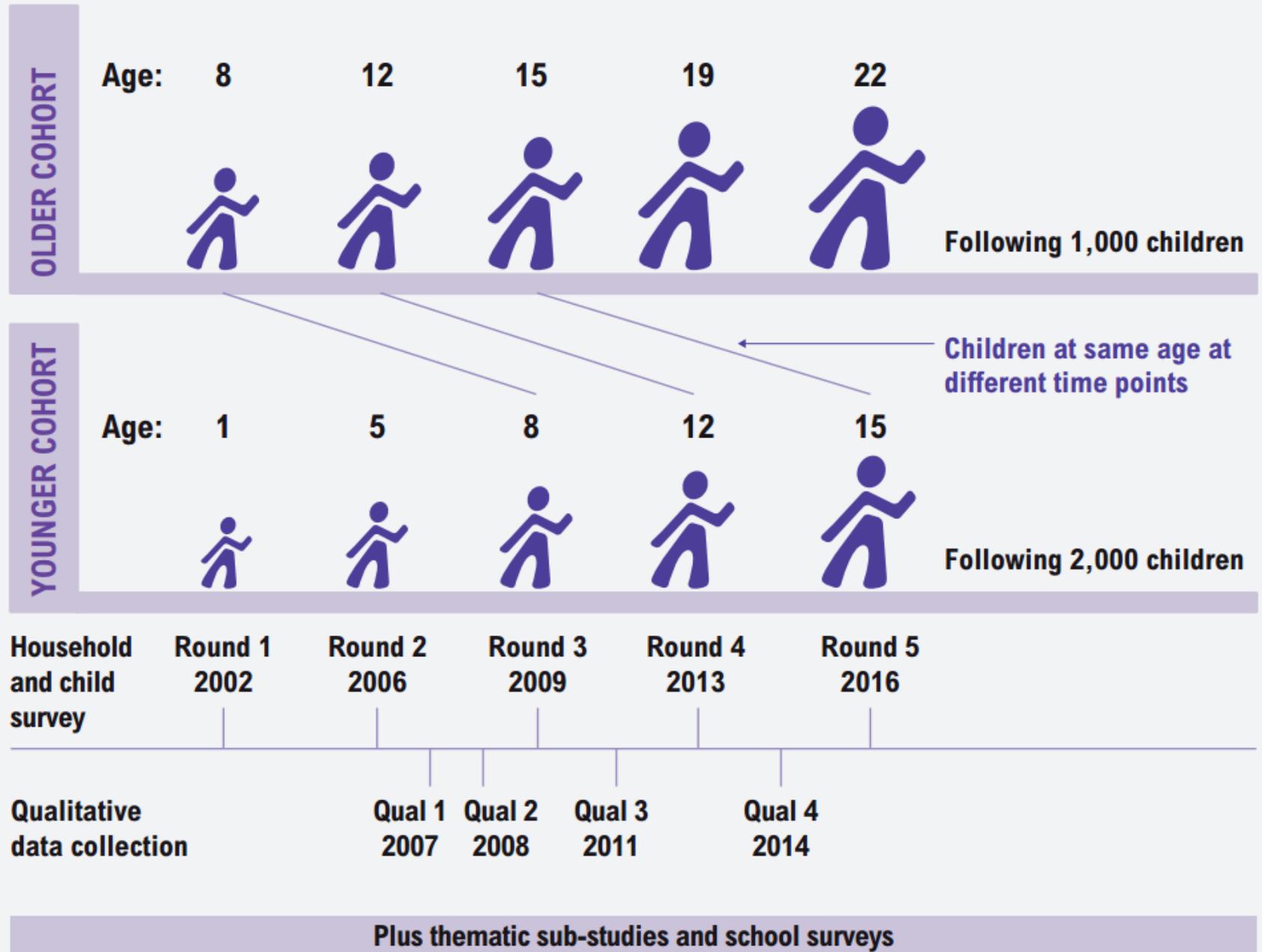
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Content

- Young Lives study
- Child marriage and early childbearing in India
- Findings - which, when, who and why?
- Conclusions/ areas for further research
- Qual sub-study



Young Lives longitudinal data collected in 4 countries: Ethiopia, India (Andhra Pradesh and Telangana), Peru, Vietnam



Suitability of the Dataset

1. Reveal links between earlier circumstances and later outcomes
2. Allow us to analyse how patterns change or persist over time
3. Each cohort surveyed at the same age but at different points in time, so possible to compare experiences
4. Able to ascertain the age at marriage and at the birth of the first child with more accuracy
5. Information about both the natal and spousal homes
6. Only cohort study in India covering the relevant life-course period

Background

- Child marriage 9% fall between 1993 - 2006 (NFHS - UNICEF 2011)
- Under 18 pregnancy rate 21% fall between 1998 - 2006 (DHS - Edilberto & Mengjia 2013)

But:

- 1/3 all child marriages (UNICEF 2014)
- 2010 - almost 12 million girls given birth under 18 (Edilberto & Mengjia 2013)
- Absolute number rising

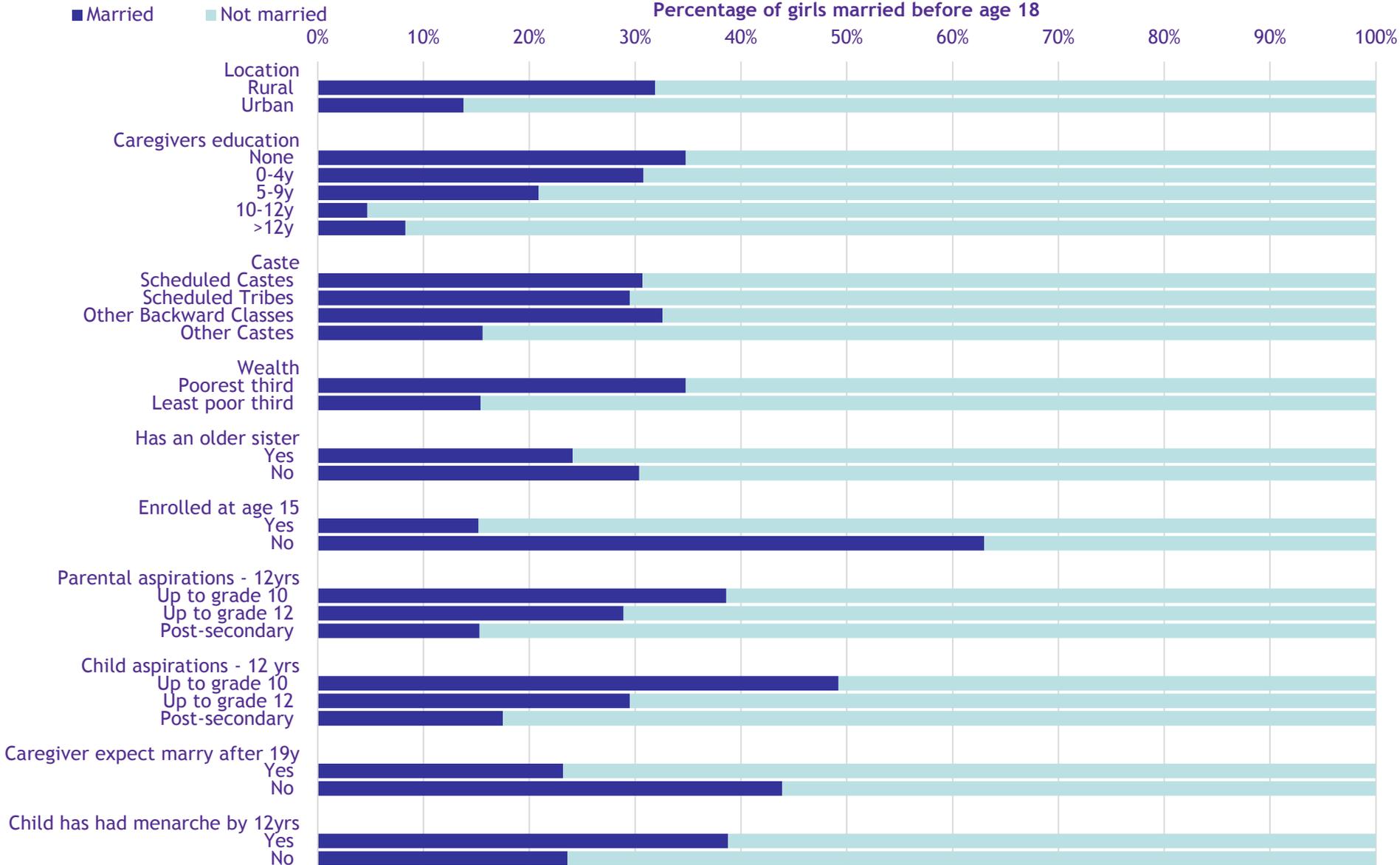
Young Lives sample:

- 28% of OC girls 1% boys married by 18
- At 19, 59% of married had given birth

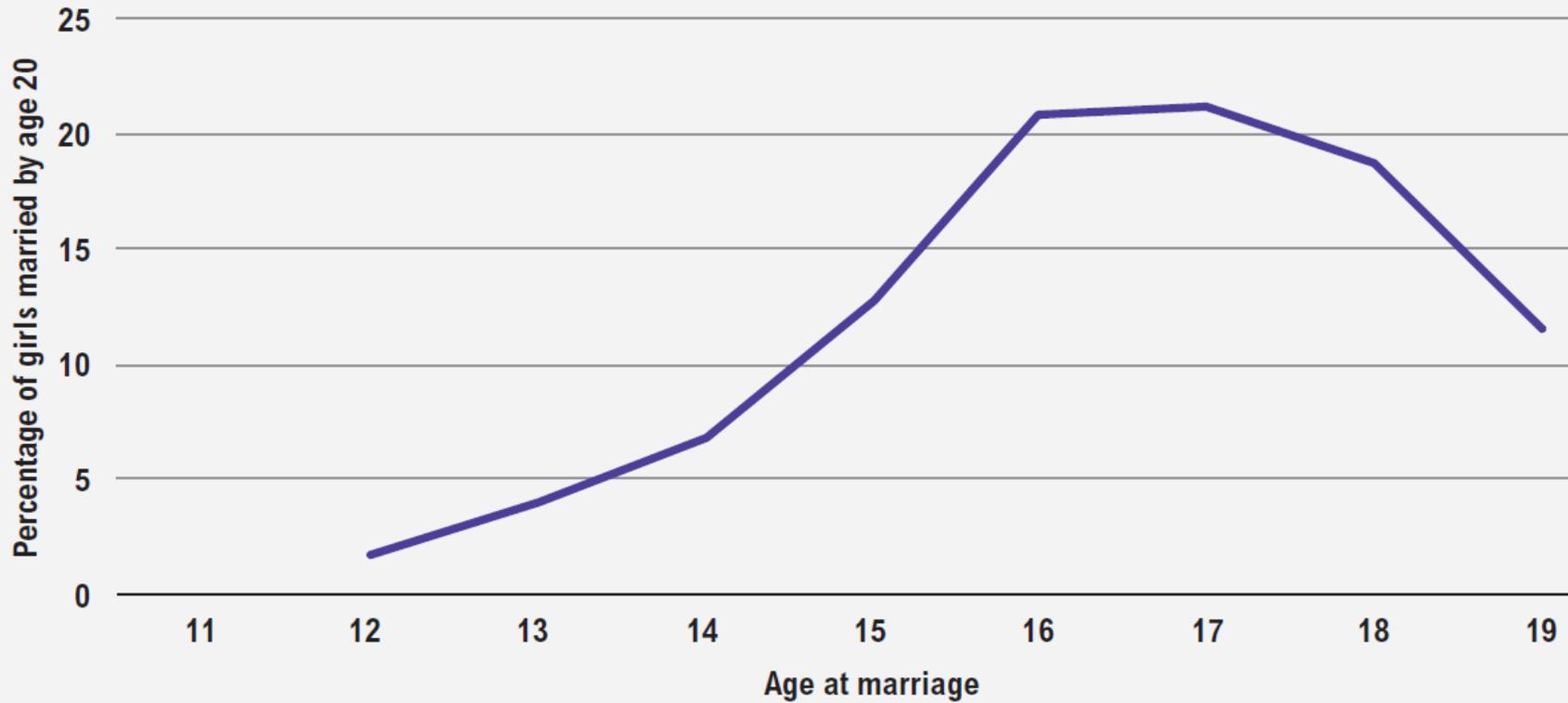


Which girls are most at risk?

Percentage of girls married before age 18



When are they getting married?



Source: Young Lives survey data.

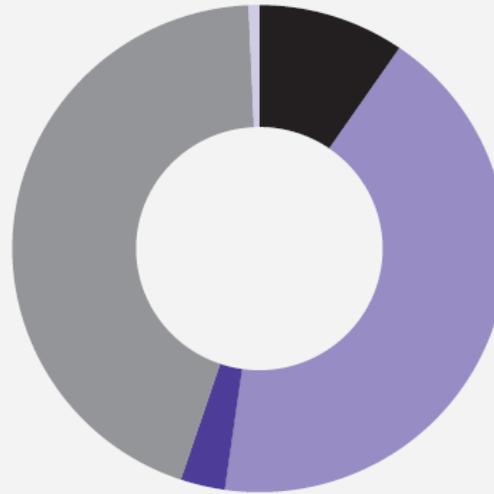
Who are they marrying?

How long did you know your spouse?



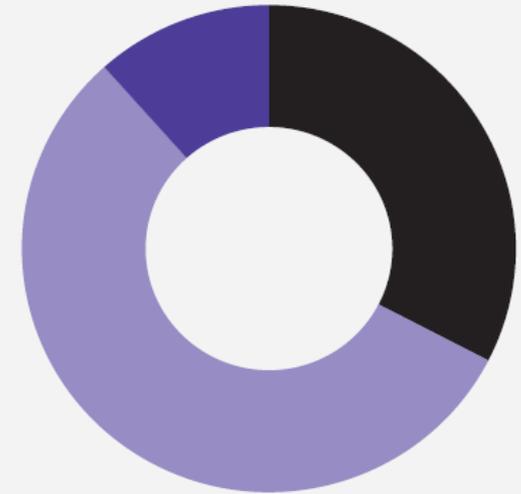
- Met them on wedding day
- Less than a year
- More than one year
- Since childhood

Who chose your spouse (partner)?



- Child himself/herself
- Child together with parents
- Child together with other relatives
- Parents and/or other relatives
- Other

Age of spouse



- 20-24
- 25-29
- 30-40

Why are some more at risk than others?



1. Girls who stay in school for longer marry later

Girls who left school by age 15 were four times more likely to experience child marriage than their still enrolled peers.

- Not evidence of causal relationship
- Gaps in enrolment widen during adolescence along lines of gender, poverty and social disadvantage
- Some evidence of social norm change - education becoming more important for marriageability - e.g. Salmon
- Families weigh up competing social risks...

“It is not good for girls to go and come every day in the bus, and whatever education she had is enough.” (Brother of Harika, 20 year-old from Telangana)

“Girls should study, madam. Because after a girl gets married, her husband may say that she doesn’t do household work nor is she educated and abuse her and beat her.” (Shanmuka Priya, a 13-year-old girl from a poor mandal in southern Telangana)

2. Poverty is a risk factor

Girls from the poorest households were twice as likely to be married by age 18 as those from the least poor households.

- Limited HH resources force parents to make difficult decisions about how to invest in children
- E.g. institutionalised gender bias in education where norms position daughters as the ‘assets’ of future in-laws
- Poverty motivates parents to seek earlier opportunities to provide for daughters financially

3. Aspirations matter but reflect wider realities

Girls whose parents had the lowest educational aspirations for them were twice as likely to be married by age 18

- Girls' and caregivers' aspirations start off high, but diminish during adolescence
 - Challenges in obtaining a quality education; entering into work; and exposure to reputational risks
- Aspirations responsive/reflective of wider realities - efforts to influence best targeted at improving societal and HH circumstances

4. Childbirth follows closely after marriage

...the most powerful influence on early child-bearing is child marriage

- Some married girls are at greater risk of early child-bearing than others - caste was more significant predictor here
- Social norms compounded by limited access to sexual and reproductive health information and services

“if it is even a bit late then they [the community] will take you to task ... if we don't have a child immediately then people look down upon that ... if the first child is born immediately after marriage then it is for our own good. If we don't conceive immediately then they will comment on us and keep taunting us. They will say, ‘Look she has no children’ and in this way a finger will be pointed at us.” (Young mother, focus group, Telangana)

Conclusions

- Child marriage and early childbearing driven by entrenched patriarchal norms but structural factors are critical
- Development for society (more opportunities) and adolescent girls (capacity and resources to make use of them)
- Practices are not monolithic (Mann et al. 2015):
 - Diverse within and between states (as well as between countries)
 - Practices do change - e.g. importance of education, YPs involvement in decision-making - Who are they changing for?
- Neither are risks:
 - Different risks/ experiences at different age groups
 - Impacts of marriage are not necessarily uniformly detrimental - some young women report positive aspects of marriage - what are young people's main sources of concern; needs; experiences in their transitions to adulthood, in particular with regards to marriage/parenthood

Sub-study

What supports married adolescent girls and young women in low-resource communities?

Negotiating sexual and reproductive health and fertility decision-making in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, India

- Married/unmarried adolescents, young mothers/young fathers
 - role in decision-making - marriage and fertility
 - hopes, expectations and realities of marriage and parenthood
 - needs, choices and experiences - sexual and reproductive health and parenthood



References

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- Patricia Espinoza and Abhijeet Singh (2016) *Teenage Marriage, Fertility and Wellbeing: Panel Evidence from India*, Young Lives Working Paper 151
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- Nirantar Trust (2015) *Early and Child Marriage in India: A Landscape Analysis*, New Delhi: Nirantar Trust
- Jennifer Roest (2016, forthcoming) *Child Marriage and Early Child-bearing in India: Evidence from Young Lives*, Young Lives Working Paper
- Renu Singh and Uma Vennam (2016) *Factors Shaping Trajectories to Early Marriage: Evidence from Young Lives*, India, Young Lives Working Paper 149
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- UNICEF (2011) *The Situation of Children in India: A Profile*, New Delhi: UNICEF
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The author thanks all the children, families and other community members who participate in Young Lives research.

Finding out more

www.younglives.org.uk

- methodology and research papers
- child profiles and photos
- e-newsletter
- datasets (UK Data Archive)

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Young Lives website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'RESEARCH', 'PUBLICATIONS', 'POLICY AND IMPACT', 'THEMES ABOUT PEOPLE', 'BOOKS, NEWS & EVENTS COUNTRIES', and the 'UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD' logo. Below the navigation bar is a large banner image featuring a group of diverse children. Underneath the banner, there are four buttons: 'See our research', 'Use our data', 'For policymakers', and 'Use our findings'. A section titled 'OUR THEMES' lists five categories: 'POVERTY & INEQUALITY', 'HEALTH AND NUTRITION', 'EDUCATION', 'GENDER & YOUTH', and 'CHILD PROTECTION'. Below this, there are two sections: 'USE OUR DATA FOR YOUR RESEARCH' and 'LEARN FROM OUR RESEARCH', each with a brief description and links to 'Use our data', 'Methods', and 'Our team'.



Uncovering the processes: how children are left behind

Paul Dorsett
Senior Policy Officer



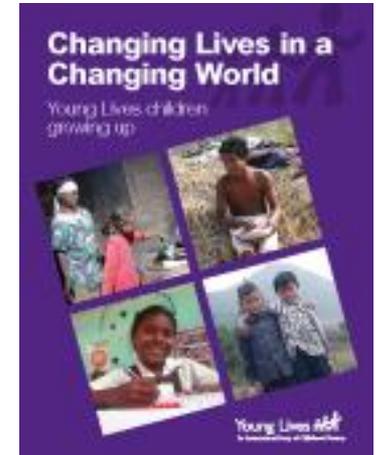
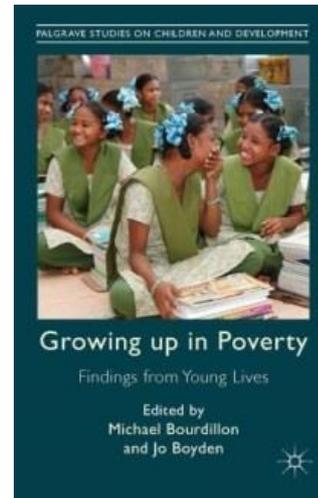
First thoughts on this year's State of the World's Children

Paul Dorsett
Senior Policy Officer



How we're supporting researchers using all rounds of Young Lives datasets

Kristine Brown
Research Assistant



The screenshot shows the ESDS International website. The header includes 'ESDS International' and a navigation menu with 'About', 'Data', 'Resources', 'Project', 'News', 'Events', and 'Search website'. The main content area is titled 'ESDS International study guide' and 'Guide to Young Lives'. It contains a large red and blue graphic of two children holding hands. The text describes the study as an innovative, long-term project investigating the changing nature of childhood poverty in four developing countries. It also mentions that the study is being conducted in Ethiopia, India, and the Andhra Pradesh state in India. The website also provides information on 'Accessing data and documentation' and 'Using the data'.

The screenshot shows the title page of a report titled 'Young Lives Survey Design and Sampling in Peru'. It includes the Young Lives logo and a small map of Peru.

Young Lives Survey Design and Sampling in Peru

Young Lives 2014

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Young Lives Survey Design and Sampling in Peru

Young Lives 2014

Policy implications

Development of society



Investment in safe, accessible, girl-friendly and high quality secondary education



Strong and comprehensive social protection systems and support for the poorest households



Improve young women's access to economic opportunities



Effective interventions with communities and families (including boys and men) to address social norms and to reduce gendered risks



Improve access to sexual and reproductive health services for adolescent married girls, couples and communities

Development for Adolescent Girls



Encouraging female role models so that girls and their families can visualise positive alternatives to child marriage



Challenging discriminatory norms and empowering girls with information and skills to help them take advantage of opportunities (where opportunities exist)