

Country Note on Gender Inequality Indicator - Child Marriage

Prepared by

Norah Madaya
Uganda Bureau of Statistics

COUNTRY NOTE ON GENDER INEQUALITY INDICATOR – CHILD MARRIAGE

By Norah Madaya, Uganda Bureau of Statistics.

Uganda like the majority of developing countries has been undertaking Censuses and Surveys. Previously not all Censuses and Surveys had a gender conscious lens during planning, instrument design and interpretation of results. This improved in the 21st Century. To date, gender mainstreaming has become a household name and a code in Social economic surveys, as well as quality assurance standards.

Indicator: Child marriage = Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were married or in union before age 18".

Marriage is the leading social and demographic indicator of exposure of women to the risk of pregnancy, especially in the case of low level contraceptive use. Early marriages in the Ugandan context, where family planning is limited, lead to early childbearing and longer period of exposure of women to reproductive risks, which lead to high cumulative fertility levels. This is attributed to the discriminatory tendencies in some societies against women such as; son bias, asset ownership, inheritance and minimum age of marriage, etc. In Uganda, the minimum legal age for a woman to get married is 18 but early marriage is a common practice (15yrs). This is dictated mainly by family social economic status and religion (*push factors for girls to rush into marriage*).

Data Source: UDHS, Panel Survey (Module)

Child marriage data is collected through the Uganda Demographic Health Survey (UDHS). For example in 2011 the 15 percent of the married women got married at 15years, while those in the age bracket of (24-29yrs) by 18yrs were 40 percent.

If one added a Woman Module in a typical Panel Survey, this information would be generated. However, to reflect changes in the prevalence rate, the survey would need to be conducted every 3 yrs in addition to the UDHS.

Periodicity: The UDHS is conducted every 5 years. Hence, the value points can be captured for the past 3 Surveys (1988-89, 1995, 2002-01, 2006, and 2011). Trend analysis is feasible for the post 2015 Agenda.

Indicator Monitoring:

The indicator already exists and will continue to be collected. There is need to ask ourselves the question about the Age at First Marriage/Cohabiting/Living with a man. For one to get this correctly there is need for a robust way of ascertaining Age (when the body and brain is ready to take on marriage, pregnancy because it is argued in some areas that an age less than 20yrs is risky).

Coverage: Sample is representative by region, rural – urban, (10,086 HH); 404 Enumeration Areas,