

# ISSUES AROUND CHILD MARRIAGE



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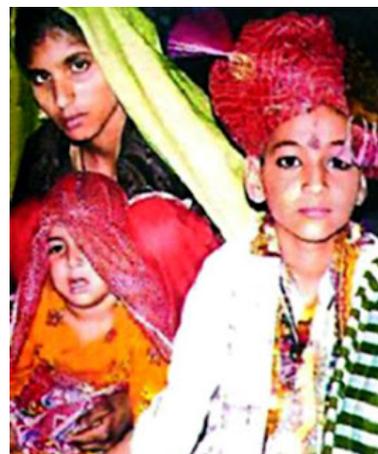


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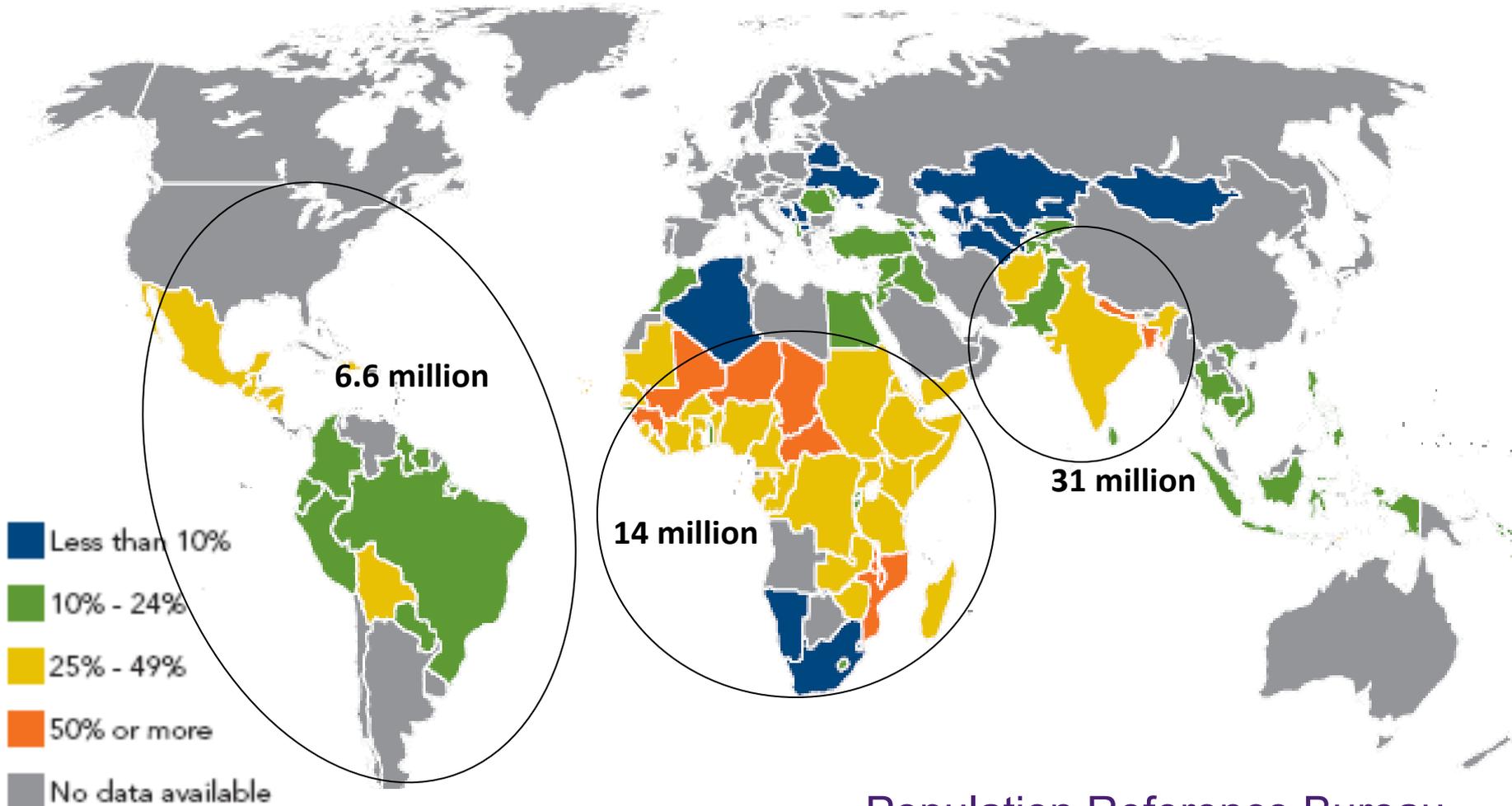


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# Definitions of child marriage

- Most jurisdictions set a minimum age at marriage, that is, a person must attain a certain age to be legally allowed to marry.
  - Although most age restrictions are in place, but child marriage remain common in parts of the world.
  - Age and other requirements vary between countries from 14 to 21
- Marriage is also influenced by how a community defines **age at maturity** or the threshold of adulthood
  - impacted mostly by the physical and sexual growth of girls as well as the norms that exists and encourage practices

# Everyday more than 25,000 girls under the age of 18 are married world wide.



# What happens to girls who are married off early?

- Worst form of child labour mainly within the household
- Denial of freedoms
  - Denied educational and economic opportunities
  - Drop out of school
- Higher risk of death and injury due to early sexual activity and childbearing
- More likely to suffer domestic violence and sexual abuse within marriage
- Child brides are likely to be more vulnerable to morbidity and death
- Risk for HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Cervical Cancer

# Girls are not valued as people who have rights.

## The many reasons why child marriage occurs

Normative and structural factors, such as

- Tradition and the role of the family in child marriage
  - parent's responsibility to marry their daughters and protect her chastity
  - security of young girls from vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse.
  - Marriage is seen as a remedy to protect young girls from potential danger
  - primary roles for women are that of a wife and mother
  - getting an education is linked to getting a job
  - to get a younger girl to help the elder woman in household chores.

# The lack of security at home and in public spaces affects poorer girls more.....

- Poverty & child marriage
  - Girls in poorer families are more vulnerable to early marriage
  - expenses associated with a daughter's marriage lead to child marriages
  - less dowry for younger girls
- Education & child marriage

**While social norms favouring early marriage are common, there are certain context specific factors that play an important role.**

- declining sex ratio (decline in proportion of girls) has promoted the practice of *Atta Satta* which involves the exchange of a daughter for a daughter in law in marriage.

**Despite the norms, fragmented programs and inadequate policies, the problem of child marriage can be addressed!**

