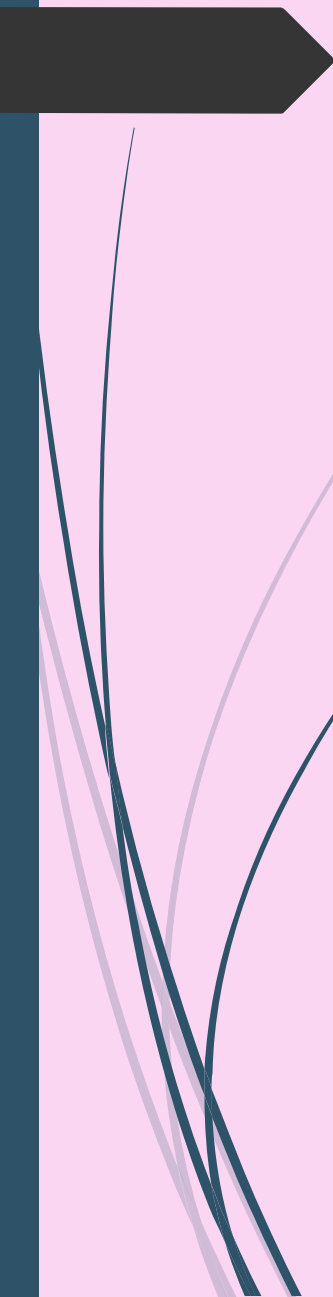


# CHILD MARRIAGES



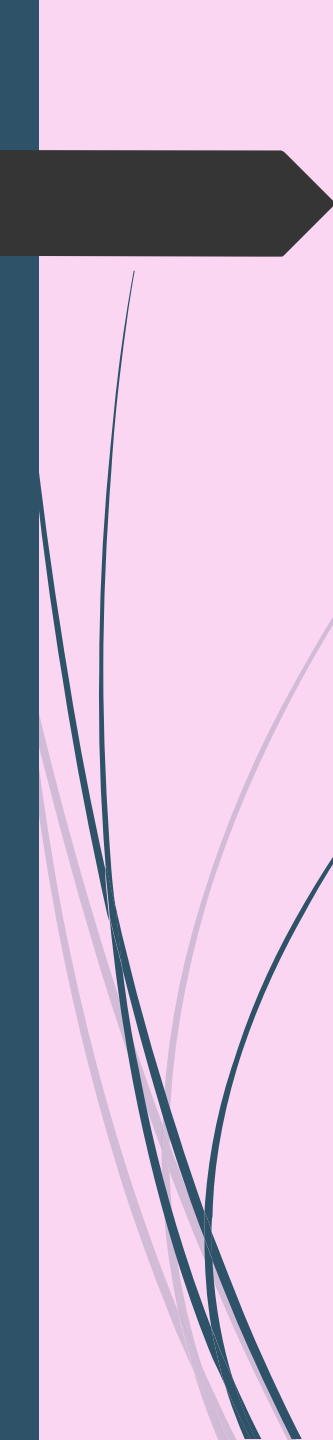
**Dr. Arzu ÖZYOL**

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**“Early marriages” which are mostly forced, meaning done without the consent of the girls, is an important focus of a social problem which has multidimensional causes and consequences.**

**Thousands of girls suffer due to the child marriages each year in many countries, including Turkey.**





**The definitions of the “*child*” and “*early marriage*” are different in different sources.**

**Widely acknowledged definition of “*child*” indicates the people who belong to the age-group under 18.**

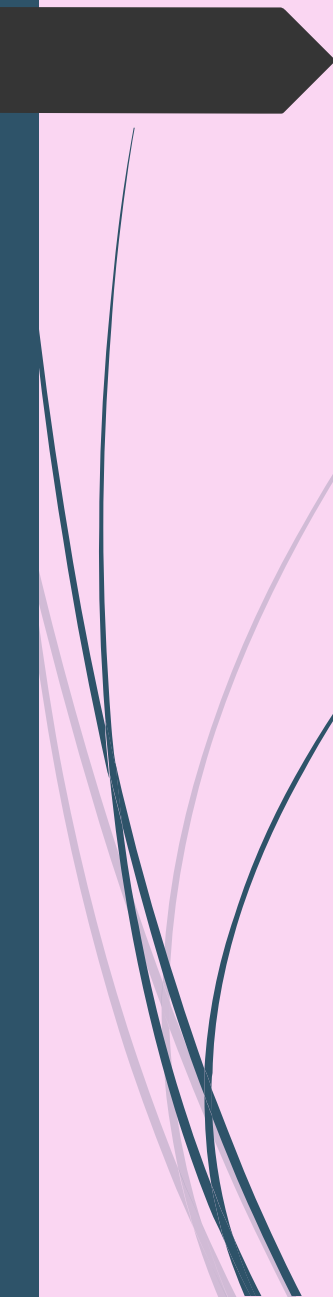
**If marriage is realized among persons who are younger than 18 years old, it is considered as “*early marriage.*”**

**According to the TR Civil Law, Article 124, the minimum age for marriages is accepted as 17.**



**Traditional and patriarchal structure of the society have legitimized the concept of early marriages over the years.**



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**Although, there is no accurate statistics on marriage, it is predicted that one in every 4 marriages is a child marriage in Turkey. Moreover, one of every 3 marriages is a child marriage in South Eastern part of Turkey.**

## In 2009

In 2009, 693 early marriages were analyzed. According to the results, 675 brides belong to the age group under 18 while only 18 bridegrooms are under 18 years old.

Another remarkable result of the research is about geographical distribution of child marriages. Of 693 early marriages over 330 were realized in the East and South Eastern part of Turkey. While 326 brides are under 18 years old, 4 bridegrooms are under 18 years old.

<b>CITIES</b>	<b>WOMAN</b>	<b>MAN</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Ağrı</b>	115	1	116
<b>Diyarbakır</b>	56	1	57
<b>Gaziantep</b>	40	0	40
<b>Mardin</b>	23	0	23
<b>Muş</b>	39	1	40
<b>Siirt</b>	21	1	22
<b>Şanlıurfa</b>	17	0	17
<b>Şırnak</b>	15	0	15
<b>Toplam</b>	326	4	330



**Unequal societal position of women has been consolidated and opportunities to realize their individual preferences has been limited.**



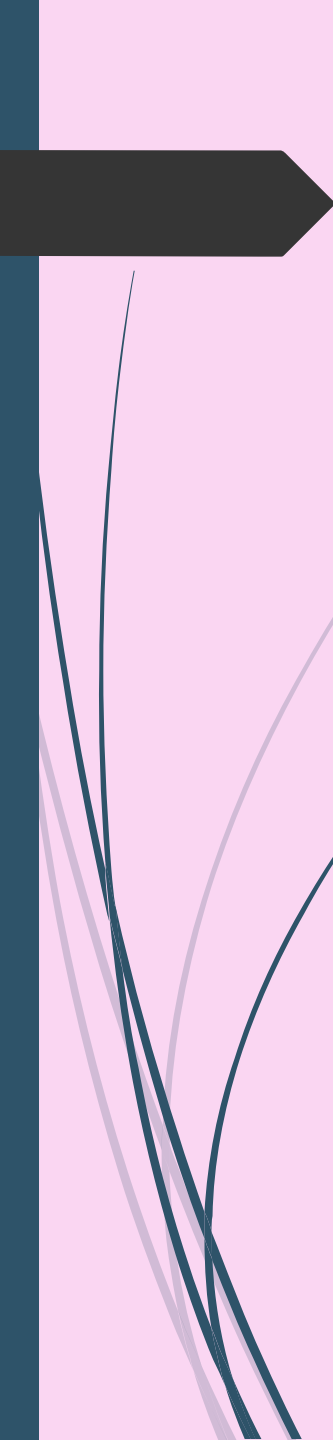
**At the global level, child marriages are accepted as the violations of children, women and human rights.**

# **MAJOR REASONS OF EARLY MARRIAGES**

- ▶ **Socio-economic reasons**
- ▶ **Traditions, cultural practices and wrong religious beliefs**
- ▶ **Low educational level**
- ▶ **Domestic violence**
- ▶ **Social Pressure and societal common expressions**
- ▶ **Others**

# **Socio-economic Reasons**

- ▶ **If the families live in poverty, girls are accepted as the extra load on the family while they think that boys are their life-insurance. Moreover the traditions allow them to get money from the families of bridegrooms before marriage of their daughters.**
- ▶ **Families think that girls are the temporary gift from the GOD but the husband's home is always accepted as the actual family of girls.**
- ▶ **Families want to secure a good marriage for their daughters while they are virgins and innocent.**

- 
- ▶ **Families believe that young marriages protect girls from sexual harassment and violence.**
  - ▶ **Families believe that young brides are more obedient to their husbands and so, marriages are more untroubled.**



# **Lack of Education**

**If the families have limited budget and many children, they prefer to make investment for their sons' education. Furthermore, in rural areas, families don't allow their daughters of juvenile age, to continue their education.**

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**After the government has taken precautionary measures to increase school attendance for girls, upward trends in the schooling rate for girls were observed.**

**Government has provided “tied aid” to the poor families on the condition that they have to ensure school attendance of their children.**



**For the primary school attendance:**

**Boys: 20TL/Month**

**Girls: 25TL/Month**

**For the secondary school attendance;**

**Boys: 35TL/Month**

**Girls: 45 TL/Month**



# **Domestic Violence**

- ▶ **Children who faced difficulties such as domestic violence, incompatibility among parents, loss of parents, having step parents, family pressure, have a tendency for young marriages in order to break away.**





# Others

- ▶ **The girls who are abused or assaulted, are often married off to the rapist.**
- ▶ **The girls -who make off with their boy friends-are often married off to another old man who is accepted by their families.**

# The marriages of the girls of juvenile age

- ▶ The inexperienced and uneducated girls -*who are married in juvenile age*, have no ability to defend themselves, are exposed to physical, emotional and sexual violence by their husbands. If the girls do not have an opportunity to divorce -due to the family and social pressures- they prefer to commit suicide.



# **Medical and Sociological problems for the mothers of juvenile age**

## **Medical Problems**

- ▶ **Weight deficiency or obesity**
- ▶ **Anemia**
- ▶ **Venerial diseases**
- ▶ **Bone defects**
- ▶ **Postpartum problems**
- ▶ **Frequent pregnancy**

## **Sociological Problems**

- ▶ **Loss of education opportunities**
- ▶ **Loss of employment opportunities**
- ▶ **Lack of socialization**
- ▶ **Poverty**
- ▶ **Divorce or separation**
- ▶ **Social isolation**
- ▶ **Stress and depression**
- ▶ **Addictions**

# **Medical and Sociological problems for the babies who have mothers of juvenile age**

## **Medical Problems**

- ▶ **Weight deficiency**
- ▶ **Premature birth**
- ▶ **Sudden infant death syndrome**
- ▶ **Acute infections**
- ▶ **High infant mortality rate**

## **Sociological Problems**

- ▶ **Growth Retardation**
- ▶ **Addictions**
- ▶ **Behavioral disorders**
- ▶ **Failure in school**