

Girl Child Marriage In Sudan, Drivers, Levels and trends and Differentials among Sudan states

By

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Abstract:

The paper tries to: list main socio-economic and cultural drivers that may fueling incidence of girl child marriage in Sudan, show levels and trends of child marriage and find out the causes of differential in the level of early marriage among Sudan eighteen states . About two fifths of Sudanese girls married before age 18 and it seems no trend to decrease during the last two decades, however no legislative procedures to curtail the practice or raise awareness.

To find the drivers of child marriage in Sudan the study suggested such factors depending on literature and previous research findings in the area so discussed the main issues and how they affect the child marriage. To see the level and trend of child marriage secondary data collected from various surveys and censuses done in Sudan, mainly depending on Multiple Integrated Cluster Survey(MICS-2014) data as the recent source of data. To rationalize the differential in level of early marriage among Sudan states, states divided into two groups, those have percentages of child marriage above Sudan average and those with percentages lower than Sudan average. Twenty three MICS indicators selected and categorized into five groups to analyze the situation in each group of states.

The main findings of the paper are: High incidence of girl child marriage in Sudan with semi constant level for the last the two decades, poor families tend to marry their girls earlier, Sudan legislations play minor role in prohibiting and eradicating child marriage, political unrest and civil war worsen the situation of the children human rights and traditional harmful practices supporting child marriage play beyond the law and religious values. The group of states relatively with high prevalence of child marriage can be described by poor indicators in: economic situation, health status, nutrition standards, education attainment and harmful traditional practices.

The paper recommends for stronger government commitment towards child welfare and rights that consistent with regional and international conventions and call for legal reform concerning child rights associated with awareness. To reduce child marriage incidence and developmental gab between the two group of states comprehensive human development approach should be adopted.

1.Introduction

According to unicef report (2014) :Child marriage, defined as marriage before age 18, is a violation of human rights, compromising the development of girls and often resulting in early pregnancy and social isolation, with little education and poor vocational training reinforcing the gendered nature of poverty. Most child marriages are also forced marriages, where the consent of the child is not considered before the consummation of the union. While boys are affected by child marriage, the issue impacts girls in far larger numbers and with more intensity. Many organizations, social reformers and formal government policies makers intend to affect early marriage practices under such umbrellas . some consider early marriage as behavioral determinant fueling rapid population growth. Some speak about such concepts like safe motherhood, health needs of adolescents who prone to HIV/AIDS. Some concentrate in what we called teenage pregnancy. Some work under the title education for all. some reflects health drawbacks of early childbearing. Some speak on religious and cultural background. It is time to speak frankly and shift should take place that child marriage is a pure a matter of human rights violation.

The republic of Sudan is a multi-ethnic country with a predominantly Muslim population. It is North African country bordering red sea, Egypt, Libya, Chad, Central Africa republic, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea. It occupies area around 1.86 million Sq Km . Sudan population estimated at 40.78 millions. The population characterized by young age structure, median age 19.6, percentage population less than 15 estimated at 43%with infant mortality rate(52) and total fertility 5.2 so has high dependency ratio 85% and low life expectancy(57),GNI per capita PPP estimated at 4290 with highly unequal distribution to situation where half of the population below the national poverty line (CBS Sudan,MICS2014).

2 . literature

No one knows for certain how prevalent the practice of early marriage is, but estimates undeniably reveal millions of girls under the age of eighteen who are forced into marriage. The major reason for uncertainty is the lack of complete public records in the many countries where children are married(Warner,2011). For the period 2000-2011, just over one third (an estimated 34 per cent) of women aged 20 to 24 years in developing regions were married or in union before their eighteenth birthday. In 2010 this was equivalent to almost 67 million women. About 12 per cent of them were married or in union before age 15.The prevalence of child marriage varies substantially among countries, ranging from only 2 percent in Algeria to 75 per cent in Niger(UNFPA). Such reports and studies tried to find out the drivers of child marriage and come up with package of drivers, among them economic reasons, control over sexuality, custom and tradition, insecurity, discriminatory culture, religious traditions, social unrest and civil war(Alsaïdi,2005). There is little empirical data available on child marriage in Sudan and not exist adequate studies around the issue of child marriage. Only one can drive statistics from (1973,1983,1993, and 2008) census data. Also surveys consider source of child marriage statistics, for example Sudan Health Household Surveys (2006 and 2010). **Khalid (2013)** in her study about early marriage in six of Sudan states found that 54% of women married before age 18 and the main driver of child marriage was high incidence of poverty. According to (Ali,et al 2014) about 46% of women married before age 18 in Sudan as average of sample states , the highest prevalence of early marriage among those rural with less secondary education and have large families. Sudanese organization for research and development in one of its reports stated that(*Child and forced marriage is not an isolated practice, it is very much associated to the status of girls/women rights and the prevailing gender relations, so a more holistic analysis and approach is necessary*). Child marriage, is a widespread practice in Sudan with several negative impacts that need to be urgently addressed as part of the efforts in child protection. According to study done among Beja a Sudanese tribe in Eastern Sudan ,the study summarized drivers of the early marriage in the society as follows" marriage is holly event completed and dissolved through Islam religion procedures , early

marriage supported by cultural and traditional values, the prevalence of internal- marriage or cousin marriage with lower dowry plays as facilitator for early marriage also marriage considered as a mechanism to secure ties between clans , early girl marriage minimize the economic burden of the family, existence of plural marriage ,where old men marry young girls, the matter of girl virginity is highly considered, the desire of large number of children, gender bias situation ,underestimation of the economic role of female and uncertainty, vulnerability and fragile status of the society. people not aware about harms of child marriage"(omer,2017).

3. Methodology:

To list the drivers of child marriage in Sudan the study suggested such factors depending on literature and previous research findings in the area so discussed the main issues and how they affect the child marriage. To see the level and trend of child marriage secondary data collected from various surveys and censuses done in Sudan, mainly depending on Multiple Integrated Cluster Survey(MICS-2014) data as the recent source. The study uses such measures to reflect the level: ever married women before age 15 in age group(15-49), ever married women before age18 in age group(20-49), currently married women in age group(15-19), singulate mean age at first marriage, mean age at marriage and median age at marriage. To see the trend the study compare child marriage levels at different points in time and using hypothetical cohort. To analyze the differential in level of early marriage among Sudan states, states are divided into two groups, those have percentages of child marriage above Sudan average and those with percentages lower than Sudan average on basis of MICS-2014 data. Twenty three MICS indicators selected and reorganized in six categories as follows: assets and wealth(households with electricity, households own T.V,40% in wealth bottom, poverty incidence rate and households use solid fuel),health situation(infant mortality rate, women protected against tetanus, maternal mortality rate, households with improved drinking water and sanitation and women who have antenatal care),nutrition status(severe malnutrition rate and families with poor food),reproductive health(contraceptives use, total fertility rate and adolescents births),education attainment(literate young women and gender parity index for secondary school) and tradition and culture(

spousal age difference, domestic violence, awareness about AIDS, birth registration and child labor) to analyze situation in each group.

4. Discussion

Child marriage and socio-economic situation in Sudan:

a-poverty and child marriage

Child marriage in part, a reaction to severe economic distress. It is widely spread in low income countries and in poorest segments within specific countries and clearly pronounced in poor urban in such societies where female child considered as financial burden or means of income through dowry mechanism. several countries with very low gross domestic products (GDPs) tend to have higher rates of child marriage. According to the international centre for research on women(ICRW) Child marriage is most common in the world's poorest countries and is often concentrated among the poorest households within those countries. It is closely linked with poverty and levels of economic development. In families with limit resources, child marriage is often seen as a way to provide for their daughter's future. But girls who marry young are more likely to be poor and remain poor. Parents encourage marriage of their daughters while they are still children in hope that this marriage will benefit them both financially and socially (ferdousi,2011).

The monthly per capita consumption in Sudan in 2009 was 148 SDG(7\$ now days). Urban areas display consumption levels significantly higher than rural areas, at SDG 197(10\$ now days) and SDG 122(6\$ now days) respectively. The poverty line was calculated to be 113.8 SDG(5.5\$ now days) per person per month. About 46.5% of the of Sudan population is found to fall below the poverty line, with 26.5% of the urban population and 57.6% of the rural population. Poverty levels vary greatly by state(Sudan baseline Survey,2009). Gross national income(GNI)per capita estimated at 4290 with highly unequal distribution to situation where half(46.5) of the population below the national poverty line(CBS).

On basis of MICS(2014), percentage of women married before age 15 was 17.8 and 5 for poorest and richest quintile respectively, percentage of women in age group (20-49) who married before age 18 was 53.8 and 19.2 for poorest and richest quintile respectively, percentage currently married in age group 15-19 was 24.5 and 10.7 for poorest and richest quintile respectively. Thus the data reflects a clear association between the rank of wealth index and child marriage and supports axiom that poverty paves roads for early marriage.

b .Legislation and child marriage

Sudan was one of the first countries to sign the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child(CRC)in 1990. Sudan established a national council for child welfare (NCCW) in 1991. The NCCW is responsible for following up implementation of international child rights conventions. It is represented in the 18 states by State Councils for Child Welfare (SCCWs), each headed by the State Governor. The Personal Status Law of Muslims, 1991, allows the marriage of a girl once she has hit puberty. It also provides that a 10-year-old can be married by their guardian with the permission of a judge. There is no article in the Sudanese law that prevents the marriage of children(NCCW) The legislative system in Sudan has done nothing to stop early girl marriage. The law in Sudan permits child marriage i.e no lower age limit at marriage determined by law. The acceptance of child marriage under certain interpretations of Shariah law has allowed the practice to continue in spite of numerous international human rights instruments as well as domestic legislation prohibiting child marriage .The religious leaders insist on the necessity of marriage rather than drawbacks of early girl marriage(Omer,2017).

c. Political unrest in Sudan

According to fragile states report(2017) Sudan occupies the fifths rank after South Sudan, Somalia, Central African Republic and Yemen(Fund for Peace organization). Sudan characterized by vulnerability and insecurity .Civil war between north and south Sudan affected the

country since independence in 1956, apart from a peaceful 10 year period between 1972 and 1982. Afterwards, civil war continued until 2005 when the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in the South. There are ongoing armed conflicts in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile States, and also in the Abyei area. Sudan has large numbers of both refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs). There are many IDPs in Sudan, their numbers increased by recent intensified violence in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) statistics, showed that IDPs numbers reached 3.1 million as of December 2014. There is no information about the numbers of IDP children, but they were counted within this overall total. Sudan borders recently affected by what called human trafficking for sure it has negative impact on welfare of child.

d. Gender inequality:

Women stand at the cross roads between production and reproduction, between economic activity and care of human beings and therefore between economic development and human development. The child marriage system is also a reflection of discrimination against women(Lal,2011).

Sudan had not signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).Islamic law Sharia which is main source legislations in Sudan affects laws especially related to personal affairs act . Here the paper not going to dig deeper Sudan law regarding gender equity but reflects some variables to see gender gap. Sudan characterized by high total fertility rate estimated at 5.2 birth which assumed to be boring and time wasting for female in Sudan. The high fertility may be in expenses of female education and participation in labor force. Not only the fertility high in Sudan but childbearing begins early with high adolescent birth rate around 90 per 1000 women.

About 500 Women from each 1000000 women die in maternity each year which considered risky. Regarding education about 40% of young female illiterate. Gender parity index not reflects high gender gap in education both in primary and secondary schools(MICS,204). Gender gap clearly reflected in labor force participation rate which 29% for female versus 71% for male, Unemployment rate for female was 37% whereas for male 11%. About 73% of female economically in active. This indicates sharp inequality in labor market (ILO), table(1).

table(1): Key Gender indicators in Sudan

The variable	Percentage or level
Health Indicators	
Adolescents birth rate	87 birth per 1000 women
Total fertility rate	5.2 births per a woman
Unmet need	26.6%
Maternal mortality rate	500
Education variable	
Literacy among young females (15-24)	59.8 %
Gender parity index for primary school	.98
Gender parity index for secondary	1.07
Labor force indicators	
Unemployment rate for female 15+	37% (for male=11.4)
Youth 9(15-24) female unemployed	51.1% (for male=22.2)
Labor participation rate for female	28.9 % (for male=70.8)
Economically inactive female population	72.6% (for male=32)
Employed female population	19.6%(for male=61.4)

ratio	
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Source: MICS-2014 and Sudan Labor force survey

A girl with low socio-economic characteristics in rural beja community (Sudanese tribe) suffers from: lack of education, domestic labor, and limited freedom- in this situation- marriage the only means to play a role in the society. families underestimate the economic role of girl so tend to educate male children in expenses of female so female has limited chances to have paid job. Females have no access to work outside the village and their poor characteristics enforce them to work in marginalized sector with low wages so economically weak and completely dependent on their fathers (Omer, 2017).

Traditional practices and child marriage:

Religious and traditional practices limit the effectiveness of international and domestic legislation aimed at combating child marriages. Culture is one of the obstacles to the enjoyment of children's rights in (Sinbanda, 2011). **The** reasons behind child marriage vary from one country to another. Most studies have shown that the dominant reason is culture (Birech, 2013).

The majority of the Sudanese adhere to Islam such studies find that early marriage not associated with specific religion. Roughly speaking Sudanese families have intentions of high fertility and early marriage taken child marriage as a mechanism to realize their intentions. A girl's virginity is highly considered in Sudanese societies so a father manages to marry his daughter early before having premarital sex. A second wife and further tend to be younger than their husband that is to say already married men tend to marry a wife younger than previous ones so as a husband married with a higher number of wives the latest is younger if not a child. A father supported by tribal ethics has the right to settle a marriage. In Sudanese Beja society a young girl in her early days may be assigned to her older male cousin who may not seek for another wife but

wait for pre-determined wife, for sure this leading to young girl marriage. In this society blood relation formulate the structure of social system to secure ties, a father scarify by his young girl to be married by one of elder relatives so as to maintain the relation with his relatives specially old relative who elite of the society .It known to them that early married girl has greater chance to higher number of children so parents tend to exaggerate their grand children by marring their children early. In this society children considered as asset rather than cost .The young girl with children has social prestige over unmarried one, in context like that seems girls not tend offset early marriage (Omer,2017).

The levels and trends of child marriage In Sudan:

According to the girls not prides partnership " *Child marriage is a truly global problem that cuts across countries, cultures, religions and ethnicities. Child brides can be found in every region in the world, from the Middle East to Latin America, South Asia to Europe*". More than 700 million women alive today were married as children.

To understand early marriage situation in Sudan should give a look for countries have land borders with Sudan. Percentage of currently married women in age group (15-19) in Sudan estimated at 22%. This percentage higher than in Egypt (14.4%) and Ethiopia (19.1). The percentage of currently married in age group (15-19) more than twice than situation in Sudan both in Chad (48%) and Central Africa Republic (55%). Two fifth of women in age(15-19) currently married in South Sudan state table(2).Thus the phenomenon of early marriage familiar with people in Sudan and surroundings countries.

Table(2): For some selected countries Percentages of women aged 15-19 currently married (2010 or 2011)

country	Percentage married (15-19)
Chad	47.8
Egypt	14.4
Eritrea	29

Ethiopia	19.1
Kenya	14.6
Sudan	21.9
Central Africa Republic	54.9
South Sudan	40.1

Source: population reference bureau- data finder

To reflect the level of early marriage in Sudan the paper uses MICS 2014 survey as a recent data source. To measure the levels and trends of early marriage we take such standards, percentage of women(15-49) married before age 15, percentage of women (20-49) married before age 18 , percentage of women currently married in age group(15-19), singulate mean age at first marriage (SMAM),mean age at marriage and median age at marriage.

Women ever married before age 15 in age group(15-49):-

The percentage of Women in age group(15-49) who married before age 15 stayed constant during the period (2006-2014) at 12%. It is more than double in rural than urban(26% versus 11%). During the period (2010-2014) the percentage increased in both rural and urban. One fifth of women with no education in age group (15-49) married before age 15 compared to 4% for women with secondary education, During the period(2006-2014) the percentage of no education women increased by 2% (18% versus 20%) for those with secondary education stayed same at 4%.A bout 18% of women in poorest quintile in age group (15-49) married before age 15 compared to 5% in richest quintile, the percentage increased in poor quintile by 1.7% and .8% in richest quintile during the period (2006-2014). Again the practice associated with poverty piling up table(3).

Women married before age 18 in age group(20-49):-

The percentage of women in age group (20-49) married before age 18 increased from 36% in 2006 to 38% in 2014, the percentage more pronounced in rural areas than urban(42% versus 29%) . More half

half(55%) of women with no education(20-49) married before age 18 compared 24% for women attained secondary education, the percentage during the period (2006-2014) increased by 10 points for non schooling women(46% to 56%) and by 15 points for women attained secondary education(9% to 24%). More than Half(54%) of the women in poorest quintile married before 18 in comparison to one fifth in the richest quintile. Percentage of women married before age 18 in poorest quintile increased from 42 in 2006 to 54 in 2014 (by 10 points) whereas the percentage in richest quintile not changed during the same period table(3).

Currently married women in age group(15-19):-

Percentage of women currently married in age group (15-19) decreased from 25% in 2006 to 21% in 2014 with high urban rural differential(11% versus 26 %) in 2014. About 41% of non schooling women in age group(15-19) currently married in contrast to 11% in women with secondary school .Quarter of women in poorest quintile in age group 15-19 currently married in contrasted to one tenth in richest quintile. Both in poorest and richest quintile the percentage of currently married women in age group(15-19) decreased during the period (2006-2014) by 15 and 3 points respectively table(3).

Median age:

Other measure to show change in age at marriage is median age at first marriage for female. Here the two first age groups excluded under assumption that women there have high propensity to be married. Assuming hypothetical cohort the median age semi same for all age group .Again this is a sign of stable age at first marriage for different age groups table(4).

Table(3) percentages of women married before age 15 in age group(15-49),percentage of women married before age 18 in age group(20-49) and currently married in age group(15-19) by specific Survey and background characteristics.

variable	Married before age 15 in women aged(15-49)			Married before age 18 in women aged (20-49)			Currently married in age group(15-19)		
	SHH S 2006	SHH S 2010	MIC S 2014	SHH S 2006	SHH S 2010	MIC S 2014	SHH S 2006	SHHS 2 2010	MIC S 2014
Sudan	12.1	9.5	11.9	36	37.6	38	24.7	25.5	21.1
State									
Northern	7	5.2	seen	20.4	20.5	19	14	9.4	13.6
River Nile	6.1	8	6.2	19.3	27.3	21	11.8	22	22.3
Red Sea	10.5	10.7	10	32.6	33.2	32.2	20.1	24.9	23
Kassala	14.8	16.5	18.6	42.7	47.2	45.1	33.9	24.9	29.8
Gadarif	16.5	14.3	14.9	48.5	48.8	49.3	32.6	27.9	33.1
Khartoum	7.4	6.1	6.9	27.4	27.5	26.5	12	13.5	12
Gezira	7.4	6	8.7	24.7	28.2	29.7	11.6	17.1	21.1
White Nile	10.9	8	9.1	35.1	35.7	36.9	20.9	25	20.8
Sinnar	10.4	10.8	12.3	35.6	39.5	34	18.6	18.2	19.2
Blue Nile	20.8	19.1	16.5	56.4	62.2	50.1	38	36.3	29.9
North Kordfan	12.7	8.9	15.6	33.3	37.1	39.1	20.8	27.4	27.6
South Kordfan	13.2	12.7	18	41.1	48.1	46.7	30.2	33.9	20.1
West	-	-	13.5	-	-	40.8	-	-	19.6

Kordfan									
North Darfour	13.2	see	12.9	31.1	33.9	47	15.3	19.4	16.6
West Darfour	9.4	15.5	14.1	49.1	49.4	43.9	42.8	43.3	20.5
South Darfour	14.5	12.1	17.8	47.5	53.9	55.7	24.6	33	23.7
Central Darfour	-	-	16.4	-	-	54.6	-	-	22.5
East Darfour	-	-	15.3	-	-	57.4	-	-	26.3
Residence Area									
urban	-	7	8	-	29.1	29.1	-	14.6	11.2
rural	-	10.8	13	-	42	42.3	-	28.3	26
Education									
None	17.9	16.1	19.7	46	53.8	54.6	46	47.1	40.5
Primary	7.7	9	13.9	28.5	39	43.5	15.3	25.1	27.5
Secondary	3.8	1.1	3.9	9	8.9	23.9	10	7.7	11.2
Age group									
15-19	6.9	4.9	5.7	-	-	-	24.7	25.5	12.1
20-24	11.5	7.2	11.9	34	32.9	34.2	-	-	-
25-29	14.6	10.3	14.7	37	36.3	40	-	-	-
30-34	14.7	10.6	12.4	36.9	37	37.9	-	-	-
35-39	12.8	12.6	13.8	35.5	40.6	38.6	-	-	-
40-44	13.1	13.2	13.7	35.8	43.1	37.8	-	-	-
45-49	17	15.5	14.6	39.1	43.2	40.9	-	-	-
Wealth index									
Poorest	16.1	13.7	17.8	41.8	53.8	53.8	39.6	31.9	24.5
Second	16.6	13.8	17.1	44.4	47.7	50.9	40.1	34.8	30.1
Middle	14.9	10.8	12.7	42.2	43.9	39.6	33.1	30.9	25.5
Fourth	10.6	7.1	9	35.2	31.6	32.6	17.6	16.9	16.9
Richest	5.8	4	5	19.9	17.3	19.2	7.8	8.4	10.7

Table(4): median age at first marriage among women aged 25-49 years by age group

Age group	median
25-29	18
30-34	18
35-39	19
40-44	19
45-49	18
total	18

Source: MICS,2014

Hypothetical cohort:-

Here the paper adopted Hypothetical cohort method to know the trend of percentage of women married before age 18 in age group (25-49), to do so we back dated all women group to the time when their age was in age group(25-29) as reflected in the table(5), then try to follow the change in percentage of women married before age 18 in age group (25-29) during the period(1990-2014). The percentage of women married before age 18 in age group(25-29) was 41% in 1994 and decrease to 40% in 2014 i.e it decreased by 2.4% during 15 years. This supports our previous findings that no change has taken place regarding level of early marriage in Sudan since long period. Following the data in the table no linear decrease or increase in percentage of women married before age 18 in age group (25-49) during the period (1990-2014) but it is fluctuating within the range(37.6%-40.9%) table(5).

Table(5) percentage of women married before age 18 by hypothetical cohort during period (9990-2014).

Current age in 2014	Time when their age was in age group(25-29)	Percentage married before age 18	Change in percentage married
25-29	2010-2014	40	+5.2%
30-34	2005-2009	37.9	-2.6%
35-39	2000-2004	38.6	+2.6%

40-44	1995-1999	37.8	-7%
45-49	1990-1994	40.9	

Source: MICS-2014

Singulate mean age at first marriage:-

Singulate mean age at first marriage(SMAM) or years spent in single status on average for female decreased by 8% during the period(1978-2010)i.e in Sudan fertility survey(1978) SMAM for female was 24 years, decreased to 22 years in Sudan household survey(2010), this may not mean fueling early marriage but says women marry earlier than before. What we avoid to say clearly reflected here, percentage of currently married women in age group(15-19) increased from 20% in Sudan fertility survey(1978) to 21% in MICS-2014 table(6).

Table(6):Percentage of women aged 15-19 currently married and singulate mean age at first marriage(SMAM) for female (1979-2014) by different sources.

Source	SMAM	Percentage currently married(15-19)
Sudan fertility survey-1978/79	24.1	20.1
Sudan demographic and health survey 1989/90	24.1	15.4
Fourth population census 1993	22.7	19.7
SMS 1999	24.2	-
MICS 2000	24.2	13.7
SHHS 2006	-	24.7
SHHS2	21.9	25.5
MICS 2014	-	21.1

Source: SFS,SDHS,CBS,SHHs and MICS(2000and 2014).

Girl child marriage differential among Sudan states:

In This section paper tries to answer the question: what are socio-economic characteristics of those states with higher percentage of women married before age 18 than Sudan average(38%)? As mentioned in the methodology Sudan 18 states grouped into two groups: those

their percentage of women married before age 18 less than 38% (Sudan average) named group A, this group includes seven states: (Northern(A1), River Nile(A2), Red Sea(A3), Khartoum(A4), Gezira(A5), White Nile(A6) and Sennar(A7) and those their percentages of women married before age 18 higher than 38% (Sudan average) named group B, the group includes eleven states, Kassala(B1), Gadarif(B2), Blue Nile (B3), North Kordfan (B4), South Kordfan(B5), West Kordfan(B6), North Darfour(B7), West Darfour(B8), South Darfour(B9), Central Darfour (B10) and East Darfour(B11). To analyze the differential twenty three MICS indicators selected and reorganized in six categories as follows: assets and wealth (households with electricity, households own T.V, 40% in bottom, poverty incidence rate and households use solid fuel), health situation (infant mortality rate, women protected against tetanus, maternal mortality rate, households with improved drinking water and sanitation and women who have antenatal care), nutrition status (severe malnutrition rate and families with poor food), reproductive health (contraceptives use, total fertility rate and adolescents births), education attainment (literate young women and gender parity index for secondary school) and tradition and culture (spousal age difference, domestic violence, awareness about AIDS, birth registration and child labor) to analyze situation in each group table(7) and table(8).

1.Assets ownership and wealth indicators:

Here suggested five variables: households percentage with electricity, households percentage with TV, households percentage at 40% bottom in wealth rank, poverty prevalence and percentage of households using solid fuels. About 45% of Sudanese households have access to specific type of electricity, in all states of group A the percentage of households with electricity higher than Sudan average except Red Sea(A3) and White Nile(A7) states but all states in group B has percentage lower than Sudan average except blue Nile(B3). Two fifth of Sudanese families own TV on average, all states in group A their percentage of household with TV Higher than Sudan average whereas all states in group B have percentage lower than Sudan average. About 40% of Sudanese families

lays in 40% bottom of wealth rank, all states in group A have lower percentage than Sudan Average whereas those in group B have percentages higher than Sudan average. About 46% of Sudanese families under national poverty line, states in group A have average less than Sudan average except Red Sea(A3) and White Nile(A7) states but the percentage higher than Sudan average in all states in group B. About 58% of Sudanese families use solid fuel, the percentage is lower than average in all group A states while it is higher than average in all states in group B. Here can conclude that states in group B with higher percentage of female child marriage characterized by higher level of poverty than states in group B table(7 and 8)

2. Health Indicators:

Five variables taken to measure health situation in specific state: infant mortality rate, maternal mortality rate, percentage of women protected against tetanus, percentage of women with antenatal care and percentage of households have improved drinking water and sanitation. All states in group A have infant mortality rates lower than Sudan average(52) whereas all states in group B have rates higher Sudan except blue Nile(B3), North Kordfan(B2) and Central Darfour(B11). The average of maternal mortality rate in group A was 467 whereas in group B estimated at 558. About 58% of Sudanese women protected against tetanus, all group A states have percentages higher or close to Sudan average except Red Sea (A3). Four fifth of Sudanese women have antenatal care, the percentage higher than Sudan average in all states in group A except Red Sea state(A3) and Sennar (A7), the state with lowest percentage is South Darfour(62%) belongs to group B. About 28% of Sudanese households have access to improved drinking water and sanitation half of the states in group A have percentage lower than Sudan average, only one state in group B has percentage higher than Sudan average. On the basis of these indicators, health situation better in group A states than group B states on average table(7 and 8).

3. Nutrition Indicators

To reflect nutrition indicators two variables used, severe malnutrition rate and percentage of population with poor food consumption. Severe malnutrition rate in Sudan estimated at 12%, half of states in group A and three fourths of states in group B have malnutrition rate lower than Sudan average. About 5.4% of Sudanese households consume poor food, all states in group A and two states in group B have percentages lower than Sudan average so relatively nutrition status in group A states better than group B states table(7 and 8).

4. Reproductive Behavior indicators

To measure reproductive behavior three measure taken, percentage of women currently using contraceptives, total fertility rate and adolescents births. Percentage currently using contraceptives in Sudan estimated at 12.2, one state in group A(one out of seven) and 10 states in group B(ten out of eleven) have percentages lower than Sudan average. Total fertility rate in Sudan estimated at 5.2 , no state in group A have fertility levels higher than Sudan average but nine states in group B(nine out of eleven) have levels higher than Sudan average. Births to women in age group (15-19) in Sudan estimated at 87 per 1000 women, one state in group A and all states in group B have adolescents births higher than Sudan average. Thus states in group A characterized on average by lower fertility rate than states in group B table(7 and 8).

5. Education indicators

The percentage of literate young women and gender parity index for secondary school adopted as measure of education. About three fifths(60%) of young women aged(15-24) are literate in Sudan, all states in group A have percentages higher than Sudan average except one but all states in group B have percentages lower than Sudan average. Gender parity index for secondary school in Sudan is 1.07. Inequality against girls clearly reflected in West Kordfan B6 (.71) West Darfour

B8(.64) and South Darfour B9(.83) states, all of them belong group B. However, education attainment for female better in group A state than B table(7 and 8) .

6. Traditional and cultural indicators

Here six proxy indicators used: spousal age difference, level of acceptance domestic violence, knowledge about AIDS, birth registration, child labor and polygyny prevalence. The percentage of women in age group 15-19 married with spousal age difference ten years or more estimate at 8 % in Sudan, two states from group A (two out of seven) and seven states(Seven out of 11) from group B have percentages higher than Sudan average. The percentage of women accepted domestic violence behavior estimated in Sudan as 34%, two states from group A(two out of seven) and eight states from group B(eight out of eleven) have percentages higher than Sudan average. About three fourths of Sudanese women heard about AIDS, two states in group A(two out of seven) and nine states in group B(nine out of eleven) have percentages lower than Sudan average. About 67% of births registered in Sudan, all states in group A have percentages higher than Sudan average but all states in group B have percentages lower than Sudan average. The percentage of children(5-11) participating in economic activity in Sudan estimated at 21%, all states in group A have percentages lower than Sudan average but all states in group B have percentage higher than Sudan average. About 21.7 % of Sudanese women in plural marriage, all states in group A and three states from group B(three out of eleven) have percentages of polygyny lower than Sudan average. States in group B characterized by higher, spousal age difference, domestic violence, AIDS awareness, birth registration and child labor than states in group A, on average table(7 and 8).

Table(7) some selected indicators for specified states(group: A)

indicators	Sudan	States group A						
		A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7
Percentage married before 18	38	19	21	32.2	26.6	29.7	37	34
Assets ownership and wealth indicators								
Percentage with electricity	44.9	94.4	79.1	36.9	81.6	72.9	40.1	57.9
Percentage own TV	39.6	86	75.3	41.2	77	60.5	42	41.1
40% in bottom	40	.8	5.5	31.6	3	5.5	24.5	22.4
Poverty incidence	46.5	36.2	32.2	57.7	26	37.8	55.5	44.1
Percentage uses solid fuel	58.2	16.4	13.3	57.2	12.1	16.2	38.2	57.4
Health indicators								
Infant mortality rate	52	30	28.1	44.2	45.1	41.1	46.8	34.1
Percentage of women protected against tetanus	58.2	61	73	42.3	73.4	63.4	57.6	60.1

Maternal mortality rate		437	443	565	389	422	509	503
Percentage have improved drinking water and sanitation	28.2	76.3	44.7	11.4	62.7	37.7	20.1	17.5
Percent of women have antenatal care	79	94.7	95.2	72.4	97	83.3	78.8	75.3
Nutrition indicators								
Severe Malnutrition rate	12	4.5	11	16	6.4	13.2	11.1	14.6
Percentage with poor food consumption	5.4	.5	.4	2.9	1.1	3.2	3.3	4
Reproductive behavior								
Percentage currently using contraceptives	12.2	23	21.3	9.6	26.5	12.2	15.6	13.5
Total fertility rate	5.2	3.8	3.6	3.2	4.2	4.3	5.2	5.3
Adolescents Births	87	52	49	44	47	65	91	86
Education indicators								
Percentage of young women literate	60	91.5	79.8	72	82.6	66.4	67.5	54
GPI for secondary	1.07	1.63	1.04	1.05	1.09	1.02	1.12	1.14

school								
Tradition and culture indicators								
Spousal age difference 10 years and over for women age 15-19	7.9	5.9	10.2	5.8	6.1	8.8	7.9	7.1
Percentage of women accepted domestic violence	34	25.7	9.6	10.4	18.8	17	35.2	40
Percentage heard about aids	74.8	89	85.3	69.8	94.8	71.5	80	68.3
Birth registration	67.3	98	96.8	80.5	97	80	70.8	75.6
Children (5-11) participating in economic activities	21	12.2	7.3	11.9	4.9	15.1	12.1	18.7
polygyny	21.7	6.4	6	6.1	14	13.3	12	17.8

Source: MICS,2014 final report

Table(8) some selected indicators for specified states(group B)

indicators	states										
	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10	B11
Percentage married before 18	45.1	49.3	50.1	39.1	46.7	40.8	47.7	44	55.7	54.6	57.4
Assets ownership and wealth indicators											
Percentage with electricity	38	39.5	48.5	17.7	19.6	12	8.7	15.5	19.9	14.4	11
Percentage own TV	29	28.8	30.4	17.4	20.2	12.4	7.6	13.8	18.2	8	12.5
40% in bottom	48	52.2	28.4	65.5	51	82.5	86.6	70.5	74.3	82	86.8
Poverty incidence	36.3	50.1	56.5	57.9	60	-	69	55.6	61.1	-	-
Percentage uses solid fuel	74.7	69.6	88.5	82.5	97.5	98.3	97.4	99.7	97.9	100	99
Health indicators											
Infant mortality rate	62.1	53.4	46.8	35.6	70.2	68.2	68.5	71.2	52.6	44.5	88.5
Percentage of women protected	40.3	55.5	51	59.2	59.6	44	57.4	64	50	60	51.3

indicators											
Percentage of young women literate	48.4	42.8	36.1	58.8	49.2	33	56	50	49.3	27.2	40
GPI for secondary school	1.18	1.17	1.38	.94	1.38	.71	.99	.64	.83	.88	1.16
Tradition and culture indicators											
Spousal age difference 10 years and over for women age 15-19	8	12	6.9	12.7	8.8	5.9	3.8	9.5	8.5	4.1	7.9
Percentage of women accepted domestic violence	14.1	21.2	38.8	29	58.1	50.5	62.2	57.1	65.2	63.4	77.4
Percentage heard about aids	56.7	73	66.9	69.8	73.1	67.3	60.1	78.4	75.1	49	71.5
Birth registration	48.4	42.8	36.1	58.8	49.2	33	56	50	49.3	27.4	40
Children (5-11) participating in economic activity	8	22	44	16	33	26	22.8	29	48.6	39.4	36
polygyny	10.7	19.1	28.3	14.3	25.5	33.2	35.2	53	41	45	35

Source: MICS,2014 final report

5.Findings:

The main findings of the paper are: High incidence of girl child marriage in Sudan with semi constant level for the last the two decades, poor families tend to marry their girls earlier, Sudan legislations play minor role in prohibiting and eradicating child marriage, political unrest and civil war worsen the situation of the children human rights and traditional harmful practices play beyond the law and religious values. The group of states relatively with high prevalence of child marriage can be described by poor indicators in: economic situation, health status, nutrition standards, education attainment and harmful traditional practices.

6.Recommendations:

The paper recommends for stronger government commitment towards child welfare and rights consistent with regional and international conventions and comprehensive legal reform concerning child rights associated with awareness. To reduce developmental gab among states comprehensive human development approach should be adopted.

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