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## **Factors of Violation of Legal Age at First Marriage of Women in Bangladesh: An Analysis**

Omar Faroque<sup>1</sup>, Ruhul Amin<sup>2\*</sup>

### **ABSTRACT**

Age at first marriage of women has been increasing in Bangladesh but marriage before 18 years for girls still prevails in Bangladesh especially in rural areas. This paper examines various factors of violation of legal age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh. The population of the study is comprised of individual level married women of different areas in Bangladesh. A sample of 350 married women has been constructed through purposive sampling technique and surveyed through structured questionnaire. Research data have been analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics as one-way ANOVA and Chi-square correlation. In one-way ANOVA analysis, it is found that mean age at first marriage of women is 16.25 years in rural and 18.46 years in urban. The findings of this study also reveal that some demographic, socio-economic, and psychological factors like women's education, occupation, place of residence, husband's education, occupation, consent to marry, parents' education, psychological maturity, economic condition, age and religion lead the women to violation of legal age at first marriage in Bangladesh. In chi-square correlation analysis, it is found that all of the factors except women religion have significant impacts on age at first marriage of women. The findings of this study will help the concerned parties for further studies and policy formulation.

**KEYWORDS:** Age at first marriage, Women, Violation, One-way ANOVA, Inferential statistics, Bangladesh

### **INTRODUCTION**

Bangladesh is one of the Lower Middle Income Countries (LMIC) where about half of the total population is women who are getting involved in all spheres of life as educational, professional, political arena and contributing to the economy. But lower age at first marriage of women is a serious impediment to this contribution (Faroque and Amin, 2016). However, age at first

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<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Dept. of Management Studies, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science & Technology University, Gopalganj, Bangladesh

<sup>2</sup> MBA Program, Dept. of Management Studies, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science & Technology University, Gopalganj, Bangladesh

\*Responding Author

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marriage of women is related to some terms like family, marriage and so on. Family means there are two or more persons who are related by blood, marriage or cohabitation, and living in the same residence (Fields and Casper, 2001). Marriage is a medium of making family in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, marriage is nearly universal and conceptions are considered as legal only after marriage and hence there has a direct effect of marriage to increase the fertility.

The legal age of marriage in Bangladesh is 18 for girls and 21 for boys (BDHS, 2004); and in ancient Rome, it was 14 for males and 12 for females (Dahl, 2010). So, marriage before 18 years for girls means violating the legislative age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh. Some demographic, biographic, socio-economic and psychological factors force women to violate the legal age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh. However, the timing of the first marriage or union is an important dimension of women's reproductive behavior with far reaching consequences, particularly for the reproductive health and social status (Singh and Samara, 1996). Society where contraception is not practiced well and where births do not occur outside marriage, age at first marriage has an important effect on the rate of population growth (Coale and Tye, 1961). The population with lower age at first marriage of a country may experience early child bearing and high fertility (Luc et al., 1993; Varea, 1993). Moreover, girls who marry before the age of 18 are likely to have lower educational attainment, greater chances of experiencing unwanted pregnancies and are at greater risk of sexual and reproductive health morbidities and maternal mortality (UNFPA, 2009). In this case, education and mass media can improve these scenarios (Rabbi and Kabir, 2013). The average age at first marriage for female in Bangladesh is 18.7 years (BBS, 2009); and 25.8 for women and 28.3 for men in United States. Premarital cohabitation contributed to the delay in first marriage for both women and men (Coper et al., 2012). Although the average age at first marriage has gradually increased during the last two decades in Bangladesh, adolescent marriages are still prevalent in rural areas in Bangladesh (Karim, 2002). Women's education, husband's education, childhood place of residence, sex of household head, religion, wealth and place of region are important determinants of adolescent motherhood in Bangladesh (Kamal, 2009). Every year 13.5 million girls marry before their eighteenth birthday (UNFPA, 2012). Bangladesh is the fourth-highest country of child marriage in the world. From 2005 to 2013, 29% of girls married before the age of 15 and 65% of girls married before the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2014). So, from this statistics it can easily be realized that how much intensive the violation of legal age at first marriage of women is in Bangladesh!

However, the effectiveness of legislative age at first marriage depends largely on prevailing social customs, religion, literacy rate, economic conditions, and employment opportunities as well as enforcement machinery (Pathak, 1980). Labor market equality can also increase the female age at first marriage (Black and Brainerd, 2004; Black and Strahan, 2001). Bangladesh Government has been continuously taking preemptive policies, legislations, strategies and national affirmative action plans and program for accelerating the implementation process in achieving the goal of holistic empowerment of women that will increase the age at first marriage

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for women. There is huge research gap in this field. Very few researchers have conducted such kind of study. Therefore, the objective of this study is to find out some socio economic, demographic, biographic and psychological factors that lead to the violation of legal age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh and also measure the intensity of these factors on female age at first marriage. The limitations of study may be helpful to the other researchers for further development. The academicians, researchers, government, NGOs, policy makers and other stakeholders of this arena would be benefitted from this study.

### DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Data were collected over 350 married women of different areas in Bangladesh from March-August, 2015 by purposive sampling technique method. Among them, 230 from rural areas and 120 from urban areas were personally interviewed. To collect data, Likert- five-point scale was used. Likert -five-point scale includes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 standing for strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree respectively. In this study, age at first marriage of women (below 18 years and above 18 years) is considered as dependent variable and the independent variables are respondent's education, occupation, place of residence, husband's education, occupation, consent to marry, parents' education, psychological maturity, economic condition, age and religion. These data have been coded into SPSS 15.0 software where one-way ANOVA through univariate General Linear Model (GLM) and Chi-square correlation analysis have been used to examine the significance, degree of association of these demographic and socio-economic factors on the female age at first marriage and examine the violation of legal age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh. Mathematically, univariate General Linear Model (GLM) can be presented as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_{11} X_{11} + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

Where,  $Y$  represents dependent variable that is age at first marriage of women.  $B_0$  represents constant.

$X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5, X_6, X_7, X_8, X_9, X_{10}, X_{11}$  represent age of the respondents, respondents' education level, religion, place of residence, husband's education, respondent's occupation, husband's occupation, consent to marry, parent's education, psychological maturity, and economic condition respectively.

$\varepsilon$  represents a disturbance or error term, responsible for variation in  $Y$ . The study has also used eta square ( $\eta^2$ ) to measure the degree of effect of the selected independent variables on the female age at first marriage and take decision about which one is stronger than others according to their effect. Mathematically, the  $\eta^2$  can be calculated as:

$$\eta^2 = \frac{SSB}{SST} \quad (2)$$

Where,  $SSB$  represents between-groups sum of squares and  $SST$  represents the total sum of squares.

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### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### *Mean values of age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh with some selected socio-economic and demographic variables by performing one-way ANOVA analysis*

Results of mean values of age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh with some selected socio-economic and demographic variables by performing one-way ANOVA analysis have been demonstrated in table 1. From Table 1, it is observed that respondent's education has been found to be the first strongest influential factor on the variation of female age at first marriage among all other selected variables. The proportion of variance of age at first marriage explained by the women's education is the highest as the value of  $\eta^2$  is 0.175. The mean values of age at first marriage of the women having no education, primary, S.S.C. and H.S.C. and more, are 15.63, 16.28, 16.73 and 19.95 years respectively which indicate that age at first marriage is increasing with the promotion of women's education level in Bangladesh. Women's occupation has been found to be the second strongest influential factor for explaining the variation on female age at first marriage. The proportion of variance explained by women's occupation is 0.096 (value of  $\eta^2$ ). The mean values of age at first marriage of the women, whose occupations are housewife, service and others, are 16.70, 20.95 and 19.67 years respectively. This implies that the age at first marriage for the women whose occupation is service and others, is more than that of housewife.

Respondent's place of residence has been found to be the third strongest influential factor for explaining the variation on female age at first marriage as well as the proportion of variance explained by place of residence is 0.094 (value of  $\eta^2$ ). The mean values of age at first marriage for the women living in rural and urban areas are 16.25 and 18.46 years respectively. It indicates that the age at first marriage of the women living in urban areas is more than that of rural women.

Respondent's psychological maturity has been found to be the fourth strongest influential factor on the variation of female age at first marriage. The proportion of variance of age at first marriage explained by women's psychological maturity is 0.081 (value of  $\eta^2$ ). The mean values of age at first marriage of the women having psychological maturity and not having biological maturity are 17.77 and 15.77 years respectively. If the guardians who get their daughters married consider about their daughters' psychological maturity, the female age at first marriage will increase.

Husband's education has been found to be the fifth strongest influential factor on the variation of female age at first marriage. The proportion of variance of age at first marriage explained by women husband's education is 0.067 (value of  $\eta^2$ ). The mean values of age at first marriage of the women whose husbands have no education, primary, S.S.C. and H.S.C. and more education, are 15.47, 16.63, 16.91, and 18.18 years respectively which indicate that female age at first marriage increases with the increasing husband's level of education.

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Husband's occupation has been found to be the sixth strongest influential factor on the variation of female age at first marriage. The proportion of variance of age at first marriage explained by the women husband's occupation is 0.035 (value of  $\eta^2$ ). The mean values of age at first marriage of the women whose husband's occupations are agriculture, service and others are 15.82, 16.91 and 17.63 years respectively. So, female age at first marriage will increase if the occupation of their husband is service and others and decrease if the occupation of their husband is agriculture.

Parents' education has been found to be the seventh strongest influential factor for explaining the variation on female age at first marriage as well as the proportion of variance explained by women parents' education is 0.032 (value of  $\eta^2$ ). The mean values of age at first marriage of the women, whose parents are literate and illiterate respectively, are 17.80, 16.53 years respectively. This implies that the age at first marriage increases for the women whose parents are literate and decreases whose parents are illiterate. Respondent's present age has been found to be the eighth strongest influential factor for explaining the variation on female age at first marriage as well as the proportion of variance explained by women's present age is 0.029 (value of  $\eta^2$ ). The mean values of age at first marriage of the women whose present age group is less than 20 years, 20 - 30 years and more than 30 years, are 15.93, 17.62 and 16.85 years respectively. These mean values indicate that the age at first marriage for the women whose present age ranges from 20-30 years is more than that of other age groups.

Birth, marriage and death are the standard trio of key events in human lives. But only one marriage is a matter of choice. The right to exercise that choice was recognized as a principle of law. Yet many girls and a few boys enter marriage without any chance of exercising the right to choose (UNICEF, 2001). So, this is a forced marriage. Forced marriage describes a marriage that takes place without the free or valid consent of one or both of the partners and involves either physical or emotional stain. Early marriage is related to forced marriage

**Table1: Mean values of age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh with some selected socio-economic and demographic variables by performing one-way ANOVA analysis, (n=350)**

| Explanatory variables         | N (%)      | Predicted mean | $\eta^2$     |
|-------------------------------|------------|----------------|--------------|
| <b>Age</b>                    |            |                | <b>0.029</b> |
| Less than 20 years            | 53 (15.1)  | 15.92          |              |
| 20-30 years                   | 135(38.6)  | 17.62          |              |
| More than 30 years            | 162 (46.3) | 16.85          |              |
| <b>Respondent's education</b> |            |                | <b>0.175</b> |
| No education                  | 35 (10.0)  | 15.63          |              |
| Primary                       | 157 (44.9) | 16.28          |              |
| S.S.C.                        | 94 (26.9)  | 16.73          |              |
| H.S.C. and more               | 64 (18.3)  | 19.95          |              |
| <b>Religion</b>               |            |                | <b>0.002</b> |
| Muslim                        | 343 (98.0) | 16.99          |              |

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| Explanatory variables          | N (%)      | Predicted mean | $\eta^2$     |
|--------------------------------|------------|----------------|--------------|
| Non-Muslim                     | 7 (2.0)    | 18.14          |              |
| <b>Place of residence</b>      |            |                | <b>0.094</b> |
| Rural                          | 230 (65.7) | 16.25          |              |
| Urban                          | 120 (34.3) | 18.46          |              |
| <b>Husband's education</b>     |            |                | <b>0.067</b> |
| No education                   | 47 (13.4)  | 15.47          |              |
| Primary                        | 117 (33.4) | 16.63          |              |
| S.S.C.                         | 80 (22.9)  | 16.91          |              |
| H.S.C.                         | 106 (30.3) | 18.18          |              |
| <b>Respondent's occupation</b> |            |                | <b>0.096</b> |
| Housewife                      | 322 (92.0) | 16.70          |              |
| Service                        | 19 (5.4)   | 20.95          |              |
| Others                         | 9 (2.6)    | 19.67          |              |
| <b>Husband's occupation</b>    |            |                | <b>0.035</b> |
| Agriculture                    | 62 (17.7)  | 15.82          |              |
| Service                        | 146 (41.7) | 16.91          |              |
| Others                         | 142 (40.6) | 17.63          |              |
| <b>Consent to marry</b>        |            |                | <b>0.025</b> |
| Agree                          | 302 (86.3) | 17.23          |              |
| Disagree                       | 48 (13.7)  | 15.65          |              |
| <b>Parent's education</b>      |            |                | <b>0.032</b> |
| Literate                       | 131 (37.4) | 17.80          |              |
| Illiterate                     | 219 (62.6) | 16.53          |              |
| <b>Psychological maturity</b>  |            |                | <b>0.081</b> |
| Yes                            | 217 (62.0) | 17.77          |              |
| No                             | 133 (38.0) | 15.77          |              |
| <b>Economic condition</b>      |            |                | <b>0.019</b> |
| Poor                           | 106 (30.3) | 16.30          |              |
| Moderate                       | 244 (69.7) | 17.32          |              |

Note: S.S.C. and H.S.C. stands for Secondary School Certificate and Higher Secondary Certificate. Eta value of 0.01-0.06 (small effect), 0.06-0.14 (moderate effect) and above 0.14 (large effect) (Cohen, 1988). because minors are deemed incapable of giving informed consent (Thomas, 2009). In this study, respondent's consent to marry has been found to be the ninth strongest influential factor on the variation of female age at first marriage. The value of  $\eta^2$  explained by women's consent to marry is 0.025. The mean values of age at first marriage of the women who agree and disagree to marry respectively, are 17.23 and 15.65 years respectively which indicate that female age at first marriage will increase if they agree and decrease if they disagree to marry.

Respondent's economic condition has been found to be the tenth strongest influential factor on the variation of female age at first marriage among all other selected variables. The value of  $\eta^2$  explained by women's economic condition is 0.019. The mean values of age at first marriage of

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the women having poor and moderate economic condition respectively are 16.30 and 17.32 years respectively which indicate that female age at first marriage will increase if their economic condition is moderate and decrease if their economic condition is poor. But, the median age at first marriage among women 20-24 years old in the lowest wealth quintile is 14.6; girls in the highest quintile marry at a median age of 18.3 (Burket et al., 2006) and 75% of rural girls marry before the age 16 years and only 5% marry after 18 years (Barkat and Majid, 2003); three-quarters of women aged 20-49 years were married before age 18 years (UNICEF and BBS, 2007).

Religion has been found to be the eleventh strongest influential factor for explaining the variation on female age at first marriage as well as the proportion of variance explained by religion is 0.002 (value of  $\eta^2$ ). The mean values of age at first marriage for the Muslim and Non-Muslim women are 16.99 and 18.14 years respectively. This implies that the Non-Muslim women's age at first marriage is more than that of Muslims.

### *Results of chi-square correlation analysis of age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh*

Results of Chi-square correlation of age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh have been demonstrated in table 2. From table 2, it is observed that 103 women among 350, whose present age is more than 30 years, get married at below 18 years. This age group is violating the legal age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh more than other age groups and present age has statistically significant impact on age at first marriage of women. Education is one of the most influential factors on age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh. About 30 percent of the total respondents, whose education level is primary, are violating the legislative age at first marriage most in Bangladesh. Level of education has also statistical significant impact on age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh.

Religion is another influential factor on age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh. About 57 percent women, who are from Muslim families, get married at below 18 years meaning that Muslim women are violating the legislative age at first marriage more than Non-Muslim women in Bangladesh and religion has no significant impact on age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh. Place of residence also leads to the change in female age at first marriage in Bangladesh. About 45 percent women living in rural areas get married at below 18 years and 13 percent women living in urban areas get married at below 18 years meaning that rural women violate legal age at first marriage more than urban women in Bangladesh and place of residence has strongly statistical significant impact on age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh.

Women husband's education is another influential factor on age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh. About 10 percent, 21 percent, 16 percent and 11 percent of total respondents, whose husbands have no education, primary education, S.S.S, and H.S.C level education respectively, get married at below 18 years. From this it can be said that women whose husband has primary

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level education, violate the legislative age at first marriage most in Bangladesh. Husband's education has statistical significant impact on age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh.

Age at first marriage of women varies based on the occupation of women in Bangladesh. According to this study, about 56.9 percent, 0.9 percent and 0.3 percent of the total respondents, who are housewives, service holders and others respectively, get married at below 18 years which is not the legal age of marriage for women in Bangladesh. This means that the women who are housewives are violating the legal age of marriage of women most in Bangladesh and occupation has strongly statistical significant impact on age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh.

Women husband's occupation also leads to change in age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh. About 4 percent, 17 percent and 21 percent women, whose husbands are farmers, service holders and others respectively, get married at above 18 years which is the legislative age of marriage for women in Bangladesh. According to this, it can be said that the women whose husbands are farmers are violating the legal age at first marriage most prevailing in Bangladesh. Husband's occupation has strongly statistical significant impact on age at first marriage of women. Women consent to marry has also statistical significant impact on age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh. According to this study, about 40 percent and only 2 percent of total respondents who give their consent to marry and disagree to marry respectively get married at above 18 years. So, the women who are not forced to marry violate the legal age of marriage less than those who are forced to marry.

Women parents' education has strongly statistical significant impact on age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh. In this study, the women whose parents are illiterate violate the legislative age of marriage more than those whose parents are literate. Finally, women psychological maturity and economic condition have statistical significant impact on age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh. According to this study, about 33 percent and only 9 percent women having psychological maturity and not having psychological maturity respectively get married at above 18 years; and about 10 percent and 32 percent of total 350 women having poor and moderate economic condition respectively get married at above 18 years. Basically, women are not directly violating the legal age of marriage introduced by the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh rather the socio-economic conditions of Bangladesh are forcing the girls to get married at below 18 years.



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*Table 2: Results of chi-square correlation analysis of age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh, (n=350).*

| Explanatory variables          | Age at first marriage   |                         | Total     | <i>x<sup>2</sup>cal and p Value</i> |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|
|                                | Below 18 years<br>N (%) | Above 18 years<br>N (%) |           |                                     |
| <b>Age</b>                     |                         |                         |           |                                     |
| Less than 20 years             | 35(10)                  | 18(5)                   | 53(15)    | $X^2 = 8.855$                       |
| 20-30 years                    | 65(19)                  | 70(20)                  | 135(39)   | $P = .012$                          |
| More than 30 years             | 103(29)                 | 59(17)                  | 162(46)   |                                     |
| Total                          | 203(58)                 | 147(42)                 | 350(100)  |                                     |
| <b>Respondent's education</b>  |                         |                         |           |                                     |
| No education                   | 28(8)                   | 7(2)                    | 35(10)    | $X^2 = 62.641$                      |
| Primary                        | 109(31)                 | 48(14)                  | 157(45)   | $P = .000$                          |
| S.S.C.                         | 56(16)                  | 38(11)                  | 94(27)    |                                     |
| H.S.C. and more                | 10(3)                   | 54(15)                  | 64(18)    |                                     |
| Total                          | 203(58)                 | 147(42)                 | 350(100)  |                                     |
| <b>Religion</b>                |                         |                         |           |                                     |
| Muslim                         | 201(57)                 | 142(41)                 | 343(98)   | $X^2 = 2.539$                       |
| Non-Muslim                     | 2(1)                    | 5(1)                    | 7(2)      | $P = .115$                          |
| Total                          | 203(58)                 | 147(42)                 | 350(100)  |                                     |
| <b>Place of residence</b>      |                         |                         |           |                                     |
| Rural                          | 158(45)                 | 72(21)                  | 230(66)   | $X^2 = 31.503$                      |
| Urban                          | 45(13)                  | 75(21)                  | 120(34)   | $P = .000$                          |
| Total                          | 203(58)                 | 147(42)                 | 350(100)  |                                     |
| <b>Husband's education</b>     |                         |                         |           |                                     |
| No education                   | 37(10)                  | 10(3)                   | 47(13)    | $X^2 = 32.253$                      |
| Primary                        | 72(21)                  | 45(13)                  | 117(34)   | $P = .000$                          |
| S.S.C.                         | 55(16)                  | 25(7)                   | 80(23)    |                                     |
| H.S.C.                         | 39(11)                  | 67(19)                  | 106(30)   |                                     |
| Total                          | 203(58)                 | 147(42)                 | 350(100)  |                                     |
| <b>Respondent's occupation</b> |                         |                         |           |                                     |
| Housewife                      | 199(56.9)               | 123(35)                 | 322(91.9) | $X^2 = 23.930$                      |
| Service                        | 3(.9)                   | 16(5)                   | 19(5.9)   | $P = .000$                          |
| Others                         | 1(.3)                   | 8(2)                    | 9(2.3)    |                                     |
| Total                          | 203(58)                 | 147(42)                 | 350(100)  |                                     |
| <b>Husband's occupation</b>    |                         |                         |           |                                     |
| Agriculture                    | 49(14)                  | 13(4)                   | 62(18)    | $X^2 = 17.269$                      |
| Service                        | 86(25)                  | 60(17)                  | 146(42)   | $P = .000$                          |
| Others                         | 68(19)                  | 74(21)                  | 142(40)   |                                     |

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| Explanatory variables         | Age at first marriage   |                         | Total    | <i>x<sup>2</sup>cal and p Value</i> |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------|
|                               | Below 18 years<br>N (%) | Above 18 years<br>N (%) |          |                                     |
| Total                         | 203(58)                 | 147(42)                 | 350(100) |                                     |
| <b>Consent to marry</b>       |                         |                         |          |                                     |
| Agree                         | 163(47)                 | 139(40)                 | 302(87)  | $X^2 = 14.656$                      |
| Disagree                      | 40(11)                  | 8(2)                    | 48(13)   | $P = .000$                          |
| Total                         | 203(58)                 | 147(42)                 | 350(100) |                                     |
| <b>Parent's education</b>     |                         |                         |          |                                     |
| Literate                      | 59(17)                  | 72(21)                  | 131(38)  | $X^2 = 14.439$                      |
| Illiterate                    | 144(41)                 | 75(21)                  | 219(62)  | $P = .000$                          |
| Total                         | 203(58)                 | 147(42)                 | 350(100) |                                     |
| <b>Psychological maturity</b> |                         |                         |          |                                     |
| Yes                           | 102(29)                 | 115(33)                 | 217(62)  | $X^2 = 28.341$                      |
| No                            | 101(29)                 | 32(9)                   | 133(38)  | $P = .000$                          |
| Total                         | 203(58)                 | 147(42)                 | 350(100) |                                     |
| <b>Economic condition</b>     |                         |                         |          |                                     |
| Poor                          | 71(20)                  | 35(10)                  | 106(30)  | $X^2 = 5.035$                       |
| Moderate                      | 132(38)                 | 112(32)                 | 244(70)  | $P = .016$                          |
| Total                         | 203(58)                 | 147(42)                 | 350(100) |                                     |

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the study, age at first marriage of women is increasing with the encouragement of their level of education and husband's education in Bangladesh. Women living in rural areas are getting married at earlier age than those living in urban areas. Moreover, the Muslim women are also getting married at earlier age than the Non-Muslim women. So, the women having lower level of education, living in rural areas, Non-Muslim women are violating the legal age at first marriage enforced in Bangladesh. The study implies that age at first marriage of women has both positive and negative impacts on the population and economy of a country. So, this study helps other researchers to conduct future research over the impact of violation of legal age at first marriage of women on the population and economy of a country. The study findings lead to the following policy implications to reduce the violation of legal age at first marriage of women in Bangladesh:

- **To increase the participation of female in both secondary and higher secondary level of education:** The more the girls will be educated, the more they will be knowledgeable and capable enough to provide informative and matured decision and this will reduce the violation of legal age of marriage.
- **To urbanize the rural areas as much as possible:** The rural women are illiterate, unemployed but the urban women are more educated and employed who are capable

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enough to provide their consent to marry. So, it is necessary to urbanize the rural areas as much as possible because this transformation will reduce violation of legal age of marriage.

- **To create equal employment opportunities for the women:** If the women get employed, they will be self-dependent and decision makers in case of every spheres of life including marriage.
- **Not to get the women married without their consent:** If the guardians of the girls give priority on the consent of women to marry, the age at first marriage will increase in Bangladesh.
- **To let them become biologically and psychologically prepared to marry:** Generally, the girls below 18 years are not biologically and psychologically matured enough to take any decision because at this stage they are not informative, well-educated. At this stage, they remain very much emotional and do not know about the reality. So, if the guardians consider their biological and psychological maturity, the intensity of violation of legal age of marriage will reduce.

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