
Subject: Definition of marriage in DHS-Bangladesh
Posted by [JanSchuele](#) on Fri, 29 Aug 2014 13:32:32 GMT

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The final report of the Demographic and Health Survey in Bangladesh 2004 (<https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR165/FR-BD04%5BFR165%5D.pdf>) states on p.91 that Quote:[i]t is important to take note of the definition of marriage that was used in the 2004 BDHS. In Bangladesh, it is common for a woman to wait several months or even years after formal marriage before going to live with her husband. Since the researchers who designed the 2004 BDHS were interested in marriage mainly as it affects exposure to the risk of pregnancy, interviewers were instructed to ask the questions about marriage not in the sense of formal marriage, but as cohabitation.

Is this definition of marriage used for all household members, or only the ever-married women sample? I am confused because in every survey year I find a substantial rate of girls, who are coded as married, and still stay with their parents or grandparents. For example in 2011 at age 12-14 that was approximately 35 percent. This is in accordance with the cultural context, but not with the above marriage definition. I don't think that all these girls are just temporary guests.

The guide to DHS statistics only explains marriage indicators as marriage or consensual union, not really how marriage is defined.

CAN YOU TELL ME THE REAL USED DEFINITIONS OF MARRIAGE (for all household members). Would be great. Thank you!

Subject: Re: Definition of marriage in DHS-Bangladesh
Posted by [Trevor-DHS](#) on Sun, 31 Aug 2014 16:32:06 GMT

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The definition of marriage is as defined in the report, however, we are reliant on the respondent's responses and if the respondent says a person is married according to the definition then we do not question the response further. I took a look at some of the cases in the 2011 dataset and I found 103 girls (unweighted numbers) age 12-14 listed as currently married. Of these 28 were listed as daughter of the head of household and two were listed as grandchildren. Of these 30, 19 of them were listed as not being usual residents of the household but having slept in the household the previous night - just 11 girls were listed as usual residents.

I hope this helps to clarify.
