

Determinants of Early Marriage among Young Women in Democratic Republic of Congo

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ABSTRACT Early marriage denies children childhood experience, endangers their health, and terminates their expectations. In Democratic Republic of Congo, though the 2006 sexual violence law criminalizes child marriages in the country, but the practice of early marriage persists. DRC has one of the uppermost child marriage incidence rates in the world, where nearly seventy-four percent of girls and women between 15 and 19 years of age are married. This paper examined the socio-economic and demographic determinants of early marriage among young women in the DRC. Descriptive and multivariate analyses performed show that young women who faced first sexual intercourse before 16 are 73.5 times more at risk of early marriage more than those who initiated it at the age 18-24. Also, those with no education have a higher risk of early union than their higher educated counterparts. The paper recommends the adoption of a formal sex education framework before first sexual intercourse.