

Table 4.4 Percentage Never Married among the Population Aged 20-24 by Sex, Residence, Education, Labour Force and Industrial Sector, Cambodia 2008

Socio-economic Variables	Never Married Aged 20-24		
	Male	Female	Difference
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Cambodia	70.8	49.2	21.6
Urban	84.1	67.8	16.3
Rural	66.2	42.0	24.2
Education			
Literate	73.2	52.9	20.3
Illiterate	54.4	33.3	21.1
Literate without Educational Level	67.1	44.5	22.7
Primary Not Completed	61.8	42.0	19.8
Primary	69.0	49.9	19.1
Lower Secondary	82.7	66.9	15.8
Secondary/Technical Diploma	92.2	83.4	8.8
Beyond Secondary/Technical Diploma	95.5	88.0	7.4
Labour Force			
Economically Active	64.2	45.8	18.4
Employed	63.6	45.4	18.1
Unemployed	86.0	58.2	27.8
Economically Not Active	95.5	64.0	31.4
Industry			
Primary Sector	58.2	35.0	23.3
Secondary Sector	73.2	70.8	2.3
Tertiary Sector	76.0	59.9	16.1

Source: Special Tabulation

But for a minor exception at the primary not completed level there is a consistent rise in the percentage single among both males and females with increase in education. Among illiterate males aged 20-24 the proportion single is 54.4 percent. The proportion increases to 67.1 percent, 61.8 percent, 69.0 percent, 82.7 percent, 92.2 percent and 95.5 percent for literate with no educational level, primary not completed, primary, lower secondary, secondary/ technical diploma and beyond secondary/ technical diploma respectively. The highest proportion of never married is found among those with tertiary education. This is true for both males and females.

With an overall lower proportion of never married, young women have also the same marital pattern as young men with regard to relationship of educational level and proportion single. The gender gap in the postponement of marriage reduces gradually from illiterate level (21 percentage points). It decreases slightly (with the exception of literate without educational level) in lower educational groups and reaches a comparatively lower gap at the lower secondary level and ends with the lowest difference of about 7 to 8 percentage points in the higher educational levels. This trend is due to the cumulative effect of gender difference in the prospect of getting jobs at different educational levels, desire to have a family, availability of suitable grooms or brides with matching educational qualifications and the level of development.

The gap in proportion single between literate and illiterate men in the age group 20-24 is 18.8 percentage points. The corresponding gap among women is slightly higher (19.6 percentage points). In 1998, these differences were calculated as 12.65 and 4.64 respectively (Annex Table 3). There has therefore been a sizeable increase in the gap in the proportion single between literate and illiterate women during the decade.

4.4.1 Impact of Education on Celibacy, Divorce and Widowhood

From a special tabulation made it is found that with the increase in educational level there is a corresponding increase in the proportion of never married women in the age group 45-49 which marks the end of reproductive span. It is 4.86 percent for women who have completed primary level, 12.04 percent for those who have completed secondary/ technical diploma and 15.5 percent for women qualified beyond secondary/ technical diploma. This increase in the celibacy level of women alongside increase in their educational level may be due to two reasons: (i) shortage of suitable male partners with the same or higher educational level (ii) some of the women with higher education prefer to remain single unlike their less educated sisters (iii) influence of the modernisation process.

The proportion of divorced/separated among the elderly (60+) males (2.31 percent) is much lower than that of elderly females (5.21percent). According to computations made, among the elderly women the proportion divorced is 5.40percent for illiterate women and 4.89percent for literate women. It is the highest (5.72percent) among the elderly women who are literate with non formal education. At the primary, lower secondary, secondary/ technical diploma and beyond secondary/ technical diploma level of education the proportions of divorced among the elderly women are 4.75, 5.00, 3.60 and 4.24 respectively. The impact of education on marriage dissolution does not appear to be considerable.

Table 4.5 Percentage Widowed among the population Aged 60 and above by Sex, Residence, Education, Labour Force and Industrial Sector, Cambodia 2008

Socio-economic Variables	Widowed Aged 60 and above		
	Male	Female	Difference
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Cambodia	9.8	41.8	-31.9
Urban	8.2	41.3	-33.1
Rural	10.1	41.9	-31.8
Education			
Literate	8.6	34.5	-25.9
Illiterate	13.9	46.1	-32.1
Literate without Educational Level	11.4	40.1	-28.7
Primary Not Completed	9.9	34.7	-24.8
Primary	7.5	31.6	-24.1
Lower Secondary	6.8	32.7	-25.9
Secondary/Technical Diploma	5.2	34.0	-28.8
Beyond Secondary/Technical Diploma	3.2	18.5	-15.3
Labour Force			
Economically Active	6.5	34.3	-27.8
Employed	6.4	34.2	-27.8
Unemployed	9.6	41.1	-31.6
Economically Not Active	20.2	50.5	-30.4
Industry			
Primary Sector	6.6	33.7	-27.2
Secondary Sector	4.6	37.0	-32.3
Tertiary Sector	6.3	38.6	-32.3

Source: Special Tabulation

Table 4.5 shows that widowhood level is generally lower among literate persons in the age group 60 and more. In the case of elderly males the percentage widowed reduces gradually with increase in educational level from 13.9 among illiterate persons to 3.2 among those qualified beyond secondary/ technical diploma level. In the case of females also a similar trend is noted with the exception in the lower secondary and secondary level when the proportion widowed increases by one to two percent from its previous level and then falls drastically at the level of beyond secondary/ technical diploma level.

Though in general the gender gap reduces due to literacy and education it increases at the lower secondary and secondary level of education. At the secondary and higher levels, men seem to be at an advantage when compared to women in this regard.

4.5 Influence of Economic Activity on Marital Pattern

Economic activity or labour force participation affects the marriage patterns of both men and women. Though participation in gainful employment may call for lot of adjustments in domestic life it provides a window of opportunities for women. Decision to get married early or to delay it has to be taken by women who have started working in a factory or any establishment taking into account the economic status of their families.

According to Table 4.4, in the age group 20-24, proportion single among the economically not active persons is higher than that of the economically active persons. It has to be pointed out in this connection that majority of the population in the younger age groups are economically active. The proportions single among the economically active and inactive males of this age group are 64.2 percent and 95.5 percent respectively. The corresponding proportions among females are 45.8 percent and 64.0 percent. The difference in the proportion is higher for males (31.3 percentage points) than females (18.2 percentage points). Gender difference is very much higher in the case of economically inactive category (31.4 percentage points) than in the case of economically active category (18.4 percentage points). Most of the economically inactive males would like to postpone their marriage. Some of them, especially the urban residents, may be students pursuing higher education who would not like to think of marriage till they completed their study. The proportions single among the young unemployed males and females are 86.0 percent and 58.2 percent respectively.

Table 4.4 shows that among the industrial sectors the proportion never married is the lowest in the primary sector for both men and women of the age group 20-24. More than 70 percent of males remain single in the secondary and tertiary sectors as against 58 percent in the primary sector. One striking feature noticed is that only 35 percent of women remain single in the primary sector while 70.8 percent remain single in the secondary sector and 59.9 percent do so in the tertiary sector. Women primary sector workers who are mostly in the rural areas tend to marry early. The work in factories and other manufacturing industries is of such nature that it is more suited for single women. In most cases, women workers in factories also run the risk of losing their jobs if they marry and beget children. Women who are in trade and service (tertiary sector) have comparatively no such restrictions.

As regards the population aged 60 and over the proportions of widowed males and females are higher in the economically not active category compared to the economically active category (Table 4.5). About half of the elderly widowed women are economically inactive, while about one-fifth of the widowed men are in that category. Special policy for the welfare of elderly widows especially those who are poor, appears imperative.

5. Teenage Marriage

Teenage marriages essentially commence at age 15 though a few marriages in the ages 12 -14 are also reported at the census. The proportion never married in the age group 15-19 serves as a convenient and useful indicator of teenage marriage though it suffers from substantial underestimation of proportion of teenage marriages as many of those in this age group who remained single at the time of the census get married as teenagers (before attaining the age 20).

According to Annex Table 4, 1.7 percent among males and 8.4 percent among females in the age group of 15-19, are ever married in Cambodia in 2008. Thus the proportion ever married females is nearly five times higher than males in this very young age group. The proportions ever married in urban and rural areas are 1.2 and 1.9 percent for males. The corresponding proportions for females are 5.2 percent and 9.7 percent. The gap between the proportions ever married among males and females is 7.8 percentage points in rural areas as against 4.0 percentage points in the urban areas.

**Table 4.6 Percentage of Ever Married Females and Males aged 15-19
in some countries of Southeast Asia**

Country	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)
Indonesia	1.0	8.7
Thailand	5.3	12.0
Myanmar	2.6	8.4
Singapore Malays	0.3	2.4
Singapore Chinese	0.1	0.5
Singapore Indians	0.1	2.0
Cambodia	1.8	8.7

Source: Gavin Jones and Bina Gubbaju, 2010 for all countries except Cambodia

As may be seen from Table 4.6, the proportion of females ever married in Cambodia in 2008 is lower than that of Thailand and it is the same as that of Indonesia. This proportion is very much lower in Singapore. In Cambodia, within the age-group 15-19 itself, the percentage ever married rises from 1.1 percent at age 15 to 2.6 percent, 5.99 percent, 12.2 percent and 22.8 percent at ages 16, 17, 18 and 19 respectively. Generally the proportion of teenage marriage decreases when there is an increase in the age at marriage. Cambodia is no exception to this trend. The percentage ever married females in the age-group 15-19 has declined from 11.7 percent in 1998 to 8.7 percent in 2008 when the corresponding increase in mean age at marriage is from 22.5 years to 23.3 years. However, the fact remains that a high proportion of teen age marriages of females do take place in Cambodia.

The percentage of ever married women in the age group 15-19 varies over a wide range among the provinces. It is 6.80 in Kandal and 26.34 in Ratanak Kiri (see Map 4). It is high in the Plateau and Mountain Region and low in the Plains with Tonle Sap and Coastal regions having intermediate values. Hence the proportion of teenage marriage seems to be inversely related to development. Teenage marriage is essentially a problem of female adolescents rather than that of their male counter parts. The problem is more acute in the rural areas with nearly 10 percent of female adolescents in the ever married status. In comparison with women who marry late, teenage married women lose the opportunity of schooling. Most of them therefore remain uneducated. Pregnancy at an early age throws many challenges (e.g. reproductive health) for which they are not mature enough to face. All these issues call for special programmes for their welfare and development.

Map.4. Percentage of Ever-married Females in the 15-19 Age Group in Rural Areas by Province, Cambodia 2008

