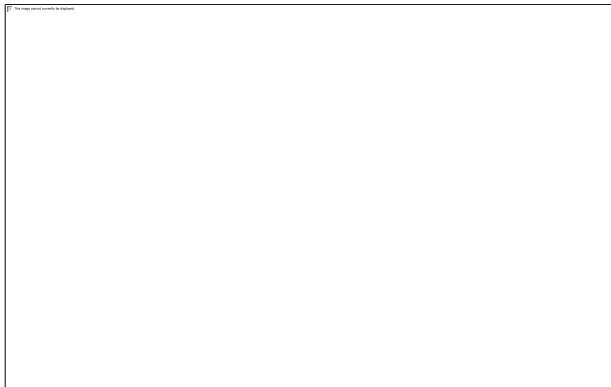


**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK**

**experiences of vulnerable children involved in tobacco farming. a case of bingaguru  
ward 10 makoni district, rusape.**

**BY**

**B201055B**



A dissertation submitted to Bindura University of Science Education, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Department of Social Work, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work

## **APPROVAL FORM**

I certify that I supervised **Panashe Bridget Chitewere** in carrying out this research titled: **Experiences of vulnerable children involved in tobacco farming. A Case of Bingaguru, Ward 10** in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Science, Honours Degree in Social Work and recommend that it proceeds for examination.

*Chairperson of the Department Board of Examiners*

The departmental board of examiners is satisfied that this dissertation report meets the examination requirements and therefore I recommend to Bindura University of Science Education to accept this research project by Panashe Bridget Chitewere titled: **Experiences of vulnerable children involved in tobacco farming. A Case of Bingaguru Ward 10** in partial fulfilment of the Bachelor of Science, Honours Degree in Social work.

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**DEDICATION**

This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to my family, friends, and all social workers who selflessly strive to promote social justice in their community.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Firstly, I extend my deepest thanks to God Almighty, who granted me the strength, courage, and resilience to conduct this research. While I appreciate the help of many individuals, I recognise that His divine grace, protection, and guidance, which enabled me to overcome obstacles and successfully complete this project.

Secondly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my Supervisor, Mr Njovu, for his guidance, support, and expertise throughout the course of writing this dissertation. His invaluable input, encouragement, and mentorship have been instrumental in shaping my research and helping me achieve my academic goals.

Finally, I would also like to appreciate all the participants and key informants from Rusape, Makoni District for their willingness to participate and their valuable contributions to this research.

## **ABSTRACT**

*The study aimed at exploring the experiences of vulnerable children involved in tobacco farming, using a rural context, Bingaguru ward 10, Rusape, as the study location. The study employed a case study research design. The research was qualitative in nature and employed in-depth, key informant interviews and focus group discussions for the purpose of data collection. The study employed Bronfrenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory. The study findings revealed an alarmingly high involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming, performing hazardous and age-inappropriate tasks. The study identified several factors contributing to child*

*involvement, including poverty, limited access to education, the dependence of tobacco farmers on unfair contractual relationships with tobacco companies, parental illiteracy, limited alternative crop opportunities, and lack of awareness and understanding. The study also found that child involvement in tobacco farming leads to physical hazards and health risks, educational disruption, and social isolation and play deprivation. Participants suggested strategies to mitigate child involvement, including educational interventions, social protection, and awareness-raising campaigns. Notably, the study puts across some recommendations. The study recommends a sustainable advocacy and awareness-raising program, accessible education for underprivileged children, government empowerment programs, provision of training and support to farmers in alternative livelihoods, supplementary feeding programs in schools and regular monitoring to prevent child involvement in tobacco farming.*

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Children
BEAM	Basic Education Assistance Module
CCW	Community Childcare Worker
DSD	Department of Social Development
DSDO	Department of Social Development Officer
ECLTF	Elimination of Child Labour in Tobacco Foundation
FDMS	Food Deficit Mitigating Strategy
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HSCT	Harmonised Social Cash Transfer

ILO	International Labour Organization
MoPSLSW	Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PO	Probation Officer
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Children
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USDL	United States Department of Labour
WHO	World Health Organization





**PLAGIARISM REPORT**

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the background of the study relating to the experiences of vulnerable children involved in tobacco farming. The background references information from global societies, regional societies and local ones. This chapter also includes a statement of the problem, aim, research objectives, research questions, and assumptions of the study, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, definition of key terms, dissertation outline, and a chapter summary.

### **1.1 Background of the study**

Globally, ILO (2018) reports that around 2.7 million children worldwide are engaged in tobacco farming, with Asia, Africa, and Latin America having the highest prevalence of child involvement in this industry. In Asia, children make up around 15% of all tobacco harvesters and can work for up to 12 hours daily with only limited time for breaks. (ILO, 2018). In Africa, up to 80% of tobacco is harvested by hand, and children may work for extended periods, often exceeding 12 hours, without adequate food and water (ILO, 2018). In Latin America, minors aged just 8 years old are employed in tobacco farming often working from dawn to dusk for a small wage (ILO, 2018). Additionally, according to the ILO (2018), children make up around 40% of those employed to dry tobacco leaves and pick up tobacco scraps. A report by Human Rights Watch reveals that six-year-old minors are involved in tobacco farming (Wurth and Buchanan, 2015). Children involved in dangerous work are likely to miss out on their education, with only 56% of children aged 5–17 attending school (ILO/UNICEF, 2021). These statistics reveal that child involvement in the tobacco industry is a widespread and serious problem with devastating consequences for children.

Regionally, researches in Sub-Saharan Africa highlights the need to safeguard children from participating in tobacco farming, especially in rural African contexts. According to USDL (2016), several nations in the Sub-Saharan African region, including Zimbabwe, Zambia, Uganda, Mozambique, Kenya, Tanzania as well as Malawi, have been identified as involving children in tobacco farming. These countries have the highest prevalence of child involvement in tobacco farming, with around 41% of children between the ages of 5 and 14 involved in this practice, making it one of the regions with the highest rates worldwide (USDL, 2016). The ILO (2017) asserts that child involvement in tobacco farming in Sub-Saharan Africa is perpetuated mainly due to poverty, as families largely depend on agriculture for their livelihood, and child labour is seen as a way to supplement the family income. As a result, children experience various effects, including exposure to hazards such as nicotine poisoning and harmful pesticides, long working hours, and interference with their education, leisure, and playtime. The ILO (2019) reports that Zimbabwe has one of the highest prevalence rates of child involvement in tobacco farming in Sub-Saharan Africa, with 43% of children below the age of 18. In alignment with this, Wurth and Buchanan (2018) of HRW revealed that in Zimbabwe, minors aged just 7 years old are involved in tobacco farming, frequently working alongside their parents to perform various tasks. Therefore, it indicates that in the regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, the involvement of children in tobacco farming is negatively impacting their education, health, and overall well-being.

Locally, In Zimbabwe, child involvement in tobacco farming is prevalent in four provinces where tobacco is grown extensively, that is, Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland West, Midlands, and Manicaland provinces (Wurth and Buchanan, 2018). A Human Rights Watch study revealed that child involvement in tobacco farming is alarmingly high in Zimbabwe, with children performing almost all tasks in the industry, most of which are hazardous and age-inappropriate (Wurth and

Buchanan, 2018). According to the Zimbabwe Child Labour Association, 70% of child labourers in tobacco farming were under 15 years old (ZCLA, 2019). A study by Stanek (2019) found that impoverished local tobacco farmers, unable to afford additional labour, often rely on their children and young family members to assist with harvesting. This clearly indicates that poverty in Zimbabwe is a key driver of child involvement in tobacco farming, as families struggling to make ends meet often rely on their children's earnings. The International Institute for Sustainable Development (2017) identified child labour in Zimbabwe's tobacco production as a major issue, resulting in children missing school, struggling to concentrate, or dropping out entirely. WHO (2017) reported that children in tobacco farming in Zimbabwe face numerous health and safety risks, including nicotine poisoning, physical injuries, and psychological distress.

Moreover, various global and regional initiatives have been launched and implemented to combat child labour, aiming to provide a structured approach to tackling this complex issue. The ILO's Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999) and the United Nations' (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) emphasized the need to eradicate child labour. However, simply banning children from working is not enough to solve the problem, as poverty is a primary driver of child labour, a connection that the ILO and UNCRC have already acknowledged (Otañez, 2014). Despite this understanding, social security programs in Bangladesh, which aim to address poverty and related issues, still have limited coverage, leaving many families and children vulnerable to child labour (Otañez, 2014). Furthermore, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990) places a duty on state parties to take measures that prevent children from engaging in exploitative work and ensure their access to education and leisure activities. Nevertheless, child labour in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Zimbabwe, remains alarmingly high, resulting in the deprivation of children's right to education and leisure (USDL, 2020). It was reported that the

Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) program is limited and does not cover all children who deserve it due to financial constraints; hence, child labour persists despite the emphasis from ACRWC, leading to unequal access to education for vulnerable children (USDL, 2020). Currently, it is unclear whether instituting policies on child labour issues can help mitigate child involvement in tobacco farming in a positive way (Wurth and Buchanan, 2018).

Furthermore, Zimbabwe has implemented various policies and programs aimed at combating child labour; however, these efforts are inadequate to effectively tackle the extent of the problem. Even the existing ones fail to address the gap in child labour issues, which has become a recurrent subject of concern. Zimbabwe's legal framework prohibits child labour, with the Labour Act (Chapter 28:01) introducing a minimum employment age of 16 years (Government of Zimbabwe, 1992). However, enforcement mechanisms are often inadequate due to financial resource limitations, and child labour remains a significant problem (ILO, 2017). Additionally, the Children's Act outlaws ill-treatment and child labour, aligning with Zimbabwe's Constitution, specifically Section 81(1)(e), which guarantees that children have the right to be safeguarded against economic and sexual exploitation, forced labour, and all forms of mistreatment (Tsabora et al., 2018). Nevertheless, this act lacks specific provisions regulating child labour in non-employment settings, such as family work. As Mubambi (2016) noted, the absence of specific provisions in the Children's Act addressing child labour in domestic settings, particularly non-employment situations like family work, hinders effective protection of children from potential exploitation and abuse. This uncertainty regarding whether work done by children in domestic spaces constitutes child labour undermines the Act's ability to comprehensively address child labour issues in Zimbabwe, potentially weakening the overall effectiveness of child labour policies.

## **1.2 Problem statement**

Child involvement in tobacco farming refers to the practice of children performing tobacco-related tasks, which hinders their access to education, deprives them of play and socialisation with peers, and causes physical, mental, and moral harm. The persistent problem of child involvement in tobacco farming poses a significant challenge, as it not only violates children's fundamental rights but also perpetuates a cycle of poverty, illiteracy, and limited opportunities, thereby hindering their overall development. Despite existing restrictions on child labour, a significant number of children, particularly in rural areas, continue to work on tobacco farms. While numerous studies have been conducted on this topic across the country, none have focused specifically on Makoni district, Rusape, particularly in Bingaguru Ward 10. Therefore, the above plethora of problems have prompted the researcher to conduct this study to unearth the underlying issues surrounding child involvement in tobacco farming, with a specific focus on Bingaguru Ward 10, in order to address this knowledge gap.

## **1.3 Aim of the study**

To explore the experiences of vulnerable children involved in tobacco farming.

## **1.4 Research objectives**

1. To explore the nature of work performed by children in tobacco farming in Bingaguru Ward 10.
2. To explore factors contributing to the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming.
3. To explore the effects of child involvement in tobacco farming on vulnerable children of Bingaguru Ward 10.

4. To examine the strategies that can be adopted to ameliorate child involvement in tobacco farming among vulnerable children of Bingaguru Ward 10.

### **1.5 Research questions**

1. What tasks do children typically perform in tobacco farming?
2. What are the factors contributing to the involvement of children in tobacco farming?
3. What are the effects of child involvement in tobacco farming on vulnerable children of Bingaguru ward 10?
4. What are the strategies that can be adopted to ameliorate child involvement in tobacco farming?

### **1.6 Assumptions of the study**

1. The involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming is alarmingly high in Bingaguru Ward 10.
2. There are several factors contributing to the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming, and numerous effects of this involvement on the children in Bingaguru Ward 10.
3. There are strategies that can be adopted to ameliorate child involvement in tobacco farming among vulnerable children in Bingaguru Ward 10.

### **1.7 Significance of the study**

This research is impactful because it sheds light on the existing gaps in addressing child labour issues, providing valuable insights for improvement. Also, this study is of paramount importance, as its findings will benefit a multitude of stakeholders. Crucially, this study will benefit children in rural areas by recognizing and upholding their rights, eradicating child labour, and providing access to education, thereby ensuring their safety, well-being, and a brighter future. The study will

also benefit government ministries, such as the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare (MoPSLSW), and policymakers by providing them with relevant information on child labour issues, enabling them to develop practical policies and laws that benefit the affected children. Moreover, the study will provide NGOs with valuable insights and data to address this issue effectively, facilitating collaboration and partnerships, strengthening resource mobilization efforts, and supporting monitoring and evaluation of interventions. It will also serve as a point of reference for future researchers and academics, while also enhancing the knowledge and practice of social workers nationwide, specifically regarding the experiences of vulnerable children involved in tobacco farming. This research will have a profound impact in the field of social work, as it will help social workers raise awareness about the risks and dangers faced by vulnerable children working in tobacco farms and provide recommendations for eradicating child labour and ensuring the safety and protection of children from abuse and exploitation. Therefore, this research is relevant because it addresses existing gaps, and its findings will benefit numerous stakeholders.

### **1.8 Delimitation of the study**

The research was carried out in Makoni district of Rusape, specifically in Bingaguru Ward 10. This district is primarily a tobacco farming area, and there are few other sources of income for people living there. This district was chosen for the study because it produces more tobacco than other districts in the Manicaland region. Additionally, the area has the highest population density, making it easier to locate and interview participants. The research also found that many vulnerable children in this area are exposed to hazardous labour on tobacco farms. Therefore, this district was an appropriate location for this research.

The targeted population was children aged 10 to 17. This age range was targeted because these are the ages that are most vulnerable and typically work in tobacco farms, despite the fact that they

are still too young to do so. The researcher also targeted the children's caregivers in the research to understand why they allow their children to work in tobacco farms or send them to other people's farms. The researcher worked with DSD because they deal with and safeguard children. The researcher also included CCWs in her research since they serve as community watchdogs by safeguarding children from mistreatment. The researcher included Agriculture Extension Officer from Premium Tobacco Company since they are the ones who supply the tobacco inputs to the community.

### **1.9 Limitations of the study**

Also, due to the sensitive nature of the research, which involved exploring the illegal use of child labour in tobacco farms, some potential respondents were afraid to share their insights or be involved in the study. Furthermore, some participants who consented to take part in the study were giving false information due to fear of arrest. To deal with this obstacle, the researcher made use of pseudo names instead of their real names to encourage free will participation. The researcher also made it clear that all data collected would be strictly used for academic research purposes only and will not be shared with any third parties. This helped to ensure the safety and privacy of the participants, as well as the integrity of the research. Therefore, confidentiality was of the utmost importance in this research, as it allowed participants to feel comfortable sharing sensitive information, which was essential for the researcher to gain a deeper insight into the research topic.

### **1.10 Definition of key terms**

#### **1.10.1 Child labour**

It refers to any work that interferes with children's education, jeopardizes their physical and mental health, prevents them from playing or socializing with other children, or forces them to do things that are inappropriate for their age (ILO, 2017).



### **1.10.2 Child Protection**

According to WHO (2017), Child protection involves safeguarding measures to prevent and respond to child maltreatment, including abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence, to ensure their safety and well-being.

### **1.10.3 Vulnerable Children**

World Bank (2018), defines vulnerable children as those who are at risk of being left behind or excluded due to their circumstances, including poverty, disability, social or economic disadvantage, exclusion, and/or discrimination.

### **1.10.4 Tobacco farming**

WHO (2017), defines tobacco farming as the cultivation, harvesting, curing, and processing of tobacco leaves for the purpose of producing tobacco products.

### **1.10.5 Child Experiences**

Child experience refers to a broad range of aspects in a minor's life, including physical, emotional, social, and psychological encounters that occur while they are engaged in tobacco farming activities (Wurth and Buchanan, 2018).

## **1.11 Dissertation structure**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction and research background**

This chapter focuses on the research background, a problem statement, research aim, objectives, and questions, as well as assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study. Additionally, it defines key terms, outlines the dissertation structure, and provides a chapter summary.

### **Chapter 2: Literature review**

The chapter provides a comprehensive review of the literature on the experiences of vulnerable children involved in tobacco farming, and outlines relevant theoretical and conceptual frameworks to inform the study. It examines the legal frameworks that underpin the safeguarding of children from child labour, and identifies gaps in the existing literature that this study aims to address.

### **Chapter 3: Research methodology**

This chapter presents the procedure used to explore the experiences of vulnerable children involved in tobacco farming. It clearly postulates the chosen research approach and design, sampling strategy, study population, research procedure, data collection methods and tools, data presentation and analysis, and relevant research ethics.

### **Chapter 4: Data analysis, presentation and discussion of findings**

This chapter presents the study's results, analysis, and discussion, adhering to the qualitative research approach.

### **Chapter 5: Summary, conclusions and recommendations**

This final chapter concludes the study by summarizing the main points, drawing final conclusions, and recommending strategies to mitigate the involvement of children in tobacco farming.

#### **1.12 Chapter summary**

The chapter explored the research background, examining the experiences of vulnerable children in tobacco farming. The background drew on information from global, regional, and local societies. This chapter provided a clear statement of the problem, aims, research objectives, research questions, and research assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. Additionally, it also

defined key terms, outlined the dissertation structure, and concluded with a summary of this chapter.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter conducts a review of the existing literature on the experiences of children vulnerable to tobacco farming. The chapter begins by presenting Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems

Theory as the guiding theoretical perspective. This section explores the specific nature related to work performed by vulnerable children in tobacco farming, providing a global, regional, and local overview. It explores the literature on the factors contributing to the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming, as well as the effects of child involvement in tobacco farming on these children. The chapter also reviews strategies that can be adopted to mitigate child involvement in tobacco farming among vulnerable children. Additionally, it examines the legal frameworks that underpin the safeguarding of children from child labour, and identifies gaps in the existing literature that this study aims to address.

## **2.1 Theoretical framework**

Patton (2015) defined a theoretical framework as a road map that the researcher can use to guide their work, from developing the research question to collect and analyse data.

### **2.1.1 Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory**

#### *2.1.1.1 Microsystem*

This is the immediate setting in which a child directly interacts, such as family (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This microsystem level will guide the research in exploring experiences within the microsystem or environment of vulnerable children that contribute to their involvement in tobacco farming. Specifically, poverty at the microsystem level plays a dominant role in shaping children's experiences, hence perpetuating child involvement in tobacco farming (Stanek, 2019). This means that when families struggle to make ends meet, they may rely on their children to supplement their income, leading to involvement in tobacco farming. Consequently, the microsystem, particularly family economic circumstances, significantly influences child labour decisions in tobacco farming. Therefore, understanding the poverty-child labour dynamic within the microsystem is crucial for

developing effective solutions that address the root causes of child involvement in tobacco farming.

#### *2.1.1.2 The Mesosystem*

The mesosystem, as described by Bronfenbrenner (1979), refers to the interconnections and interactions between various microsystems in a child's life, such as family and school. In the context regarding children's involvement in the tobacco farming industry, the mesosystem has a significant impact on shaping the occurrence and perpetuation of child labour within this industry (Walsh, 2018). For instance, the dynamic between a child's family and the local educational infrastructure such as limited access to quality education, inadequate school resources, or remote school locations can influence families to involve their children in tobacco farming (Tindara and Dominguez, 2018). Consistent with this, a study by ILO (2014) in Kaoma district, Zambia found that families viewed child labor as a more viable option for their child's future than education due to a lack of access to quality education, inadequate infrastructure, and distance from schools. Therefore, this highlights that if the mesosystem lacks supportive connections between the family and educational institutions, the child's opportunities for education may be compromised, increasing the likelihood of engagement in labour. Hence, understanding the nexus between a poor educational system and child involvement in tobacco farming within the mesosystem is crucial for governments and NGOs to identify areas where they can effectively target child labor prevention efforts.

#### *2.1.1.3 The exosystem*

The exosystem, as a component of the ecological systems theory, encompasses external environments that have an indirect impact on a child's growth and development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In this context, specifically in the context of children's involvement in the tobacco farming

industry, the exosystem has a significant impact on shaping the occurrence and perpetuation of child labour within this industry (Walsh, 2018). For instance, the exosystem, which includes poor social services such as inadequate child protection and/or support programs, can exacerbate the conditions that led to child involvement in tobacco farming (Wurth and Buchanan, 2018). Moreover, applying Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory offers a deeper understanding of how social environments within the exosystem influence children's involvement in hazardous tobacco farming practices (Walsh, 2018). This perspective emphasizes the need for interventions and policies that strengthen social services and provide robust child protection measures. Hence, the government and NGOs can implement these measures to break the cycle of child labour and promote healthier environments for children in tobacco farming rural villages

#### *2.1.1.4 Macrosystem*

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the macro system, within the ecological systems theory framework, refers to the larger cultural, societal, and economic environments that surround individuals and communities. When examining the problem of child labour in tobacco farming rural villages, the macro system significantly influences the prevalence and perpetuation of child labour practices (Walsh, 2018). For example, the macro system encompasses the global supply chains that connect tobacco farming areas with international markets, which can indirectly influence child involvement in tobacco farming. As noted by Wurth and Buchanan (2018), the demand for tobacco products and the economic forces within the global tobacco industry can indirectly influence child labour practices. High demand and exploitative practices within the supply chain can create economic pressures, and low prices paid to farmers can contribute to child labour (Wurth and Buchanan, 2018). Therefore, applying Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory offers a deeper understanding of how social and economic environments within the

exosystem influence children's involvement in hazardous tobacco farming practices (Walsh, 2018). Henceforth, this perspective highlights the need for interventions and policies that address these systemic factors, aiming to improve labour standards within the tobacco industry and increase prices paid to farmers, and ameliorate child labour.

#### *2.1.1.5 Chronosystem*

The chronosystem, a key component of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979), refers to the dimension and its influence on the individual and their environment. This component plays a crucial role in understanding child labour in tobacco farming. Specifically, the chronosystem's influence on the development and dynamics of child labour practices over time is significant (Walsh, 2018). For instance, farming families' long-term economic pressures and debt cycles, which can last for generations, perpetuate child labour (Wurth and Buchanan, 2018). Moreover, the seasonal nature of tobacco farming creates a sense of urgency, leading farmers to rely on their children during peak harvesting seasons (Appiah, 2018). As a result, prolonged involvement in tobacco farming hinders children's educational and personal growth (Appiah, 2018). Therefore, recognizing the chronosystem's influence is essential for addressing the deep-rooted factors driving child labour in tobacco farming. To combat this issue, government and NGOs must work together to develop sustainable solutions that consider the complex interplay of time, environment, and socioeconomic factors.

## **2.2 Conceptualization of child involvement in tobacco farming**

This section reviews literature on the conceptual meanings of the main characteristics of child involvement in tobacco farming. These characteristics include; work-related tasks and responsibilities, dangerous working conditions, education disruption, social and play deprivation, and emotional and psychological well-being.

### *2.2.1 Work-related tasks and responsibilities*

According to Otañez (2014), children engaged in tobacco farming undertake a range of labour-intensive tasks that are both physically demanding and time-consuming. These tasks include preparing seedling beds, applying chemicals, transplanting seedlings to land plots, controlling weed growth, removing the tobacco flowers from the top of the plants to ensure growth of large leaves, harvesting mature leaves, stringing and sorting leaves for processing, and packing leaves into bales for storage and transportation. This work requires significant physical effort and time, making children vulnerable to various risks and hazards.

### *2.2.2 Dangerous working conditions.*

Children involved in tobacco farming perform hazardous tasks that expose them to significant risks and dangers (Wurth and Buchanan, 2018). While working, they handle toxic chemicals and pesticides, operate heavy machinery, and use sharp objects, making them vulnerable to extreme weather conditions like heat, cold, and rain (Wurth and Buchanan, 2018). Moreover, according to Conde (2022), children involved in tobacco farming often work long hours without adequate protective equipment and safety measures, putting them at risk of accidents and injuries. Consequently, they are susceptible to physical health and well-being risks, making them vulnerable to acute and chronic health problems.

### *2.2.3 Education disruption*

Children involved in tobacco farming face disruptions to their education. According to Appiah (2018), children may miss school regularly or drop out completely to work full-time in tobacco farming. Furthermore, Wurth and Buchanan (2018) note that children may repeat grades due to poor academic performance caused by frequent absences or lack of focus in school. Hence, this



indicates that children involved in tobacco farming are highly vulnerable to education disruptions, which can have long-term consequences for their academic achievement and future opportunities.

#### *2.2.4 Social and play deprivation*

Children work for long hours because tobacco farming requires a lot of work, so they lose valuable time that they could spend learning, playing, and interacting with their peers (Trinh, 2020). This means that tobacco farming hinders their ability to socialize and play, as tobacco-related tasks leave them exhausted. As a result, children become vulnerable and experience delayed social skills development and difficulty forming and maintaining relationships.

#### *2.2.5 Emotional and psychological well-being*

Eweya et al. (2017) assert that children involved in tobacco farming may experience emotional exhaustion, stress, anxiety, and depression due to long working hours in a physically demanding environment, exposure to toxic chemicals and health risks, and social isolation, which limits their opportunities for socialization and play. Hence, child involvement in tobacco farming may consequently lead to children being vulnerable to impaired emotional and psychological development.

### **2.3 Nature of work performed by children in tobacco farming**

#### *2.3.1 Global overview*

In Americas, the exploitation of children in tobacco farming is a significant concern in several countries, including Mexico, Honduras, Argentina, and Brazil, where children are engaged in tobacco-related activities. Gamlin (2011) asserts that in Mexico, 5-year-old help their parents on tobacco plantations, contributing to tasks such as harvesting, stringing, and drying leaves, which exposes them to hazardous levels of pesticides. Also, Tuttle (2014) reports that in Honduras,

approximately 241,000 children aged 11-17 work in tobacco plantations, where they are responsible for applying pesticides to the crops. Alarmingly, they do so without proper protective gear, often immersing their hands and arms in pesticide containers to scoop out the chemicals and apply them directly to the plants. In Argentina, an alarming 7% of the total workforce is comprised of child laborers, numbering approximately 1.9 million children aged 5-14, who are frequently exposed to hazardous conditions, including tobacco farm work and physically demanding tasks (Tuttle, 2014). ILO (2017) reported that in Guatemala, it is estimated that around 1.4 million minors, aged 7 to 14 years old engage in hazardous work, including tasks on tobacco fields and other sectors, putting them at risk of physical and psychological harm. According to a study by Fassa et al. (2021), approximately 1.8 million children aged 5 to 17 years in Southern Brazil were engaged in child labour in the tobacco industry, performing tasks such as harvesting and preparing tobacco leaves for sale.

South-East Asia, In India, it is estimated that 225,000 children, or approximately 8.4% of the of the labour force, are engaged in tobacco production tasks and reportedly suffer from poor psychosocial development due to their working conditions, as well as severe punishment for infractions committed during working time (Kumar, 2018). Guarcellob et al. (2016) reported that, in Indonesia, a study of 100 child laborers funded by the tobacco industry found that many children work in tobacco fields, and 33% of them experienced work-related accidents. In Nepal, children involved in tobacco farming to assist in tobacco cultivation and performing tasks such as planting, weeding, and harvesting tobacco leaves (Varghese, 2020). Approximately 82% of the estimated 6 million child labourers in Bangladesh work in agriculture, including the cultivation of tobacco, monitoring of tobacco drying barns at night, often without compensation (Otañez, 2014). According to the study by Phetphum et al. (2021) around 12% of Burley tobacco farmers in

Thailand rely on child labour for tobacco farming tasks, specifically the collection, harvesting, and drying of tobacco leaves.

### *2.3.2 Regional overview*

Child labour is a widespread issue in Africa's tobacco industry, particularly in countries like Malawi, Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique, where tobacco companies like BAT take advantage of low production costs. Eweya et al. (2015) assert that in Malawi, more than 78,000 children under the age of 10, some as young as 5, in tobacco-farming families, are engaged in hazardous labour such as tobacco harvesting and field clearing. A research study conducted by Kweyuh (2017) found that minors participate in tobacco production on almost every one of the 50 Kenyan tobacco-grower operations examined. According to reports from Uganda, children from families involved in tobacco farming are frequently withdrawn from school and are instead assigned to perform various tasks in tobacco fields, such as weeding, watering, and sewing bunches of tobacco leaves for drying (Otañez, 2014). A report by ECLTF (2018) revealed that in Mozambique, an overwhelming majority (80%) of families involved in tobacco farming utilize their children who are 6 years old to perform in tobacco-related tasks. A study by ILO (2014) showed that more than 6,000 children in Zambia are working in tobacco farms, performing a range of dangerous tasks, such as lifting excessive weights, handling harmful chemicals, and working for prolonged periods, often beyond the legal limit for child workers. The research conducted by ILO (2016) reported that children involved in tobacco farming in Tanzania suffered from signs of nicotine exposure, including stomach illness, vomiting, and lightheadedness, and spinal harm caused by lifting heavy loads and performing repetitive tasks.

### *2.3.3 Local overview*

In Zimbabwe, child involvement in tobacco farming is most prevalent in four provinces where tobacco is grown extensively: Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland West, Manicaland, and Midlands (Wurth & Buchanan, 2018). According to the USDOL (2022), minors between the ages of 8 and 17 are engaged in various tasks on tobacco plantations, including seedling cultivation, crop maintenance, packing, leaf harvesting, and quality assessment. As a result, these children are exposed to hazardous chemicals and are at risk of nicotine poisoning from handling tobacco leaves. Furthermore, the ECLT Foundation and MoPSLSW (2019) report that 26.3% of children between 5 and 17 years old were engaged in tobacco-related tasks such as curing, spraying, and weeding. Notably, the highest rate of child participation in tobacco farming was recorded in Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland West provinces. A report by Wurth and Buchanan (2018) of HRW revealed that children aged just as 7 years old are involved in tobacco farming, frequently working alongside their parents to perform various tasks. These tasks, which include planting, harvesting, curing, sorting, and applying pesticides and fertilizers, put them at risk of nicotine poisoning and pesticide exposure (Wurth and Buchanan, 2018). The ILO (2017) asserts that children in Zimbabwe are involved in tobacco farming, performing tasks such as planting, harvesting, curing, and sorting tobacco, and often work long hours in hazardous conditions. Hence, one can note that children perform various tasks in tobacco farming, most of which are hazardous to them.

## **2.4 Factors that contribute to the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming**

### *2.4.1 Poverty*

Poverty was highlighted as a significant factor contributing to the involvement of children in tobacco farming. A study conducted in Zimbabwe by Stanek (2019) revealed impoverished local tobacco farmers, unable to afford additional labour, often rely on their children and young family

members to assist with the harvesting process. Santos et al. (2022) reported that in Northern Philippines, children from poor families were engaged in tobacco farming and less likely to attend school because their families could not afford to send them to school or support them financially. Similarly, Xia and Deininger (2019) noted that in Malawi, many children worked in tobacco farms to help their families earn an income for food, clothes and school fees. The report highlighted that many children in tobacco-growing households were not in school, and the cost of education was often prohibitively expensive for families (Xia and Deininger, 2019). This clearly indicates that poverty is a key driver of child involvement in tobacco farming, as families struggling to make ends meet often rely on their children's earnings.

#### *2.4.2 Limited access to education*

Limited access to education was identified as another factor contributing to child involvement in tobacco farming. According to the study by Wurth and Buchanan (2018), school fees were a major barrier to school enrollment among small-scale tobacco farming families in the Mashonaland Central region of Zimbabwe, leading families who could not afford the fees to keep their children out of school and instead engage them in tobacco farming. Also, ILO (2014) reported that children in Kaoma district, Zambia, could not access school during rainy seasons due to flooded rivers and a lack of bridges, leading them to help with tobacco farming instead. Tindana and Dominguez (2018) found that in Ghana, there was a lack of adequate schools and teachers in tobacco farming areas, resulting in children having to walk long distances to attend school. As a result, many children dropped out of school and became involved in tobacco farming. Hence, this shows that limited access to education perpetuates the cycle of child involvement in tobacco farming.

#### *2.4.3 Inadequate regulatory support and protection*

Inadequate regulatory support and protection was highlighted as one of the factors contributing to the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming. Wurth and Buchanan (2015) of Human Rights Watch assert that the US government has failed to adequately protect child tobacco workers, many of whom are immigrants, and allowed children as young as 12 to work long hours on tobacco farms without imposing sufficient legal restrictions. Thus, putting them at risk of exploitation, harm, and potential long-term health consequences (Wurth and Buchanan, 2015). Also, the research conducted by Phetphum et al. (2021) found that tobacco farmers in Thailand who were not inspected by authorities lacked awareness of child labour regulations and were six times more likely to engage children in tobacco cultivation than farmers who had undergone inspections. Therefore, this highlights how inadequate regulatory support and protection leads to the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming, exposing them to hazardous labour and exploitation, with no effective safeguards in place to protect their rights and well-being.

#### *2.4.4 Parental illiteracy*

A study by ILO (2014) in Kaoma district, Zambia, found that high levels of illiteracy among parents were associated with a lower likelihood of encouraging their children to pursue education. As a result, children of parents with limited education were less likely to recognise the benefits of education and were at a higher risk of being engaged in tobacco-related activities (ILO, 2014). Similarly, a study conducted in Tabora Region, Tanzania, revealed that parents with limited education were more likely to involve their children in tobacco farming, as they did not prioritise education and saw little benefit in it for their children's future (ILO, 2016). According to research conducted by Miranda (2021) of the World Literacy Foundation, functionally illiterate parents tend to prioritise work over education, leading to lower educational aspirations for their children and a

higher likelihood of their children dropping out of school. This research suggests that parents' educational background significantly influences their children's education, potentially perpetuating a cycle of limited access to education and hindering social mobility. Therefore, parental illiteracy contributes to the perpetuation of child involvement in tobacco farming.

#### *2.4.5 Limited access to alternative crop opportunities*

Limited access to alternative crop opportunities was pointed out as another factor contributing to the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming. According to Barrett (2019), the lack of alternative crop opportunity forces families to rely on a single cash crop, such as tobacco, due to limited market access, lack of education and skills, insufficient infrastructure and resources, and poor rainfall patterns. A study by Sahadewo et al. (2020) in Indonesia found that respondents considered their area suitable for tobacco cultivation due to its ability to thrive in poor rainfall conditions and the existing market demand. However, they noted that growing alternative crops like rice, chilies, eggplant, and green beans is not viable due to a lack of market demand, unlike tobacco which has an established market (Sahadewo et al, 2020). As a result, families are likely to continue growing tobacco, despite its unprofitability and unsustainability, and the negative implications for children, who are often forced to participate in the labour-intensive process.

#### *2.4.6 Lack of Awareness and understanding*

Lack of awareness and understanding was identified as another contributing factor to the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming. According to a study by Phetphum et al. (2021) among Burley tobacco farmers in Thailand, those who had a limited understanding of the harmful effects of tobacco-related labour on children were more likely to have a positive attitude towards involving children in tobacco cultivation and production. This, in other words, suggests that a lack of awareness about the consequences of child labour may contribute to its perpetuation

in the tobacco farming. In contrast with the argument, Conde (2023) asserts that Mexican and Brazilian parents who worked in the United States were aware that engaging their children in tobacco cultivation and production had a negative impact on their children's education, health, and well-being, but they still needed money to survive. Similarly, Sarah (2015) argues that parents are forced to send their children to do harmful jobs for survival reasons, even when they know it is wrong. Therefore, this suggests that the involvement of children in tobacco farming can be attributed to a lack of awareness and understanding, but to some extent, it is also driven by desperate circumstances, as those facing financial constraints may feel they have no other option, despite being aware of the harmful consequences.

#### *2.4.7 The dependence of tobacco farmers on unfair contractual relationships with tobacco companies*

The dependence of tobacco farmers on unfair contractual relationships with tobacco companies was identified as one of the factors contributing to the prevalence of child involvement in tobacco farming. A study done by Mango and Kugedera (2022) reported that farmers in Shamva district, Zimbabwe, were complaining that they were being monopolised and manipulated due to their unfortunate situation of lacking resources and funding sources for tobacco production, which is perpetuated through leaf downgrading, price suppression, and inflated prices for tobacco inputs. In line with this, Masocha (2021) adds that due to the low prices for tobacco leaf paid by tobacco companies, tobacco farmers struggle to make a living. In order to repay the inputs provided by tobacco companies, farming families are pressured to grow more tobacco than they can handle, ending up relying on their children's unpaid labour because they cannot afford to hire seasonal workers (Mango and Kugedera, 2022). Thus, the exploitation of farmers by tobacco companies perpetuates poverty and the involvement of children in tobacco farming.



## **2.5 Effects of child involvement in tobacco farming on vulnerable children.**

### *2.5.1 Education disruption*

Education disruption was highlighted as one of the effects of child involvement in tobacco farming on vulnerable children. Wurth and Buchanan (2018) conducted interviews with teachers in Zimbabwe who observed that students were frequently absent from school during the tobacco season. According to Appiah (2018), a study conducted in the Volta region of Ghana found that among children involved in tobacco farming, 65% attend school only one or two days a week, while just 35% attend school all five days a week. In addition, Appiah (2018) reports that headmasters noted that children working on tobacco farms struggled to complete assignments, concentrate, and participate in class discussions due to physical exhaustion, resulting in grade repetition, poor performance, and low grades. This suggests that child involvement in tobacco farming may be affecting students' education by interfering with their ability to concentrate, perform well in school, and attend regularly. This starkly contrasts with Article 32 of the UNCRC (1989), which emphasises the importance of education by stipulating that children shall not be involved in work that interferes with their education or compromises their overall well-being.

### *2.5.2 Physical hazards and health risks*

A study conducted by Wurth and Buchanan (2018) in Zimbabwe reported that many children who were interviewed described symptoms consistent with green tobacco sickness, a form of acute nicotine poisoning that includes respiratory problems, nausea, vomiting, headaches, and dizziness. Conde (2020) adds on to say that exploitation of Mexican and Brazilian migrant children working in US tobacco fields is a significant concern, as they often work for 10–12 hours a day, exposed to harmful nicotine through contact and absorption, leading to serious health issues. Conde (2023) reveals that teachers in the USA frequently observed the physical toll of tobacco-related labour, as

their Latino immigrants students showed visible signs of body injuries such as cuts on their hands, sun burns, and skin damage, as well as symptoms like nausea, drowsiness, and fatigue, which were likely caused by the children's prolonged exposure to harmful conditions without proper protective equipment.

### *2.5.3 Social isolation and play deprivation*

Social isolation and play deprivation were identified as another effect of child involvement in tobacco farming. Colburn (2014) reports that children working in tobacco fields in the United States miss out on playtime, sports, and socializing with peers, as they spend most of their time harvesting and hanging tobacco. In addition, Conde (2023) notes that working in tobacco-related tasks leaves children exhausted, which hinders their ability to engage in games, play, and rest. Trinh (2020) adds that children who are overworked in tobacco farming lose valuable time that could be spent learning, playing, and interacting with their peers. Hence, child involvement in tobacco farming has a profound impact on children's lives, denying them the opportunity to experience a normal childhood with all its benefits, and instead forcing them to work long hours in hazardous conditions. This stands in sharp contrasts with Article 31 of the UNCRC (1989), which creates a specific right for all children to have rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to their age.

### *2.5.4 Psychological and emotional consequences*

Researches indicate that psychological and emotional consequences are another effect of child involvement in tobacco farming on vulnerable children. A study conducted by Conde (2020) in United States tobacco fields found that Latino immigrant children were traumatized and distressed as survivors of exploitation, violence, racism, sexism, and terrible living and working conditions. According to a study by Eweya, Tsikanda, and Chisumpa (2017) in Malawi, many children

working in tobacco farming experienced emotional exhaustion, stress, anxiety, and depression due to the lack of control they had over their lives. The researchers found that the children in their study reported having no control over their work schedules, with no say in when to work, how much to work, or even whether to attend school (Eweya et al., 2017). Therefore, this shows that involving children in tobacco farming has severe psychological and emotional consequences for them, as they are still young and unaware of their rights.

#### *2.5.5 Exposure to exploitation and poor working conditions*

Exposure to exploitation and poor working conditions are another effect of child involvement in tobacco farming on vulnerable children. According to Conde (2020), Latino immigrant children were forced to work to support their families or fend for themselves when their parents were deported or arrested, making them more vulnerable to exploitation and violence. Mwamba (2015) further notes that many children reported receiving low wages and experiencing physical abuse, including being beaten and threatened by their employers if they tried to escape or refuse to work, as well as verbal abuse, such as being yelled at or cursed at (Mwamba, 2015). Therefore, it is evident that the involvement of children in tobacco farming exposes them to unfair treatment, poor working conditions, and low wages.

## **2.6 Strategies that can be adopted to ameliorate child involvement in tobacco farming among vulnerable children**

### *2.6.1 Educational interventions*

Educational interventions have been shown to be an effective strategy for reducing child involvement in tobacco farming. According to the reports by the USDL (2022), the Zimbabwean government implemented BEAM program to keep children in school and to enroll children who lack access to education due to economic hardship. Sabrina (2022) reported that HRW, in

partnership with local tobacco companies in Nusa Tenggara Barat province, Indonesia, introduced an after-school program that successfully reduced the number of primary school-aged children working in tobacco farming by 90%. Sabrina (2022) further notes that HRW and local tobacco companies implemented educational scholarship programs for children who lacked access to education. This program was reportedly an effort to decrease the incidence of child labour in Indonesia. This means keeping children in school reduces their likelihood of working in hazardous environments. Hence, educational interventions can be a strategy to ameliorate child involvement in tobacco farming.

### *2.6.2 Social protection*

Social protection is another strategy to ameliorate child involvement in tobacco farming. Wurth and Buchanan (2018) argue that social protection initiatives can reduce child involvement in tobacco farming by providing families with the necessary support to meet their basic needs, thereby alleviating financial pressures that force families to rely on their children's labour. According to reports by USDL (2022), the Zimbabwean government, in collaboration with UNICEF, introduced HSCT program to support households facing labour constraints and food insecurity, with the goal of reducing child labour. The program experienced significant growth, expanding from 55,000 households in 2021 to 78,000 households across 20 districts in 2022. This means that there was a significant increase of 23,000 households, showcasing a commitment to eradicating child labour within families. Hence, by helping families earn a living, this approach reduces the likelihood of children being forced into tobacco farming, effectively breaking the cycle of child labour.

### *2.6.3 Awareness raising campaigns*

A study by ILO (2016) in the Tabora region of Tanzania found that awareness-raising campaigns about the risks and consequences of child involvement in tobacco farming are essential for communities, families, and children themselves. This implies that awareness-raising efforts help them learn about the risks and make informed decisions to protect children from harmful work. In support of this, Sabrina (2022) added that awareness-raising among Indonesian parents informed them about the illegality and health risks of child involvement in tobacco farming, as well as the importance of education. Awareness-raising among caregivers is crucial to prevent child involvement in tobacco farming, given their profound impact on their children's decisions and well-being. Therefore, raising awareness is crucial to prevent children from being involved in tobacco farming.

### *2.6.4 Penalties and Deterrence*

According to Murphy (2019), imposing appropriate penalties and deterrence measures is crucial to discourage child labor practices in tobacco farming. Penalties should be proportionate to the severity of the violation and may include fines, sanctions, and, in extreme cases, criminal charges (Murphy, 2019). This means that individuals who involve their children in tobacco farming will face consequences, making them aware that their actions are wrong. Wurth and Buchanan (2015) of HRW further emphasize that effectively enforcing penalties sends a strong message that child labour is unacceptable and deters potential violators. Therefore, penalties and deterrence are a key strategy to mitigate child involvement in tobacco farming.

### *2.6.5 Strengthening regulatory frameworks*

Strengthening the regulatory framework is a crucial strategy to mitigate child involvement in tobacco farming. According to Wurth and Buchanan (2015) of HRW, ILO should develop clear,

implementable guidance on the hazards of tobacco farming for children without delay. This guidance should urge states and companies to prohibit all children under 18 from tasks involving direct contact with tobacco in any form. Furthermore, as highlighted by Conde (2020), there is a need to reform tobacco laws and cultural norms surrounding the exploitation of Mexican and Brazilian migrant children in the USA. Current legislation permits children to work at a young age with parental consent, perpetuating a harmful practice. Therefore, reforming these laws and norms is essential to reduce the involvement of children in tobacco farming.

## **2.7 Legal framework underpinning the protection of children from child labour**

Legal frameworks can be viewed in a broader spectrum as involving laws, policies, and procedures that are put in place to authorize the provision of specific services. In this context, legal frameworks refer to laws, policies, and procedures adopted by state parties to provide the basis of authority on which the protection of children against child labour is hinged. These include global, regional, and local frameworks, which will be discussed hereunder.

### *2.7.1 Global legal framework (s) on child labour*

Global frameworks provide a blueprint for the protection of children's well-being in tobacco-producing areas worldwide (Cottrell and Singh, 2020). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) regards child labour as a violation of children's rights. The UNCRC (1989) is a human rights treaty that sets out the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of children. Article 32 of the UNCRC (1989) specifically addresses issues to do with child labour. It asserts that children have the right to be protected from economic exploitation. This means that children should not be subjected to work that exploits them financially or places them in situations where they are vulnerable to abuse or harm (UNCRC, 1989). Furthermore, it specifically prohibits children from engaging in any work that is likely to be hazardous, which includes work that poses

risks to their health, safety, or overall well-being. Article 32 of the UNCRC (1989), emphasizes the importance of education by stating that children should not be involved in work that interferes with their education. It recognizes education as a fundamental right for children and acknowledges that engaging in labourious or hazardous work can hinder their ability to access and benefit from education. Renold (2010) argued that the UNCRC provides a comprehensive framework for protecting children from harmful work and recognizes the importance of providing children with a safe and healthy environment, access to education, and protection from exploitation and abuse. Such provisions are the blueprint on which the well-being of children in tobacco-producing areas globally hinges.

The International Labour Organization's Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (C-182) of 1999 also provide global underpinnings for the protection of children from worst forms of child labour. Convention 182 is a key international treaty aimed at eliminating the most harmful forms of child labour (ILO, 1999). The convention 182 (C-182) requires all the member states to take immediate action to prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour which include slavery, forced labour, trafficking and hazardous work that jeopardize the health, safety, or morals of children (ILO, 1999). It also recognizes child labour as a global issue, therefore, it promotes international cooperation among governments, employers, workers, and other stakeholders to address the root causes and consequences of child labour effectively. This is in line with Anggrian (2020) who suggested that coordinated efforts among governments, civil society organizations, and private sector actors are needed to effectively address child labour. The ILO Convention 182 (C-182) therefore has established a clear legal framework to protect children from hazardous work in tobacco farming. Thus, governments and stakeholders involved in tobacco farming globally should comply with these legal frameworks to prevent the exploitation and harm of children.

### *2.7.2 Regional legal framework (s) on child labour*

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) (1990) is the reviewed regional framework that outlines the fundamental rights of African children and sets out the obligations of African states to protect, promote, and respect these rights. Article 11 of the ACRWC forbids the employment of children in any work that is likely to endanger their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development (UN, 1990). Mbengue (2019) posits that the ACRWC's contribution to the children resembles to that of the UNCRC, as they both emphasize the protection of children from hazardous work that jeopardizes their health, education, and development. Aikins (2021) adds that the ACRWC places a duty on state parties to take measures to ensure that children do not engage in exploitative labour, and to ensure their access to education and leisure activities. Therefore, by requiring state parties to outlaw exploitative labour, the ACRWC offers a legal framework for tackling the issues that vulnerable children in Africa face.

### *2.7.3 National legal framework (s) on child labour*

The Children's Act (Chapter 5:06) is one of the most significant legal frameworks in Zimbabwe for dealing with child labour issues, providing general guidelines for handling such matters. It outlaws ill-treatment and child labour, and this is in line with Section 81(1) (e) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, which provides that children should be protected from economic and sexual exploitation, child labour, and any form of abuse (Tsabora et al., 2018). Part 1 of the Act, Section 3(2), also enshrines the best interests of the child principle, which is a key pillar for child protection under the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe, the UNCRC, and the ACRWC. Section 34 of the Children's Act also prohibits withholding education for the purpose of child labour (Tsabora et al., 2018). However, this act lacks specific provisions regulating child labour in non-employment



settings, such as family work. In the same vein, Mubambi (2016) noted that the absence of specific provisions in the Children's Act addressing child labour in domestic settings, particularly non-employment situations like family work, hinders effective protection of children from potential exploitation and abuse. Hence, this uncertainty regarding whether work done by children in domestic spaces constitutes child labour undermines the Act's ability to comprehensively address child labor issues in Zimbabwe. This, as a result, could potentially weaken the overall effectiveness of child labour in Zimbabwe.

The Zimbabwean Labour Act (Chapter 28:01) (1985), as amended in 2015, provides legal protection against child labour. Mangota (2010) notes that the Act prohibits the employment of children under the age of 16 in regular employment, except for light work that does not harm the child's health, well-being, or education. This aims to safeguard children from harmful labour practices while also allowing them to continue their education. According to the Zimbabwean Labour Act, employers must ensure suitable working conditions for children aged 16 to 18. Section 73(3) mandates adequate rest periods and protection from hazardous work. According to Mangota (2010), violations of these provisions are subject to fines and/or imprisonment, as specified in Section 77 of the Act. This legislation reflects Zimbabwe's commitment to protecting children from exploitative labour practices while also recognizing the importance of education in their development. Hence, the Labour Act establishes a comprehensive framework for safeguarding children's rights and well-being in the workplace.

The Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) recognizes various rights that are relevant to the contentious issue of child labour. Firstly, the Constitution defines a child as any person under 18 years old and prohibits children in this age group from engaging in work or services that are inappropriate for their age or hazardous to their physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development. According

to Section 63(b) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013), participation in cultural activities is prohibited if it violates any fundamental right or freedom, including the protection of children from exploitation, child labor, maltreatment, neglect, or abuse. Therefore, while employing child labour may be part of a particular culture, it would be unconstitutional under the Zimbabwean Constitution as it violates children's rights to be protected from harmful labour practices. In line with the Children's Act, UNCRC, and ACRWC, Section 81 of the Constitution is underpinned by the principle of the best interests of the child (Tsabora et al., 2018). Therefore, this clearly shows that the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) prohibits child labour practices that undermine children's rights, such as their right to education, safety, and protection from abuse.

## **2.8 Gaps in the literature**

The researcher found out that despite global, regional, and local efforts to combat child labour, it remains a persistent issue in countries like Zimbabwe, where tobacco is extensively cultivated. This suggests a knowledge gap in addressing the problem. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the underlying causes and effects of child involvement in tobacco farming, as well as identify effective strategies to mitigate the issue from the perspectives of those who are experiencing the phenomenon and experts in the field of child welfare.

Also, researches on child labour issues in Zimbabwe's tobacco farming industry is limited. To address this gap, this study aims to explore the personal experiences of children working in this sector. While earlier research focused on statistics and numbers, this study will take a more in-depth, qualitative approach to gain a richer understanding of the issue and its impact on vulnerable children.

## **2.9 Chapter summary**

This chapter reviewed existing literature on the experiences of vulnerable children working in tobacco farming. The chapter presented the theory of Bronfrenbrenner's Social Ecological Systems Theory as per theoretical framework. It presented the literature on the factors that contributing to the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farms. The chapter explored the literature on the effects of child involvement in tobacco farming among vulnerable children. The chapter also reviewed some of the strategies that can be adopted to ameliorate child involvement in tobacco farming among vulnerable children.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the process that was taken in investigation of the experiences of vulnerable children involved in tobacco farming. It clearly postulates the chosen research approach, research design, study population, sampling, research procedure, data collection methods, data collection

tools, data presentation, research ethics, data analysis, research ethics/ethical considerations relevant towards the study. A clear justification of the chosen methodology will be provided.

### **3.1 Research Approach**

This research employed a qualitative approach in an investigation of experiences of vulnerable children working in tobacco farming rural villages. A qualitative approach has been described by Bryman (2012) as an approach that is focused on words and the collection and analysis of data in a non-quantitative approaches. The researcher chose to use a qualitative research method in order to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of participants. This is supported by Creswell (2014), who stated that qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. As this study seeks to explore the experiences of vulnerable children working in tobacco farming, qualitative approach best suits this study in the context of quality assessment of issues and the provision of quality results. The data collected through in-depth and key informant interviews, as well as focus group discussion, provided the researcher with a more nuanced and complex understanding of the experiences of vulnerable children involved in tobacco farming. The data that was gathered allowed for the development of a pattern of meaning and themes, which helped the researcher to draw conclusions and make sense of the phenomenon being studied.

### **3.2 Research design**

A research design is a plan or a proposed structure for how research will be conducted, including the strategies that can be employed (Neuman, 2014). Gray (2014) adds that research designs are concerned with the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. The researcher used a case study to provide an accurate and comprehensive overview of the case by conducting in-depth interviews. A case study involves a detailed and in-depth analysis of a case (Cresswell, 2014). As a result, the

study used a case study to give a complete analysis of the experiences of vulnerable children in tobacco farming, as well as to study the nature of work performed by children in tobacco farming, factors contributing to child involvement in tobacco farming and measures to reduce child involvement in tobacco farming. The use of a case study indicates that the researcher was able to allow participants to express themselves, resulting in detailed information useful to the topic under study. However, because of its qualitative nature, the use of a case study made the research subjective rather than objective. Nonetheless, the benefits of studying issues to do with child labour in its natural context, from the perspectives of the children who are working in farms, their caregivers, and child protection officers, were of paramount importance to the researcher.

### **3.3 Study Population**

According to Merten (2014), target population is defined as the total group of individuals who meet the criteria for inclusion in a study. In other words, it is the group that the researcher is interested in studying. In the context of this study, the researcher worked with DSD because they deal with and safeguard children. The researcher also targeted children aged 10 to 17 who lived in Bingaguru Ward 10, Rusape Makoni District. This age group or range was targeted because these are the ages that are most vulnerable and typically work in tobacco farms, despite the fact that they are still too young to do so. The researcher also targeted the children's caregivers in the research to understand why they allow their children to work in tobacco farms or send them to other people's farms. The researcher also included CCWs in her research since they serve as community watchdogs by protecting children from abuse. The researcher targeted Agriculture Extension Officer from Premium Tobacco Company since they are the ones who supply the tobacco inputs to the community. Hence, was important to understand their perspectives about child labour and their efforts to reduce child labour among their farmers.

### **3.4 Sample**

#### **3.4.1 Sample size**

Flick (2011) defines sample size as the number of participants that are included in a study. Hence, 22 participants in total were chosen to make the researcher's sample size. 10 children who were working in tobacco farms were chosen for in-depth interviews because they had been experiencing various difficulties since they started working in tobacco farms. The children were conveniently identified either in the tobacco fields or at their homesteads. 7 caregivers of the children were also interviewed as part of the study. These caregivers were of children who were also participants in the research study. 5 Key informants were selected for interviews. Babbie (2011) defines a key informant as someone who has knowledge and experience related to the topic of study and is willing to share it. Hence, the key informants were chosen for their deep knowledge and experience in child labour issues. The key informants included a DSDO, a probation officer, two CCWs and one Agriculture Extension Officer from Premium Tobacco Company.

### **3.5 Sampling techniques**

The researcher used two non-probability sampling techniques which are; purposive and convenient sampling. These sampling techniques are described and explained below:

#### **3.5.1 Convenient/availability sampling**

Salkind (2016) defines convince sampling as a type of non-probability sampling that involves selecting participants based on their availability and accessibility. Creswell (2013), defines convenience sampling as a method of sampling that is based on the researcher's access to a population or the ease with which participants can be targeted. The researcher used convenience sampling to select a subset of the population that was likely to provide the most relevant and informative data to answer the research question. The researcher conveniently selected one DSDO,

one Probation Officer, and two CCWs from the Department of Social Development; one Agriculture Extension Officer from Premium Tobacco Company; and 10-17 year-old children and their caregivers from the community. One advantage of choosing this sample was that the respondents were easily accessible and all gathered regularly at their respective places. This made it convenient for the researcher to collect data from them.

### **3.5.2 Purposive/expert Sampling**

Purposive sampling, according to Sharma (2017), is a non-probability sampling technique that is chosen depending on the unique characteristics of a population and the goals of the study. Babbie (2011) states that purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher's judgement about which ones will be the most useful or representative. The researcher's rationale for using purposive/judgmental sampling was that it enabled the selection of the key informants who have knowledge of child labour issues under study. Therefore, the key informants were purposively selected based on their expertise and knowledge of child labour issue. This type of sampling enabled the researcher to acquire valid information from the selected members from the DSD, Premium Tobacco Company, and CCWs. There was a male DSDO and a female Probation Officer from DSD, one female Agriculture extension officer from Premium Tobacco Company, and a male and a female CCWs from the community, who are under the supervision of DSD.

## **3.6 Data collection methods/techniques**

### ***3.6.1 In-depth interviews***

The researcher collected data by means of in-depth interviews. Kvale (1996) defined an in-depth interview as a qualitative research method that involves one-on-one conversations between a researcher and a participant. The participants who were interviewed using in-depth interviews

consisted of 5 female and 5 male children, as well as 7 caregivers, comprising 4 females and 3 males. The main reason for using in-depth interviews was that they allowed for a more detailed exploration of the participant's perspective than other research methods, such as surveys. Another reason for using in-depth interviews was that the interviewer was able to follow-up on questions and probe further to get a more nuanced understanding of the participant's experiences and thoughts about working on tobacco farms. Hence, the researcher managed to gather rich and detailed data about the experience of vulnerable children working in tobacco farms, making in-depth interviews an ideal method.

### ***3.6.2 Key informant interviews***

The researcher conducted interviews with key informants. Key informant interviews involve interviewing participants who are selected because they are particularly knowledgeable about the phenomenon of interest (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Henceforth, the researcher interviewed the key informants who were experts and have knowledge of child labour issue. This method enabled the researcher to acquire valid information from the selected members from DSD, Premium Tobacco Company, and CCWs. There was a male DSDO and a female Probation Officer from DSD, one female Agriculture extension officer from Premium Tobacco Company, and a male and a female CCWs from the community, who are under the supervision of DSD. The rationale for using the key informant interviews was to obtain rich, detailed data, as well as a deep understanding of the perspective of the informant.

### ***3.6.3 Focus group discussions***

Focus group discussions are semi-structured interviews conducted with a group of people who have relevant knowledge and experience of the topic being studied. In this regard, the researcher employed focus group discussions with 17 participants. These comprised 10 children, equally



divided between 5 females and 5 males, and their 7 caregivers, consisting of 4 females and 3 males. The rationale for using focus group interviews was that they allow for a variety of perspectives to be explored, provided a more comprehensive understanding of the topic than what could be achieved through individual interviews. In this study, the focus group interviews helped to uncover the different perspectives of children working on tobacco farms and their caregivers, including their thoughts, feelings, and motivations. The rich information gathered through the focus group interviews added depth and breadth to the data collected. Krueger and Casey (2014) emphasize the efficiency of focus group discussions, noting that they are an ideal choice when time is a constraint. Hence, the researcher made use of focused group discussions as they were less time-consuming than individual interviews, as the researcher asked the same question to all participants at once rather than having to be asked multiple times. Instead of being asked multiple times, ask once.

### **3.7 Data collection tools**

#### ***3.7.1 In-depth interview guide***

In in-depth interviews, the researcher used an in-depth interview guide to collect data from the selected participants. The guide included both open-ended and closed-ended questions, which allowed the participants to provide detailed information about the experiences of vulnerable children involved in tobacco farming. The guide was considered relevant because it allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the topic.

#### ***3.7.2 Key informant interview guide***

On key informant interviews, the researcher used a key informant interview guide with both open-ended and closed-ended questions to collect information from officers at the Department of Social Development and Premium Tobacco Company. The guide was relevant because it allowed the key

informants to provide in-depth information about their professional knowledge on child involvement in tobacco farming.

### **3.8 Data collection procedure**

The researcher followed the proper procedures for collecting data. Firstly, the researcher obtained a research permission-seeking letter from Bindura University of Science Education. Then, the researcher wrote an application letter to the DSD Makoni, Rusape, and seeking permission to conduct the research. The Department granted permission, and the researcher received a letter indicating their acceptance. Additionally, the researcher sought permission from relevant authorities, including the counselor, CCWs, village heads, and the Agriculture Extension Officer of Bingaguru ward 10, Rusape Makoni. She provided all necessary documentation, including the research application letter, school ID, and Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities research permission-seeking letter. After obtaining permission, the researcher drafted questions for the focus group discussion and interview guide, aligning them with the research objectives. 6 key informants participated in the research, and the researcher scheduled interviews with them at their workplaces. The researcher interviewed the 10 children and 7 caregivers in their homes and in the tobacco fields. The focus group discussion, comprising 10 children and 7 caregivers, was conducted in an open space under a tree. The participants were reminded of the date and time through phone calls or physical visits.

### **3.9 Data presentation and Data analysis**

Creswell (2014) defines data analysis as the process of making sense of the data, reducing it, and organizing it to increase understanding, derive meaning, and develop empirical knowledge. The data collected from in-depth and key informant interviews as well as focus group discussions was analysed manually using thematic analysis. The data was more suitable for qualitative analysis, so

it was analyzed by identifying patterns and themes within the data. For example, with the objective of exploring the effects of child involvement in tobacco farming among vulnerable children, a theme that was the effects of child involvement in tobacco farming among vulnerable children was identified. From that theme, subthemes such as education disruption, physical hazards and health, and social isolation and play deprivation risks were identified within the broader theme. Hence, thematic analysis allowed for a more detailed and nuanced understanding of the data.

### **3.10 Research ethics/ ethical considerations**

The researcher took ethical considerations into account to ensure that the research was conducted in an ethical manner.

#### **3.10.1 Informed consent**

Sharma (2017), defines informed consent as the process of providing adequate information to a person to enable a freely given, knowledgeable and informed choice about participation in research. The researcher obtained informed consent from the participants, explaining that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. The researcher also made it clear that there would be no financial incentives for participating in the research. These measures were taken to ensure that the participants were fully informed and could make a decision about participation free from coercion or undue influence. Also, the caregivers of the children interviewed were also asked for informed consent to ensure that the research could be conducted ethically and with their full knowledge and understanding.

#### **3.10.2 Confidentiality**

According to Creswell (2014), confidentiality is the guarantee that the researchers will not breach the trust that the participant has placed in them to protect their identity and their data. In this regard,

the researcher made sure that confidentiality was a priority during the research process. Participants were assured that their information would be kept confidential. This helped to ensure that the participants felt comfortable and secure in sharing their information. The researcher made every effort to maintain the highest standards of confidentiality and data security. Also, due to the sensitive nature of the research, which involved exploring the illegal use of child labour in tobacco farms, the researcher made it clear that all information gathered would be used only for academic purposes and would not be shared with any third parties. This helped to ensure the safety and privacy of the participants, as well as the integrity of the research. Therefore, confidentiality was of the utmost importance in this research, as it allowed participants to feel comfortable sharing sensitive information, which was essential for the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the topic.

### **3.10.3 Anonymity**

According to Kalichman et al. (2015), anonymity refers to the untraceability of individual responses to particular participants and requires that data be collected in a manner such that participants cannot be identified by any means. Hence, the researcher collected data in a way that did not allow participants to be identified, by using pseudonyms and omitting identifying information. This allowed participants to feel safe and confident that their identities would not be revealed, which resulted in them sharing more information of which some of this it were sensitive.

### **3.11 Study feasibility**

Feasibility is an important consideration when conducting a research study. In this case, the researcher chose to conduct the study in Bingaguru Ward 10 of Rusape Makoni District, which was close to her place of residence. This made it easier and more cost-effective for the researcher to access and interact with the study participants, who were mostly children and their caregivers

working on tobacco farms or living in the surrounding homesteads. In addition, the researcher obtained informed consent from the local authorities and from DSD. Most importantly, the researcher received guidance and supervision from her supervisor throughout the research process, which helped to ensure that the study was conducted in a rigorous and ethical manner.

### **3.12 limitations of the study**

Also, due to the sensitive nature of the research, which involved exploring the illegal use of child labour in tobacco farms, some potential respondents were afraid to participate in the study. Furthermore, those who agreed to participate were giving false information due to fear of arrest. To deal with this obstacle, the researcher made use of pseudo names instead of their real names to encourage free will participation. The researcher also made it clear that all information gathered would be used only for academic purposes and would not be shared with any third parties. This helped to ensure the safety and privacy of the participants, as well as the integrity of the research. Therefore, confidentiality was of the utmost importance in this research, as it allowed participants to feel comfortable sharing sensitive information, which was essential for the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the topic.

### **3.13 Chapter summary**

The chapter provided the research methodology as used by the researcher in the study. This included research approach, research design, study population, sampling, research procedure, data collection methods, data collection tools, data presentation, data analysis, research ethics/ethical considerations, study feasibility and limitations of the study.

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter provides the presentation, analysis and discussion of the obtained data. In- depth interview, key informant interview as well as focused group discussions were used to collect data from the participants. The findings are presented according to the study's key objectives which include: to explore the factors that contributing to the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming; to explore the effects of child involvement in tobacco farming among vulnerable children of Bingaguru, ward 10; and to address the strategies that can be adopted to ameliorate child labour in tobacco farming among vulnerable children of Bingaguru, ward 10. The data was collected from 22 participants, consisting of 10 children and 7 caregivers who resided in Bingaguru Ward 10, Key informants included 2 officers from DSD Rusape, 2 CCWs from Bingaguru Ward

10, and 1 representative from the Premium Tobacco Company. Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were a top priority to protect the rights and dignity of all participants. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis in the discussion of findings.

#### **4.1 Biographical information of participants**

The section presents the biographical information of the participants. The profile is of great significant as it will assists in contextualizing the concepts under study.

##### **4.1.1 The table shows the number of participants who partook in the research.**

*Table 1. Total Participants*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Children	5	5	10
Caregivers (parents/guardian)	3	4	7
DSDO	1	0	1
Probation Officer	0	1	1
CCWS	1	1	2
Agriculture Extension Officer	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>10</u></b>	<b><u>12</u></b>	<b><u>22</u></b>

N=22

The table above shows the biographical information of the participants. It reveals that twenty-two people participated in this research, comprising 10 children (5 males and 5 females), 7 caregivers (3 males and 4 females), 1 male DSDO, 1 female Probation Officer, 2 CCWS (1 male and 1

female), and 1 female Agriculture Extension Officer. It shows that the research was balanced because it has got both females and males. Hence, giving the researcher in-depth information on the research study.

#### **4.1.2 Age range of participants**

<b>AGE RANGE (YEARS)</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
10-30	12
31-40	6
41-50	3
51+	1
Total	22

The table above shows the age range of participants in the research. The age range of people who participated in the research shows that the age range from 10-30 had a total of 12 participants. From 31-40, there were 6 participants in total; from 41-50, there were 3 participants; and 51+, there was 1 participant. Hence, this shows that the highest number of participants were in the age range of 10-30, while the least number were in the 50+ range.

#### **4.1.3 Key informants' educational background and years of experience**

<b>Key informant</b>	<b>Educational background</b>	<b>Years of experience</b>
DSDO	Honours and Master's degree	20 years
Probation Officer	Honours degree	10 years
Agriculture Extension Officer	Diploma	12 years



CCW 1	Advanced level certificate	8 years
CCW 2	Advanced level certificate	10 years

The table above shows the key informants' educational background and years of experience. The key informants' qualifications ranged from Advanced Level certificates to Master's degrees, with corresponding years of experience. The DSDO held Honours and Master's degrees, with 20 years of experience, while the Probation Officer had an Honour's degree, with 10 years of experience. The Agriculture Extension Officer had a Diploma, with 12 years of experience, and CCW 1 held an advanced Level certificate with 8 years of experience and CCW 2 held Advanced Level certificate with 10 years of experience, respectively. This indicates that the key informants were well-educated and experienced, providing valuable insights and tangible ideas.

#### **4.1.4 Education status and attendance frequency rate of children during tobacco seasons**

<b>Education level</b>	<b>Number of children</b>	<b>Attendance frequency rate during tobacco seasons</b>
Primary level	<b>3</b>	<b>3-4 days per week</b>
Secondary level	<b>6</b>	<b>1-2 days per week</b>
School Dropout	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

The table above shows the education status and attendance frequency rate of children during tobacco season. It reveals the number of children at primary and secondary levels, as well as school dropouts, and their weekly school attendance frequency during the tobacco season. Specifically, 3 children were at the primary level, attending school 3-4 days per week, while 6 children were at

the secondary level, attending school only 1-2 days per week. Additionally, 1 child had dropped out of school completely. These findings indicate that while most children in tobacco farming households attend school, their attendance rates during the tobacco season are relatively low. Moreover, children at the primary level tend to have better school attendance than those at the secondary level, suggesting that the demand for labour increases as children progress to secondary level, as they are perceived to be capable of performing more work.

#### **4.1.5 Education level of parents/Guardians (Caregivers) of working children**

<b>Level of education</b>	<b>Number of caregivers</b>	
	<b>Females</b>	<b>Male</b>
<b>Never attended school</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Primary school</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Secondary school</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Tertiary education</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

The table above shows the educational levels of caregivers, categorizing them into four groups: those who never attended school, those who reached primary school level, those who reached secondary school level, and those who attained tertiary education level. According to the table, 2 female caregivers and 1 male caregiver never attended school. 3 caregivers, comprising 2 females and 1 male, reached primary school level. Only 1 male caregiver reached secondary school level. Notably, none of the caregivers reported attaining tertiary education level. This indicates high levels of illiteracy among the caregivers, which may lead to a lower likelihood of encouraging

their children to pursue education and recognizing the benefits of education. As a result, this could increase the likelihood of involving their children in tobacco farming, potentially perpetuating a cycle of limited educational opportunities and exploitation.

#### **4.2 Nature of work performed by children in tobacco farming in Bingaguru Ward 10.**

The responses revealed that children aged 17 and below are performing tobacco-related tasks that are hazardous, with poor working conditions that are inappropriate given their young age. 3 male and 2 female children reported that they are involved in the initial stages of tobacco preparation, which they find challenging. Specifically, they mentioned that they prepare seedling beds, apply chemicals and transplant seedlings to their fields. They noted that these tasks are difficult because they require a lot of water, which is hard to access during the dry season. As a result, they have to carry water from afar, exposing themselves to chemicals and heavy physical labour. They also mentioned that transferring tobacco seedlings to the fields is particularly challenging because they have to carry heavy sacks over long distances. Also, 2 male and 3 female children reported that they engage in various tasks in tobacco farming, including weeding, applying chemicals to tobacco plants, and removing the tobacco flowers from the top of the plants to ensure growth of large leaves. They described these tasks as extremely exhausting, citing long working hours in the field, exposure to harsh weather conditions (scorching sun and heavy rains), and hazardous working conditions (snake bites and chemical exposure). As a result, they experience adverse health effects, including nausea, vomiting, dizziness, and headaches, likely caused by chemical exposure and physical exhaustion.

Also, 3 male and 4 female caregivers reported that their children assist with various tasks in the tobacco production process, including stringing, sorting, and baling. These caregivers cited that during the stringing stage, children help hang harvested tobacco in the curing barn for drying and

curing. They also indicated that their children assist with fire curing, working day and night to control temperatures and prevent overheating, using hardwood and coal. Additionally, caregivers stated that children aid in sorting tobacco leaves by quality and size and help pack them into bales. The caregivers expressed concern that the smoke from fire-cured tobacco can be harsh and irritating to the respiratory system, causing coughing, wheezing, and breathing difficulties in both children and themselves. Amongst the key informants, a female Agriculture Extension Officer reported that children assist their parents and guardians in harvesting by picking and selecting tobacco leaves from the plant, exposing them to the risk of nicotine poisoning, leading to a condition known as green tobacco sickness, especially when children handle tobacco in rainy conditions or when the leaves are wet, as the moisture facilitates nicotine absorption through the skin. To confirm this, below is what one of the male child participant (16 years) said:

*“I help my parents with tobacco farming and it's a lot of hard work! We start by making special beds for the tiny tobacco plants, then we water and spray them until they're strong enough to move to the big fields. In the fields, we do lots of tasks like pulling out weeds, removing the flowers, and applying special chemicals that can make us sick. We also pick and sort the ripe tobacco leaves, which is hard work too. And when we're fire-curing the leaves, we have to stay up all night making sure the temperature is just right. We have to cut down big trees for firewood, which is hard to find, and then sort the leaves by size and store them separately. It's exhausting, but I want to help my parents, even though it's really tough.”* **(Male child, 16 years)**

One of the female participant (caregiver) from the FGD states that:

*“Usually, our children help with hanging harvested tobacco in the curing barn for drying and curing; sorting and baling it when it is ready for sale. This task is not easy, but as a parent, I feel I have no other choice. In order for my children and me to survive, we have to help each other. The smoke from the fire-cured tobacco can be harsh and irritating to the extent that children or even adults will start coughing excessively, leading to extreme chest pains and difficulty breathing” (Caregiver, 40 years)*

To further support the above expressed sentiments, one of the female key informant participant said:

*“As an agriculture extension officer, it's my duty to ensure that our tobacco farmers are aware of the best practices in the industry. Unfortunately, I've seen firsthand that children are often involved in the harvesting process, working alongside their parents to pick and select tobacco leaves. While this may seem harmless, it's a serious concern, as children are not equipped with the necessary protective gear, such as special clothing, gloves, and respiratory masks. This leaves them vulnerable to nicotine poisoning, which can lead to green tobacco sickness, especially when working in rainy conditions. It's a situation that needs attention and action to ensure the well-being of these young ones.”(Agriculture Extension Officer, Tobacco Premium Company)*

The findings indicate that children in tobacco farming are performing hazardous and age-inappropriate work. They engage in various tobacco-related tasks, including planting, weeding, harvesting, drying tobacco leaves, and preparing leaves for sale. This aligns with Varghese (2020), who found that children in Nepal work in tobacco plantations, assisting with cultivation and performing tasks like planting, weeding, and harvesting tobacco leaves. Similarly, Phetphum et al. (2021) reported that around 12% of Burley tobacco farmers in Thailand rely on child labour for

tasks like collecting, harvesting, and drying tobacco leaves. Additionally, Fassa et al. (2021) found that approximately 1.8 million children aged 5–17 in southern Brazil engage in child labour in the tobacco industry, performing tasks like harvesting and preparing tobacco leaves for sale. Lastly, the ILO (2014) reported that over 6,000 children in Zambia work in tobacco farms, performing hazardous tasks like carrying heavy loads, handling dangerous pesticides, and working extended periods, often exceeding the legal limit for child workers. Therefore, it can be argued that children in tobacco farming perform almost all the tasks done in the tobacco industry, most of which are hazardous.

#### **4.3 Factors that is contributing to the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming.**

The factors that is contributing to the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming were explored. The respondents highlighted poverty, limited access to education and inadequate schooling facilities as major factors contributing to children involved in tobacco farming in Bingaguru, Ward 10.

##### *4.3.1 Poverty*

Poverty was cited by all participants as a major factor contributing to the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming. All 7 caregivers highlighted that they work alongside their children in the tobacco fields because they cannot afford to hire additional help. They also noted that due to poverty, they are unable to provide their children with basic necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, and education. All child participants stated that they often work extra hard because they are told by their parents that their needs and wants are dependent on their labor in the tobacco fields. Key informants indicated that poverty is the main cause of child involvement in tobacco farming.

A female participant said:

*“The challenge that we rural dwellers are facing is the lack of financial resources to pay our workers. This is pushing me to work with my children in the tobacco field. Another thing is that I am failing to provide for my children with basic needs such as food, which forces me to go with my children to other people’s fields to work for groceries or money. I do this with my children so that we can finish the portion of that work quickly.”* **(Female caregiver, 30 years)**

A male child participant shared almost a similar respond and said that;

*“Yeah... we have to work in the tobacco fields because there's no food or money at home. If we don't work, we won't eat. So, we go with our parents to our field or sometimes to other people's fields to work for money or food. Also, sometimes we can be sent back home from school due to the inability to pay school fees. That’s when we have to work with our parents in the tobacco fields. It's hard, but we know that if our parents sell the tobacco, we'll get money for books and school fees. I'm 12, and I've been working in the fields for as long as I can remember. We work extra hard because we know that if our parents sell the tobacco, we'll have a better life.”* **(Male child, 12 years)**

Key informant participant added that;

*“I have discovered that in ward 10, caregivers are failing to provide their children with basic necessities such as food, clothes, and educational facilities due to poverty. So, this poverty is forcing children to work in tobacco farming, either in their parents’ fields or in other people’s fields within the community. So, these kids work in the tobacco fields to supplement their families’ income”* **(PO, Rusape DSD)**

The findings indicate that poverty is the primary factor contributing to the involvement of children in tobacco farming. A study conducted in Zimbabwe by Stanek (2019) revealed that impoverished local tobacco farmers, unable to afford additional labour, often rely on their children and young family members to assist with harvesting. Similarly, Santos et al. (2022) found that in the Northern Philippines, children from poor families were engaged in tobacco farming and less likely to attend school due to their families' financial constraints. Xia and Deininger (2019) also noted that in Malawi, many children worked in tobacco farms to help their families earn an income for basic necessities like food, clothing, and school fees. This is consistent with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979), which identifies the microsystem (immediate environment) as a key influence on child development. In this case, the microsystem is the family, and poverty within the family significantly influences child labour decisions in tobacco farming, perpetuating child involvement in this industry. This clearly indicates that poverty in Bingaguru Ward 10 is a key driver of child involvement in tobacco farming, as families struggling to make ends meet often rely on their children's earnings.

#### *4.3.2 Limited access to education*

Limited access to education was mentioned by the participants as one of the factors contributing to the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming. All the participants were supporting limited access to education as one of the factors. One of the female participant (caregiver) from the focused group discussion stated that;

*“A big issue here is that I'm failing to pay school fees for my kids, so when they're sent away from school, there's no way they'll spend time playing at home. So, I'll take that opportunity to go with them to the tobacco field or do tobacco-related tasks.”* **(Female caregiver, 40 years)**



A male child participant stated that:

*“I end up helping my parents in the tobacco field because sometimes I'll be sent back home by the headmaster for not paying school fees. As a result, I'm left with no option but to help my family, since I'll be told that this is where our money for school fees comes from, so I have to work. As secondary school students, we have to walk a long distance to school, which is very challenging. Moreover, when it rains, it's difficult for us to cross rivers, leaving us with no option but to stay home and help my family in the tobacco fields” (male child, 16 years)*

To further confirm and cement the above response. A key informant added that:

*“Here in Ward 10, schools are far away, especially secondary schools, and there are no bridges, so children find it difficult to cross rivers during this time of year when it rains heavily. As a result, children will miss school, causing some secondary school students to drop out and engage in tobacco farming” (CCW, Bingaguru Ward 10)*

Based on the presented findings, it can be observed that limited access to education contribute s to the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming. The findings suggest that when caregivers are unable to pay school fees, children may end up not attending school and engaging in tobacco farming activities. This is consistent with the study by Wurth and Buchanan (2018) who argue that school fees were a major barrier to school enrollment among small-scale tobacco farming families in the Mashonaland Central region of Zimbabwe, leading families who could not afford the fees to keep their children out of school and instead engage them in tobacco farming. Also, according to the participants’ narratives, it is evident that schools in rural areas are often located far away, making it challenging for children to attend school, especially during rainy

seasons when rivers become difficult to cross, which further contributes to children not attending school and engaging themselves in tobacco farming. Similarly, ILO (2014) who reported that children in Kaoma district, Zambia, couldn't access school during rainy seasons due to flooded rivers and a lack of bridges, leading them to help with tobacco farming instead. In accordance with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, the mesosystem refers to the interconnections and interactions between various microsystems in a child's life, including family, school, and community. In this case, the mesosystem involves the interactions between these microsystems, leading to children's involvement in tobacco farming due to their family's inability to pay school fees, distant schools, and flooded rivers without bridges during rainy seasons. This highlights the interconnectedness of the microsystems and their impact on children's lives.

#### *4.3.3 Lack of Awareness and understanding*

Lack of awareness and understanding was identified as another contributing factor to the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming. 5 participants reported working with their children because they believed that there was nothing wrong with the practice, perceiving that they were teaching their children work ethics. 3 other participants mentioned that caregivers engage their children in tobacco farming, unaware that they are jeopardizing their children's future and well-being. In contrast, 2 participants indicated that they are aware that working with their children in tobacco farming endanger their children's rights to education and health, and said that they are being forced by circumstances such as poverty, which leaves them with no alternative means to survive. One female participant (caregiver) said that;

*"I work with my children in all tobacco-related tasks and I don't see any issue with that because they are assisting me. As you know, it's challenging to manage tobacco farming with a limited number of people, so their help makes it more manageable. Also, I'm*

*teaching them about the importance of work ethic, so they understand that hard work is necessary if you want to earn money” (Caregiver, 35 years)*

A key informant participant stated that;

*“Caregivers are unaware of the risks of involving their children in hazardous tasks, as they are jeopardizing their children’s health and well-being and also compromise their future by frequently taking them out of school to assist during the busiest planting and harvesting periods. Also, the community at large perceives child involvement in tobacco farming as a normal practice, and as a result, many cases go unreported.” (PO, Rusape DSD)*

To further confirm and cement the above response. Another key informant added that;

*“Caregivers are primarily focused on receiving help from their children, without any awareness or concern for the harmful effects of exposing children to hazardous labour. They do not realize that their actions could put their children’s future and well-being at risk.” (CCW, ward 10)*

The finding that caregivers in Bingaguru ward 10 involve their children in tobacco-related tasks due to a lack of awareness about the consequences indicates that they perceive this as a norm in which children learn work ethics by assisting their parents. However, this practice exposes children to hazardous work, which negatively impacts their education, health, and well-being. This finding aligns with Phetphum et al. (2021), who found that among Burley tobacco farmers in Thailand, those with limited knowledge of the harmful effects of tobacco-related labour on children were more likely to have a positive attitude towards involving children in tobacco cultivation and production. Therefore, a lack of awareness about the consequences of child labour may contribute

to its perpetuation in tobacco farming. This is in stark contrast with some participants from the findings, who argue that they are aware that working with their children risks their children's education, health, and overall well-being, but they do so in order to earn a living. This is consistent with the study conducted by Conde (2023), which found that Mexican and Brazilian parents working in the United States reported being aware of the negative implications of engaging their children in tobacco farming but felt they had no other options due to financial necessity. Thus, the involvement of children in tobacco-related tasks in Bingaguru Ward 10 appears to depend on how caregivers and the community perceive this issue. While some caregivers remain unaware of the potential harmful consequences, which underscores the vulnerability of these children, others are aware of the risks but feel compelled to involve their children in tobacco-related work due to financial constraints.

#### *4.3.4 The dependence of tobacco farmers on unfair contractual relationships with tobacco companies*

The dependence of tobacco farmers on unfair contractual relationships with tobacco companies was highlighted by some participants as a factor contributing to the involvement of children in tobacco farming. In a focused group discussion conducted by the researcher, all seven caregivers complained about the low prices paid by tobacco companies for tobacco leaves, as well as the high cost of inputs deducted from their payments. Hence, reported that to survive and pay for the required inputs, they need to cultivate more hectares, which compels them to work with their children. One male participant (caregiver) from focused discussion stated that;

*“The tobacco companies we depend on are treating us unfairly. They provide some inputs and a small amount of money intended for hiring additional labourers, but it is insufficient compared to the work and labour required in tobacco farming. As a result, we're forced to work with our children. To make matters worse, the companies deduct more than the value*

*of the inputs they provide. As a result, I have no choice but to work with my children, as hiring adult labourers is unaffordable for me.”(Male caregiver, 35 years)*

Then, a female participant (caregiver) also supported the above view saying,

*“Tobacco companies are buying tobacco at very low prices, so I believe it's better to work with my children to grow more hectares. This way, we can produce enough to pay back the company for the inputs they provided, and still have something left over to support my family. It's disheartening to see the hard work and effort we put into tobacco farming, only to be paid low prices at the tobacco sales floor. To make matters worse, the companies deduct even more money for their inputs, leaving us with barely enough to survive. It's a struggle to make ends meet and provide for our families.”(Female caregiver, 28 years)*

The above findings indicate that the dependence of tobacco farmers on unfair contractual relationships with tobacco companies contributes to the involvement of children in tobacco farming. This is consistent with a study by Mango and Kugedera (2022), which reported that farmers in Shamva district, Zimbabwe, felt monopolised and manipulated due to their lack of resources and funding sources for tobacco production. This is perpetuated through leaf downgrading, price suppression, and inflated prices for tobacco inputs. Similarly, Masocha (2021) notes that the low prices paid by tobacco companies for tobacco leaves make it difficult for farmers to make a living. To repay the inputs provided by tobacco companies, farming families are pressured to grow more tobacco than they can handle, leading them to rely on their children's unpaid labour since they cannot afford to hire seasonal workers (Mango and Kugedera, 2022). These findings suggest that the exploitation of farmers by tobacco companies perpetuates the involvement of children in tobacco farming.

#### 4.3.5 Parental illiteracy

Parental illiteracy was identified as a key factor contributing to the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming. 3 caregivers, including one male and two female participants were perceiving tobacco farming as more beneficial than education. 4 key informants emphasized that lack of education was the primary reason parents involved their children in tobacco farming instead of sending them to school. One female participant (caregiver) said that:

*“We engage in tobacco farming to make a living, so I involve my children in the process to ensure our survival. Sometimes, they miss school because I need their help. If they only focused on school and didn't assist with farming, we wouldn't be able to make ends meet. So, I balance their education by having them attend school some days and help with farming on others” (Caregiver, 30 years).*

One of the key informant highlighted that:

*“Most caregivers in Ward 10 have never attended school, and some only completed primary education, making it challenging for them to understand the importance of education for their children. As a result, they prioritize tobacco farming, which they see as a source of income, over education” (CCW, Ward 10).*

Another key informant also supported the above view saying:

*“Illiteracy is a big problem. It leads parents to prioritize tobacco farming over their children's education. During tobacco season, many children miss school because their parents need their help with farming. Unfortunately, parents who struggle with illiteracy often don't realize the importance of education, so they keep their children home to help with the farming” (Probation Officer, Rusape DSD)*

Based on the provided information, parental illiteracy can be seen as a factor contributing to children's involvement in tobacco farming. In Bingaguru Ward 10, most caregivers have never attended school, and others have only completed primary school, which may lead to a lower likelihood of encouraging their children to pursue education and recognising the benefits of education. A study by ILO (2014) in Kaoma district, Zambia, found that high levels of parental illiteracy were associated with a lower likelihood of encouraging children to pursue education. As a result, children of parents with limited education were less likely to recognise the benefits of education and were at a higher risk of engaging in tobacco-related activities (ILO, 2014). This argument is supported by a study in Tabora Region, Tanzania, which revealed that parents with limited education were more likely to involve their children in tobacco farming, as they did not prioritise education and saw little benefit in it for their children's future (ILO, 2016). Similarly, Miranda (2021) of the World Literacy Foundation observed that illiterate parents tend to prioritise work over education, leading to lower educational aspirations for their children and a higher likelihood of school dropout. Therefore, the parents' educational background in Bingaguru Ward 10 significantly influences their children's education and perpetuates child involvement in tobacco farming.

#### *4.3.6 Limited access to alternative crop opportunities in the area*

Limited access to alternative crops opportunities was identified as another factor contributing to the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming. 2 male participants (caregivers) also stated that there are no other alternative crops in their area with the same market demand as tobacco. 1 female participant (caregiver) mentioned that there are poor rainfall patterns in Ward 10, which allows tobacco, unlike other crops, to thrive in poor rainfall conditions. 2 female key informants stated that a lack of knowledge and skills about growing alternative crops that have a

market and are suitable for the area is the reason why farmers continue to grow tobacco, which requires intensive labour. One male participant said that:

*“We have no other alternative choice or crops in our area. I believe tobacco farming is the only option that can provide a better income compared to maize and other crops, considering its established market. Although growing tobacco is not easy and requires a lot of labour, we often end up involving our children in the process.”* **(Male caregiver, 35 years)**

One female caregiver reported during the focus group discussion that:

*“I have observed that climate change has made rainfall increasingly unpredictable compared to what it used to be in the past. Therefore, I firmly believe that tobacco stands out as the only crop we have with a market and more resilient than other crops in conditions of scarce rainfall.”* **(Female caregiver, 29 years).**

One of the key informant interviews also highlighted that:

*“What tobacco farmers lack is knowledge about alternative crops that are suitable for their area, which can provide them with a decent income without demanding too much labour that might force them to involve their children.”* **(DSDO, Rusape DSD)**

The findings indicate that limited access to alternative crop opportunities is a factor contributing to the involvement of children in tobacco farming. According to Barrett (2019), the limited access to alternative crop opportunities compels families to rely on a single cash crop like tobacco due to limited market access, inadequate education and skills, insufficient infrastructure and resources, and poor rainfall patterns. In Ward 10, participants noted that they are unaware of any other crop with a market demand in their area like tobacco, which suits their rainfall pattern. Consequently,



it becomes challenging for them to shift away from tobacco despite its unsustainability and labor intensiveness. Similarly, a study by Sahadewo et al. (2020) in Indonesia found that respondents considered their area suitable for tobacco cultivation due to its ability to thrive in poor rainfall conditions and existing market demand. However, they noted that growing alternative crops like rice, chilies, eggplant, and green beans is not viable due to a lack of market demand, unlike tobacco which has an established market (Sahadewo et al., 2020). As a result, families in Bingaguru Ward 10 are likely to continue growing tobacco, despite its unsustainability and the negative implications for children, who are often forced to participate in the labor-intensive process. Therefore, limited access to alternative crop opportunities is a significant factor contributing to the involvement of children in tobacco farming.

#### **4.4 Effects of child involvement in tobacco farming on vulnerable children.**

##### *4.4.1 Education disruption*

Education disruption was highlighted as one of the effects of child involvement in tobacco farming on vulnerable children. Specifically, 3 female children and 2 male children reported that they often miss school during the tobacco harvesting stage. Additionally, 2 female children mentioned that they struggle with lack of concentration and feel tired in class due to their tobacco work. Furthermore, 2 female key informants noted that children frequently miss school during the tobacco season due to the heavy workload, resulting in poor academic performance and failure in their studies. One male child participant said that:

*“Yeah... well, it's really hard. We have to work all the time, even at night. Like, when we're curing the tobacco, we have to keep the fire going, so I have to wake up multiple times during the night to add more firewood. And it's not just that - when we're stringing the tobacco to get it ready for curing, we work really late too. Honestly, it's really hard to*

*concentrate in class. I usually wake up feeling really tired, and it's hard to focus on what the teacher is saying. I try my best, but it's just really hard when you're so tired all the time.” (Male child, 15 years).*

Another female child participant indicated that:

*“Well, when it's time to harvest the tobacco, I have to help my family. We all work together to get it done. But that means I often have to miss school during that time. It's hard because I want to go to school and learn, but my family needs me to help with the harvest.” (Female child, 13 years).*

To further support the above expressed sentiments, one of the male key informant interviewees submitted that:

*“Unfortunately, I've seen a disturbing trend among children working in tobacco farms. They often miss school three days a week, which inevitably leads to poor academic performance and failure.” (CCW, Bingaguru Ward 10).*

The above findings reveal that education disruption was highlighted as one of the consequences of child involvement in tobacco farming. In line with this, Wurth and Buchanan (2018) conducted interviews with teachers in Zimbabwe, who reported frequent student absences during the tobacco season. Similarly, Appiah (2018) found that headmasters observed children working on tobacco farms struggling to complete assignments, concentrate, and participate in class discussions due to physical exhaustion, resulting in grade repetition, poor performance, and low grades. Therefore, it can be asserted that child involvement in tobacco farming in Bingaguru Ward 10 is negatively impacting children's education, interfering with their ability to concentrate, perform well in school, and attend regularly. This starkly contrasts with Article 32 of the UNCRC (1989), which

emphasises the importance of education by stipulating that children shall not be involved in work that interferes with their education or compromises their overall well-being.

#### *4.4.2 Physical hazards and health risk*

Physical hazards and health risk were highlighted as another effect of child involvement in tobacco farming on vulnerable children. 3 male and 4 female children from the FGD reported experiencing adverse health effects, including nausea, vomiting, dizziness, and headaches, likely caused by chemical exposure and physical exhaustion. They also complained of back pain from carrying heavy loads. Additionally, 3 male and 4 female caregivers revealed that the smoke from fire-cured tobacco during sorting can be harsh and irritating to the respiratory system, causing coughing, wheezing, and breathing difficulties. Furthermore, a female Agriculture Extension Officer noted that children are at risk of nicotine poisoning, which can lead to a condition known as green tobacco sickness during harvesting. A male child participant from the FGD stated that:

*“Pandinenge ndichishanda mufodya kunyanya ndikafema mushonga wakaiswa mufodya, ndikashanda zvakanyanya uye tikakwanhura kuchinaya ndinonzwa kupera simba, kunzwa kuda kurutsa, kutemwa nemusoro kuita kunge ndiri kuda kurwara nemalaria” (male child, 14 years).*

(When I'm working in the tobacco field, especially if I breathe in the chemical spray that is applied to the tobacco, when I work excessively and when picking and selecting tobacco leaves in the rain, I feel dizzy, nauseous, and get a headache as if I'm having symptoms of malaria).

A female participant (caregiver) from the FGD adds on to say:

*“Mweya wefodya inenge yatsva iya inokachidza zvekuti unotanga kukosora nekutadza kufema zvakanaka, kuvana zvese nekuvhanhu vakuru”* **(female caregiver, 33 years)**

(The smoke from fire-cured tobacco can be harsh and irritating, leading to coughing and breathing difficulties, in both children and adults)

To further support the above expressed sentiments, one of the key informant interviewees submitted that:

*“As I mentioned earlier, the absence of essential protective equipment, including specialized clothing, gloves, and masks, puts children at risk of exposure to harmful tobacco leaf components during both field and indoor settings. One of the challenges resulting from this lack of protective gear is that, during harvesting, children pick and select tobacco leaves from the plant with their bare hands, exposing them to the risk of nicotine poisoning, which can lead to a condition known as green tobacco sickness. This risk is especially high when children handle tobacco in rainy conditions and when the leaves are wet, as the moisture facilitates nicotine absorption through the skin.”*

**(Agriculture Extension Officer, Premium Tobacco Company)**

The presented findings indicate that child involvement in tobacco farming poses physical hazards and health risks. The observed health effects corroborate the findings of Wurth and Buchanan (2018) who reported that in Zimbabwe child tobacco farmers experienced symptoms consistent with green tobacco sickness, a form of acute nicotine poisoning characterized by respiratory problems, nausea, vomiting, headaches, and dizziness. Similarly, Conde (2023) observed that Latino immigrant students in the USA, who worked in tobacco farming, exhibited visible signs of body injuries as well as symptoms like nausea, drowsiness, and fatigue, likely caused by prolonged exposure to hazardous conditions without proper protective equipment. These findings suggest

that child involvement in tobacco farming may have detrimental effects on their health due to inadequate protection and exposure to hazardous working conditions.

#### *4.4.3 Social isolation and play deprivation*

Social isolation and play deprivation were identified as other effects of child involvement in tobacco farming. 2 male and 3 female children reported that they miss out on playtime and socialising with friends because they spend most of their time working in the tobacco fields. Additionally, 2 females and 2 male children stated that after working in tobacco, they feel tired and exhausted, making it difficult for them to play sports and interact with their peers. A key informant emphasised that children working in tobacco farming miss out on playtime, socialisation, and learning opportunities, and these tasks leave them exhausted. One of the female child participant said that:

*“I think I'm missing out on being a kid. I don't really have time to play and make friends especially during tobacco season. I work in the tobacco fields with my family, from dawn till dusk. There's no time for play or friends, and it's really hard.”***(Female child, 13 years)**

Then, a male child participant also supported the above view saying:

*“It's really hard... I want to play soccer and run around with my friends, but my body can't keep up. I get winded easily, and my muscles ache. When I try to interact with my friends, I struggle to keep up with their energy. It makes me feel left out and alone, like I'm missing out on all the fun. I wish I could be like other kids who get to play and have fun without feeling so tired and exhausted all the time”***(Male child, 14 years)**

To further confirm and support the above sentiments, one of the key informants also stated that:

*“Yes, of course. The physical demands of tobacco farming are exhausting for children. They miss out on playtime, socialization, and learning opportunities, which are essential for their physical, emotional, and cognitive development” (DSDO, Rusape DSD)*

The findings indicate that child involvement in tobacco farming leads to social isolation and play deprivation. These results align with Colburn's (2014) findings, which showed that children working in tobacco fields in the United States miss out on playtime, sports, and socialising with peers, as they spend most of their time harvesting and hanging tobacco. Similarly, Conde (2023) notes that working on tobacco-related tasks leaves children exhausted, hindering their ability to engage in games, play, and rest. Trinh (2020) adds that children who are overworked in tobacco farming lose valuable time that could be spent learning, playing, and interacting with their peers. Therefore, child involvement in tobacco farming in Bingaguru Ward 10 has a profound impact on children's lives, denying them the opportunity to experience a normal childhood with all its benefits and instead forcing them to work long hours in hazardous conditions. This stands in sharp contrasts with Article 31 of the UNCRC (1989), which creates a specific right for all children to have rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to their age.

#### **4.5 Strategies that can be adopted to ameliorate child labour in tobacco farming among vulnerable children**

##### *4.5.1 Educational intervention*

Educational intervention was highlighted as an effective strategy for reducing child involvement in tobacco farming. The male caregiver emphasized the need for constructing boarding schools in rural areas. A female key informant reported that there is a need to introduce after-school programs to prevent children from engaging in tobacco farming. Another male key informant reported that they are working to support OVCs who cannot pay school fees through BEAM program and

advocating for those without traceable relatives to obtain birth certificate, enabling them to access education. One male participant suggested that:

*“Building boarding schools is necessary to encourage children to attend school, as our schools are distant and the rivers frequently overflow during rainy seasons, preventing children from attending school and participating in tobacco farming.”* (Male caregiver, 44 years)

A female key informant stated that:

*“Children need to learn life skills and be engaged in activities like sports, drama, or modeling through after-school programs, to keep them away from tobacco farming.”* (PO, Rusape DSD)

A male key informant noted that:

*“We're working to support OVCs who cannot pay school fees through the BEAM program, and we're also advocating for those without traceable relatives to obtain birth certificates through sociological reports to the Registrar General. This enables them to access education, which is crucial for breaking the cycle of poverty and preventing them from engaging in tobacco farming”* (DSDO, Rusape DSD)

Research findings have revealed that educational interventions are a paramount strategy to ameliorate child involvement in tobacco farming in Bingaguru Ward 10. According to the USDL (2022) reports, the Zimbabwean government implemented the BEAM program to keep children in school and enroll those who lack access to education due to economic constraints. Moreover, Sabrina (2022) reported that HRW, in partnership with local tobacco companies in Nusa Tenggara

Barat province, Indonesia, introduced an after-school program that successfully reduced the number of primary school-aged children working in tobacco farming by 90%. This underscores the fact that keeping children in school reduces their likelihood of working in hazardous environments. These findings are in line with both ACRWC (1990) and UNCRC (1989), which emphasizes the importance of education and recognises it as the fundamental right to children. Therefore, educational interventions can be a viable strategy to ameliorate child involvement in tobacco farming.

#### *4.5.2 Social protection*

Social protection emerged as another strategy to address child involvement in tobacco farming, according to participant feedback. 2 female participants emphasized the need for government intervention, specifically providing food and financial assistance in Ward 10, to reduce child involvement. 2 male children echoed this sentiment, stressing the importance of NGOs or government support in providing basic needs for their families, thereby preventing their involvement in tobacco farming. A male key informant highlighted ongoing efforts to implement HSCT and FDMS programs, aimed at tackling poverty, hunger, and financial constraints. One of the female participant argued that:

*“I wish the government would intervene and help us aged widows with food and funds. We're struggling to care for kids who've been left behind and need protection since they no longer have parents. As you can see, I'm now old and can't fend for them alone, so they're working to help us earn a living. Unfortunately, Ward 10 lacks food programs and cash transfer programs. We received help a long time ago, but social welfare services have stopped coming to our area. Therefore, government should intervene and assist us with*



*food and funds, enabling these kids to focus on their education instead of working in tobacco farming.” (Female caregiver, 70 years)*

Similarly, a male child participant stated that:

*“I wish NGOs or the government could help my family with basic needs like food, clothes, and shelter. If they did, I wouldn't have to work in the tobacco fields anymore. It's hard labour and hurts my body. If we had support, I could focus on my education and have a better future” (male child, 15 years)*

A male key informant highlighted that:

*“As DSD, we are committed to supporting individuals struggling with hunger and starvation through our FDMS and HSCT program. These initiatives aim to provide crucial assistance to vulnerable households facing financial constraints, ultimately addressing the pressing issue of child involvement in tobacco farming.” (DSDO, Rusape DSD)*

The findings indicate that social protection is a key strategy to mitigate child involvement in tobacco farming. Consistent with this, Wurth and Buchanan (2018) argue that social protection initiatives can reduce child involvement in tobacco farming by providing families with the necessary support to meet their basic needs, thereby alleviating financial pressures that force families to rely on their children's labour. According to reports by USDL (2022), the Zimbabwean government, in collaboration with UNICEF, introduced the HSCT program to support households facing labour constraints and food insecurity, with the goal of reducing child labour. In line with this, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) highlights the impact of external environments on child development. Social protection services, as part of the exosystem, can promote healthier environments for children in Bingaguru Ward 10 by reducing financial pressures

that drive child labour in tobacco farming. By supporting families, social protection can break the cycle of child labour and create a supportive exosystem for children to thrive (Walsh, 2018).

#### *4.5.3 Awareness raising campaigns*

Awareness-raising campaigns were identified by participants as a key strategy to reduce child involvement in tobacco farming. 2 female and one male caregivers emphasized that awareness-raising is crucial for parents, children, and the community as a whole. A female key informant noted that tobacco companies have a vital role to play in addressing child involvement by continuing to educate farmers about the illegality and harmful effects of child involvement in tobacco farming. One male participant suggested that:

*“Parents should be educated on the significance of education for their children's future prospects and be informed about the harmful effects of involving children in hazardous labour. To address this, Ward 10 needs programs that educate children, parents, and the community at large. These programs should focus on raising awareness about the importance of education and the dangers of child labour, as well as providing support and resources to help families make informed choices about their children's well-being and future”*(Male caregiver, 40 years )

A female key informant stated that:

*“I believe companies contracting farmers have a crucial role to play in addressing child labour in tobacco farming. They should continue educating farmers on the safe handling of chemicals, the harmful effects of involving children in tobacco farming, and the importance of treating workers with dignity and respect, as human beings deserving of fair labour practices. By doing so, farmers will be more likely to prioritize adult labour and*

*avoid involving children in hazardous work, ultimately creating a safer and more equitable environment for all.” (Agriculture Extension Officer, Premium Tobacco Company)*

The above highlights that awareness-raising campaigns are a key strategy to reduce child involvement in tobacco farming. This aligns with the study by ILO (2016) in Tabora region, Tanzania, which found that awareness-raising campaigns about the risks and consequences of child involvement in tobacco farming are crucial for communities, families, and children themselves. Similarly, Sabrina (2022) noted that awareness-raising among Indonesian parents informed them about the illegality and health risks of child involvement in tobacco farming, as well as the importance of education. Therefore, raising awareness in Bingaguru Ward 10 among parents, children, and the community as a whole about the importance of education and the harmful and illegal effects of child involvement in tobacco farming reduces the likelihood of children engaging in this practice.

#### **4.6 Chapter summary**

This chapter presented the findings on the experiences of vulnerable children working in tobacco farming in Bingaguru Ward 10. The findings were based on the data collected in Bingaguru Ward 10 and were analysed using thematic content analysis, aligning with the research aim and objectives. The next chapter presents a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the research study presented in the previous chapters, drawing conclusions and providing recommendations based on the analyzed and presented data on experiences of vulnerable children working in tobacco farming in Bingaguru Ward 10. The recommendations target the themes identified in the study, ultimately aiming to address the underlying causes of child involvement in tobacco farming in Bingaguru Ward 10.

### **5.1 Summary of findings**

The previous chapters discussed the background of the study, reviewed the literature, methodology, and data presentation, analysis, and discussion. The research study explored the experiences of vulnerable children working on tobacco farms. The study was carried out in Bingaguru Ward 10, Makoni District, and Rusape. The study was guided by four objectives: to assess the nature of work performed by children in tobacco farming, to explore the factors contributing to the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming, to examine the effects of child involvement in tobacco farming on vulnerable children, and to identify strategies that can be adopted to mitigate child involvement in tobacco farming. Bronfenbrenner's ecological social systems theory was used as a guiding framework for the study. The study was also guided by a legal framework that underpins the protection of children from child labour. The study employed a qualitative research approach. The study utilized in-depth interviews and a focus group

discussion to collect data from 22 participants, comprising 10 children and 7 caregivers residing in Bingaguru Ward 10. Additionally, key informants included 2 officers from DSD Rusape, 2 Child Care Workers (CCWs) from Bingaguru Ward 10, and 1 Agriculture Extension Officer from the Premium Tobacco Company. These key informants had extensive professional experience in the field of child protection and child labor, and they provided valuable insights through key informant interviews.

The study revealed that children in tobacco farming perform almost all the tasks done in the tobacco industry, most of which are hazardous and age-inappropriate. These tasks include planting, weeding, harvesting, drying tobacco leaves, and preparing leaves for sale. It was found that the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming is alarmingly high and is attributed to a multitude of factors, including poverty. It found that children work in tobacco farms because their families cannot afford to hire additional help, and other families often rely on their children's income to make ends meet. Limited access to education was identified as another factor contributing to child involvement in tobacco farming. The study found that children's access to school is limited by caregivers' inability to pay fees, distant schools in rural areas, and rivers that become difficult to cross during rainy seasons, leading to difficulties in attending school and a likelihood of engaging in tobacco farming activities. It was found that caregivers involve their children in tobacco-related tasks due to a lack of awareness about the consequences, indicating that they perceive this as a normal way for children to learn work ethics by assisting their parents. On the other hand, other caregivers are aware of the risks but feel compelled to involve their children in tobacco-related work due to financial constraints. The dependence of tobacco farmers on unfair contractual relationships with tobacco companies contributes to the involvement of children in tobacco farming. It was found that tobacco companies are buying at low prices, so

caregivers are working with their children to grow more tobacco to cover costs and support their families. The study also revealed that parental illiteracy is a factor contributing to the involvement of children in tobacco farming. It was found that many caregivers lack formal education, making it less likely for them to encourage their children to pursue education, perpetuating child involvement in tobacco farming. Lastly, limited access to alternative crops was identified as one of the factors contributing to child involvement in tobacco farming. Limited access to alternative crops forces caregivers to grow tobacco, despite its unsustainability and harm to children, due to factors like poor market access, inadequate education and skills, insufficient resources, and poor rainfall, thereby perpetuating child involvement in tobacco farming as it is often the only viable crop with a market.

From the findings, the effects of child involvement in tobacco farming on vulnerable children were noted. Educational disruption was highlighted as one of the effects of child involvement in tobacco farming. The researcher deduced that child involvement in tobacco farming is negatively impacting children's education, interfering with their ability to concentrate, perform well in school, and attend regularly. Moreover, the researcher found that child involvement in tobacco farming poses physical hazards and health risks, including adverse health effects from chemical exposure and physical exhaustion, as well as a risk of nicotine poisoning, which can lead to green tobacco sickness. Social isolation and play deprivation were identified as another effect of child involvement in tobacco farming. It was found that children in tobacco farming miss out on playtime, sports, and socializing with friends as they spend most of their time working in tobacco fields. This, therefore, calls for strategies to ameliorate child involvement in tobacco farming. From the research findings, it has been suggested that educational interventions such as after-school programs, the BEAM program, and the construction of boarding schools are viable

strategies to ameliorate child involvement in tobacco farming. Social protection was also suggested as an intervention strategy to address child involvement in tobacco farming, aimed at tackling poverty, hunger, and financial constraints among families, thereby reducing the involvement of children in hazardous work. Awareness-raising campaigns were identified as another key strategy to address child involvement in tobacco farming. Raising awareness among parents, children, and the community about the importance of education and the harmful and illegal effects of child involvement in tobacco farming reduces the likelihood of children engaging in this practice.

## **5.2 Conclusions of the study**

Deducing from the findings of the research, the study arrived at the following conclusions: Children in tobacco farming perform almost all the tasks done in the tobacco industry, most of which are hazardous and age-inappropriate. The study concludes that the involvement of vulnerable children in tobacco farming is alarmingly high and is attributed to multiple factors, which include poverty, limited access to education, a lack of awareness and understanding, the dependence of tobacco farmers on unfair contractual relationships with tobacco companies, parental illiteracy, and limited access to alternative crops.

The study also concludes that child involvement in tobacco farming has some effects. Child involvement in tobacco farming is negatively impacting children's education, interfering with their ability to concentrate, perform well in school, and attend regularly. The study also concludes that child involvement in tobacco farming poses physical hazards and health risks, including adverse health effects from chemical exposure and physical exhaustion, as well as a risk of nicotine poisoning, which can lead to green tobacco sickness. The study also concludes that children in tobacco farming miss out on playtime, sports, and socialising with friends, as they spend most of their time working in tobacco fields.

Given the findings, the study concluded that educational interventions, such as after-school programs, the BEAM program, and the construction of boarding schools, are viable strategies to ameliorate child involvement in tobacco farming. The research, upon analysis of the findings, arrived at the conclusion that social protection can be an intervention strategy to address child involvement in tobacco farming, aimed at tackling poverty, hunger, and financial constraints among families, thereby reducing the involvement of children in hazardous work. The researcher also concluded that awareness-raising among parents, children, and the community about the importance of education and the harmful and illegal effects of child involvement in tobacco farming reduces the likelihood of children engaging in this practice.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the key findings of the experiences of vulnerable children working in tobacco farming, it is important to address the problem of child involvement in tobacco farming in Bingaguru Ward 10. Thus, the following recommendations are made:

- There should be a sustainable advocacy and awareness-raising program to prevent the violation of children's rights and raise awareness about the negative consequences of involving children in tobacco farming and related activities. The program should educate the community on the importance of education, encouraging parents to send their children to school. These programs must be conducted targeting all community members, including influential individuals such as tobacco farming employers, parents, relevant government departments, local authorities, village headmen, chiefs, religious leaders, and civil society organizations.
- The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Service, Labour, and Social Welfare should ensure that education is accessible to



all children from underprivileged families who cannot afford it due to financial constraints. To achieve this, they can intervene through programs that pay tuition, school fees, and exam fees for them. Research has shown that children from these families often lack essential educational materials such as books, satchels, school shoes, and uniforms, hindering their ability to access education. Therefore, it is recommended that programs like BEAM should provide targeted support to OVC in tobacco farming rural villages, addressing these additional educational needs. With international assistance, the BEAM program should expand to provide financial assistance to a greater number of children in these communities, promoting equal access to education.

- The Ministry of Public Service, Labour, and Social Welfare should implement programs aimed at empowering eligible poor households through skill training, income-generating initiatives, and the expansion of HSCT and FDMS programs to a larger number of wards, as Ward 10 has been excluded from these programs. Additionally, the Ministry should conduct regular investigations and monitoring to prevent child involvement in tobacco farming. This can be achieved by conducting unannounced inspections during tobacco seasons and identifying areas where children are frequently working in tobacco farming. By taking these steps, the Ministry can help alleviate poverty, promote sustainable livelihoods, and protect children from exploitation in tobacco farming.
- It is recommended that tobacco contracting companies, such as Premium Tobacco Company in Bingaguru Ward 10, implement effective measures to prevent child involvement in tobacco farming. To achieve this, they should impose strict monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to detect and prevent child involvement in tobacco farming. Additionally, they should provide incentives, such as prices or bonuses, to tobacco farmers

who comply with child labour regulations. Furthermore, tobacco contracting companies should continuously provide training and support to farmers on alternative livelihoods, sustainable agricultural practices, and the consequences of involving children in tobacco farming. By taking these steps, tobacco contracting companies can help prevent child labour, promote sustainable and ethical practices, and improve the livelihoods of tobacco farmers.

- The Ministry of Health and Child Care must launch public awareness campaigns and training initiatives to educate people about the health hazards of tobacco farming. These programs should focus on the dangers of nicotine and pesticide exposure, as well as the importance of using personal protective equipment. Furthermore, the Ministry should support initiatives that offer suitable educational and job opportunities to children above the minimum working age in rural farming communities. This will provide alternatives to tobacco farming, enabling children to acquire skills, support their families, and safeguard their health and well-being. By doing so, the Ministry can help eradicate child labour, promote sustainable livelihoods, and guarantee the welfare of rural children.
- The Government in partnership with the NGOs should implement supplementary feeding programs in schools to support children involved in tobacco farming. This is necessary because most of these children come from poor households and often experience hunger at home.

## **5.4 Chapter summary**

This chapter presented a summary of the findings, followed by a section on conclusions and a section on recommendations to address the study's identified gaps. The recommendations were on ways that should be adopted to mitigate child involvement in tobacco farming.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### INTRODUCTION

My name is Panashe Bridget Chitewere, a fourth-year Social Work student at Bindura University of Science Education. As part of my degree program, I am conducting individual research on the topic '**Experiences of Vulnerable Children in Tobacco Farming: A Case Study of Bingaguru Ward 10, Makoni District, Rusape.**' This research aims to explore the experiences of vulnerable children in tobacco farming in Ward 10. I kindly request your participation in this study. Please note that your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous and will be used solely for academic purposes. Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw at any time during the interview. I will conduct an interview with you as part of my data collection process, which will not exceed 30 minutes. Thank you for considering my request.

Start time.....

Date.....

## **QUESTIONS**

### **Section A: Biographic Information**

Participant.....

Institution.....

Job title.....

Age 10-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51+ ☐

Level of education reached.....

Years of experience.....

### **Section B: Nature of work performed by children in tobacco farming**

1. What tasks do children typically perform in tobacco farming?

### **Section C: Factors contributing to child involvement in tobacco farming**

1. In your experience, what are the main factors that contribute to children becoming involved in tobacco farming?

2. Are there any specific vulnerabilities or circumstances that make children more susceptible to being engaged in child labour in tobacco farming?

### **Section D: Effects of child involvement in tobacco farming**

1. What are some of the immediate and long-term effects that children working in tobacco farms may experience, both physically and psychologically?

2. How does child involvement in tobacco farming impact children's access to education and their overall development?

3. Have you observed any specific health risks or hazards that children face while working on tobacco farms? How do these affect their well-being?

4. What are some of the social and emotional consequences that children working in tobacco farms may experience? How does it affect their relationships and sense of self?

5. Can you share any examples of cases where child labour in tobacco farms has had detrimental effects on children's lives? How do you support these children in their recovery and reintegration?

### **Section E: Strategies to ameliorate child involvement in tobacco farming**

1. What are some effective strategies or interventions that you have found helpful in preventing and addressing child involvement in tobacco farming?

2. How do you collaborate with local communities, government agencies, and other stakeholders to combat child involvement in the tobacco farming sector?

3. What measures can be taken to ensure that children have access to quality education and are not forced to work in tobacco farms?

4. Are there any successful programs or initiatives that focus on providing alternative livelihood opportunities for families involved in tobacco farming?

## **APPENDIX 2: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHILDREN**

### **INTRODUCTION**

My name is Panashe Bridget Chitewere, a fourth-year Social Work student at Bindura University of Science Education. As part of my degree program, I am conducting individual research on the topic '**Experiences of Vulnerable Children in Tobacco Farming: A Case Study of Bingaguru Ward 10, Makoni District, Rusape.**' This research aims to explore the experiences of vulnerable children in tobacco farming in Ward 10. I kindly request your participation in this study. Please note that your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous and will be used solely for academic purposes. Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw at any time during the interview. I will conduct an interview with you as part of my data collection process, which will not exceed 30 minutes. Thank you for considering my request.

Start time.....

Date.....

### **Section A: Biographic Information**

Participant.....

Age 10-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51+ ☐

Education level.....

Attendance frequency rate during tobacco season 1-2 ☐ 3-4 ☐ 5 ☐ days per week

### **Section B: Nature of work performed by children in tobacco farming**

1. What tasks do you do when you help with tobacco farming, and how often do you do them?

### **Section C: Factors contributing to child involvement in tobacco farming**

1. How old were you when you started working in tobacco farming?

2. Can you tell me why children in your village are involved in tobacco farming?

3. Are you the one who chooses to work in tobacco farming or there are specific reasons that led you to work?

4. Are there any specific challenges or difficulties in your family or community that make it more likely for children to work in tobacco farms?

5. How does the lack of educational opportunities or limited schooling facilities influence child involvement in tobacco farming?

### **Section D: Effects of child involvement in tobacco farming**

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your experience working in tobacco farming?

2. Do you face any difficulties or dangers while working in the tobacco farm? What are they?

3. How does working in the tobacco farm affect your daily life, such as your health, education, or relationships with family and friends?

4. Are there any specific feelings or emotions you experience while working in the tobacco farm?  
How does it make you feel?



5. Have you ever faced any problems or challenges because of your work in the tobacco farm?  
Can you give me an example?

### **Section E: Strategies to ameliorate child involvement in tobacco farming**

1 In your opinion, what measures can be taken to prevent or reduce child involvement in tobacco farming?

2. Is there anything that would make it easier for you to go to school instead of working in the tobacco farm? What kind of support or help would be useful?

3. Are there any activities or programs that you think would help children in tobacco farms have a better life or more opportunities?

4. How do you think adults, communities, or organizations can help children like you who are working in tobacco farms?

5. How do you think education can play a role in combating child involvement in tobacco farming, and what improvements can be made to ensure better access to education.

### **APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPANT'S INDEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CAREGIVERS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

My name is Panashe Bridget Chitewere, a fourth-year Social Work student at Bindura University of Science Education. As part of my degree program, I am conducting individual research on the topic **'Experiences of Vulnerable Children Involved in Tobacco Farming: A Case Study of Bingaguru Ward 10, Makoni District, Rusape.'** This research aims to explore the experiences of vulnerable children in tobacco farming in Ward 10. I kindly request your participation in this study. Please note that your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous and will be used solely for academic purposes. Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw at any time during the interview. I will conduct an interview with you as part of my data collection process, which will not exceed 30 minutes. Thank you for considering my request.

Start time.....

Date.....

### **Section A: Biographic Information**

Participant.....

Age 10-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51+ ☐

Level of education reached.....

### **Section B: Nature of work performed by children in tobacco farming**

1. What tasks do children typically perform in tobacco farming?

### **Section C: Factors contributing to child involvement in tobacco farming**

1. Can you share your perspective on why children in your community are involved in tobacco farming?

2. What are the main challenges or difficulties family face to involve their children in tobacco farming?

4. How does the lack of educational opportunities or access to schools influence child involvement in tobacco farming?

5. Are there any other factors that you believe influence child involvement in tobacco farming?

### **Section D: Effects of child involvement in tobacco farming**

1. How do you think working in the tobacco farm affects your child's physical health and overall well-being?

2. Have you noticed any emotional or psychological impacts on children who are involved in tobacco farming?

3. How does working in the tobacco farm impact your child's access to education and their ability to reach their full potential?

4. Have you observed any instances of exploitation, abuse, or unfair treatment of children in tobacco farms? How does this affect your child's experience?

5. From your observations or experiences, what are the physical risks or health hazards that children face while working in tobacco farming?

### **Section E: Strategies to ameliorate child involvement in tobacco farming**

1. Are there any existing programs or initiatives in your community or region aimed at addressing child involvement in tobacco farms? What are your thoughts on these efforts?

2. What kind of support or interventions do you believe would be most effective in preventing and reducing child labor in tobacco farms?

3. How can access to education and vocational training be improved to provide alternative opportunities for vulnerable children?

4. Do you think there is a role for government agencies, industry stakeholders, or community organizations in addressing child labor in tobacco farms? If so, what actions do you think they should take?

5. Are there any specific resources, services, or policies that you believe would help families like yours avoid or overcome the need to involve children in tobacco farming?



## **APPENDIX 4: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE WITH CHILDREN AND CAREGIVERS IN BINGAGURU WARD 10**

### **INTRODUCTION**

My name is Panashe Bridget Chitewere, a fourth-year Social Work student at Bindura University of Science Education. As part of my degree program, I am conducting individual research on the topic '**Experiences of Vulnerable Children Involved in Tobacco Farming: A Case Study of Bingaguru Ward 10, Makoni District, Rusape.**' This research aims to explore the experiences of vulnerable children in tobacco farming in Ward 10. I kindly request your participation in this study. Please note that your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous and will be used solely for academic purposes. Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw at any time during the interview. I will conduct an interview with you as part of my data collection process, which will not exceed 30 minutes. Thank you for considering my request.

Start time.....

Date.....

### **Section A: Nature of work performed by children in tobacco farming**

1. What tasks do children typically perform in tobacco farming?

### **Section B: Factors contributing to child involvement in tobacco farming**

1. What are some reasons why children are involved in tobacco farming?
2. What are the economic factors that contribute to child labor in tobacco farming?
3. Are there any social or cultural factors that influence child labor in tobacco farming?
4. How does the lack of educational opportunities contribute to child labor in tobacco farming?

5. Are there any other factors that you believe contribute to child labor in tobacco farming?

### **Section C: Effects of child involvement in tobacco farming**

1. What are the physical risks and health hazards that children face while working in tobacco farming?

2. How does child involvement in tobacco farming affect a child's education and overall development?

3. In what ways does child involvement in tobacco farming impact children's mental and emotional well-being?

### **Section D: Strategies to ameliorate child involvement in tobacco farming**

1. What measures do you think should be taken to raise awareness about the issue of child involvement in tobacco farming?

2. How can the government, organizations, and communities collaborate to address child labor in tobacco farming effectively?

3. What alternatives or opportunities can be provided to children and their families to prevent child involvement in tobacco farming?

4. Are there any existing initiatives or programs that have successfully reduced child involvement in tobacco farming? If so, what are they?

5. What role can education play in combating child involvement in tobacco farming, and how can access to education be improved?

## **APPENDIX 5: CONSENT FORM**

### **BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

### **FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**

### **DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK**

#### **INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM**

##### **Introduction**

Dear Participant,

My name is Panashe Bridget Chitewere, a student at the Bindura University Science Education pursuing a Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work. I am undertaking a study in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Social Work Degree, and the study is entitled: Experiences of vulnerable children in tobacco farming. A case of Bingaguru Ward 10, Makoni district, Rusape. The research aims at exploring the experiences of vulnerable children in tobacco farming.

I would like to thank you for devoting your time in taking part in this study. Note that as a participant in this study, your participation is voluntary and free from coercion. Confidentiality is ensured as your name will not be disclosed in the report and if need be, pseudonyms will be used. Your name will also not be written on the researcher's recording sheet. Your identity will therefore be shared with no third party and the researcher intends to avoid violating your privacy. No harm is intended on the participant as the study is conducted solely for academic purposes and no other purpose is intended. The researcher seeks your permission to record a voice note although she will be jotting down the information you will be providing so that she does not miss the details of the



interview. You are free to withdraw from participating in the study whenever you want without being penalised.

An interview will be conducted with you only if you have agreed with the information provided in this information form. You may ask any questions that you have regarding the study or areas which need clarification. Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

### **Contact details**

If you have any other questions you can contact me on the following details:

Email; chitewerepanashe126@gmail.com

Phone number; +263775718659

If you are willing to partake and contribute to and in the study, you can kindly fill your details in the spaces below.

Participant's signature (pseudonym).....

Researcher's signature.....

Date.....

With thanks

Panashe Bridget Chitewere.

## APPENDIX 6: APPROVAL LETTER 1 FOR DATA COLLECTION

## APPENDIX 7: APPROVAL LETTER 2 FOR DATA COLLECTION

17 The image cannot be displayed. Your computer may not have enough memory to open the image, or the image may have been deleted. Restart your computer and try again. If the red x still appears, you may have to delete the image and then insert it again.

17 The image area is not to be altered

