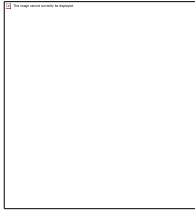


**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**



**FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING**

**DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**An analysis of the background factors to persistent child marriages in Rushinga District, Zimbabwe**

**By**

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Development Studies**

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**2024**

## APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read the dissertation and have approved its submission for marking confirming that it conforms to the departmental requirements on a research entitled: “**An analysis of the background factors to persistent child marriages in Rushinga District, Zimbabwe**” Submitted by Zvikomborero M Rugoho in partial fulfilment of Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Development Studies.

Dr. H. Musarandega (Dissertation Supervisor) .....  .....

Date...30/05/2024 ....

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been the result of my own original efforts and investigations and such work has not been presented elsewhere for the purpose of degree assessment. All additional sources of information have been acknowledged by means of references.

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Date..June 2024

## **DEDICATION**

This research is dedicated to the Almighty God who has made it a possibility to reach the end. I also dedicate this to my supervisor for all the efforts put in order to complete the research process, not leaving out my family which also supported ethically and financially in the processes of this research.

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## **ABSTRACT**

. The concept of child marriage has had a number of things in consideration looking on the areas affected. This study focused on the assessment of background factors to child marriages in Rushinga District. It aimed at assessing the trend of child marriages involving the evaluation of the meaning of child marriage and the causes driving and at the same time unpacking the effects of the deadly practice and the measures by the interventions in child marriage reduction. The suggestion of the ways to curb the practice was also a concern to the study lastly. In the study was adopted the descriptive research design and the methods used to collected data involved F.G.Ds, open interviews and KIIs. The results revealed a meaning of child marriage as one, involving a below 18 year old child. Secondly, the background factors to child marriage in the district with a socio economic influence. Additionally factors as poverty, mining effects, proximity to the Mozambique boarder and technology to mention some were found as the main causes to child marriages. Moreover, the study highlighted of the effects imposed by child marriages, at the same time giving out other roles by interventions to avoid such. There were revealed the interventions by NGOs and by the Government itself. Furthermore the roles and effects of the intervention were explored, reducing poverty and providing education as key roles but at the same time with suggestions to see a total change and reduction in the exacerbation of child marriages after their interference. The discussion of the results from interviews and FGDs explored valuable insights to achieve reduced child marriages in the district revealing the connectedness between communities and the act with also the suggested measures. Last but not least, the study involved a few recommended issues as education of all genders, G & C lessons, plough back and to mention most importantly poverty eradication

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## **List of abbreviation**

GBV	Gender Based Violence
CAMFED	Campaign for Female Education
FACT	Family Aids Caring Trust
DSD	Department of Social Development
MOWACSMED	Ministry of Women Affairs Community, Small and Medium Enterprise Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
DOO	District Operations Officer
DDC	District Development Coordinator
DSI	District Schools Inspector
KII	Key Informant Interviews
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CHW	Community Health Worker
WHO	World Health Organization



# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Chapter Introduction

The chapter provides a summary of the background of the study and an outline of the research problem; that is background factors to persistent child marriages in Rushinga District, Zimbabwe. The research focuses on child marriage pushing factors. Child marriages have recently become a serious global issue, including Zimbabwe and it has diminished the potentials in a girl child and even women. The aim and objectives of the study are also highlighted in this chapter. It also introduces research questions and an analysis of the study aim on child marriage causes in the Zimbabwean context. The main research question then goes in hand with the idea of reviewing the unearthed modern factors causing child marriages in Rushinga District, Zimbabwe. The chapter provides a brief analysis of the importance of taking the study and justification to the research. This is important and it specifies the gap and potential measures to be reached within the study. In addition, the chapter provides definition of terms to be used in the study and lastly, there is provision of an outline of the structure as to give guidance of the flow of thesis.

### 1.2 Background

Child marriages in Zimbabwe are part and parcel of the factors resulting to less development and this has been a huge problem to be catered for in rural areas especially Rushinga district which still stands to be facing the challenge. Community interventions have played a great role in cooperation to reduce child marriages and not forgetting also the role by the government, but however as stated that, as early as fourteen and fifteen years of age, children to whom the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, (2018) refers as every human being below the age of 18 years are still engaging into partnerships leading to marriage. Therefore the efforts by community interventions through provision of school needs, provision of food hampers, health care assistance and educational support to children by both non-governmental organization and governmental programs, Rushinga district in particular seems to have specific challenges that apart from poverty in general are not solved through that. The Herald of 3 November 2020, states of the district in Mashonaland central having the highest rates of early marriages, teen pregnancies and

12 year olds being sexually active. This is due to the existence of a number of factors that are rarely discovered through by communities but are hided under the justification of the term poverty, like the influence of uneducated parents, walking of pupils long distances to and from school, farm locations far from home, the value put in US dollar and lack of exposure, to mention a few. The communities end up losing the positive potentials in a girl child, facing underdevelopments and henceforth working on an unending issue. However with a little benefit from the efforts, community interventions are trying and tackling the tide of poverty, there is development somehow in the processes. Poverty has continued to play a negative role to vulnerability statuses of people to food and even security in nutrition as well as livelihoods in Zimbabwe (ZIMVAC, 2021). This research seeks to evaluate possible background factors leading to child marriages as directed by the major factor, poverty and in this case Rushinga District is to be used. The District is found in natural region 4 and as a result the district is prone to child marriages. Subsistence farming is the main activity of most communities in the District and no large scale farming is practiced in Rushinga District therefore it has been the reason for the migration of families during the rain seasons. Contrary to this background it can therefore be noted that, most households are suffering from child marriage effects. Therefore the research is then an effort to dig into the challenges and the gaps that still mark Rushinga district as one of the areas with high rates of early marriages.

### **1.3 Research Problem**

In the past years, child marriages have increasingly been noticed as a problem in Zimbabwe. Children below the age of eighteen are engaging in sexual activities resulting in child marriages, (Camlin et al., 2013). Community interventions including the nongovernmental organization programs and government activities have played a crucial role to unpack the solutions towards the ending of child marriages but despite campaigns against the bad practice, there is still a number to count on child marriage existence. Therefore, this project aims to reveal the dynamics of child marriages with special focus on Rushinga District. As according to Magwaza, (2014), a number of organizations have been working to end or reduce child marriages in Zimbabwe and these may include Girls Not Brides, UNICEF and Women's Group. These work hand in glove to reduce child marriages in the rural of Zimbabwe offering assistance in funding of campaigns, awareness's, trainings and poverty reduction. This has been the focus by Lietz, (2019) as mentioned in one of



the articles that poverty as the major driver of child marriages, and to some extent cultures and law enforcement have been the challenge to achieving effective measures from community intervention initiatives on these child marriage trends in Zimbabwean rural areas. Therefore child marriage has been a serious issue to give attention to in Zimbabwe as UNICEF, (2016) provides the statistics of child marriages in Zimbabwe as over 1 in 3 girls being married before 18 years of age. Locally therefore, the government in order to pave the way to minimize child marriage effects and existence, a number of programs have been encountered especially in rural areas and Rushinga being one of the top affected is considered. According to Plan International & European Union, (2018), much effort has been put in Zimbabwean rural, and however the trends of child marriages keeps records on the prevalence. Thus the research is to look into the background factors to persistent child marriages in a specific district, Rushinga.

#### **1.4 Aim**

To explore the background factors to continued child marriages in the district of Rushinga in Zimbabwe.

#### **1.5 Research Objectives**

The objectives of the study are to:

- i. reveal the trend of child marriages in Rushinga District
- ii. unpack the causes of child marriages in the District of Rushinga
- iii. assess measures to eradicate child marriages in Rushinga.
- iv. suggest additional ways to curb child marriages in Rushinga

#### **1.6 Research Questions**

- i. what is the trend of child marriages in Rushinga District?
- ii. what are the causes of child marriages in Rushinga?
- iii. how effective are the ways of reducing child marriages in Rushinga District?
- iv. what ways can be used to curb the existence of child marriages in Rushinga District?

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The research is significantly looking into the background factors leading to child marriages and the role that has been taken by community interventions to reduce in the district of Rushinga. It is with significant hope that by the end of the research, the district officers, NGOs, government officials, community members and young children will benefit from the research. It is the aim of the research to close the gaps that have been realized in relation to community interventions roles and efforts in reducing child marriages. The research has a purpose on recording the successes, challenges, and recommendations by the interventions as also pointed out by Tjonneland & Heggenhougen, (2016) that there is progress and challenges in eliminating child marriages in the district communities that have been working towards the reduction of child marriages. It is also the purpose of the study to analyze the efforts by community interventions, the gaps and measures that can be useful in dealing with child marriages. The causes of child marriages have mostly been outlined as according to Hadi, (2019), but however the study wishes to pursue a further research on the unearthed modern factors which still proves to drive child marriages no matter the work done in reducing them. The results of this study significantly contribute to the understanding of various issues relating to child marriages in Rushinga District communities. It is specifically aimed at enabling one to analytically understand and appreciate with the aim of reducing the various causes and effects of child marriages that have continually affected human and community development.

## **1.8 Justification**

The research directly looks at the background factors to persistent child marriages in the district of Rushinga, Zimbabwe and most importantly looks forward to unveil solutions to tackle the ability of poverty in destructing a girl child's potential. It is also important for the research to provide other useful ways to community interventions as Tjonneland & Heggenhougen, (2016) have mentioned also of the interventions successes and failures in reducing child marriages as however their efforts are overwhelmed by the rapid growth in the pressure of modern day activities. In this study, it is of great determination to review community interventions' possibilities in reducing the proliferation of child marriages and to break down the determinants of child marriages from poverty which is mentioned by UNICEF, (2018) that it drives to child marriage. Therefore it

is the aim of the study to uncover ways to solve child marriage effects in the district of Rushinga, Zimbabwe.

### **1.9 Definition of Terms**

**Child marriage**- child marriage is any formal marriage or informal union where one or both parties are under 18 years of age. It is rooted in gender inequality (UNICEF, 2020). This means any marriage for under 18 year olds or one, formal or not is considered a child marriage.

**Non-governmental** - a private, not for profit organization that operates independently of any government (Corbett and Williams, 2008). That is an institution not under government but private sector.

**Community Interventions**- programs or projects that aim to improve the health and wellbeing of a community (According to Petticrew & Alderson, 2008). Thus all groups aiming on improving the community

**Poverty**- the inability to achieve the minimal requirements necessary to afford a basic standard of living (According to Deondam (2019). This means being unable to afford basics for an average life.

**Development**- a multi-dimensional process involving the reorganization and reorientation of the entire economic and social systems, it is a physical reality and a state of mind in which the society has through some combinations of social, economic and political process secured the way of obtaining a better life Todaro (1981). Development therefore involves positive change.

### **1.10 Organization of Study**

Chapter one consisted of the introduction and background of the study with a highlight of the significance and also the aims and to be achievements of the study. This is a chapter whereby a brief scope of the study is provided and also the explanation of the main interest within. Chapter two is on literature review. In this chapter, there is provided an overview of other scholars on the research topic, research gaps and also the theoretical framework. There is chapter three for the research methodology. This chapter provides research design to be used in answering research questions, and data collection. Data collection tools that will be used are also entailed. Chapter four provides results and the chapter focuses on the research findings, their importance in answering the research questions and also provides with a summary of data findings. Lastly, there

is chapter five of the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations. This is a summary of chapter one to chapter five. Recommendations from research findings and the interpretation of the results are provided, not forgetting the conclusions.

### **1.11 Limitations of the Study**

In this study, were met a number of challenges including the organization of focus group discussions during data collection with school learners in schools as they had sports throughout the period but however to make it a success, there was the assistance from the school sports directors through the provision of a schedule of free days before the discussions. Participants of the study expected payments after their assistance and to solve the issue, it was made clear before that the research was undertaken for educational purposes and no allowance was available for all of the interviewees and FGD participants. It was also a challenge to engage Key Informants' participation because of tight schedules and their commitments. However requests were made in order to make appointments for the data collection exercise before the time.

### **1.12 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter was given an overview of the background of child marriages, the importance of the study and above all the justification, aims and objectives of the analysis of the background factors to persistent child marriages in Rushinga as a District. In this chapter, it was defined the key words within the research and was provided the organization of the whole study.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Chapter Introduction

The chapter looks forward to unpack literature on the key concepts of child marriage on a global and local context. The research on child marriages has brought about the motivation to look different views on the issue. The chapter reviews the concept of “child marriage” understood differently in the cultural and legal context across the globe. Interventions have worked towards the causes of child marriage, but however globally and locally the causes have literature. The chapter provides literature on the global and local understanding of causes of child marriages as well as the role played by NGOs and governments to tackle the bad practice. On a global scale, harmful cultural practices and unlawful acts have been pinpointed to contribute to children getting married before 18 years of age. The chapter concludes with consequences of child marriage, and globally literature has reviewed on health problems as one. Girls mostly suffer from emotional and psychological damage as usually they lack the power to take charge in and out of the marriages. Nour (2006) also points out that girls suffer from HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases as they lack power to agree on safer sex. There is also a reduced attendance of school for a girl child and even economic opportunities. The exercise will have lasting deleterious consequences at the health, health and rights of hundreds of thousands of girls. (United Nations Children’s Fund, 2021). Lastly the chapter unpacks the interventions, international and local working towards the reduction of child marriages.

#### 2.2 Definition and scope of Child marriages

*Table 1: The Definition of Child Marriage.*

Definition	Source
Marriage of children below the age of 18 years.	Clark, M. (2004).
A marriage that happens below 18 years and global statistics on the practice is alarming.	World Health Organization, (2017).

Any formal marriage or informal union where one or both parties are under 18 years of age.	UNICEF, (2022).
A legal or customary union between two people, one or both of whom is below age 18.	African Union, (2015).

In this study, the preferred definition is that one by UNICEF, (2022) stating that a child marriage can be a formal or an informal union but one or both are below 18 because the research wishes to unveil out all modern challenges hence formally or not, the definition helps fit in all possible causes. The global social, cultural, legal and traditional contexts determines the definition and understanding of the term child marriage. Also in the research, the influence of the concepts child will frame the study on how the concepts have influence towards child marriages in both the global and local context. According to UNOHCHR, (2022) a child is a person who is under the age of 18 years. Majority is about at age 18 unless, beneath home law, it is far attained earlier. UNICEF, (2021) states that the phrases child and children talk to all kids and younger humans from delivery to 18 years of age, as specific with inside the UN Convention at the Rights of the Child, if a selected age organization of kids is intended, this can be made clean with inside the text and it is critical to spotlight that age groups can range in line with context and culture. As according to the Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, (2019), childhood is the state of being a child till the stop of the twentieth century where the concept of childhood as a separate social class had been paid little or no attention. The definition of childhood additionally varies according to cultural norms and expectations. Therefore, Crandall & Evans, (2019) asserts that children are incapable to absolutely consent to sexual dating with adults or even with different children. In addition, for everyone to offer knowledgeable consent to sexual intimacy, it's far critical to own information and knowledge of the act of sexual intimacy.

The concept of child marriage is interestingly as according to (Clark, 2004 & Nour, 2004) taken to an age limit of 18 and nothing above and however such a view in this study helps reveal different views of how communities takes this into account and understands the concept of child. Rendering

to the High Commission of Human Rights (OHCHR, 2015) child marriage is a marriage that takes place when one is below the age of 18 years. Thus, the conceptualization of child marriage agreed the sequential is vital as it becomes insightful of the scale at which it is trendy on a global and local context. In this study, conceptualization of the word is vital in accepting consequences of the exercise of child marriage in the communities. At the same period, the chronological meaning of child marriage provides a clear picture in accepting the reasons why the practice remains to ensue in many parts of the world and Rushinga District in particular. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (2021), child marriage is extensively recognized as a contravention of human rights and a problem to countrywide development.

The constitution of Zimbabwe 2013 also has things to contribute towards the concept of child marriages. Hedling, (2017) defines a constitution as laws and principles that are used to determine how a state works in terms of operation and actions. IPFF (2016), talks of the constitution of Zimbabwe as being the highest law of the country and Section 26(b) of the constitution denies marrying off children, the constitution points out that, "The State must take appropriate measures to ensure that: no marriage is entered into without the free and full consent of the intending spouses; children are not pledged in marriage" (Section 26 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013: 28). Musiwa, (2018) also states that the safety of spouses in times, during and after dissolution is shown in Section 26(d) of the constitution. In a courtroom docket case between Mudzuru and another Minister of Justice (2016, Z79/14(cc), the women complained of wanton abuse at some point of and after separation in their marriage and the provisions of the charter are critical to notice in relation to the exercise of child marriage in Zimbabwe. Towards the observation therefore, Musiwa, (2018) keeps that during Zimbabwe, even though the charter stipulates the criminal age of marriage to be 18 years, there's nevertheless no particular law that outlaws child marriage. Hence, the war to prevent this exercise is but to be won.

The country can have a constitution but that is not enough for the protection of girls towards child marriages, therefore the government needs to develop and install laws and regulations to safeguard the referred to be "children". According to Mawodza, (2018), the constitution is not yet cindered to put in place measures that discourages perpetrators or somewhere somehow protect girls from child marriages. Repeatedly, the exercise of child marriage has now no longer been criminalized or even had the time been spared to let parliamentarians amend the opposite legal guidelines that

contravene the provisions of the constitutions. To this end, the modification of the legal guidelines remains to take place.

## **2.3 Causes of Child Marriages**

In this chapter, there is the discussion of general and even the specific related literature on child marriages on a global and local context, Zimbabwe. There are a number of conditions fueling up the bad practice that may include poverty, instructional possibilities to women and gender discrimination. At the identical time, the preservation of social-cultural norms on marriage and the inferior positioning of the girl child is an own circle of relatives and network pushing to fuel up the existence of child marriage and thereby contributing to bad results and futures of girls and women. As according to Fatima, (2023), teenagers are engaging into romance in every year, hence the numbers are bigger in Southern Asia and half of the married off young girls do live there.

The current information talks about the prevalence of child marriage as declined, but there is substantial heterogeneity in the reduction rates throughout and even within countries with reduced prevalence (United Nations Children's Fund, 2021). As the worldwide discount in child marriage is to be celebrated, no area is on target to fulfill the SDG goal of casting off this dangerous practice through 2030, (United Nations Children's Fund, 2021). UNICEF (2019) also talks of the number of girls and the already married women counting to 650 million of girls who married as children and 12 million is the number of girls married each year. Kumari and Shekar (2023) found that early marriage is a serious issue in the Indian state of Rajasthan and poverty, lack of education, and cultural and societal norms are the main reasons for early marriage in the state.

### **2.3.1 Poverty**

According to Morduch, (2016), poverty can be defined as multidimensional concept that looks towards the scales to which people, households and at large communities are deprived of basic needs. Some literature looks into the indicators and however these may involve deprivation of income, food, and even access to housing. Poverty is one of the pushing factors to child marriage, and as according to Plan International, (2015); Girls Not Bride, (2019) it is a belief in some families that marriage is financial breakthrough due to an increased coat of dowry that comes with age of a girl child. Hence as family puts effort to marry off their children, they experience a relief in supporting them financially anymore. World Vision, (2021) pinpoints that, children suffering from



hunger and starvation are more likely to get married at an early age, that is 18 and below than children free from hunger, thus the relationship is quantified. A research proves out that Nelson Mandela once talked about the elimination of poverty after his retirement as he stood on behalf of the Make Poverty History campaign in London. It was his idea to stand for the reduction of poverty worldwide as he mentioned that poverty cannot be defined as natural but people as a whole can overcome its consequences and effects, (Murdoch, 2016). Countries like Mali and Mozambique are included into the range of countries with a low Gross Domestic Product and high rates of married girls under the age of 18 whereby the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), (2018), states that half of the women are married before eighteen years of age and higher than or equal to quarter of the population of the girls spend two dollars a day. This is therefore an open source to point out that worldwide, poverty has led to the practice of child marriages and is playing a bigger role.

UNICEF, (2018) nullifies that poverty has played a role to the vulnerabilities of children and the parents having a lot of burden however making child marriages the only better solution to both. The COVID-19 pandemic also is a highlight of increased child marriages worldwide and it's not surprising that children, particularly the ones from bad socioeconomic regions who have been already marginalized and neglected, were struck through the COVID-19 epidemic. Particularly at risk of the pandemic's long-time period effects which includes infant labor, child trafficking, child marriage, sexual exploitation, and death are children from underprivileged backgrounds and at danger are girls and women, who face discrimination and risk due to their gender and social role as outcasts (Rahiem, 2021).

Zimbabwe is also associated with child marriages driven through poverty as World Food Programme (WFP), (2022) points out that poverty is a driver to early marriage as parents tend to migrate in search of work, they marry off children with the motive to receive "lobola" and even forces their children into unplanned relationships and marriages as a way to flee poverty. That has given a consideration to the research to passionately look for the outpointed factors at a lower local level.

### **2.3.2 Gender Inequalities**

Gender inequality is when men and women are not treated equally, and may lead to women losing their full participation in different activities, (Hickey, 2019). Child marriages manifest from the

existence of inequalities in gender, and however the discrimination against girls as a result of reflecting social norms. Within this context, it is the SDG 5 which states on the promotion of gender equality and however empowering women and girls, thus it gives value to the idea of ending child marriage practices, forced or not. As important as it is, all individuals require opportunities to respect, value, and self-determination no matter their gender, (United Nations, 2022). It is discovered that in Pakistan, there is high prevalence of the said to be marriage before 18 years of age due to the existence of gender inequality and as proven by, Fatima, S. (2023) that girls therefore suffer from death and maternal morbidity because of the bad practice as it is linked with a number of pregnancies as weighing 2 years of another, some not planned and even abortions.

According to World Food Programme (WFP). (2022) male dominance in decision making especially fathers and brothers has played a role to growth in gender inequalities therefore promoting child marriages. Chiredzi, Zimbabwe has been identified to be affected and child marriage dominant as it is associated with gender inequality as fathers highly get the right to influence girl children into marriage earlier and brothers to some extent promotes eloping of a girl child as a form of marriage. Adding on, gender inequalities may also be a gap to school dropout, thus a girl child's education is not prioritized over a boy. This therefore in cultural and societal norms that prioritizes a boy over a girl may result in school dropout hence marriage becomes an option to some girls.

### **2.3.3 Harmful Traditional Practices**

Harmful practices in the name of tradition have become a form of violation on children and has been accepted in a number of countries. This may involve the practice of the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and this is a traditional practice whereby female children as infants or teenagers are circumcised and it is a process of a surgical removal of the sensitive genital organs. African Union, (2015), points out that in most African countries, the prevalence of child marriages is reduced by civil laws that sets a marriageable age but however the existence and work of traditional practices makes it a different case to enforce the laws. In addition tradition and religion to point out, are the most drivers of child marriages apart from others.

Other harmful practices in tradition that seem to push on child marriages is the culture of purifying girls sexually. This means having no marriage is a shame and an example is that of Bangladesh whereby their beliefs persist on getting married to remove the shame. Therefore the practice is

based on reducing the need for sex for girls and marrying them off for their protection from illicit sexual incidents.

Guvamombe, (2016), comments that Zimbabwean traditional practice like that of “Kuzvarira” is harmful and has promoted to the prevalence of child marriages. This is a practice of marrying off a girl child before even birth for family interest. That is creating a pathway to child marriages as earlier the child is given to her husband before she indulges with other boys. In a milestone research, Inter Press Service (2018), talks of a case in Honde valley whereby 5 girls left schools unwillingly but forced to do so in order to get married in compensation of Kapesa’s death. This happened in 1999 and as according to a belief of compensating the dead with wives, it is believed the girls were handed over to marriage between 7 to 15 years of age. A similar case was recorded in Manicaland Province where a 4 year old girl was pledged for marriage to Nyakuriwa family in Sahumani village as a way to appease avenging spirits that were blamed on her family, Hambari family (Zimbabwe Daily, 2017). These practices clearly have fueled up child marriages and most probably in a secret place they have grown to diminish the standards of a girl child.

### **2.3.4 Religion Issues within Families**

The exacerbation of child marriages is somehow a result of religious activities whereby in the name of church doctrines, girls do not overcome the pressure of marriage whilst before 18 years of age. The idea and act of marrying off a girl before 18 years is frequently happening because of the mixtures in tradition and religion concepts. Moreover, it is with great effect how the religion of people affects a girl child’s decisions as Ghosh, S. et al (2019), notices that it is rare when girls are consulted about their marriages and Plan International has also discovered that as a blame for the proliferation of child marriage is the existence and attention given to cultures and beliefs of communities. Religion has also caused child marriages in a number of countries and even locally. In several countries, especially countries with an Islamic population is exposed to child marriage rise. According to a report by the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights, (2018), countries with higher Islamic populations have a record of child marriages because religious leaders voices on and even opposes campaigns that goes against the bad practice. The Islamic scriptures are interpreted in such a way that child marriages are said to be allowed. “. The Gambia, for example, has a large Muslim majority, at 95% of the population and in the same country, child marriage is not regarded by society at large as wrong or against the best interests of the child”,

(African Commission on Human and People's Rights, 2018). This practice of early marriages is most common in parts of Cameroon and it is important to point out that the Islamic law has influenced the act as one of the leaders had an oath that even if it means breaking the laws, leaving will mean going against the religious book and that's not possible. Child marriages have their roots in religion, culture and tradition as argued by Schaffnit, Urassa & Lawson, (2019). Thus parents marry off their kids as a way to protect them from sex before marriage hence, as early as below 18, a child is married.

In Zimbabwe, it is sad to discover that a number of children married under the age of 18 is recorded in Johanne Marange Apostolic church where they believe marriages comes from the "Holy Spirit" and no one can go against the communication. Studies have been taken upon the act in the church and discoveries repeatedly are rising in numbers of child marriages day in and day out. This sect has groups of followers and located in different parts of the country. Most of the girls are married off at a tender age and to older man and however it is unfortunate that they are married off without education experience and even the power to deny the communication of the "holy spirit" as believed.

### **2.3.5 Patriarchal Structure**

A family as a system, Montazeri et al., (2016) argues that with its nature, it can promote child marriages occurs. This has been argued from the sense that it acquires roles, norms, and an embedment of intergenerational issues. Child marriages are associated with the function of the family structure as a system and this as commented by Susan, et al., (2019). This is therefore significantly a crucial issue and causes the proliferation of child marriages as the respect in women and girls is then proven through their morality and act in sexual conducts. Thus pointing out the idea why children are married off under the age of 18. There was an observation by Mahato (2016) whereby an idea is brought about that children do get into marriages sometimes early as a way to protection against possible dangers or abuse from their fathers. Thus the idea that concerned parents consider a marriage as offering protection and the way towards family honor.

A family as it exist according to Muharry, Hakimi & Wahyuni (2018) has two divisions which reads, the nuclear and the extended one and both have norms and values attached to an individual within. Muharry, et al. (2018) studies Indramayu Regency and found out that it is the level of education on a father that impacts on marrying of a girl child and age in the community. It is

therefore realized that a girl, before reaching 18, is however married to a husband that is if the father's education is low. Apparently an educated father goes against marriage of his daughter before the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and as head of house or family there are chances he can determine the age to marry off the children or daughter. So as a daughter is wished to attain better education, it is all hindered not only by traditional values but an influence of priorities a patriarchal family set towards its daughters.

In Zimbabwe, family is something patriarchal in sense and belief that men have the right to decide and give orders. This has been a place where family issues are handed over to fathers, educated or not, reach or not they have the final say. However the state to which families therefore cause child marriage is when ruled by an uneducated father, with religious background and generational beliefs like "*kuripa ngozi*". This is when avenging spirits within the family are frequently paid off with a virgin wife and that is pointing on to the teen girls who have never experienced marriage, thus marrying off a child.

### **2.3.6 Existence of Conflicts and Wars**

Girl not Brides, (2020), communicates that an unstable structure and insecurities are a driver of child marriages. Wars and conflicts destroys structures responsible for the prevention and monitoring of child marriages, (Mazaruna, Marshak & Spears, 2019). Conflicts and wars often result to child marriages as it has negative impacts on the economic situations of families. In a state of armed conflict, the families are at the verge of marrying off their daughters at an early age, and this done to offer protection from girls' recruitment, sexual harassment and even harming of girls, (DiGiuseppe & Haer, 2022). This therefore fuels up the applicability of marriage as a strategy to provide safety for a girl child and prevent potential harm in times of instabilities. Conflict and wars ensure for the rise in early marriages as parents tend to believe their children are safer in a marriage relationship than out as young girls supply is common in times of wars. According to Donnelly, (2019), conflict and wars promotes child marriages because parents tend to marry off their children as way to create bond and even family growth for the prevention of violence and oneness against armed groups. In addition, marriage acts as a protective measure in times of conflicts and wars from sexual violence for example at Panzi Hospital in the Eastern Democratic in Congo, a medical record reviewed that of all the women who were receiving treatment from sexual violence, the married group occupied less of the victims than unmarried women,

(DiGiuseppe & Haer 2022). This means a married girl is protected than an unmarried girl in times of wars and conflicts.

In Uganda, Mali and the DRC, are the results of armed conflicts that have destroyed public services like hospitals, schools and yet putting a number of populations into poverty. Thus creating room for younger girls to flee into marriage at an early age to overcome economic pressure, (Africa Commission on Human Rights, 2019).

## **2.4 Effects of Child Marriages**

Child marriages comes with challenges or effects as mentioned by ICRW, (2018) that it is an acts that goes against the rights of children as usually they get deprived of education, health and even equal opportunities. To mention of the effects of child marriages at a macro level, they hinder development for all nations that are associated with the practice. The girls who experience early marriages are more exposed to health problems, education drop out, abuse and even violence, (ICRW, 2018). In several ways, the negative results of child marriages can be noticed and as cleared discovered, the life of a girl is affected in both psychological and economic ways of life.

### **2.4.1 Health Problems**

ZIMSTATS, (2016) study on the experiences of the young married girls stated that it is with high probability that girl married at an early age suffers from health problems like HIV infections because they are of less power and are even harassed to bed without consent. According to the Africa Commission on Human Rights, (2019) study on the consequences of child marriage, it was stated that girls married below 18 years of age are not commonly exposed to contraceptive use hence teen pregnancy rise, and in Mozambique for example women married before 15 may carry as more children as possible because psychologically they are not prepared. This then in results may record a number of cases of complications during birth processes, premature labor and also maternal mortality. Girls married earlier tend to receive more treatment and health care during the times of pregnancy than women married as adults in Mali, (Africa Commission on Human Rights, 2019).

According to Fatima, (2018), sexual and physical abuse may also exist in the life of an early married girl, this is negatively affecting the lives as girls married early are deprived of education and economic chances, hence negatively impacting the wellbeing in the women. Nations have

efforts towards gender equality, discrimination of women, and child mortality, but however through child marriages, there is increased poverty that still dig into the existence of health challenges on girls married at a premature age, (Webb et al, 2023). Child marriages have consequences on the sexual reproductive health of youngsters and even early grownups and having a child at an early age has discouraged girls to education, and encouraged higher poverty rates and also a disturbed health.

## **2.4.2 Increased Mortality**

Studies have shown that child marriage is associated with higher maternal mortality rates, as well as increased rates of suicide among young girls, (Dahlback et al, 2017). The reasons for this include the fact that child brides are more likely to have complications during pregnancy and childbirth, and they may be more likely to experience violence at the hands of their husbands. These factors can all contribute to an increased risk of death for child brides.

### **2.4.2.1 Infant Mortality**

Infant mortality is the death of a baby during the first year of life. This is often measured by the infant mortality rate, which is calculated by dividing the number of infant deaths by the number of live births in a given year. By studying infant mortality trends over time, we can learn more about the health of different populations and regions, (International Journal of Maternal and Child Health and AIDS, 2019). Infant mortality not only takes an emotional toll on families, it can also have long-term psychological effects, including depression, grief, and feelings of guilt.

Infant mortality as stated by Verma et al. (2019), globally can be higher among married children because they are more likely to face challenges accessing quality healthcare, completing their education, and achieving economic independence. Maestre et al, (2017), carried a study in Malawi and found out that child marriage is associated with a higher risk of infant mortality, even when other factors like education and socioeconomic status were taken into account. World Health Organization, (2020) talks of the infant mortality rate being 28.9 per 1000 live births and authors suggest that this is because child marriage may limit a woman's access to maternal health services, and may lead to early pregnancy and childbirth. In other words, child marriage has a negative impact on a woman's health and her child's health, and may contribute to higher infant mortality rates.

Also, child marriage is associated with higher infant mortality rates in Zimbabwe, especially in rural areas where access to health care is more limited. Saito et al, (2018), suggest that this is because child brides are more likely to have early and unplanned pregnancies, and may not have access to the necessary prenatal and postnatal care. This can put both the mother and child at risk, and may contribute to higher infant mortality rates. That is leaving an understanding that early marriages no matter the size and place of occurrence, they result in health issues which need to be discussed about from a local understanding.

#### **2.4.2.2 Maternal Mortality**

World Health Organization, (2017) defines maternal mortality as the death of a woman during pregnancy, childbirth, or even in the period of 42 days as she gives birth. Globally, there is a bigger number to talk about on maternal mortality as caused by child marriages and these are issues to talk about in most developing countries. In Africa, maternal mortality rates are recorded high especially in Zimbabwe that is said to be with the highest number in the whole continent. There are contributing factors and these may include limited access to health care, poverty, lack of education, and cultural and societal factors that prevent women from seeking the care they need as they get married at an early age, (World Health Organization, 2017). Also as estimated and looked into, Zimbabwe maternal mortality is considered an issue to observe well as estimated 614 deaths per 100,000 births in 2015, (World Health Organization, 2017).

#### **2.4.2.3 Suicide Results**

Kral et al, (2018) defines suicide as a way of death whereby one take his or her life. It is believed to be a difficult state to understand as it brings devastating results on families and even communities. Jejeebhoy et al, (2019), shows that child marriage is linked to an increased risk of suicide among young women around the world. The reasons for this increased risk include factors such as a lack of control over one's life, social isolation, and violence. Child marriage can also lead to mental health problems such as depression and anxiety, which can increase the risk of suicide.

Based on the available research by Strohschein et al (2017), child marriage may be a risk factor for suicide in some African countries. The limited research suggests that young married women may be at a higher risk for suicidal thoughts than unmarried women. This may be due to the stressful circumstances of child marriage, including poverty, isolation, and domestic violence. The



World Bank, (2018) study found that child marriage is associated with an increased risk of mental health problems among women in developing countries. These mental health problems can include depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. The study also found that the longer a girl is married, the more severe her mental health problems are likely to be. Mumba & Madhavan, (2016), comments on the report by University of Zimbabwe that a number of suicidal attempts cases was recorded from children who get married before reaching 18 as they face a lot of depression and hopelessness. Thus however, more research is needed to better understand the link between child marriage and suicide in local context.

#### **2.4.3 Loss of Educational Opportunities and Future Employment**

Child marriages have a negative impact on girls' education, particularly in low-income countries and child brides are less likely to complete their education and have poorer job prospects. According to Chant et al, (2018), child marriage has a negative impact on future earnings for women, which can have a ripple effect on their children and families. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), (2015), states that if a girl is married early, there is a high probability to girls who get married early that they lose the opportunities to school, drop out and loose interest, and that will result in a poor economic opportunity also. Cheng et al, (2018), mentioning of the effects of child marriages, states that child marriage often results in girls dropping out of school and having fewer job opportunities in the future. This is because child marriage can lead to additional responsibilities at home, making it difficult to attend school. Even if they stay in school, married girls may have trouble concentrating or keeping up with their studies.

In a nutshell, child marriage in Malawi and Niger according to Nour et al, (2016), has contributed to a loss of educational opportunities for girls in several ways. Many girls are forced to leave school when they marry and even other schools lack separate toilets for boys and girls, which can make it difficult for girls to stay in school. Some miss school during their periods because of inadequate sanitation facilities. To talk of Malawi also, there is a record whereby UNICEF, (2013), states that a huge number of women who did not attain educational qualifications were married at an early age, and socially this is because they cut off from family and even limited of the access to education and even employment. Lower educational qualifications are found in early married women.

In summary, a study by Matanda and Rutoruka, (2019), found that child marriage in Zimbabwe has negative long-term consequences for girls, including reduced educational attainment, lower

employment opportunities, and worse health outcomes. In this study, it was highlighted the need for interventions that address the root causes of child marriage and help to improve the educational and economic prospects of girls in Zimbabwe.

#### **2.4.4 Exposure to Violence and Abuse**

According to the study by Hicks (2020) in Nepal, child marriage may contribute to violence against women by making it more likely that they will accept violence, lack the ability to leave an abusive relationship, and experience sexual violence. This suggests that efforts to end violence against women must address the underlying factors that contribute to violence, including child marriage. It was also realized that child marriage is associated with practices of violence both domestic and intimate partner that may hinder the life of the women.

Child marriage may increase the risk of violence and abuse against women even in Africa. This is argued by Haddas et al, (2019), as mentioned that it is with high prevalence that child marriage cases have raised violence and abuse opportunities in the African countries like Nigeria for example. Therefore while further research is needed, these findings suggest that ending child marriage could play a role in reducing violence and abuse against women in Africa. This is also discovered in Uganda that child marriages have risen an act of intimate partner violence that women married before the normal age have reported more cases on violence than women married in adulthood, (Wright, M., et al, 2019).

In Zimbabwe, it is sad to point out that child marriages have been a huge driver to violence and abuse against girls. UNICEF, (2016) report reviews that child marriage is a significant problem in the country with one in four girl getting married before the age of 18 and that child brides are the most vulnerable to violence, abuse and even exploitation.

#### **2.4.5 Psychological and Emotional Trauma**

Deardorff & Yount (2017), argues that child marriage is a form of violence against girls that can have long-term negative psychological effects. These effects include depression, anxiety and they are often exacerbated by a lack of social support and limited access to mental health services. Afghanistan is an example of a country globally whereby Barr, H. (2017), talks of child marriages and its psychological impacts. There is high prevalence of child marriages, and this in results is spear head for psychological distress and imbalance in the mental wellbeing of people under 18

years. The UNFPA even named the situation in Afghanistan that it is a state of silent trauma, (UNFPA. 2015).

Child brides in Africa often experience depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and a sense of hopelessness. They may also feel isolated from friends and family and may have few opportunities for education or work. As according to Wagner, A., et al, (2017), the trauma associated with child marriage can have lasting effects that impact the rest of a girl's life and higher levels of emotional disturbance is recorded in women married below the normal age 18. This means that child marriages go hand in hand with the long term effects of psychological and emotional trauma. The study by Moyo & Muula (2019) in Malawi, found that child marriage can lead to poor mental health in women, including higher rates of depression and anxiety and additionally, child marriage can negatively affect a woman's sense of self-worth and social support.

Ndlovu & Manda, (2021), argues that through a study in Zimbabwe, it was reviewed that cases have been reported on the signs of depression and emotional damage in children married before the age of 18 and this has affected economically. The confidence is ruined and even the social development in each and every married child decreases day in, day out due to the effects of psychological trauma.

## **2.5 Anti Child Marriage Interventions**

UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, talks about interventions that their significance is reviewed in the sounding, progress, age consideration and the meaningful of regions. The young people's sexual and reproductive health also needs to be looked at in sex education (Nadeem et al., 2020). This is a crucial role that as part of intervention's responsibility, a society is saved and provided with knowledge on what has to be done to protect children under 18 from early marriages. World Food Programme (WFP), (2022), comments that gender transformative programming in communities have to improve gender fairness with inside the family and network to consequently have interaction with the most effective mother and father, and also younger men, which includes brothers, as champions and fine deviants of the activity. This has been useful as working towards enforcing intergenerational workshops and dialogues amongst mother and father and kids has fostered trust and knowledge and to boom verbal exchange on problems dealing with adolescents.

According to African Union, (2015), a number of child marriage prevention programs in the whole of African has improved but with an understanding to end poverty, provide health services and even educational and financial support. This is an effort that intervention seeks to look for ways to eliminate the bad practice of formally marrying a child under 18 with expectations to end family poverty. To reduce these acts, there is need for a multi-stakeholder engagement and this can assist in the elimination of broader poverty consequences and even working towards other influential social practices, (African Union, 2015)

Locally, there has been a record in Zimbabwe whereby NGOS, (PLAN Zimbabwe and CAMFED) have played a role towards the appearance of child marriages as in other provinces, Midlands and Kwekwe for example have received assistance in educational needs, (African Commission on Human and People's Rights, 2018). This is an important role that interventions are putting towards promoting education of children as according to UNICEF, (2013), the social isolation and limited opportunities in economic needs and education has advantaged the rise in early marriages. Thus therefore a probing state to identify whether community interventions at a lower level have effectively attained in their goal.

### **2.5.1 International Initiatives against Child Marriages**

Child marriages has become an issue to look at from the international level down to the local levels. A number of international initiatives have therefore been implemented to address child marriages in Zimbabwe. Tjonneland & Heggenhougen, (2016), argues that there has been a lot of successes and at the same time challenges to international initiatives which may involve "Because I am a girl" by Plan International, and African Union's campaign. The United Nations Populations Fund, has been working with the Zimbabwean government to reduce the prevalence of child marriages and working with communities the aim is at changing the social norms and attitudes around the practice (United Nations Populations Fund, 2018, para 2). Child marriages in the global context have been pushed by the effects of the social norms, beliefs and most importantly traditions, therefore Plan International has been working with rural community leaders to change the attitudes of people in their cultures and traditions. According to Nyamupandu & Carlsson, (2017), there is also the work of World Vision and African Union towards the reduction of child marriages in Zimbabwe. These have been on the point to provide educational support, and economic support to girls in order to reduce their reasons to child marriage. The African Union

initiative has had a role to raise awareness of the issue and advocating for the change in policies towards child marriages (Dossou-Yovo et al., 2018). The African Union launched a campaign to end child marriages in Africa, including Zimbabwe. The initiatives are aiming at improving access to proper education, provision of health facilities, and an increase in the opportunities for girls especially in the economy (Tjonneland & Heggenhougen, 2016).

## **2.6 Gaps in Eradicating Child Marriages**

There are a number of gaps that need to be addressed in order to achieve the end of child marriages. According to Lewis et al., (2016), in one of the article was mentioned that lack of resources and capacity to manage and implement programs towards ending child marriages is a challenge and one of the gaps in the globe. This is importantly something to take note as with no resources, campaigns and educational trainings are disadvantaged and children are at risk of getting married early as a results. Bacolod & Silverman, (2018) argues that there is the need for more research and data on the prevalence and causes of child marriages in the Sub Saharan Africa. This is a gap as to get to a point of understanding the causes will provide the ways to work on and reduce child marriages. The is also the need for legal reform and enforcement of laws to guide and give protection to young girls in Africa, according to Gomez-Lobo & Oesterle, (2016) is another gap in trying to reduce child marriages. Governments need to work on law enforcement and renewal so as to meet the goals and aims of international initiatives that are working on the issue.

In Zimbabwe, there is the need for more support in accessing education, economic opportunities and even health facilities which increases the risk for child marriages in more areas. According to Lewis et al., (2016), there is a rise to child marriages due to dropout effects, lack of education and sometimes lack of economic opportunities in African countries however leading to the risks as unoccupied girls are at end engaged to marrying at a young age. This is therefore a list of ways to strategize and work on the eradication of child marriages through working on the gaps as argued in the literature.

## **2.7 Chapter Conclusion**

The chapter reviewed the scope of child marriages in the global, African and national context. The practice of child marriages is common in the whole world but most affecting African countries as reviewed. Child marriages was defined and someone below 18 cannot be married. As shown in

the literature, child marriages are a result of a number of factors with which poverty has proven to be the driver of many. Trying and looking at the causes of child marriages, there was also the provision of community interventions roles in the chapter, whereby the research aim to dive into the intervention's ability to work towards child marriage decrease has been looked at. Lastly it is also important to note that child marriages have effects or consequences that the chapter has provided which are hindering the opportunities for most girls.

## CHAPTER III

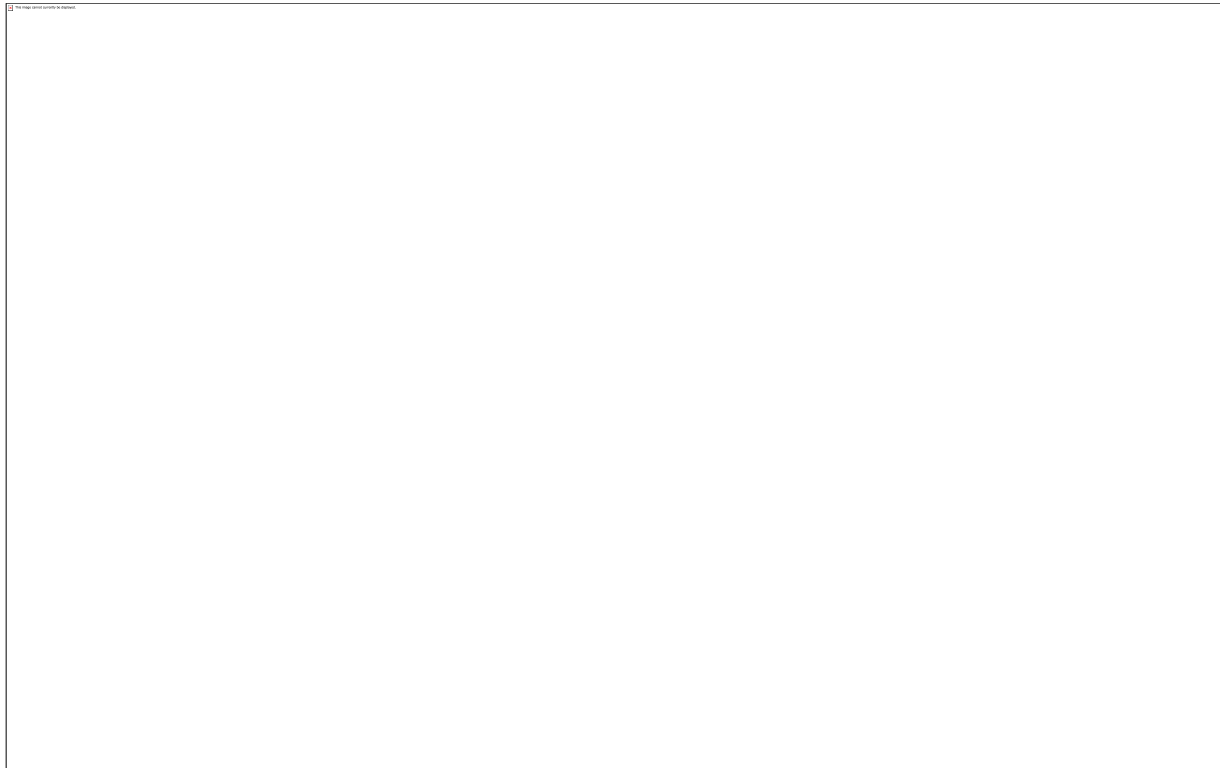
### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Chapter Introduction

The research was aimed at examining the background factors to persistent child marriages. Both qualitative and quantitative research was employed and therefore the chapter looks forward to answering the research questions and objectives of the study. The chapter therefore gives clearance to how the study was carried out through the description of study area, methods used in collecting data and tools used, the targeted population, data analysis and even the reliability and validity.

#### 3.2 Description of Study Area

The research was carried out in Rushinga District, a rural area that is in the Northern part of Zimbabwe close to the Mozambique boarder.



*Figure 1: A map showing the location of Rushinga District in Mashonaland Central Province, Zimbabwe.*

A map showing the district of Rushinga. The district is located in Mashonaland Central Province and the grid location according to Marirwa, M, J., (2015), is 18 degrees and 2 minutes south and

31 degrees and 15 minutes east. The district is approximately 180 km north of Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe and 55 km south of Kariba. Rushinga district is bordered by other districts in the province including Muzarabani, Mt Darwin, Guruve and Mbire. The region is chiefly agricultural and the major crops grown are tobacco, maize and cotton and there is also common livestock keeping and small business management. ZIMSTATS, (2022) report states that the population of the district is around 200000 with a growth rate of 3.7%. The population of the district is mainly rural and 10% is considered living in the urban, 38% of the population is 15 years and below. 97871 is the male population and 100851 is female population with a total of 198722 as according to (ZIMSTATS, 2022). The literacy rate of the district is also given as 53%, and it is lower than the national average which is pointed to 86%, (ZIMSTATS, 2022). The people in the district are usually not accessed to food security, good infrastructure and markets, there is poverty, poor infrastructure and less markets.

### **3.3 Research Design**

The study adopted a narrative design and this allowed for the provision of descriptions on the study characteristics on population and other phenomenon. A mixed approach of both qualitative and quantitative data collection was used but mainly qualitative data was used in the study. This was because a mixed approach allows for a complete understanding as it stretches an in-depth of different views, (Creswell, 2009). However, as according to Coenen-Schimke & Arend, (2019), qualitative data collection provided with the ability to explore social relations and meanings and at the same time capture the experiences of participants from their own mouths. Most importantly, the suitability of the study area lies on the fact that Rushinga district is a child marriage practice area and as pointed out by ZIMSTATS, (2022), the child marriage rate in Rushinga District is 31% which even exceeds that of the national average of 26%. This means that women in the age group 20-24 of the population were married before reaching 18year. Therefore, a narrative research design allowed for the correct and complete account of the study sensation, which will be valuable in enlightening policy and administrative related to child marriages in Zimbabwe.

### **3.4 Data Collection Methods**

Data was collected using FGDs, Open interviews and Key Informants Interviews. Data collection in households was done after the engagement of District offices like the District Development Coordinator, the Educational office and the village head who helped by providing their views also



on the challenges leading to child marriages in the district of Rushinga. The district officers provided an overview of how child marriages have affected lives and how community interventions have worked towards the reduction giving permission also to attain more from school children and community people and teachers.

### **3.4.1 Focus Group Discussions**

In this study, Focus Group Discussions were firstly used as a way of collecting data and these are essential for providing rich and detailed data, with the exploration of complex topics and can encourage participants to openly and honestly share information (Braun, 2016). Two groups of seven participants were used on focus groups and conveniently this was because they were the available people. In this study was selected the first group from Chimhanda Secondary School which is a peri urban school and the second was from Rusambo which is about 7-10 km from Chimanda and is located in a rural area. This was done to get reasonable information from the different school setups and to gather a deep understanding of their activities. Focus group discussions helped to gather relevant information in a short period of time, and also surfacing underlying beliefs of the participants. For this research, through focus group discussions, were determined the major challenges influencing child marriages. This took for about 30 minutes for each group.

### **3.4.2 Open Interviews**

In this study, open interviews were conducted purposively on 6 participants. The interviewees approached were, 2 community health workers because they have experiences in working with community issues on child cases, 2 school teachers one from Chimhanda and one from Mazowe Bridge with the reason that they have dealt with school children issues, lastly 2 victims to whom the Sister in charge at a local Clinic gave access to and this was because these had the real experiences of the real child marriage and would explore the whole processes to their understanding. An understanding of the complex and sensitive issue, child marriage, was attained and as also supported by Department of State, (2015) this was important for it allowed for a room to discover new information and insight of persistent child marriage in Rushinga District. The interviews took a total of 2 hours to finish all of them.

### **3.4.3 Key Informant Interviews**

In this study, Key Informant Interviews were lastly used and Seal, C. (2021) argues that these interviews are a powerful tool for gaining insights into people's lives and experiences and therefore purposively, they were conducted face to face with the District Development Coordinator, 1 Head man, 1 School Head from Gwangwava, the District Schools Inspector, the District Operations Officer from CAMFED and lastly Sister in charge from a local clinic at Rushinga. This was because as also according to Yin, R. K, (2014), selecting participants based on their qualities, knowledge and also with experiences, true information with an in-depth understanding was shared. It took 2 hours 30 min in total to finish the interviews and this took place in different environments. This was useful as the interviewees were able to express themselves, exploring all the information and even asking questions towards the main objectives of the research.

### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

Research instruments refers to the tools used for collecting, measuring and analyzing the data to the research interest. For this research, interview guide and focus group discussion guide were the tools used in collecting data.

#### **3.5.1 Focus Group Discussion Guide**

A FGD guide was used and the guide consisted of questions to do with religion, beliefs, practices, perceptions, opinions and ideas. This allowed the participants to discuss in their own words and views and note taken was applied in order to keep the shared information. Attaining all relevant information through the focus group discussion guide was important as this allowed for a free, open in-depth of information sharing and the participants from experience were able to articulate the challenges faced, and that still push for child marriages.

#### **3.5.2 Interview Guide**

Twelve interviews were conducted for this research and three sets of guides were used, the first was used for the Open interviews, the second for the KII and the last one for the victims. This was helpful in providing a lot of information on the research aim. For the KII, the guide asked about the department's roles towards child marriage reduction and one for the open interviews which focused on the trends of child marriage in the communities. As for the interviewed victims, there was a small twist of other questions in order to gain much of their experiences, before and even

during their child marriages. Note taking was a way used to capture data as more information was shared.

### **3.6 Target Population Sample Size(s)**

Sample size simply refers to the chosen number of participants in a study, (American Psychological Association, 2020). However in this study, was used the data saturation level method whereby there was no intended number of participants for the data collection and therefore there was reached the data saturation level. The engaged participants were the Key Informants and other people from schools and communities.

### **3.7 Data Analysis Methods**

Data was analyzed using the thematic analysis method which involves looking for the themes and patterns in qualitative data. Certain procedures were followed from familiarization, coding, generating themes, defining and naming themes and writing up as stated by Braun & Clarke, (2013). Familiarization was the first stage and was for re-reading the data, noting down initial thoughts and the ideas. This stage helped come up with a clear insight of the data, and started noticing patterns within the data. Noting down important and crucial information to the study comments was also done in this study. It was also identified and generated codes from the data by looking for themes and assigning them codes which is the coding stage. This was done in reference to the study objectives, and proceeded to the next stage. Also, by generating themes in this other stage, the study required looking for connections between the codes and themes with the data and grouped them together, this helped identify the main patterns in the data. Lastly, there was defined and analyzed themes. The themes were refined and checked for their consistency. Therefore for the presentation of data, it was presented using summary tables, charts, selected citations and lastly detailed narrative.

### **3.8 Data Reliability and Study Validity**

Braun & Clarke (2020 p 209), defines data reliability as "the extent to which your data, interpretations, and conclusions are consistent, credible, and justifiable." Therefore, it is important to point out the methods used in choosing participants and if the findings being repeated by other researchers, this means the outcomes may be defined as consistent. The important relationship is also on data reliability and validity whereby an invalid instrument is never reliable to be used.

Therefore it was easy to maintain and connect the data and the conclusions within the study that is reliability. The use of research objectives also by was necessary to bring out the consistency of the data.

Study validity is defined by Miles & Huberman, (1994) as the extent to which data found is true and accurate and actually reflects the area being studied. In this study was the interpretive validity as a way to figure out the events and characteristics of the people who were involved in the study. This helped come up with hidden agendas, beliefs and even the values by participants of the study area. The two different types of validity, internal and external and their threats to the study may affect. Bias was the most common threat met and this means a systematic error or deviation from the truth, (Braun and Clarke, 2019). The participants, being part of the study and knowing that, they would offer information as a way to please the interviewer and not any other way round, therefore minimizing these effects was therefore through not pressurizing participants and requesting to get honesty.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

In this study, were considered the welfare and protection of the participants who helped with information and people on and above the age of 18 participated due to the fact of data accuracy and age considerations. They were all handled with dignity and equity during the participations, considering their safety and each and everyone's view and efforts with equality. Confidentiality, honesty and integrity was held in the study and the collected data was with security and privacy. The names of the participants were withheld in this study in order to keep confidential standards, therefore letters were used instead and lastly the minimization of plagiarism was also a key factor for the study to succeed.

### **3.10 Chapter conclusion**

In summary, the chapter highlighted on the required information on the study are and its location. There was reviewed the data collection methods and tools used by during the collection period. The chapter also gives a clear understanding of the sample sizes, the techniques used, and also the analysis part of data gathered in the study. Data reliability and its validity to the challenges faced during the process was also of no exception in the chapter.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

#### **4.1 Chapter Introduction**

In this chapter, is presented the collected data from participants on the driving factors to the persistence in child marriages in the district of Rushinga. The chapter is aimed at getting the meaning of the data that was collected and the knowledge about the aim of the study on child marriage causes. The chapter outlines the backgrounds of participants who were involved, the key areas of discussion and lastly results of the discussed issues. Areas of concern that were noted through data analysis process will be analyzed in this chapter from the meaning of child marriage, the causes, the interventions involved, effects and ways to the reduction.

#### **4.2 Demographic Information of Participants**

In this section is presented the information of the participants touching the socioeconomic themes basing on the factors of the study aim, age, sex and occupation of all participants.

##### **4.2.1 Demographic of Total Participants**

In this study, the actual number of participants reached for the study was **26** in total. This was the level to which data saturation was touched. The numbers of men to women has a difference of 8 whereby this was because the population of women exceeds that of men in the district, as according to ZIMSTATS, (2022) and also it was considered the fact that the rate to which child marriages affect females differs from men, that girls are the most affected. In total, Key Informants were 6, (3 males and 3 females) and these were the most considered stakeholders acting towards child marriage issues. The demographic information is presented below. Participants of the study were also asked to give their marital statuses as collection of personal data before they participated on the research and the actual figures to the information stated represented 4 married women (2 female teachers, 1 community health worker and 1 victim), 1 married man and lastly 1 single woman who is a victim. The excluded were school children and Key Informants due to the considerations of their dignity and welfare. It was important to consider people from the age 18 and above due to the consideration of age restriction on the participation. Lastly, the intended key participants were 6, from different sectors, education, health, community, NGO and the district office. Below is

provided their number each from one sector except from the education whereby the Head was engaged through the DSI.

**Table 2: Participants Profiles**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
1	18	Male	Learner (Chimhanda High)
2	18	Female	Learner (Chimhanda High)
3	18	Female	Learner (Chimhanda High)
4	18	Female	Learner (Chimhanda High)
5	18	Female	Learner (Chimhanda High)
6	18	Female	Learner (Chimhanda High)
7	20	Male	Learner (Chimhanda High)
8	53	Male	Headman
9	58	Male	District Schools Inspector
10	50	Female	Nurse
11	48	Male	Community health worker
12	19	Female	Learner (Mazowe Bridge Sec)
13	19	Female	Learner (Mazowe Bridge Sec)
14	21	Male	Learner (Mazowe Bridge Sec)
15	18	Female	Learner (Mazowe Bridge Sec)
16	18	Female	Learner (Mazowe Bridge Sec)
17	18	Male	Learner (Mazowe Bridge Sec)
18	19	Male	Learner (Mazowe Bridge Sec)
19	44	Female	Teacher
20	36	Female	Teacher
21	16	Female	Victim
22	19	Female	Victim
23	55	Male	School Head
24	31	Female	NGO Staff
25	48	Female	Sister in charge
26	38	Female	District Development Coordinator

### **4.3 Data Analysis and Presentation**

In this study, data was collected using Focus Group Discussions, Open interviews and Key Informants interviews. Thereafter, data was coded into their specific themes using thematic analysis, thus this chapter provides of the background factors to persistent child marriages in Rushinga District. The themes are to be discussed according to objectives and names of the participants were withheld due to ethical considerations therefore in this study, numbers were used to represent all the participants of the interviews and from the Focus Group Discussions. In the chapter, data was also presented using selected citations, detailed narratives, summary tables and charts.

### **4.4 Trend of Child Marriages**

In this section, the trend of child marriages in general was discussed and thus addressing the objective of the trend of child marriages in the district of Rushinga. Participants were asked questions to do with the definition on its own, ‘What is child marriage?’ and to get a deeper understanding of the scope of child marriage, the participants were also asked on the causes and effects of child marriages in the district.

#### **4.4.1 Definition of Child Marriage**

In this section, participants were asked to tell the meaning of “*child marriage*” and eleven interviewed key informants and community people gave their understanding of child marriage as marriage of people under the age of 18 whether formal or not. One Key informant, (*number 9, male, 58years, DSI*), gave an emphasis that if one is under 18, then it is still regarded a child marriage and showed an understanding of the legal age due to their professional statuses as also said, “A child is considered 18 years and below despite the fact that she is in school or not”. Another participant from a FGD stated that:

*“This is a marriage between teenagers.” (Number 14, male, 21years, learner)*

Continuing with the discussion, this was however emphasized by another participant on the age issue that for a marriage to be considered a child marriage, it is not of teenagers in general because a teenage age starts from 13 to 19 whereas a child ends at 18 years as the participant said:

*“Not all teenage marriages are child marriages, but a marriage of people or one under the age of 18 is considered a child marriage.” (Number 13, female, 19years, learner).*

The results of the definition of child marriage from Focus Group Discussions mirrored those from findings of the interviews conducted with key informants. The participants showed that a child marriage definition and consideration is a well-known issue and therefore they proved out that child marriage can never be defined other way than a marriage of people or one under 18 years of age.

#### **4.4.2 Causes of Child Marriages**

Participants were also asked to give the causes to which they have seen leading to child marriages. Interviewed participants poured out to more ways to which children end up married in the district of Rushinga. They pointed out that interventions are tackling up the issues of poverty but there is still rising the practice of child marriages. It was also discussed by participants to mention not poverty being the background factor to child marriages but with different emerging factors due to the trends. The results to the objective are fully discussed below.

##### **4.4.2.1 The Mining Effect**

All interviewed key informants stated that the mining activity taking place in the Mazowe river has the greatest influence to child marriage practice particularly to the surrounding wards, ward 1,2,3,20,18,19,16 and 25. As stated by one Key informant, (Number 26, female, DDC), attersernal mining has become the best livelihood, with the miners being the richest people to get married to and the river the best place to be at, to the children in Rushinga district. Another participant added that:

*Kuna Mazowe kwapedza vana muno muRushinga, vana vakuziva mari and vamwe vaskana ndiko kwavari kubva nenhumbu kwavari koroverwa netukomana twunowonga (The Mazoe River mining activity is contributing a lot to child marriages because the children no longer have anything important to look for than money, hence girls are being impregnated for money with the attersernal miners). (Number 23, male, 55years, School Head).*

This was supported by the experience of one interviewed victim (Number 22, female, 19years, victim), who stated that going to Mazowe River was the main driver of her getting married because



her mother stayed there and would ask her and the siblings to come just as soon as they closed school. Therefore meeting with boys and seeing them buy food stuffs made her assume that getting married to a miner, she would enjoy the money too and later she found a boyfriend and they engaged till she got pregnant at 15years.

In general, the results of the interviews were a reflection also of the FGD conducted. The participants mentioned of the girls being carried away with the dollars flashed by the miners from Mazowe, and getting married early just to keep enjoying the money and the mining activity. One FGD participant said:

*These miners are taking advantage of the small girls in schools and using the small amounts of money they get from their hustles to sexually enjoy them, ending up marrying them as they get pregnant. (Number 7, male, 20years, learner).*

Thus therefore the nature to which the Mazowe River has had a negative impact on the children of Rushinga stated by the participants. It has led to persistent child marriages because learners are taken advantage of, girls are also falling for money and lastly the attersernal miners are gaining false knowledge of their capabilities to an extent of thinking they can marry anytime and anyone. The participants have also argued of an important issue that during holidays, they go for mining with parents and the environment there is not conducive for young people as relationships are started and even grow to marriage for the time being, hence children are impregnated during those periods and they drop school for marriage.

#### **4.4.2.2 Long Distances To and From School**

Results from interviewed participants on the question of the causes to child marriage showed that children are also walking long distances to and from school, therefore Participant 19 (*female, 44years, teacher*) talked of the pressure to which girls and boys get during their travels to and from school, they are said to have school relationships or with even people out of school and sexually indulging on the way home. Some are said to end up losing the interest to attend school, dropping out and after that they decide to get married.

This was also pointed out in Focus Group Discussions that learners have suffered to the unavailability of many secondary schools, as they are said to travel long distances to reach the school premises and learn. Participant 9 (*male, 58years, DSI*) commented on this issue saying that

most of the learners at Mazowe Bridge School travel long distances covering 6 to 10 kilometers one way, and went on pressing on the issue that some girls or boys however end up quitting school and find it better to get married, get pregnant or go for mining. The other Key Informant, (*Number 24, female, 31years, NGO Staff*) contributed also on the issue that a few of the learners have had the opportunity to get bicycles given to the school by CAMFED but recommended that it is still an issue to look forward to as truly more learners are leaving school due to the distances they walk to school. The last participant stated that:

*Secondary schools in Rushinga are still a challenge to marginalized communities and this has costed the district as children tend to drop out of school due to long distances, some not even attempting high school with the same reason being distance, hence they experience life at home early, and however end up with marriage being the left option (Number 26, female, 38years, DDC).*

Thus the results on child marriage causes include long distance to and from school as one of the influential factors to child marriage was explored in the above mentioned discussions.

#### **4.4.2.3 Proximity to the Mozambique Border**

This was a cause of child marriage stated by some of the participants. The other parts of the district of Rushinga from the border side have realized farming to be so beneficial in the border line where the soil is fertile, therefore as stated by the participants, the families are migrating to the sites, leaving school children alone at home, making them responsible at an early age hence all they ought to learn is having a family and taking care of the family. The participant stated that:

*It is difficult for a child who is still in school to manage house requirement when parents are far away, therefore the privileged will get all things easily yet the poorer looks for help and thus man or boys are taking advantage of the little they provided with and sexually as children they get abused until they get pregnant. (Number 10, female, 50years, nurse).*

This was well explained by one of the key informants, (*Number 8, male, 53years, Headman*) that as parents leave home early for farming preparations, children especially girls take over their responsibilities from fetching food to taking care of the siblings. This has driven more girl children to child marriages. The Key informant also stated that:

*Children are having their own children the period they are left home, engaging in sexual activities in their parents' home taking responsibilities to a level of thinking they also can become parents.*

On this issue, key informant contributed on the issue more that parents have their children getting impregnated but however cannot quit the act of giving them family responsibilities. The results of the Key informants also matched a comment from the FGDs as said:

*Kunewo vasikana vakusiirwa imba nevabereki pavanoenda kumunda gore rese vachisara vachipinza vakomana mumba vabereki vachizodzoka vatotizira vamwe vana vasisina wekusara naye. (There are other girls who are being left home when parents go to the farms for even a year to take care of themselves and siblings but however they are taking that as an opportunity taking their boys in and lastly getting pregnant and leaving home) (Number 12, female, 19years, learner).*

This is therefore another driver of child marriages in wards that surround the Mozambique border. Farms in the Mozambique side have modernly took out the majority of the district that they are now migrating and returning as they finish reaping. This is therefore a common ground to expose a girl child to risks of getting pregnant as they tend to understand being alone, getting no guidance and being responsible. Hence this has led to persistent child marriages as stated.

#### **4.4.2.4 Lack of Parental Guidance**

Four participants from the interviewed confirmed that child marriages are a result of lack of parental guidance. This is stated to be because as parents do, their children also are capable of doing according to participant 11, (*male, 48years, Community Health Worker*). Therefore the participants mentioned that parents are playing a bigger role in exacerbating child marriages in the district because they do not have time with their children, they don't counsel, teach and direct them in an admirable way. This idea mirrored that of another participant (*Number 20, female, 36years, Teacher*), who stated that in this modern world, it is now normal for parents in Rushinga to know of their children's boyfriends or girlfriends during secondary school but it becomes a burden to the same parents as their children impregnates or gets pregnant early. Therefore the idea was that some parents are not properly guiding their children because the results showed that parents even value ideas and decisions made by children than theirs as said:

*Vamwe vabereki vanoremekedza zvinotaurwa nevana asi zvichizoremera naivo nekuti vana vanotaura zvekuzviuraya kana vatsiurwa. (Parents are lacking guidance and respecting decisions of their children and later carrying a burden, that being because children threaten parents with suicidal thoughts), (Number 10, female, 50years, Nurse).*

In this section, the idea was that parental guidance is lacking to children in Rushinga District. Parents are considering their children's needs than building their future. Parents are regretting after they lose their children to child marriages, or even after they return home with pregnancy or a baby.

#### **4.4.2.5 The effects of technology**

Interviewed participants also mentioned the effects of technology on the lives of girls as another cause of child marriage one started by mentioning that:

*Children are getting their brides and groom from the social media, proposing and falling in love within hours and sexually they engage through pornography pictures and at the end physical engagement which has never been seen in the past times than today.*

Participant (Number 19, female, 44years, Teacher) stated the above quoted statement as an emphasis of the point that technology has brought about negative effects to the children in Rushinga District as they now have more time for social media than anything hence paving a way to their interest to engage in sex and getting married early due to pregnancy. The interviewed key informants mentioned of the influence of technology on the modern world of which the children are living today as another cause of child marriages and that parents cannot teach their children on anything nowadays because much of their time is spent on the social media platforms using their mobile phones. This was said to affect greatly on the interaction between parents and their children because they no longer have time together whereby the friends and family of the children have become the socialites and the internet. One key informant said:

*Becoming the worst culprit, social media platforms have brought about an unsafe ground whereby even on the radio we come through other programmes that have sexual connotation and watching with our kids we switch off due to embarrassment. (Number 25, female, 48years, Sister in charge).*

Thus therefore an argument to be put on that children getting exposed to such acts and pornographic materials, they try to experiment and end up falling pregnant. Thus all participants were of great worry that as much as the world is turning to become technological, it is however a challenge rising day in and day out to the school children who have the access to social media platforms.

#### **4.4.2.6 Poverty in the communities**

Participants of this study pointed out that poverty is a background known driver of child marriage. There are still marginalized communities living in poverty and still believing that marrying off a child or getting a child married is a breakthrough. One Key informant stated that:

*Poverty has limited a number of families to work on making a future for their kids because they sometimes finish school at an early age, fail and are not given the chance to try again, then the only option to proceed with life is get married (Number 24, female, 31years, NGO Staff).*

All interviewed key informants mentioned of the idea that poverty cannot be the only factor to cause child marriages in Rushinga but it has come as the background push factor to much of the causes. This, they say is because interventions are coming into the district and tackling the tide of poverty, giving out assistance but it is a shame also that the assisted children still tend to raise the flag of child marriages in the district of Rushinga. Hence as a cause, poverty will be talked of but not as the major driver of child marriages in the whole of Rushinga District. However participant, (Number 21, female, 16years, victim) mentions, “*Poverty took me to marriage because I had my grandmother only to take care of me and had no one to provide so getting married, I thought I was making the right decision*”. Thus agreeing to the idea that poverty has led to children falling for other things in the name of changing life.

The findings from the interviewed key informants were corroborated by those from other views by other interviewed participants as they brought out the fact that much of the child marriages in Rushinga have a background of poverty because parents are accepting the marriages sometimes because of the need for money, they have shortages in needs and cannot afford a lot. Hence the idea from the participants was that as much as the district is working on reducing child marriages, the backbone too of the causes is hunger and poverty. This means that poverty has played a role to

the exacerbation of child marriages in the district of Rushinga and it has become the background factor to a number of the modern factors.

### 4.3 Effects of Child Marriages

Participants from both interviews and FGDs were also asked on their idea of the effects of child marriages that have been recognized in the district and they mentioned of increased poverty, school dropouts, and lack of economic opportunities, health problems and death. The pie chart below shows that child marriages in Rushinga have had effects to the people and communities in the district, to which if distributed from a 100% their figures will take a difference with increased poverty being the outstanding with a 40% because as said by the participants, the district has already been suffering from poverty but with child marriages increasing in numbers, there is no solved poverty but increased due to the fact that people tend to suffer more after child marriages, lacking good health and wellbeing, with underdevelopment and affording nothing but free food and free services.

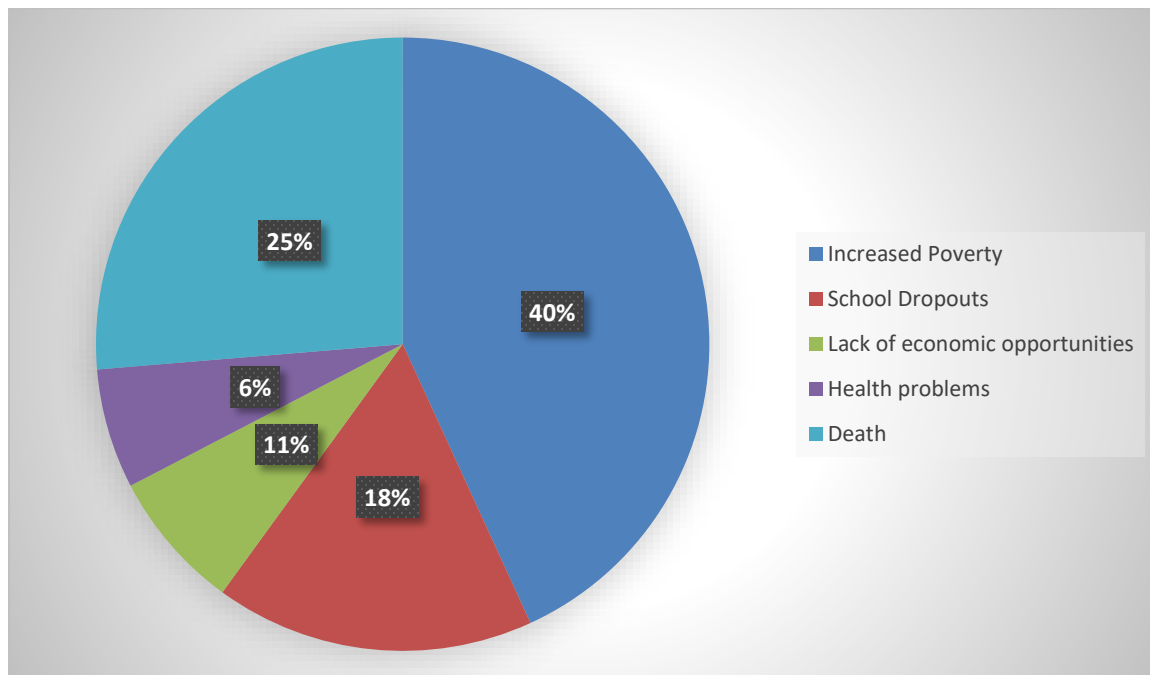


Figure 2: A chart showing the distribution of percentages of child marriage effects in Rushinga District.

### 4.3.1 Increased Poverty level

Interviewed Key Informants were asked to comment on the effects of child marriages in the district of Rushinga and increased poverty was the most said to be the worst of the results of child marriages. First Key informant (*Number 9, male, 58years, DSI*), was asked to explain more and the sense of the findings was that children are getting married early especially from the rural areas than urban, they engage in sexual activities early, get pregnant, and they are asked to go to their boyfriends and hence they get married which later brings a burden to the same families struggling to pay for school needs. The other stated that:

*Vane nhamo vanoramba vanayo and inowedzera nekuti vanofanira kunge vachizoipedzawo vakutoiwedzera nekuita misha vasat vakukwanisa (Poverty is not worked upon, rather it is promoted because the generation to take rid of the situations has turned to get marriages earlier than the age they can manage and afford the marriage requirements) (Number 20, female, 36years, teacher).*

This brought out the idea that families are burdened and not rescued from poverty because children getting married are mostly from under privileged families, hence there is an increase in building poverty stores than tackling the tide of poverty. Participant (*Number 3, female, 18 years, learner*), from FGD also commented on the same effect that children are adding nothing to poverty reduction but adding flesh to an increase because the same things disadvantaging their capabilities are ignored like schooling and engaging in projects after secondary school. Participant (*Number 18, male, 19years, learner*) also commented that new parents are being introduced yet they do not have the qualities, thus children are having children and lastly the two levels of children have nothing to do for positive change hence the poverty level is increased and as more of them get to divorce, they tend to suffer from poverty as unemployed, single mothers.

Findings from the interviewed Key informants and FGDs matched the idea that was shared by the interviewees on increased poverty as an effect of child marriages in Rushinga District. Participant, (*Number 11, male, 48years, CHW*), mentioned of the rate to which poverty has increased in form of a demonstration table on child marriage impacting much on the wellbeing of people who get married earlier than those who get married from 18 years and above because they are pulled out from a lot of opportunities, they leave school early and are not exposed to beneficial things as they

get married. Children who get married not under the age of 18 get opportunities, they get a few children up to the age of 25 and have better living standards:

**Table 3: Demonstration of increased poverty as a child marriage effect.**

	Age	Working	Children in school	Level of Poverty
Child marriage victim	25	No	4	High
Not a victim	25	Yes	2	Moderate

#### **4.3.2 Increased mortality rate**

Death is also one of the effects of child marriages stated by all the participants. Participants from Focus Group Discussions stated that children are getting married at an age that is however costing their life, forgetting the lessons they get on maternal mortality and infant mortality causes. Realizing that they got pregnant or that their girlfriend got pregnant, suicidal thoughts even fill their minds to an extent of attempting. Participant (*Number 13, female, 19years, learner*), mentioned that child marriages have no good because as the marriages last less time, victims have no other options than death in mind. This means that children who elope, dismisses themselves from parental control and are even told to never visit their homes have high chances of suicide. Another participant also commented on the idea of death that:

*“It is sad that children are deciding to get married early but later chooses to kill themselves as they realize that they have made the wrong decisions.” (Number 6, female, 18years, learner).*

Results from FGDs generally mirrored those from interviewees as they also said about the fact that mortality in general is an effect of child marriages in Rushinga to get rid of. Number 11 participant, stated that death has become the best option because children lack knowledge and think corrections cannot be taken after getting married. The School Head also said that taking a life is the hardest thing to attempt but it is surprising that children who fail to make their marriages last have suicide



to their next options which has become the deadliest effect of child marriages in the district of Rushinga. Another participant said that:

*Vana vacho kana musha waramba vanozofunga kuzviuraya chete havana dzimwe pfungwa dzekugadzirisa pavakatadza (Suicide has become the last option to these children who get married early than looking for life changing opportunities) (Number 19, female, 44years, teacher).*

The findings from Key informants commented on infant mortality and maternal mortality which are types of deaths met due to child marriages. Key informant, (Number 25, female, 48, Sister in Charge), stated of the issue of children who get married from 13-15 have high chances of not making it in the nine months or even in the labor period during birth. Infant mortality has been recorded of the recent years and to talk of the cases, these are cases from child marriage victims who get pregnant before the rightful age and are at risks of complications before or during birth. The same participant emphasizes that due to their age, the children under 18 have immature systems to carry a baby and deliver naturally, there are possibilities that they get complications on the way and however the babies die within a period of 0 weeks-3 months. Participant (Number 10, female, 50years, Nurse), also mentioned that it is possible that before or during delivery the mother may face challenges to loss of life and never be able to live due to age restrictions especially those getting married at 12-14 years of age. One victim (Number 22, female, 19years, victim), talked of the experience of her first pregnancy as: “*ndakarasikirwa nemwana wekutanga ndine 8 months dzekuzvitakura nekuda kwekuti hapana zvandaiziva kana zvandaigona ndakaitwa operation mwana akaburitswa akafa*”, (I lost my first child at 8months of pregnancy in my 15<sup>th</sup> year due to the fact that I knew nothing about visiting the hospital and I could not do anything). Thus therefore clearly pointed out that increased mortality as an effect of child marriage has affected the district of Rushinga as from the research findings that suicide, infant mortality and lastly maternal mortality have had their way to impact.

### **4.3.3 School Dropouts Increase**

Three Key informants highlighted that children are leaving school as they get pregnant or as they elope. It was mentioned that girls usually are affected the most that they cannot continue with school due to lack of interest or the feeling of shame or even due to the rule by the husbands. Intelligent girls even get pregnant at school but it is said to be difficult to encourage them stay in

school because their minds do register marriage the moment they find out their pregnancy is showing. Therefore although they sometimes later re-enroll into school as, dropouts have exceedingly been due to child marriages. Key informant stated that:

*Because school is not what they want, they are ready to leave it and start marriages so they get pregnant first and elope to their husbands without anyone having the time to encourage them. Education is what they quite fast than marriage consequences (Number 9, male, 58years, DSI).*

Results from key informants were corroborated by those from FGDs as they talked of the extent to which the schools are losing learners due to child marriages. Participants pointed of the idea that every term in a year the schools probably loses 3 and above learners to marriage. The reason to that is said to be because learners get pregnant in school and cannot continue with school due to the fear of facing other learners with a big tummy. Participant, (Number 16, female, 18years, learner) also contributed to the point and said that as learners, they tend to ignore the fact that getting pregnant or impregnating a girl in school, impacts negatively on their education. Lastly it was added that:

*Pregnant girls usually leave school, boys who impregnate have chances also to leave school to marriage, and as teachers, headmasters and friends may try to keep them in school, there is always a difficulty in them staying, so schools with child marriages, counts school dropouts (Number 1, male, 18years, learner).*

That is therefore something to mention on the effects of child marriages that they have definitely impacted on the education of the children, they drop out of school to go for marriages.

#### **4.3.4 Lack of full potential in girls**

Interviewed Key informants were asked to comment on lack of educational opportunities as an effect of child marriages. Therefore, two key informants talked about the idea that children are prioritizing having boyfriends and girlfriends yet failing to work on their future. There is a number of unemployed young men and young women in Rushinga district as a whole, to mention of single parents to be particular. Key informants brought out the process to which learners are falling for cheaper and easy thing yet forgetting the important to get future things as key informant, (Number 8, male, 53years, Headman), talked about learners engaging in sexual activities at a young age,

enjoying leaving school, getting pregnant early and staying with their broke young husbands sometimes whilst they forget to work hard in school, prioritize education, get into competition for businesses and jobs to later on get officially married. Key informant, (*Number 26, female, 38years, DDC*), lastly added the point that children have had hard times getting paying jobs because they don't have education, they are immature and have a lot of responsibilities at a young age, some even having lack of knowledge on job hunting. Thus the consequences to child marriage have risen in an uneducated young person who have no opportunities.

The findings from other interviewees also matched that from Key informants as they also brought out the idea of having a lot to work on as parents on young marriage couples who have nothing to do as livelihoods. Participant (*Number 11, male, 58years, CHW*), said that children who gets into marriage under the age of 18 do not even get to understand on the importance of National Identities, hence as opportunities open, they are isolated due to lack of knowledge and shortage of qualifications. Another participant stated that:

*“Children who get married early have no qualifications to jobs, with reasons being that, they leave school early and do not write final exams, or they feel comfortable sitting at home and not searching for jobs, or they are limited in job choices due to age and lastly they depend on family incomes and lack individual opportunities” (Number 24, female, 31years, DOO).*

These child marriages are a hindrance of progress and have effects in lack of economic opportunities and progress.

#### **4.3.5 Health Problems**

Participants were asked by the researcher to explain on health problems as the effect of child marriages in Rushinga District. There was given the point by Participants from FGDs that child marriages have led to health issues like back aches, operations due to complications and even blood pressure has affected a number of them who get married early, not to leave the boys who mentally get depressions. They did not give much from their understanding but commented on that children who get operated during birth due to complications, have health problems for life anytime the operation gets disturbed, they also have health challenges psychologically because they have a lot to think about as soon as they realize their mistakes, and lastly blood pressure is a possibility as

the children get responsibilities at a young age. Two interviewed Key informants mentioned of the impact to which health challenges have emerged from child marriages as they mentioned that children get complications during birth, and the probability for a rise of health issues to be dealt with is high as they get to carry pregnancy below the recommended age. The statement goes on to add that:

*These children will still be young to carry pregnancy and therefore everything in their bodies is not ready but however the body is stretched during birth, hence there is the rise of backache, cervix complications and even depression (Number 25, female, 48years, Sister in Charge).*

This means that, child marriages have implications on health and affects mostly the girls and not boys usually. Boys tend to get mental health challenges but not for long as mentioned by the Key informants. Lastly it was added on the point of health challenges that it is not only about the children who get affected but even their guardians or parents have suffered from blood pressure, headaches, and mental disturbances due to the situations they are put into by their children.

*Parents and guardians suffer also from health problems and in these scenarios children do not value the health of their parents, they suffer from mental health challenges and are even admitted in this clinic sometimes due to high blood pressure, and stress from their children who gets into marriage early (Number 10, female, 50years, Nurse).*

Therefore, the findings were in support of the idea that was raised that health problems is an effect of child marriages in Rushinga district.

#### **4.4 Anti Child Marriage Interventions in Rushinga District**

This section provides with results to the asked question on the anti-child marriage interventions that are helping reduce child marriages in Rushinga. Rushinga District has been known for its trend of child marriages and however a lot has been happening to end the exacerbation of child marriages. CAMFED, FACT and World Vision were the nominated international organization interventions and NAC, DSD and MOWACSMED.

#### 4.4.1 NGO Support

Participants from FGDs discussed that CAMFED is an organization fighting for female education for vulnerable girls. Participants from Chimhanda mentioned that CAMFED has taken its children up from form one even to adulthood but however this has been a privilege some tend to take for granted. Participant, (*Number 7, male, 20years, learner*), stated that fees for the vulnerable learners is paid for, their needs (school wear, books, food and even shelter) provided and even bicycles to those travelling long distances to school, they have access to loans and grants to start business soon after school. It was mentioned that poverty as one of the visible factors to child marriages, CAMFED has played on it as a way of eliminating its causes and reducing child marriages. Participant 13 stated that:

*Vasikana vanobva kumhuri dzisina zvikwanisiro zvekut vadzidze zvakanaka varikupinzwa muCAMFED vobatsirwa kut vaone kukosha kwedzidzo nokupiwa mari yechikoro, zvipfeko, kana zvokudya. Kunewo vava vanenge vapedza chikoro votadza kubuda zvakanaka pazvidzidzo zvavo vanokwanisa kuita mabasa emaoko vachiwana rubatsiro kubva kuCAMFED, nevanokunda pazvidzidzo zvavo vanofundiswa kusvika kana kuUniversity. (CAMFED has been of help in ending poverty results on girls through providing educational needs and even sanitary wear and food to vulnerable girls, loan and grants to those who finishes Ordinary level and fail to make it in education, also supporting those who pass to attain higher levels of their education, all as a way to end poverty and reduce child marriages).*

Interviews also brought out the same results as all key informants also talked about the efforts by CAMFED in reducing child marriages. They mentioned of the point that many recorded cases on child marriages have poverty being the driver of it. CAMFED conducts meetings and workshops to impart educational benefits on girls and they give training also to CAMA members that they share the information to learners in schools. Key informant (*Number 24, female, 31years, DOO*), mentioned that as CAMFED they have raised the economic flag of young girls in Rushinga through providing loans and grants to start businesses after school, promoting business minds and not marriage minds. Therefore, CAMFED as a non-governmental organization has tried and worked on disadvantaging the causes of child marriages like poverty, distances walked to and from school,

and also uplifting the economic statuses to girls which in turn has played a role in advocating for anti-child marriage acts.

Interviewed community members mentioned also of the roles to which World Vision is considered an anti-child marriage initiative in the community. It was mentioned that World Vision has improved the wellbeing of learners through provision of food and sanitary wear and sometimes paying for school fees. Participant, (*Number 13, female, 19years, learner*), commented that communities have lost children because of their failure to meet some of their needs like buying sanitary wear for the girls but World Vision in trying and opposing the idea, vulnerable children get sanitary wear and are limited to the risk of falling for such things from boys.

Results from Key Informants also talked of the same idea that World Vision has been covering up the gaps to which child marriages have emerged. One Key Informant said that:

*World Vision looks forward to a healthy child and requires all bellow eighteen as children, therefore anything to threaten the right of a child on health as child marriage is not promoted hence they provide with ways to end poverty, promote hygiene and keep a child a child (Number 23, male, 55years, School Head).*

Lastly another Key informant talked of the goal to which World Vision has to reach and reducing poverty as one of the aims,

*“The vision for World Vision organization is on setting a world free of poverty, injustice and preventable deaths of children therefore it has helped reduce child marriages.”*  
(*Number 26, female, 38years, DDC*).

Lastly, participants pointed out that FACT as an NGO has been working also to reduce child marriages in Rushinga District. To talk of the findings from Key informants, two of them stated that working together as a district with the organization of FACT, a lot of gaps have been covered and looked at to cut the chances of girls being abused and chased away for marriages. One Key informant said,

*FACT has been providing with safe spaces for girls whom their guardians or parents seem to abuse or fail to take care of, giving them shelter, food and even clothing as well as*

*directing them for medical assistance and this has given a safe place to keep children (Number 26, female, 38years, DDC).*

Interviewees from the community were a highlight of the key activities to which FACT has implemented in the communities of Rushinga. As stated, FACT has appointed mentors for their Sister to Sister groups and these consume of young women and girls where they are taught with considerations to their age groups. Sister to sister groups conduct sessions on teaching small girls on running projects, hygiene and abstain from sexual activities to avoid STIs or HIV. Participant, (Number 11, male, 48years, CHW) also talked about the counselling sessions held to children who get abused or get raped or who are found sexually active to abstain and attend school, not opting out for marriages. FACT was also said to reduce the chances of girls in school leave school for marriage because it also have assistance to conduct sessions once in a week at school with girls, imparting the knowledge of issues to do with educational importance, hygiene, and abstinence from sex at their age till 18, by participant 20. This means that FACT has been working on educational training, and reducing the existence of child marriages in Rushinga through also psychological support and a hand in hand act with other NGOs like CAMFED.

#### **4.4.2 Governmental Support/Interventions**

Interviewed participants of this study mentioned also that not only the NGOs have been working towards the reduction of child marriages in Rushinga but the government has also been working towards the goal. They mentioned MOWACSMED and DSD working with children and young women. MOWACSMED is a governmental institution towards the goal to empower women and thus participants mentioned this institution as one of the well-recognized governmental organizations to work on reducing child marriages in the district. Findings from interviewed participants provides the view that MOWACSMED has had advocacy work on eliminating child marriages through campaigns, awareness, education in schools, advocating for women rights, imparting the idea of child protection and lastly economically empowering a girl child. This was mentioned to be part of the initiatives by the government whereby poverty results in girls are discouraged and a girl is not married off at an early age. Participant (*Number 11, male, 48years, CHW*) stated that:

*MOWACSMED has its community coordinators we work with, who help with community awareness and tend to have an impact because cases of child marriages are followed up on or even prevented through case referral to the police as soon as the case is reported.*

The results from one Key informant stated that the ministry is working with other NGOs like FACT and CAMFED in order to reach out to marginalized areas of the district to spread the education on the overwhelming disadvantages of child marriages as said,

*The Ministry as the government department for women, is looking forward to reduce child marriage as so far the idea is still on empowering a girl child through education, thus they refer vulnerable students for a CAMFED bursary, we conduct awareness on anti-child marriage practices in schools and communities, lastly we advocate for the laws and policies towards all women, that is issues to do with child care, protection and rights (Number 26, female, 38years, DDC).*

The results were on the idea that MOWACSMED is a governmental department aiming at empowering a girl child, spreading awareness and reducing cases of child marriages. The last key informant from an NGO points out that, “*MOWACSMED is greatly a department that is always there to help us assist a girl child, they refer vulnerable girls for a bursary, they recommend on grants distribution and on their behalf request for loans and business trainings which has always been benefiting the district at large*”.

Results from key informants highlighted also that DSD has been working towards child marriage reduction as they are responsible for child rights and safeguard. Participant (Number 23, male, 55years, School Head stated that:

*DSD department has been working on the welfare of children from documentary, making referrals for case management and reporting some cases to be handle by the police, providing with psychosocial support, health care services and lastly the enforcement of laws and policies in communities, all as a way to safeguard a so called “Child”.*

Thus advocating for anti-child marriage is also the biggest role by DSD because they cooperate on case follow ups, awareness, campaigns and workshops to do with children within the district have an impact on the goals of protecting a girl or boy child.



#### 4.5 The Effects of Existing Interventions

The interviewed participants were asked to comment on the effects to which the existing measures by interventions and at the same time they were able to add on their thoughts on what needs to be done on reducing child marriages in Rushinga District. Participants from FGDs were greatly mentioning out that the effects of the interventions found in Rushinga are not clearly seen as the exacerbation of child marriages is talked about daily. The NGOs and governmental institutions towards anti-child marriage initiatives have worked on reducing poverty through food provision, education, sanitary wear, school wear, bicycles provision, health care assistance, advocacy work and awareness but however gaps are seen and left unsolved through the effect of social media and beliefs, they said. One participant said,

*Zvikwata zvirikushanda kuderedza kuroodzwa kwevana vadiki zvaita mabasa akawanda chose asi pamwe hazvionekei kushanda nokuti kana takaramba tiine vanhu vanofunga kuti kuroodza mwana kunopedza nhamo, machild marriage haaperi ba (Community interventions are trying a lot to reduce child marriages, providing assistance in any way but as long as the community still have those who believe in marrying off children to get a better living, child marriages will keep existing).*

As argued, this means that the interventions are getting rid of the causes of child marriages, bringing in solutions to poverty at large and other causes and thereby reducing child marriages but however the duties of the society are not taken. There are still the effects of religion and social media to some extent pushing into the existing of the practice. Key informants also gave a highlight of the same idea as they commented that the government and the NGOs have come to reduce the so called major cause of child marriage in children, poverty but however children under the assistance are the ones getting married early. Key Informant number 9, (Male, 58years, DSI) stated that:

*CAMFED students get support through school wear, books, food, bicycles, sanitary wear and other donated things termly but they are the first found on school dropouts list yearly. This is because they do not face poverty only and long distances to school as their challenges but however they have a background of lack of interest in school and are interested in the trends of child marriage.*

This is greatly a point noting on to the point that the effects of the measures to reduce child marriages are less noticed and recorded in the district of Rushinga due to the opposing results of the efforts put. Poverty is reduced, children's rights catered for, health care is being provided and young women are empowered, however there is less progress to the achievement of the goal to end child marriages in the communities of Rushinga. Lastly from one recognized interviewed community leader it was said that:

*“As long as the community still lack in education, child marriage will be the worst thing to destroy the communities.” (Number 8, male, 53years, Headman).*

Therefore there was suggested a few ways the interventions and community can do reduce child marriages and participants commented and gave the ways as educating both men and women/ girls and boys, reduce community poverty not at individual level, empowered people to plough back in the communities, prosecution of perpetrators and Guidance & Counselling teachers to consider it in sessions.

#### **4.6 Ways to Reduce Child Marriages**

Participants were asked on the measures to be taken by district officials and even the community in order to end child marriages. Therefore all participants had time to pour out the ways to which the exacerbation of child marriages can be get rid of.

##### **4.6.1 Educate Both Genders**

Participants from FGDs mentioned that all sexes need to receive the education on child marriage negatives that have destroyed the communities of Rushinga. Thus the participants discussed that it will never make any change as girls only seem to be receiving the education through the pointed out interventions. Participant (*Number 15, female, 18years, learner*), said that girls are the only engaged in sister to sister groups, they attend CAMFED sessions and are considered on sanitary wear, hence boys are left out in the opportunities. The participant went on to comment that:

*“Minds of educated girl are corrupted by the left out boys who take advantage of innocent girls, impregnate them, let them drop out of school and marry them at an early age.”*

Findings from Participants greatly mirrored the idea of one Key informant who also mentioned of the same idea. It was mentioned by the Headman of Chihwai Village that the same man who get

to work with communities and who are engaged by NGOs seem to be the drivers of the unending issue “child marriages” as they have scandals of dating school children to an extent of somehow getting them home as they elope and are married early. Therefore getting the males and females under educative spheres may be a chance to take care of the girls and at the same time guiding the boys or man.

#### **4.6.2 Reduction of Poverty**

Interviewees mentioned of the way to get rid of child marriages as reducing poverty at a community level not individual. As explained, this meant that community interventions have to consider the whole community on food provision, project funding, grant provision, and even educational opportunities to learners. Participant, (*Number 22, female, 19years, victim*), said that it will be good if NGOs consider the whole district vulnerable and cater for a bigger number especially the students in schools because CAMFED clients for example get all their school needs, this is meant to cover for her only and not the family, therefore there is competition for the resources at home and later poverty remains poverty up to the next provision. Participant number 19 (*Female, 44years, teacher*), also stated that CAMFED clients have had the privilege to travel using bicycles for longer distances but that does not solve the solutions because they are giving the bicycles to their boyfriends and friends to and from home, therefore this is somehow not a way to reduce their consequences to engage in sex and get pregnant. The last participant ended by saying that:

*Poverty is not ended by the termly provisions to children or by the unregularly grants and food to some community members but at least a learned community or funded community projects may help end poverty and reduce child marriages because parents will afford their children and help them get exposure not to admire marriage at a young age.*

This is therefore pointing out that if the whole community benefits from the interventions, then it is guaranteed that change and child marriage reduction will take place because there will be the promotion of collaboration and poverty end in general.

#### **4.6.3 Plough Back To Rural Communities**

Interviewed Key informants emphasized on the idea of letting those people who have made it from the same district to plough back through educating the coming generations, and conducting

sessions in schools just as a way to motivate the learners. Key informant (*Number 23, male, 55years, School Head*), mentioned that it is a different scenario when a learner is listening to some people who have succeeded from the same backgrounds, schools or district than to listen from the everyday talkers. The School Head, added on saying that children devalue the power in their teacher's mouth but listen more from a successful district member.

The results from Key informants were also at the same page with those from FGDs. Two participants from the different schools (Chimhanda and Mazowe Bridge Secondary) also talked of the school heads inviting successful people to motivate the upcoming future in school. One participant stated that it is more important to get exposure through one of the successful persons from the same background as this makes all learners motivated to attain the same standard and girls will not desire for marriage when they see a learned woman, successful and empowered in front of them. The last participant Mazowe Bridge said,

*Zvinodawo kuti vakambodzidza kuno vakabudirira vasina kuroorwa vari vadiki vambouya muzvikoro zvedu izvi pamwe vana vechikoro vanodzidzawo kut zvakanak kusangofunga kuroorwa. [It is a good thing to meet successful women from our schools also to show us that marriage is not the only thing to desire for at a young age but a better future].(Number 17, male, 18years, learner)*

This brings a clear argument that another solution to reducing child marriages may be the plan to invite former students from Rushinga secondary schools to conduct sessions with learners and prove to them that there is a lot out of Rushinga and not just the communities full of poverty and child marriage effects.

#### **4.6.4 Apprehension of Perpetrators**

Six interviewed participants mentioned that perpetrators need to be arrested as soon they are found to have impregnated a girl or girls. The participants showed that perpetrators are least reported on marrying children under age and a number of girls are however justifying their acts with being in their marriages as early as they decide. Participant 11 stated that other children are married to old man that parents are not considering sewing them due to the payment of lobola or even due to his status within the community. The same man are given a child to marry, he pays and gets the wife

home but never gets tired of marrying but still is not considered a criminal by the society because they agree with the parents to the children. It was mentioned that,

*Vabereki havasi kusungisa varume vanomitisa vana vavo nekuti vanopiwa mari uye vanotywa kupiwa mutoro wekuchengeta vana kana murume vakamusungisa (Parents who have their daughters elope and staying with the boyfriends are afraid of sewing the husband for marrying a young aged person and somehow consider the husband to take care of her wife than sewing him and getting their child back). (Number 20, female, 36years, teacher)*

This they say has ruined the communities because they no longer have the fear to take a young child for marriage. Thus therefore an important issue to consider when dealing with child marriage issues that perpetrators be arrested and at least some will learn not to take advantage of young children and sexually engage with them to pregnancy.

The findings were corroborated by the views of school learners. They also commented and brought the idea that if perpetrators are taken to jail then the girls do not continue with marriages. Participant from Mazowe Bridge Secondary said:

*Vakomana vacho havasi kusungwa zvinoita kut vasikana vazvione kunge zvakakanaka, vanosungwa vashoma vamwe macase akungoenda kumapurisa asi isu mitemo yacho hatizivi kuti ine vainosunga nevasingasungwe sei. (The perpetrators are not getting under arrest therefore girls do have no fear to elope to their boyfriends, and we not even sure of the laws that permit for the arrest of some and some getting free even after the case is reported to the police). (Number 16, female, 18years, learner)*

Hence the communities stated the idea of making it an obvious case that anyone who marries a child or marry off a child should be detained and for sure.

#### **4.6.5 Guidance and Counselling Sessions**

Participants from FGD commented that there is also need for G & C in schools mainly focusing on the prevention of child marriages. Despite the sessions conducted by presenters from CAMFED and FACT, there is less of the sessions conducted in schools particularly on the issue, they stated. Participant, (Number 3, females, 18years, learner), said that teachers do consider their school subjects more than the G & C lessons and sometime do extra time lessons on core subjects but do

not really make the guidance and counselling a real deal in schools, therefore there is need to strengthen the Guidance and Counselling so as to assist reduce child marriages from schools to communities because they said children are more in schools than communities. Another participant from Mazowe Bridge Secondary also added on saying that child marriages is the most said issue in the communities and school, hence considering campaigns or do lessons and awareness on anti-child marriage any day at school may assist spread the message to end child marriages.

Hence to argue that Rushinga District need to have G & C sessions on child marriage aspects in schools is crucial because the discussions were pointing on to the idea that most of the times children spend their time in schools and hence taking that as a chance to impart the knowledge of avoiding child marriages and empowerment starts from the school also, sessions, school awareness and campaigns on anti-child marriages.

#### **4.7 Discussions**

In the analysis of the background factors to persistent child marriages in Rushinga District, the main key points that were captured from the research take account of the understanding of the meaning of child marriage. Child marriage definition was mainly provided to be the act of a formal or informal marriage of people or one under the age of 18 from all the participants. This means that the considered age of a child remains 18 and below as also was stated by UNICEF, (2021) that a child is just a phrase pointing out to all young people from birth to 18 years of age.

Firstly, as according to the participants of the study, child marriages have been due to a number of factors to which are attached to a background of poverty at large. The district of Rushinga has a number of people with informal jobs hence basing their livelihoods on farming, part time jobs and attersernal mining to mention the most done. Poverty has led to child marriage exacerbation in the district as through efforts to end child marriages, the families are ready to leave home for farming, mining and sometimes through accepting marriage of a child at home. Thus from other researches, Girls Not Brides, (2019), marriage is sometimes a breakthrough to poverty, therefore Rushinga with a background in poverty has lost children through the effects of Mazowe River mining as parents gives less attention to the children but find more time to go work, and get the small amounts of money from the activity. This means that an unguided child will find it easy to engage in sexual relationships and marriage at the end, even dropping out of school and as also according to Lewis, etal. (2016), this pushes to child marriages. The farming activity in Mozambique, has led to

children getting responsibilities after they are left home and at last they envy being in marriage, hence a child is triggered to marry. Children have also been finding it difficult to reach school premises due to distance, thus they end up occupying themselves with love relationships on the way and get to the point of getting pregnant or dropping out of school and choosing marriage not school at an age that is not recommended. Lastly it is important to talk of technology and lack of parental guidance as some of the causes of child marriages in the district through children getting access to the internet and social media platforms, they choose different influential directions that some are influenced negatively on building relationships in school and not education, they are motivated and pressured to get married and leave school hence that is driving to the act of child marriage. At the same time parents lose control over their children due to different reasons including being far away, having less time home or even due to the idea of avoiding suicidal attempts by children. Thus modernly Rushinga District has suffered from a background of poverty but not poverty only as the push factor to child marriages.

The participants secondly shared the effects imposed by child marriages. These may include health considerations whereby the same people engaged in child marriages tend to meet complications from pregnancy till birth of the child. This is because the children who get pregnant at the ages below 18 may definitely come across health restrictions by age, even World Health Organization, (2020) talks of the access to health services as limited to children married early. This means that this can be a worldwide effect of child marriages. Also poverty incassation is an effect because the impregnated or the boys who impregnate the girls have no resources to take care of starting families but however they burden the same parents, stay at home and beg for everything hence the poverty status is never reduced but increased. There is increased school dropout and at the same time reduced opportunities to economic development and they are limited to the number of formal jobs as they lack in education and knowledge, as also from other studies this has appeared to be a similar issue, Cheng et al, (2018) states of the same idea as effects of child marriages. Lastly, death is the most sensitive effect imposed by child marriages within the district. This is in form of suicide, maternal or infant mortality. The children after discovering or realizing that marriage is never an option over education, they tend to attempt suicide and this is even due to depression and distress after they are abandoned by the families. Maternal mortality and infant mortality are records of the hospital cases as children are getting married early and these count to death of children before reaching 3 months and mothers dying before or during birth of the child. Hence

the all mentioned ways have added on to the scales of deaths in Rushinga brought about through child marriages.

Moreover, there are interventions to the reduction of child marriage who have worked towards reducing poverty in general and linking up with the communities of the district. NGOs and at the same time government initiatives have been involved in the considerations. Therefore to reduce poverty as the major aim, the NGOs like CAMFED and World vision have given vulnerable school children access to education, and the opportunity to afford school needs from school wear to food and stationary. Nyamupanda & Carlson, (2017), also mentions of the fact that World Vision has played a crucial role towards the reduction of child marriages, and that is also seen in Rushinga as a district. As if this is not enough the two have managed to assist vulnerable children with sanitary wear and even bicycles to go to school in their long distances. This is all done to reduce the consequences of the effects of poverty in child marriages. This therefore important also in making a girl child safer as they are even engaged in loan applications or even grants to do projects and start businesses of their own as soon as they finish school. FACT to mention, is NGO that has educational trainings to children in schools and who are out of school. This is done with the aim of imparting knowledge in girls to stay in school and consider their future needs and child marriage effects and done to get time to interact with older people and get the needed information for a child under 18 to survive child marriage pressure.

Government initiatives like DSD and MOWACSMED have had crucial roles as referential assistance to children in need of school assistance or food. These government sectors work towards empowering women and securing children from harm. Therefore they provide case management services in the communities and district at the same time, appointed community workers refer cases to the district when need arise and however to the other side they provide with food services, financial assistance, health care assistance and refer cases to the police and to NGOs for other needs out of their capacity. Thus these have worked hand in hand with NGOs in order to reduce poverty and child marriages at the same time.

Lastly, there are the ways to which the district can use in order to reduce child marriages as provided by participants as, education of both women and men in order to get the efforts of both in the reduction. Thus imparting the knowledge from the definition, causes, effects and measure to avoid. Guidance and counselling is another crucial issue to note in dealing with the reduction of



child marriages. This was raised by the participants because most of the children married are from school and less number get married out of school, this means therefore that educating a child from school on child marriage concept and trends will somehow be of greater importance to the communities and families in the district and borrowing the idea by Bacolod & Silverman, (2018), that research and education needs a push is important so as to work on the prevalence of child marriages in Rushinga too. Also, encouraging ploughing back is an option as children learn more from practical and real demonstrations. Thus through another lady or gentlemen talking of his or her success to the school people after a poor background, they get to understand from a different dimension of life as stated by the interviewed respondents. Lastly, the perpetrators also have to be arrested if the laws states need. The communities have a number of people with cases recorded and reported to the policy but with perpetrators enjoying the small punishments they get or no punishment at all. Thus with the police working hand in hand with community leaders and community interventions on the cases, the participants agreed they may curb the results of child marriages.

#### **4.8 Chapter Conclusion**

In this chapter was provided the findings of the research from the communities of Rushinga District. Data was presented from the demographic to the pointed out themes of the research that were derived from the objectives of the research. The child marriage trend included the definition, causes and effects of the so called child marriage in the District. The interventions also taking part in the reduction were explored with their roles and the effects to which the measures have imposed. The study has also managed to indicate and present on the ways to which the communities can reduce child marriages, thus ways to curb the so trending issue and lastly the findings were discussed.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Chapter Introduction

In this chapter is provided the summary of the findings of the research and there is coming the conclusion to the research and lastly the recommendations attached to the study.

#### 5.2 Summary

The discussed findings of the study from interviews undertaken and FGDs conducted, where a highlight of the aim of the study that focused on the exploration of the background factors to persistent child marriages in Rushinga District. The findings from the study provided with the trend of child marriages from the definition, cases and lastly the effects found in Rushinga District. This in short was a clear picture that Rushinga has high level of child marriage practice and the communities have the meaning to a child and what is considered a child marriage. They have had challenges in the district with the source being “*poverty*”. Much of the causes of child marriages where all derived from the effects of poverty with some having a modern influence of technology and economic downfalls. Also, the effects of child marriages have brought about the continuation of the challenges of poverty, health related issues and even school dropouts, to mention a few. Participants however managed to bring out the interventions towards child marriages, their roles and the effects to their responsibilities. Last but not least, a discussion of other ways to achieve the elimination of child marriages was provided, with other thoughts to help ideas on the issue. Thus the district in particular has faced the increase in child marriage practice and with a list of factors to connect to the exacerbation.

#### 5.3 Conclusion

Socio-economic Characteristics: The study revealed that the most ages of children getting involved in child marriages range from 13-16 years of age. These have no formal jobs, they are involved in part time jobs and some do not even have livelihoods. To the children married, their highest level of education cannot even be categorized as Ordinary level because they quit school before writing ordinary level exams. Their marital statuses appeared to be influenced by child marriages and a lot of them tend to live as single parents.

Causes of child marriages: The modern activities in Rushinga district have brought about a change and the exacerbation of child marriages due to the push from poverty. Poverty has not stood as the only factor but major factor with others issues including the mining effects, the migrations and shifts made in the rain season, with also a count from technological effects to children and lack of parental guidance. The effects of the shortages in schools in Rushinga District also has led to

children walking long distances to and from school, and in the long run dropping out of school and getting married instead.

Effect of child marriages: the effects of child marriages from the study consisted of the increase in the so called poverty being worked on. This was also accompanied by a few factors also as health problems due to the age considerations, the dropping out of school of children by the time they get married, and the children also get to disadvantage themselves by leaving school. The married children miss the chance to education and at the same time economic opportunities to formal jobs. Death has also been recorded as one of the effects of child marriages as children attempt suicide after they realize of their pregnancy and are even involved in maternal mortality or the children dies during or before the birth, (infant mortality).

Anti-child marriage initiatives: The government has been working towards the reduction of child marriages through the DSD department and MOWACSMED. These have worked towards campaigns and service provision in psychosocial support, food assistance, and case management and referral. There is also a number of NGOs working with government officials to tackle the tide of poverty.

The conclusions shows that child marriages have been increasing in the district of Rushinga no matter the efforts of the community interventions in the district. These have worked towards poverty reduction but however a number of pushing factors to the proliferation of child marriages still modernly exist.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

To talk about the reduction of child marriages, there is a lot be done as suggested by the discussions of the participants in order to curb the proliferation of child marriages in Rushinga District.

- The education of the children and parents handling all both genders. This is important because it raises awareness results in all boys and girls, men and women in the district, leaving no one behind the knowledge of the disadvantages of child marriage.
- The children also need guidance and counselling sessions from school on adolescents sexual reproductive health programmes and at the same time involving the influence of successful people from the same district of Rushinga, to visit the secondary schools and empower school children to desire for a better future of a learned person.

- The communities of Rushinga District need more assistance in reducing the so called poverty which has to be tackled from the family roots up to the community level and this can be through the NGOs putting much effort to the vulnerable children starting from the home needs and at the same time providing for school needs.
- Lastly there was suggested the need to consider law enforcement or tightening or harmonization in order for the police to arrest the perpetrators of child marriages.

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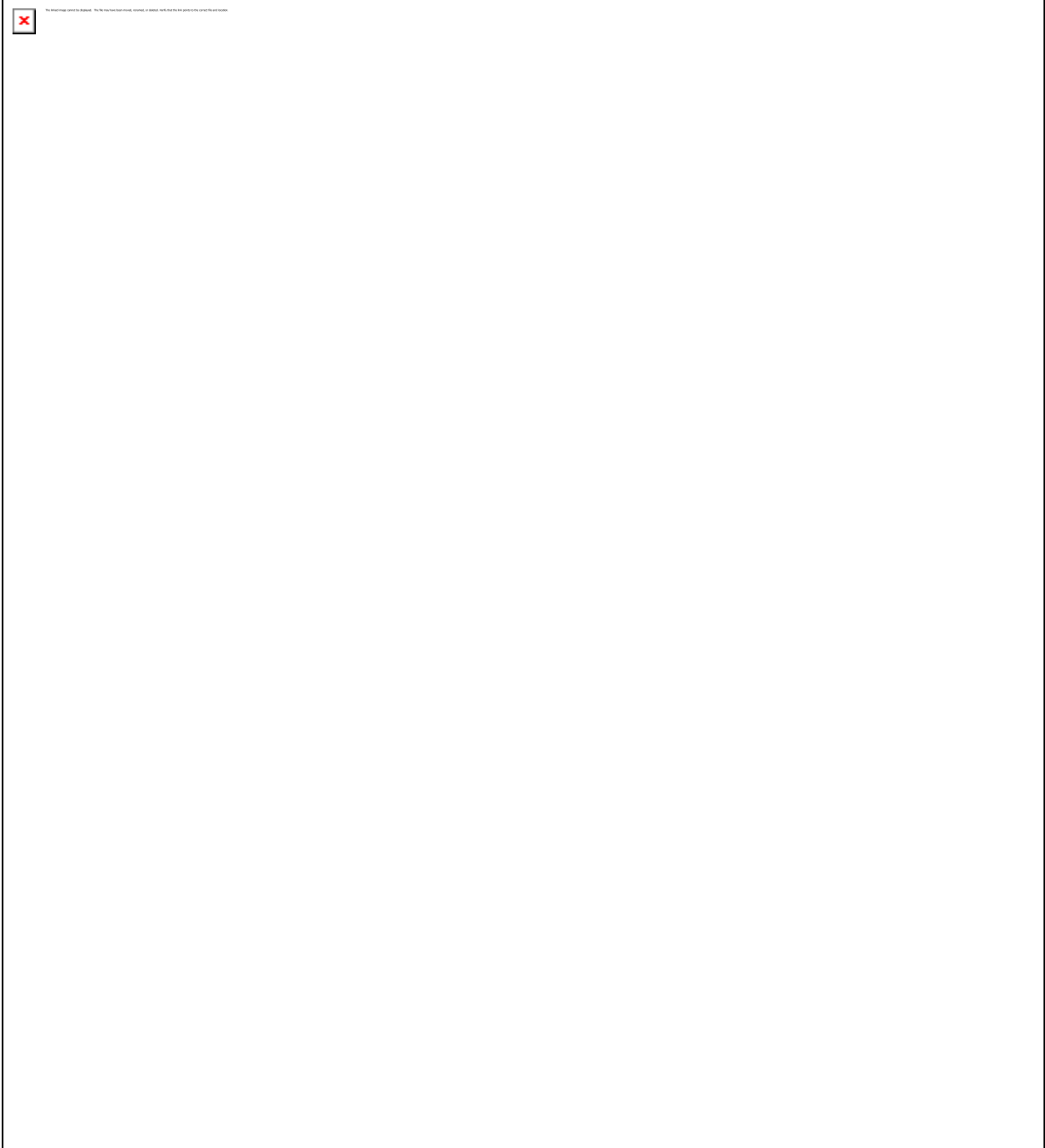
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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: BUSE Research Clearance Letter



## **Appendix 2: A F.G.D guide for school learners**

I am Zvikomborero M Rugoho a student at Bindura University of Science Education carrying out a research in fulfillment of Bachelor of Honors Degree in Development Studies. I am kindly asking for a hand in, in the participation and fulfillment of the questions provided. The study is seeking to review the modern challenges leading to child marriages in the district of Rushinga.

I would like you to know that you are surely invited to participate in this research and that your information to the questions shall be kept confidential. The information provided will surely be used for the purposes of the study only and the combined findings will be reported in upright academic publications.

### **INTRODUCTION.**

The purpose of the group is to discuss on the modern day challenges leading to child marriages, looking also at what has been done by other interventions and the gaps and ways to reduce the practice in the communities of Rushinga District. Therefore everyone's participation is of great importance to the study.

#### **Ground rules for the discussion:**

1. Everyone has the right to participate.
2. Give each other time to speak.
3. Do not use examples of people with names.
4. Provide true information.
5. What has to be discussed here shall be kept confidential.

#### **The main questions.**

1. Anyone to define 'child marriage'?
2. What are the current factors leading to the practice of child marriages?
3. Which range of ages are being engaged in child marriages in your communities?
4. Are there known community interventions working on child marriages reduction?
5. What are their roles and effects on the practice?
6. Do child marriages have positive or negative effects on human lives?
7. What are some of these effects in your communities?
8. Can child marriages be reduced in your communities? How?

#### **Closing questions.**

Do you think like we have covered everything you wanted to talk about?

Do you have any feedback about the process?

***Thank you for sharing your thoughts and experiences with me. Thank you also for your time and considerations.***

### **Appendix 3: An interview guide for the community workers and teachers**

I am Zvikomborero M Rugoho a student at Bindura University of Science Education carrying out a research in fulfillment of Bachelor of Honors Degree in Development Studies. I am kindly asking for a hand in the participation and fulfillment of the questions provided. The study is seeking to review the background factors leading to child marriages in the district of Rushinga.

I would like you to know that you are surely invited to participate in this research and that your information to the questions shall be kept confidential. The information provided will surely be used for the purposes of the study only and the combined findings will be reported in upright academic publications.

1. How old are you?
2. What is your role in the district?
3. How do you define 'child marriage'?
4. Can you tell me more about that?
5. What are its main causes in your own community/school?
6. What have you discovered about child marriages as a community worker?
7. Do you think child marriage is a problem or it is a minor issue?
8. What are the effects of child marriages?
9. What challenges are you facing in the community/school as children get married?
10. Do you think child marriages can be eliminated forever?  
If so, how?
11. What else do you want to talk about on this concept apart from what I asked you?

***We greatly appreciate your participation in the questionnaire. Thank you for the time.***



#### **Appendix 4: An interview guide for the victims**

I am Zvikomborero M Rugoho a student at Bindura University of Science Education carrying out a research in fulfillment of Bachelor of Honors Degree in Development Studies. I am kindly asking for a hand in the participation and fulfillment of the questions provided. The study is seeking to review the background factors leading to child marriages in the district of Rushinga.

I would like you to know that you are surely invited to participate in this research and that your information to the questions shall be kept confidential. The information provided will surely be used for the purposes of the study only and the combined findings will be reported in upright academic publications.

1. How old are you?
2. What is your marital status?
3. How many children do you have?
4. What is your occupation?
5. How do you define 'child marriage'?
6. Can you tell me more about that?
7. What was the causing factor for you to get married early?
8. Do you think child marriage is a problem or it is a minor issue?
9. Do you face any challenges in life as a result of your marriage? What challenges?
10. What would be the ideal age to marry in your own opinion?
11. Do you think child marriages can be eliminated forever?  
If so, how?
12. What else do you want to talk about on this concept apart from what I asked you?

***We greatly appreciate your participation in the questionnaire. Thank you for the time.***

## **Appendix 5: An interview guide for the Key Informants**

I am Zvikomborero M Rugoho a student at Bindura University of Science Education carrying out a research in fulfillment of Bachelor of Honors Degree in Development Studies. I am kindly asking for a hand in the participation and fulfillment of the questions provided. The study is seeking to review the background factors leading to child marriages in the district of Rushinga.

I would like you to know that you are surely invited to participate in this research and that your information to the questions shall be kept confidential. The information provided will surely be used for the purposes of the study only and the combined findings will be reported in upright academic publications.

13. How old are you?
14. What is your role in the district?
15. How do you define 'child marriage'?
16. Can you tell me more about that?
17. What are its main causes in your own community?
18. What is your role as an intervention?
19. Do you think child marriage is a problem or it is a minor issue?
20. Do child marriages have any positive effects?
21. What would be the ideal age to marry in your own opinion?
22. Do you think child marriages can be eliminated forever?  
If so, how?
23. What else do you want to talk about on this concept apart from what I asked you?

***We greatly appreciate your participation in the questionnaire. Thank you for the time.***