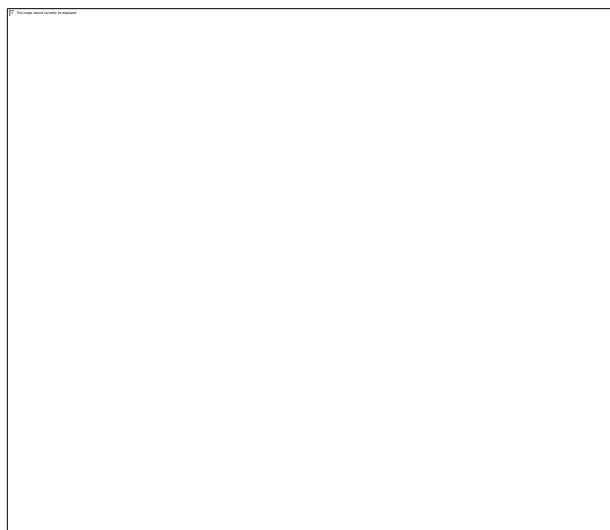


**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**  
**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND GOVERNANCE**



**Impact of Parental Migration on Family Life: Case Study of Domboshava (Chirombo Village).**

**By**

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**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Peace and Governance in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Peace and Governance**

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**Bindura, Zimbabwe**

**4 April 2025**

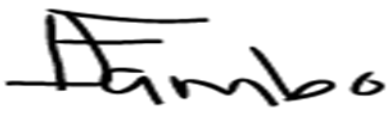
## **ABSTRACT**

The study explored on the impact of parental migration on family life in Domboshava (Chirombo village). The major aim of the study was to examine the effects of parental migration on family life. The study employed an exploratory research design. The research was qualitative in nature and employed interviews and a focus group discussion for the purpose of data collection. A sample size of 25 participants was drawn from the target population and to collect relevant information to the study. The study employed the social capital theory. The study revealed that parental migration has negative consequences on children left behind and these include sexual abuse, child labor, school dropouts, early child marriages, use of alcohol and substance abuse. However some children benefit from their parents' migration showing that besides the negative effects it has also some positive effects to the family. After identifying the effects the researcher also identified the coping strategies employed by these children as well as peace and governance strategies to these problems. The findings were in line with what the social capital theory posits whilst others were contrary to that. The assumptions were also cleared after the data collection. The study recommends that the government should implement policies to support children left behind by migrating parents and also partner with other NGOs so as to provide the needs of these families. It also recommends the department of Peace and Governance to establish offices in Chirombo village for counseling services as well as offering loans to those facing financial challenges.

## **DECLARATION**

I, Felistas Mavis Jambo (B210857) , declare that this research is my own original work and has not been submitted elsewhere for examination. I confirm that all sources used in the research have been properly acknowledged and referenced

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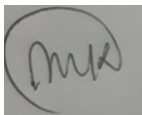
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**DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this project to my parents Mr and Mrs Jambo who supported and guided me throughout the project. I also want to dedicate this research project to my sisters Faith and Fortunate Jambo who kept on pushing and inspiring me even during the most challenging moments. Above all, I dedicate this project to the Lord Almighty.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Dr Zembere whose guidance and wisdom have been of great help in the completion of this dissertation. Your patience and expertise have been a source of inspiration throughout this journey.

I would like to thank my family once again for their unwavering support.

I'm also grateful to the Almighty for granting me the opportunity to pursue my academics

I'm grateful to the residents of Domboshava (Chirombo village) for their cooperation in this research

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

|         |                                                        |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| A level | Advanced Level                                         |
| AU      | African Union                                          |
| CSOs    | Civil Society Organizations                            |
| IOM     | International Organization for Migration               |
| MoPSE   | Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education            |
| NGOs    | Non-Governmental Organizations                         |
| O level | Ordinary Level                                         |
| UK      | United Kingdom                                         |
| UN      | United Nations                                         |
| UNICEF  | United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund |
| ZIMSTAT | Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency                    |

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

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

The issue of parental migration has become a global challenge affecting millions of families around the world. According to the United Nations there is approximately 272 million of international migrants which includes 49 % being the women who leave their children behind hence this has some implications on family life as it affects the child's well-being as well as community development. The global statistics states that 35% of international migrants are parents leaving children behind IOM (2019) whilst 150 million are children who have at least one migrant parent as according to UNICEF (2018).

Africa is also a home to about 30 million children who have one or both parents working abroad due to economic instability as according to the AU (2019). Also according to AU the majority of these migrants move within the continent as 70% of them have relocated to countries such as South Africa, Nigeria and Egypt because of poverty, lack of employment opportunities hence these countries have been recognized as the top destination countries for migrants.

Regionally South Africa has more than 642,000 migrants and displaced children. ZIMSTAT (2020) also states that 1.5 million Zimbabweans live outside of the country. Most of these people came from Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi whilst Botswana, Namibia and South Africa are the primary destination countries. However these people are facing some challenges whilst trying to find some jobs as lack of coordination between countries hinder effective support for these migrant families. Demographics of migrant parents states that 55% are female whilst 45% are male living abroad between the age of 25 to 45 whilst working in the informal sector.

Domboshava is situated approximately 30 kilometers from Harare and has experienced notable migration by its residents. Migration has been as a result of economic and social hardships

which has caused some parents to move to places such as UK and South Africa in search of work so as to make ends meet. Zimbabwe has also a population of around 1.5 million of its members living outside of the country. Domboshava village experiences high rate of parental migration and the government has employed some strategies to provide social protection for left behind families as well as on the measures to engage with the diaspora. However migration has also resulted in left behind family members mostly the women and children facing increased responsibilities and economic burdens. The research also seeks to promote effective strategies to support migrant families and mitigate the negative consequences of migration on family life. Some of the NGOs that would help in mitigating these effects would be UNICEF's 'Children Left Behind' program as well as local NGOs that provide psychosocial support and education to the vulnerable children so as to ensure the promotion of human security.

## **1.2 Purpose of the study**

The research aimed to examine the effects of parental migration among the residents of Domboshava (Chirombo Village).

## **1.3 Statement of the problem**

Parental migration in search of work has been a challenge to the left-behind families as it decreases parental involvement in raising up a child as well as disrupting family dynamics and roles. This has also resulted in increased risk of child abuse as well as engagement in substance abuse by children who have been left behind trying to reduce depression and stress. Absence of parents has also been a cause of conflicts in the society. Domboshava village has 12.6 % of its total population of children living with at least one parent as according to the findings of 2012 census.

## **1.4 Research Objectives**

- Identify the impact of parental migration on children in Domboshava (Chirombo village).

- To investigate its positive impact
- To investigate adaptive measures
- To identify peace and governance strategies to solve challenges faced.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- What are effects of migration in Domboshava (Chirombo village)?
- Which are positive impacts?
- What coping measures can children in Chirombo village adopt?
- Peace and governance strategies to these problems

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

- It also assumes that support networks would play a greater role in reducing these challenges only if participants are willing to comply so as to identify the challenges they are facing.
- Zimbabwe's economic situation is also a driver of this hence improving the economy will also reduce this challenge.

### **1.7 Importance of the study**

By carrying out this research there would be empirical evidence being provided as well as theoretical insights which will result in the recommendations of practical solutions being made so as to ensure well-being of these families. Therefore the research aims at understanding the challenges being faced by these families and better ways of supporting them in issues to do with migration related challenges.

This research will benefit the (CSOs) by knowing some problems being faced by the left behind children so as to proffer ways to reduce them as well as policies that will safeguard the vulnerable members. This will include providing financial support so as to reduce conflicts caused by poverty, improve access to food as well as education so as to ensure that the needs of these children are being met.

The NGOs will also be guided by this in implementing effective programs that cater for the needs of these people. NGOs can do partnership with the government and other CSOs in providing the resources needed to support these children and their families.

Women Organizations will also benefit from this. Therefore this will inform policy makers on programs to undertake as well as how best they can protect women's rights so as to reduce cases of gender based violence.

(MoPSE) will benefit as they will better understand the challenges faced by children who have parents living abroad. By so doing the ministry will provide policies that will improve access to quality education for these children as absence of parents affect them both physically and mentally thereby reducing their educational performance as some drop off from school. Thus policies that cater for a child's educational needs will be implemented thereby ensuring that each and every child has access to education.

### **1.8 Delimitations of the study**

It focuses on Chirombo Village limiting the focus on other villages. It also excludes urban areas though they are also facing the same challenge and it is also limited to families with at least one migrant parent as well as focusing on Zimbabwean culture.

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

Ethics such as consent, confidentiality and emotional distress can limited how the researcher approaches her studies as ethical constraints restrict researchers from fully exploring sensitive topics related to familial relationships impacted by migration. Temporal dynamics is another challenge as if data is collected after a parent has shortly migrated it might not capture long-term adjustments that families undergo over time. Methodological constraints were also a challenge as quantitative approaches fail to capture emotional and psychological impacts of parental migration on family members. There is also limited consideration of other migration drivers.

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

- Parental migration- (UNICEF, 2018, p. 7) parental migration is the temporal or permanent movement of parents across international borders.
- Family life-(Glass, 2018, p. 5) defines it as a social institution that provides emotional support, economic security as social connection.
- Left-behind Children-(Oliveira, 2020, p. 933) defines them as minors who remain in their home country.
- Migration-(Castles, 2020, p. 993) defines it as the change in place of people from one place to another due to economic, social, political and environmental factors.

### **1.11 Dissertation Outline**

#### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Chapter 1 focuses on the background of the study, highlighting the purpose of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives and questions, assumptions as well as the significance of the study.

#### **Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

Chapter 2 reviewed relevant literature and theoretical framework.

#### **Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology**

It focuses on research methodology with particular attention to research design and data collection tools.

#### **Chapter 4: Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings**

The focus was on data presentation and discussion of research findings

#### **Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusion, Recommendations and Area of further research**

The chapter concludes and summarises all the findings and make recommendations

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

It explains existing literature on the impact of parental migration using the social capital theory as a framework. The literature review will help to identify areas of deficiency and then connect theoretical framework with the previous researches. The literature review will be structured to align with the research objectives, so as to ensure a thorough examination of relevant studies. This chapter will conclude with a chapter summary which provides an overview of the chapter's content.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

This section introduces a framework that is social capital theory. However strong community ties can help mitigate some negative effects by providing support systems through extended family or community organizations. The theory also emphasizes the importance of networks in fostering cooperation among individuals for mutual benefit. The theory was popularized by sociologists such as Pierre Bourdieu(1986) contributing to distinct perspectives on how social capital operates within communities. The concept emphasizes on the importance of social connections in achieving economic and social outcomes.

Robert Putnam expanded on Bourdieu's ideas in his influential work "Bowling Alone" (2000). He illustrated this with examples from American society noting how declining participation in community organizations has led to decreased trust among citizens. James Coleman provided examples from educational settings where students from families with strong social networks performed better academically due to support systems that encouraged learning and achievement.

### **2.2.1 Applicability**

It emphasizes the significance of networks. This is so because it helps the families left behind to cope with challenges that are linked to parental migration. Studies by ( Mazzucato & Schans, 2015) have also shown that these migrant families have strong social support networks which enables them to adapt to challenges of parental migration as well as to maintain close relations with the families they left behind. Jordan(2017) also highlighted that the ones who have social support networks maintain regular contact with their families and promote emotional as well as support needed by these families. This role is mostly done by mothers as they are emotional as compared to men. Also according to Graham and Jordan (2017) social support networks play a crucial role in helping migrant mothers to balance caregiving support as well as economic goals (p.123).

Ryan (2018) notes that migrant families who have the access to community and institutional support which includes counseling services as well as support groups adapt easily to challenges of migration and maintain strong relationships with their left behind families hence reducing some of the negative impacts of migration. Martini and Querin (2019) also highlighted those migrant families who have access to the community and institutions experience low levels of stress related to parental migration showing that the community plays a pivotal role in reducing the negative impacts of migration.

According to Lutz (2017) social norms shape family experiences in terms of obligations as well as expectations towards their families they left behind. Baldassar and Merla (2014) also found out that some migrant families who abide with their cultural backgrounds prioritizes family duties and maintain close relations with their left behind families. Piper and Lee (2017) also found that migrant families from low social backgrounds experience poverty and exclusion in the countries they migrate to hence affecting the way they support their left behind families.

Social capital theory also emphasizes on the importance of transnational ties and networks. These facilitates communication and cooperation between parents and their families (Levitt 2016). Also according to Kilkey and Merla (2014) those migrant parents who maintain strong transnational ties with their left behind families are more likely to support them financially as well as maintaining regular contact with them thereby mitigating the cases of breaking down of family bonds as well as depression due to family burden on few family members.

### **2.2.2 Weaknesses**

According to Glick Schiller (2015) it assumes that social relations and networks are accessible to every individual regardless of socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity. Graham, (2017) on their research found out that those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds especially mothers are likely to experience poverty and social exclusion in host countries thereby limiting their ability to maintain close relations with the families they left behind.

Another weakness of social capital theory is its inability to account for the complexity and diversity of migrant families' experiences. According to Levitt (2016) this theory relies on simplistic and binary categories such as strong and weak social ties which do not capture different variations of migrant families' experiences. (Castles, 2015) noted that migrant family experiences are shaped by various factors which include the cultural background, socioeconomic status as well as migration policies. According to Kilkey and Merla (2014) migrant families from different cultural backgrounds have different expectations and obligations towards their families which impacts their ability to maintain strong relations with them.

Another weakness of this theory is that it idealizes the role of social networks as well as community ties in a migrant family' life. Ryan (2018) notes that this theory assumes that social networks and community ties are beneficial for migrant families without even considering the challenges associated with this whilst Martini and Querin (2019) sees the community as a source of stress and anxiety for these families if they have conflicting expectations and obligations from different family members. Diaz (2017) also found that long distant migrant parents who have social ties with their families experience feelings of guilty as well as anxiety due to their failure in providing enough care and support needed by their left behind families.

### **2.3 Literature Review**

Tienda (2016) defined family life as a complex construct that encompasses the relationships, roles and dynamics among family members. She also emphasizes that migration significantly alters family structures and relationships (Tienda 2016) .She discussed how migration can lead to transnational families where members are separated by geographic boundaries but maintain strong emotional and economic ties across countries. This phenomenon often results in altered parenting roles and responsibilities as some parents may migrate for work while leaving children behind in their home country. Tienda also highlighted the impact of migration on

family stability as families may experience stress due to separation or the challenges of reunification after migration. This emotional toll of such separations can affect children's well-being and development (Haskins, 2018). Moreover, she notes that migrant families often face unique challenges related to legal status, economic instability and cultural integration which further complicate their familial relationships. When families reunite after long periods apart, they may struggle with reintegration due to changes in individual roles or expectations (Tienda 2016). She also highlighted that migrant families often engage in transnational practices maintaining connections with relatives across borders through communication technologies or remittances. These practices strengthen familial bonds but may also create tensions regarding loyalty and identity (Tienda, 2016) whilst economic contributions from migrant workers can significantly improve the living conditions of families left behind though reliance on remittances and this can also create vulnerabilities if the migrant faces job loss or legal issues abroad (Tienda et al., 2018).

Scholars such as De Haas (2014) emphasize the economic motivations behind parental migration. They define parental migration as a strategy employed by families to improve their economic circumstances. This perspective highlights how parents migrate primarily for employment opportunities which can lead to remittances that support families left behind. The framework suggests that while parental migration may enhance financial stability it also poses risks related to emotional and social well-being for children who remain in the home country. Though he defined it as a strategy to improve economic circumstances I am of the view that parents can resort to vending or farming activities that can improve their well-being rather than migration as it results in the breaking up of families.

Researchers like Mazzucato and Schans (2018) focus on the sociocultural dimensions of parental migration. They argue that parental absence can disrupt traditional family structures and cultural practices. Their framework posits that children may experience identity challenges

and altered familial roles due to the absence of one or both parents. This perspective underscores the importance of understanding how cultural contexts shape the experiences of migrant families. Despite his view I am of the view that it is better to disrupt traditional family structures and norms in a bid to improve living standards so as to ensure that children will not struggle with attaining improved education as well as obtaining enough food which ensures good health and well-being rather than staying with them whilst failing to meet their needs.

Recent studies by scholars such as Gonzalez et al. (2020) define parental migration in terms of its psychological effects on children, including issues related to attachment, anxiety and educational outcomes. Their research indicates that while some children may benefit from increased financial resources through remittances others may suffer emotionally from separation, anxiety and lack of parental guidance. In order solve the psychological impacts on children I am of the view that parents must migrate with their children so as to ensure that they will not feel being lonely as this will result in some of them engaging in drug abuses in order to reduce stress.

The governance aspect is explored by scholars like Crisp (2021) who analyze how policies affect migrant families. He defines parental migration within a policy framework that considers legal status, access to services and integration challenges faced by migrant families. This approach emphasizes the need for comprehensive policies that address not only economic but also social welfare needs of families affected by migration. As a peace practitioner I am of the view that the government should find ways of improving economy so as to reduce the number of parents migrating and leaving their families behind.

Kofman (2022) advocates for intersectional approach to understanding parental migration. She argues that factors such as gender, class and ethnicity significantly influence migration experiences and outcomes for families. Kofman's framework suggests that understanding these

intersecting identities is crucial for developing effective support systems for migrant families. Despite these factors it is important to note that poverty, unemployment as well as having social networks influences parental migration.

## **2.4 Impact of migration in Domboshava (Chirombo Village)**

### **2.4.1 Affects traditional family roles**

The migration of parents for work leads to a reconfiguration of traditional family roles. This shift disrupt conventional authority structures within families for instance some children experience a loss of parental guidance and support which traditionally comes from both parents. Research indicates that this absence leads to increased responsibilities for older siblings who take on caregiving roles while also managing their education (Chikanda & Maposa, 2018). As a result, there is often a blurring of generational roles where children undertake responsibilities typically held by adults.

### **2.4.2 Alter power dynamics**

Remittances empower those who remain behind often women or elderly relatives by providing them with financial resources that enhance their decision-making power within the household. This shift can challenge traditional gender roles where men were historically seen as the primary breadwinners (Mavhunga & Moyo, 2020). Also, women may gain greater autonomy and influence over household decisions due to their newfound financial agency hence helping to do away with gender stereotypes.

### **2.4.3 Affects family structure**

The structure of families in Domboshava has also evolved due to parental migration. The phenomenon has led to an increase in what are known as “left-behind” families those with one or both parents being absent for extended periods. These families often face challenges related

to emotional well-being and social cohesion. Children in these households struggle with feelings of abandonment and neglect which affects their mental health and academic performance (Muzenda & Chikanda, 2021). Additionally, the reliance on extended family networks becomes more pronounced as kinship ties are called upon to fill gaps left by absent parents. While this can foster resilience within communities by strengthening familial bonds, it may also lead to tensions regarding authority and resource allocation among relatives (Chikanda & Maposa, 2018). The interplay between these dynamics reflects a significant transformation from nuclear family models towards more complex arrangements involving multiple caregivers.

Culturally, parental migration influences how familial relationships are perceived and enacted within Domboshava. The traditional values associated with parenting and familial duty may be challenged as children adapt to new realities without their parents' direct involvement. This cultural shift can lead to generational divides where younger members of the family adopt different values compared to those held by older generations who remain rooted in traditional practices (Mavhunga & Moyo, 2020). Furthermore, remittances not only provide financial support but also introduce new consumer behaviors influenced by global trends that migrant workers encounter abroad. This exposure can lead to changes in lifestyle choices among families left behind hence creating conflicts between modern aspirations and traditional expectations (Muzenda & Chikanda, 2021).

#### **2.4.4 Impact on family cohesion**

Parental migration can either weaken or strengthen family bond. In some cases, families report increased cohesion as they adapt to new roles but however, prolonged separation often leads to estrangement between parents and children (Mazzucato et al., 2015). The emotional distance created by physical absence can result in a lack of shared experiences which are crucial for maintaining strong familial ties.

#### **2.4.5 Long-term effects on relationships**

The long-term effects of parental migration extend beyond immediate emotional responses as they can shape future relationships as children grow into adulthood. Research indicates that individuals from migrant families may develop different attachment styles based on their early experiences with absent parents (Schmidt et al., 2021). These attachment styles can influence their future romantic relationships and parenting approaches when they themselves become parents.

#### **2.4.6 Economic consequences**

The economic impact of parental migration is multifaceted. According to World Bank (2023), global remittances reached approximately \$700 billion in 2022, with many developing countries relying heavily on these funds for household consumption and investment in education and health care. Families receiving remittances often experience increased spending power which can lead to improved living standards (Ratha et al., 2021). However, the departure of parents can also result in a loss of income generating capacity within the household. Children may have to take on additional responsibilities or work to support the family financially which can hinder their educational opportunities (Gonzalez et al., 2020). This duality creates a complex economic landscape where short term benefits from remittances are counterbalanced by long term challenges related to child labor and reduced educational attainment.

#### **2.4.7 Social consequences**

Socially, parental migration can lead to changes in family dynamics and community structures. The absence of parents often shifts caregiving responsibilities to grandparents or older siblings which can disrupt traditional family roles (Schmalzbauer & Brito, 2018). This shift may foster resilience among children but can also lead to feelings of neglect or abandonment. Moreover, communities may experience demographic changes as a result of parental migration as areas with high rates of out migration may see a decline in population density and alterations in social networks (Mazzucato & Schans, 2015). These changes can affect local economies and social

cohesion as fewer adults remain to participate in community activities. Additionally, there is evidence that children left behind may face stigma or discrimination due to their parents' absence by being excluded from community activities. They might be labeled as “migrant children,” which could affect their social interactions and integration within schools and communities (Hernandez & Charney, 2022).

## **2.5 Coping strategies and adaptations employed by families in response to parental migration**

### **2.5.1 Emotional consequences**

Children left behind often experience feelings of sadness, anxiety and loneliness due to separation from their parents (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018). Research indicates that these emotional struggles can manifest in behavioral issues at school and difficulties forming relationships with peers. Furthermore, the uncertainty surrounding parental return adds an additional layer of stress for these children. Studies show that prolonged separation can lead to attachment issues and children may develop negative feelings towards their migrating parents upon reunion (Kälin & Schmidlin, 2020). This emotional turmoil not only affects individual well-being but also impacts familial relationships over time.

### **2.5.2 Social adaptations**

The absence of a parent can alter family dynamics significantly hence families adapt socially in various ways such as role reconfiguration. Remaining family members often take on additional responsibilities to fill the void left by the absent parents for example older siblings may take caregiving roles for younger siblings (Parreñas, 2014). This shift can lead to increased maturity but also stress due to added responsibilities. Community engagement is another way as many families become more involved in their local communities as a means of social support. Engaging with neighbors or community organizations provides both practical help and emotional solace (Böcker & Meeteren, 2016). Building new relationships is another strategy as some families form new friendships that help them cope with the absence of the migrant parent.

These relationships provide essential social support and reduce feelings of isolation (Schmalzbauer, 2020).

### **2.5.3 Economic coping strategies**

Economic factors play a crucial role in making families adapt to parental migration through financial remittances (2016). The influx of remittances significantly improves living standards. Diversifying income sources is another strategy as families may seek alternative income sources when a parent migrates and this involve starting small businesses or engaging in agricultural activities to supplement household income (De Haas et al., 2015). Budgeting and financial planning also help with changes in household income dynamics due to migration as families often adopt stricter budgeting practices to manage resources effectively (Mastrorillo et al., 2016). This adaptation is crucial for ensuring financial stability during periods when remittances may be irregular.

### **2.5.4 Educational adaptations**

Children left behind may develop heightened aspirations for education as they recognize the sacrifices made by their migrant parents (Orozco & Fedewa, 2015). This motivation leads to improved academic performance. Some children may seek additional educational resources such as tutoring or extracurricular activities funded by remittances in order to keep themselves busy (Dreby, 2015). They also rely on teachers and mentors for support during this transition (Sáenz & Morales, 2015) thus keeping them busy and avoiding cases of depression and loneliness.

## **2.6 Peace and Governance strategies that can help children left behind by migrant parents**

### **2.6.1 Community support programs**

Peace practitioners can train community leaders as well as teachers who can recognize signs of emotional distress among children and assist them with the necessary help needed. Mental health services should also be integrated into community support systems so as to enhance the

support network to these children such that they can be able to process their feelings of loss and abandonment, anxiety and depression (Bauer, 2019).

### **2.6.2 Educational initiatives**

Peace practitioners can play a vital role in enlightening children left behind by migrant parents on the migration process and its consequences and how best they can cope with it. They can establish community based intervention programs which will provide emotional as well as social support by involving local volunteers, healthcare providers and educators who can work together in creating a nurturing environment for example initiatives that focus on mentorship and peer support to ensure that children cope with feelings of abandonment and isolation (Madzivadondo, 2015).

### **2.6.3 Policy advocacy and caregiver support**

Communities should advocate for policies that protect the rights of left behind children ensuring their access to education as well as healthcare services. In China a study by Gao (2023) showed that caregiver support is important for the well-being of children left behind by migrant parents whilst in Uganda a study by Bourdillon (2018) emphasized on the significance of caregiver support in fostering resilience among these children. Peace practitioners can also support caregivers by developing support groups and providing resources to help them cope with the challenges of caregiving such as collaborating with the government and NGOs in providing educational resources, scholarships and educational programs designed for these children so as to ensure that they receive support needed for them to thrive academically.

### **2.6.4 Peer support groups**

In Netherlands, peer support groups have proven to provide a secure and supportive environment for children to express their emotions and experiences thereby reducing feelings of loneliness and increasing confidence through sharing emotions (Kamphuis, 2020). These children can be empowered by engaging them in community decision making such that they

would express their needs and concerns thereby fostering a sense of belonging and agency which helps the community in understanding them better and addressing the challenges they face

## **2.7 Gaps in the literature**

It is limited by lack of longitudinal studies (Ampiah, 2016). Longitudinal studies can help with identifying the critical periods, education as well as social relationships rather than focusing on cross sectional studies.

There is limited evidence which assesses the effectiveness of various interventions which aim at supporting left behind children therefore more empirical data is needed to guide in policy decisions effectively.

The effects of migration on child's academic is poorly understood with few studies examining the effects of it on academic achievement, educational aspirations and school engagement (Hernandez et al., 2022). Understanding these effects is very crucial so as to develop targeted interventions needed to support a child's educational development.

Technology can also play a crucial role in maintaining relationships between migrant parents and their children yet few studies have researched about this topic (Graham & Gemi, 2020).

## **2.8 Chapter Summary**

It reviewed existing research on the impact of migration on children and how peace practitioners can help in mitigating these effects on children. The chapter also identified areas of deficiency in current researches towards this topic.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology using a case study of the residents in Domboshava (Chirombo village). This chapter also aims to justify the chosen research methodology, design and data collection methods.

#### 3.2 Research Philosophy

Constructivist research philosophy emphasizes on understanding the subjective experiences of individuals.

#### 3.3 Key Principles of Constructivist Research Philosophy

- **Contextual Understanding:** The context in which learning occurs is crucial in constructivist research thus Domboshava is of importance to the researcher. The researcher explored Chirombo village so as to gain insights into how context influences knowledge construction.
- **Collaborative Inquiry:** Constructivist researcher engages participants in the research process, viewing them as co-researchers rather than subjects being studied. This collaborative approach allowed for richer data collection and a more nuanced understanding of participants' perspectives as they are the ones who are being affected by this.

#### 3.4 Research Methodology

Qualitative research methodology was used. This technique is about obtaining non-numerical data through observations, interviews and textual analysis in order to gain understanding of the varying subject experiences, viewpoints and interpretations that people assign to different phenomena (Creswell, 2014). This approach facilitates an understanding of personal narratives and lived experiences which are essential for exploring the intricacies of social capital within migrant families. On the other hand, qualitative methods are essential for understanding the

different experiences of family members. Interviews and focus groups reveal how children feel about their parents' absence, how they cope with emotional challenges and how familial roles shift in response to migration. These insights are critical for interpreting the quantitative data in a meaningful way.

### **3.5 Research Design**

The research design used was exploratory, aiming to uncover new insights into how parental migration influences family dynamics through social capital theory. Interviews were conducted with family members who have experienced parental migration and other key informants who have some knowledge about it so as to gather their viewpoints and experiences. This design allowed participants to express their thoughts freely. This design was chosen as it gives data directly from what people are experiencing. Focus group discussions were also used. It involves conducting guided conversations with participants, allowing for flexibility and exploration of relevant topics concerning migration (Bernard, 2017). In this case the interviewer prepared a set of predetermined questions based on a thematic framework but retained the flexibility to adjust the order of questions, skip some and add new ones as the conversation unfolds. This approach allowed for a more natural dialogue while still ensuring that key topics are covered.

### **3.6 Population and Sample**

The target population included the families affected by parental migration within Chirombo village. According to Babbie (2019). The sample consisted of approximately 25 people including key informants.

### **3.7 Sampling Method**

This method ensured that participants provide rich information about their experiences and perspectives. Purposive sampling allowed to focus on specific subsets of a population that are most relevant to her study hence enabling her to gather detailed data about the effects parental migration on family life.

### **3.8 Data Collection Methods**

#### **3.8.1 In-depth interviews**

This is a method which is characterized by thorough exploration. This approach allowed for effective listening to participants' responses, experiences and emotions enabling a deeper understanding of their perspectives. In-depth interviews also provided the follow-up questions and revisiting of key topics which yielded a rich comprehension of the challenges faced by children whose parents have migrated. Moreover, this method facilitated rapport-building with participants making them feel more at ease and comfortable, thereby resulting in more insightful responses particularly regarding sensitive topics like how these children are being cared for by their caregivers.

#### **3.8.2 Key informant interviews**

These are one on one dialogue with individuals possessing valuable insights into the program being evaluated (Sharma, 2017). The researcher chose key informant interviews because they are easy to carry out and requires low cost as one respondent and interviewer are the only ones needed with no need for other special facilities. Adding on, key informant interviews allowed the researcher to address sensitive topics and gather firsthand information from children left behind by migrating parents.

#### **3.8.3 Group discussions**

The researcher utilized this method with two groups of children, girls and boys who had experienced parental migration aiming to understand their diverse perspectives. This approach proved efficient, saving time and resources. Moreover, the researcher observed that children who have experienced parental migration share similar experiences and emotions making focus group discussion a suitable method for exploring their thoughts and feelings.

### **3.9 Validity and Reliability**

To ensure validity, triangulation was employed. This was done by comparing findings from interviews with secondary data sources. Validity was assessed by ensuring that the tools used

(surveys, interview guides) accurately measure what they intend to measure regarding the impact of parental migration to family life.

Reliability was addressed through consistent interview protocols and thorough documentation of the research process thereby allowing for replication in the future studies. Reliability was assessed by checking the alignment of data as when multiple researchers analyze qualitative data like interview transcripts their interpretations should align closely if reliability is high whilst when similar measures are taken at different times for example when conducting follow-up surveys results should remain consistent if reliability is also strong and in this case it was reliable.

### **3.10 Data Analysis and Presentation**

It is a process of reviewing the interview transcripts, notes and other texts collected by the researcher to better understand the topic being studied. Thematic analysis was used to find and study the patterns and themes in the data which is good for understanding people's experiences and opinions.

### **3.11 Pilot Testing/Pretesting the Questionnaire**

Pilot testing was conducted to refine interview questions based on participant feedback. This pretesting phase aimed to identify any biases in questions that could affect data quality. This was done by choosing a small group that represents the target population that is families affected by parental migration and then administering the questionnaire to this sample group under conditions similar to those expected during full deployment. After completion qualitative feedback was gathered through interviews and focus groups about people's experiences then the responses were analyzed looking for patterns in responses that indicate confusion or misinterpretation of questions then adjustments were made based on feedback received during pilot testing through rewording questions. The same process was conducted on another group to ensure that the revisions made were satisfactory and no major issues remained.

### **3.12 Ethical Considerations**

It is crucial to safeguard participants by adhering to appropriate ethical guidelines in any research investigation, particularly considering the in-depth nature of the study process. Ethics entails upholding the principles of professional conduct and behavior (Haider, 2022). Ethical considerations are crucial in protecting both the participants and the researcher from potential misconceptions and harm. Throughout this study the researcher adhered to the following ethical principles:

#### **3.12.1 Informed Consent**

This included explaining the procedures, potential outcomes, benefits and risks involved. The researcher emphasized the importance of participants being thoroughly familiar with the research study.

#### **3.12.2 Confidentiality**

In the field of peace and governance, maintaining confidentiality is essential to adhere for ethical and legal standards (Raines and Cox, 2021). Preserving confidentiality helps protect sensitive information from unauthorized access, safeguarding privacy, security and trust in both personal and professional relationships (Raines & Cox, 2021). To address this, the researcher ensured that participants were fully informed of their right to confidentiality regarding the information they would share about their experiences.

#### **3.12.3 Voluntary Participation**

This principle enabled participants to respond to questions without coercion or manipulation, allowing them to feel comfortable and willing to participate. The researcher employed voluntary participation to establish trust with participants who were free to choose their own timeline for participation. This approach ensured that participants' responses were genuine and not influenced by coercion aligning with peace practitioners' ethical responsibility to prioritize participants' free will and subjective experiences.

### **3.13 Feasibility of the Study**

According to Neuman (2014), feasibility refers to the potential for something to be successfully accomplished or carried out. The research was deemed feasible and one key factor was the researcher's proximity to the village making it easily accessible. Additionally, the villagers were willing and available to assist the researcher in gathering information from children whose parents have migrated. Furthermore, the researcher obtained necessary permissions from relevant authorities, granting access to these children and providing valuable insights that made the research project viable, practical and achievable.

### **3.14 Chapter Summary**

This chapter outlined a comprehensive framework for investigating the impact of parental migration on family life. By employing qualitative methods rooted in constructivist philosophy, this study aimed to illuminate how separation affects familial relationships and community ties. The chapter also managed to provide an overview on the research methods, sample size and sampling techniques

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents and analyses the research findings on the impact of parental migration on family life in Domboshava (Chirombo village). The study aimed to investigate the effects of parental migration on children, how they cope with these challenges as well as peace practitioner's ways of reducing the negative impacts faced. 10 girls, 10 boys and 5 key

informants that is community developers, left behind children, migrant parent, educators as well as the community leader of the Chirombo village were participants and presented in accordance with the ethical considerations.

#### **4.2 Demographic characteristics of participants**

The key informants were the ones who have much knowledge concerning this issue. The researcher interviewed 20 children as participants and 5 key informants hence gaining valuable insights into their experiences.

**Table 1 Age Distribution Table**

| AGE   | Number of Respondents |
|-------|-----------------------|
| 10-13 | 8                     |
| 13-17 | 7                     |
| 17-25 | 5                     |
| 25-30 | 3                     |
| 30-50 | 2                     |

*Source: Researcher*

Table 1 shows respondents, their age range and corresponding number of participants. The table reveals that children from the age of 10 to 17 impacted by parental migration were interviewed. Individuals aged 17-50 including the left educators, caregivers, parents abroad

and community leaders were also interviewed. The researcher collected comprehensive data from all the participants hence gaining a rich understanding migration.

**Table 2 Participant Education Background**

| Education Level       | Number |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Primary education     | 2      |
| ‘O’ Level             | 5      |
| ‘A’ Level             | 7      |
| Bachelor’s degree     | 3      |
| Dropped out of school | 8      |

*Source: Researcher*

The table shows that 5 children successfully completed their Ordinary level education while 8 dropped out due to financial crises. 2 managed to complete their Primary level education whilst 7 were pursuing their Advanced level. Among the professionals there was an educator, community leader and a parent who held some Bachelor's degree.

### **4.3 Effects of parental migration on children**

Children experienced some emotional, physical and psychological impacts due to the absence of their parents. These effects include sexual abuse, child labor, alcohol and substance abuse, depression and early child marriages.

#### **4.3.1 Sexual abuse**

The children pointed out sexual abuse as one of the challenges they face due to the absence of their parents. A left behind child pointed that her uncle who is her father’s friend abused her but she was told to keep quiet by her aunt hence being denied justice. Another key informant

also pointed that a girl was also abused the same way showing that girls are the ones who are vulnerable to this kind of abuse rather than boys.

One key participant mentioned that;

*“I’ve noticed that during awareness campaigns with girl child, many girls have reported cases of being sexually abused by their close relatives and most of them are the ones who are left in the hands of their relatives. As an educator I make sure that counseling is offered to these affected ones as well as educating them on what to do in case of them being abused as it is their right to have justice. I also assured them that even when they report their confidentiality will not be revealed hence they must feel free and safe to report any kind of injustice and receive medication on time in case of being raped. I also provide support on where they can report, who to call and who to avoid telling their issues. Additionally I also connect the affected children with other human rights activists and feminists that fights for the rights of children especially the girl child as she is more prone to sexual abuse”* (educator, Parirewa High school)

Another participant reported during the focus group discussions that;

*“I’m so scared of my father’s friend who takes advantage of me since we live by ourselves as a child headed family. He told me that if I report to anyone he will kill my siblings and frame me to have committed that crime and rot in jail. He raped me for more than six times but that fear of losing my siblings stopped me from reporting to our neighbors as my aunt has forbidden me to do so but due to some drug and sexual abuse campaigns held at our school I have finally gathered the courage to report him to the police and he was arrested. From there I started to get myself back as due to him I was living in constant fear and this even affected my educational performance as I was always depressed but now I can encourage my peer to report whenever they are abused such that they will save themselves from a lot of things rather than suffering alone in*

*silence. If you are in the same situation I urge you to report as its not too late for justice to be served as I say no to child abuse”(female participant, 16 years).*

These findings shows that girls are more prone to sexual abuse especially the ones from child headed families. This has made the assumption that most children face problems because of the absence of their parents to be true as findings shows that children suffer from depression, low educational performance as well as trauma as they will be threatened by the abusers hence affecting their health and well-being. This also shows that children are no longer safe as some are abused by their close relatives whilst others by their neighbors which make them prone to abuse. Also referring to what other scholars say Bauer (2019) found that in Canada children of migrant parents are also found being vulnerable to sexual abuse. Zimbabwean research by Mkwanzanji and Maposa (2021) also reveals that girls are exploited mostly by their relatives and family friends. According to social capital theory this therefore results in emotional distress as well as decreased academic performance for children due to abuse.

#### **4.3.2 School dropout**

Dropping out from school was identified as another negative impact affecting children left behind. A male participant shared that he was forced to take on parental responsibilities such as working for the younger siblings hence significantly affecting his academic performance as due to pressure he started to sell bricks at Showground shopping center so as to make earns meet and ensure that the family has something to sustain them. Moreover, a female key informant noted that excessive household chores have led to a decline in pass rates for some children as most children are dropping out of school so as to cater for their families.

One male participant mentioned that;

*"I was a student at Parirewa high school but due to family responsibilities I'm now molding bricks so as to ensure that we survive as failure to do so results in us sleeping*

*on empty stomachs. I was in form 2 and I was a good student but due to this I left school and my future has been ruined since my parents have left and they have not been able to send any remittance hence my grandmother forcing me to take on family responsibilities so as to cater for my siblings. This has also made me to do other illegal work so as to earn money such as mining at a very young age and without much knowledge about the job. I wish my parents can take on their responsibility over the family such that I will be able to go back to school without thinking of the family first"* (male participant, 15 years)

Another key informant mentioned that;

*"I've noticed that some of the children I teach at Chogugudza Primary School, are consistently late for school whilst others spend more days without attending class as they claim to be taking care of the young siblings. As a teacher, I consulted them and that is when they told me that they live with their grandparents and as a result of that they have to work up and do work first before going to school and as a result some end up sleeping in class hence losing a lot that will be taught. I have tasked them to bring their guardians but unfortunately their grandparents are too old for that whilst parents are in South Africa, Botswana and Zambia which makes the situation difficult to handle as some of these parents have forgotten the existence of their children and cannot be reached".* (teacher, Chogugudza Primary School)

These shows that children left are negatively impacted academically due to family responsibilities which result in some dropping out from school. According to ILO (2020) children of migrant parents are vulnerable to child labor which can deprive them of their education hence affecting them at an early stage as they are handling heavier responsibilities which are not for their age. The study conducted by Fayomi (2022) shows that in Nigeria

71.4% engage in child labor so as to cater for their siblings as well as the family hence their education suffering as they drop out from school. The social capital theory posits that parental migration results in improved economic remittances and this is contrary to my research findings.

#### **4.3.3 Early child marriages**

Early child marriages were also highlighted. Two female participants shared their personal experiences concerning this issue. One of them cited that she was forced to drop out of school so as to get married due to economic hardships whilst the other one abandoned her education due to the negligence of her parents to pay for her school fees.

One female participant mentioned that;

*“I dropped from school in grade 7 due to financial constraints at home. My mother died when I was in grade 3 and I was left without anyone to take care of me as my father lived abroad and since when he went he has not come back again. As a result of this my grandmother took responsibilities over me and things starts to worsen as she was diagnosed of cancer and due to the fear of leaving me alone my grandmother got me married. This was not a good idea but without having any other support it was the only option to resort to hence I was married off to a 30 year old man. I thought this will make my life easier but it worsened as my husband did not have a stable job and to make earns meet we relied on piece jobs and I could not go back to school since we were suffering financially”.*(female participant, 16 years)

Another participant reported during a focus group discussion that;

*“I also suffered a similar fate, as I was pushed into early marriage and dropped out of school. This was so because my parents worked in South Africa and they were not sending any remittances to support us and unfortunately the school fees started hiking*

*and this was a challenge for me and my aunt. She then told me that she would get me married to a wealthy guy. At first I denied but she convinced me and I started meeting him and then unfortunately I got pregnant and eloped. After this I found out that he was not rich but I had no other option since I was already pregnant.”*(female participant, 17 years)

This shows that children are being forced into marriage due to different reasons triggered by the absence of their parents who are not sending them money for support. Huisman (2018) also asserts that some of the children of migrant parents in Germany particularly girls got married at early stages. In addition Erulkar (2019) discovered that in Kenya, early child marriage is also a challenge in communities where parents have migrated to other countries in search of work. According to the social capital theory, children require a supportive network from parents through remittent so as to be able to pay for their fees. Also parental migration erodes social capital as there is reduced parental involvement in a child’s life which can result in them getting into early marriages showing that Zimbabwe’s economy is a driver of this.

#### **4.3.4 Depression**

Depression was another impact due to feelings of abandonment whilst others suffer from it due to the way they will be treated by their caregivers.

*1 participant mentioned that;*

*"When I was 12 years my parents left me with a maid when they went to Botswana for work. They do video calls here and there but I miss them so much since they haven't come back but ensure that they send us everything we need for survival. Sometimes when I miss them so much I cry myself to sleep but I always feel lonely though the maid is always with me. It always hurts me when I see other children with their parents as it*

*reminds me of those days I used to stay with my parents being a complete family where we would do everything together. Everything always reminds me of them and that hurts so much as even at school the maid is the one who play the roles of my mother. Sometimes I feel like ending myself by committing suicide since my parents do not love me* "(male participant, 13 years)

Some of these children end up feeling like committing suicide hence showing the negative impact of the absence of parent in a child's life. According to Schacher (2022), in Australia many children experience anxiety, depression and loneliness due to parental migration. Farinha (20220) also discovered that children in Mozambique experience high levels of emotional distress and need parental love, care and support of their own parents to function well both emotionally and physically. This is supported by the theoretical framework as it talks of increased risk behavioral problems due to the absence of parents such as anxiety, depression and feelings of abandonment.

#### **4.3.5 Better Education**

Better education was one of the impacts of migration as children will be receiving remittance from their parents to cater for their education and other basic needs as some children go to expensive schools such as Solid Rock High school thereby performing well academically.

1 female participant stated that;

*"I go to Solid Rock high and I am performing very well at school all thanks being to my parents who pays for everything I need from grade 1 up to now I'm form 4. My parents are very proud of me and they make sure that they come during the prize giving days so as to celebrate my achievements with me. Due to my family support I passed my grade 7 with 4 units and I'm also excelling in my academics due to their love and support despite the fact that they don't work here whilst my siblings are also at Solid*

*Rock primary excelling in their academics as we lack nothing when it comes to issues concerning our studies."* (female participant, 16 years)

Another male participant mentioned that;

*"My parents moved to UK in 2015 for work and we were left with my maternal aunt. She treats us so well that there is no room for complaint as she does everything we need with love and care. My aunt treats us the same as her daughters to an extent that I don't even miss my parents as my aunt makes sure that I'm being serious with my education .Due to her and the money we receive from my parents for school fees I'm always the top student as I passed my ordinary level with 8 As and 2Bs."*(male participant, 17 years)

The research reveals that children of parents residing in UK are experiencing positive outcomes despite not living with their parents as they are enrolled in expensive schools which ensure quality education. The social capital theory posits that migrant parents can send financial remittances back to their families for support thereby increasing access to education showing the importance of social networks in improving economic well being.

#### **4.4 Coping mechanism adopted by children left behind**

Coping mechanisms adopted by children left behind by their parents were also explored. These include doing piece jobs, rank marshaling, vending business as well as begging.

##### **4.4.1 Piece jobs**

One child mentioned that he works in other people's farms so as to earn money for school fees as well as catering for his other siblings since the remittances send by his parents are not enough to sustain them. A key informant participant also highlighted that some children works at school so as to raise money for their fees.

1 male participant mentioned that;

*"I'm in grade 7 at Harvadale Primary school and my parents left when I was in grade 5. They are now based in South Africa and we were left in the hands of my grandfather. Due to his age my grandfather was not able to work hence it was my duty to take over the responsibility so I started working in people's farms earning some money. This helped a lot as I was able to pay for my school fees as well as sustaining ourselves whilst also using the little money my parents send for buying my grandfather's medication. This also ensured that I didn't drop out of school and ruining my future as now I'm in grade 7 because of this."* (Male participant, 12 years)

1 key participant cited that;

*"I'm a teacher at Solid Rock high and I see a lot of children taking in part in cutting grass at the school grounds such that their fees will be paid in return. By so doing they end up lessening the burden on their caregivers as they will not have to struggle for their school fees. This acts as a strategy to reduce cases of school drop outs due to shortages of fees as some parents are finding it difficult to send enough money that can sustain all of their left behind children. Some other children also take part in selling at the school tuck shop during lunch times and get paid by the school hence this acting as a coping strategy to reduce issues related to the shortages of school fees as well as buying educational equipment needed for academics."* (Teacher, Solid Rock High).

The findings shows that due to little remittances children receive they end up doing some piece jobs so as to sustain themselves as well as paying for their school fees. However this burdens children as they have to balance school as well as work whilst at young ages hence affecting their academics as some end up sleeping during lessons whilst others skip school. Also according to Ansell (2020) in Malawi children are also engaging in piece jobs by taking part in farming activities during the planting and harvesting seasons so as to support their families

financially and this is in line with what the theory used says as it shows that absence of parents strain the remaining caregivers leading children into finding other alternatives for survival.

#### **4.4.2 Rank marshalling**

A male participant highlighted that he stepped out from school so as to take part in this job as it require maximum participation.

The male participant mentioned that;

*"I'm 16 years and I work as a rank marshal at Showground shopping center so as to earn something. I load buses that goes to town as well as Bindura and I earn \$1 for loading each bus and I use this money to pay for the school fees of my little brother as I want him to have a better future rather than mine which is already ruined as these days without education finding a well-paying job is very difficult. At first I used to suffer from stress but due to engaging with a lot of people at work I have managed to overcome this as I was on the verge of taking drugs which could have affected my health." (Male participant, 16 years old)*

Another male participant also mentioned that;

*"I'm 17 years and I work as a conductor in commuter omnibuses. My parents went to UK through nursing adverts and from there I never heard anything from them. They didn't even tried to contact me and I don't know if they are still alive or not so as an older family member I decided to look after my siblings since we were left on our own. This job is so challenging for me as I start work very early and finish late which makes me spend few time with my siblings as most of the time I arrive when they are already sleeping. This affects our bond as it is lessening due to not spending much time together as I cannot always be there for them to know their needs as well as the challenges they*

*face due to the absence of our parents because I'm always busy with work and cannot find time to console them."* (Male participant, 17years)

The finding shows that children are forced to drop out of school so as to take care of their families and support them. According to Sibanda (2019), in South Africa children in the township of Alexandra are also engaging in piece jobs such as rank marshaling. Olejnik (2022) conducted a study in Poland and also discovered that children in Poland were engaging in piece jobs as a coping strategy.

#### **4.4.3 Vending business**

The vending business was also cited as one of the coping strategies. One participant mentioned that she sells tomatoes and vegetables at Mtake shops for her school fees.

Female participant mentioned that;

*"I sell vegetables and tomatoes at Mtake shops during the weekends. My parents are in Mozambique and their jobs are not well paying as they work as garden boy and house maid. I'm about to write my Advanced Level exams and I have used some of the money I got to add to the money that is needed for me to register for my exams. This is well paying since sometimes I get \$80 per month hence using it to buy some basic needs and this has lessened a burden on my parents as I'm also able to assist them. At first I was very shy to do this job but ever since I realized that no job is too small I have started to like what I do for a living"* (female participant, 16 years old).

This response confirm that some of the children in Chirombo village engage in vending activities as a coping strategy to support their parents as they also generate profit from this job hence being able to sustain their needs. According to Kabermann (2017) in Uganda there is widespread prevalence of child vending in urban areas for example in Kampala whilst Mufambi (2020), also talks about child vending in Harare as a means of survival. This is contrary to my

theory as it posits that parental migration increase remittances whilst in this case it has shown the opposite.

#### 4.4.4 Begging

The other participants highlighted begging as a coping mechanism as the affected children resort to it for survival. Some beg for food as well as clothing as some of the caregivers abuse them and send them to beg for their own food.

1 female participant mentioned that;

*“My parents left us in the hands of our neighbor and my parents send us money and food through them but unfortunately these things cannot reach us since our neighbor uses it for her family. I don't have a cellphone which I can use to contact my parents and report this so as a result I and my siblings end up begging for food from the nearby residents. Some days we can reach far to areas like Hatcliffe trying to find some helping hands. Some days are good as we came with something whilst other days are very tough since we sometimes end up being insulted and labeled as thieves. Some days we think of becoming street kids thinking that maybe it might work but the thought of that maybe one day our parents might return keep us at home.” (Female participant, 15 years old).*

This has a negative impact on them as it affects them emotionally as sometimes they are labeled as thieves whilst they are trying to have something to eat. Some beg because their parents no longer support them whilst others are abused by their caregivers and this is in line with Kabermann (2017) who conducted a research in Germany. Jacobsen (2019) also conducted a research in Kenya and discovered that children in the slums of Nairobi were engaging in begging as a means of survival. Therefore, parental migration leads to decreased academic performance as children will spend more time in begging whilst missing school.

#### 4.5 Peace and governance strategies to help children left behind

The respondents mentioned strategies like counseling, caregiver support and education to support so that they can cope up with their parents' absence.

##### 4.5.1 Counselling

Counseling was highlighted as a strategy to help children left behind by migrating parents. 1 key participant mentioned that counseling is a good strategy so as to reduce stress and depression faced by these children.

1 key informant mentioned that;

*"In my experience of working with left behind children by migrating parents, as a parent I have also learnt that counseling them is a great deal especially those who would have been abused. The pain these children have endured is heartbreaking as some have to take responsibilities at earlier stages whilst others are sexually abused hence supporting them will ensure that they are being healed."* (Community Development Officer)

Another key informant mentioned that;

*"As a community leader, I've seen a disturbing trend as many resort to drug abuse as they have dropped out from school. As a result I recommend the government in partnership with other NGOs to cater for these children by assisting them with school fees as well as food in case of not receiving remittances from their parents so as to reduce cases of drug abuse which leads to the rise of social zeros as well as conflicts in the societies. I've recorded cases of children as young as 12 years old engaging in alcohol and substance abuse so before assisting with their education counseling is a pre requisite so as to support these vulnerable families."* (Community Leader, Chirombo)

Another participant during a focus group discussion mentioned that;

*"My teacher at Solid Rock High counseled me when I was about to drop out from school and gave me money to start a business in selling out sweets at school during lunch hours so as to help my grandmother with money for my school fees. This helped me a lot as I was open to her about the challenges I was facing hence ending up obtaining some healthy coping mechanisms (left behind child, 17 years old).*

This reflects that counseling is needed so as to reduce other negative impacts that comes as a result of this for example engaging in drug abuse. Also the government must take part in supporting these children. Thus according to the social capital theory strengthening family bonds is important so as to reduce cases of children being abused.

#### **4.5.2 Migrant parents support**

Participants highlighted migrants support as a strategy to help children left behind by migrating parents. This can be done by buying tickets for parents who are abroad who are willing to come back and stay with their families.

1 migrant parent mentioned that;

*"NGOs must support the children we have left at home as some of us are here in South Africa but we are still struggling to an extent that we cannot send any money to support our families back home and this is so heartbreaking to be a parent but failing to provide for your family. Sometimes I wish to come back and live with my children but I'm unable to find the money to use for transport as I sold everything to come to UK hence a lot of money is needed for me to go back. Hopefully one day I will find someone who will pay for my ticket such that I will live together with my family and find other ways of survival with them."* (migrant parent, UK)

The findings clearly indicate that supporting migrant parents is also important so as to lessen burdens on grandmothers who are often shouldering the responsibility of caring for these children. This can be done through social support networks such as community based initiatives to support migrant parents and their families.

#### **4.5.3 Education**

Participants highlighted education as a strategy that peace practitioners should do.

1 participant mentioned that;

*"Peace practitioners should teach children on how they should cope with the negative challenges such as emotional distress, anxiety and feelings of abandonment. Children can be taught about abuse, how and where to report such that when abused they will know what to do and seek advice and help. (female participant, 17 years old)*

1 key participant mentioned that;

*"Peace practitioners should educate the community about the effects of parental migration such that they will support these children as a community. This can be done through conducting some workshops such that when one notices a child being abused he or she will know what to do. By raising awareness, a culture of reporting will be promoted rather than children suffering in silence. These workshops can also provide platforms for community members to share their concerns ask questions and receive guidance on how to support children affected by parental migration." (teacher, Parirewa High ).*

The findings highlight the importance of education as a strategy to help children left behind. Education empowers children to understand the impact of parental migration, cope with challenges and speak out against abuse hence ensuring that their rights are not violated.

Therefore according to the social capital theory school based programs are important so as to help children cope with emotional challenges of parental absence.

#### **4.6 Chapter summary**

It presented the findings in Chirombo village. Presentation findings were based on data gathered.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The chapter draws conclusions and recommendations to the effects of parental migration on family life in Domboshava (Chirombo village). The recommendations are there to mitigate the negative effects of parental migration. The chapter also summarizes the findings of the study as well as conclusion to this research.

#### **5.2 Summary**

This research explored the impact of parental migration on family life. The social capital theory was used in understanding the impact of parental migration on family life in Chirombo village. The theory shows significance of parental migration through emotional support and financial support by facilitating cooperation and mutual support among migrant families. There is also disruption of family structure hence the research highlighted the importance of community support so as to address the negative effects of this issue

The findings suggest that targeted interventions and government collaborations with other organizations is necessary so as to curb the negative effects. These children require emotional support, counseling and educational support.

## **5.3 Conclusions**

### **5.3.1 Effects of parental migration on children left behind**

The effects of parental migration on children in Chirombo village has been a serious challenge which needs special attention. It has resulted in family breakdown, depression, reduced access to education as well as healthcare. It affects the wellbeing of children as well as that of parents thus a need to address this challenge is needed for the well-being of those affected by parental migration.

### **5.3.2 Social effects**

Children left behind by migrating parents in Domboshava (Chirombo village) face social challenges which includes social isolation and marginalization. These social challenges are a result of the absence of parents which makes them being vulnerable and prone to abuse. Some children suffer as they lack family support as some parents are finding it hard to send remittances to their families back home leading to poverty and family exclusion in community activities

### **5.4.3 Economic effects**

Shortage in family income and remittances from the parents forces children to engage in illegal economic activities of making ends meet such as child labor, begging and vending activities so as to support their families.

### **5.4.4 Emotional effects**

Children left behind by migrating parents suffer from emotional challenges such as anxiety, depression as well as loneliness. These emotional challenges are caused by the absence of parents, increased family responsibilities, abuse as well as social exclusion from the community activities.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

The researcher has proposed the following recommendations.

### **5.5.1 Recommendations to the government**

The government can support these children, their caregivers as well as the migrant parents by providing food and other basic needs needed by these families so as to improve their wellbeing. This can be done through social protection programs such as childcare support to alleviate economic burdens.

Community members should be trained on how best they can look after these families so as to ensure a sense of belonging rather than excluding them from community activities. Partnership with other civil society organizations and NGOs would be of great help so as to ensure that the needs of these families are being met. Partnership with organizations that fight for human rights should also be done so as to train people on their rights, what to do when they are violated and where to report so as to protect the rights of children against abuse.

In addition a database should be also created so as to track and monitor them and employ interventions and programs that can assist them in coping with the challenges caused by parental migration.

Furthermore, psychological support and counseling services should be provided to children affected by parental migration. The government should do this so as to ensure emotional well-being and reduce cases of depression, anxiety as well as taking in of drugs so as to reduce stress.

### **5.5.2 To the Civil Society Organizations (CSO)s**

NGOs and civil society organizations should establish programs that support those children affected by parental migration. This can be done by offering them with emotional support and counseling services.

Additionally, NGOs and civil society organizations should partner with the government. This can be done through assisting them with educational needs as well as food so as to ensure the promotion of human rights.

Furthermore, they should also partner with community-based organizations in providing support services, educational assistance as well as healthcare support.

### **5.5.3 To the clinic**

The clinic should designate a private room for counseling services. This should be done ensuring that the child's privacy is being protected so as to reduce cases of children suffering in silence due to the fear of humiliation.

### **5.5.4 To peace practitioners**

The Department of Peace and Governance should establish offices in Chirombo village that can offer counseling services, offer loans to those who want to start their businesses so as to reduce high cases of migration. These offices should also ensure some ethical considerations so as to ensure that confidentiality is being promoted and everyone feels safe to go and report any challenge they would be facing.

Community developers should receive ongoing training on how they can develop the community without raising community zeros as well as uneducated people. This can be done by offering scholarships to the affected families so as to ensure that cases of school drop outs are minimized and create a community full of intellectuals.

### **5.5.5 To the community**

The community should support children left behind by migrating parents. This will help them in knowing how best they can interact with these families and assist them without making them

feel unwanted. This is in line with the social capital theory as it talks of promoting social capital through community engagement so as to develop a sense of belonging for these children.

### **5.6 Chapter summary**

This concludes the research and provides recommendations so as to address the areas of deficiency. The recommendations made were to support vulnerable children.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE

My name is Felistas Mavis Jambo. I am a fourth-year student at Bindura University of Science Education, studying Peace and Governance. As part of completing the degree programme, students are required to conduct individual research. Therefore, I am conducting a research on the topic Impact of parental migration on family life: Case of Domboshava (Chirombo village). You are kindly requested to be one of the key informants in this research study and your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous and will be used strictly for academic purposes. I am going to engage you in an interview which will not last for more than 30 minutes as part of data collection.

Start Time: .....

Date: .....

## QUESTIONS

### Section A: Biographic Information

Respondent.....

Institution .....

Job title.....

Age .....

Marital Status .....

Educational Level.....

### Section B: Effects of parental migration on the family

How does parental migration affect family relation and cohesion?

What impact does parental migration have on children's education?

### Section C: Coping mechanism used by children during parental absence

How do children cope with parental absence emotionally?

How do children stay in touch with absent parents?

Who do children rely on for support during parental absence?

### Section D: Peace and Governance approaches to support children left behind by migrating parents

Which peace and governance strategies strengthen caregiver support for children?

How can peace practitioners facilitate emotional support groups for children?

What community-based interventions can peace practitioners develop to promote children's well-being?

## APPENDIX 2: Focus Group Discussion Guide

### Introduction

My name is Felistas Jambo I am a fourth-year student at Bindura University of Science Education, studying Peace and Governance As part of completing the degree programme, I am conducting a research on the topic Impact of parental migration on family life: Case of Domboshava (Chirombo village). You are kindly requested to be one of the key informants in this research study and your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous used strictly

for academic purposes. Also, your participation in this study is voluntary. I am going to engage you in an interview which will not last for more than 30 minutes as part of data collection.

#### Section A: Effects of parental migration on family life

How does parental migration affect family life?

How does parental migration influence children's lifestyle?

#### Section B: Coping mechanism used by children during parental absence

How do children cope with parental absence?

How do children stay in touch with absent parents?

Who do children rely on for support during parental absence?

#### Section C: Peace and Governance approaches to support children left behind by migrating parents

Which Peace and Governance strategies strengthen caregiver support for children?

How can peace practitioners facilitate emotional support groups for children?

What community-based interventions can peace practitioners develop to promote children's well-being?

### **A letter of approval from Goromonzi Rural District Council**



17 The paper cannot accurately be described