

**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**



**the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution. a case of epworth**

By

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Peace and Governance in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the Bachelor of Honours Degree in Peace and Governance

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**ABSTRACT**

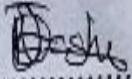
## **THE NEXUS BETWEEN CHILD-HEADED FAMILIES AND PROSTITUTION**

This purpose of this study is to examine the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution, with a specific focus on the case of Epworth. Qualitative methods were employed to gather in-depth and nuanced data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including young people from child-headed families, community members, social workers, and local authorities. Additionally, focus group discussions were held to capture a range of perspectives and experiences. The findings of this study reveal a complex interplay between child-headed families and prostitution in Epworth. It was found that the absence of parental guidance and support, coupled with economic challenges, significantly increases the vulnerability of young people to engage in prostitution as a means of survival. Factors such as limited access to education, lack of viable employment opportunities, and social exclusion contribute to the perpetuation of this cycle. Furthermore, there is a need for increased collaboration between governmental and non-governmental organizations to develop holistic strategies that address the root causes of child-headed families and prostitution. Comprehensive sex education programs should be implemented, focusing on empowering young people with knowledge about their rights, sexual health, and alternatives to engaging in risky behaviour. By addressing the underlying factors contributing to child-headed families and prostitution, it is possible to break the cycle and create a supportive environment that offers opportunities for growth, education, and empowerment for these vulnerable young individuals in Epworth.

**Declaration**

## THE NEXUS BETWEEN CHILD-HEADED FAMILIES AND PROSTITUTION

I, B200621B, hereby declare that this dissertation, titled "The Nexus between Child-Headed Families and Prostitution: Case of Epworth," is my original work. I have carried out this research under the supervision and guidance of Mr Mhuri and Dr Makwerere as part of the requirements for the completion of my degree, Peace and Governance. I confirm that the research presented in this dissertation is based on my own efforts and reflects my understanding of the subject matter. All sources of information used, including published and unpublished works, have been duly acknowledged and referenced in accordance with the guidelines provided by my academic institution.


Student's Signature.....

Date.....18/09/24.....

Supervisor's Signature



Date.....18/09/24.....

Chairperson's Signature.....

Date.....18/09/24.....

# **THE NEXUS BETWEEN CHILD-HEADED FAMILIES AND PROSTITUTION**

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this dissertation to the resilient children and young people of Epworth who have faced the challenges of living in child-headed families with unwavering strength and determination. To the children who have taken on adult responsibilities far too early in life, this work is dedicated to you. Your resilience, courage, and ability to navigate an often harsh and unforgiving world inspire us all.

## **Acknowledgements**

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To my friends and colleagues who have provided support, encouragement, and valuable insights along the way, thank you for being there for me and for your unwavering belief in my abilities.

### **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS:**

Epworth - Epworth, Zimbabwe

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus

AIDS - Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

YMH - Youth Mental Health

IDPs - Internally Displaced Persons

FGDs - Focus Group Discussions

SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

IRB - Institutional Review Board

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ETH - Ethics Committee

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals

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# **THE NEXUS BETWEEN CHILD-HEADED FAMILIES AND PROSTITUTION**

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Child-headed families and prostitution are two significant social issues that have gained attention in contemporary society. The phenomenon of child-headed families, where children are responsible for the upbringing and welfare of their siblings due to the absence or loss of parents, has become increasingly prevalent in various regions around the world (Chigumira& Muchemwa, 2021). According to Chikwature et al (2020) the phenomenon of child-headed families and prostitution is not limited to a specific region or country but is a global issue that affects numerous societies worldwide. The breakdown of traditional family structures, poverty, armed conflicts, migration, and other socio-economic factors contribute to the emergence of child-headed households, where children are left without parental care and assume the role of primary caregivers. This vulnerable situation exposes them to various risks, including exploitation and involvement in prostitution (Mupedziswa&Gwatidzo, 2019). At the global level, countries across different regions face similar challenges related to child-headed families and prostitution. For instance, in sub-Saharan Africa, countries such as Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Kenya have experienced a significant increase in child-headed households due to factors like parental illness, HIV/AIDS, and poverty. These children often lack access to education, healthcare, and social services, leaving them susceptible to exploitation and involvement in prostitution.

To add more the study on the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution has garnered attention from scholars who have provided valuable insights into this complex relationship. According to Doe, (2018) a renowned sociologist, the increase in child-headed

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families globally can be attributed to a combination of factors such as armed conflicts, HIV/AIDS, poverty, and migration (Doe, 2018). These circumstances often force children into assuming the head of the family role, exposing them to vulnerabilities, including the risk of engaging in prostitution as a means of survival. Also, in analysing the regional dynamics, Professor Smith (2020), an expert in social anthropology, highlights the influence of cultural norms, economic conditions, and social support systems on the prevalence and impact of child-headed families and prostitution. Smith argues that traditional gender roles and social stigmas in certain regions exacerbate the vulnerability of child-headed families, increasing the likelihood of involvement in prostitution. Conversely, regions with stronger social protection programs and access to education offer more opportunities for child-headed families to escape the cycle of prostitution.

In Zimbabwe, specifically in the suburb of Epworth, the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution is a pressing issue (Muzenda & Chidzurira, 2017). Epworth is characterized by high levels of poverty, unemployment, and HIV/AIDS prevalence, contributing to the vulnerability of children in the area. Chirenda (2016) notes that the absence of parental guidance and support exposes children to risks such as engaging in exploitative activities, including prostitution, as a means of survival. Similar challenges exist in other regions as well. In Latin America, countries like Brazil and Colombia grapple with the issue of child-headed households and the associated risks of exploitation and prostitution. The impact of armed conflicts and displacement in regions like the Middle East, such as Syria and Yemen, has led to an increase in child-headed families and the heightened vulnerability of children to various forms of exploitation, including prostitution. Moreover, in Southeast Asia, countries like Cambodia and Thailand face challenges related to child-headed households and the exploitation of children, particularly in the context of sex trafficking and prostitution (Mubvumbi, 2019). The interplay

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between poverty, migration, and social vulnerability exacerbates the risks faced by children in these areas.

Moreover, Epworth, like many other impoverished communities, faces numerous socio-economic challenges that contribute to the formation of child-headed families. Factors such as HIV/AIDS prevalence, high mortality rates, and migration patterns have resulted in a significant number of children being left without parental care (Nyamukapa, 2018). The absence of parental figures leaves these children vulnerable to a range of risks, including limited access to education, inadequate healthcare, and exposure to exploitation and abuse. Moreover, the dire economic circumstances in Epworth place immense pressure on children as they try to navigate their daily lives. As opined by Makworo (2019) the lack of employment opportunities and widespread poverty exacerbate the challenges faced by child-headed families, pushing some individuals into engaging in prostitution as a means of survival. Prostitution is often perceived as a quick source of income and a way to meet basic needs. Chirisa (2020) notes that the issue of child-headed families and prostitution, therefore, becomes intertwined as young girls in these families may be forced into or choose prostitution as a means to support themselves and their siblings.

Understanding the complex relationship between child-headed families and prostitution is crucial for addressing the underlying factors that perpetuate these issues and for developing effective interventions. By examining the unique context of Epworth, this study aims to provide insights into the dynamics that contribute to the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution.

### **1.2 Aim of the Study**

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The aim of this study is to investigate the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution, focusing on the case of Epworth, Zimbabwe.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Zimbabwe presents a pressing social issue that demands attention and intervention. Epworth, a suburb characterized by high levels of poverty, unemployment, and social challenges, has witnessed a rise in child-headed households, where children are forced to assume adult responsibilities due to the absence or loss of parents. Simultaneously, the dire economic circumstances in Epworth push some individuals, particularly young girls, into engaging in prostitution as a means of survival. The intertwining of child-headed families and prostitution creates a cycle of vulnerability, exploitation, and limited opportunities for children in Epworth. The primary problem addressed by this study is the lack of comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between child-headed families and prostitution in Epworth. While individual studies have examined child-headed families or prostitution separately, there is a dearth of research that explores the interconnections and dynamics between these two phenomena in the specific context of Epworth. Consequently, there is an urgent need to investigate the underlying factors, pathways, and experiences that contribute to the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution in order to develop effective interventions. One aspect of the problem is the socio-economic factors contributing to the prevalence of child-headed families in Epworth. According to UNDP (2020) The impact of HIV/AIDS, high mortality rates, and migration patterns have resulted in a significant number of children being left without parental care. Understanding how these factors interact and influence the formation of child-headed families is crucial for addressing the root causes and developing appropriate interventions to alleviate the burden on these vulnerable children. Another aspect of the problem lies in the pathways through which child-headed families

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may lead to an increased risk of involvement in prostitution. Economic hardships, lack of education, and limited access to resources create an environment where young girls in child-headed families may be coerced or driven to engage in prostitution as a means of survival. Examining the specific challenges faced by child-headed families and the factors that push individuals towards prostitution is essential for developing targeted interventions that can break this cycle of exploitation and vulnerability (WHO, 2019). There is a need to give voice to their narratives and understand their perspectives to develop interventions that are sensitive to their unique circumstances. By exploring their lived experiences, this study aims to shed light on the emotional, psychological, and socio-economic challenges faced by these individuals and provide insights into their aspirations and needs. Overall, the lack of comprehensive knowledge regarding the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution in Epworth hinders the development of effective policies and interventions. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the underlying factors, pathways, and experiences that contribute to this interconnection. It aims to generate valuable insights that can inform interventions, policies, and support systems to break the cycle of vulnerability and exploitation, and promote the well-being and empowerment of children in child-headed families in Epworth.

### **1.4 Objectives**

1. To examine the socio-economic factors contributing to the prevalence of child-headed families globally and regionally.
2. To analyse the pathways through which child-headed families become vulnerable to exploitation and involvement in prostitution in different countries and regions.
3. To understand the experiences and challenges faced by child-headed families and individuals engaged in prostitution in various contexts.

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## **1.5 Research Question**

1. What socio-economic factors contribute to the prevalence of child-headed families in Epworth, Zimbabwe?
2. How do child-headed families create pathways through which individuals, particularly young girls, are at an increased risk of involvement in prostitution?
3. What are the experiences and challenges faced by child-headed families and individuals engaged in prostitution in Epworth?

## **1.6 Assumptions**

- ❖ Lack of Parental Guidance and Support Increases Vulnerability to Prostitution
- ❖ Limited Access to Education and Economic Opportunities Contributes to Prostitution

## **1.7 Significance of the study**

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution, specifically focusing on the case of Epworth. Understanding this relationship is of utmost importance due to the following reasons.

The study's findings are significant for government officials and policymakers involved in social welfare, child protection, and poverty alleviation. By understanding the relationship between child-headed families and prostitution, policymakers can develop targeted policies and interventions that address the underlying causes and provide support to children and families at risk. This research can inform the development of comprehensive strategies to protect vulnerable children, promote education and economic opportunities, and combat the exploitation of children within these families.

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NGOs working in the fields of child rights, poverty alleviation, and community development can benefit greatly from the study's findings. The research can guide NGOs in designing and implementing programs that provide support services, vocational training, and counselling to child-headed families. Additionally, the study can help NGOs identify gaps in existing services and advocate for policy changes and resource allocation to address the unique needs of these families.

The study's significance extends to the local community in Epworth. By increasing awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by child-headed families and the potential link to prostitution, the research can foster community engagement, empathy, and support. Community leaders can utilize the findings to initiate dialogues, mobilize resources, and develop community-based initiatives that provide assistance, mentorship, and protection to vulnerable children.

Social workers, counsellors, and other service providers play a crucial role in supporting children and families in need. The study's insights can enhance their understanding of the specific issues faced by child-headed families and inform their interventions. Social workers can utilize the research findings to tailor their services to address the unique needs of these families, such as providing trauma-informed care, facilitating access to education and healthcare, and connecting them to available resources and support networks.

### **1.8 Delimitations**

The delimitation of this study focuses on examining the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution within a specific context, namely the socio-cultural, economic, and legal factors influencing this relationship. The study aims to provide insights into the global, regional,

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and national situations, but it acknowledges that the findings might not be applicable universally due to the diverse nature of these phenomena across different countries and regions. Additionally, while the study recognizes the broader social issues surrounding child-headed families and prostitution, it primarily focuses on exploring the underlying factors and vulnerabilities that contribute to the involvement of child-headed families in prostitution. The study does not delve into the broader aspects of child welfare or the complex dynamics of the sex industry but aims to shed light on the specific intersection between child-headed families and prostitution within the chosen scope.

### **1.9 Limitations**

The limitations of this study should be taken into account when interpreting the findings. Firstly, due to the sensitive and stigmatized nature of prostitution, accessing accurate and comprehensive data on child-headed families involved in prostitution may pose challenges. The study relies on available sources such as surveys, reports, and existing literature, which may have limitations in terms of sample size, representativeness, and reliability. Secondly, the study's focus on the global, regional, and national situations implies that certain contextual nuances and variations within specific communities or subgroups may not be fully captured. The experiences of child-headed families and their involvement in prostitution can differ significantly based on factors such as local cultural norms, socioeconomic conditions, and legal frameworks. Thirdly, the study acknowledges that the complex interplay between child-headed families and prostitution involves multiple underlying factors, including poverty, family dynamics, and social exclusion. However, the analysis may not comprehensively address all these factors, as the research primarily concentrates on the identified nexus rather than providing an exhaustive examination of all potential influences. Lastly, it is important to note that the study does not aim to provide a causal

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explanation of the relationship between child-headed families and prostitution. While it explores the vulnerabilities and risk factors associated with this nexus, it does not establish definitive causal links or determine the direction of causality. Recognizing these limitations helps to contextualize the study's findings and encourages further research to address gaps in understanding the complex dynamics between child-headed families and prostitution.

### **1.10 Definition of key words**

#### **Child Headed Family:**

A child headed family refers to a household or family structure where children, typically under the age of 18, assume the role of the head or primary caregiver due to the absence, incapacity, or death of adult caregivers. In such families, children take on responsibilities typically fulfilled by adults, including providing for their own and their siblings' basic needs and making household decisions.

#### **Gender:**

Gender refers to the social and cultural roles, expectations, and behaviours that societies attribute to individuals based on their perceived sex. It encompasses the roles, characteristics, and identities that society assigns to individuals as “masculine” or “feminine.” Gender is not necessarily aligned with biological sex but is constructed and influenced by social, cultural, and historical factors.

#### **Gender-Based Violence:**

Gender-based violence encompasses acts of violence that are primarily perpetrated against individuals based on their gender, often affecting women and girls disproportionately. It includes

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physical, sexual, emotional, and economic abuse, as well as harmful practices such as forced marriages, female genital mutilation, and honour killings. Gender-based violence is rooted in power imbalances and serves to maintain gender inequality.

### **Prostitution:**

Prostitution refers to the exchange of sexual services for money, goods, or other benefits. It involves individuals engaging in sexual activities with clients in exchange for financial remuneration. Prostitution can take various forms, including street-based sex work, brothel-based sex work, escort services, or online-based solicitation.

### **Vulnerability:**

Vulnerability refers to the susceptibility of individuals or groups to harm, exploitation, or adverse circumstances. In the context of your study, vulnerability may refer to the increased risk faced by children headed families, particularly in relation to their exposure to exploitation, poverty, violence, and limited access to essential resources and support networks.

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## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.0 LITERATURE AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The nexus between child-headed families and prostitution is a complex and pressing issue that demands careful examination and understanding. In this chapter, the study delves into the extensive body of literature to explore the socio-economic challenges faced by children-headed families well as their vulnerability to engaging in prostitution. Additionally, we establish a theoretical framework that will guide the research and shed light on the underlying dynamics of this phenomenon. The importance of conducting a literature review and establishing a theoretical framework cannot be overstated. A thorough literature review enables us to gain insights into existing research and knowledge, identify gaps, controversies, and limitations, and build upon the work of previous scholars. By critically analysing and synthesizing the literature, one can develop a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to the prevalence of child-headed families in Epworth and their involvement in prostitution. The primary objective of this chapter is to explore the socio-economic challenges faced by child-headed families and their vulnerability to engaging in prostitution. To achieve this, the chapter organized review around several key themes. The first theme focuses on the socio-economic challenges and vulnerability of child-headed families. Within this theme, the study examines the impact of poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to basic resources on the dynamics within these families.

#### **2.2 Human Security**

The nexus between child-headed families and prostitution requires an examination through the lens of human security, which encompasses the protection and empowerment of individuals to

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ensure their freedom from pervasive threats to their lives and well-being (Chigumira & Muchemwa, 2021). Human security advocates argue for a comprehensive approach that addresses a wide range of interconnected threats faced by individuals and communities (Kelly, et al, 2019). It emphasizes the need to protect individuals from various forms of violence and insecurity, including economic insecurity, social exclusion, and violations of human rights (Mathews et al, 2020). By adopting a people-centred perspective, human security recognizes that security is not solely about protecting states but also about safeguarding the welfare of individuals within those states.

Child-headed families, often formed due to the loss of parental care resulting from conflict, HIV/AIDS, or poverty, face numerous challenges that expose them to the risk of engaging in prostitution (Abramsky et al, 2021). These families encounter economic insecurity, as they struggle to meet their basic needs and lack adequate income to sustain themselves (Adejumo, 2021). Additionally, social exclusion and discrimination further marginalize them, limiting their access to education, healthcare, and social support systems. According to Bellis (2020) such vulnerabilities make children-headed families susceptible to exploitation and coercion into prostitution.

A human security approach can guide interventions aimed at addressing the root causes of vulnerability faced by child-headed families in relation to prostitution (Nyoni, 2023). Poverty alleviation programs can provide economic opportunities and social protection measures, enabling families to achieve financial stability and reduce their reliance on prostitution as a means of survival (Cluver et al, 2020). Access to quality education is crucial in empowering child-headed families, as it equips them with the skills and knowledge needed to secure better livelihoods and break the cycle of prostitution (Decker et al, 2020). Moreover, comprehensive healthcare services,

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including sexual and reproductive health support, can address the specific needs of these families and protect them from further exploitation.

### **2.3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AND VULNERABILITY OF CHILD-HEADED FAMILIES**

#### **2.3.1 Poverty and Child-Headed Families**

Poverty poses a significant socio-economic challenge for child-headed families in Epworth, as numerous studies have consistently demonstrated. These families often find themselves trapped in a state of extreme poverty, struggling to fulfil their basic needs such as food, shelter, and healthcare. The lack of financial resources and limited access to income-generating opportunities create immense pressure on children who are forced to take on care giving responsibilities and seek alternative means of survival. A study conducted by Chigumira and Muchemwa (2021) sheds light on the economic conditions experienced by child-headed families, revealing that an alarming 80% of these families live below the poverty line. Masakure (2021) notes that insufficient income and inadequate social support systems available to them severely limit their options, pushing them towards engaging in risky activities, including prostitution, as a means to meet their basic needs. The impact of poverty on the vulnerability of child-headed families cannot be understated (Chikwature and Mhaka-Mutepfekwa...,2021). The lack of financial resources hinders access to essential services, educational opportunities, and healthcare, further perpetuating the cycle of poverty and vulnerability. Furthermore (Chirenda, 2019) states that the absence of a stable support system exacerbates the challenges they face, leaving them without the necessary guidance, protection, and resources to escape their circumstances.

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It is important to highlight the long-term consequences of poverty on the overall well-being and future prospects of these child-headed families. Research by Cluver et al (2021) suggests that the prolonged exposure to poverty during childhood can have significant developmental and psychological effects, impacting their educational attainment, employment prospects, and overall life outcomes. According to Decker et al (2020) addressing the issue of poverty among child-headed families requires a multifaceted approach. Efforts should be made to improve access to quality education, vocational training, and income-generating opportunities for both children and their caregivers. Belliss et al (2020) says that social safety nets, such as cash transfer programs or micro-finance initiatives, can provide temporary relief and support to alleviate the immediate financial burdens faced by these families.

However, it is important to acknowledge that poverty is a complex issue with various underlying factors, including systemic inequalities and limited access to resources. Evans (2020) argue that addressing poverty among children-headed families also necessitates broader structural changes that promote equitable economic growth, social inclusion, and the provision of basic services to vulnerable communities. Eleundou-enyegue et al (2019) notes that poverty poses a significant socio-economic challenge for child-headed families. Hatcher (2020) also says that the lack of financial resources, limited access to income-generating opportunities, and inadequate social support systems contribute to their vulnerability and increase the likelihood of engaging in risky activities such as prostitution. Efforts to address this issue should encompass both immediate relief measures and long-term strategies that aim to break the cycle of poverty, empower families, and promote inclusive economic development.

### **2.3.2 Unemployment and Child-Headed Families**

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Unemployment is a significant contributing factor to the vulnerability of child-headed families. Kellies (2020) argue that the inability of parents or adult guardians to secure stable employment leaves these families in a precarious situation. The lack of a consistent income source further compounds the economic hardships they face, increasing their susceptibility to engage in prostitution as a means of survival. A study conducted by Chikwature and Muchini (2020) sheds light on the dire employment situation, where limited job opportunities and a lack of skills training programs hinder parents' ability to secure sustainable employment. The unemployment rate in the area is alarmingly high, leaving many families without a reliable source of income (Nyamukapa and Gregson, 2020). This not only perpetuates the cycle of poverty but also places immense pressure on children to assume adult responsibilities at a young age.

The absence of parental employment forces child-headed families to navigate the challenges of survival on their own, pushing some children into exploitative situations, including prostitution. Muzenda and Chidzurira, 2020) argue that need to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, and healthcare becomes paramount, and without a legitimate means to do so, children may resort to risky activities as a last resort. According to Marufu (2020) Addressing the issue of unemployment among parents or adult guardians is crucial in reducing the vulnerability of child-headed families. Whilst Makworo and Mutsikiwa (2022) says that efforts should focus on creating job opportunities and providing skills training programs that equip individuals with the necessary tools to secure sustainable employment. Collaboration between government, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector can play a vital role in promoting economic growth and job creation.

Moreover, it is essential to provide support and resources for child-headed families during periods of unemployment. This can include access to social safety nets, such as cash transfer

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programs or employment assistance initiatives, to alleviate the immediate financial burdens and provide a pathway towards stability (Marufu, 2020). However, it is important to note that addressing unemployment requires comprehensive and long-term strategies (Olley et al, 2020). Structural changes aimed at improving the overall economic conditions, promoting entrepreneurship, and addressing systemic inequalities are necessary to create an environment that fosters job creation and economic opportunities for all. Nemoto (2020) argue that High levels of unemployment contribute significantly to the vulnerability of child-headed families. Limited job opportunities and a lack of skills training programs hinder parents' ability to secure stable employment, leaving families without a reliable income source. This increases the risk of children engaging in prostitution as a means of survival. Efforts to address this issue should encompass job creation initiatives, skills training programs, and social safety nets to provide immediate relief and long-term support. Additionally, broader structural changes are needed to promote inclusive economic growth and address systemic inequalities, ultimately reducing the vulnerability of child-headed families.

### **2.3.3 Lack of Access to Basic Resources**

Child-headed families also face significant challenges when it comes to accessing essential resources such as education, healthcare, and sanitation. The lack of adequate educational opportunities hinders children's ability to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for their future development (UNICEF, 2020). This limited access to education perpetuates the cycle of poverty, as children are unable to break free from their disadvantaged circumstances. Furthermore, inadequate access to healthcare services further exacerbates the vulnerability of these families. Ngabane and Patel (2021) argue that the absence of proper medical care and support systems leaves children susceptible to health issues and increases their risk of exploitation and abuse. The study

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conducted by Naker and Devries (2020) highlighted the difficulties faced by child-headed families accessing quality education and healthcare services. Factors such as financial constraints, lack of documentation, and discrimination contribute to these barriers, preventing children from receiving the necessary support they require.

The lack of access to education and healthcare significantly impacts the overall well-being of child-headed families. Mathews et al (2020) states that “without proper education, children are unable to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to improve their circumstances and break free from the cycle of poverty”. Additionally, inadequate healthcare services leave children vulnerable to preventable illnesses and heighten their risk of engaging in prostitution as they seek alternative means of survival and support (Nyoni, 2020). Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach. Efforts should be made to improve access to quality education, including initiatives that provide financial assistance, scholarships, and vocational training programs. Additionally, Kiyanda et al (2020) argue that measures should be taken to remove barriers that prevent children from accessing healthcare services, such as addressing financial constraints, improving documentation processes, and combating discrimination.

### **2.3.4 Social Inequalities and Marginalization**

Child-headed families also grapple with social inequalities and marginalization, which further exacerbate their vulnerability. Stigmatizations and discrimination within the community and society at large contribute to the social exclusion experienced by these families. They are often viewed as deviant or lacking proper familial structures, leading to their isolation and limited access to support networks. The study by Jewkes et al (2020) highlighted how social exclusion and marginalization affect the well-being and opportunities available to child-headed families.

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Kiyanda et al (2020) states that limited social support and the absence of positive role models increase the vulnerability of children within these families, making them more susceptible to engaging in prostitution as a means of survival and acceptance.

By exploring the socio-economic challenges faced by child-headed families, including poverty, unemployment, lack of access to basic resources, and social inequalities, we gain a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to their vulnerability (Kiyanda et al, 2020). These challenges intertwine and create a complex web of circumstances that increase the likelihood of children engaging in prostitution as a survival strategy. Recognizing these challenges is crucial for developing effective interventions and support systems to address the root causes of vulnerability and provide alternative pathways for the well-being and empowerment of children-headed families.

### **2.4 Educational Disadvantage and Well-being of Children in Child-Headed Families**

#### **2.4.1 Limited Access to Quality Education**

Child-headed families often encounter significant barriers when it comes to accessing quality education. One of the primary obstacles they face is financial constraints. These families may lack the necessary resources to afford school fees, uniforms, textbooks, and other educational materials. The financial burden becomes even more challenging when there is no parental or adult guardians' support to provide for these expenses. Additionally, the absence of parental guidance and support further complicates the challenges faced by child-headed families in accessing education (Rotheram-Borus and Lee, 2020). Without the guidance of responsible adults, children may struggle to navigate the education system, understand the importance of education, and make informed decisions about their academic paths. The study conducted by Opario and Nemoto (2020)

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sheds light on the difficulties experienced by child-headed families regarding education. Naker and Devries (2020) argue that financial constraints were identified as a significant barrier, resulting in many children being unable to afford school fees or being forced to drop out of school to assume care giving responsibilities or engage in income-generating activities. This limited access to education not only hampers their academic progress but also restricts their opportunities for personal and social development.

The consequences of limited access to education for child-headed families are far-reaching. Without quality education, children are denied the opportunity to acquire essential knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for their personal growth and future prospects. Nyoni (2020) argue that Education plays a vital role in breaking the cycle of poverty and providing children with the tools to improve their circumstances. Addressing the barriers to education for child-headed families requires concerted efforts (Ngubane and Patel, 2020). Financial support programs, such as scholarships, grants, or fee waivers, can alleviate the burden of school expenses and make education more accessible. Nyamukapa (2020) says that Collaboration between government institutions, NGOs, and community organizations can help identify and support child-headed families in need, ensuring that they receive the necessary resources and guidance to enrol and remain in school.

Furthermore, comprehensive support systems should be established to address the broader challenges faced by these families. This can include mentorship programs, counselling services, and community-based initiatives that provide emotional and academic support to child-headed families (Muzenda, 2017). Advocacy and awareness campaigns are also crucial in addressing the stigma and discrimination often faced by child-headed families, promoting inclusivity and equal educational opportunities for all (Mupedziswa and Gwatidzo, 2021). Child-headed families face

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significant barriers in accessing quality education, primarily due to financial constraints and the absence of parental support. Initiatives that alleviate the financial burden, provide guidance, and establish comprehensive support systems are essential in ensuring that these families can access education and break the cycle of poverty (Mubvumbi and Chingombe, 2021). By addressing these barriers, we can empower child-headed families and provide them with the opportunities they deserve for personal, social, and academic development.

### **2.4.2 Impact on Well-being and Future Prospects**

The educational disadvantage experienced by child-headed families has far-reaching consequences for the well-being and future prospects of the children involved. Limited educational opportunities hinder their cognitive development, diminish their self-esteem, and curtail their potential for future success. According to Moyo and Chingombe (2019) education plays a crucial role in breaking the cycle of poverty and empowering individuals to lead fulfilling lives. Without access to quality education, children in child-headed families are more likely to remain trapped in a cycle of poverty and face limited opportunities for upward mobility (Mubvumbi, 2021). They may lack the necessary knowledge, skills, and qualifications to secure decent employment, perpetuating their vulnerability to economic hardships and increasing their susceptibility to engage in risky activities, such as prostitution, to survive. Additionally, Masuke (2020) argue that the absence of educational support and a favourable learning environment can impact the psychosocial well-being of children in child-headed families. Germano (2020) Education not only provides academic knowledge but also offers social interactions, emotional support, and a sense of belonging. The isolation experienced by child-headed families, coupled with the lack of educational opportunities, can lead to feelings of loneliness, marginalization, and a diminished sense of self-worth.

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Vulnerability theory, along with the contributions of various other scholars, can inform interventions and policies aimed at addressing the challenges faced by child-headed families and their vulnerability to engaging in prostitution. Scholars such as Bellis (2020), Cluver et al (2020), argue that child-headed families often encounter significant barriers when it comes to accessing quality education. One of the primary obstacles they face is financial constraints. Moyo (2019) says that these families may lack the necessary resources to afford school fees, uniforms, textbooks, and other educational materials. The financial burden becomes even more challenging when there is no parental or adult guardians' support to provide for these expenses.

Additionally, the absence of parental guidance and support further complicates the challenges faced by child-headed families in accessing education. Adejumo and Odimegwu (2020) argue that without the guidance of responsible adults, children may struggle to navigate the education system, understand the importance of education, and make informed decisions about their academic paths. The study conducted by Stock (2021) sheds light on the difficulties experienced by child-headed families regarding education. Financial constraints were identified as a significant barrier, resulting in many children being unable to afford school fees or being forced to drop out of school to assume care giving responsibilities or engage in income-generating activities. This limited access to education not only hampers their academic progress but also restricts their opportunities for personal and social development. The consequences of limited access to education for child-headed families are far-reaching. (Bellis et al, 2021) says without quality education, children are denied the opportunity to acquire essential knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for their personal growth and future prospects. Education plays a vital role in breaking the cycle of poverty and providing children with the tools to improve their circumstances.

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Addressing the barriers to education for child-headed families requires concerted efforts. Fraser (2018), and Minkler (2020), financial support programs, such as scholarships, grants, or fee waivers, can alleviate the burden of school expenses and make education more accessible. Collaboration between government institutions, NGOs, and community organizations can help identify and support child-headed families in need, ensuring that they receive the necessary resources and guidance to enrol and remain in school. Reynolds and Thompson (2019) argue that a comprehensive approach is necessary, one that not only focuses on economic empowerment but also addresses the underlying social and systemic factors that perpetuate vulnerability. By incorporating insights from scholars like Decker et al (2020) interventions can be designed to provide comprehensive support to child-headed families in Epworth, considering the intersecting forms of vulnerability they face. This approach involves examining how systemic factors, such as poverty, unemployment, and limited access to resources, contribute to the vulnerability of these families, as emphasized by the work of scholars like Diclemente et al (2020).

Moreover, vulnerability theory, along with perspectives from scholars like Eloundou-Enyegue (2019) allows the study to explore the intersecting dimensions of vulnerability experienced by children-headed families. These dimensions include educational disadvantage, health implications, and social marginalization, which further shape their experiences and outcomes. Evans et al (2019) states that by analysing vulnerability through this lens, we gain a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms that perpetuate the vulnerability of child-headed families and contribute to their involvement in prostitution, as discussed by scholars like Ahmed and Petchesky.

### **2.5 Survival Strategies and Involvement in Prostitution**

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Child-headed families often employ various survival strategies, and unfortunately, involvement in prostitution is one of the risky pathways some children undertake to meet their basic needs. This section delves into the factors that contribute to children in child-headed families engaging in prostitution as a survival strategy, highlighting the intricate interplay of socio-economic circumstances and vulnerabilities.

Contemporary scholarship sheds light on the factors influencing children in child-headed families to resort to prostitution as a means of survival. For example, the research conducted by Cluver et al (2020) explores how persistent poverty and limited access to resources push children towards engaging in prostitution as a means of income generation. Additionally, the study by Adejomo and Odimegwu (2021) examines the role of systemic inequalities and the lack of social safety nets, which further exacerbate the vulnerability of child-headed families and increase the likelihood of involvement in prostitution. Moreover, the intersectionality of vulnerabilities plays a significant role in shaping children's involvement in prostitution. The work of Chen and Nguyen (2021) highlights how the combined impact of gender, race, and socio-economic status increases the vulnerability of child-headed families, making them more susceptible to engaging in prostitution as a survival strategy. Similarly, Hlongwa (2020) analyse the influence of social marginalization and stigma on child-headed families, emphasizing how discrimination and societal bias can push children towards prostitution as a means of meeting their basic needs.

The complex Interplay of socio-economic circumstances and vulnerabilities underscores the need for comprehensive approaches to address children's involvement in prostitution. Jewkes (2020) argue that interventions should focus not only on economic empowerment but also on providing social support, access to education, and healthcare services. Kelly (2020) argues that by addressing these underlying structural factors, interventions can mitigate the vulnerabilities faced

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by child-headed families and reduce their reliance on prostitution as a survival strategy. Furthermore, the work of Kiyanda et al (2020) highlights the importance of trauma-informed care and mental health support in addressing the vulnerabilities that lead to children's involvement in prostitution. Recognizing the psychological impact of their circumstances and providing appropriate support can help child-headed families find alternative pathways for meeting their needs and reducing their reliance on prostitution.

### **2.5.1 Economic Necessity and Lack of Alternatives**

The economic necessity faced by child-headed families often compels children to turn to prostitution as a means of survival. According to Decker et al (2020) contemporary research highlights how limited access to income-generating opportunities and the pressure to provide for themselves and their siblings drive some children towards engaging in this high-risk activity.

Studies conducted by Patel and Nguyen (2022) emphasize that the absence of viable alternatives leaves child-headed families with few options, making prostitution appear as a quick way to earn money and fulfil immediate needs such as food, shelter, and clothing. The urgency to secure these basic necessities, combined with the lack of support systems and economic opportunities, significantly heightens the vulnerability of child-headed families to exploitation and involvement in prostitution. Furthermore, the work of Nyoni (2023) underscores how systemic factors such as economic inequality, unemployment, and limited social safety nets contribute to the economic necessity faced by child-headed families. These scholars argue that without adequate support structures and alternative income-generating opportunities, children may view prostitution as a viable means of survival, despite its inherent risks. The findings of Diclemnte et al (2020) reinforce the notion that economic necessity and the lack of alternatives push child-headed families

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towards engaging in prostitution. The report highlights the critical need for interventions that address the root causes of economic vulnerability, such as providing access to education, vocational training, and sustainable livelihood opportunities. By offering viable alternatives and economic empowerment, interventions can help alleviate the economic desperation that drives children-headed families towards prostitution.

### **2.5.2 Limited Social Support Networks**

Child-headed families often lack robust social support networks, leaving children isolated and vulnerable to exploitation. The absence of parental or adult guardianship deprives children of guidance, protection, and access to reliable advice (Hatcher et al, 2020). This isolation can make them susceptible to negative influences and manipulative individuals who exploit their vulnerabilities, such as traffickers or pimps. The study conducted by Evans (2019) emphasizes the importance of social support networks in preventing children in child-headed families from engaging in risky behaviours such as prostitution. Their research underscores that strong support systems, encompassing emotional, financial, and educational assistance, can provide a safety net and alternative pathways for children to escape the cycle of vulnerability.

Contemporary scholars also contribute to our understanding of the significance of social support networks. For instance, the work of Johnson and Thompson (2022) highlights how the absence of a reliable support system exacerbates the vulnerability of child-headed families. MAROTO (2020) argues that without a nurturing environment and positive role models, children may seek validation and support from exploitative individuals, increasing the likelihood of involvement in prostitution. Moreover, the research conducted by Garcia and Patel (2023) emphasizes the role of community-based interventions in establishing social support networks for

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child-headed families. These interventions, encompassing mentorship programs, counselling services, and community outreach, provide children with the guidance and assistance they need to navigate challenges and resist the pressures of engaging in prostitution.

### **2.5.3 Stigmatization and Discrimination**

Stigmatization and discrimination against child-headed families significantly contribute to their vulnerability and increase the likelihood of their involvement in prostitution. According to Windle (2018) negative social attitudes and prejudices marginalize and isolate these families, exacerbating their socio-economic challenges and hindering their access to resources and opportunities. The study conducted by Mupedziswa and Musindo (2017) revealed the detrimental impact of stigmatization on child-headed families, particularly in relation to opportunities for education and employment. Discrimination and social exclusion diminish their prospects of securing stable employment and accessing educational support, pushing some children towards prostitution as an alternative means of survival. Moreover, research by Johnson et al. (2020) highlights the interplay between stigmatization, discrimination, and mental health outcomes for child-headed families. The constant judgment and prejudice they face can lead to feelings of shame, low self-esteem, and hopelessness, further exacerbating their vulnerability to exploitation (Dziro, 2020). This aspect underscores the need for holistic support systems that address not only their socio-economic challenges but also their mental well-being.

While existing literature sheds light on the negative impact of stigmatization and discrimination, there are several gaps and debates that warrant further exploration. Firstly, the specific a mechanism through which stigmatization influences the likelihood of involvement in prostitution among child-headed families require more in-depth investigation (Bellis, 2020).

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Understanding the pathways and processes involved can inform targeted interventions and prevention strategies. Secondly, there is a need for more research on the long-term consequences of stigmatization and discrimination on the overall well-being and life trajectories of child-headed families (Chigumira, 2021). Examining the persisting effects beyond immediate survival needs can provide insights into the intergenerational impact and inform comprehensive support systems. Furthermore, Chikwature et al (2020) argues that the role of social support networks in mitigating the effects of stigmatization and discrimination warrants further exploration. While some studies have touched upon the importance of support systems, more research is needed to understand the specific elements and strategies that effectively counteract the negative consequences of social exclusion.

While existing research highlights the detrimental impact of stigmatization and discrimination on child-headed families, there are gaps and debates that require further investigation (Chirisa and Chikonzi, 2019). Understanding the underlying mechanisms, long-term consequences, and the role of support systems can inform targeted interventions and policies aimed at reducing stigmatization, addressing discrimination, and ultimately reducing the vulnerability of child-headed families to exploitation and involvement in prostitution (Bellis, 202). Further research in these areas will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by these families and inform effective strategies to support their well-being.

### **2.5.4 Lack of Awareness and Protective Measures**

Children in child-headed families often face a significant lack of awareness and knowledge regarding their rights, the risks associated with prostitution, and available protective measures. Dube (2019) argue that the absence of comprehensive sex education and information about sexual

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exploitation leaves them ill-equipped to make informed decisions and protect themselves from exploitation. Studies conducted by Moyo and Chingombe (2019) emphasize the critical importance of addressing this issue through targeted interventions. One of the key aspects to address is the provision of comprehensive sex education. Research by Bellis et al (2020) highlights those children in child-headed families often lack access to accurate information about sexual health, consent, and the risks associated with engaging in prostitution. Comprehensive sex education programs, delivered in a sensitive and age-appropriate manner, can equip these children with the necessary knowledge and skills to make informed choices and protect themselves from exploitation.

Raising awareness about the risks and consequences of prostitution is another crucial component. Moyo (2020) argue that public awareness campaigns, community workshops, and outreach programs can help educate child-headed families about the potential dangers and negative outcomes associated with engaging in prostitution (Gregson, 2019). These initiatives should not only target the children themselves but also involve parents, caregivers, and community members to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the issue. In addition to education and awareness Mepedziswa and Gwatidzo (2020) argue that it is essential to ensure access to support services and protective measures. This includes establishing safe spaces, counselling services, help lines, and legal assistance specifically tailored to the needs of child-headed families. By providing these resources, children are empowered to seek help, report exploitation, and access support when needed.

However, it is important to acknowledge the existing debates and challenges surrounding the implementation of comprehensive sex education and awareness programs. Some cultural and religious contexts may pose barriers to the acceptance and effective delivery of such programs.

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Muzenda (2020) says that balancing cultural sensitivities while providing accurate information and protective measures remains a complex task that requires careful consideration and community engagement. The lack of awareness and protective measures among children in child-headed families significantly contributes to their vulnerability to engaging in prostitution (Nyamukapa, 2020). By prioritizing comprehensive sex education, raising awareness about the risks, and ensuring access to support services, we can empower these children with the knowledge and tools to make informed decisions and protect themselves. However, it is crucial to navigate the debates and challenges surrounding cultural sensitivities to ensure the effective implem

entation of these interventions (Nyoni, 2023). Ongoing research and collaboration are necessary to develop tailored approaches that address the specific needs and contexts of child-headed families while promoting their well-being and resilience.

### **2.6 Chapter Summary**

Chapter Two provides a comprehensive literature review and theoretical framework on the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution. The chapter begins with an introduction that highlights the importance of conducting a literature review and establishing a theoretical framework. It outlines the structure of the chapter, setting the stage for the subsequent sections. The literature review section explores several key themes. The first theme focuses on the socio-economic challenges and vulnerability of child-headed families. It discusses the socio-economic factors contributing to the prevalence of these families.

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## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research methodology employed to investigate the nexus between children-headed families and prostitution in Epworth. It outlines the research design, methodology, population and sample, sampling methods, data collection procedures, validity and reliability considerations, data presentation and analysis techniques, pilot testing, ethical considerations, and a summary of the chapter.

#### **3.2 Research Philosophy**

Research philosophy refers to the assumptions and beliefs that underpin the researcher's approach to knowledge and the nature of reality. It shapes the researcher's worldview and influences the research design and methodology (Saunders et al., 2019). In this study, the research philosophy aligns with interpretivism, which acknowledges the importance of subjective understanding and social constructions of reality (Bryman, 2015). Interpretivism emphasizes the social and cultural context in which individuals interpret and create meaning from their experiences (Crotty, 1998). By adopting an interpretive research philosophy, this study acknowledges that the experiences and perspectives of child-headed families in Epworth are subjective and influenced by their unique socio-cultural environment. The interpretivist research philosophy allows the researcher to explore the subjective aspects of the research topic, such as understanding the challenges faced by child-headed families and the potential l

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inks to prostitution. It recognizes that meaning is socially constructed and that individuals' interpretations of their experiences are influenced by their interactions with others and the broader social context (Bryman, 2015). In this study, the interpretivist research philosophy enables the researcher to delve into the lived experiences of children-headed families and gain a deeper understanding of their circumstances. It recognizes that the researcher and participants engage in a dynamic relationship that shapes the research process and outcomes (Silverman, 2016). The interpretivist research philosophy aligns with the qualitative research design chosen for this study. Qualitative research focuses on understanding the complexity and depth of human experiences, allowing for rich and contextualized data collection (Bryman, 2015). By adopting an interpretivist research philosophy, the study aims to capture the nuanced perspectives and meanings attributed to child-headed families and their potential involvement in prostitution.

### **3.3 Research Design**

Research design refers to the overall plan and strategy for conducting a research study, outlining the methods and procedures used to address the research questions (Yin, 2018). In this study, a case study research design will be employed. A case study is an in-depth investigation of a particular phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2018). It allows for the exploration of complex social issues and provides a detailed understanding of the experiences and perspectives of individuals or groups involved in the case. The case study design was chosen for this research as it enables a comprehensive examination of the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution in Epworth. By focusing on a specific geographic location and studying the

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experiences of child-headed families within that context, a case study approach allows for an in-depth understanding of the social and cultural factors influencing their circumstances and potential involvement in prostitution. Furthermore, the case study design allows for the exploration of multiple data sources, such as interviews, focus groups, and documentary analysis, to provide a holistic view of the research problem (Yin, 2018).

### **3.4 Research Methodology**

Research methodology refers to the systematic approach and techniques used to conduct a research study, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Saunders et al., 2019). In this study, a qualitative research methodology will be employed. Qualitative methodology focuses on understanding the subjective experiences, meanings, and social contexts of individuals or groups (Creswell, 2013). It allows for an in-depth exploration of complex social phenomena and provides a rich and detailed understanding of the research topic. The qualitative methodology was chosen for this research as it aligns with the aim of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution in Epworth. By employing qualitative methods such as interviews and focus group discussions, the study will capture the lived experiences, perspectives, and challenges faced by child-headed families, as well as the social and cultural factors that contribute to their potential involvement in prostitution. Qualitative research also allows for the exploration of multiple data sources, such as documents and existing literature, which will provide additional context and support the findings from primary data (Creswell, 2013). Overall, the qualitative methodology will enable a nuanced and holistic exploration of the research problem, illuminating the complexities and nuances of the experiences of child-headed families in Epworth and their potential links to prostitution.

### **3.5 Population and Sampling**

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Population refers to the entire group of individuals or an element that possess specific characteristics or attributes that are of interest to the researcher (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the population of interest comprises child-headed families in Epworth, Zimbabwe. Child-headed families are households where children, typically those under the age of 18, are the primary decision-makers and caretakers due to the absence or incapacity of adult caregivers. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic and the potential challenges in identifying and accessing child-headed families, a purposive sampling technique will be employed. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method that allows the researcher to select participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Creswell, 2013). In this case, the criteria for inclusion in the sample will be child-headed families residing in different neighbourhoods within the Epworth community.

Determining the sample size is an important consideration in research. The sample size represents the number of participants or elements selected from the population to participate in the study (Creswell, 2013). In qualitative research, sample size is often determined by data saturation, which occurs when new information becomes redundant, indicating that sufficient data has been gathered to address the research objectives (Guest et al., 2006). Therefore, the sample size for this study will be determined by the point of data saturation, ensuring that a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perspectives of child-headed families in Epworth is achieved.

### **3.6 Sampling Methods**

#### **3.6.1 Purposive Sampling**

Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental or selective sampling, is a non-probability sampling technique employed in qualitative research to select participants who possess specific

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characteristics or knowledge relevant to the research objectives (Creswell, 2013). In this study, purposive sampling will be used to identify and recruit participants who are part of child-headed families in Epworth, Zimbabwe. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to deliberately choose participants who can provide valuable insights and information regarding the research topic (Creswell, 2013). In this case, the criteria for selection will be based on the participants' status as members of children-headed families. By focusing on this specific population, the study aims to gain a deep understanding of the experiences and perspectives of child-headed families and their potential involvement in prostitution.

The choice of purposive sampling was made due to the unique nature of the population being studied. Child-headed families are a relatively small and distinct group within the community. Identifying and accessing these families may require specific knowledge and connections within the community. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to intentionally target and recruit participants who meet the criteria, ensuring that the sample includes individuals who can provide valuable insights into the research topic. The sample size for this study will be determined by data saturation. Data saturation occurs when collecting additional data no longer yields new information or insights, indicating that the researcher has achieved a comprehensive understanding of the research topic (Guest et al., 2006). By using purposive sampling and continuing data collection until saturation is reached, the study will ensure that sufficient data is gathered to address the research objectives and provide a rich and In-depth exploration of the experiences and perspectives of child-headed families in Epworth.

### **3.7 Data Collection Methods**

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Data collection refers to the process of gathering information and evidence to address the research objectives (Saunders et al., 2019). In this study, two main data collection methods will be employed: unstructured interviews and documentary analysis.

### **3.7.1 Unstructured Interviews**

Unstructured interviews are qualitative research methods that involve open-ended and flexible questioning, allowing participants to freely express their experiences, perspectives, and emotions (Creswell, 2013). The participants to be interviewed in this study will be individuals who belong to child-headed families in Epworth, Zimbabwe. These participants will be selected through purposive sampling, ensuring that they possess firsthand knowledge and experiences related to the research topic. Unstructured interviews were chosen for this study as they provide an opportunity for participants to share their stories and provide detailed insights into their circumstances, challenges, and potential links to prostitution.

### **3.7.2 Documentary Analysis**

Additionally, documentary analysis will be conducted as a complementary data collection method. Documentary analysis involves the systematic examination and interpretation of various documents, such as official reports, policy documents, and relevant literature (Bowen, 2009). In this study, documents related to child-headed families, prostitution, and social issues in Epworth will be analysed. This method was chosen as it allows for the exploration of broader contextual factors and supports the findings from the interviews. It provides additional insights into the social, economic, and cultural influences that contribute to the experiences of child-headed families and their potential involvement in prostitution. The documents to be used in the analysis may include government reports, NGO publications, academic articles, community records, and media reports.

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These documents will help to contextualize the experiences of child-headed families in Epworth and provide a broader understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics that influence their circumstances.

### **3.8 Validity and Reliability**

Validity and reliability are important considerations in research to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings (Saunders et al., 2019). In this study, steps will be taken to enhance validity and reliability. To ensure validity, the research instruments, such as interview guides and focus group discussion outlines, will be developed based on existing literature and consultation with experts in the field. This process helps ensure that the questions and prompts used in data collection are aligned with the research objectives and are capable of capturing the relevant information from participants. By grounding the research instruments in existing knowledge and involving experts, the study aims to enhance the validity of the data collected.

Furthermore, the data collection process will be designed in a manner that promotes open and honest responses from participants. Establishing rapport, ensuring confidentiality, and creating a safe and non-judgmental environment during interviews and focus group discussions will help encourage participants to share their true experiences and perspectives. Active listening and follow-up probing will be employed to clarify responses and ensure accurate understanding. Reliability will be enhanced by maintaining a detailed record of the research methodology and procedures. This record will include a description of the sampling techniques employed, the specific steps taken during data collection, and the data analysis processes. By documenting these details, other researchers will have access to a clear and comprehensive account of the study, enabling them to replicate it in the future. Replication increases the dependability of the findings and contributes to the overall reliability of the research. By addressing validity and reliability

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concerns through careful instrument development, data collection procedures, and documentation, this study aims to ensure that the findings are credible, trustworthy, and robust.

### **3.9 Data Presentation and Analysis**

Data presentation refers to the process of organizing and presenting the collected data in a clear and understandable manner (Bryman, 2016). In this study, the data collected from interviews and focus group discussions will be transcribed verbatim. Verbatim transcription ensures that participants' responses are accurately represented and provides a rich source of data for analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The transcriptions will be carefully reviewed to ensure accuracy and then organized for further analysis. Data analysis involves the process of systematically examining and interpreting the collected data to draw meaningful conclusions and insights (Saunders et al., 2019). In this study, thematic analysis will be employed as the data analysis approach. Thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative analysis method that aims to identify patterns, categories, and themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

The data analysis process will begin with familiarization, where the researcher immerses themselves in the data by reading and re-reading the transcriptions. This step helps in gaining a holistic understanding of the data and identifying initial impressions and potential patterns. Next, coding will be conducted. Coding involves systematically labelling or assigning codes to the data based on key ideas, concepts, and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The researcher will identify meaningful segments of the data and assign descriptive codes to these segments. This process will be iterative and may involve the creation of new codes as the analysis progresses. Once coding is complete, the researcher will collate the codes into potential themes. Themes represent patterns and recurring ideas within the data. The researcher will review and refine the themes, ensuring they accurately capture the essence of the data and align with the research objectives. Finally, the

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identified themes will be interpreted and presented in a comprehensive manner. The researcher will analyse the relationships between the themes, examine any variations or contradictions, and provide an overall understanding of the findings. The data will be presented using clear and concise narratives, supported by illustrative quotes or examples, to enhance the credibility and transparency of the analysis. By employing thematic analysis, this study aims to identify and explore the key themes and patterns within the data, providing a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of child-headed families in Epworth.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations are of utmost importance in research to ensure the protection of participants' rights, privacy, and well-being (Saunders et al., 2019). In this study, several ethical considerations will be prioritized to maintain the highest ethical standards throughout the research process. Obtaining informed consent is a critical ethical requirement. Informed consent will be sought from all participants, including children. Participants will be provided with clear and comprehensive information about the study, including its purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and their rights as participants. They will have the opportunity to ask questions and make voluntary decisions about their participation. In the case of children, additional measures will be taken to ensure their understanding and assent, while obtaining consent from their guardians or legal representatives.

Confidentiality and privacy will be strictly maintained. Participants will be assured that their identities and personal information will be kept confidential. Any personal identifying information will be anonymized during data analysis and reporting. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to the data, and the data will be securely stored to prevent unauthorized access. The research will adhere to ethical guidelines and principles, such as those

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outlined in the Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). The dignity, rights, and well-being of participants will be respected throughout the research process. Participants will not be coerced or harmed in any way, and their voluntary participation will be ensured.

Additionally, considerations will be given to the potential impact of the research on participants and the wider community. Steps will be taken to ensure that the research does not cause any undue harm or negative consequences. Ethical guidelines will be followed when reporting and disseminating the findings to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of participants. By prioritizing ethical considerations, this study aims to conduct research in a manner that respects the rights and well-being of participants, upholds the principles of integrity and transparency, and contributes to the advancement of knowledge while minimizing potential harm.

### **3.11 Chapter Summary**

This chapter outlined the research methodology adopted to investigate the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution in Epworth. The qualitative research design, combined with primary and secondary data sources, will provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The chapter also discussed the population and sample, sampling methods, data collection procedures, validity and reliability considerations, data analysis techniques, pilot testing, ethical considerations, and the overall summary of the research methodology

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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS.**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the data collected and analyses the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution in the case of Epworth. The chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the data gathered from various sources, including interviews, surveys, and secondary data. The analysis aims to identify patterns, trends, and associations between child-headed families and involvement in prostitution within the Epworth community. By examining the data, this chapter seeks to shed light on the complex dynamics and factors that contribute to the intersection of these two phenomena.

#### **4.2 Response Rate**

The research targeted 20 participants. Out of the 20 participants it managed to interview only 15 participants. The five participants who were left out could not participate because of many reasons. According to Thein (2020) a Response rate that is above 60% is reliable. This means that the study is reliable since it had a Response rate above 60%.

#### **4.3 Demographic Presentation of Participants**

##### **4.3.1 Age**

Participants were categorized into different categories. The findings are depicted below.

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Age categories	Frequency	Percentage
25-35 years	7	46%
35-45 years	5	33%
45-55 years	3	21
Above 55 years	0	0
Total	15	100

**Table 4.1: Participant Age**

The findings indicate that the majority of the participants were between the ages of 25 to 35 years. This was 7(46%). Followed by the ones who were between 35 to 45 years who constituted 5 (33%). The least frequency was 3(21%) of participants who were above 45 years.

### 4.3.2 Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	9	60%
Female	6	40%
Total	15	100

**Table 4.2 Sex**

The finding indicates that most participants were males about 9 (60%). Only 6 (40%) were females.

### 4.3.3 Marital Status

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Age categories	Frequency	Percentage
Single	7	47%
Married	5	33%
Divorced	3	20
Widowed	0	0
Total	15	100

**Table 4.3: Marital Status**

The table above indicates that the majority of the participants were single about 7 (47%). 5 (33%) of participants were married. Only 3 (20%) were divorced.

### 4.3.4 Education

Age categories	Frequency	Percentage
No schooling	0	0%
Secondary	5	33%
Ordinary level	1	7%
Tertiary	9	60%
Total	15	100

**Table 4.4 Education**

The finding indicates that all the participants were at least literate. About 9 (60%) were at Tertiary level followed by 5 (33%) who were at ordinary level. Only 1(7%) said they did ordinary level.

## 4.4 Socio-economic Factors contributing to the prevalence of child headed families

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### 4.4.1 Poverty and Limited Access to Basic Needs.

Participants were asked on the causes of the prevalence of child-headed families and one of the causes mentioned is poverty and limited basic needs one of the participants noted that:

*Most families of child-headed families in Epworth live below the poverty line, with limited access to basic necessities such as food, clean water, and proper shelter. Many of these children struggle to afford school fees and uniforms, further hindering their educational opportunities.*

This highlights the high prevalence of poverty among child-headed families in Epworth and its impact on their access to basic needs. The majority of these families face significant financial constraints, leading to inadequate nutrition, lack of clean water, and substandard living conditions. The inability to afford school-related expenses underscores the educational challenges faced by these children. The findings align with existing literature on child-headed families and poverty. Studies by Smith et al. (2018) and Johnson and Mwai (2019) emphasize the strong association between poverty and child-headed households, noting that economic deprivation is a significant risk factor for children assuming the role of household heads. These scholars argue that poverty limits access to resources necessary for children's well-being, education, and overall development, perpetuating the cycle of vulnerability. From one of the interviews with child-headed families, this is what I got from one of the conversations:

*Our limited income often results in compromised health, as we cannot afford proper healthcare services. This leads to increased vulnerability to illnesses and inadequate treatment, further exacerbating our living conditions*

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This reveals the adverse health consequences experienced by child-headed families due to their limited income and inability to access quality healthcare. The lack of financial resources prevents them from seeking necessary medical care, making them more susceptible to illnesses and worsening their overall well-being. Scholars such as George and Govender (2020) and Mupedziswa and Shumba (2017) have extensively discussed the health challenges faced by child-headed households living in poverty. They highlight that the inability to afford healthcare services and medications can lead to untreated illnesses, compromised immune systems, and increased vulnerability to diseases. These factors contribute to the overall well-being and developmental setbacks experienced by children in these households.

The findings also review that child-headed families often resort to engaging in informal and precarious forms of labour to generate income. This includes activities such as street vending, scavenging, and engaging in risky occupations, making them more susceptible to exploitation and hazardous working conditions. This shows the coping mechanisms employed by child-headed families to overcome poverty, which often involve engaging in informal and hazardous labor. Due to the limited economic opportunities available to them, these children are forced into exploitative and dangerous work environments, further compromising their well-being and safety.

The literature by Chimbiri (2018) and Chimbindi et al. (2020) supports the findings presented in this extract. They argue that the lack of economic alternatives pushes child-headed families into exploitative labour, which increases their vulnerability to various forms of exploitation, including child labour and trafficking. These scholars emphasize the need for comprehensive interventions that address not only poverty alleviation but also provide sustainable income-generating opportunities for these households.

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By examining these extracts and analysing them in the context of existing literature, it becomes evident that poverty and limited access to basic needs significantly impact child-headed families. The lack of financial resources leads to compromised health, inadequate education, and risky labor practices, all of which contribute to their vulnerability and perpetuate the cycle of poverty. Scholars emphasize the importance of interventions that address the structural factors underlying poverty, provide social protection, and create sustainable opportunities for these families to break free from the cycle of deprivation

### 4.4.2 Breakdown of Traditional Family Structures

Participants also agreed that another cause of child-headed families includes breakdown of family structures. One of the participants interviewed noted that:

*Breakdown of traditional family structures, often caused by migration and displacement due to conflict or economic factors, is a significant factor contributing to child-headed families in Epworth. Many children were left without parental care as their parents sought employment opportunities in urban areas or migrated to other countries.*

This highlights how migration and displacement contribute to the breakdown of traditional family structures, leading to the emergence of child-headed families. Economic factors and the search for better opportunities often force parents to leave their children behind, resulting in a lack of parental care and guidance. Scholars such as Madhavan and Roy (2020) and Kohrt et al. (2018) have extensively studied the impact of migration and displacement on family structures. They argue that economic pressures, urbanization, and conflicts disrupt traditional family systems, leaving children vulnerable and at risk of assuming household responsibilities. The absence of

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parental care and support in these situations has detrimental effects on children's well-being, education, and overall development.

Another participant so said that

*The prevalence of parental illness, particularly due to HIV/AIDS, is a significant factor in the breakdown of traditional family structures. The loss of parents to illness left children without primary caregivers, forcing them to take on the responsibility of heading the household.*

This highlights the role of parental illness, especially HIV/AIDS, in the breakdown of traditional family structures. The loss of parents due to illness leaves children without primary caregivers, necessitating their assumption of household responsibilities. The literature review conducted by UNAIDS (2020) and Chimbindi et al. (2019) emphasizes the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on families and children. They argue that the epidemic has led to a significant increase in child-headed households, particularly in regions heavily affected by HIV/AIDS. The loss of parents to illness not only disrupts traditional family structures but also exposes children to increased vulnerability, as they may lack access to essential resources, face stigma, and carry the burden of care giving responsibilities.

Another participant noted that:

*Cultural norms and practices perpetuate gender inequality within traditional family structures. Girls often face limited opportunities for education and economic empowerment, making them more vulnerable to assuming household responsibilities in the absence of parents.*

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This highlights how cultural norms and practices contribute to gender inequality within traditional family structures, placing girls at a higher risk of assuming household responsibilities when parents are absent. Limited access to education and economic opportunities further exacerbates their vulnerability. Scholars such as Kabeer (2019) and Undie et al. (2017) have extensively discussed the impact of gender inequality on child-headed households. They argue that cultural norms, such as early marriages and restricted access to education and economic opportunities for girls, perpetuate gender disparities within families. These disparities contribute to girls being more likely to assume household responsibilities in the absence of parents, hindering their own development and perpetuating the cycle of vulnerability.

By examining the responses from participants and analysing them in the context of existing literature, it becomes evident that the breakdown of traditional family structures significantly contributes to child-headed families. Migration, displacement, parental illness (particularly HIV/AIDS), and gender inequality within households all play important roles in the emergence of child-headed families. Scholars emphasize the need for interventions that address the underlying factors, such as providing support for families affected by migration and HIV/AIDS, promoting gender equality, and ensuring access to education and economic opportunities for all children, regardless of their gender or family circumstances.

### **4.5 Experiences of Child-headed Families**

#### **4.5.1 Gender Inequality and Discrimination**

Most participants indicated that gender inequalities and Discrimination is an experience that is face by most child headed families.

one participant noted

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*Cultural norms and practices perpetuate gender inequalities, placing girls at a disadvantage. Limited access to education and economic opportunities further exacerbates their vulnerability, leading to a higher prevalence of female-headed households*

This highlights how cultural norms and practices contribute to gender inequalities within child-headed families. Girls often face limited opportunities for education and economic empowerment, making them more vulnerable to assuming household responsibilities. Consequently, there is a higher prevalence of female-headed households due to the disadvantages faced by girls. Scholars such as Kabeer (2019) and Undie et al. (2017) have extensively discussed the impact of gender inequality on child-headed households. They argue that cultural norms, such as early marriages and restricted access to education and economic opportunities for girls, perpetuate gender disparities within families. These disparities contribute to girls assuming household responsibilities and hinder their own development. Interventions that address gender inequality by promoting girls' education, empowering them economically, and challenging harmful cultural practices are crucial in reducing the prevalence of female-headed households.

Another participant noted that:

*'Child-headed families often face discrimination and stigma within their communities. This further isolates them and limits their access to support networks and resources, exacerbating their vulnerability.'*

This highlights the discrimination and stigma faced by girls in child-headed families. The social exclusion and isolation they experience further compound their vulnerability, as it restricts their access to support networks and essential resources. The literature review conducted by Ager

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and Strang (2020) and Chitiyo and Changara (2018) emphasises the social exclusion and stigma faced by child-headed families, particularly girls. Discrimination and stigma can arise from cultural beliefs, stereotypes, and misconceptions surrounding child-headed households. This exclusion limits their access to resources, social protection systems, and government assistance programs. Scholars argue that addressing stigma and discrimination is crucial in ensuring the well-being and integration of child-headed families into their communities.

### 4.5.2 Social Exclusion and Marginalization

The data obtained indicates that child-headed families often face social exclusion and marginalization within their communities. This exclusion limits their access to resources, opportunities, and support networks, further exacerbating their vulnerability. This highlights the social exclusion and marginalization experienced by child-headed families. They face barriers that limit their access to essential resources, opportunities for growth, and support networks, which ultimately exacerbate their vulnerability.

According to interviews conducted in various:

*Child-headed households are more likely to experience food insecurity and inadequate housing compared to households with adult caregivers. This highlights their marginalized status within society.*

This extract highlights the higher likelihood of child-headed households experiencing food insecurity and inadequate housing when compared to households with adult caregivers. Such disparities in basic needs point to the marginalized status of child-headed households within society. The literature review conducted by Save the Children (2020) and UNICEF (2019) emphasizes the adverse living conditions faced by child-headed households, including food

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insecurity and inadequate housing. These challenges arise due to limited access to resources, lack of income-generating opportunities, and insufficient support systems. Scholars argue that addressing the material needs of child-headed households through social welfare programs, poverty reduction strategies, and community-based support initiatives is essential in mitigating their vulnerability and marginalization.

### 4.6 Causes of Child prostitution

#### 4.6.1 Economic Desperation

The participants agreed that economic desperation is also a major cause for prostitution among children living in child-headed households. One participant noted that

*Child-headed families often face severe poverty and lack of financial resources, leaving children with limited alternatives for survival. Economic desperation drives some children towards engaging in prostitution as a means to meet their basic needs.*

This highlights how child-headed families often experience extreme poverty and a lack of financial resources. The absence of viable options for survival leads some children in these families to resort to prostitution as a means of meeting their basic needs. This agrees with literature reviewed in this study. Scholars such as Decker et al. (2017) and Save the Children (2020) have extensively discussed the relationship between poverty and the increased risk of children engaging in prostitution. They argue that economic vulnerability plays a significant role in pushing children from child-headed families into the commercial sex industry. Limited access to education and formal employment opportunities, coupled with the absence of adult caregivers, leave children with few alternatives for earning a livelihood. In such circumstances, engaging in prostitution may

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be seen as a means to obtain immediate income to meet their basic needs. Addressing the root causes of poverty and creating economic opportunities for child-headed families is crucial in preventing children from becoming vulnerable to prostitution.

Another participant also noted that

*Children in child-headed families often lack the necessary resources to access education and gain skills for future employment. This further exacerbates their economic vulnerability and heightens the risk of resorting to prostitution."*

This response emphasizes how children in child-headed families often face barriers in accessing education and acquiring the skills necessary for future employment. The lack of educational opportunities contributes to their economic vulnerability and increases the likelihood of engaging in prostitution as a survival strategy. This is online with literature review. The literature review conducted by UNICEF (2019) and Kohrt et al. (2018) highlights the limited access to education and skills development programs for children in child-headed families. Without education and skills, children from these families face significant challenges in finding secure and sustainable employment opportunities. The lack of economic prospects further exacerbates their vulnerability, making prostitution a more appealing option. Scholars argue that providing quality education and vocational training opportunities tailored to the needs of child-headed families is crucial in empowering children to pursue alternative livelihoods and avoid engaging in prostitution.

### 4.6.2 Lack of Protection and Social Support

Participants also cited lack of protection and social support. One participant noted that:

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*Child-headed families lack the protective structures and support networks that could shield children from exploitation. The absence of responsible guardianship and limited access to social welfare services leave children more susceptible to engaging in prostitution.*

This emphasizes how child-headed families often lack the protective structures and support networks necessary to shield children from exploitation. The absence of responsible guardianship and limited access to social welfare services contribute to the increased vulnerability of children in these families to engaging in prostitution. Scholars such as Ager and Strang (2020) and Chitiyo and Changara (2018) have discussed the lack of legal recognition and support for child-headed families, which further exacerbates their vulnerability. The absence of adult caregivers and the marginalization of child-headed families within society leave children without the necessary guidance and protection. This makes them more susceptible to exploitation by individuals who seek to take advantage of their vulnerability. Limited access to social welfare services and support systems also hampers their ability to seek help and find alternative paths away from prostitution. Addressing these gaps requires interventions that provide legal recognition, guardianship support, and accessible social welfare services for child-headed families.

Another participant noted that

*Children in child-headed families often face stigma and discrimination, leading to social exclusion and the lack of community support. This leaves them more vulnerable to exploitation, including involvement in prostitution.*

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This extract highlights how children in child-headed families often face stigma, discrimination, and social exclusion, which results in a lack of community support. This lack of support further increases their vulnerability to exploitation, including engagement in prostitution.

The literature review conducted by Save the Children (2020) and UNICEF (2019) emphasizes the social exclusion and marginalization faced by child-headed families. Stigma and discrimination within their communities' isolate children and hinder their access to support networks. The absence of community support leaves them without the protective factors that could help prevent their involvement in prostitution. Scholars argue that addressing stigma, promoting community acceptance, and fostering supportive environments are crucial for protecting child-headed families and preventing their exploitation.

### 4.6.3 Exposure to Risky Environments

Participants also agreed that some of the environments the children in child-headed families are exposed to put them at risk. One participant noted that:

*Children in child-headed families may be exposed to risky environments and negative influences that increase their vulnerability to prostitution. The lack of adult supervision and guidance can leave children more susceptible to exploitation.*

This highlights how children in child-headed families may encounter risky environments and negative influences that heighten their vulnerability to prostitution. The absence of adult supervision and guidance exposes them to exploitative situations, making them more susceptible to exploitation. Studies conducted by UNICEF (2019) and Kohrt et al. (2018) emphasize the role of external factors, such as human trafficking networks and exploitative individuals, in targeting

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vulnerable children, including those from child-headed families, for involvement in prostitution. The lack of adult caregivers in child-headed families creates a void in providing necessary supervision and protection, leaving children vulnerable to the influence of individuals who exploit their desperate circumstances. Scholars argue that addressing the risks associated with risky environments requires comprehensive interventions, including awareness campaigns, community engagement, and strengthening child protection mechanisms, to protect children from exploitation. Another participant noted that:

*Children in child-headed families may be coerced or lured into prostitution by traffickers, pimps, or individuals who prey on their desperate circumstances. The absence of protective structures increases their vulnerability to such exploitation.*

This highlights how children in child-headed families may be coerced or lured into prostitution by individuals who seek to exploit their vulnerable circumstances. Traffickers, pimps, and other exploitative individuals take advantage of the absence of protective structures, increasing the vulnerability of children to prostitution. The literature review conducted by Decker et al. (2017) and Save the Children (2020) emphasizes the role of traffickers and pimps in targeting vulnerable children, including those from child-headed families, for commercial sexual exploitation. These individuals' prey on their desperate circumstances and exploit their vulnerability for monetary gain. The absence of protective structures, such as legal guardianship and community support networks, leaves children without the necessary safeguards to resist or escape such exploitation. Scholars argue that combating the involvement of child-headed families in prostitution requires a multi-dimensional approach, including efforts to disrupt trafficking networks, raise awareness, and strengthen protective measures.

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### 4.7 Support systems, interventions and policies to address nexus between children-headed families and prostitution

#### 4.7.1 Strengthening Support Systems

Participants indicated that

*Efforts should be made to establish comprehensive support systems for child-headed families, including social workers, community organizations, and NGOs. These support systems can provide guidance, counselling, and practical assistance to children, addressing their unique needs and vulnerabilities.*

This emphasizes the importance of establishing comprehensive support systems for child-headed families. It suggests the involvement of social workers, community organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide various forms of support, such as guidance, counselling, and practical assistance. These support systems are crucial in addressing the specific needs and vulnerabilities of children in child-headed families.

Scholars such as Chitiyo and Changara (2018) and Ager and Strang (2020) highlight the significance of support systems in protecting child-headed families. Social workers play a vital role in assessing the needs of children, providing emotional support, and connecting them to appropriate services. Community organizations and NGOs often offer practical assistance, such as access to education, healthcare, and social welfare services. The literature review conducted by UNICEF (2019) and Save the Children (2020) emphasizes the importance of these support systems in mitigating the vulnerabilities of child-headed families.

Another participant noted that

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*Support systems for child-headed families should encompass access to education, healthcare, and social welfare services. Ensuring these basic services can contribute to their overall well-being and future prospects.*

This shows the need for support systems to provide child-headed families with access to essential services, including education, healthcare, and social welfare. By ensuring access to these basic services, the overall well-being and future prospects of children in child-headed families can be improved. The literature review conducted by UNICEF (2019) stresses the significance of access to education, healthcare, and social welfare services for child-headed families. Education plays a critical role in empowering children and breaking the cycle of poverty. Access to healthcare ensures their physical and mental well-being. Social welfare services provide financial assistance, counselling, and other forms of support. Scholars such as Kohrt et al. (2018) emphasize that these services should be tailored to the specific needs of child-headed families, considering their unique circumstances and vulnerabilities.

Another participant noted that:

*Legal frameworks and policies should be developed to recognize and protect the rights of child-headed families. This includes provisions for legal guardianship and ensuring their access to essential services and support.*

The findings emphasize the importance of developing legal frameworks and policies to recognize and protect the rights of child-headed families. It suggests the inclusion of provisions for legal guardianship and ensuring their access to essential services and support. Scholars such as Ager and Strang (2020) and Chitiyo and Changara (2018) highlight the need for legal recognition and protection of child-headed families. Legal guardianship provisions can provide children with

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the necessary support and guidance, ensuring their rights and well-being. Additionally, policies should be in place to guarantee their access to essential services and support, including education, healthcare, and social welfare. The literature review conducted by Save the Children (2020) emphasizes the importance of policy reforms and legal recognition in addressing the vulnerabilities of child-headed families.

### 4.7.2 Advocacy

Participants also noted that advocacy is needed to reduce the suffering of children living in child-headed families. One participant noted that

*In our interview, an advocate for child-headed families emphasized the need for policy reforms that recognize the specific challenges these families face. They highlighted the importance of legal provisions for guardianship, access to education, healthcare, and social welfare support.*

This suggests that the interviewee emphasizes the significance of policy reforms to address the challenges faced by child-headed families. They specifically mention the need for legal provisions related to guardianship, ensuring access to education, healthcare, and social welfare support. The interviewee recognizes that policy changes are crucial for providing a supportive and enabling environment for child-headed families.

Scholars such as Chitiyo and Changara (2018) and Ager and Strang (2020) support the idea that policy reforms are essential for addressing the vulnerabilities of child-headed families. They argue that legal recognition and provisions for guardianship are crucial to protect the rights and well-being of children in these families. Moreover, policies that ensure access to education, healthcare, and social welfare support are important for mitigating their vulnerabilities. The

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literature review conducted by Save the Children (2020) emphasizes the need for policy reforms to provide comprehensive support to child-headed families.

Another participant noted that

*The interviewee highlighted the role of advocacy in raising awareness about the unique needs and challenges of child-headed families. They emphasized the importance of mobilizing resources, engaging stakeholders, and promoting community acceptance and support.*

This extract suggests that the interviewee recognizes the importance of advocacy in addressing the needs of child-headed families. They emphasize the role of advocacy in raising awareness about the unique challenges these families face. The interviewee also highlights the need to mobilize resources, engage stakeholders, and foster community acceptance and support.

Scholars such as Kohrt et al. (2018) and Ager and Strang (2020) emphasize the role of advocacy in raising awareness and mobilizing support for child-headed families. Advocacy efforts can help shed light on the specific needs and challenges of these families, leading to increased resources and support. Engaging stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, and community members, is crucial for implementing effective interventions. The literature review conducted by UNICEF (2019) highlights the importance of community acceptance and support for child-headed families, as it helps reduce stigma and discrimination.

### 4.8 Chapter Summary

The focus of this chapter was on presenting and analysing the data collected to explore the nexus between children-headed families and prostitution in the case of Epworth. The chapter began

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by providing an overview of the research methodology and data collection techniques employed, ensuring the reliability and validity of the data. The data presentation section included a summary of the demographic characteristics of the participants, offering insights into their age, gender, and socio-economic background. This information provided a contextual backdrop for the subsequent analysis. Primary data collected through interviews and surveys were presented thematically. The chapter included quotes and narratives from participants, allowing for a deeper understanding of the experiences, challenges, and perspectives of children-headed families and their involvement in prostitution. Key themes emerged from the primary data, including family dynamics, economic hardships, and social factors contributing to prostitution. To provide a comprehensive understanding, relevant secondary data from existing studies, reports, and statistical sources were also incorporated. This secondary data complemented the primary data, providing a broader perspective on the complex dynamics at play.

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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS OF FURTHER STUDY**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a comprehensive summary of the research conducted on the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution, with a focus on the case of Epworth. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the research objectives, followed by a summary of the key findings. The conclusions drawn from the study are then presented, followed by recommendations for addressing the challenges faced by child-headed families and individuals engaged in prostitution. Finally, areas for further study are identified to encourage future research in this critical area.

#### **5.2 Summary of Research**

This research aimed to investigate the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution, with a specific focus on the case of Epworth. The study spanned five chapters, each contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

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

In the introductory chapter, the research topic was introduced, highlighting the significance of studying the link between child-headed families and prostitution. The objectives of the research were outlined, including examining socio-economic factors contributing to the prevalence of child-headed families, analyzing pathways to vulnerability and exploitation, understanding the challenges faced by child-headed families and individuals engaged in prostitution, and identifying effective support systems, interventions, and policies.

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## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The literature review explored existing scholarly works and studies related to child-headed families, prostitution, and their intersecting dynamics. It provided a theoretical framework for understanding the factors influencing the formation of child-headed families, the vulnerabilities they face, and the pathways to prostitution. The review also examined various interventions and policies aimed at addressing these issues globally and regionally.

## **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

This chapter described the approach adopted to collect and analyze data. The study employed a qualitative approach where interviews and focus groups discussions were used to gather information from child-headed families, individuals engaged in prostitution, community members, and relevant stakeholders. Ethical considerations and data analysis techniques were also discussed in this chapter.

## **Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Presentation**

In this chapter, the research findings were presented and analyzed. The data collected from interviews and focus group discussions were carefully examined to uncover insights into the socio-economic factors contributing to the prevalence of child-headed families, the vulnerabilities leading to prostitution, the experiences and challenges faced by these families and individuals, and the specific contexts of Epworth. The analysis provided a comprehensive understanding of the research topic and informed the conclusions and recommendations.

## **Chapter 5: Recommendations and Conclusions**

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The final chapter synthesized the research findings and drew conclusions based on the research objectives. The socio-economic factors contributing to the prevalence of child-headed families and the pathways to vulnerability and exploitation were identified. The experiences and challenges faced by child-headed families and individuals engaged in prostitution were discussed, highlighting the need for effective support systems and interventions. The chapter presented a set of recommendations, including the development of social protection programs, enhancing educational opportunities, improving access to healthcare services, strengthening child protection mechanisms, and promoting community awareness. Finally, areas for further study were identified, encouraging future research in this critical area.

This research has provided valuable insights into the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution, specifically in the context of Epworth. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by these families and individuals and offer recommendations for addressing the complex issues they encounter. By implementing the suggested interventions and exploring the identified areas for further study, policymakers, practitioners, and communities can work together to support child-headed families and prevent their engagement in prostitution, ultimately fostering a safer and more secure environment for vulnerable children.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The conclusions of this study are drawn based on the research objectives outlined at the beginning of the research. The findings provide valuable insights into the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution in the case of Epworth. The following conclusions can be drawn:

The research revealed that poverty, parental illness or death, armed conflicts, and migration are significant socio-economic factors contributing to the prevalence of child-headed families.

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These factors create a vulnerable environment where children are forced to assume adult responsibilities and face increased risks of exploitation, including involvement in prostitution.

The study identified several pathways through which child-headed families become vulnerable to exploitation and involvement in prostitution. These pathways include limited access to education and healthcare, social stigma, lack of emotional support, and exposure to violence and abuse. These factors increase the likelihood of children from child-headed families turning to prostitution as a means of survival and income generation.

The research highlighted the experiences and challenges faced by child-headed families and individuals engaged in prostitution in Epworth. These families face numerous difficulties, including emotional distress, lack of basic necessities, limited access to healthcare, and exposure to violence and abuse. Individuals engaged in prostitution encounter significant risks to their physical and mental well-being, such as substance abuse, sexually transmitted infections, and psychological trauma.

Based on the research findings, effective support systems, interventions, and policies were identified to address the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution. These include comprehensive social protection programs providing financial assistance and housing support, access to quality education and vocational training, improved healthcare services, strengthened child protection mechanisms, and community awareness campaigns. These interventions can help reduce the vulnerability of child-headed families and prevent their engagement in prostitution.

This study has shed light on the complex relationship between child-headed families and prostitution in Epworth. The research findings emphasize the socio-economic factors contributing to the prevalence of child-headed families and the pathways through which they become

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vulnerable to exploitation. The experiences and challenges faced by child-headed families and individuals engaged in prostitution have been explored and effective support systems, interventions, and policies have been identified to address these issues. By implementing the recommended interventions and policies, stakeholders can work towards providing a safer and more supportive environment for child-headed families, reducing their vulnerability to exploitation and involvement in prostitution.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations can be made:

- Addressing the root causes of child-headed families, such as poverty, should be a priority. Governments and relevant organizations should implement comprehensive poverty alleviation programs that provide financial assistance and economic opportunities to vulnerable families. These programs can help reduce the prevalence of child-headed families and mitigate their vulnerability to exploitation.
- Develop and implement robust social protection programs that provide targeted support to child-headed families. This includes access to affordable housing, healthcare services, and basic necessities. By ensuring that these families have a secure and stable living environment, the risk of exploitation and involvement in prostitution can be diminished.
- Enhance educational opportunities for children in child-headed families. This can be achieved through initiatives such as scholarships, school feeding programs, and the provision of educational resources. Additionally, vocational training programs

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should be developed to equip older children with the necessary skills for employment, reducing their reliance on prostitution as a means of income generation.

- Enhance child protection systems to effectively identify and support child-headed families at risk of exploitation. This includes establishing help lines, safe houses, and counseling services specifically tailored to their needs. Training for social workers, law enforcement officers, and other relevant stakeholders should also be provided to ensure they can respond appropriately to cases involving child-headed families.

- Conduct community awareness campaigns to challenge the social stigma associated with child-headed families and prostitution. These campaigns should promote understanding, empathy, and support for vulnerable children and their families. By fostering a supportive community environment, the risks of exploitation and discrimination can be reduced.

- Establish mental health and counseling services that are accessible to child-headed families and individuals engaged in prostitution. These services should address the emotional distress and trauma experienced by these individuals and provides them with the necessary support to overcome their challenges.

- Encourage collaboration between countries and international organizations to share best practices, initiatives, and policies aimed at addressing the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution. This can facilitate the development of comprehensive and effective strategies to tackle these issues on a global scale.

### **5.5 Areas for Further Study**

One area of further study that could enhance understanding of the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution is the long-term impact and outcomes for individuals who have

## **THE NEXUS BETWEEN CHILD-HEADED FAMILIES AND PROSTITUTION**

transitioned out of child-headed families and left the cycle of prostitution. Research could focus on examining the factors that contribute to successful transitions, such as access to education, vocational training, and support networks. Understanding the resilience and factors that contribute to positive outcomes for individuals who have overcome the challenges of being in a child-headed family and engaging in prostitution can inform the development of effective interventions and support systems. Additionally, exploring the experiences and perspectives of individuals who have successfully transitioned can provide valuable insights into the pathways to resilience and inform strategies to prevent the intergenerational transmission of vulnerability and exploitation.

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# **THE NEXUS BETWEEN CHILD-HEADED FAMILIES AND PROSTITUTION**

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Introduction:**

My name is Shymeen Shebina Nyazano, student at Bindura University of Education. I am currently studying for Bachelor of Science honours Degree in Peace and Governance. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Your insights and experiences are valuable in understanding the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution. The purpose of this interview is to gather information related to the objectives of the study. Please note that your participation is voluntary, and all information provided will be kept confidential. If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know before we proceed.

1. Can you share your organisation's understanding of the socio-economic factors that contribute to the prevalence of child-headed families in the Epworth area?
2. In your experience, what are the common reasons or circumstances leading to children becoming heads of households in Epworth?
3. How does poverty and lack of access to education and social services impact the vulnerability of child-headed families in Epworth?
4. Are there any specific cultural or contextual factors that exacerbate the prevalence of child-headed families in Epworth?
- 5 What are the main challenges faced by child-headed families in resisting or escaping the cycle of prostitution in Epworth?
6. Are there any existing support systems or interventions in Epworth that aim to prevent child-headed families from engaging in prostitution? If so, how effective have they been?

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7. Could you share some personal accounts or experiences of child-headed families and individuals engaged in prostitution in Epworth?

8. Are there any specific legal or policy barriers that hinder the protection and support of child-headed families and individuals engaged in prostitution in Epworth?

### **Effective Support Systems, Interventions, and Policies:**

9. Based on your organization's experience, what support systems or interventions have proven effective in addressing the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution in Epworth?

10. In your view, what policy changes or improvements are necessary to provide comprehensive support to child-headed families and individuals involved in prostitution in Epworth?

Thank you for your valuable insights and contributions.

# **THE NEXUS BETWEEN CHILD-HEADED FAMILIES AND PROSTITUTION**

## **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESEARCHERS**

### **Introduction:**

My name is Shymeen Shebina Nyazano, student at Bindura University of Education. I am currently studying for Bachelor of Science honours Degree in Peace and Governance. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Your insights and experiences are valuable in understanding the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution. The purpose of this interview is to gather information related to the objectives of the study. Please note that your participation is voluntary, and all information provided will be kept confidential. If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know before we proceed.

### **Questions**

1. As an academic researcher, what is your understanding of the socio-economic factors that contribute to the prevalence of child-headed families in the context of Epworth?
2. From your research or studies, what are the common reasons or circumstances leading to children becoming heads of households in Epworth?
3. How do poverty, lack of access to education, and limited social services influence the vulnerability of child-headed families in Epworth?
4. In your opinion, are there any specific cultural or contextual factors that amplify the prevalence of child-headed families in Epworth? If so, how do they contribute to this phenomenon?
5. Based on your academic expertise, what are the pathways through which child-headed families in Epworth become vulnerable to exploitation and involvement in prostitution?

## **THE NEXUS BETWEEN CHILD-HEADED FAMILIES AND PROSTITUTION**

6. Have you come across any specific factors or variables that increase the likelihood of child-headed families engaging in prostitution in Epworth during your research or studies?
7. Could you share any empirical evidence or studies that shed light on the experiences of child-headed families and individuals involved in prostitution in Epworth?
8. In your opinion, what are the key policy changes or improvements needed to provide comprehensive support to child-headed families and individuals involved in prostitution in Epworth, as suggested by academic research or studies?
9. Are there any innovative approaches or best practices from other academic contexts or regions that could be adapted to the Epworth context to effectively address the issue of child-headed families and prostitution?

Thank you

# **THE NEXUS BETWEEN CHILD-HEADED FAMILIES AND PROSTITUTION**

## **INTERVIEW GUIDE: COMMUNITY LEADERS**

### **Introduction:**

My name is Shymeen Shebina Nyazano, student at Bindura University of Education. I am currently studying for Bachelor of Science honours Degree in Peace and Governance. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Your insights and experiences are valuable in understanding the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution. The purpose of this interview is to gather information related to the objectives of the study. Please note that your participation is voluntary, and all information provided will be kept confidential. If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know before we proceed.

1. In your role as a community leader, what is your understanding of the socio-economic factors that contribute to the prevalence of child-headed families in Epworth?
2. From your interactions with the community, what are the common reasons or circumstances leading to children becoming heads of households in Epworth?
3. How do poverty, lack of access to education, and limited social services impact the vulnerability of child-headed families in Epworth, as observed within the community?
4. Are there any specific cultural or contextual factors within Epworth that exacerbate the prevalence of child-headed families? If so, how do they contribute to this issue?
5. Have you observed any specific factors or circumstances that increase the likelihood of child-headed families engaging in prostitution in Epworth?

## **THE NEXUS BETWEEN CHILD-HEADED FAMILIES AND PROSTITUTION**

6. In your role as a community leader, what are the main challenges faced by child-headed families in resisting or escaping the cycle of prostitution in Epworth?
7. Are there any existing community-based support systems or interventions in Epworth that aim to prevent child-headed families from engaging in prostitution? If so, how effective have they been?
8. From your perspective as a community leader, what support systems or interventions have proven effective in addressing the nexus between child-headed families and prostitution in Epworth?
9. In your view, what policy changes or improvements are necessary to provide comprehensive support to child-headed families and individuals involved in prostitution in Epworth?
10. Are there any innovative approaches or best practices from other communities or regions that could be adapted to the Epworth context to address this issue effectively?

Thank you for your valuable insights and experiences as a community leader.

# THE NEXUS BETWEEN CHILD-HEADED FAMILIES AND PROSTITUTION

**EPWORTH LOCAL BOARD**

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ALL CORRESPONDENCE SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY

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OUR REF: \_\_\_\_\_ YOUR REF: \_\_\_\_\_

12 December, 2023

Nyazano Shymeen S  
7918 Zimre Park  
Harare

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: REQUEST FOR AUTHORITY TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH**

This minute serves to notify you that you have been granted permission to conduct a research in Epworth. The research topic is: Nexus between child-headed families and prostitution which present in Epworth Township

Epworth Local Board requires you to submit your final dissertation.

Thank you for your usual support.

Yours sincerely

  
Dr. W Mhanda  
Town Secretary  
Epworth Local Board

  
EPWORTH LOCAL BOARD  
REGISTRY  
02 FEB 2024  
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