

Bindura University of Science Education Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities



AN EXAMINATION ON THE CHALLENGES AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES ADOPTED
BY WOMEN-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS DURING COVID-19: THE CASE STUDY OF
WARREN PARK D, HARARE.

BY

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A research project submitted to the Department of Social Work in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work.

2021.

APPROVAL FORM.

I certify that I supervised Cathrine P. Dhlumingo in carrying out this research titled: **An examination on the challenges and survival strategy adopted by women-headed households during covid-19: The case study of Warren Park D, Harare** in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work and recommend that it proceeds for examination.

Supervisor: Signature Date

Chairperson of the Department Board of Examiners

The department board of examiners is satisfied that this dissertation report meets the examination requirements and therefore I recommend to Bindura University to accept this research project by Cathrine P. Dhlumingo titled: **An examination on the challenges and survival strategy adopted by women-headed households during COVID-19: The case study of Warren Park D, Harare** in partial fulfilment of the Bachelor of Science, Honours Degree in Social Work.

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I, Cathrine P. Dhlumingo studying for a Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work, aware of the fact that plagiarism is an academic offense and that falsifying information is a breach of the ethics of Social Work research. I truthfully declare that:

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DEDICATION.

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving mother Chipo Mahwekwe. Thank you so much for being the for me, I love you so much mom. I also dedicate this dissertation to my loving husband and son, Great and Jayden Chiumburu. Thank you for encouraging me not to give up and thank you for helping me through. I also dedicate this to my brothers and sister Albert, Anorld, Alfred, Agripa and Nenyasha thank you for being there for me when I needed you most.

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ABSTRACT.

This research examined the challenges faced by women-headed households during COVID-19 and how they can be solved so that these families can be able to solve their problems in future disasters. It examined the survival strategies adopted by women-headed households during COVID-19 and these strategies can be improved so that women can be able to take full responsibilities of their families during hard times in the future. The research aimed at examining the challenges and survival strategies adopted by women-headed households in Warren Park D, Harare during the lockdown. The research was qualitative in nature. A sample size of 20 participants was drawn from the population and was used to elicit information relevant to the title of the research study. Face-to-face, in-depth and key informant interviews were used as data collection tools. The findings indicated that female headed households faced hunger, unemployment, boredom, financial constraints, limited access to justice, education and healthcare services during COVID-19. Hence, the need for intervention from the government and non-governmental organizations to provide social assistance to the vulnerable groups of people during or after disasters to improve their wellbeing. Based on the views of the Ecological model of human development, the findings indicated that women must use the available systems within their families and surrounding them to get useful resources so that they can be able to solve their problems and improve their wellbeing during disasters. The research gives the recommendations. The government must provide social assistance to the people as their right during or after a disaster. Women must be involved in policy formulation or programs which are being implemented to meet their needs so that their wellbeing will be improved.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.

WHO	World Health Organization.
COVID-19	Coronavirus
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ART	Antiretroviral therapy
CCW	Childcare worker
DSD	Department of Social Development

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.

The research explored the challenges and survival strategies adopted by women-headed households during the COVID-19 lockdown. The first 21 days of lockdown was announced by the government to begin on the 30th of March 2020 and it was further extended. The research targeted this group of people because they are among the most vulnerable groups of people in the society before, during and after the disaster. The lockdown increased their vulnerability to poverty, psychological, social and economic problems. The lockdown increased the vulnerability of women and children as their means of survival were banned and forced to stay indoors. The research took into consideration the role of the government and other non-state agencies in providing welfare services to these households during COVID-19. The research advocated for women and children to get effective support and resources from the government and non-governmental organizations to empower their personal surviving skills so that they can be able to cope/solve their own problems during disasters.

There are economic, social reasons and circumstances in life which can make a woman the head of the family. Due to economic challenges in Zimbabwe, men migrated to neighboring countries like South Africa, Mozambique, Botswana and also in countries as far as United States of America and China in search of greener pastures leaving the family responsibilities in the hands of their wives. Jackson (2016) notes that the rise of males migrating elsewhere for work increased the number of families headed by single women. Life circumstances like chronic illness and accidents which lead to death of a male partner also led to woman became the head of the family. Despite of

the different causes of woman become the head of the family, women-headed households face almost similar problems.

Being a female and head of the family is difficult in our communities because women are the most vulnerable people due to limited access to resources, they are looked down upon as inferior ones and most of women are not educated. Fothergill & Squier (2018) argues that the root causes of women's vulnerability are lack of resources such as income, education, lack of political voice, social networks and household labour responsibilities that allow people to cope up with risky events. Therefore, with no good source of income, social networks and support system women heading families in Warren Park D are struggling to take care of their children so that live a better life free from suffering and stress.

With the current COVID-19 pandemic, it increased the suffering of women-headed households in urban areas mentally, economically and socially. COVID-19 or Coronavirus is a deadly disease which was discovered in 2019. World Health Organization (2020) defines COVID-19 as an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Therefore, to curb the spread of the virus, Zimbabwe introduces the lockdown system which banned every human activity because coronavirus is a communicable disease. The lockdown regulations encouraged people to stay home, schools, businesses were banned and all movements of people was restricted. The lockdown brought many challenges to female headed households. Hunger and starvation, unemployment, stress, loneliness and increased responsibility as primary caregivers within the family increases their risk of infection as they are exposed at front as income generators. Failure to get justice and help on time during COVID-19 as movements were restricted. According to Newsday (2020) the majority of citizens lack access to food, healthcare services, endure a collapsed social service delivery and limited access to water, raising poverty levels in the country. Therefore, the need to

carry out the research to understand the challenges faced by women-headed families during COVID-19 lockdown.

Women play a paramount role within the family, meeting the immediate survival needs of family members as well as managing the home, (Humanitarian Coalition, 2016). Schools were closed during lockdown and education was being offered online. The same overburdened mother will also have to look for resources (cell phone/laptop, data bundles and pay for electricity) for her children to proceed with their education. Therefore, challenges and survival strategies adopted by these women in raising their children and managing their households during COVID-19 are deserving attention and research so that steps can be done to reduce the human suffering and strengthen the skills within them and hopes because they provide essential roles in a home.

A 2018 IMF report says Zimbabwe's informal economy is the largest in Africa and the sector contributes around 60% of the country's economic activity, (Newsday, 2020). Inadequate assistance from the government has pushed many informal businesses into difficult positions during covid-19. Most of these women who are heads of the family they are self- employed in the informal sector which was positively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to World Health Organization (2020) COVID-19 pandemic has literally wiped away the informal sector which is causing a number of other socio-economic challenges. Those women that are formally employed, acquire low ranks earning little income than men. This also underlines the need to identify coping skills adopted by these women that enable them to support their families financially during the lockdown period.

Inaccessibility of justice and services during the lockdown was one of the challenges faced by female headed households during COVID-19. Female headed households are the vulnerable people especially during time of crisis, the government must look after these families. However,

during COVID-19 female headed households were denied their right to receive social assistance from the government due to Social Welfare and Assistance Act Chapter 17:06 and travelling restrictions. social protection in Zimbabwe according to the Social Welfare Assistance Act Chapter 17:06. According to Newsday (2020) the Act compels government to only extend social protection assistance to a “destitute or indigent person” who is “over 60 years of age, is handicapped physically or mentally, suffers continuous ill-health or is a dependent of a person who is destitute or indigent or incapable of looking after oneself”. Therefore, the need to understand the challenges faced by female headed households and to empower their survival skills during COVID-19.

1.1 AIM

The study aimed at examining the challenges and survival strategies adopted by women headed households in Warren Park D, Harare during COVID-19.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Children are supposed to be raised by both parents and management of the house should be carried out by the man of the house alongside his wife. Management of the house by single parent may lead to many challenges like poverty, child delinquency and stress among family members which affects child’s development. Due to trending deaths of COVID-19, divorce and men migrating to diaspora looking for greener pastures, women are raising children and manage family’s responsibility alone during COVID-19. Women are finding it difficult to raise children alone during the lockdown. The pandemic led to shutdown of businesses in the informal sector where women are employed. Therefore, raising children without a source of income during lockdown is stressful to these mothers. Worries related to finances, childcare and being afraid of getting infected with the virus disrupts their lifestyles and mental health. Therefore, the need to carry out

the study to lighten the burden on women heading families of taking care of all the responsibilities with limited resources during crisis.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research:

- a. explored the challenges faced by women-headed households during COVID-19 lockdown.
- b. investigated survival strategies adopted by women-headed households during COVID-19 lockdown.
- c. identified the role of the government and non-governmental organizations in addressing the challenges faced by women headed-households during COVID-19 lockdown.
- d. identified the role of the government and non-governmental organizations in enhancing the surviving strategies adopted by women-headed households during COVID-19.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

- a. What are the challenges faced by women-headed households during COVID-19 lockdown?
- b. What are the survival strategies adopted by women-headed households during COVID-19 lockdown?
- c. What are the role of the government and non-governmental organizations in addressing the challenges faced by women-headed households during COVID-19 lockdown?

- d. What are the role of the government and non-governmental organization in improving the surviving strategies adopted by women-headed households?

1.5 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY.

The government and non-governmental organization should provide social assistance to female headed households to help them solve their problems and improve their surviving strategies they have adopted during COVID-19. The implementation of new policies in favor of female headed families will make this study successful in promoting the development of women and children. Successful policies, they involve the intended beneficiaries in policy formulation so that their needs will be met. Also the government should fund for more resources to improve welfare service delivery as their services have fallen below the expected standards. Therefore, women-headed households should participate in policy formulation so that their needs will be met.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.

The gender dimensions of COVID-19 pose a threat to pre-existing gender and other intersecting inequalities especially on women and girls, (WANEP, 2020). Due to social exclusion and economic crisis in Zimbabwe, women have limited access to resources and essential services. Therefore, the government and non-governmental organizations has the role to play to promote social inclusion by empowering women through education and implementation of policies which will act towards improving the welfare of women headed households.

In addition, most of the women are not formally employed and they depend much on agricultural activities for surviving and the informal sector especially as vendors and these informal jobs was

affected positively by the COVID-19 lockdown and extreme climate affected their farming. According to Newsday (2020) without the alternative income sources, vulnerable families still have difficulties despite government relaxing some lockdown restrictions. Therefore, the findings of this study highlights the challenges faced by women-headed households during COVID-19 and propose possible solutions which can be taken by the state and non-state organisations to mitigate human suffering.

The economic crisis is also affecting the state as it is failing to provide welfare services to the people in need. Social protection is vital in responding to the coronavirus crisis by ensuring that people have access to healthcare, supporting job and income security. Without such, it is more difficult for the poor to survive the post-COVID-19 era, (Newsday, 2020). The deterioration of the economy in the late 1980s, forced the government to review its policies on social service provision. Means testing was used when providing social assistance which means that some people who are vulnerable will not receive services from the Department of Social Welfare, (Social Welfare Assistance Act, Chapter 17:06). Newsday (2020) asserts that the government's social welfare and protection grants are not meant for everyone, more so in a time of crisis and the Finance and Economic Development minister Mthuli Ncube in July said that social welfare structures would identify the beneficiaries of government's social protection grants. The means testing method was used due to limited resources in the country. Hence, the importance of this study as it highlights the need for the government to draft new policies which benefits the vulnerable in the communities like women and children in times of need.

The study benefits the women headed households as their challenges will be addressed and their survival strategies will be enhanced through the interventions of the government and non-governmental organization which cater services to women and children to enhance their well-

being. The needs of both women and children will be met according to their age and sex. Also the study will protect female headed families from harm through the provision of services from multi-agencies.

1.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY.

The study was carried out in Harare Central District, focusing on the challenges and survival strategies adopted by women headed households in Warren Park D during COVID-19. The researcher drew a sample of ten women who are family heads and five family members in these female headed families. The sample was drawn only from the predetermined population under the assumption that they will be representative of the population. The sample size was practical to seek the responses of the targeted population by the researcher.

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.

According to IMS (2017) are influences, shortcomings and conditions that the researcher cannot controlled by the researcher that place restrictions on the methodology and conclusions of the study. COVID-19 restrictions were one of the challenge faced by the researcher. The researcher carried out the study during the lockdown and people's movements were restricted and people were not welcoming visitors because they were afraid of containing the virus. Limited resources to carryout interviews during COVID-19. Resources needed during this time were hand saniters and face masks to mitigate the spread of the virus. It was recommended not to spend much time with the stranger or exposing yourself to different people, so the research would spend little time with the respondents during interviews to protect both the researcher and participants from containing the virus.

1.9 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS.

Survival strategies.

Survival strategy is process resulting in the evolution of people's best adapted to the environment. Unfavorable conditions or challenges can make an individual develop and adapt to new ways or skills to survive during hard time.

Women-headed households.

According to Fuller & Lain (2017), household heads is the person who makes the greatest contribution to the household's income, the person who has the greatest influence or final say in decision making. Therefore, women-headed household can be defined as a household in which an adult female is a sole or main income producer and decision maker. Circumstances that can led to female heading family are due to the death of the husband, divorce, separation and when the husband is working far from home. Jackson (2016) notes that the rise of males migrating elsewhere for work increased the number of families headed by single women. Therefore, sickness, death, separation or divorce and migration of a male partner to work far away from home can make a female to become the head of the family.

COVID-19.

COVID-19 is also called Coronavirus and it was discovered in 2019. World Health Organization (2020) defines COVID-19 as an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. The virus spreads through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Most of the people infected with the virus experienced mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. The elderly people and those with

underlying medical problems like diabetes, chronic respiratory disease and care re more likely to develop serious illness.

To curb the spread of the virus, Zimbabwe introduces the lockdown with certain restrictions or measures. The latest measures are contained in Statutory Instrument 110/2020 which are as follows; public examinations in schools, colleges, universities or other tertiary education institutions were declared an essential service but would be conducted in compliance with circulars to be issued by responsible ministries, outdoor exercises like walking or jogging or cycling along public thoroughfares in public parks or open spaces or at sporting are not allowed under the new provisions, extended opening times for business and industries among others. According to Section 4 of SI 110 of 2020, these level 2 lockdown measures were to continue indefinitely, but they will be subjected to a fortnightly review from May 31, 2020 onwards. Therefore, lockdown encouraged people to stay home, schools, businesses and activities which includes many people to attend was banned which caused a number of socio-economic challenges in female headed households. The vaccine to reduce the effects of COVID-19 were discovered in countries like China, Russia and India. People are getting the vaccine from different health centers in the country. Since February Zimbabwe received batches of COVID-19 vaccine from China, Russia and India. However, there are shortages of the vaccine in Zimbabwe which made Wilkins Hospital which is the country's main vaccination center force people turn away, (Mavhunga,2021).

1.10 SUMMARY

The chapter presented the background of the study. It outlined the problem statement, aim of the study, objectives and research questions. The chapter was also comprised of the assumptions, significance of the study and defined key terms of the research topic. It sets the base for the next chapter which is chapter two, that focuses on theoretical framework and literature review.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 INTRODUCTION.

This chapter presents the literature reviewed and theoretical framework which guided the research. The existing knowledge conducted by other scholars was recognized to trace the challenges faced by female headed households during COVID-19. The chapter outlined the global, regional and national overview of the challenges faced by female headed households during the lockdown. The previous studies by different scholars indicated that women are amongst the groups of people that are highly affected with the outbreak disasters. Disasters threaten and make people suffer from them but women and children are members of the society affected mostly because social and economic inequalities make them more vulnerable to disasters. Women faced hunger, violence, unemployment and limited access to justice and healthcare during the outbreak of Ebola in West African countries and hurricane Matthew in Haiti in 2010.

With the current COVID-19 pandemic, women are still facing the same challenges they encountered during disasters that took place decades ago. Available data highlights that many women in health sector and social service workforce during COVID-19 in Africa are women. The implication of this is that women are on the frontline are at higher risk of containing the virus and also have extra burden taking care of their families, protecting them from containing the virus. Women economic activities are being shut down due to lockdown measures taken by the government. Therefore, much work needs to be done to mitigate women suffering and empower them so that they will not experience same challenges in the future. Lastly, the chapter will outline two case studies showing the similarity of challenges faced by female headed households during disasters that took place few years back.

Literature review is a survey of scholarly sources on a specific topic, providing an overview of current knowledge allowing the researcher to identify relevant theories, methods and gaps in the existing research, (McCombes, 2019). Thus, literature review helps to identify various views of different scholars on the challenges and survival strategies adopted by women headed households during COVID-19. It also shows the similarities and difference on the views of scholars and the gap in the area of the study.

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

The research is premised on the ecological model of human development which was proposed by Bronfenbrenner. The model is comprised of micro, meso, exo, macro and chrono systems respectively and these systems will be explained below. The ecological model of human development is a specific social work practice theory based on social systems thinking as it looks at how multiple social systems and levels of the social environments impact individual's experiences and behavior, (Social Work Degree Centre, 2019). The theory asserts that individuals do not exist in isolation but they belong to the family, community, culture and organization which influence them and they also influence the system. Most women are not developed because they are not educated, they lack resources and cultural beliefs in our communities which discriminate and stereotype women. Therefore, the model can be used to understand the challenges faced by women headed households as individuals at several levels of their social ecosystem and the role of different agency in enhancing human development.

According to Guy-Evans (2020) the micro systems refers to the relationship between the developing person and the immediate environment such as parents, siblings, school, and peers. This system shows the direct role and effect of immediate environment on female headed households. Thus if a child has a strong nurturing relationship with his/her parents, this has a

positive effect on the child whereas distant and unaffectionate parents will have a negative effect on the child. Growing up without a good relationship with the father/ without father figure can affect child's behavior and development. For instance, surviving during COVID-19 was hard especially in female headed households than in male headed households and due to distant male parent, female headed households were suffering from hunger and starvation which affects child's development.

The second level of ecological model of human development is meso system. The meso system encompasses the interactions between the child's microsystems. According to Guy-Evans (2020) mesosystem is where a person's individual microsystems do not function independently, but are interconnected and assert influence upon one another. Thus, if the mother of the child is communicating and have a good relationship with her/his extended family members, the interaction may influence the child's development. The good relationship between the single mother and her in-laws can make the in-laws help her and the children during hard times like that of COVID-19.

Exo-system is a component of the ecological model of human development developed by Bronfenbrenner. It incorporates other formal and informal social structures which do not themselves contain the child but indirectly influence them as they affect one of the microsystem, (Guy-Evans, 2020). These include neighbors, parent's friends, legal services and social welfare services. For instance, the mother may come home and have a short temper with the child as a result of an argument she was involved in with the ex-husband over divorce issues after a court session.

In addition, the macro system is a component of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development that focuses on how cultural elements affect a child's (person's) development such

as socioeconomic status, wealth, poverty and ethnicity. (Guy-Evans, 2020). Thus, the child living in the female headed household would experience a different development than a child living in a male headed household. This is so because female headed households are more associated with poverty, poor living conditions (housing and sanitation) and unemployment due to gender inequality in the society. While male headed households are the wealthier ones because they have access to useful resources. Also the negative attitude towards women and discrimination against single women in the community is affecting women's development and their households.

The final level of the ecological model of human development is known as the chronosystem. Guy-Evans (2020) notes that the chronosystem consists of all of the environmental changes that occur over lifetime which influence development, including major life transitions and historical events. For instance, the divorce or death of a child's father can affect the child's development. The child will lack the father figure in his/her life and also being raised by a single mom can negatively affect the child's development. Thus, this study was based on the interaction between five systems of ecological model of human development in understanding the challenges that affects the development of women headed households during COVID-19.

2.2 GLOBAL OVERVIEW.

Disasters threaten and make people suffer from them but they do not affect all members of the society equally as social and economic inequalities make certain groups more vulnerable to disasters. During previous disasters like the outbreak of Ebola in western African countries, hurricane Mathew in Haiti in 2010 and the outbreak of swine flu, women were highly experienced the negative effects brought by these disasters. According to Korkoyah & Wreh (2016) Ebola created huge household income deficits and limited access to food, leaving many women headed families unable to provide for basic social needs such as healthcare and education for children.

Even before the outbreak of these disasters, women and children experienced limited access to health services and faced pre-existing problems such as malnutrition and lack of safe drinking water in most third world countries. The outbreak has further exacerbated the problem of access to health services and hunger due to closure of health facilities and economic crisis in these countries.

The concerns of the effects of the current COVID-19 pandemic have been echoed by the United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, who in his appeal in early April for a global ceasefire emphasized that women and children are among the most vulnerable in times of war, and face the highest risk suffering devastating losses from the pandemic, (Kamanga-Njiko & Tajik, 2020). Studies by different scholars shows that female headed households are the most likely to be worst hit by the pandemic containment measures as the economic lockdowns lead to recessions and total loss of income. According to Kamanga-Njiko & Tajik (2020) COVID-19 crisis poses a serious threat to women's engagement in economic activities, especially in informal sectors where women constitute fifty-five percent of the work force. However, little has been done in studying and enhancing the survival strategies of women during crisis as they are still facing challenges in their lives during disaster.

Available data highlights that sixty percent of the health care workers and social service workforce during COVID-19 in Africa are women. The implication of this is that women on the frontline of containing the spread of the virus are at higher risk of contracting the virus through work-related services and this makes them targets of stigmatization as public fears of infection from frontline health caregiver's spreads in communities, it adds up an extra burden to their challenge of protecting themselves and their families, (WANEP, 2020). At the domestic level, women's

responsibility as primary caregivers within the family increases their risk of infection as they are exposed at two fronts as income generators and primary support for members of their families.

2.3 REGIONAL OVERVIEW.

The pandemic has brought many challenges in female headed families of Southern African region. Unemployment is one of the challenges faced by female headed households during COVID-19 due to trade disruptions as borders were closed or impose stricter sanitary controls and curfews, slowing down or halting the movements of agricultural goods. The exchange and selling of goods between countries in the region created employment especially among women. Women's reduced livelihood opportunities due to travel restrictions or increased unemployment impact their decision making power in the home, (Dayton & Williamson, 2020). In Zimbabwe, most women who are family heads they are informally employed they buy clothes, furniture and food items in South Africa, Mozambique, Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia and sell them. Therefore, closing of borders made them lose their source of income which led to hunger and starvation. Being a family head whilst unemployed is stressful and this has a negative impact to the whole family.

The lockdown increased the burden and vulnerability of female headed household financially. Schools were closed during the coronavirus lockdown and e-learning was introduced in every country including Zimbabwe, Kenya and South Africa. The overburdened mother has the responsibility of providing resources (cellphone, data and online tutors) for her children to continue with their education. Due to limited access to resources and income, most children in female headed households were not being able to access educational and health services.

Due to travel restrictions families were being separated for so long and this led to depression, stress, loneliness among family members and overburden the mother with the responsibilities of

the family alone. Due to economic hardships in countries located in Southern Africa, men migrate from one country to the other in search of greener pastures. Therefore, due to travel restrictions to curb the spread of the virus, men were denied their rights to be with their families and some ended up having another family in diaspora which led to divorce and marital problems.

2.4 NATIONAL OVERVIEW.

After the government announced the first 21-day coronavirus lockdown many female-headed families in Zimbabwe faced social and economic effects of the lockdown. Unemployment is one of the effects of COVID-19 lockdown. A 2018 International Monetary Fund (IMF) report says Zimbabwe's informal economy is the largest in Africa and the sector contributes around 60% of the country's economic activity, (Newsday, 2020). Most of informal employees are women. Their source of income is selling agricultural produce, clothes, exchanging money at the black market and hairdressing which was banned during the lockdown. According to World Health Organization (2020) COVID-19 pandemic has literally wiped away the informal sector which is causing a number of other socio-economic challenges. Therefore, female headed households suffered financially due to unemployment during COVID-19 lockdown.

Young female headed households were particularly vulnerable to shocks and stress as their mobility and livelihood options were limited to take care of younger siblings in the family. Burden of taking care of children, performing household chores among other routine duties they have at household and community level were the effects of COVID-19. Also access to justice was critical during lockdown. There were reported increase of sexual and gender based violence and financial distress due to the informal and survivalist nature of economic activity women involved in, (United Nations Zimbabwe, 2020) as challenge faced by female headed households during COVID-19

lockdown. These women failed to get justice or assisted with useful resources because of lockdown restrictions.

2.5 CASE STUDIES.

The following case studies shows the challenges faced by female headed families during or after the disaster hits. The outbreak of Ebola in the West African countries in 2014-2016 and the hurricane Matthew Haiti in 2010 will be used to show the effects of natural or man-made disasters on women and children. Undoubtedly, the health and socio-economic dynamics and impacts of covid-19 are similar to the experiences of the Ebola epidemic outbreak of 2014-2016 in the West African Nations of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, (WANEP, 2020). These case studies indicate that women are still facing similar challenges that they encountered during or after Ebola/ earthquakes that strikes part of the earth years back. Therefore, much needs to be done to mitigate human suffering and empower women to curb the effects of disasters on them and their households.

The case of Ebola outbreak in the West African Countries in 2014-2016.

Women faced many challenges during and after Ebola epidemic outbreak in 2014-2016 in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone. 11, 325 people died due to the outbreak in these three countries, (WANEP, 2020). The outbreak increased the number of female headed families with the challenge of hunger and starvation during the outbreak. The situation also affected widows and orphans as more men became sick and died and they left behind food-insecure families. Women had limited access to resources. Access to justice a critical challenge in the Ebola response in affected countries of the region as lockdown or reallocation of resources resulted in widespread exploitation and the inability of women to seek adequate assistance during the crisis, (WANEP, 2020). Unemployment was another challenge during and after the outbreak of Ebola epidemic. According to Korkoyah &

Wreh (2020) in rural areas where the majority of small holder farmers are women, food production dropped sharply as borders were closed, restricting cross-border traders and the impact continued beyond the post-Ebola crisis as small businesses and trade controlled by women struggled to return to its economic buoyancy.

Hurricane Matthew in Haiti in 2010.

Female headed families were negatively affected by the hurricane socially and economically in Haiti. According to Llorente-Marron, Diaz-Fernandez, Moreno & Mendez-Rodriguez (2020), the negative effects of the hurricane were further intensified when the head of the household was a woman, thus increasing the gap between the wealth of female-and male-headed households. Gender inequality and financial challenges were faced by female headed families after the earthquake in Haiti. Natural disasters have more negative impact on women and specifically on the economic possibilities of female-headed households, and shows that at least in Haiti, the enormous gender inequality that existed prior to the earthquake do not diminish post-disaster but are indeed exaggerated, (Llorente-Marron et al, 2020). Poor living conditions and violence against women was one of the challenges faced by female headed households after the earthquake. Llorente-Marron et al (2020) asserts that living conditions of female headed households were affected differently to those of men- headed households in disaster and post disaster situations. For instance, there is evidence of increased violence against women such as occurred after the hurricane in Haiti in 2010.

2.6 SUMMARY.

The chapter outlined the theoretical framework and global, regional and national overviews. It also presented the case studies drawn from the case of Ebola outbreak in West African countries and the earthquake in Haiti to show the effects of disasters on female headed households. The next chapter focused on data presentation and analyses of data collected by the researcher to understand challenges and survival strategies adopted by women headed households in Warren Park D, Harare.

CHAPTER THREE.

3.0 INTRODUCTION.

This chapter details the research methodology employed to understand the challenges and survival strategies adopted by women-headed households during COVID-19 in Warren Park D, Harare. The research plan of the researcher focused on providing relevant information drawn from the research questions mentioned above in chapter one. The chapter highlights the research design, research methodology, population and sample, sampling methods to be used, data collection, data presentation and analysis, ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN.

The study employed a case study. According to Kabir (2016) case study is an in-depth investigation of a single person, group, event or community. Through case studies, the researcher gained in-depth understanding of situations and meaning for those involved, (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). The case study research design allowed the researcher to understanding the challenges and survival strategies adopted by women headed families in Warren Park D during COVID-19. The effects of the challenges on their lives were further unraveled through in-depth interviews and face to face interviews with the family members.

3.2 TARGET POPULATION.

Target population are all the subjects likely to take part in the study in any form of the research, (David & Sutton, 2016). The study targeted ten female headed households in the area. The researcher decided to involve female who assumed due to different grounds like divorce or separation, death of a husband or a breadwinner and where the husband is working far away from home or in diaspora. This was done to have a better understanding of the challenges of these

different families with different backgrounds if they are similar or different according to their environments or family backgrounds. The study also targeted key informants from the CCW in Warren Park D, social workers from the DSD and Child Line. These professionals were targeted because they work with vulnerable children and women especially when they are in need. The information from the social workers helped the researcher to gain more information about the challenges and survival strategies adopted by these families.

3.3 SAMPLE SIZE.

Etikan (2016) defines a sample as a portion of a population or universe which is the subject for the research. The researcher drew a sample of ten women who are family heads and five family members in these female headed families. The sample was drawn only from the predetermined population under the assumption that they will be representative of the population. The sample size was practical to seek the responses of the targeted population by the researcher. The researcher also acknowledges five social workers from the DSD and Child Line. The CCW in Warren Park D was acknowledged for the researcher to gain more information about the challenges and survival strategies adopted by female headed households in Warren Park D, Harare.

3.4 SAMPLING.

Vonk (2016) defines sample as members of the population from which data is collected. Purposive sampling method was utilized in this study. Purposive sampling refers to a method by which a researcher intentionally chooses the participants for particular study being studied by their capacity to give the required and necessary information, (Etikan, 2016). Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to select participants based on the purpose of the study with the expectation that participants will provide unique and rich information of value to the study. Thus, purposive

sampling allowed the researcher to decide what needs to be known and to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience. The availability and willingness to participate in sharing the knowledge and experience by the respondent will allow the research to gain rich information of value to the study. Purposive sampling, the researcher will obtain a comprehensive understanding by continuing to sample until no new substantive information is acquired, (Etikan, 2016).

3.5 DATA COLLECTION.

Data collection is defined as the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses and evaluate outcomes, (Kabir, 2016). Data collection uses different tools which provides best results of information from the respondents which is needed by the researcher.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION TOOLS.

Data collection tools can be defined as instruments used to gather data from the participant when carrying out a research. The study used an interview guide to gain information through semi-structured questions. According to Kabir (2016), interview guide is a list of questions and topics that need to be covered during the conversation, usually in a particular order.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION METHODS.

The researcher used different data collection methods such as in-depth interviews, face-to-face interviews, key informant interviews and documentary research to gather information. The use of different data collection methods helps to have in-depth understanding of the views of the respondents. It also helps to cover the weakness of each method with the strength of the another.

a. In-depth interviews.

In-depth interviews are informal interviews without a list of questions which guide an interview process. It is a qualitative research method that uses open-ended questions to uncover information on a topic of the researcher, (Etikan, 2016). Therefore, this method enables the researcher to gain more knowledge from different angles as the respondent will answer the questions using his or her own words and explaining the events in details. The research will be able to note down the information given by the interviewee both verbal and non-verbal. It allows the respondents to express their opinions and ideas using their own words. Therefore, in-depth interviews were conducted with the women-headed families to gather information on the challenges they are facing and the survival strategies they are adopting during COVID-19. However, in-depth interviews are time consuming and due to COVID-19 restrictions the researcher faced some challenge in conducting the interview. Also participants that are sensitive may respond falsely to avoid further questions by the interviewer.

b. Face to face interviews.

This interviews were used to note the non-verbal communication by the respondents. One on one interviews provide the researcher with more detailed information as the respondent will show his/her knowledge, experience and feelings on the area of study. Open-ended questions will be used. However, face to face is time consuming and due to COVID-19 regulations the respondent and the interviewer must maintain social distance and wearing a mask which will led to poor communication as one cannot hear clearly what the other is saying.

c. Key informant interviews.

These are interviews conducted by the researcher with people who have personal knowledge or experience with a particular problem or have a professional training in that area. Key informants for this study were the CCW in Warren Park D, the social welfare officer or probation officer at the DSD (Makombe), Musasa Project and Child line in Harare. The significance of these key informant interviews is that some of the information given by women-headed households may be failed or hesitated to be provided to the researcher so it can be obtained from the key informants mentioned above. Therefore, key informant interviews curb the limitations associated with interviewing the target population.

d. Documentary research.

It involves the use of secondary sources of information which entails collection of data from books, journals, newspapers, electronic media, library literature, diaries among other published works. Documentary research allowed the researcher to understand the problem of the study. The researcher was able to draw the conclusions from the writings of other authors who worked on the same topic which unearth the challenges and survival strategies adopted by women-headed households. The documentary research was easily accessible and readily available.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION PROCEDURES.

The data collected from the respondents were recorded in a summary form. Information which were not recorded in English, were translated.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics can be defined as a set of principles concerning right and wrong and how people should behave when carrying out the research. According to Kabir (2016), ethics in research helps to promote the aims of the study such as knowledge, truth and avoidance of error. The principles guide the researcher's activities to avoid violation of participant's rights. The researcher was guided by the following ethics when conducting the research: informed consent and confidentiality.

i. Informed consent.

Bodgan & Bicklen (2016) asserts that informed consent is the written or verbal approval given to the respondents who are told about the nature and disadvantages of their participation in the research. Participation is voluntary. Respondents were not forced to take part in this study, forcing them to participate will make the respondents convey false information and not participating effectively. The researcher makes sure that the participants are well informed about the purpose of the study. By knowing that the study will also benefit them through the help from different agencies, the respondents participated more effectively and express their problems sincerely with the hope that they will get help.

ii. Confidentiality.

Confidentiality can be defined as an assurance given by the researcher to the respondent that his/her secrets or information which he/she will review to the researcher will be considered as private information not to be shared to everyone and their names will not be published. This

allowed the respondents to participate more profitably knowing that their names and privacy will not be exposed.

3.10 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Delimitation of the study are the boundaries set for the study. The study is carried out to understand the challenges and survival strategies adopted by women headed households during COVID-19 in Warren Park D, Harare. There are other vulnerable groups of people like people living with disabilities and the elderly but this study is mainly focused on the challenges and survival strategies adopted by women headed households in Warren Park D. The study. Therefore, the study had limitations in terms of groups of people, area and time.

a. Women-headed households in Warren Park D, Harare.

The focus of the study “women-headed household’ is one of the delimitation of the study. The study only focus on the challenges faced by women-headed households during COVID-19 and their survival strategies not looking on the other groups of vulnerable people during this period. Also the study is only focusing on the women-headed households residing in Warren Park D in Harare. Hence, the area of the study is another delimitation of this study. The study is also guided by the time frame which is during COVID-19.

b. COVID-19 lockdown.

The study is also limited due to time frame “during COVID-19.” The COVID-19 lockdown started on the 30th of March 2020. Therefore, time frame from 30th of May to December 2020 is the delimitation of this study. The research is not mainly focused on the challenges faced by these families before COVID-19 lockdown. Although some challenges have traces that they began to existed before the lockdown and stretches into the lockdown because the problem was not solved

during that time. The study focused on this time frame because COVID-19 affected every human being on this planet because of the sicknesses, lockdown of economic activities, stress or depression and death of people. Therefore, the need to support more disadvantaged people like women and children during COVID-19 as their vulnerability increases in such a time.

3.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.

Limitations are factors that can obstruct the researcher to gain some of the information which is essential for the study. The researcher faced some challenges like the need of COVID-19 certificate that shows he or she is not infected with the virus so that people will be free to welcome the researcher. Also people were not welcoming visitors to avoid the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, conversations during interviews were made short and precise to limit the time of exposing the respondents to COVID-19. Some of the respondents did not want to participate or share personal secrets which brings back memories especially those who were divorced and widows as the death of their loved ones makes them sad.

3.12 SUMMARY

The chapter highlighted the research design which was used to carry out this research, that is case study. It also highlighted the research methodology, population and sample, sampling methods to be used, data collection, data presentation and analysis, ethical considerations and limitations of the study. The following chapter presents research findings, analyzed data and interpretation of results based on thematic areas

CHAPTER FOUR.

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and analyses data collected through interviews and documentary research on the challenges and survival strategies adopted by women headed households in Warren Park D, Harare during COVID-19 lockdown which started on the 30th of March 2020. The research explored the challenges faced by these families and the survival strategies they developed during the lockdown. The study explored the roles of the state and non-state organizations in helping these families to cope or solve their problems and appreciate the work of the state and non-state organizations to enhance their skills they adopted during the lockdown to avoid facing similar problems when a crisis/disaster is to happen in the future.

4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA PRESENTATION

The demographic profile of respondents is important in the research as it helps to draw conclusions that can be attributed to certain groups. Therefore, the profile of the respondents was explored.

Table 4a. Demographic profile of respondents.

Variables	Category	Number of respondents	Males	Females	Total percentage of respondents.
Age	10-15years	2	1	1	10%
	16-20	2	1	1	10%
	21-25	2	0	2	10%
	26-30	4	0	4	20%
	31-35	5	1	4	25%
	36-40	3	0	3	15%
	41 and above	2	1	1	10%
Sex	Females	16			80%
	Males	4			20%
Marital status	Married (Husband ansent)	4	0	4	20%
	Abandoned/seperated	3	0	3	15%
	Divorced	1	0	1	5%
	Widowed	2	0	2	10%
Educational level	Primary	7	2	5	35%
	Secondary	8	2	6	40%
	Tertiary	5	2	3	25%
Employment status	formal	2	2	5	35%
	Informal	13	4	9	65%
	Never employed	2	0	2	10%
Total		20	4	16	100%

4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF THE STUDY RESPONDENTS.

This section presents the demographic data of the 20 respondents.

Distribution of respondents by educational level.

Ten respondents were asked that which level of education did they reach. Seven respondents (35%) reached the primary level and they couldn't go further with their education because of financial problems. Eight respondents (40%) revealed that they reached ordinary level and five respondents (25%) managed to reach the tertiary level and they are graduates. From the age of 26 years, women constituted the majority of respondents faced the challenge of unemployment during COVID-19 because they were involved in the informal sector which was banned during the

lockdown. According to World Health Organization (2020) covid-19 pandemic has literally wiped away the informal sector which is causing a number of other socio-economic challenges. The main reason for their problems was lack of educational qualifications and skills for them to be employed in the formal sector. The information given by the respondents showed that eleven respondents (55%) does not have five ordinary levels which are considered minimal requirements when one is looking for a job in the formal sector. According to Kamanga-Njiko & Tajik (2020) covid-19 crisis poses a serious threat to women's engagement in economic activities, especially in informal sectors where women constitute fifty-five percent of the work force. Therefore, female headed households faced financial challenges during covid-19 because the pandemic wiped away their sources of income.

Distribution of respondents by marital status.

Twenty respondents were asked that why are they single parent. Two respondents revealed that they their husbands died and they automatically became head of the family. Four women revealed that their male partners migrated to South Africa, Dubai and Mozambique in search of greener pastures. Three respondents indicated that they became the head of the family because they were abandoned by their husbands and the other one was a divorcee. Due to economic hardship in Zimbabwe, men migrated to neighboring countries in search of greener pasture and left their families' responsibilities in the hands of their wives, some abandoned their wives and children and remarry in those foreign lands. Jackson (2016) notes that the rise of males migrating elsewhere for work increased the number of families headed by single women Hence, the reason why there is 20% of married women with their husbands who are migrant workers, 15% of women abandoned by their male partners and 5% divorced in Warren Park D in Harare.

Distribution of respondents by employment status.

Twenty respondents were asked that are they formally or informally employed. Thirteen respondents (65%) indicated that they were not formally employed. Seven respondents (35%) indicated that they were formally employed as civil servants and two respondents (10%) revealed that they were never employed with the reasons best known to them. The information given by the respondents, it showed that the majority of women (65%) in Warren Park D are involved in the activities of the informal sector as their source of income. The reason maybe that many women are not educated. The findings showed that 55% of women heading families in Warren Park D did not have five ordinary levels. During COVID-19 these women involved in the informal sector were as good as considered unemployed because they were not going to work and the informal activities were banned in the country. According to Macheke (2020) in Zimbabwe, the lockdown measures have led to the shutdown of informal food markets and as a result informal workers struggle to find work and access to food has become a key challenge for poor urban households. Due to banning of informal employment, female headed households faced financial problems during COVID-19. Without alternative income sources, vulnerable female headed families encountered difficulties despite government relaxing some lockdown restrictions, (Nyikadzino,2020). Therefore, female headed households suffered a lot during the lockdown because they had no source of income or any means to generate money which enable them to access to useful resources like healthcare, social assistance and justice.

4.3 CHALLENGES AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY WOMEN-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS DURING COVID-19 IN WARREN PARK D, HARARE.

a) National lockdown restrictions.

Twenty respondents were asked that what were the ways in which COVID-19 lockdown measures affected their socio-economic lifestyles. National lockdown restrictions were cited as one of the challenges faced by female-headed households in Warren Park D. Twenty respondents (100%) said that national lockdown restrictions forced them to stay home, made them lose their jobs and suffer financial problems.

Laws and policies were introduced which were comprised of national lockdown measures or restrictions. Lockdown measures like Statutory Instrument 110/2020 and Operation on informal sector when the designated markets have been revamped and illegal vending sites at undesignated spaces were demolished were introduced. This action by the government affected the women in informal sector as their sources of income was banned. One on the respondents revealed that:

“life was better before lockdown, ever since covid-19 lockdown began it hard to survive in Zimbabwe. I can’t go anywhere to generate money because of police violence. I can’t afford to be home and not work if I don’t go to work my family will die of hunger so what the difference does it make?” (woman, aged 33).

The government measures impacted heavily on informal workers as they lost their livelihood due to lockdowns and slowing demands for their services. The government did not give people time to prepare enough for the lockdown and people were not prepared to survive those days of extension of the lockdown. Gukurume & Oosterom (2020) notes that the abrupt announcement of the

lockdown gave the vendors little time to organize their savings and stock up food. Therefore, in future events like that of covid-19 lockdown, the government must give people time to prepare for the lockdown and help the people in need with useful resources.

a) Closure of boarders.

Twenty respondents were asked that in what ways did COVID-19 lockdown measures affected their lifestyles. The closure of boarders was cited as one of the challenges encountered by female headed households during COVID-19. Eight respondents (40%) indicated that closure of boarders made them lose their jobs as there were trade disruptions because of slowing down of movements of goods as boarders were closed. Two respondents (10%) indicated that the impose of stricter sanitary controls and curfews made them unable to visits their husband in South Africa and Mozambique. Two respondents revealed this:

“I am a single mother and I am a runner, i used to go to South Africa and Zambia to buy clothes and shoes in bulk and sell here in Zimbabwe. The business was doing great up until covid-19 came. I’m broke now because I used the money (capital and profit) to buy food and other things needed in the house while I was waiting for reopening of boarders.’

(women, aged 28)

“my husband is working in South Africa and he used to visit us more often but during covid-19 he couldn’t visit us anymore because of travel restriction and closure of boarders. I wasn’t going to work before covid-19 because my husband was taking care of everything but now I

don't know where to start from because he is no longer here like he used to" (women, aged 40).

World Health Organization announced the total shutdown of all international boards to curb the spread of COVID-19 from one continent to the other. Zimbabwe closed its borders following the lockdown measures according to WHO guidelines. The exchange and selling of goods which was taking place before the lockdown between countries in the region created employment especially among women. According to Dayton & Williamson, (2020) women's reduced livelihood opportunities due to travel restrictions or increased unemployment impact their decision making power in the home. Stress and depression is affecting women heading families as they are taking care of all the responsibilities of a family without resources because they are unemployed.

b) Social justice.

Twenty respondents were asked that in what ways in which COVID-19 lockdown measures affected their socio-economic lifestyle. Limited access to justice was cited as one of the challenges faced by female-headed households during the lockdown. Two respondents (10%) revealed that they were unfairly dismissed from work and one was chased out of the house they were renting because they couldn't pay for rent but there was no justice for them. Thirteen respondents (65%) indicated that they lost their jobs when the government destroyed all legal markets. Seven respondents (35%) indicated that they were forced to work throughout the height of the pandemic despite fears of contracting the virus or bringing it home to their families. One of the respondents revealed that:

"three months down the line after covid-19 lockdown started, I couldn't raise money to pay my rent and electricity bills because I'm no longer going

to work (zvimusika zvakavharwa chero zvemuno nuD hakuchatengeseki). I explained my situation to my landlord but she didn't take it. She took my valuables which was worth the money I owe her and kick me out her house. I went to the police but my case was not handled fairly then I decided to move in with my relatives.” (woman, aged 24).

Gleixner & Cilem (2021) asserts that COVID-19 virus has exposed, fed off and increased existing inequalities of wealth, gender and race. Social justice must be upheld during or after a disaster. According to Gukurume & Oosterom (2020) in Harare and other cities, the local authorities have taken the advantage of the national lockdown to redesign the informal economy. Those in power took advantage of the poor, oppressing them during crisis to achieve their agendas. This act by the authorities impacted heavily the women heading families as they destroyed their sources of income.

d) Lack of psycho-social support.

Twenty respondents were asked that in what ways did the COVID-19 lockdown measures affected their socio-economic lifestyles. Lack of psycho-social support was cited as one of the challenges experienced by female-headed households during the lockdown. Twenty respondents (100%) revealed that during the lockdown, they were not mingling in-person at the weddings and church gatherings because they were banned and online interaction was not that effective. Respondents indicated that being isolated at home without mingling and sharing problems and ideas with others was boring and stressful. Two respondents had this to say:

“we were locked up in our houses during the lockdown, no leisure, no 9parties, churches and night clubs and I was lonely because my husband is in South Africa

he couldn't visit us. All those places we used to go to freshen up our minds were closed and I couldn't even go to check on my neighbor's place so one ended up being stressed all the time. However, I managed to chat with my husbands, church mates and friends on social media and the platforms made me feel like we are together all the time as we share ideas and solve our problems together."

(girl, aged 19).

'spending much time at home doing nothing was boring I felt like my life was over because I couldn't mingle with my friends and having fun. But I managed to mingle with my sisters and my mother and together as a family we had close bond we prayed and played together rather than chatting on WhatsApp with someone who is faraway.' **(boy, ages 14).**

Spending quality time with friends or loved ones can just feel good for everyone. Too much time on your own can make you feel lonely and out of touch. It is good to socialize because it can lighten your mood and make you feel happier (better mental health), promote sense of safety, belonging and security and it allows you to confide in others and let them confide in you, (Mercycare, 2020). Hence, socialization is important during crisis as improves brain health and it makes people forget about the current problem and be happy for that moment.

COVID-19 pandemic is negatively affecting social relationships, which should ultimately lead to negative health implications. WHO asserts that the coronavirus pandemic has been followed by a concern for potential spike in suicides, exacerbated by social isolation due to quarantine and social distancing guidelines, fear, unemployment and financial factors. Many developed coronaphobia which researchers have identified as a byproduct of the pandemic, (Mercycare, 2020). This is where individuals have excessive fear of contracting the virus that caused marked impairment in

daily life functioning. Decision-makers are advised to provide online educational campaigns that improve the sociological health of the women heading families.

c) Unemployment.

Twenty respondents were asked to point out the challenges and the survival strategies they have adopted during COVID-19. Unemployment was cited as one of the challenges faced by female-headed households during the lockdown. Thirteen respondents (65%) revealed that they lost their jobs early last year when the lockdown measures were initiated and destroyed market places because they were considered as hotspot area of containing the virus. Two of the respondents had this to say:

“As a vendor I had low sales due to travel restrictions during the lockdown, and this affected my family because selling second hand clothes is my main source of income. I managed to advertise and market the clothes through social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp groups. It worked but to a lesser extend as I face challenges of transport to deliver the clothes to the people and the bundles are expensive so sometimes I would miss the customers as I went offline for some says as bundles depleted”. (woman, aged 35)

‘I am a hustler and I’m not formally employed I do everything and anything for the survival of my family. Covid-19 yakavharisa zvese hakusisina kana mikoto yekuti ndingaende kunoshanda kuti ndiwane chekuraramisa mhuri hapana kana chekubata’ (women, aged 37).

This shows that the government has the role to empower and equip with women in informal sector with needed resources so that they can be able to function normally during or after a crisis. Covid-

19 lockdown banned all informally activities which some families depends on for surviving. According to World Health Organization (2020) COVID-19 pandemic has literally wiped away the informal sector which is causing a number of other socio-economic challenges Being a family head without a source of income is very stressful because mother will not have resources or means to generate money to fulfill her duties.

d) Hunger and starvation.

Twenty respondents were asked that what were the challenges they faced and the survival strategies they have adopted during covid-19. Hunger and starvation was cited as one of the challenged experienced by female-headed households during the lockdown. Six respondents (30%) indicated that they had one meal per day and they had no money to bay basic food. Hunger and starvation were pointed out by three key informants, as one of the challenges faced by female headed households during COVID-19. The CCW notes that some of the children were coming to him to seek help because of the shortage of food in their homes so that he will get assistance from the DSD. Due to hunger and starvation in these families the CCW had this to say:

“to mitigate hunger and starvation in these families, I managed to get in contact with the Department of Social Development to get something for them but sometime I would get maize, cooking oil, rice, soap and beans but these were still not enough I also approach individuals in the community in the area for some more food to balance their diet.” (man, aged 32).

Two of the respondents revealed that:

“I had a tuck-shop in town but it was demolished during the operation. I don’t have money or any means to generate money these days and for some days we were

eating porridge without sugar because I had no food to give my children proper meal and my husband is very ill so I'm the one in charge of everything. My husband's relatives gave us money and I managed to start a small business. I am selling vegetables, tomatoes and onions at my gate. I'm managing to raise little profit per day but after some days I am able to buy food for my family." **(woman, aged 34).**

"at first my parents helped us, they bought us food and give us money but as time goes by and lockdown being extended they stopped supporting my family as they were also facing financial problems because they were working. I was so stressed and I couldn't sleep at night thinking what I will give to my four children. I went to Msasa Organization for assistance". **(woman, aged 31).**

The citations above show the importance of all systems surrounding every individual. Women and children are among the most vulnerable group of people during disasters, therefore they must make use of the systems around them for their own advantage to get what they need during crisis. Guy-Evans (2020) notes that the ecological model of human development indicates that individuals do not exist in isolation but they belong to the family, community, culture and organization which influence them and they also influence the system. The relationship between an individual with the immediate environment like family, school and peers is important during or after crisis. The immediate environment will be there for you in times of need, if they fail the extended family or the community. The state is responsible for providing assistance to those in need during or after a disaster.

e) Financial constraints.

Twenty respondents were asked to point out the challenges they faced during COVID-19. Financial constraints were cited as one of the challenges faced by female-headed households during COVID-19. Seven respondents (35%) revealed that due to unemployment they find it to pay bills like rent, water electricity, funeral policy and medical aid. Their financial problem which made them not being able to pay rent and other bills led to other problems like assaults from the landlords and violence. Two respondents indicated that they were given notices and were thrown out of their houses because they failed to pay rent, water and electricity bills. One of the respondents had this to say:

‘there was a time that things were hard, I couldn’t pay rent for two months because I used the last money I had to buy food. I reasoned with my landlord promising him to pay up as soon as things get better but he couldn’t listen to me. I was given notice to leave his house as soon as possible. I left the house and moved in with my parents.’ (women, aged 42).

According to WHO (2020) without concerted action, families barely getting by could be pushed into poverty, and the poorest families could face levels of deprivation that have not been seen for decades. Hence, without alternative income sources, vulnerable female headed families faced difficulties during COVID-19. The government and non-governmental organizations must help the families in need during crisis to allow people exercise their rights like right to shelter, water among others.

f) Limited access to education.

Twenty respondents were asked that what were the challenges they faced during COVID-19 and survival strategies they have adopted during the lockdown. Limited access to education was cited as one of the challenges faced by female-headed households during COVID-19. Five respondents (25%) indicated that they did not go to schools since early last year and they were not accessing e-learning because they had no phones and money to buy data. the impact of covid-19 on the right to education if felt worldwide. During the lockdown, schools were closed. Online lessons or e-learning was introduced so that learners from pre-school up to tertiary education may continue with their studies. However, due to limited resources like smartphones/laptop, data bundles/WIFI and money to pay online tutors, some of the children in female headed households failed to access these online lessons. The respondents had this to say:

“I am a divorced mother with four kids and all of them wanted to continue with their education. I couldn’t afford online lessons because they don’t phone and data bundles were very expense. I managed to get a tutor here in Warren Park D so that 2 of my children who are in exam classes (grade 7 and form 4) may continue with their lessons to prepare them for the upcoming exams”. **(woman, aged 44)**

Two of the respondents also had this to say:

“the lockdown affected my education because I only attend extra-lessons when my mother got money. When I’m not going to school, I’m the one doing the house chores while my mother is doing her business.” **(girl, aged 12)**

“online learning is affecting me because sometimes there is poor network and sometimes I would miss lectures because I have no data bundles or Wi-Fi.”

(boy, aged 20).

This shows that limited access to education led to child labor during covid-19. Global Campaign for Education (2020) asserts that from 1.5 billion learners out of school in March 2020, nearly 1.1 billion learners in 146 countries are still affected today. African Charter on the Rights of Women asserts that women and girls have the right to education, training and skills. Education is essential for human development. Individuals must have access to educational services during or after disaster strikes. Lack of access to education increased child labor and child abuse in the home, the lockdowns have represented a global setback for children’s rights, with devastating consequences. The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action notes that children are now more at risk of labor exploitation due to covid-19 because of closing of schools, lack of adequate access to remote learning which forced children to spend more time, family financial problems due to job loss as a result of lockdown and quarantine, (NGO ATINA, 2020).

g) Limited access to healthcare services.

Twenty respondents were asked that what were the challenges they faced during COVID-19 and what were the survival strategies they have adopted during the lockdown. Limited access to education was cited as one of the problems faced by female-headed households during COVID-19. Two respondents (10%) said that they failed to get their babies immunized on time because the local polyclinic was closed during the lockdown. Three respondents (15%) indicated that they differed on ART for some days because they couldn’t get their medication on time because they had to look for another hospital where they can collect their medications. Due to lockdown measures and restrictions, the local clinic Warren Park Polyclinic was closed. Private clinics and

big government hospitals like Parirenytwa hospital were the only functioning hospitals during the lockdown but their services are very expensive and the poor were not affording their services.

Respondents had this to say:

“I couldn’t get my baby immunized because the poly-clinic was closed. So I had to go to Kuwadzana clinic for my baby to be immunized.” (women, aged 25)

‘I failed to get my family planning pills on time because I used to get them at very cheap price at the poly-clinic. I raised money to get the pills at private hospital at a very expensive price and I had to change from taking the family planning pills to Depo-Provera because it last longer than the pills’ (women, aged 35).

The assertion above, shows that the healthcare delivery has changed during the pandemic. Worries related to finances, childcare and being afraid of getting infected with the virus disrupts people’s lifestyles and mental health. WHO (2020) notes that the uncertainty about the future, the ceaseless news coverage and constant social media driven flood of messages increased sense of anxiety. Therefore, health services are essential during crisis so that people can get help to avoid sickness and promote the well-being of the people so that they can be able to cope with their problems during crisis.

According WHO (2020) health providers experienced fears of helplessness, coupled with the obligation to know answers for their patients, becoming infected and spreading the disease to others. This led to closure of many local hospitals in Zimbabwe, government hospitals were the only ones that were functioning. To make sure that women and children are exercising their rights during or after the disaster strikes, the government must provide extensive and regular training to healthcare professionals to be able to handle situations and able function in times like this.

4.4 INTERVENTIONS BY THE GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS.

a) Social assistance.

Twenty respondents were asked that what form of assistance they received from the government or non-governmental organization to solve the challenges they faced during COVID-19. Social assistance was cited as one of the aid received by female-headed households from the government during COVID-19. Five respondents (25%) received maize, cooking oil, sugar and chunks from the Department of Social Development during the lockdown. During the interview, two respondents had this to say:

“One day when I was watching teaching, there was an advert which was encouraging people in need to go to the Department of Social Welfare for assistance. When I heard that people are getting assistance from the Department of Social Welfare, I went there to get help and I was given maize, 2litres of cooking oil, green bar and chunks and his really helped me because my situation was very bad,” (woman, aged 34).

“takangoonawo kuti mumba hamuna chekudya tikanotsvaga rubatiro kusocial welfare. Takanopihwa chibage, mafuta nemachunks, “(woman, aged 40).

Interviewing one of the key informants at Musasa Project she has this to say:

“women who are family heads, they approached us during lockdown because of financial problems as they were not able to pay rent and other bills. Therefore, as an organization we helped the homeless with temporary shelter and encourage others who were struggling to raise money to engage in money generating project

they are interested in and empower them with skills so that they can be able to solve their financial problems by themselves.” (woman, aged 35).

The rapid spread of covid-19 pandemic, many countries including Zimbabwe started to implement social protection programs to eliminate the negative impacts of the covid-19 pandemic crisis and enhance community resilience, (Abdoul- Azize & Gamil, 2020). The government called for families in need of social welfare assistance to go to the nearest Department of Social Welfare to get assistance. However, some of the families in did not received social assistance from the government due to the terms and condition of the Social Welfare Assistance Act Chapter 17:06. The Act compels government to only extend social protection assistance to a “destitute or indigent person” who is “over 60 years of age, is handicapped physically or mentally, suffers continuous ill-health or is a dependent of a person who is destitute or indigent or incapable of looking after oneself”. According to Nyikadzino (2020) Finance and Economic Development minister Mthuli Ncube in July said that social welfare structures would identify the beneficiaries of government’s social protection grants. Hence, it’s like the government’s social welfare and protection grants are not meant for everyone, moreso in a time of crisis. If government does not count people like women heading families among the vulnerable who deserve social welfare assistance, then it is not serving the people. Therefore, the government must provide social assistance to every individual in need because almost everyone is vulnerable during crisis like that of covid-19 pandemic.

b) The government minimized the lockdown measures.

Twenty respondents were asked that what form of assistance they received from the government during COVID-19. Reducing lockdown measures by the government was cited as a form of assistance received by female-headed households during COVID-19. Twenty respondents (100%) indicated that this action by the government enable them to resume work, education and opening of borders and intercity travelling allowed them to visit their loved ones. Interviewing one of the respondents with the husband who is a migrant worker had this to say:

“when the government minimized the lockdown restrictions, I managed to go to South Africa to see my husband in December and he gave me money to start a small business. I managed to buy more goods to sell so that I can look after my children while my husband is at work.” (woman, aged 25).

Another respondent had this to say:

“I was able to go to my parent’s house in the rural area which I haven’t seen for some time. They gave me maize and many grains because mealie-meal was expensive.” (woman, aged 31).

National lockdown restrictions forced women to stay at home. There were travel restrictions and social distancing rule that prohibits people to go to work and interact in the community. Therefore, lockdown measures led to hunger and starvation, stress and depression due to lack of financial resources as people were not going to work. The act of the government to minimize lockdown restrictions enable people to resume their jobs and their hustles. According to Nyikadzino (2020) though informal traders are now operating, government’s position since the easing of lockdown restrictions is that those who want to operate should register their businesses, operate from

designated areas and present tax returns. Therefore, women must take this opportunity to do all the formalities and register their businesses so that they will not be affected by these disasters in the future.

4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY.

This chapter focused on the data presentation and analysis paying more attention to the objectives of the study. The chapter presented the socio-economic challenges faced by women headed households which includes unemployment, hunger, limited access to education, health services and financial resources to pay bills. Survival strategies adopted by women headed households during covid-19 lockdown were also presented. It also highlighted the strategies employed by the state and non-state organizations to mitigate poverty and human suffering during a disaster. The next chapter focuses on the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE.

5.0 INTRODUCTION.

This chapter provides a summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendations. The challenges and survival strategies adopted by women headed households during COVID-19 are presented in this chapter. It provides conclusions based on the challenges faced by female headed households and the survival strategy they have adopted during COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter also provides recommendations so as to mitigate poverty and human suffering during or after a disaster.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS.

The aim of this study was to examine the challenges and survival strategies adopted by women headed households in Warren Park D in Harare. The objectives of the study were to explore the challenges faced by women-headed households during COVID-19 lockdown, investigate survival strategies adopted by women-headed households during COVID-19 lockdown, identify the role of the government and non-governmental organizations in addressing the challenges faced by women headed-households during COVID-19 lockdown and to identify the role of the government and non-governmental organizations in enhancing the surviving strategies adopted by women-headed households during COVID-19. The study used case study as research design. A total number of ten female headed households and five children in these household were selected as respondents for this study. Additional information was obtained from five key informants who included the CCWs in Warren Park D and social workers at the DSD. The study adopted some of the ethical considerations which include confidentiality, informed consent and voluntary participation to protect both the researcher and the respondents.

The study indicated that female headed families faced hunger, unemployment, stress, financial crisis due to national lockdown restrictions and closure of boarder. They lacked access to education, healthcare services and justice during COVID-19. The study explored the survival strategies adopted by women headed households to be able to cope with their problems. Online shopping and selling, e-learning, money generating projects and online socialization were revealed as survival strategies adopted by female headed households to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. The roles of the government and non-governmental organizations to address the challenges faced by these families were identified. The roles included the provision of social assistance to the people in need during a crisis, empower women through education so that they can acquire skills and requirements so that they can formally employed and ensure that essential services like healthcare to be accessible during a disaster. However, the government minimized lockdown restrictions so that people can resume their jobs and the government is encouraging all women in informal sector to register their business and do all the formalities so that their businesses will not be affected in future events of natural or man-made disasters.

5.2 CONCLUSION.

Challenges faced by women headed households in Warren Park D, Harare.

During covid-19, female headed households faced many challenges which are as follows; hunger and starvation, financial resources, unemployment, limited access to healthcare services, justice and education. Almost all of these challenges were caused by national lockdown measures which banned all informal activities and closure of borders. From the information gathered, it showed that the economic crisis in the country worsens their suffering as Department of Social Development failed to offer social assistance to the vulnerable people during covid-19.

Survival strategies adopted by women headed households in Warren Park D, Harare.

The study concluded that online shopping and selling, e-learning, money generating projects and online socialization were the survival strategies adopted by female headed households to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. The government and non-governmental organization provided education and skills to women heading families so that they can enhance their survival strategies they have adopted during covid-19. However, to a lesser extent some of these families received aid from the Department of Social Welfare and other humanitarian organizations during covid-19.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS.

In line with the findings presented in this study, the researcher made the following recommendations to handle unfavorable life experiences that was encountered by female headed households during covid-19.

Provision of social assistance during or after a disaster.

Social assistance services must be given to all the people in need during disaster/crisis. The government must not use of means testing during crisis because almost everyone is vulnerable. Social assistance must be provided as a right during a disaster.

Government should provide medical facilities and testing kits.

People should have access to health services during disasters. The government should provide adequate medical facilities, testing kits, sanitizers, masks and everything that is needed by health workers to protect them from containing the virus so that local clinics will not be closed.

Participation of women in policy formulation.

Single parents must participate in policy formulation or programs that benefits them and make use of available resources so that their need will be known and mitigated.

5.4 AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY.

There is need to examine the effectiveness of aid given during/after disaster to female headed households to cope with traumatic psychosocial effects of a disaster.

5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY.

The chapter provided the overview of the research findings, conclusions and recommendations to the study to mitigate the suffering of female headed households during or after a disaster in the future. This was the final chapter of the study.

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE KEY INFORMANTS.

My name is Cathrine P. Dhlumingo. I'm a **BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK** student at Bindura University of Science Education. I am carrying out a research entitled "**AN EXAMINATION OF THE CHALLENGES AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY WOMEN HEADED HOUSEHOLDS DURING COVID-19: THE CASE OF WARREN PARK D**". I have seen it worthy to interview you for some information relating to the topic above. I am kindly asking you to participate in this study by answering the questions below. There is no any other materialistic gain after this research project.

Ethical considerations.

1. Participation in this research is voluntary and you can withdraw from the interview if you are no longer feeling comfortable.
2. Your confidentiality will be respected.
3. No names will be required during this process for anonymity, your personal security and the security of your agency.

I would like to seek your consent to participate

YES

NO

THANK YOU.

SECTION A

Demographic Information for the key informants selected.

Gender	
Age	
Organization	
Number of years at work	

SECTION B

1. What are the challenges faced by female headed families during COVID-19?

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2. In what ways did COVID-19 affect their socio-economic lifestyle?

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3. What are the survival strategies adopted by female headed households during COVID-19?

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4. To what extent did the government and non-governmental organizations address the challenges faced by female headed households during COVID-19?

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5. How did the government and any other non-governmental organization enhance the survival strategies that were adopted by female headed households during covid-19?

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6. In what ways can the effects of COVID-19 be addressed especially among the female headed families?

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7. What recommendations do you propose so as to deal with the COVID-19 related socio-economic challenges among female headed households?

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Thank you for participating.

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE WOMEN HEADED HOUSEHOLDS.

My name is Cathrine P. Dhlumingo. I'm a **BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK** student at Bindura University of Science Education. I am carrying out a research entitled "**AN EXAMINATION OF THE CHALLENGES AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY WOMEN HEADED HOUSEHOLDS DURING COVID-19**". I am kindly asking you to participate in this study by answering the following questions. There is no any other materialistic gain after this research project.

Ethical considerations.

1. Participation in this research is voluntary and you can withdraw from the interview if you are no longer feeling comfortable.
2. Your confidentiality will be respected.
3. No names will be required during this process for anonymity, your personal security and the security of your agency.

I would like to seek your consent to participate

YES

NO

THANK YOU.

SECTION A

Demographic information for selected respondents.

Age	
Sex	
Educational level.	
Occupation	

1. What are the challenges you faced during COVID-19 lockdown?

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2. In what ways did COVID-19 lockdown measures affect your socio-economic lifestyle?

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3. What survival strategies did you adopt during COVID-19?

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4. What form of assistance from the government or non-governmental organizations did you received to solve the challenges, you faced during COVID-19?

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5. How the government or any non-governmental organization assist you and your family in enhancing the survival strategies you have adopted during covid-19?

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6. In what ways did the donors and well-wishers in the community assist you during disasters or difficult times like COVID-19?

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7. What recommendations do you propose so as to deal with the COVID-19 related socio-economic challenges you faced as an individual/ family?

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Thank you for participating.

APPENDIX 3

CONSENT FORM.

My name is Cathrine P. Dhlumingo. I'm a **BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK** student at Bindura University of Science Education. I am carrying out a research entitled "**AN EXAMINATION OF THE CHALLENGES AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY WOMEN HEADED HOUSEHOLDS DURING COVID-19: THE CASE OF WARREN PARK D IN HARARE**". I have seen it worthy to interview you for some information relating to the topic above. I am kindly asking you to participate in this study by answering the questions below. There is no any other materialistic gain after this research project.

Ethical considerations.

1. Participation in this research is voluntary and you can withdraw from the interview if you are no longer feeling comfortable.
2. Your confidentiality will be respected.
3. No names will be required during this process for anonymity, your personal security and the security of your agency.

I would like to seek your consent to participate

YES

NO

THANK YOU.

I have read and understand the foregoing information. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and clear off queries and the questions have been asked to my satisfaction. I consent to voluntarily to be a participate in the study.

Signature of participant Date

Signature of researcher Date

APPENDIX 4

APPROVAL FOR DATA COLLECTION.

