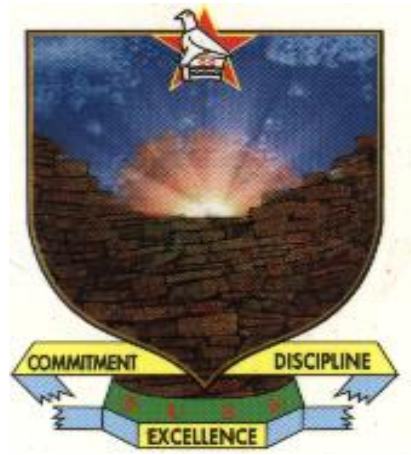


**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

AN ASSESSMENT ON THE EFFICACY OF CHILD MARRIAGE MITIGATION STRATEGIES IN RURAL COMMUNITIES OF ZIMBABWE: A CASE STUDY OF CHIWESHE WARD 10 IN MUZARABANI DISTRICT.

BY

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A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK IN PARTIAL FULLFILMENT OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK

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APPROVAL FORM

I..... certify that I supervised Blessing Chareka in doing her research entitled “An assessment on the efficacy of child marriage mitigation strategies in rural communities of Zimbabwe. A case study of Chiweshe ward 10 in Muzarabani District” in partial fulfilment of the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work.

Signature..... Date.....

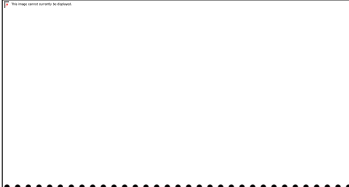
Chairperson of the Board of Examiners

The boards of examiners have supervised and approved the dissertation and therefore recommend the University to approve the dissertation since it meets the requirements set by the board.

Chairperson signature.....Date.....

DECLARATION

I Blessing Chareka (B1954102) declare that this dissertation on the topic: **An assessment on the efficacy of child marriage mitigation strategies in rural communities of Zimbabwe. A case study of Chiweshe ward 10 of Muzarabani District** is my own work and all the sources used in this dissertation have been acknowledged by means of references. This work has not been previously included or submitted to this or any other institution.

SIGNATURE:..... ..... **DATE: 9/6/2023**

DEDICATION

This work is a fruit of countless and arduous sacrifices. Through the researcher's effort, this work is heartily and proudly dedicated to the people who serve as an inspiration from parents and guardians, to classmates and circle of friends whom extended their help in the midst of problems while doing this work. Above all, to God Almighty who showered me His blessings in my everyday life, especially for the strength, courage, patience, wisdom, time and guidance in realisation of this work.

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ABSTRACT

With an increase rate in child marriage in Zimbabwe, the study sought to assess on the efficacy of child marriage mitigation strategies being implemented in rural communities. The objectives of the study were to identify strategies being implemented to mitigate child marriage, their effectiveness and ways of improving the effectiveness of these strategies in Chiweshe ward 10. The qualitative research method was adopted in the study and it informed its data collection and analysis process. Focus group discussions and key informants interviews were therefore used to gain insight into the experiences of participants. Through the use of purposive and convenient sampling, 20 participants comprising of young mothers who visited St Albert's Mission Hospital waiting mothers' shelter and stakeholders from St Albert's CHBC, Childline, DSD, VFU and a community leader in Chiweshe ward 10 were selected. The findings revealed key strategies being implemented to mitigate child marriage which are community sensitisation, educational assistance and laws and policies. The study found that community sensitisation, empowerment of girls and educational assistance are the most effective strategies while laws and policies as well as youth initiatives are less effective. An analysis of key informant interviews and focus group discussion shows that strengthening existing systems, stakeholder collaboration as well as training and equipping more community volunteers can improve the effectiveness of mitigation strategies on child marriage. It was therefore recommended that for child marriage to mitigate the government should ensure that laws and policies on child marriage are in place and strictly enforced, the government and development partners should work to eradicate barriers to education for girls and increase access to education for children especially girls in rural areas and the government and development partners should intensify efforts to raise awareness of the dangers of child marriage, both among families and the wider community, girls need to be empowered through education, leadership training, mentorship and life skills training.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BEAM	Basic Education Assistance Module
CAMFED	Campaign for Female Education
CCW	Child Care Worker
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CPC	Child Protection Committee
DSD	Department for Social Development
GBV	Gender Based Violence
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SACHBC	St Albert's Community Home Based Care
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VFU	Victim Friendly Unit
WHO	World Health Organisation

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Child marriages are prevalent not only in Zimbabwe but throughout the whole world. Several studies revealed that girls are more likely to be married below the age of 18 than boys. According to several studies, girls are more likely than boys to be married before turning 18 years old. The background of the study, the problem statement, the justification of the study, the purpose of the study, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the assumptions of the study, the limitations, the delimitations, the definition of important terminology, and the organization of the investigation are all included in this chapter.

1.2 Background of the study

Since it is still in existence around the world, child marriage is definitely one of the most significant and important issues in terms of child protection. Child marriage was acknowledged as a socioeconomic, economic, gender, and reproductive health issue around the turn of the 2000, but it was not considered a topic that necessitated much research, action, or lobbying. Between 2005 and 2010, the phrase entered the vocabulary of international development, where proponents and academics adopted it right away. As indicated by key events like the founding of Girls Not Brides: the Global Partnership to End Child Marriage, the Inaugural Day of the Girl in 2012, and the Girl Summit in London in 2014, the problem of child marriage attracted international attention between 2011 and 2015.

UNICEF (2018) reports that although child marriage occur throughout the world, they are most common in South Asia, Africa, and Latin America as compared to others continents. Gender inequality, poverty, social norms, instability, and a lack of education all contribute to child marriages, which have demoralizing impacts on people all over the world. Studies have indicated that child marriage restricts girls' rights to education, and these rights must be recognized, protected, and realized for particularly vulnerable groups (Nguyen & Wodon, 2014). Along with other things, rights to work and life can be denied by denial of education and health. Human rights law has long recognized the right to choose one's spouse, but there are many important gaps and inconsistencies in national laws governing the legal age of marriage that restrict this right, allowing, for example, rapists to wed underage girls who have assaulted them.

Numerous religious and customary laws fall short of protecting women completely, and parental consent is less effective if the child's best interests are not respected or if it is not properly implemented. Child marriage is still on the rise in Zimbabwe despite all the efforts made there by organizations like the Girl Child Network, Gender Policies, Child Line, UNICEF, and even Zimbabwe's Constitution on girl child empowerment (Masinire, 2015). Girls are especially vulnerable to child marriage, even though it mostly affects boys and girls under the age of 18 (Dziva and Mazambani, 2017). Because many of these marriages go unregistered and the ages of the girls are faked, numerous studies have shown that it is difficult to gather precise data on the rate of child marriages (UNICEF, 2014). Girls in Zimbabwe who are receiving educational help from Plan Zimbabwe and the Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) in regions like Midlands and Kwekwe reportedly took the decision to stop attending school in order to get married, according to publicly available accounts (Nicholas, 2013).

According to Gwesela (2013), bad parenting practices like child counseling and grooming are to blame for the surge in child marriages. Child marriage frequently results in early pregnancies and social isolation, which halts a girl's scholastic progress, reduces her possibilities for professional and career progression, and increases her vulnerability to domestic abuse. The right to health and development of girls and young women is regularly violated by child marriage, despite the fact that it is prohibited by numerous international and regional human rights laws and treaties (SADDC, 2016). In South Asia, where 48% of 13 to 24 year olds wed before turning 18, and in Africa, where 42% do so, child marriage is the most prevalent practice (UNICEF, 2020). According to estimates, 1,2 million people in Zimbabwe belong to the Johanne Marange Apostolic sect, which is also the most likely to practice polygamy and engage in child marriage (Anna and Bengesai, 2021).

It is clear that child marriages compromise health, education, and opportunities for its victims, as shown by the aforementioned points of view. Therefore, this study aims to determine the effectiveness of child marriage prevention programs being implemented by government departments and development partners in order to see how they have managed to reduce child marriage in the region and also suggest changes to improve child marriage reduction practices. The purpose of the study is to assess the effectiveness of initiatives to prevent child marriage.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Around the world, child marriages have been a problem, particularly for girls. Adolescent girls are disproportionately affected more than any other social group, and if it is not treated, there is a major risk to their health and wellbeing. The Zimbabwean government and its development partners have developed strategies to protect children from child marriage, including the empowerment of the girl, providing support for the girl's needs, and mobilizing families and communities (Mukombachoto, 2016). The majority of child marriages occur among teenage

females in underdeveloped rural communities (Mukombachoto, 2016). The UN programs, such as the Spotlight initiative and UNICEF awareness campaigns, which encourage everyone to take action to avoid child marriages and empower girls, are essential in reducing child marriages. Despite significant financial investment in programs to reduce child marriages, the problem still exists, particularly in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, child marriages are still commonplace despite all the policies and initiatives in place to protect children. In rural Zimbabwe, eight thousand girls have either been held as sex slaves or pushed into early marriages since 2008 due to different reasons (Sithole, 2019). 34% of Zimbabwean women between the ages of 20 and 24 who participated in a UNICEF survey reported getting married or being in a marriage before turning eighteen. A higher percentage of girls (12%) than boys (0,9%) were married in the 56 799 youngsters aged 15 to 17 years that were counted in the 2012 census. This issue has far-reaching consequences for children, particularly the girl, because it violates her rights to health, education, and opportunity. Child marriages can result in premature pregnancy, dangerous complications during pregnancy and childbirth, hiv and aids, and domestic violence. Instead of decreasing, child marriages are increasing, with the reasons for this increase being unknown, hence the need for this study. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of child marriage prevention strategies.

1.4 Justification of the study

The study will examine the policies and programs that the government of Zimbabwe and its development partners are implementing on the ground to address the problems caused by child marriages of girls, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses as well as suggesting potential fixes for any identified gaps. Additionally, the study will advance our understanding of the effectiveness of neighborhood-wide initiatives to stop child marriage. By questioning people about their opinions, the repercussions of child marriage, and common misconceptions about

it, the researcher will also be able to lower the rate at which these unions take place. The study will help decision-makers and other stakeholders develop policies to reduce child marriage. The research is relevant as it will add literature on child marriage and serve as a reference source for future research.

1.5 Aim of the study

The purpose of the study is to assess the efficacy of child marriage prevention measures implemented in Zimbabwean rural communities.

1.6 Research objectives

The following objectives serve as the study's direction:

1. To identify strategies being implemented to mitigate child marriages in Chiweshe ward 10
2. To assess the effectiveness of strategies being implemented to mitigate child marriages in Chiweshe ward 10
3. To suggest ways of improving the effectiveness of mitigation strategies on child marriages in Chiweshe ward 10

1.7 Research Questions

1. What are the strategies being implemented to mitigate child marriages in Chiweshe ward 10?
2. How effective are the strategies being implemented to mitigate child marriages in Chiweshe ward 10?
3. What can be recommended to improve the effectiveness of mitigation strategies on child marriages in Chiweshe ward 10?

1.8 Assumptions of the study

The researcher assumes that the research is going to take place in politically correct environment. The researcher assumes that the respondents will provide enough information that is bias free for the study. Another assumption is that the girl child is the most affected by child marriages because of societal and cultural norms which make them inferior.

1.9 Limitations of the study

Financial limitations will prevent the researcher from collecting all the data and information she needs for the study because it will be necessary to pay for travel expenses, internet research, and other sources like telephone interviews with stakeholders. The researcher will, however, carefully plan her financial resources to cover all necessary expenses. Time and the demands of the work are two further restrictions. The student will put in extra effort even in the evenings to balance the two since she is going to complete her honors degree and do research at the same time.

1.10 Delimitations of the study

Due to her familiarity with the ward from her work there during her attachment, the researcher won't encounter many obstacles while completing her research in the community. Additionally, the researcher will request authorization from the relevant authorities, including the District Administrator, to carry out the research. This won't be difficult because the researcher worked with these stakeholders during her attachment period, so she is familiar with their operations and is knowledgeable about them.

1.11 Definition of terms

- **Mitigation strategies**-these are strategies designed to minimize the likelihood of injury as a result of any undesirable event (Murkhejee,2021)

- **Child marriages**- are children under the age of 18 who cohabitate with a partner as if they were married and can refer to both legal marriages and informal relationships (UNFPA, 2016).
- **Rural communities** -a group of people living together in a village with a common characteristic or passion (Coburn et. al., 2007).

1.12 Organisation of the study

The background of the study, the statement's problem, the study's goal and objectives, its rationale, its assumptions, delimitations, and limitations, as well as its organization and definition of important terms, are all included in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 contains literature review on the mitigation strategies of child marriages, analysis and review of the extent of the successes and failures of these strategies and ways to improve their effectiveness. The researcher's research methods are discussed in chapter 3 to obtain data. It is in this chapter where all the research ethics, among other issues are discussed. Chapter 4 presents the analysis and discussion of the data's findings, and Chapter 5 presents a summary, a conclusion, and recommendations.

1.13 Chapter summary

This chapter provided the study's background information. There was a problem statement, the study's goal and objectives, as well as a list of the research questions the study would answer at its completion. This chapter covered the study's significance to various stakeholders, as well as its constraints, delimitations, assumptions, definitions of key terms, and organizational structure.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter introduction

The researcher tries to provide an overview of the literature accessible on the mitigation strategies of child marriages, analyse and also reviewing the extent to the successes and failures of these strategies being employed to reduce child marriages and ways to improve the effectiveness of mitigation strategies on child marriage in this chapter. The chapter also focuses on the theoretical framework.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The work a researcher does to apply a theory to a particular study is reflected in the theoretical framework, claim Varpio et al. (2019). Below is a detailed explanation of the study, which applied the change theory.

2.2.1 Change theory

The change theory was applied in this study. The subject of theory-driven evaluation, which gained popularity in the 1990s, is where change theory's historical roots may be located (Bonis, 2020). The Practice of Management by Peter Drucker, published in 1954, is credited with popularizing management by objectives. Establishing lower order goals that, if achieved, will probably result in the accomplishment of higher order goals is part of management by objectives. The concept of change theory includes effect in addition to goals and objectives. Change theory emphasized showing how it may be accomplished by utilizing particular tactics, in addition to learning whether a program is beneficial.

The change theory was created in the 1990s by the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change as a tool for modeling and evaluating extensive community initiatives using evaluation theory. Since 1980, a number of well-known methodologists, including Huey-Tsyh Chen, Peter Rossi, Michael Quinn Patton, Helene Clark, and Carol Weiss, have been experimenting with

the use of program theories in analysis. Early work by the Roundtables concentrated on addressing the difficulties of assessing intricate community efforts. The release of "New Approaches to Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives" (Weiss, 1995) marked the conclusion of this research. The fact why intricate initiatives are challenging to evaluate is largely due to the incorrect assumptions that underlie them, according to Carol Weiss, a member of the steering group for the Roundtable's review.

Weiss used the change model to explain the relationships between program activities and results at each stage of the process as well as the rules that govern the mini-steps that lead to the long-term aim of interest. They would be better able to take credit for the outcomes anticipated by their model and their overall evaluation strategies would be improved, according to her argument. She also counseled programmers of difficult community-based initiatives to be explicit about the basic transformation concepts that underpin their efforts. Many organizations pushed for the application of this method, later known as the Theory of Change approach in the evaluations of community development initiatives, as a result of her standing in the field and the theory's apparent potential. A framework that explains how a particular intervention or a sequence of interventions is likely to result in a particular development change is called a change theory, and it is based on a causal analysis of the available evidence.

Change theory starts with long-term objectives and works backward to determine essential conditions. Despite the rise of the change theory, particularly in the field of development, there are differences in the concepts and methods required to execute it successfully. In truth, there is some misunderstanding as to what exactly is meant by the word "change theory," and in certain instances, what some programmers refer to as a "change theory" is really a log frame, strategic plan, or some other type of strategy that excludes the intricacy of the change theory.

The study's research objectives were in line with the change theory. This strategy was adopted to identify the strategies that can be applied to reduce child marriages, which was the first study question. The change hypothesis contends that everyone has a part to play in preventing child marriages and that there is no one effective technique to do it. In the end, efforts to stop child marriages must be adapted to local conditions, which necessitates that programs and investments take various shapes. To combat child marriages, various strategies are being developed, including: empowering the child, mobilizing families and communities, providing services to meet the needs of the girls, and enforcing and implementing laws and regulations by the Government. As a result of empowerment, girls are more aware of their rights and will have the chance to create a sense of community through peer groups and group efforts. In order to ensure that families, communities, and young people value alternatives to child marriage, it is important to mobilize families and communities so that children are made more aware of the consequences of child marriage as well as the advantages available (not Brides, 2014). In many families, communities, and countries, child marriage is a deeply ingrained practice, and ending it will need several actors operating at various levels. Depending on the cultural context, a different set of specialized strategies can be utilized to halt long-standing child marriage practices. National, regional, and local efforts are needed to build an atmosphere that supports and fosters this transition.

The second objective of the study, which was to assess the efficacy of various strategies being used to decrease child marriages, was also emphasized by the change theory. It acts as a benchmark for success. The change theory can be thought of as a north star to measure progress, achievement, and failure in order to determine its value. This will help in the development of performance targets, key performance indicators, and strategic implementation decisions. It provides a framework for learning by articulating the causes of the problems and making assumptions about how the proposed strategy is likely to yield results.

The change theory aided the researcher in identifying strategies to effectively address the causes of the problems that hinder progress and helped guide the decision-making process. This is in keeping with the third objective of the study, which is to identify steps that can be taken to improve the effectiveness of child marriage prevention programs. The change theory acts as a starting point for consensus on how to tackle child marriages and support married people in the long and short term. The change theory follows some principles, including that married girls should not be neglected while attempting to reduce child marriages, since child marriages are most detrimental to the girls, and that change can be initiated at local, regional, and global levels.

2.3 STRATEGIES BEING IMPLEMENTED TO MITIGATE CHILD MARRIAGE

According to literature reviews, there are five main strategies being used to decrease child marriages: fostering an enabling legal and policy framework; improving the accessibility and quality of formal education for girls; offering financial incentives to girls and their families; increased sensitization of the issues surrounding child marriage; and empowering girls with knowledge, skills, and support networks. More information on the strategies will be provided below.

2.3.1 Fostering an enabling legal and policy framework

Many nations have made efforts to create international regulations that forbid child marriage. There are laws against child marriage in many nations with a high rate of it, and over time, legislation has been created to enhance or enforce these prohibitions. As a result of the development of new international instruments or conventions centered on the necessity to protect children's rights, numerous more international instruments or conventions have emerged (Human Rights Watch, 2016) to fight for children's rights. International human rights agreements place a strong emphasis on the need to address child marriage and the need

to protect vulnerable girls (Horii, 2020). Since 1948, the United Nations has promoted legislative initiatives and policies to prohibit child marriage, according to UNICEF (2014). For instance, article 16(3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1983 states that one must provide agreement to the union (Addaney & Azubike, 2017). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) are some of the most significant laws prohibiting child marriage. These regulations emphasize the establishment of an 18-year-old minimum marriage age (UN WOMEN, 2016). The most vulnerable groups in society have been safeguarded by laws; conventions, declarations, and campaigns to fulfill their needs and demand their participation in decisions about their livelihoods (Engdahl, 2019). Many states have agreed to these conventions and pledged to fight against underage marriage while still supporting the recognition of human rights (Ozler, 2018). The United Nations created the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which included a target year of 2030 for ending child marriage. Under international law, a precise minimum age for marriage does not yet exist. Only Article 16(2) of the CEDAW mandates that a marriage's minimum age be stated and that the registration of all marriages in an official registry must be mandatory.

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) was established at the regional level to safeguard children from all forms of abuse and neglect (Mbise, 2017). In support of protecting young girls from harmful social and cultural standards, Article 21 of the Charter makes this claim. According to Article 21(2), which also stated that the appropriate measures, including legislation, would be taken to set the legal minimum age for marriage as 18 years old and make marriage registration in an official registry a requirement (UNICEF, 2020), both child marriage and the betrothal of girls and boys were prohibited. In addition, article 6 of both the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981) and the African

Charter on the Rights of Women (2003) warns against marriage unless both parties freely and unreservedly accept to it and stipulates that the legal marriage age is at least 18 years old (Vega, 2018). Every marriage must be documented and registered, according to the procedure (Yaya and Odusina, 2019). Borrowing from these significant documents, the 2006 African Youth Charter's Article 20(1a) calls for the abolition of all unconstitutional practices that compromise the appearance and dignity of girls and women (Mezmur, 2020). Due to the growing concern about child marriage around the world, several African countries, including Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, have passed laws to prohibit child marriage (AU, 2015). The African Union (AU) created the "The Africa We Want" (agenda 2063) program, which is a master plan and blueprint for converting Africa into the global superpower of the future. The African Union Commission's 2017 goals include inclusive and sustainable development, the prevention and abolition of child marriage, and the reduction of gender inequality.

To protect girls locally, Zimbabwe has made an effort to match it with already-existing international and regional agreements. For instance, the Zimbabwean Constitution (20 of 2013) mandates that a person must be at least 18 years old before they can get married. The Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act prohibits women under the age of 18 in particular from being pledged. The Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children (ZNCWC) is a branch of the group working for children's rights. Through the Children's Act, it manages children's rights. The Children's Act, first issued in 1971, has undergone various amendments, including those to Chapter 5.06. The Children's Act aims to create children's courts, make provisions for the welfare, protection, and supervision of children and adolescents, and establish, recognize, and register institutions and institutes for the reception, care, and supervision of children and adolescents as well as for the care of children and adolescents after their placement in such institutions and institutes. The establishment of the children's court

protected children and youth's safety, health, and administration in addition to guaranteeing that institutions and organizations with specific training in responding to and protecting children were respected.

The Marriage Act (Chapter 5:17) was signed into law by Zimbabwe's president on the 27th of May. The abolition of the Marriage Act (Chapter 5:11) and the Customary Marriages Act (Chapter 5:07) has significantly changed Zimbabwe's marriage regulations. The new act establishes a civil partnership and a qualified civil union, as well as an unregistered customary law union. The new law, in addition to acknowledging all marriages, bans child marriages by requiring a minimum age of 18 for marriages and criminalizes anyone involved in child marriage. The Customary Marriage Act, which oversees customary marriages, does not, however (Mwambene, 2018), set a minimum age for marriage.

2.3.2 Enhancing the accessibility and quality of formal schooling for girls

It has been demonstrated that education is a potent technique for preventing child marriage all around the world (Paul, 2019). The methods being utilized to prevent child marriage, according to the research, center on teaching young girls that they have the power to choose their husband and wedding date (Paul, 2019). As a result, putting money into girls' education can significantly lower the age at which girls get married. Girls' access to secondary school considerably increased the time it took to be married, according to a multi-nation survey carried out in South West Asia, Bangladesh, and Nigeria (Polyakova, 2018). With the explicit purpose of delaying marriage, the national education sector of Bangladesh started a sizable initiative known as the Female Secondary School Stipend Program.

Study findings indicate a high correlation between delayed marriage and girls' schooling. According to Klugman et al. (2014), girls without a secondary education are six times more likely to marry as young adults. Although it is still unclear what causes this link, new research

has indicated that girls who do not attend school are more likely to be married than those who do attend school (Marcus, 2018). Education is beneficial in delaying marriage. According to Islam et al. (2016), governments should support girls' education in order to foster economic development and avoid child marriage. Local traditional authorities in the Karonga District have received training to uphold tough local rules on child marriage in Malawi, according to the Life Gate Report (2019). Anyone who wishes their child to be married before they have finished school must pay a fine (Maiden, 2021). The money collected from fines is also provided to nearby schools, thereby strengthening the beneficial impact of this intervention on the lives of girls. These by-laws have been successful in entirely prohibiting child marriage (Life Gate Report, 2019). In order to guarantee equal educational rights and opportunities for females, Mozambique established a Gender Strategy for the Education Sector (Sawadogo-Lewis, 2018). The plan highlights the need to remove obstacles to females' education by providing scholarships and running campaigns that address these issues (Chibango and Silumba, 2018).

Studies show that in order to prevent girls from having to travel long distances to their respective schools, the Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED), a nonprofit organization striving to reduce poverty in rural areas by educating females, erected dorms close to schools in Zimbabwe. The organization also provides scholarships to aid girls in continuing their education (Munosunama, 2018). The females who are a part of this program keep studying till they have finished their study. This not only gives them more influence but also lessens the likelihood that they will wed young (Berliana et al., 2021). Mutoko's unfavorable attitudes against girls' education in the rural community have been successfully changed by organizations like Plan International (Plan International, 2019). Gender transformational education-based initiatives are therefore essential in the battle against child marriage (Rumbie et al., 2017). According to Marcus (2018), education makes it easier for women to challenge

discriminatory gender conventions and is a powerful step toward achieving gender equality, which can help reduce the number of child marriages.

2.3.3 Offering economic support and incentives for girls and their families

The high rate of child marriage is a result of several factors, including poverty and the lack of viable income-generating opportunities for girls and young women. The social pressure on families to marry off their daughters at a young age is being addressed by programs. This tactic was used by eight of the 23 child marriage prevention initiatives. This strategy is based on the notion that an immediate boost in financial circumstances would be a valid replacement for marriage and increase the daughter's value and contribution to her parental family. Providing families with direct funding access can also increase their sense of financial security or promote upward mobility. The societal and economical pressure to marry off a daughter young is lessened as a result.

The Zomba monetary Transfer Program in Malawi, which enhances adolescent girls' abilities to create money through microfinance and related training, monetary and non-cash incentives, grants, loans, and scholarships to families are two key techniques employed in this strategy. Ela Centers created by Brac provide both group formation for microfinance and skill-based income-generating activities for children in Bangladesh. Marriages have been postponed despite the intervention not producing significant change. The Bangladesh government offers a secondary school stipend scheme in addition to giving 15 kilograms of wheat to underprivileged households enrolling their children in primary school each month. Comparing the effects of unconditional versus conditional cash transfers among girls who were enrolled in school at the start of the intervention, the Zomba Cash Transfer scheme in Malawi found that unconditional cash transfers had a much greater effect on lowering the likelihood of being married at the conclusion of the two-year program than conditional cash transfers.

In Zimbabwe, a number of organizations are attempting to lower the number of child marriages. According to studies, Plan International teaches essential skills like agriculture to poor households. In Mutasa District, there are presently seminars or trainings that concentrate on value addition entrepreneurship skills as well as capacity development on agriculture as a means of providing financial security, according to the Plan International study from 2016. Recently accepted in Zimbabwe, the United Nations Sustainable Development Plan (2022–2026) makes recommendations for actions to take against poverty, GBV eradication, and other harmful practices like child, early, and forced marriage.

2.3.4 Increased sensitization on issues of child marriages

Malhotra et al.'s (2011) strategy is referred to as "Educating and mobilizing parents and community members." Traditional and local authorities have been helpful because many child marriages in rural areas take place under customary law and are overseen by the village head (Nyalapa and Conn, 2019). The involvement of local officials shows a sincere dedication to improving the lives of rural youth, their living situations, and ending child marriage. The Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust employs conciliation meetings with community leaders and families of complainants and defendants, as well as negotiation, discussion, and counseling, to address the issues of child marriage, domestic abuse, and family problems in Bangladesh (Alam, 2020).

The percentage of people who are willing to modify harmful behaviors has increased by 37% regionally, according to early findings from the Global Program's social norms baseline survey. In 2021, 71 community leaders organized over 2600 community dialogue events in Nampula province in Mozambique, and 50 854 residents took part. In addition to these discussions, 239 instances of child marriage and abuse were found and reported to the local authorities for inquiry. The local authorities also annulled 215 child marriages and found the culprits guilty in 215 cases.

Zimbabwe created a National Action Plan and Communication Strategy to stop child marriages. The NAP specifically considers the Sustainable Development Goal 5,3 which focuses on putting a stop to all harmful practices like child, early, and forced marriages and female genital mutilations. This NAP is the outcome of a protracted conversation among a number of stakeholders, including academics, CSOs, traditional leaders, decision-makers, and religious figures, in addition to young people, child brides, embassies, families, and communities. Stakeholder discussions were held in each of Zimbabwe's 10 provinces.

2.3.5 Empowering girls with information, skills and support networks

UNFPA and UNICEF have implemented a multi-stakeholder strategy in Bangladesh that incorporates life skills training into both formal and non-formal education programs that are frequently evaluated and have a significant participatory element. The Global Program hired 96 592 adolescent girls in 2021 to deliver life skills training that was gender-transformative and focused on sexual and reproductive health and rights. These girls included married teenage girls and girls with disabilities.

Studies show that the safe space model has persisted in energizing young people in Zambia who are eager to seek alternative paths and put off marriage. Human rights, sexual and reproductive health, reproductive rights, menstrual hygiene, and other issues were discussed during the sessions. Two chiefdoms (Chieftainess Kawaza and Chief Mbangombe) in the Katete district received training to undertake program interventions for underserved teenage boys and girls. During the COVID 19 outbreak, the mobile platform U-Report was used to raise girls' knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and rights and to inform them of the services that are available. Peer educators provided information to adolescent girls and young women so they may make educated decisions about things that affected them, such as preventing pregnancy. Due to greater understanding of teenage rights, some girls started to reject child marriages, and several planned marriages were reported to the police.

The Girls and Young Women's Empowerment Plan was created by the Zimbabwean government. In an effort to promote equal involvement of women and men in national development processes, Zimbabwe's government is reportedly creating a Girl/Young Women Empowerment Plan as of 2013. This is according to the ACERWC's 2013 report. Based on the idea that prejudice, which starts early in a female child's life and persists, the framework enacted in October 2014 cannot lead to equal participation of women. The program's foundation is the discovery that giving girls and young women access to education and chances for engagement can significantly improve their own and their families' well-being. For instance, the framework demonstrates how the Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey (ZDHS) 2011–2012 discovered that child death rates are lower in households where the mother acknowledges that family violence is never justifiable. (Government of Zimbabwe, 2014) Women who have completed at least a secondary education are more likely to be employed. The government and the ministry of women's affairs, gender, and community development have set a number of ambitious goals, including achieving equality at all levels of education, increasing the number of girls participating in decision-making processes, expanding access to sexual and reproductive health services for girls and young women, and lowering the rate of reporting violence against girls from 3% to 50% by 2020.

2.4 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MITIGATION STRATEGIES ON CHILD MARRIAGE

The effectiveness of prevention strategies for child marriage has been analyzed by research, and these strategies have shown promise in reducing child marriage rates. To make them more effective, governments, civil society organizations, and development partners must unite to make them possible. Below is a summary of what to expect from this article.

2.4.1 Fostering an enabling legal and policy framework

“Legal and advocacy strategies are poorly described and evaluated in the literature, perhaps because of the difficulties in evaluating such programs using experimental and quasi-experimental approaches,” Freccero and Whiting (2018) argue. National and international legislation have been passed, yet it is evident that the practice has not been stopped (Gaffney-Rhys, 2011). Due to poor implementation and lack of enforcement, legal improvements as a standalone measure typically have little or no impact. According to the United Nations, child marriage is less common in nations with more robust legal frameworks that forbid it. Child marriages may be prohibited by laws that make marriage at least 18 years old, and anyone who help or participate in child marriages may face penalties.

In 22 low- and middle-income countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, there was no appreciable effect of rules on the likelihood of marriage, according to a 2016 study by Kidman and Heymann. Among its many program activities, the Ishraq initiative, which seeks to broaden local and national policy, emphasizes the importance of girl-friendly initiatives and policies, but it claims that it was successful at gaining governors' and government involvement, which it found to be crucial to the program's national-level scaling up. However, the African Union has prioritized ending child marriages and Southern Africa has initiated legislative reforms to improve the legal frameworks that shield girls from child marriage.

Zimbabwe's government has approved laws outlawing child weddings and imposing penalties on anyone who violate it. The Zimbabwean Constitution stipulates that a person must be 18 years old to agree to sex (Zimbabwe 2013 Constitution, section 20). However, the Customary Marriage Act Chapter 5:07 permits girls to wed before the age of 18, as long as both parents agree to the union. Additionally, the need that a male who marries a girl under the age of 18 assume guardianship over her appears to celebrate child marriage under Children's Act Chapter 5:06.

2.4.2 Enhancing the accessibility and quality of formal schooling for girls

According to the 2017 Global schooling Monitoring Report, providing every girl with 12 years of schooling would result in a 64% reduction in child marriage worldwide. Numerous programs work to enhance girls' educational opportunities by enhancing the school environment, such as by enhancing the curriculum and providing teachers with the necessary training, as well as by enhancing facilities and equipment. Other initiatives assist girls in overcoming barriers to education, including those related to cost, accessibility, and adverse attitudes and values about girls' education. Women who attend secondary school are less likely to get married than women who just have a primary education or none at all, according to research conducted internationally. Freccero and Whiting (2018) did not include education as a separate strategy, although educational aid programs were one of those that made use of the empowerment programming paradigm.

An investigation into whether a mix of structural and norm-based interventions could lower secondary school dropout and child marriage among teenage girls was recently published as a cluster randomized control trial in rural India (Prakash et al. 2019). The intervention activities, according to Beattie et al. (2015), included safe spaces where girls were taught life skills, outreach workers visiting homes and holding family meetings, community get-togethers, street theater, as well as support and training for school staff. The percentage of girls who enrolled in or graduated from secondary school compared to those who were married at 15 or 16 did not, on average, differ significantly. Girls are more likely to delay marriage and pursue employment if they have access to education.

Governments in Southern Africa are attempting to remove obstacles to girls' access to school and promote the welfare of girls. Schooling was used in seven of the interventions that Chae and Ngo (2017) looked at; it was the second-best tactic. The only element in two of the programs that were judged to be beneficial was education, although both included a realistic

strategy to boost enrollment or lower dropout rates. Hallfors et al.(2011) reacted analytically to the intervention and investigated the effect of removing barriers to school attendance in Zimbabwe by providing school supplies, including uniforms, and found that the likelihood of getting married had significantly decreased. In conclusion, programs that help retain females in school and improve enrollment have demonstrated promising outcomes in lowering dropout rates among girls reducing child marriage

The STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) project, which encourages girls' access to education in these subjects, is one of many initiatives the Zimbabwean government has adopted to boost girls' access to education. The reduction of child marriage has been made possible by initiatives that boost enrollment and maintain girls in school (Koski, 2019). However, programs that emphasize lowering non-economic barriers and enhancing teaching and infrastructure tend to produce the majority of the data. For instance, a significant barrier to continued education beyond the elementary level is the distance involved and the inadequate learning resources and facilities for secondary education, particularly in rural areas.

2.4.3 Offering economic support and incentives for girls and their families

There is no universal agreement on the effectiveness of economic methods, and several studies have come to conflicting findings. They have either been deemed the most successful by some (Kalamar et al., 2016) or the least effective by others (Chae and Ngo, 2017). Three of the four techniques that had a significant impact in the study by Kalamar et al. (2016) gave some form of financial inducement to continue in education, such as cash transfers contingent on attending classes or paying tuition. This picture is complicated by Chae and Ngo's (2017) results that economic approaches had the highest failure rate when used as the only choice but had a higher success rate when combined with other approaches.

According to Freccero and Whiting (2018), incentive/asset transfer systems can be extremely effective at achieving the desired goals, depending on how they are designed. Programs for

asset transfers and incentives were effective in South Asia, Africa, and Mexico. Teenage girls and students in grades six to eight were regular targets. When they compared the effect by age, they discovered that younger adolescents, between the ages of 12 and 14, benefited most from cash or in-kind transfers depending on academic performance. Incentives for postponing marriage appeared to be more advantageous among older teenagers aged 15 and older, even if the advantages of education-conditioned transfers were less obvious in this group. There simply are not enough trustworthy studies on the impact of financial incentives and assistance on various contexts and cultures to make firm judgments on the effect. Effects appear to rely on a wide range of factors, including the duration, the target age group, the degree of conditionality, and the level of support. According to some studies, combining financial incentives and support with initiatives aimed at challenging conventional wisdom and enhancing females' abilities might increase their impact.

2.4.4 Increased sensitization on issues of child marriages

Malhotra et al. (2011) found that 13 out of 23 programs employed sensitization as their second most popular strategy. The Ethiopia Early Marriage Evaluation Study (EMES) was one such program; however it showed no signs of advancement. The community method was the least used of the 22 studies in Chae and Ngo's study (2017), and it was only used in six treatments, of which four had mixed results, one was successful, and the other two failed. Among the 43 assessments they included in their research, Freccero and Whiting (2018) discovered nine therapies that utilized community sensitization and involvement strategies. They also highlight the fact that this group participates in a variety of activities and achieves a range of outcomes. Programs are frequently poorly described in the literature and are especially variable in terms of concept, goals, target audiences, forums, and duration.

Successful programs frequently have a one- to six-year lifespan, depend on media campaigns, or give priority to more involved forms of community engagement like participatory action or

community debate. Poorer outcomes tended to be underserved, shorter in duration, and more focused on surface-level engagement techniques like awareness campaigns and quick information sharing sessions. Only two of the programs that examined influence on behavior had positive outcomes specifically connected to community involvement (Erulkar et al., 2016). The majority of community-focused programs improved people's awareness and attitudes towards child marriage in some way. According to studies, community programs in Southern Africa that support gender equality and adolescent reproductive health have been effective in lowering the number of child marriages.

Research indicates that the Zimbabwean government has launched a number of programs, such as the National Action Plan on stopping child marriage and behavior change communications campaigns to inform the populace about the detrimental impacts of child marriage. According to Khanna et al. (2013), community awareness aids in the development and improvement of effective child protection programs and promotes adolescent girls' access to sexual and reproductive health information and services. Since the existing body of literature has only undergone comprehensive study and evaluation, it is impossible to make any conclusions about the efficacy of community mobilization from it.

2.4.5 Empowering girls with information, skills and support networks

Empowerment and life skills programs have the highest success rates, according to several studies, and they may be the most promising option. In a few years, many initiatives aimed at providing girls with information, skills, and support services have shown dramatic improvements in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior related to child marriage, although none attribute these improvements to any particular intervention component of the overall strategy. For girls aged 10 to 24 in rural and urban settings, empowerment initiatives were effective throughout Africa and South Asia, resulting in positive behavioral, knowledge, and attitude changes. Themes in effective empowerment programs included specific meeting locations,

training in life skills and livelihoods, educational assistance, and knowledge of women and children's rights. They frequently lasted between one and three years.

Only a small number of studies, however, have shown positive results; those that have tended to emphasize subjects in which girls had little interest, had short intervention times, and lacked instructional resources such as a dedicated area, materials, or facilitators who were properly educated. The majority of empowerment programs that did not have a statistically significant impact on participant outcomes reported early successes, but they either started with young participants or did not examine participants over sufficient time to capture the majority of participants' transitions into marriage. One study revealed that empowerment programs were highly effective in the early years, but that more intervention was probably required to delay marriage for older adolescent girls. The study examined results for younger 12 to 14 and older 15 to 17 adolescents.

2.5 WAYS TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MITIGATION STRATEGIES ON CHILD MARRIAGE

2.5.1 Support anti-child marriage programs

There are numerous programs and groups that support ending child marriages, but they appear to be less successful as a result of a lack of funding. These programs must continue to be funded in order to have a positive impact on the communities. NGOs have been operating in rural regions and launching anti-child marriage campaigns, but because they are picking which wards to visit because there is not enough cash to conduct the campaigns in all wards, this has not been helpful in reducing child weddings in the communities. Therefore, in order to address the issue, the government and other interested parties should provide financial assistance to initiatives that call for an end to child marriages. Other approaches include enhancing procedures for the protection of children, contesting cultural presumptions that support child

marriage and giving girls the knowledge and skills they need to make wise decisions about their lives. Government should prioritize projects that strengthen legal frameworks, promote girls' growth, and aid in the upbringing of girls and their families.

In Zimbabwe, where 32% of girls are said to get married before turning 18, child marriage is still a serious problem. According to a report by Chinyoka et al. (2019), the prevalence of child marriage has decreased in the region as a result of the implementation of Zimbabwe's constitutional rules and related legislation. A multi-sectoral strategy is needed to reduce child marriage, one that takes into account the underlying economic, social, and cultural elements that support the practice.

2.5.2 The government should implement policies that promote and motivates young girls to attend school

According to Plan International's Policy Brief on ending child marriages, the government should try to broaden the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) initiative of educational assistance to include more girls who are at risk of dropping out of school and, as a result, are at risk of early marriage, particularly in the most impacted areas. The government should also consider supporting free primary and secondary education. This necessitates collaboration with or assistance from other regional development partners, such as NGOs, as well as the commitment of additional resources to the education sector. UNESCO (2009) asserts that one benefit of working with government is its capacity to approach contentious issues in an intelligent and strategic manner.

2.5.3 Provision of more economic opportunities

Studies show that poverty is one of the primary causes of child marriages; hence efforts to alleviate poverty should take priority in any initiatives to lessen child marriages. The government and other development organizations should give the young girls practical skills so they may participate in activities that generate cash. By improving job development and

entrepreneurial chances, we can improve young girls' access to economic opportunity. Access to social services and information ought to be a top priority in these programs. Young girls should be able to attend programs that equip them to broaden their life possibilities even when education is not practical, lowering the chance of child marriages as a result of poverty.

Child marriages can be reduced by improving a family's economic status. By giving educated, unmarried girls employment possibilities, this will reduce poverty over time and sooner rather than later. The ability of a youngster to make money might lessen family isolation and provide females and their families the option of delaying marriage. According to a report published by the World Bank (2017), enhancing girls' education and economic opportunities is a vital tool for reducing child marriage. Girls and their families can be rewarded for their success in school and delay marriage if they are financially empowered. According to UNICEF, child marriage affects about 1 in every 3 girls in Southern Africa. According to a review by Groes et al. (2018), policies like conditional cash transfers and education initiatives can lower the rate of child marriage in Southern Africa. This shows that if these programs are supported, cases of child marriage can reduce.

2.6 Literature gaps

According to scoping, systematic reviews, and discussions, there are already some gaps in our knowledge of child marriage, particularly in areas that have either been neglected or have come into sharper focus recently, even though the expansion of research has been helpful in boosting investment and enhancing action on child marriage. For instance, despite the fact that child marriage rates are better documented, we are unable to target programs with greater specificity without knowledge about rates and trends at the sub-national level. Additionally, we know very little about how macro-level trends may affect other areas of life and how large-scale reductions were made. Furthermore, we are lacking data on the effectiveness, cost, and efficiency of

numerous interventions. Additionally, we lack information regarding the efficiency, expense, and value of a broad range of interventions carried out in a fair, sustainable, and scalable way. Therefore, the researcher aims to evaluate the effectiveness of child marriage prevention measures in Zimbabwe's rural areas.

2.7 Chapter summary

The chapter focused on a literature review of child marriage mitigation measures, analysis of the successes and failures of these strategies in reducing child marriages, and suggestions for ways to increase the effectiveness of child marriage mitigation strategies. The chapter also focused on theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter explains how information on the effectiveness of child marriage prevention measures was acquired. It also looks at the research design, sample size, sampling technique, sampling procedure, sampling criteria and data collection procedure and method used to get information on the efficacy of child marriage mitigation strategies in rural areas. This chapter also covers data gathering tools and research ethical considerations during the research.

3.2 Study site

The research was conducted at St Albert's Mission Hospital waiting mother's shelter in Chiweshe ward 10 in Muzarabani District. The hospital services 29 wards of the District. The

researcher chose Chiweshe ward 10 area because was easy for the student to find the participants since they lived in villages around the hospital. The researcher also decided to do the research in Chiweshe ward 10 because the area has got high rate of child marriages.

3.3 Methodology

According to Kara (2015), a methodology is a context-specific framework, a logical and cogent plan that guides a researcher's decisions. A methodology, according to Haralambos and Holborn (2004), is also concerned with the specific research techniques used to gather data as well as the more general philosophies that underpin data gathering. The steps for data collection and analysis are described in the protocol.

Methods can be defined as specific methods and procedures used to gather and analyze data, such as surveys, observation, and interviews to name a few. The study used qualitative data to assess the efficacy of child marriage mitigation strategies. In qualitative research, a variety of factual data are systematically used and gathered to characterize commonplace and complicated occurrences and meanings in people's lives, including case studies, interviews, and observational, interactive, and visual texts. Its purpose is often to obtain verification of findings by means of a smattering of different viewpoints, allowing the researchers to study identified topics in-depth and build conclusions from facts provided by the respondents. Qualitative research is used to investigate the attitudes, perspectives, motivations, and emotions of individuals who encounter child marriages. It would also help the researcher to understand the individual's emotions and pain (Becker, 2017).

3.4 Research design

A research design, in Gray's opinion, is the overall strategy for tying the theoretical research question to the empirical investigation. The research design gives a timeline of how the

research will be conducted in order to answer the research questions in addition to outlining the suggested study task (Akhtar, 2016). The effectiveness of child marriage mitigation strategies was examined in this study using exploratory case studies. A case study is a research design and empirical investigation that investigates a phenomenon in a real life situation. Case studies, according to Cresswell (2013), are based on an in-depth study of individuals or groups. Hence, exploratory case studies investigate a particular phenomenon that is characterized by a lack of thorough preliminary investigation (Mills and Durepos, 2012a). The researcher sought to understand in depth the efficacy of child marriage mitigation strategies being used by government and development partners through the use of case studies. This research style has the advantage of being flexible and dynamic, allowing the researcher to adapt to changes as the study progresses; however, it lacks statistical strength, which in turn makes the data judgmental and biased.

3.5 Research methods

Research methods are methods by which a researcher can use data from credible sources to address the critical evaluation questions or the research problem that has been identified earlier in the evaluation process in order to find answers (Celine, 2017). In order to elicit responses from participants, the study used key informant interviews and focus groups to gather information from the adolescent mothers and stakeholders.

Key informant interviews are in-depth, qualitative conversations with individuals who are familiar with the local community. The advantage of the key informant interview is that it enables the gathering of data from a range of sources, including local authorities, specialists, and people with first-hand knowledge (Becker, 2017). The researcher used this data collection method to collect information from the 5 stakeholders that is the stakeholders working in

Chiweshe ward (1 from Department of Social Development, 1 from Childline, 1 from SACHBC, 1 from St Albert's police VFU and 1 community leader from Chiweshe ward 10)

Focus group discussions, according to Baral et al. (2015), are a type of qualitative study in which participants are asked questions to elicit complicated personal experiences, beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes through a moderated interaction. Two focus group discussions were used to collect information on the efficacy of child marriages mitigation strategies that are being employed in the community as well as the effects of child marriages. The first discussion occurred at St. Albert's Mission Hospital and lasted 25 minutes. It involved 10 females who were married before turning 18. The second discussion took 35 minutes and involved 5 females who were married before turning 18 for a variety of reasons, such as deprivation, peer pressure, sexual assault, and other circumstances. The FGDs enabled a deeper exploration of complex subjects since listening to others talk frequently prompts replies or thoughts that the listener had not previously considered (Birt et al., 2016). Hence the researcher got more information about how these respondents thought about child marriages as well as their views concerning what is being done by responsible authorities in ending child marriages. Hence in moderating these focus group discussions, the researcher took approximately about 60 minutes.

3.6 Research tools

A research tool is a device used to gather data related to a topic (Antoniadou, 2017). To gather qualitative data, the researcher used interview guides. Interview schedule guide is a set of standardized questions that will be used by qualified staff (Flick, 2011). Because the interview schedule guide targeted the respondents with expertise and experience in reducing child marriages, the researcher used this interview schedule guide to interview the key informants, which include Childline, Department of Social Development, SACHBC, St Albert's police VFU, and the community leader of Chiweshe ward 10. The interview schedule guide had open-

ended questions that would require additional research. The interview schedule guide was also helpful because it promoted consistency in the results obtained from respondents, since respondents' questions were similar.

The researcher used a discussion guide for focus groups. Data can be gathered from a purposefully chosen group rather than a sample of the broader population using a focus group discussion guide (Nyumba, Derick, and Mukherjee, 2018). In some cases, these discussions result in a much more in depth discussion. To gather data from 15 people who were married under the age of 18 who were identified by the focus group discussion guide, 15 participants were asked to provide details about their encounters. The focus group sessions took place at St Albert's Mission Hospital. The researcher took notes and observed the participants' nonverbal responses during the focus group discussions.

3.7 Target population

In the same manner, Dooley (2015), population is the whole set of entities that decisions relate. The targeted population were teenage mothers who visited St Albert's Mission Hospital waiting mother's shelter in Chiweshe ward 10 from January 2020 to December 2021 who are from 15 up to 17 years of age and stakeholders who work in proximity with child marriage cases that are Childline, Department of Social Development, SACHBC, St Albert's police VFU and the community leader of Chiweshe ward 10. This was so because of the need to understand the efficacy of child marriages mitigation strategies employed to reduce child marriages amongst girls and to understand what was done to assist them.

3.8 Sample size

When drawing conclusions from a sample in an empirical study, the sample size is an important consideration (Taherdoost, 2016). The sample size is crucial since it contributes to accurate

results for a particular study. 20 respondents total—15 girls who were married before turning 18 and 5 stakeholders who are accountable for child marriages—Childline, the Department of Social Development, SACHBC, St. Albert's police VFU, and the community leader of Chiweshe ward—were chosen by the researcher for this study.

3.9 Sampling procedure

According to Kothari (2013), a sampling method is a specific strategy prepared and applied during data collecting to obtain a sample from a certain population. The researcher used convenient and purposeful sampling strategies in this study.

3.10 Sampling techniques

3.10.1 Purposive sampling

A non-probability sample that is chosen based on features of a population and the goal of the study is known as "purposive sampling," also known as "purposeful" or "judgment sampling" (Ashley, 2020). According to Cresswell (2012), a researcher enrolls people depending on the reasons why they were married young and the age they were married at. This method is known as purposeful sampling. The researcher used this sampling technique to select 15 participants (15 young mothers with different causes of their marriages and different ages).

3.10.2 Convenient sampling

The study used convenient sampling technique to identify the participants 5 key informants (DSD, SACHBC, St Albert's VFU, Childline and a community leader). The units that are easiest for the researcher to access are selected to be included in the sample using the non-probability sampling technique known as convenient sampling (Nikolopoulou, 2022). The advantage of convenient sampling is that it provides results quickly in cases when time is

limited. It is the most often utilized sample technique since it is so quick, simple, and affordable.

3.11 Sampling criteria

Sampling criteria includes determinants of elements to be used during the sampling process. In order to interview young mothers who were married between the ages of 15 and 17 from January 2020 to December 2021, the researcher used inclusion and exclusion criteria. Young mothers under the age of 18 were not included in the study.

3.12 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are a set of rules that govern how scientific research should be conducted and distributed, as well as the ethical requirements for scientific researchers (Kour, 2014). The researcher made sure that these rules were followed, taking into account the following ethics

1) Avoidance of harm – avoidance of harm is ensuring that study participants do not experience any negative effects as a result of their involvement (Baines et al., 2013). The participant's protection from physical and emotional injury or discomfort that might be caused by the experiment was ensured by the researcher. Participants will be humiliated, offended, or betrayed by this.

2) Voluntary participation – Voluntary participation, as defined by Israel and Hay (2006), entails that participation must be done so voluntarily and without being subject to pressure or a danger of injury. The researcher explained to participants that they might withdraw from the study at any point if they so desired before the interviews even started. The study's participants' participation was crucial, the researcher emphasized, since it would improve efforts to reduce child marriage.

3) Informed consent- Informed consent, according to Newman (2016), is consent that is given voluntarily, knowingly, and intelligently. Participants sign consent forms (forms that specify the time frame of the study, as well as the risks and benefits) and the researcher collected data only with the participants' consent, not requiring them to respond to the study, and told them that anyone is free to decline to participate in the study, as well as have any of their data removed from the analysis where this is possible.

4) Confidentiality and Anonymity– Means that all private or personal matters or viewpoints should be treated as non-disclosable (Hoekveld and Needham, 2013).The researcher maintained the participants' anonymity by not disclosing any of the information they provided, and while taking notes, she probably did not use the participants' names but rather their ages and sexes as circumstances demanded.

3.13 Data collection procedure

The researcher firstly went to seek permission from Bindura University to collect her data. Before collecting any data in the community despite being given the permission by the district administrator, the researcher presented the permission letter to the ward councillor so that she gets permission from the local leaders who had much influence in their communities as they have authority to allow and decline activities to be carried out in their communities. This did not pose a lot of challenges to the researcher as she once worked in the ward hence was already familiar with the councillor as well as other local leaders like village heads.

3.14 Data analysis

Data analysis is defined as converting raw data into concrete facts and ideas that can be understood either qualitatively or quantitatively (Celine, 2017). In this study, the researcher applied a thematic approach to collecting results. In order to analyze qualitative data, a

researcher must carefully examine the data to identify recurring themes. This requires knowing how to code the data, identify more specific themes, and present results that can be used with other qualitative methodologies (Watling and Lingard, 2012). According to Clark and Braun (2017), it is a helpful first analytical tool for inexperienced qualitative researchers. The researcher went through the phases of analyzing a report after reading and becoming familiar with the data, coding, searching for themes, evaluating themes, identifying and labeling themes, and ultimately creating the paper (Braun and Clark, 2006). Braun and Clark (2006) note that:

- 1) The first stage includes transcribing, reading and re-reading writing down initial ideas. The researcher made use of this stage during interviews by writing down the information that she got from the participants.
- 2) The second stage includes coding/organising the data with the same interest. At this stage, there was the identification of data and their relation to the research
- 3) The third stage involves active interpretation of the organised data and making sure that the themes are coherent and distinctive. Thus on this stage, the researcher related gathered information into useful themes.
- 4) The fourth stage involves exploring all the extracts related to codes if they support the themes or if they are overlapping. Thus the researcher checked the relation between the analysed data and the themes of the research
- 5) The fifth stage includes defining the essence that each theme is about. This stage helped the researcher in coming up with data that is analysed

The researcher chose to use thematic analysis of data because it is a flexible method in the sense that it uses a wide range of analytic options, hence different ways to interpret the meaning from the data. Thus the researcher made use of tables in presenting the data. When creating topics, the freedom could, however, result in inconsistency and lack of coherence.

3.15 Chapter summary

This chapter looked at research methods, including study design, research tools, target population, sample size, sampling procedure, sampling techniques, and sampling criteria in order to better understand child marriage mitigation strategies. Ethical considerations and data collection procedures and data analysis were also discussed.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Chapter introduction

The effectiveness of child marriage mitigation strategies in Zimbabwean rural communities is shown and discussed in this chapter. Case study of Chiweshe ward 10 in Muzarabani District. The chapter present the biographical information of the participants in a qualitative way. The chapter provides responses to the research questions from the study, and the goals of the study served as a guide for the data collection. The findings are categorized into manageable themes in accordance with the study's objectives.

4.2 Biographical information

Twenty people took part in the study, as shown in the tables below. There were fifteen young mothers who were married before the age of eighteen, along with five key informants.

4.2.1 Categories of key informants

Table 1

AGE RANGE	INSTITUTION	OCCUPATION
40-45	DSD	Case management officer
30-35	CHILDLINE	Social worker

35-40	SACHBC	Social worker
28-34	VFU Police	VFU officer
45-50	Community leader	Community CPC

The table above shows the five key informants who were interviewed. The table also indicate their age range, institution they were from and their occupation

4.2.2 Categories of young mothers

Table 2

AGE RANGE THEY GOT MARRIED	NUMBER	YEAR THEY VISITED WAITING MOTHER'S SHELTER
15-17	7	2020
15-17	8	2021

The above table shows the number of young mothers who visited the St Albert's Mission Hospital in 2020 and 2021. Those married at 15 to 17 years in 2020 were 7 and in 2021 were 8.

4.3 Qualitative data presentation and analysis

Data was collected using interviews and focus group discussions. These helped the researcher to discuss into detail specific issues with regard to child marriages with the participants. The themes that emerged include the strategies being implemented to mitigate child marriages, the effectiveness of the strategies being implemented to mitigate child marriages as well as ways

of improving the effectiveness of mitigation strategies on child marriages. The three aforementioned aspects of the study are going to be discussed in detail below.

4.4 STRATEGIES BEING IMPLEMENTED TO MITIGATE CHILD MARRIAGES

The participants explored various strategies being implemented to mitigate child marriages by development partners. Most participants, especially young mothers show that they are aware of the strategies being implemented and explained how these strategies are implemented and how they are helping the community. The strategies indicated by participants included community sensitization, empowerment of girls, educational assistance, laws and policies, youth initiatives as discussed below.

4.4.1 Community sensitisation

Community sensitization is one of the strategies being implemented to mitigate child marriages. This was revealed by most of the participants (seven). One participant stated that:

‘Dzidziso iri kuitwa munharaunda medu maererano nezve kuroodzwa kwevana vadiki uye dzidziso iyi iri kubatsira nhauranda sezvo isu takaroorwa tiri vana vadiki nekuda kwekushaya ruzivo maererano nezvimhingamupini zvinosanganika nazvo mushure mekuroorwa uri mudiki.’

Translated to;

(Awareness campaigns are being done in our community on the fight against child marriages and this is helping the community as some of us had been married before the age of 18 due to lack of knowledge on the consequences of early marriage.)

Some of the participants (five) said that the message on stopping child marriages is being spread everywhere in the community including in churches, schools and community meetings making them to realize that they had committed a huge mistake of being married before 18.

Augmenting on the above matter the other participant from focus group discussions conducted said:

'Shoko riri kutenderera zuva nezuva munharaunda rekupedza kuroodzwa kwevana vadiki.'

Translated to;

(The gospel is spreading in the community of ending child marriages.)

The key informants (four) also supported this assertion when they reported that community sensitization is being done through awareness campaigns in the community on ending child marriages. All the key informants indicated that they are doing awareness campaigns advocating for children's rights. One key informant said that:

'We are trying to end child marriages in the community by conscientising everyone on the potentials of the girl child as summarised by the theme 'Regai dzive shiri mazai haana muto.'

According to Khanna et al. (2013), government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) activities help build and improve effective child protection programs and promote adolescent girls' access to sexual and reproductive health information and services. Sensitization programs are used to inform the society, encouraging those who married early to consider returning to school and those who married later to think otherwise. It is significant to note that those who got married before turning 18 support this as a means of lowering child marriage. According to literature, both the development partners and the community must be involved in the implementation as required by the change theory, which states that everyone, everywhere, has a role to play. According to the participants, cultural and economic values are negative influences, so community sensitization changes how child marriage is perceived by the community.

To change attitudes about child marriage in the community, it is essential to increase community awareness. According to Erulkar and Muthengi (2009), many programs target people in positions of influence over children and adolescents, particularly parents, guardians, and community members, because most of child marriages are family-arranged. According to the change theory, strategic initiatives should be community driven and change how gender roles and child marriage are perceived by families and within the wider community. A greater emphasis on advancing girls' rights and providing viable alternatives to child marriage will boost family and community support for girls' opportunities. However, evolving norms take a long time, and this work should be resourced accordingly. For child marriage to be avoided, awareness campaigns must be conducted on a regular basis.

4.4.2 Empowerment of girls

It was interesting to find out that empowerment of girls is said to be also a child marriage mitigation strategy being implemented in the community. Most participants (nine) reviewed that girls are being empowered with different skills keeping them occupied hence lessening child marriages as some of them professed to getting married early due to the fact that they did not have anything to do.

Few participants (five) said that empowerment is a strategy to reduce child marriages as it reduces the dependency syndrome which had made them to be married early due to poverty.

In addition to above, one of the participants highlighted that:

'Vasikana vemunharaunda medu vakudzidziswa mabasa akasiyana siyana emaoko anosanganisira kuchengeta huku, kubika nekusona vachibatsiridzwa nemadonor kuwana dzidziso iyi pachena.'

Which translates to;

(Girls in our community are being trained on different types of business skills such as poultry, baking and sewing through the assistance of development partners.)

The key informants also highlighted that young girls are being trained some business skills. Empowerment helps young youths who are unemployed to have something to do and keep them busy therefore reducing their chances of getting married early. One key informant from SACHBC said that:

'Every year we support at least forty young girls to go for business skills training and also give them starter packs after the training.'

Recently accepted in Zimbabwe, the United Nations Sustainable Development Plan (2022–2026) makes recommendations for actions to take against poverty, GBV eradication, and other harmful practices like child, early, and forced marriage. According to study, skills are vital to girls' healthy development. According to a report by the Carnegie Foundation, only 15% of job success comes from technical knowledge and skills, while 85% of employment success comes from soft skills. As a result, child marriages can be minimized. The ability to learn new skills and get knowledge about oneself and the world around them is all enhanced when girls are empowered. They also develop self-confidence in their right to opportunities and alternative options. Girls who are able to learn skills will be able to improve their life habits, particularly after school, as it will provide income and keep them busy. Girls are able to live secure, productive, and fulfilling fruitful lives to their empowerment, according to the literature.

It is important to note that empowerment of girls helps to achieve gender equality and overcome barriers created by discrimination that prevent girls from obtaining the skills they need to pursue careers and overcoming poverty, thereby reducing their dependence on men.

By giving girls options other than marriage or job outside of the home, such as education, employment, or savings and loan activities, we are empowering girls. By becoming more mobile, visible, and vocal in her household and community, a girl can have an impact on other females. In terms of economic change, girls' empowerment is essential since it enables them to become financially independent, develop sound saving practices, and increase their chances of participating in the labor force in the future. As a result, Zimbabwe has also created a Broad-Based Framework for Women's Economic Empowerment. Increasing women's business ownership, entrepreneurship, and supporting them in their responsibilities as economic decision-makers are some of the strategic aims of the Framework. Literature indicates, however, that adolescent girls' frequently lack social support, and community social norms might provide obstacles to their economic advancement.

4.4.3 Educational assistance

The study also found out that educational assistance is a strategy being implemented to mitigate child marriages. From the responses most participants (nine), highlighted that assistance in education is being provided to vulnerable children which in turn reduces their chances of getting married below the age of 18 as some of them did.

Some participants (five) said that being in school mitigate child marriages as it reduces cases of sexual abuse since some of them got married after being sexually abused. Educational assistance removes children from many risks such as sexual abuse, drug and substance abuse which may lead to early marriages. The more time a girl spends in school, the greater the reduction in the risk of child marriage. One participant said that:

'Vana vanotambura munharaunda medu vakuwana rubatsiro rwekubhadharirwa mari dzechikoro, kutengerwa mauniform nemabhuku kubva kumadonor.'

Translated to;

(Vulnerable children in our community are receiving educational assistance in form of school fees, stationery and school uniforms from development partners.)

Key informants indicated that vulnerable children in the community especially the orphans, child headed families and the disabled are being assisted in education through BEAM, SACHBC and other development partners which is mitigating child marriages. Educational assistance enlightens children as they learn some of their rights at school. One key informant said that:

'We are supporting vulnerable children in school as some are dropping out which is making them to end up rushing into marriages.'

Marcus (2018) argues that education strengthens females' abilities to confront unfair gender norms and is a potent path to gender equality. According to some academics, a lack of education limits adolescent girls' career options and stops them from fully fulfilling their rights, such as the opportunity to reject forced marriages (Hodgkin, 2017). Secondary schooling provides a significantly more dependable and potent defense against teen marriage. Attending secondary school lowers a girl's likelihood of getting married before turning 18 by at least five percentage points per year, says a 2019 World Vision report. It should be mentioned that education is a fundamental human right and that everyone should have access to it because it enhances one's capacity for thought and helps one make better decisions. Education for girls strengthens economies, reduces inequality, and contributes to the creation of more resilient, stable societies where everyone has the opportunity to realize their full potential. It also offers women the power to make decisions that change their lives, which lowers the risk of child marriage.

According to literature, girls from more educated and wealthy families are less likely to marry as youngsters, breaking the cycle of poverty and intergenerational transmission of child marriage. The theory of change, which contends that ending child marriage requires long-term

sustainable initiatives, provided support for this. Given that disadvantaged girls can get it, this demonstrates how educational support reduces the likelihood of child marriage. However, Wodon et al., (2017) notes that school closures during the Covid 19 epidemic undermined progress toward gender equality, as girls were exposed to more GBV, sexual assault, adolescent pregnancy, and forced marriage.

4.4.4 Laws and policies

The study found out that laws and policies are being implemented to mitigate child marriages in the community. Most participants (eleven) indicated that people are reporting to the police cases of child marriages under the guidance of community volunteers. One participant revealed that:

'Kushaya ruzivo maererano nezvemitemo kwevabereki vangu kwakaita kuti ndiroorwe ndichiri mwana mudiki. Vasikana vakawanda vanotambura munharaunda medu vari kubatsirwa nemitemo sezvo varivo vanonyanya kusangana nedambudziko rekubatwa chibharo uye kuroorwa vachiri vadiki.'

Translated to;

(Lack of knowledge with regard to law on the part of parents is the reason I got married before the age of consent. The most vulnerable girls in our society are helped by laws and policies since they are more likely to be sexually abused and get married as children.)

Few participants (three) said that people fear the word 'police' if community volunteers say that they are going to report to the police on a case of child marriage thus deterring perpetrators. This shows that having laws and policies is helping everyone in the community to be under control therefore reducing child marriage. Without laws and policies child marriage could be on the rise. One respondent indicated that:

'Vanhu vakuenda kunomhan'ara nyaya dzekuroodzwa kwevana vadiki kumapurisa'

Which translates to;

(People are reporting cases of child marriage to the police.)

The key informants supported this as they said the police are working towards the issue of child marriage. They indicated that if any development partner comes across a case of child marriage it refers the case to the police. A key informant from DSD said that:

'We are working hand in hand with the police to make sure that law and policies on child marriages are not broken.'

The Zimbabwean Constitution recognizes marriages and requires that no marriage be entered into without the prospective spouse's express and informed consent. It also prohibits the pledging of children in marriages. The Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act makes it illegal to pledge a female, especially if she is younger than 18. Laws and policies help define what behaviors are acceptable and undesirable, reducing conflicts between groups of people, particularly those involving the family of a boy and a girl who are considering child marriage. The law serves as a guide, allowing the community to know what to do in regards to child marriages. The recent legislation passed by Zimbabwe and the ruling by the Constitutional Court that no kid under the age of 18 is legally allowed to marry were both praised by the UN. Despite the fact that this bill is significant, it is insufficient to address the issue; instead, society as a whole needs to adapt. Leaders in the community, parents and other caregivers, senior citizens, opinion leaders, and kids themselves are all urged to promote child marriage in their neighborhoods.

4.4.5 Youth initiatives

The participants clearly showed out that youth initiatives are being used to mitigate child marriage. The majority of participants (eight) claimed that youth initiatives had been started in their neighborhood where young boys and girls form clubs and groupings that regularly gather to discuss issues that affect participants. These initiatives were reportedly unavailable at the time the participants got married because of Covid 19 restrictions.

Few participants (six) reviewed that youth initiatives are making youths review their talents especially in sports and gain exposure which mitigates child marriages. One respondent said that:

'Mayouth ari kusangana oga achikurukura nyaya dzinovakanganisa'

Translated to;

(Youths are forming clubs which are enabling them to discuss issues affecting them.)

The key informants emphasized that they support youth initiatives so that youths can have time to themselves. Additionally, they mentioned that they host galas to honor youth initiatives, where young people from various backgrounds come together to showcase their abilities and get gifts as a source of encouragement. A key informant from SACHBC said that:

'We are supporting youths to start their own clubs so as to equip them.'

This demonstrates how youth initiatives assist young people in staying active, learning from one another, and decreasing their likelihood of getting married too young by giving them time to talk privately. Youth initiatives give young people a platform to share their thoughts, talents, and experiences while also receiving assistance in creating their own child marriage prevention plans. According to studies, young girls who are exposed to a variety of opportunities for amicable relationships behave less riskily and ultimately have higher success rates of making

the transition into adulthood. Initiatives spearheaded by youth provide girls the confidence they need to avoid being forced into underage marriage. It should be noted in this context that youth programs provide young people with connections and networks of supportive adults, which lowers the likelihood of child marriage. Community responses to child marriage are being coordinated at the forefront by youth-led and grassroots organizations.

4.5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STRATEGIES BEING IMPLEMENTED TO MITIGATE CHILD MARRIAGES

The participants highlighted on the effectiveness of strategies being implemented to mitigate child marriages. The participants indicated the most effective strategies which include community sensitization, empowerment of girls and educational assistance. They also talked of laws and policies and youth initiatives as less effective mitigating measures. All these strategies are going to be discussed below.

4.5.1 Community sensitization

The findings of this study pointed out that community sensitization strategy is to a greater extent effective in mitigating child marriages. Most participants (nine) indicated that the strategy is among the most effective ones as everyone is able to gain knowledge on what are child marriages, their causes and effects.

Few participants (five) said that community mobilization helps the community to know where to go when it comes to child marriage. Augmenting on the above matter one participant from one of the focus group discussions conducted said:

‘Dzidziso maererano nekuroodzwa kwevana vadiki iri kubatsira zvikuru munharaunda medu sezvo kana vabereki vava neruzivo vanenge vava kukwanisawo kugara pasi nevana vavo vachivadzidzisa zvakashatira kuroorwa uri mwana mudiki.’

Translated to;

(Education on child marriages is helping our community as parents get well equipped to educate their children on the impact of early marriage.)

The key informants supported this assertion saying that there was a huge decrease in cases of child marriages in 2022 as compared to the past years. They indicated that in 2022 they were receiving at most 3 cases per week as compared to 2020 and 2021 when they were receiving up to 6 cases per week. A key informant from DSD said that:

'In Chiweshe ward 10 child marriages are decreasing since we have increased awareness campaigns.'

The elimination of societal presumptions, peer pressure, and other factors that result in child marriages is being helped via community sensitization. Families, communities, and young people are all aware of the negative consequences of child marriage. It is assisting the community in gaining knowledge of children's rights. Community sensitization is crucial in ensuring that the community has firsthand, factual information on child marriages. According to research, community sensitization leads to effective problem-solving, which can effectively reduce child marriage. However, community sensitization does not work on its own in mitigating child marriage as there are other causes such as poverty that cannot be solved by community sensitization hence the need to employ other strategies such as educational assistance and empowerment of girls.

4.5.2 Empowerment of girls

It was also noted from the study that empowering girls with skills is to a larger extent effective in mitigating child marriages. The most participants (twelve) said that empowerment of girls is useful as it discourages early marriage in empowered girls.

Girls' empowerment is of utmost importance to a few of the participants (two), and it is recommended that the program be tailored to all vulnerable girls because those who are left out are married before the age of 18 due to poverty as they did. One participant said that:

'Vazhinji vevasikana vari kuwana dzidziso yemabasa emaoko havasi kuroorwa vachiri vadiki sezvo shuwiro yavo inenge iri pakuda kuzofadzawo vabereki vavo uye nekuvachengeta.'

Which translates to;

(Most of the girls who are receiving entrepreneurship training are not married early as they want to make their parents proud and support them financially.)

The key informants also indicated that empowerment of girls with skills was also the most effective strategy in mitigating child marriages as most of the empowered girls are doing great and some are even supporting their parents by paying school fees for their siblings. They also said that empowered girls are also sharing the knowledge they have with other girls in the community. One key informant stated that:

'Skills trainings are bringing employment to the unemployed young girls in the community'

Everyone benefits when girls are allowed to be girls (UNICEF, 2014). Empowerment of girls with skills enhances already existing skills and introduces new skills that are beneficial to them and their communities. Empowerment gives the girl child a sense of autonomy in their lives and gives them a sense of purpose, reducing child marriages. It gives meaning to the process of accomplishment and gives the person a sense of pride. Girls' empowerment decreases poverty by reducing child marriages, since the empowered girls are able to earn a living. Girls who are empowered and educated are better equipped to provide for their families, which lead to healthier, smaller families. However, the findings showed that the program targets only few girls as development partners lack resources leaving others in vulnerability.

4.5.3 Educational assistance

From the focus group discussions conducted, most participants (twelve) highlighted that assistance in education is to a greater extent effective in mitigating child marriages as most vulnerable children are not dropping out of school since BEAM, SACHBC and other development partners are assisting them in education through payment of school fees, school uniforms and stationery. This shows that educational assistance is impacting positively to the community as vulnerable children are attending school through the support of the development partners. School is enabling children to grow without disturbances since most of them will be above 18 years by the time they finish school.

Few participants (two) said that educational assistance is effective in mitigating child marriages but there are other children who also need extra support as some of them still get married early whilst receiving such educational assistance due to other needs. It was also noted that a lack of secondary schools in the area, which results in bush boarding and some walking long distances to school, is causing child marriages. One participant said that:

'Vana vanoenda kuchikoro vashoma vanoororwa vachiri vadiki sezvo basa rekuchikoro rinenge rakavawandira'

Translated to;

(School going children are less likely to be married early as they will be occupied with school work.)

The key informants highlighted that educational assistance is helping a lot in mitigating child marriages in the community as they had noticed that child marriage cases of school going children had decreased from 80% in 2020 and 2021 to 40% in 2022. One key informant stated that:

‘Child marriages are decreasing as vulnerable children are now able to attend school because we are trying to make sure that every child is in school.’

Koski (2019) asserts that efforts to support girls in their studies have been demonstrated to lower the rate of child marriage. The most effective approach to delay girls getting married is to invest in their education (Male and Wodon, 2018). According to the 2017 Global Education Monitoring Report, providing every girl with 12 years of schooling would result in a 64% reduction in child marriage worldwide. Zimbabwe has taken a number of steps to address gender imbalances, including the National Action Plan (NAP) for Orphans and Vulnerable Children and BEAM, which helps children from disadvantaged families with levies, school costs, and examination fees, to name a few.

It is crucial to highlight, that the connection between child marriage and education is not as straightforward because it is influenced by numerous interrelated factors. For instance, in a patriarchal society, marrying off some girls who are forced to leave school owing to their inability to keep up academically could be the best course of action. Long distances and inadequate secondary education resources and facilities, particularly in rural areas, reportedly pose a significant obstacle to continuing education beyond the primary level. Some secondary school girls have established or found temporary shelters close to secondary schools in some areas, which exposes them to sexual abuse on top of it. It is also important to note that some children are receiving educational assistance but are also in need at home, which affects them physically and emotionally, resulting in early marriages.

4.5.4 Laws and policies

The study found out that laws and policies are less effective in mitigating child marriages. Most participants (ten) professed ignorance on the existence of laws that deal with child marriages.

The participants highlighted that laws and policies is less effective as a strategy in mitigating child marriages due to rigid cultural beliefs, and disharmony in provisions of the law.

Only a few participants (four) said that laws and policies are working as people are reporting cases of child marriages to the police. The police are taking all the steps to solve the problem.

One participant said that:

'Mitemo iri kubatsira hayo kupedza kuroodzwa kwevana vadiki asi vazhinji vedu hatisati takuziva kuti mitemo iyi inoshanda sei nekuti tikuzopedzisira takuona vaye vanenge varoora vana vadiki vadzoka kumba. Ini vabereki vangu vakatomhan'arawo kumapurisa pandakaroorwa murume wangu akatorwa nemapurisa asi haana kugarako akangodzoka kumba tiri kutogara tese.'

Translated to:

(Laws and policies are helping in reducing child marriages but most of us do not have knowledge of how these laws work because we are ending up seeing the perpetrators back at home. My parents reported to the police when I got married and my husband was taken by the police but he came back home and we are still together.)

The key informants highlighted that laws and policies are less effective in mitigating child marriages as most of people in the community are still ling on to their cultural belief of marrying off girls to rich men in exchange of grain, money and other commodities. Culture and the society are seen to be the bad influencers to the community. They also said that few people are reporting to the police these cases of child marriages due to fear of witchcraft. One key informant from stated that:

'The society and cultural beliefs are influencing the community badly because a lot of people fear to report the cases of child marriages.'

The Zimbabwean Constitution stipulates that a person must be 18 years old to consent to sex (Zimbabwe 2013 Constitution, section 20). However, the Customary Marriage Act Chapter 5:07 permits girls to wed before the age of 18, as long as they have their parents' consent. In section 70 of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act (Chapter 9:23), the age of consent to sexual conduct was established at 16 until 2022 in response to a Constitutional Court ruling that put the consent age at 18 years old. In addition, the Children's Act Chapter 5:06 seems to glorify child marriage by requiring that a man who marries a girl under the age of six become her guardian. All this is testament to the inconsistencies in the provisions of laws and policies hence rendering it less effective as mitigation strategy against child marriage.

4.5.5 Youth initiatives

Most participants (eight) said that youth initiatives are less effective in mitigating child marriage as they might encourage bad behaviour among peers. One participant from the focus group discussions done revealed that:

'Mayouth ane misikanzwa anofurira vamwe vavo kutora zvinodhaka uye kuita zvebonde. Dzimwe nguva mayouth vanobuda pamba vachinyepera kuenda kumapoka avo ivo vachinoita zvakashata. Izvi zvose zvinozokonzera vakawanda kuti vazobatira pamuviri kana kuroorwa vari vana vadiki.'

(Mischievous peers might influence their colleagues to indulge in drug and substance use or even in early sexual activities. In some instances these youths might go out of their homes on the pretext that they are called to do club related activities when they are actually up to some mischief. This might result in early pregnancies and child marriages.)

Few participants (five) indicated that youth initiatives are helping girls to discuss issues affecting them like the issue of child marriages and also to prove their talents in sports. One participant said that:

‘Kusangana pamwe sevana vechidiki kuri kubatsira asi ndipo pamwe pakugadzirwa tumapoka tweekukurudzirana kushandisa zvinodhaka.’

Which translates to;

(Youth initiatives are helping but some youths take advantage of them to influence their peers into drug and substance abuse.)

Key informants indicated that they are receiving complaints in the community due to such bad behaviour by youths. However, they also indicated that some youths are faring well as a result of these initiatives as they are now able to showcase different talents in sport. One key informant stated that:

‘Youth initiatives are helping dedicated children as they are learning and acting while others are taking it for granted.’

According to Bruner et al. (2021), sport participation has been shown to impact youth development outcomes positively. According to literature, youths will be able to learn their rights in their clubs and reduce crime rates by being instilled with a positive mindset that leads them to realize how much they can achieve when their focus is right. Girls in youth programs take on more responsibility, reducing their chances of getting married early. However, some girls are indulging in bad activities like doing sexual activities leading them to early marriages.

4.6 WAYS OF IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MITIGATION STRATEGIES ON CHILD MARRIAGE

Participants indicated how to improve the effectiveness of child marriage mitigation strategies. The ways highlighted by the respondents included strengthening existing systems, stakeholder collaborations and training and equipping more Child Protection Committees (CPCs) and Child Care Workers (CCWs) and they are going to be discussed below.

4.6.1 Strengthening existing systems

The findings of the study pointed out that strengthening existing systems is a way of improving the effectiveness of mitigation strategies on child marriage. Most respondents (eight) indicated that there is need to strengthen existing systems so that the strategies will be more effective as some of them got married before the age of consent as they were ignorant of laws and policies on child marriage. They said that spreading knowledge to the community on each and every strategy being implemented is of great importance as community participation is indispensable. Efforts by development partners through doing more awareness campaigns, increasing the number of beneficiaries in school, empowering more girls, educating the community on laws and policies and increasing youth initiatives are key measures in strengthening existing systems.

Few participants (six) reviewed that much emphasis needs to be put especially on the less effective strategies like youth initiatives and laws and policies. Community participation is of great importance in amplifying the aforementioned aspects. One participant stated that:

'Mhando dzikushandiswa kupedza kuroodzwa kwevana vadiki hadzina kuipa asi dzinongoda mushandira pamwe.'

Translated to;

(Strategies being used to mitigate child marriages are not bad but everyone's participation is needed.)

The key informants stated that since there has been a decline in child marriage cases since these strategies have been put in place, strengthening current systems can increase the effectiveness of child marriage mitigation strategies. One key informant said that:

‘Child marriages in Chiweshe ward are decreasing showing that the strategies we are implementing are useful.’

According to research, there are many programs that advocate for the end of child marriages, but they seem to be a little less effective, due to a lack of financial assistance. According to literature for child marriage to be mitigated, there is need to strengthen the existing child protection systems. To address the issue, the government and other interested parties should provide financial support to initiatives that call for an end to child marriages. According to Plan International's Policy Brief on ending child marriages, the government should try to broaden the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) initiative of educational assistance to include more girls who are at risk of dropping out of school and, as a result, are at risk of early marriage, particularly in the most impacted areas.

Top-down, bottom-up, and middle-out approaches should be balanced and blended in order to develop the child protection system more comprehensively. Top-down strategies assist in ensuring that governments have the rules, regulations, and funding necessary to safeguard vulnerable children. Bottom-up strategies are those that are built from the ground up, put an emphasis on community involvement, take advantage of its resources, and promote collaboration between the community and the government (Wessells, 2015). The child protection agenda is ingrained in local centers of power through middle-out initiatives, which come from actors like city councils that are located between the national and grassroots levels.

Child Protection Working Group (2012) claims that social welfare ministries and actors cannot adequately protect children on their own as a result, boosting child protection systems calls for an all-encompassing strategy that avoids severing ties across different industry sectors that permeate the humanitarian architecture. However, shortage of resources on the part of development partners may affect this hence the need of stakeholder collaboration.

4.6.2 Stakeholder collaboration

The study found out that stakeholder collaboration is also a way of improving the effectiveness of mitigation strategies on child marriage. Most participants (ten) highlighted that there is need for collaboration of stakeholders to improve the effectiveness of mitigation strategies on child marriage as it pools knowledge and experience. They also indicated that it offers those who affect (perpetrators) or be affected (victims) by the child marriage a chance to voice their opinion. Stakeholder collaboration helps to discover potential risks leading to child marriage and the possible solutions.

Few participants (four) said that child marriage is still in existence because some of the strategies being used to mitigate it are leaving gaps. For example, education assistance being provided by DSD through BEAM caters for school fees only while other vulnerable children could not even afford to have school uniforms, stationery and food. Stakeholder collaboration should therefore come into play. In this case DSD can collaborate with SACHBC so that those children assisted with school fees would get school uniforms from SACHBC. One participant said that;

'Mastakeholder akaita mushandira pamwe zvinotibatsira nekuti ini ndakatosiya chikoro ndikaroorwa asi ndaitobhadharirwa mari neBEAM ndikazosvika pakushaya mari yemabhuku.'

Translated to;

(Stakeholder collaboration helps because I dropped out of school and got married but my school fees were being paid by BEAM but I still could not afford to buy stationery.)

The key informants supported the issue of stakeholder collaboration as a way to improve the effectiveness of mitigation strategies on child marriage. They said that they are facing a

challenge of shortage of resources so stakeholder collaboration may help to fill the gaps. One key informant stated that:

'We need to collaborate as some of our efforts are failing due to lack of resources.'

Working hand in hand of development partners helps them to better achieve their time, scope, quality and cost of their targets. Togetherness of stakeholders brings better results as the community will put trust on them. To ensure that children are granted their rights in their entirety, an integrated and collaborative strategy should be used with all stakeholders at various levels. According to the change theory, adequate funds must be available to support effective implementation of plans (not Brides, 2014). Stakeholder collaboration needs to be done to strengthen the existing systems so as to solve the challenge of resource shortage. Stakeholder involvement helps to identify potential risks that could lead to child marriage and the possible solutions. However, stakeholder collaboration may require substantial time to plan.

4.6.3 Training and equipping more child protection committees (CPCs) and Child Care Workers (CCWs)

The study found out that training and equipping more CPCs and CCWs is a way of improving the effectiveness of mitigation strategies on child marriage. Most participants (twelve) indicated that there are few community volunteers in their area and the volunteers are incapacitated as most of them do not have smart phones and even airtime to call during emergencies. One participant stated that:

'Kudzidziswa vamwe vanhu vakawanda maererano nezvekuchengetedzwa kwevana munharaunda kunobatsira kuti nyaya dzakawanda dzifambiswe nekukurumidzwa.'

(Training more community volunteers helps a lot of cases to be attended early.)

Few participants (two) said that community volunteers are few but they need support from the development partners as they are travelling long distances on foot for child marriage cases. So providing them with bicycles will make their work lighter. Community volunteers need to be appreciated on their work so that they feel connected to the program. One participant said that:

'Kudzidzisa vamwe vakawanda nezvekuchengetedzwa kwevana zvinoderedzawo basa ravo nekuti apa varipo vacho basa rikuvawandira zvikuita kuti vanonoke kubatsira pane dzimwe nyaya dzekuroodzwa kwevana vadiki.'

Translated to;

(Training and equipping more child protection committees and CCWs reduces work and pressure on them as they are currently overwhelmed leading them to attend other cases of child marriages late.)

Key informants indicated that training and equipping more Child Protection Committees and Child Care Workers is a way of improving the effectiveness of mitigation strategies on child marriage as these community volunteers are the ones doing much work through identifying child marriage cases. They help on child protection. One key informant stated that:

'Training more community volunteers and equipping them can improve our efforts on mitigating child marriages.'

Child Protection Committees make vital public information on safeguarding children available. According to literature evaluations, CPCs and CCWs inform the public about child protection issues in their communities, where to go if they have concerns about a kid, and what might happen. Government of Zimbabwe (2012) claims that CPCs oversee the use of village registers in program targeting by all NGOs operating in the region, serve as the quality control monitor for NGO-implemented programs, keep an eye on and ensure that recipients of various programs

like BEAM and cash transfers are actually benefiting from them, and prevent corruption in the community. CPCs are proactive on behalf of underprivileged children; in particular, at the neighborhood level especially in ensuring they have access to education. Volunteers in the community connect those who are concerned about children they suspect to be abuses to service providers.

The 2012 Child Protection Protocol provides further evidence that community-based CPCs can advise on how to contribute to the protection of children and have plans to do so, are up-to-date with current legislation, studies, best practices, and assistance, and may even have agencies to assist them in achieving this. According to studies, elements that can influence the efficacy of community volunteers include the presence of sufficient financial and human resources, as well as strong alliances and partnerships between the government, NGOs, and the community.

However, research indicates that CPCs must be subjected to regular rigorous monitoring and evaluation, including self-monitoring by committee members, government, and other child protection partners, in order to improve their effectiveness on child marriage. By standardizing the operations of each CPC in accordance with the national or worldwide policies and strategies, standardization of training and performance monitoring framework would ultimately improve the outcomes of CPC programs.

4.7 Summary

This chapter gave discernment and analysed the research findings on the efficacy of child marriage mitigation strategies in rural communities. Case study of Chiweshe ward 10 in Muzarabani District. The findings in this research revealed strategies being implemented to mitigate child marriage, the effectiveness of the mitigation strategies on child marriages and

ways to improve the effectiveness of mitigation strategies on child marriages. The findings were aligned to the objectives of the research.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the research findings based on the research objectives. In light of the research's findings, the chapter also makes recommendations for the government and its development partners on how to mitigate the frequency of child marriages in rural areas.

5.2 Summary of the findings

Chapter 1 consist of the background of the study, problem statement, aim, objectives, research questions, and justification of the study, assumptions, delimitations and limitations, organisation of the study and definition of key terms. An overview of the literature on child

marriage mitigation strategies, their effectiveness and ways to improve it can be found in Chapter 2. This chapter also contains the theoretical framework. The research techniques used by the researcher to collect data are covered in Chapter 3. The presentation and discussion of the data obtained are in Chapter 4, and the study's summary, conclusion and recommendations are in Chapter 5. The study's aim was to assess the efficacy of child marriage mitigation measures being implemented in Zimbabwe rural communities by the government and development partners. Chiweshe ward 10 in Muzarabani District served as the location. The research was based on three objectives which are to identify strategies being implemented to mitigate child marriages, to assess the effectiveness of the strategies being implemented as well as to suggest ways of improving the effectiveness of the mitigation strategies of child marriage. Five key informants were chosen through convenient sampling whilst fifteen participants (young mothers) were selected through purposive sampling.

On the first objective the study findings revealed five strategies being implemented to mitigate child marriage which are community sensitization, empowerment of girls, educational assistance, laws and policies as well as youth initiatives. On the second objective, the findings highlighted that three of the strategies are most effective and these strategies are community sensitization, empowerment of girls and educational assistance. Laws and policies as well as youth initiatives are said to be less effective. The study also brought out ways to improve the effectiveness of these strategies which is the third objective of the study and the participants revealed three ways which are strengthening existing systems, stakeholder collaboration and training and equipping more community volunteers.

5.3 Conclusion of the study

The study concludes that child marriage mitigation strategies such as community sensitization, empowerment of girls, educational assistance, laws and policies as well as youth initiatives can

be successful in reducing the prevalence of child marriage in rural communities. However, the study discovered that a number of variables, including cultural attitudes and traditions and economic realities can affect how effective these techniques are. The study also highlighted that lack of resources within the government and development partners is also a challenge which is affecting the implementation of these strategies. The study comes to the additional conclusion that in order for child marriage mitigation strategies to be successful, they must be tailored to the unique requirements and conditions of each community or region. To do this, the government and development partner should collaborate, training and equipping more CPCs and CCWs as well as strengthening existing systems. The study upon analysis of the findings has arrived to the conclusion that there is no single solution to the problem of child marriage hence a combination of strategies can be effective in mitigating its prevalence in rural communities.

5.4 Recommendations

- 1) The government should ensure that laws and regulations prohibiting child marriage are in place and properly implemented.
- 2) In order to recognize and respond to cases of child marriage in rural communities, the government should expand child protection procedures, including training to law enforcement personnel, social workers and health workers.
- 3) The government and development partners should work to eradicate barriers to education for girls and increase access to education for children especially girls in rural areas.
- 4) The government and development partners should step up efforts to educate families and the general public about the risks of child marriage.

- 5) Girls need to be empowered through education, leadership training, mentorship and life skills training
- 6) Government and development partners should engage with community leaders, including religious leaders, traditional rulers and parents to raise awareness about harms of child marriage and to encourage them to play an active role in preventing such marriages
- 7) Government and development partners should provide alternative livelihoods to families to reduce their dependence on child labour and improve their economic status sufficiently enough to not force them to marry.
- 8) There is need for stakeholder partnership. It is the responsibility of the State, courts, civil society organisations and the media among others to work together to ensure the legal prohibition becomes reality.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter offered an overview of the research findings, conclusions and recommendations for further research. The chapter addressed the findings of the objectives in brief and provided a response to its own questions. The chapter lastly listed some recommendations towards mitigating child marriages.

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APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

My name is Blessing Chareka , I am a student at Bindura University of Science Education. In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Social Work Honors Degree, I am carrying out a study entitled “An assessment on the efficacy of child marriage mitigation strategies in rural communities of Zimbabwe. A case study of Chiweshe ward 10 in Muzarabani District.” I have identified you as a potential stakeholder and I am asking for voluntary participation. The information obtained is purely for academic purpose and will be treated with confidentiality.

Participation is based on the following terms and conditions:

1. Participation is voluntary and participants will not be coerced to participate.
2. Participants are free to seek clarification on issues that they do not understand.
3. Research proceedings will be recorded in writing or audios and anonymity will be guaranteed by not including names.
4. All information obtained will remain confidential and the research is purely for academic purposes.
5. Participants are free to withdraw from the research at any time.

Signature(Participant).....Date.....

Signature(Researcher).....Date.....

APPENDIX B: KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Does your organisation have programs to respond, control and reduce child marriages?
If not does your organisation respond to child marriages in its work?
2. What is your organisation doing to address child marriages in Chiweshe ward 10?
3. How effective are your strategies to mitigate child marriages?
4. What challenges is your organisation facing in implementing child marriage mitigation strategies?
5. What are the causes of child marriages in Chiweshe ward 10?
6. What are the effects of child marriages in Chiweshe ward 10?
7. Are cases of child marriages being reported to the police?
8. What do you think should be done to reduce child marriages in rural communities?

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

1. How old are you?
2. Which village do you come from?
3. What do you understand about child marriages?
4. What is causing child marriages in your community?
5. What are the effects of child marriages in your community?
6. Which age group is most affected by the issue of child marriages?
7. Do people report cases of child marriages to the police?
8. What mechanisms have been put in place to mitigate child marriages in your community?
9. Are the strategies being implemented in your community effective?
10. What do you think can be done to mitigate child marriages?

APPENDIX D: APPROVAL LETTER

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying most of the page. It is intended for an approval letter. In the top-left corner of this box, there is a very small, faint text label that reads "Figure 10-10: Approval Letter".

