Factors That Influence Prevalence of Child Marriages Among Married Men And Women In Chibombo District of Central Province

A Dissertation submitted as a requirement of the University of Zambia for the partial fulfillment for the attainment of Master of Public Health in Population Studies

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DECLARATION

I **JOSEPH MWAMBA YOWELA** do hereby solemnly declare that this dissertation represents my own work and that to the best of my knowledge, there has not been any dissertation of this nature submitted to this school or any other school.

SIGNATURE…………………………………………..DATE:………………………….......

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation by **Joseph Mwamba Yowela** is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Masters of Public Health – Population Studies by the University of Zambia (UNZA)

Examiner 1……………………………………………..Date…………………………………………

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Signature……………………………………………Date………………………………………….

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION OF DISSERTATION

I, **Joseph Mwamba Yowela** do hereby certify that this dissertation is a product of my own work and in submitting for the Degree of Master of Public Health in Population Studies, further attest that it has not been submitted to another University in part or whole for the award of any programme.

Signature…………………………………………………………………………………………

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I **Dr R. N Likwa**, having supervised and read this dissertation is satisfied that this is the original work of the author under whose name it is being presented.

I confirm that the work has been completed satisfactorily and is ready for presentation to the examiners.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Child marriage, also referred to as early marriage is an emerging economic and health concern across the world and remains a widespread problem especially in developing countries including Zambia. Early or child marriages recorded a national average of 42 percent in 2010 in Zambia and the situation has not changed much. The study investigated factors that influence prevalence of child marriages in Chibombo District of Central Province in Zambia among the married men and woman. Child marriages have an effect on maternal health.

Objective: The general objective of this study was to investigate factors that influence the prevalence of early marriages in Chibombo district of Central Province.

Methodology: The study used a mixed methods approach (convergent parallel) design which uses quantitative and qualitative data collection. The quantitative part of this study utilized a descriptive cross sectional approach which involved random sampling methods to select respondents (n=385); a total of 300 respondents were interviewed using an administered questionnaire. The qualitative aspect employed the phenomenological approach and it involved, six (6) FGDs involving ten (6-10) participants in each group with equal representation of gender, and 5 Key Informants (traditional leaders) were interviewed. All the participants were drawn from Chibombo district from three sampled communities, namely: Chisamba, Chamuka and Chibombo. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS version 20 while qualitative data through content analysis involving identification of major themes. Data was presented in frequency tables and charts. Chi square tests were conducted and data presented.

Results: The research findings revealed that the prevalence of early marriages in Chibombo was high at 39 percent, slightly below the national prevalence rate which was reported at 42 percent in 2010. The study ascertained that various factors influence high prevalence of child marriages but the most prominent ones were low education levels, lack of sufficient awareness information, traditional cultural practices and high poverty levels.

Conclusion and recommendations: Child marriages were more prevalent among girls due to forced marriages which were driven by poverty and the mean age at marriage was 20.4 years with a SD=4.6 years. This study recommends that awareness of consequences and effects of child marriages be intensified. Encourage girls and boys to be more focused on education

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate the works of this study to my wife Towera and my children, Nangana, Lubuto Joseph (Jr), Tamika, Ezreilah and Nancy. Just looking at these guys I see great values based leadership for now and the future. I appreciate the patience and tolerance with me when I had to juggle my school and time with them. God bless you guys! This work is for you. The sky is the starting point for you. Work hard and God will bless the works of your hands.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Virus
CEFM	Child Early and Forced Marriage
CSO	Central Statistical Office
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
FGDs	Focused Group Discussions
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICRW	International Centre for Research on Women
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
MCDMCH	Ministry of Community Development Mother and Child Health
MCTA	Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NRC	National Registration Card
PI	Principal Investigator
PSAF	Panos Institute Southern Africa
SADC	Southern Africa Development Cooperation
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WLUML	Women Living Under Muslim Laws
ZDHS	Zambia Demographic and Health Survey

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This chapter basically introduces the subject of child marriages giving some background information about the subject and extent of the issue.

Child marriage which is also referred to as early marriage is an emerging economic and health concern across the world and remains a widespread problem especially in developing countries including Zambia. This study was aimed at investigating the factors influencing high prevalence of child marriages among married men and women in Chibombo district of Central Province in Zambia. Little available information provided statistics on child marriages and the ways in which child marriages may affect the lives of young people especially women and their reproductive health and choices. International Centre for Research on Women (2010) revealed that one third of the world's population of about 7.2 billion is girls. Statistics indicate that in the year 2010, sixty seven (67) million women aged 20-24 around the world got married before the age of 18, and was also projected that in the next decade, over 142 million girls would be married before their 18th birthday provided that the present trends on child marriages continue (ICRW, 2010). According to Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), which provide much of the current country-level child marriage data, child marriage is most common in the world's poorest countries. The highest rates are in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia as well as parts of Latin America and the Caribbean(Jain & Kurz, 2007). While countries with the highest prevalence of child marriage are concentrated in Western and Sub-Saharan Africa, due to population size, the largest number of child brides resides in South Asia (ICRW, 2010).

Early marriage, also referred to as child marriage, is defined as any marriage carried out below the age of 18 years, before the girl is physically, physiologically and psychologically ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage and childbearing (Walker, 2012). Today, over sixty 60 million marriages include girls under the age of 18 years: approximately thirty one 31 million in South Asia, 14 million in Sub-Saharan Africa, and 6.6 million in Latin America and the Caribbean (Nour, 2009). Globally, according to a United Nations Children's Emergency Fund

(UNICEF) report by Umemoto, (2005), 36% of women aged 20-24 were married, forced or consensual, before they had reached 18 years. An estimated 14 million girls between the ages of 15 and 19 give birth each year (Umemoto, 2005). Girls in the age group 15 to 19 are two times more likely to die during pregnancy or child birth when compared to their counterparts in their 20s. According to Walker, (2012), girls who are younger than 15years are 5 times more likely to suffer child birth complications.

While boys are not spared, the practice predominantly impacts girls. It is often referred to as "early and forced" marriage because the girls, given their young age, can rarely make a free and informed decision about their marriage partner, the timing or the implications of this binding commitment. The problem of early or child marriages is also eminent in Zambia and is a public health concern. This study was therefore conducted and aimed at assessing early marriages in Zambia.

1.2 Problem Statement

Zambia has one of the highest prevalence rates of child marriages in the world. On average, two out of five girls get married before their 18th birthday. According to the Zambia Demographic Health Survey ZDHS, (2007), the national prevalence rate of child marriages is at 42 percent, with Central Province recording a prevalence rate of 46 percent. The legal age for marriage in Zambia is currently 21 years (UNFPA, 2010). However, in most rural parts of Zambia, customary law is more usually followed and allows marriage for anyone who is considered to have reached puberty, a definition which puts children at risk (Matenga and Tembo, 2008).

Child marriage is most common among the poorest households and it is closely linked to poverty and low levels of economic development. In addition, culture also promotes child marriages especially in rural Zambia communities. Child marriage creates problems to both sexes although girls are more affected since they are most vulnerable to early marriage and are the majority victims. Child marriage limits the child's education, affects the general health, and puts the affected in disadvantaged position. For instance children engaged in an early marriage are more likely to drop out of school, have little or no education, be unemployed or low paid, live in poor housing condition and have a lot of children.

The cycle would continue as these children are more likely to have no education, and would end up in an early marriage as well. If not addressed, child marriages may undermine all developmental efforts in the country. It is from this background information that this study was designed to investigate that factors influencing high prevalence of child marriages among married men and women. Child marriage is not only a human rights violation but it is also a barrier to development (Jain & Kurz, 2007).

1.3 Study Rationale

Early/Child marriages have a great impact on the health of the population hence the need to understand factors influencing them. Girls who are younger than 15 years are 5 times more likely to suffer child birth complications according to Walker, (2012). Child marriage is an important problem that needs to be studied to fill the existing gap in knowledge. The available knowledge only reveals statistics on the prevalence of child marriages. There is lack of statistics on the factors that influence child marriages thus this study would be an important landmark to the people of Central Province because it may equip policy makers with the necessary information on the factors leading to the rise in child marriages.

UNICEF conducted a qualitative study on the nature of child marriages in Zambia, and revealed that education levels, culture and socio-economic status influence child marriages in Zambia (Gillian et al, 2015). However, this study by UNICEF had a lot of weakness which could undermine the study results. For instance, the researcher only employed qualitative methods to arrive at the conclusion hence the study could not give statistics on the extent to which the reported factors influence child marriages. Apart from that, in certain enumeration areas, the study engaged researchers/data collectors who did not go through required research training. This has a serious effect on the quality of data used to reach a conclusion. Therefore, there was need to look at the factors that influence child marriages in Zambia in order to have quality and reliable information which may inform policy. This study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods, with well-trained and competent enumerators, in investigating the factors that influence high prevalence of child marriages in Chibombo district. The study also included a question on whether people had access to and had received information on the effects of child marriages which was not included in the previous studies.

1.4 Significance

The study was very significant to Chibombo district and Central Province at large because it generated information which may contribute to policy. The prevalence of child marriages in Chibombo district of Central Province is very high thus this study came up with policy recommendation which when implemented together with existing strategies may go a long way in reducing the prevalence of child marriages in the Province. Furthermore, we feel the study will contribute to theory because it has helped to establish that religious affiliation in Chibombo did not have an association with child marriages. Child marriages were more influenced by social-economic and cultural factors. The study also will help fill the existing gap in knowledge particularly in Central Province with regards to factors that influence prevalence of child marriages. The study further helped to establish a snap short prevalence of child marriages in Chibombo which provides a basis for intervention and evaluation of programmes aimed at ending child marriages.

In addition, this study was deemed significant to the author as it was a requirement for the award of a Masters' degree in Public Health at the University of Zambia. Thus this study provided the much needed experience on conducting a scientific research and has led to career improvement.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Demographic Characteristics of People involved in Child Marriages

Literature showed that child marriages was a global phenomenon, high prevalence of child marriages was a major challenge in the world with highest rates in Asia and Africa (ICRW, 2010). However, the factors that influence child marriages vary from one country to another. Most of the available information showed that child marriages were more common among females than among their male counterpart. Birech (2013) argued that in India, girls grow up with a mind-set of marriage within a socially determined social frame and as such almost half; 44.5 percent of women in the age group 20-24 years get married before the age of 18. The situation was similar in Yemen, approximately half the girls get married before they reached 18 years old. The legal minimum age for marriage in Yemen is at 15 years of age but some girls get married at the onset of puberty as early as 8 years old (Birech, 2013; Carla, 2009). In support of this, International Centre for Research on Women (2010) established that in most African countries, the legal age at marriage is not usually restricted but depends on physical maturity. For girls, the determinant is usually the onset of menstruation. Similarly, Ummemoto (2005) also found out that child marriages are common in Nigeria. A study on early marriage in Kebbi State, Northern Nigeria revealed that the average age at marriage for girls is just over 11 years, against a national average of 17 (Umemoto, 2005).

Furthermore, Nasrin and Rahman, (2012) also ascertained that child marriages are more prevalent among girls compared to boys. In rural Bangladesh, women get married at an early age due to many social pressures. If the marriage of a pubescent girl is delayed, her parents and sometimes the girl herself are made to feel guilty (Nasrin and Rahman, 2012). Women Living Under Muslim Law, (2013), also confirms that child marriages are more frequent to females than to their male counterparts. This is because of gender inequality; whereby girls and women are perceived to be commodities unable to make proper decisions about who and when to marry. Girls and women are forced to become brides because it is easier to control them. In the case of girls, their virginity can be guaranteed and they have longer reproductive periods in which to produce more children (Umemoto, 2001).

In terms of gender, child marriage in Zambia affects both boys and girls (Gillian et al, 2015). In many countries around the world, girls tend to marry at younger ages than boys and they marry older, adult men. However, in Zambia, a study by UNICEF uncovered that many of the marriages are between peers. Child marriage is most common between peers and it is usually as a result of teenage pregnancy. In most rural Zambian communities, if a boy impregnates then he has to oblige by marrying the same girl. However, the study did not establish whether there is an automatic link between teenage pregnancy and child marriage (Gillian et al, 2015). According to a research done in Chadiza a district in Eastern province of Zambia by Plan International, pregnancies occurred among girls as young as 12 years. Often these girls who get pregnant would drop from school and engage into early marriage with the view that marriage is the best alternative to take care of themselves and their children (Nangoma, 2013).

2.2 Awareness about the effects of Child Marriages

UNICEF defines child marriage as marriage prior to age 18 years and it is a reality for over 60 million women worldwide (Raj et al., 2009). However, very few literatures give statistics on what has been done so far in terms of sensitizing the communities on the rightful age at which a person can get married. Marriages especially in rural areas are characterised by parents making a decision on behalf of their children for who to marry, and when to marry (Adebambo, 2010). Thus mostly conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and are marriages in which duress whether physical or emotional is a factor. It is generally believed that any child marriage constitutes a forced marriage, in recognition that even if a child appears to give their consent, anyone under the age of 18 is not able to make a fully informed choice whether or not to marry (Adebambo, 2010).

In Zambia, lack of information for parents and community on dangers of child marriages, harmful cultural practices, importance of education for both girls and boys, respect for children's rights and other such relevant information makes children vulnerable to abuse and to early marriages (PSAF, 2014). Panos Institute Southern Africa further added that "like lack of formal education, lack of information limits the options for survival available to children. The importance of access to information in eradicating child marriages, therefore, cannot be overemphasized. The failure of these girls and their families to access information that would help them mitigate the threats to their lives aggravates the dangers".

2.3 Cultural Issues

Giddens (2001) defines culture as a way of life of members of a particular society. Culture includes marriage customs and family life among other issues such as food, dressing, and patterns of work. Studies indicate that culture plays a huge role in influencing child marriages in across the globe, World Youth Report (2003) established that the status of women in society influences child marriage. This is because in most African and Asian societies women are seen as inferior citizens in such a way that they cannot earn income nor take care of themselves hence should be under the care of a man (World Youth Report, 2003; Birech, 2013). For instance, in India, the birth of a girl is often not cerebrated because girls are viewed as a burden given the fact that they will get married and leave the natal family. Girls are usually married off at an early age for some reasons such as assurance of virginity at marriage and lack of education. Parents in India prefer educating a boy child to girl (Walker, 2012).

A girl's virginity is highly valued in India (Birech, 2013), and as such girls are often pushed into marriage at young age to ensure that their virginity remains intact; the younger the girl, the more likely that she would be a virgin. In the Indian culture, girls who break their virginity before marriage are often a laughing stock, and it is normally considered that shame would be cast on a family if it is found that the girl is not a virgin when she marries (Birech, 2013).

Traditions and cultural norms tend to influence marriage given that early marriage is an effective mechanism for transferring a father's patriarchal rights over his daughter to an often time older male in the community, these practices reinforces the family's social status and consolidate economic relationships (Steward et al., 2013).

In Zambia, initiation ceremonies such as 'Chinamwali and Nyau'[1] of Eastern Province have a strong influence on child marriages (Nangoma, 2013). These practices tend to influence the young people to desiring marriage as they feel ready for marriage after the rites. In support of this, Gillian et al. (2015) also established that initiation ceremonies involving preparation of children for marriage influence child marriages. Children are often initiated into such practices as early as 12 years and the training creates an attitude that such children are ready for marriage.

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[1] Chinamwali is a female initiation rite for girls who have attained puberty and is very popular among the Chewa speaking people of Eastern Zambia and Malawi. The boys, from as young as 7 years, have their own Nyau initiation rites which they engage in especially during their teenage years. The Nyau are highly secretive but the initiation ceremony generally involves learning how to dance and some training on sexuality

Having children is also another aspect of culture that is highly treasured and has also been associated with high rates of child marriages which also increase coital frequency (Clark, 2004).

In certain sections of the Zambian communities especially those in remote areas, women and children are viewed as "second class citizens" inferior to men (PSAF, 2014). This has created unequal status and power relations between the sexes and ages in Zambia. PSAF (2014) added that cultural beliefs and practices also dictate what kind of information is shared between sexes and also people of different ages. This often curtails freedom of information and expression and limits the exchange of accurate life-saving information and information that helps people make informed decisions for themselves and in the best interests of their children. In addition, cultural beliefs such as polygamous marriages influence child marriages. Wealthier men often go for young girls in polygamous marriage (Gillian, 2015; PSAF, 2014).

2.4 Socio-economic Reasons for Child Marriages

Most of the available information has indicated that there is significant relationship between poverty or the socio-economic status of the girls and child marriages (Gillian, 2015; Sah et al., 2014; Nasrin and Rahman, 2012). Families with limited resources often opt to marry off a girl at an early age in order to earn some income or wealth; marriage is considered as a significant economic transaction (Birech, 2013). Birech (2013) also learned that in most poor communities especially in Africa, bride wealth is linked to marriage thus if a family is poor, this practice encourage child marriage. Bride wealth is a source of wealth and prestige when given in the form of livestock such as cattle, goats, and sheep among others (Birech, 2013). The more livestock one has the more wealthy one is, hence, more respect.

In addition, a young girl may be seen as an economic burden who should just be married off so that the family can be relieved financially and socially (International Center for Research on Women, 2007). Nour (2009), also supported that poverty is one the major drivers of child marriages. He further added that the socio-economic status of parents drives child marriages in that parents believe that marrying off the girl child secures their daughter's financial security, and also reduce the economic burden daughters place on the family. Some traditional societies perceive girls as being costly to feed, clothe, and educate, and they eventually leave the

household. A different researcher also noted that poverty is the major cause of early marriages among other reasons (Verma & Srinivasan, 2014).

Another study on the factors affecting early marriage and early conception of women in slum areas in Rajshahi City of Bangladesh concluded that there is a significant relationship between monthly income and child marriages (Nasrin and Rahman, 2012). Bangladesh is one of the largest Muslim countries in the world which practice high child marriages. Nasrin and Rahman (2012) maintain that apart from the level of monthly income, religion also plays an important role influencing the likelihood of an early marriage. It has further been argued that if female education could be universal up to secondary and higher level, it would greatly help to end child marriages due to prolonged period spent in school, and education also empowers women in decision making such as consequences of early marriages (Sah et al.,2014; Nasrin and Rahman, 2012).

Studies have revealed that the level of education play a role in influencing child marriages (PSAF, 2014). Panos Institute Southern Africa (PSAF) (2014) reported that limited access to formal education for many children often leaves them impoverished and thus vulnerable to early marriage. This is because without education, many children have limited options for survival hence end up in an early marriage, hoping that they would be socially and economically liberated under the guardian of a husband.

In Zambia, a UNFPA sub-analysis of the 2007 Zambia Demographic Health Survey (ZDHS) indicated that two out of five girls (about 42%) were married before their 18th birthday. This analysis also showed that girls living in poverty and in rural areas faced a higher risk of early marriages and most especially those without access to education. Young girls in the rural Zambian communities are seen as financial assets; poor families become eager to marry off daughters at the earliest age, especially when they receive offers of marriage from 'good' prospects.

For girls dropping out of school because their families are unable to meet the cost of education, marriage is the only option to acquire economic security and avoid becoming a financial burden on their families. According to some people, poor parents believe that investing in a girl's education yields poor returns, because after marriage, a girl will have very little control over her

earnings and will be unable to give financial support to her parents and siblings (Verma & Srinivasan, 2014).

In addition, Walker (2012) revealed that the economic context in which early marriage exist in Africa is one of household poverty, vulnerability, uncertainty, seasonality of labour, labour surplus economies in a low productive rural setting. In this context, poverty is a significant risk factor as marring girls off before the age of 18 is experienced positively for poor families who are relieved of the responsibility of feeding, clothing and protecting the girl child in an uncertain and insecure society.

Literature has brought out various factors about child marriages and the study had the following key research questions it addressed:

2.5 Research Questions
The study answered the following research questions:

- What were the demographic characteristics of individuals involved in child marriages?
- Were the people of Chibombo district aware of the effects of child marriages?
- What were the influences of cultural practices on the prevalence of child marriages in Chibombo district?
- Did the socio-economic status of an individual/family influenced child marriages in Chibombo district?

2.6 Research Objectives

2.6.1 General Objective:
- The general objective of this study was to investigate the factors that influence prevalence of child marriages in Chibombo district of Central Province

2.6.2 Specific Objectives
- To examine the demographic characteristics of individuals engaged in child marriages
- To find out whether people of Chibombo district have received information about the effect of child marriages

- To determine the influence of cultural practices on the prevalence of child marriages in Chibombo district
- To investigate the influence of socio-economic status of individuals/families in influencing child marriages

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Conceptual Framework of Child Marriage Prevalence
Figure 1:
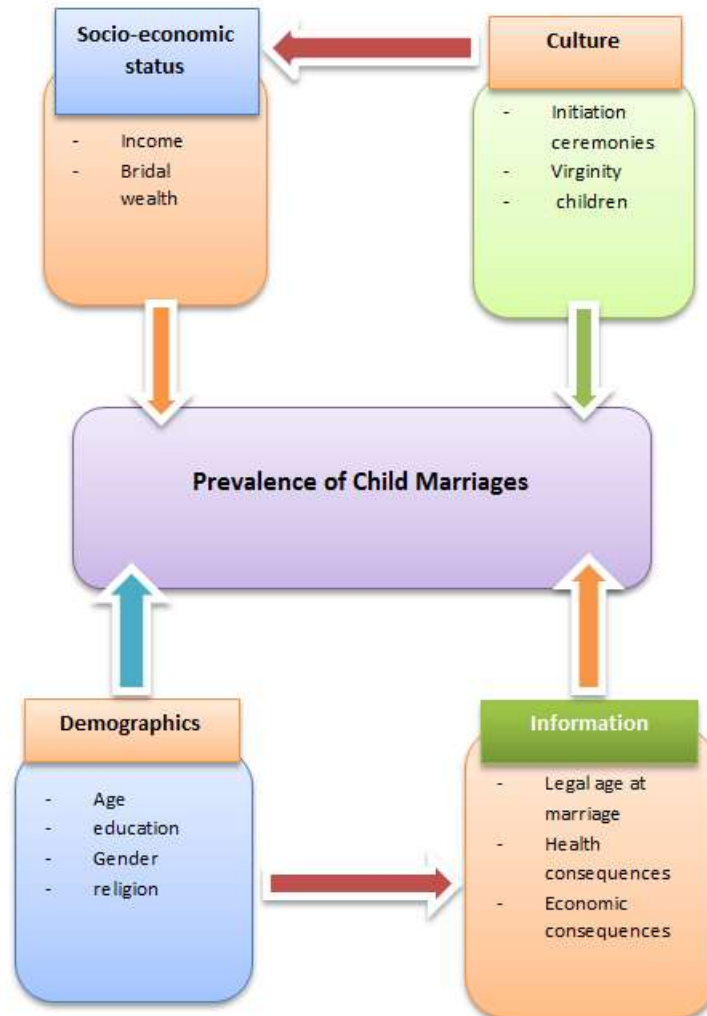
The diagram above shows a conceptual framework of the expected outcome of the results on factors influencing child marriages. Although data had not been collected, intuition and existing data favored the prediction that people with little information about the effects or dangers of engaging in child marriages would highly practice early marriages. There also seemed to be a

correlation between accessibility of information and some demographic variables such as education. People with higher education would be more likely to access and receive sensitization information on the effects of child marriages hence would not engage in early marriage. In addition, people with higher levels of education would not engage in early marriage due to the prolonged duration of schooling, and the opposite also applies.

The available data also indicates that there was a correlation between the bridal family's socio-economic status and the decision to engage in early marriage. Families with limited resources saw child marriage as way to provide for their daughter's future (Nasrin and Rahman, 2012). In families where poverty was acute, young girls could be regarded as an economic burden hence parents would prefer an early marriage as an alternative way of reducing the burden.

Furthermore, another relationship existed between culture and child marriages. Certain cultures marry off the girl child at a tender age to reduce the chances of her losing her virginity and also to avoid the embarrassment of pregnancy in the mother's home. On the other hand, boys who impregnated would be forced to marry the same girl even when they were young.

3.2 Variables

Table 1: Variables Table

Variable Type	Operational Definition	Indicators	Scale of measurement
Dependent variables: 1. Prevalence of child marriages	Marriages below the age of age years	1. Proportion/number of those married below 18year 2. Reasons for those marriages	- Percentage - Proportions
Independent Variables 1. Demographic characteristics 1) Age:	One's age at last birthday	1. Number of those below age 18 years 2. Number of those above age 18 years	- Count
2) Sex	Biological condition of being male or female	1. Number of males 2. Number of females	- Proportion - Counts
3) Marital status	The condition of being married or unmarried	1. Single 2. Married 3. Widowed 4. Divorced	- Proportion
4) Ethnicity	A category of people who identify with each other based on common language, tribe experiences	Types of languages or tribes identified (Lenje, Tonga, Bemba, Chewa, Shona, Kaonde, Lozi)	- Proportion
5) Education status/level	One's educational attainment or lack of it	1. Primary level 2. Secondary level 3. Tertiary level 4. Never attended school	- Proportions - counts
6) Occupation	One's usual or principal work or business, especially as a means of earning a living	1. Businessman 2. Peasant farmer 3. Employed	- Proportions - Counts
7) Religion	One's religious grouping or affiliation	1. Christian (protestant, SDA, Jehovah's witnesses, Catholic) 2. Hindu 3. Muslim	- Proportions
Independent Variables: 2. Access to information on child marriages	Availability and access to information on child marriages	- Availability of information on child marriages - Sources of information on child marriages - Types of information provided on child marriages	- Counts - Proportions
3. Cultural practices	Manifestation of a culture especially in regard to the traditional and customary practices of a particular ethnic or other cultural group in relation to child marriages	- Presence of cultural belief/moral in marriage - Types of cultural practices - Reasons for practices - Reactions to traditional values	- Nominal

3.3 Study Design

The study was a cross-sectional descriptive Convergent Parallel Design which used mixed methods of data collection. This means that qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analysed. This design involved the collection of quantitative and qualitative. The basis for the use of this method was hinged on the premise that; all quantitative data was based on qualitative judgments; and all qualitative data could be described and manipulated numerically. This allowed for in-depth understanding of the issues so that there was an explanation of the 'what' and 'why' interrogative questions in the study. This method helped to triangulate and corroborate the results by using both quantitative and qualitative data.

The qualitative method complemented the quantitative data by helping to explain why early marriages occur. It helped to get in-depth information around the phenomenon of early marriage in the communities and the general description of various social – cultural factors influencing early marriages in Chibombo district. The quantitative aspect focused on the description of variables such as age at marriage, economic status, prevalence and other counts.

3.4 Study site

The study was done in Chibombo district and it was conducted within a natural setting of the community so that participants could be comfortable and provide the necessary information for the study. A questionnaire was administered at the comfort of their places of residence. Chibombo is a rural district of Central Province and has a population of 303,519 persons in 3 constituencies. This population consists of 151,155 males and 152,364 females (CSO, 2012). The area is mainly inhabited by the Lenje speaking people under the chieftainship of Chief Chamuka. Though Chibombo is a predominantly Lenje speaking, it also has a mix of ethnic groupings from various places because of its centrality in the Province as well as in Zambia. The main languages used in Chibombo are Lenje, Tonga and Bemba with the main one being Lenje. The area is also highly traditional and respects its cultural value system. The people of Chibombo depend mainly on agriculture which makes them sell most of their produce along the Great North Road. Because of such activities, some sex work also is very common along the business belt which is along the main road. The area has a limited number of health facilities

with only one district hospital called Liteta where most of the cases especially maternal health ones are referred to from various and distant communities.

Map for Chibombo District in Central Province

Figure 2: Map for Chibombo District Indicating the Study Area

Source: Adapted from the internet (google search)

3.5 Study Population

The study population was drawn from three (3) communities of Chibombo district out of seven (7). The study targeted married men and women living in Chamuka, Chisamba and Chibombo communities at the time of the study. Married individuals were targeted because these are the people who might have been engaged into marriage at the time when they were below 18 years old.

3.5.1 Sample size and Procedures for Sampling

This study was conducted in Chibombo district of Central Province. Central Province was conveniently selected because it is easily accessible to researcher with minimum resources. In addition, Central Province has a very high prevalence of child marriages hence the study would be able to collect sufficient information on the problem. Kothari (2004) defined convenience sampling as method used when population elements are selected for inclusion in the sample

based on the ease of access. This method was appropriate for use since the study was constrained with resources.

A sample of 385 respondents was selected from three (3) communities/strata namely Chamuka, Chisamba and Chibombo in Chibombo district. The simple random formula was used to determine the number of respondents. In order to eliminate the gender bias, arising from sampling, the study sample 50 percent males and another 50 percent females. This sample (385 ≥ 30) was large enough to justify generalization of the findings to the entire population of Chibombo district and Central Province at large. Cluster and simple random sampling methods were used to randomly select the study units from the population. In cluster sampling, the population is divided into mutually exclusive groups known as clusters, and the researcher draws a sample of the group for interviews on the topic under study (Kothari, 2004: p65). Chibombo district was conveniently selected from Central province.

Chibombo district was further divided into smaller clusters (communities) and simple random sampling was applied to randomly select Chamuka, Chisamba and Chibombo. Simple random sampling was employed because it gave each and every item in the population an equal chance of inclusion in the sample and each one of the possible samples, has the same probability of being selected (Kothari, 2004).

At village level, the sampling frames were village registers in each village. In each household, a married individual, either husband or wife was selected for interviews using an administered questionnaire, with a well-trained enumerator who speaks Lenje/local language with fluency.

3.5.2 Sample Size Determination

A sample of 385 respondents was computed from a population proportion of Chibombo district using a point estimate formula derived from the standard normal distribution at 95% confidence interval. According to Berkowitz (2001), a point estimate for a proportional sample in a descriptive study can be drawn from its true population using the following formula:

Figure 3: Sample size calculation formula

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \times P(1 - P)}{e^2}$$

Where n = the sample size required

Where Z = value from standard normal distribution corresponding to desired confidence level (Z=1.96 for 95% CI)

P = is expected true proportion 0.46

e = is desired precision or margin of error

3.6 Data Collection

This study used primary quantitative and qualitative sources of data. Quantitative data was collected using a semi-structured administered questionnaire which mostly consisted of closed ended questions and a few open ended questions. A semi-structured administered questionnaire was adopted because it makes it easy to answer from a respondent point of view in that the enumerator would be available to clarify if the question is not clear and would help the researcher to analyze data in a systematic way (Nicholas, 2005). On the other hand, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were used to collect qualitative data.

Key Informant Interviews provides an in-depth understanding of the topic being investigated because the interview provides room for flexibility of questioning to explore more issues as they come out from the respondent. Six (6) Key Informants (KIIs) were chosen and these included traditional leaders such as village headpersons one from each village was selected for interviews. In addition, three (3) Focus Group Discussions with married men and women were conducted. Qualitative data assisted in providing the content, thus additional information for the analysis and interpretation of results. The qualitative data was also used to cross check with the data that was collected from different sources to determine whether the findings reached at the same conclusion. This gave confidence in the quality of data that was collected.

3.7 Training Assistants

Ten persons were recruited and trained by the Principal Investigator for one day covering the objective of the study and techniques of data collection. The research assistants were

males and females who had completed grade twelve (O level) and were familiar with Chibombo district, both in terms of geography and the language spoken in the area. This ensured high quality data collection across the diverse district. The training specifically focused on the general overview of the study, interviewing skills and procedures, and finally familiarization with the study instruments. The training also emphasized on the procedures of how to obtain consent from participants, maintenance of neutrality and privacy of respondents including issues pertaining to personal relation and ethics. This assured confidentiality among study participants.

3.8 Pre-test

Data collection tools were pre-tested before the actual field work. Pre-test was conducted in Chongwe district. This is because the population of Chongwe has similar characteristics with the population of Chibombo district; they both speak Lenje. The main purpose of pre-testing was to determine whether the questionnaire enilisted the correctly measured results and also to identify any technical jargon that would affect the flow of information from rspondents during data collection. Pre-testing, therefore, helped to ascertain whether adjustments were to be made to the questionnaire.

3.9 Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis process involved quality assurance. This process basically involved arranging questionnaires according to the enumeration areas and then checking for completeness, uniformity as well as serial numbering of questionnaires. This was followed by data entry process in SPSS version 20.0. SPSS was used for data analysis because it is a complete, integrated and versatile statistical software package that provides many aspects a researcher may need for data analysis (Baum, 2009). After data entry, data was further checked for accuracy through a process known as data cleaning/editing. This process involved removing computer identified errors which would be created during data entry process, and also check for consistency. Once the cleaning process was done, data was then ready for analysis. Frequency table, pie charts, graphs were used to present the results.

Qualitative data from KII and FGDs were subjected to content analysis. This involved a careful examination of the responses given by the study participants in order to identify major themes

(Briggs and Coleman, 2007). The major themes were then integrated into the text of the main report, which was written in Microsoft word together with the output from SPSS from the quantitative data.

3.10 Research Ethical consideration

The study ensured that the research ethics were taken into consideration throughout the research process. On the respondent's side, the researcher made sure that participants were informed of the main purpose of the study before engaging them into the study. Participation was based on voluntary basis; consent was obtained from the potential respondents. Respondents were also guaranteed of privacy and confidentiality of data. There was no recording of names or nay personal identification during data collection and data was analyzed in aggregate. Ethical approval was also sought from a recognized ethics body ERES Converge. Furthermore, the researcher watched over the proposed research methodology for conducting the study throughout the study. This means that there was no doctoring or alteration of the research findings aimed at satisfying (suit) the researcher's views.

3.11 Study Limitations

The study had limited resources; there was no external funding thus it was funded by the Principal Investigator. This affected the research coverage in terms of sample size. Initially, the study proposed a sample of 385 respondents but due to limited resources, only 300 participants were reached using an administered questionnaire. However, the findings were not affected to a larger extent because the study made sure that to reach a sample size of 300 respondents, the selection of respondents was done scientifically through randomization of respondents proportional to the actual population in each community with an equal representation of gender. A sample of 300≥30 is large enough to generalize the findings to the entire population of 303,519 as suggested by the central limit theorem. Furthermore, five (5) KIIs with traditional leaders and six (6) FGDs comprising of 6-10 respondents in each group were conducted. This helped to corroborate the results. The study used a design effect of 1 under the assumption that the communities/clusters did not have serious differences. This could have affected the results in a way. The study also used a simple random formula to determine the number of respondents although other sampling methods were also used.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The objective of the study was to investigate factors influencing high prevalence of child marriage among married men and women of Chibombo. The study collected information on demographic characteristics, awareness of early marriages, effects of culture on early marriages and the effects of the socio-economic status in influencing early marriages. A total of 300 participants were interviewed to provide data on factors that influence high prevalence of early marriages from Chamuka, Chisamba and Chibombo communities in Chibombo district of Central Province. In addition, six Focus Group Discussions comprising of 6-10 participants in each group and five key informant interviews with traditional leaders were conducted to provide the researcher with in depth understanding of the topic under study. The findings have been organized and prioritized equally using a merged analysis approach.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Analyzing the demographic characteristics of individuals is very important in any scientific research as they influence decision making among stakeholders.

Table 2: Percent Distribution of Respondents by Demographic Characteristics

	Gender		Total	
Characteristic	Male	Female	Count	Percent
Community				
Chamuka	19.7% (59)	19.3% (58)	117	39.0
Chisamba	22.0% (66)	21.3% (64)	130	43.3
Chibombo	8.7% (26)	9.0% (27)	53	17.7
Tribe				
Lenje	33.7% (101)	23.7% (71)	172	57.3
Tonga	8.7% (26)	12.7% (38)	64	21.3
Bemba	5.0% (15)	6.3% (19)	34	11.3
Chewa	1.0% (3)	3.0% (9)	12	4.0
Shona	1.0% (3)	1.7% (5)	8	2.7
Kaonde	.3% (1)	1.3% (4)	5	1.7
Lozi	.7% (2)	1.0% (3)	5	1.7
Total	50.3% (151)	49.7% (149)	n=300	100.0

The survey collected data on gender, age, tribe, religion, education, geography and occupation. This background information was later used in discussing the above mentioned characteristics and their association with early marriages.

Table 2 provides results on gender, tribe and religious affiliation of the respondents. The results show that 50.3 percent of the respondents were males and 49.7 percent were females. The results also show that the largest proportion (43.3 percent) of the respondents was from Chisamba followed by Chamuka with 39 percent while Chibombo had about 17.7 percent of the participants. Furthermore, the research findings show that most (57.3 percent) and slightly above quarter (21.3 percent) were Lenje and Tonga by tribe respectively. The Lozi and Kaonde were the least with 1.7 percent, respectively.

The study also collected data on gender and age at first marriage because some studies have actually indicated that there are variations on gender and age at first marriage (UNFPA, 2010)

4.3 Gender and Age at First Marriage

Table 3: Gender and Age at First Marriage

Age at First Marriage	Male	Female	Total
Below 18 years	8.0% (24)	31.0% (93)	39.0% (117)
Above 18 years	37.3% (112)	14.0% (42)	51.3% (154)
Don't Know age married	5.0% (15)	4.7% (14)	9.7% (29)
Total	50.3% (151)	49.7% (149)	100.0% (300)

P=0.0001

The results in table 3 show that more females were married below the age of 18 compared to their male counterparts. There is a statistical significance difference (p= 0.0001) to demonstrate that there is a strong relationship between gender and practice of child marriages. In other words child marriages are more prevalent among females than among males.

4.4 Religious Affiliation

Figure 4 : Percent Distribution of Respondents by Religious Affiliation and Child marriage
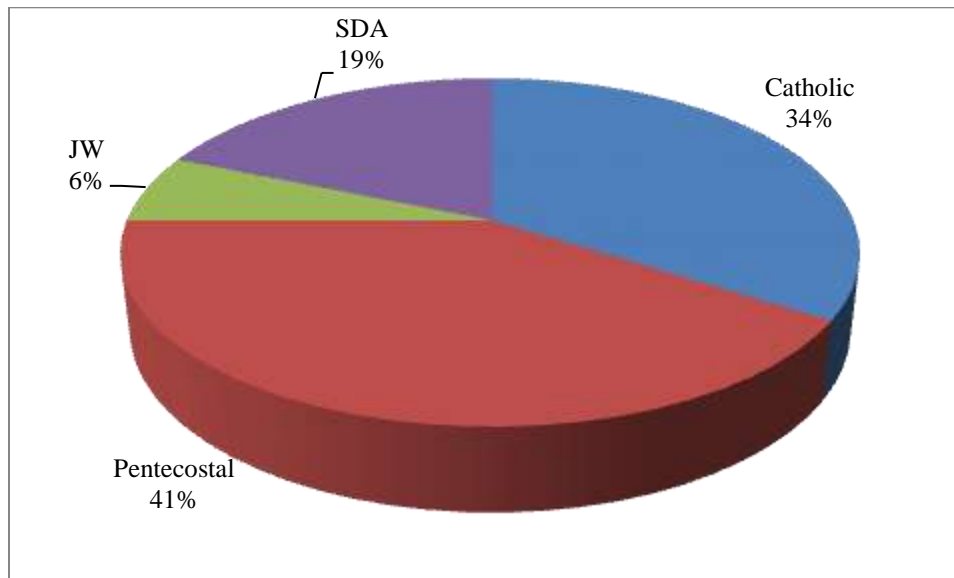
The study also included a question on religious affiliation. The purpose of this question was to examine whether religion played role in influencing child marriages in Chibombo rural district. The results in figure 4 show that most (41 percent) of the study participants belonged to the Pentecostal churches, 34 percent were Catholics, 19 percent were Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) and the least; 6.3 percent were Jehovah's Witnesses (JW).

Table 4: Religious affiliation and Age at First Marriage

Religious Affiliation	Below 18 years	Above 18 years (%)	Don't know age married	Total
Catholic	13.7% (41)	17.0% (51)	3.3% (10)	34.0% (102)
Pentecostal	15.0% (45)	21.0% (63)	5.0% (15)	41.0% (123)
Jehovah's Witness	3.0% (9)	3.3% (10)	-	6.3% (19)
SDA	7.3% (22)	10.0% (30)	1.3% (4)	18.7% (56)
Total	39.0% (117)	51.3% (154)	9.7% (29)	100.0% (300)

p>0.720

In a quest to find out whether religion had an influence on child marriages, a chi-square test of independence was done to determine whether there is relationship between someone's religious affiliation and the age at which an individual first moved into marriage and table 4 displays the results.

The results in table 4 show that 13.7 percent of the Catholics got married at the age below 18 years while 17 percent got married at above 18 years of age. The pattern was also similar with Pentecostals, more (21 percent compared to 15 percent) married at the age above 18 years. However, the percentage differences are not (p-value 0.672>0.05) significant to conclude that there is a relationship between someone's religion and practice of early/child marriage. This means that an individual can still be a victim of child marriage despite of his/her religious affiliation.

4.5 Education Level

According to CSO (2010), there are various benefits that education provides such as promoting economic growth, national productivity, innovations and social cohesion. The government of Zambia recognizes the importance of education and as such, the current education policy supports free primary education for all.

Figure 5: Percent Distribution of Respondents by Education Levels n=300
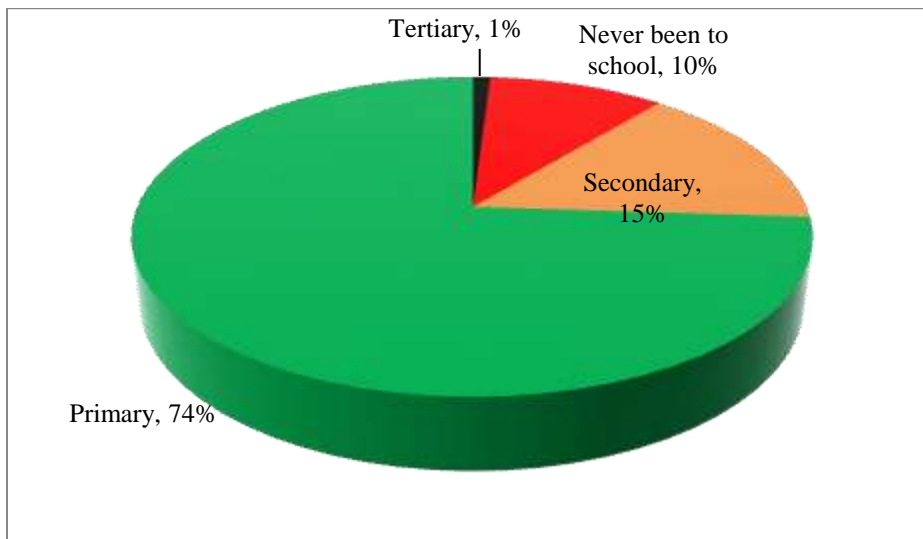
Lack of education can negatively affect accessibility of quality information on the effects of early marriage. Results in figure 5 show that the vast majority, 74 percent of the respondents

attained primary level of education, 15 percent reached secondary education level, 10 percent did not attend any formal school and only 1 percent attained tertiary education level.

4.6 Education and Early Marriages

Table 5: Level of education and Age at First Marriage

Age at first marriage	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	No Education	Total
Below 18	30.0% (90)	3.0% (9)	-	6.0% (18)	39.0% (117)
Above 18	40.3% (121)	8.7% (26)	(3) 1.0%	1.3% (4)	51.3% (154)
Don't know age married	3.7% (11)	3.7% (11)	-	(7) 2.3%	9.7% (29)
Total	74.0% (222)	15.3% (46)	(3) 1.0%	(29) 9.7%	100.0% (300)

P=0.0001

The statistics in table 5 show a decrease in the percentage of people that got married below 18 years with higher level of education. For instance, none of the respondents with tertiary level of education got married below 18 years of age. The chi square test done shows that the percentage differences demonstrate the strength of association (p-value 0.0001) between a person's level of education and child marriages. People with higher level of education did not indulge in early marriages.

4.7 Age of the Respondents

Figure 6: Percent Distribution of Respondents by Age n=300

25
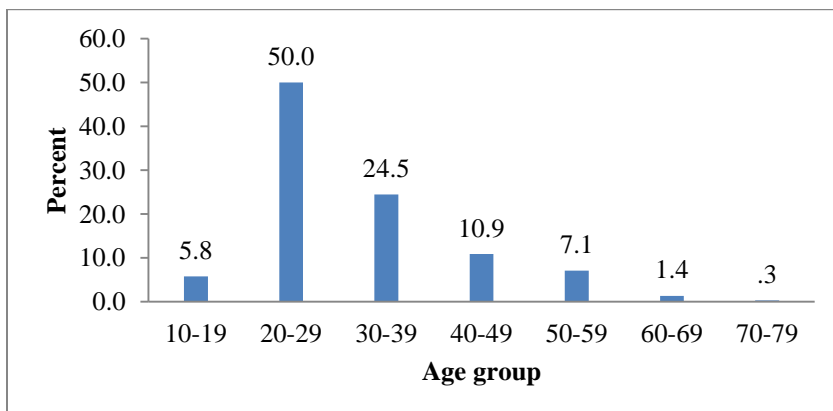
The results in figure 6 show that 50 percent of the respondents were in the ages 20-29 years. Interestingly, 5.8 percent of the respondents were in the ages 10-19 years and already in the marital union. The results show that age distribution of the respondents was decreasing in older ages. This means that at older ages, the number of marriages reduce either because of death or divorce. The majority of the respondents were between the ages 20 – 29 years old.

4.8. Age at First Marriage

Figure 7 shows that age at first marriage was almost normally distributed. The study found that on average, people in Chibombo district get into first marriage at 20.41 years, with a standard deviation of 4.906 years; meaning that people in Chibombo district get married at 4.9 years below and above the mean age at first marriage (20.41 years). In other words, this means that people get married as early as 16 years while those who delay would get married by 24.9 years.

Figure 7: Age at First Marriage

Histogram

Mean = 20.41
Std. Dev. = 4.906
N = 276
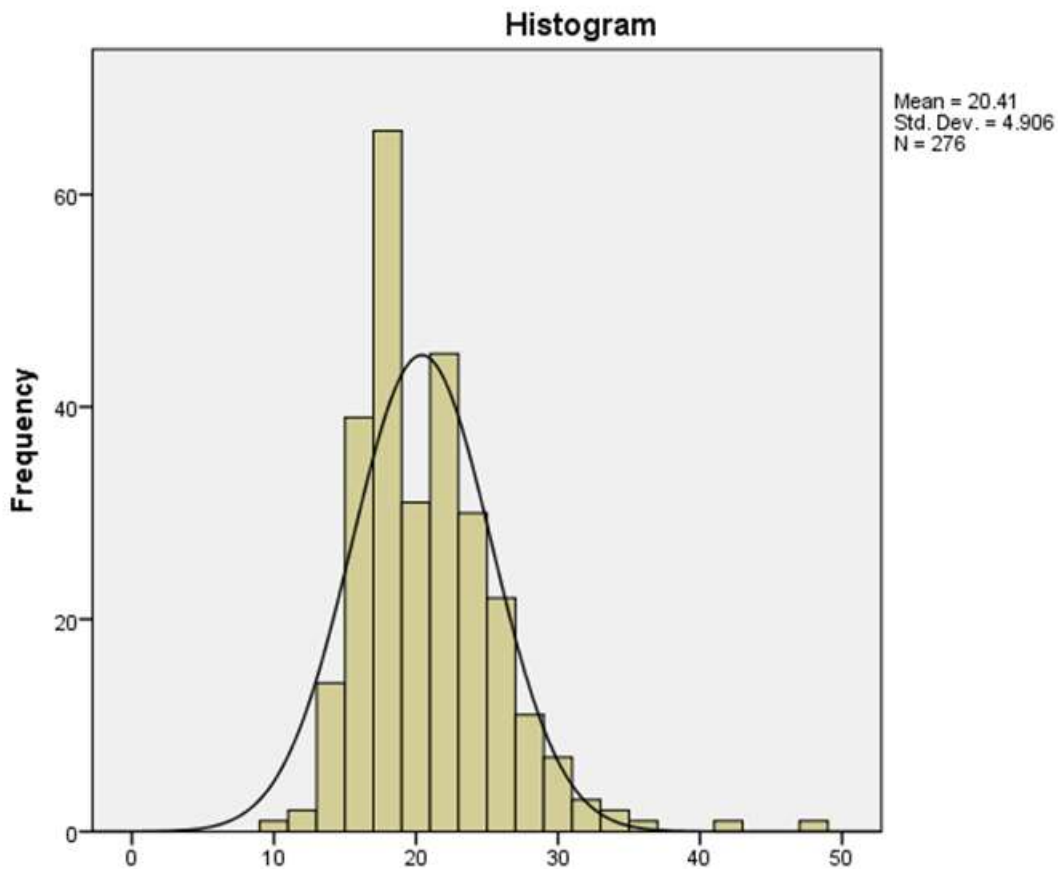
Table 6: Average Age at First Marriage by Gender

Gender	N	Mean	Mode
Female	139	18.39	18
Male	137	22.45	22

Table 6 indicates that the average age at first marriage for a female was 18.39 years and most (mode at 18 years) of them get married at 18 years old. On the other hand, the average age marriage for males was reported at 22.45 years.

4.9 Acceptable age at Marriage

Table 7: Acceptable minimum age at which a person can get married

Count	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation	N/A
158	18.4	18	18	2.3	142

A follow up question was asked (for respondents who had received information on child marriages) to find out the acceptable minimum age at which a person can get married. This question was meant to find out whether respondents had received sufficient information on child marriages. In this study, 'acceptable minimum age at marriage' is the age at which people in a particular community consider to be normal or acceptable age for a person to get married.

Results in table 7 indicate that the mean acceptable age to marry is 18.4 years. This means that in Chibombo district, the average acceptable age to marry is 18 years, with a standard deviation of 2.3 years, implying that it is acceptable to marry 2 years below and above the mean acceptable age of 18 years. Data from the FDGs also disclosed that for girls it is acceptable to marry as early as 15 years while others reported that some girls get married at the age of 17.

"Girls usually get married even when they are between 15 and 17 years as long as they are mature. People still marry at this age and there is no problem. If the girl is big enough to keep her home and able to have children, then it is still fine." (A man of Chamuka – FGD, 2016)

4.10 Awareness Information on Child Marriages

Table 8: Ever received Information on Early Marriages

	Received information		Not received information		Total	
Community	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Chamuka	55	18.3	62	20.7	117	39.0
Chisamba	80	26.7	50	16.7	130	43.3
Chibombo	39	13.0	14	4.7	53	17.7
Total	174	58.0	126	42.0	300	100.0

Respondents were asked whether they had received any information about early marriages. Results from this question are displayed in Table 8 above.

Table 8 shows that above half (58 percent) of the respondents received information on child marriages and the remaining 42 percent never received any information on early marriages. The results further revealed that the majority (26.7 percent) of the respondents that received information were from Chisamba.

4.11 Age at first Marriage and Accessibility of Information on Early Marriages

A chi square test of independence was done to examine whether there is any relationship between age at first marriage and accessibility of information on early marriages and the results are displayed in table 9. Statistics indicate that 17.3 percent of the respondents who received information on early marriages got married below the age of 18 compared to respondents (21.7 percent) respondents who had not received any information on child marriages. Majority (33.7 percent) of the people that received information on effects of child marriages got married at the ages above 18 years. The percentage differences are statistically significant (p-value 0.001<0.05), indicating that there is a strong relationship between people who have received information on effects of early marriages and practice of child marriages. People who have information on child marriages did not move into an early marriage the study revealed.

Table 9: Access of Information on Child Marriages and Age at First Marriage

Age at first marriage	Received information	Not received information	Total
Below 18 years	(52) 17.3%	(65) 21.7%	(117) 39.0%
Above 18 years	(101) 33.7%	(53) 17.7%	(154) 51.3%
Don't know age Married	(21) 7.0%	(8) 2.7%	(29) 9.7%
Total	(174) 58.0%	(126) 42.0%	(300) 100.0%

P<0.001

4.12 Consequences of Engaging in Early Marriage

Respondents were asked whether they were aware that there were any consequences from indulging into early marriages. Figure 8 shows that 66 percent of the respondents were aware of the results of a person involved into child marriages while 34 percent said that they were not aware of what would happen if someone gets into child marriage

Figure 8: Awareness of the Consequences of child marriages
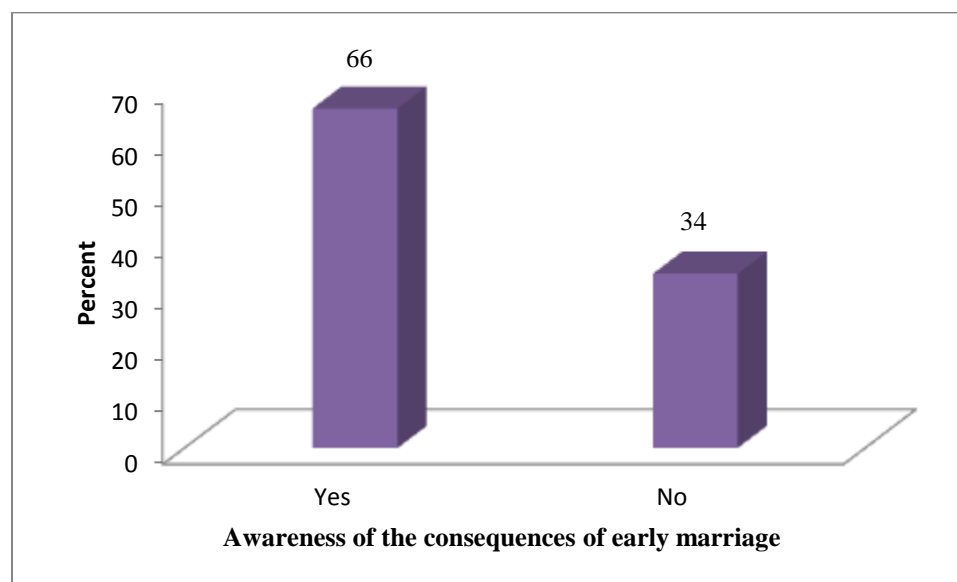
Furthermore, a follow up question was asked to find out what would happen if a person gets into an early marriage or marries a child and the results are shown in figure 9. The results show that 30.6 percent of the respondents said that a person in early marriage would have poor health. This came out clear in the FGDs as well as from the KII that mostly if a girl is married at a tender age,

she would face problems when giving birth due to the fact that she has a small birth canal which cannot support the movement of the infant from the womb.

"Girls who get married early usually fail to give normal birth when their time comes due to a small birth canal; requiring a lot of energy to push the baby but you find that they fail to push unless they undergo operations and sometimes even lose their life" (young woman from Chamuka, 2016).

Figure 9: Consequences of engaging in early marriages
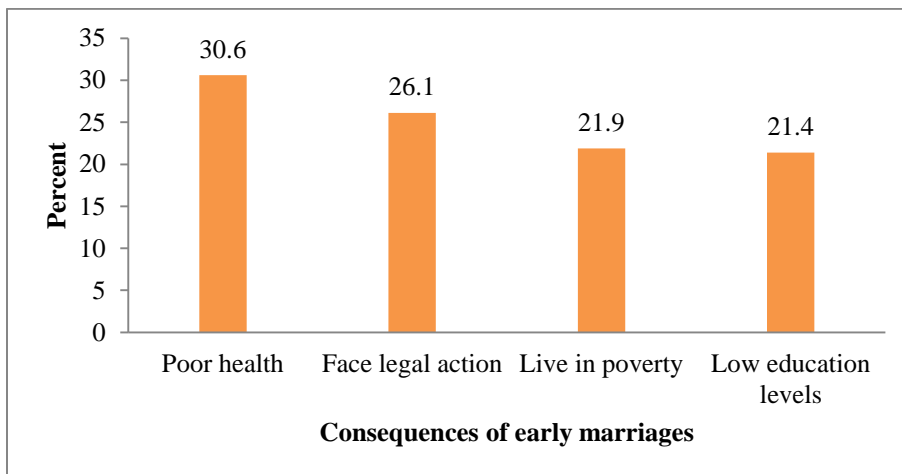
4.13 Culture and Early Marriages

Respondents were asked to disclose whether there was any cultural initiation ceremony that contributed to high prevalence of child marriages in their communities. The results in figure 10 shows that six in ten of the respondents said that there was no initiation ceremony that influenced early marriages and 35 percent reported that there was an initiation ceremony that caused an increase in child marriages.

Figure 10: Influences of Initiation into Early Marriages
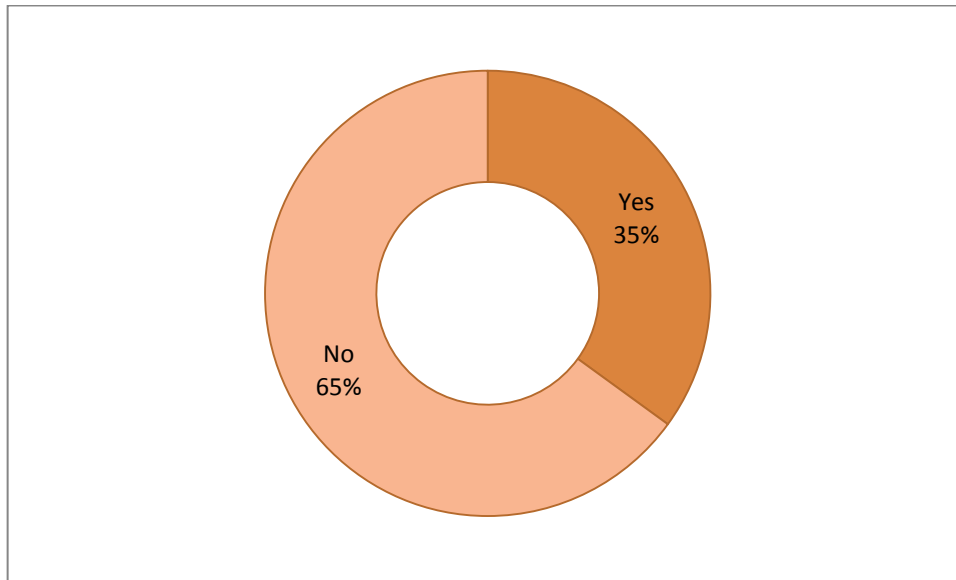
Participants who affirmed that there was an initiation ceremony that contributed to a rise in early marriages were further asked to name the initiation ceremony that influenced child marriages. All (100 percent) the respondents affirmed that Chisungu had an influence on child marriages and the results in figure indicates the percent distribution of respondents who reported that this cultural ceremony played an significant role in influencing early marriages in their communities. FDGs participants explained that Chisungu is a Lenje name which refers to a traditional ceremony for young girls aimed at preparing them for their adult life especially in marriage.

Figure 11: Practice of Chisungu Marriage Initiation Ceremony N=105
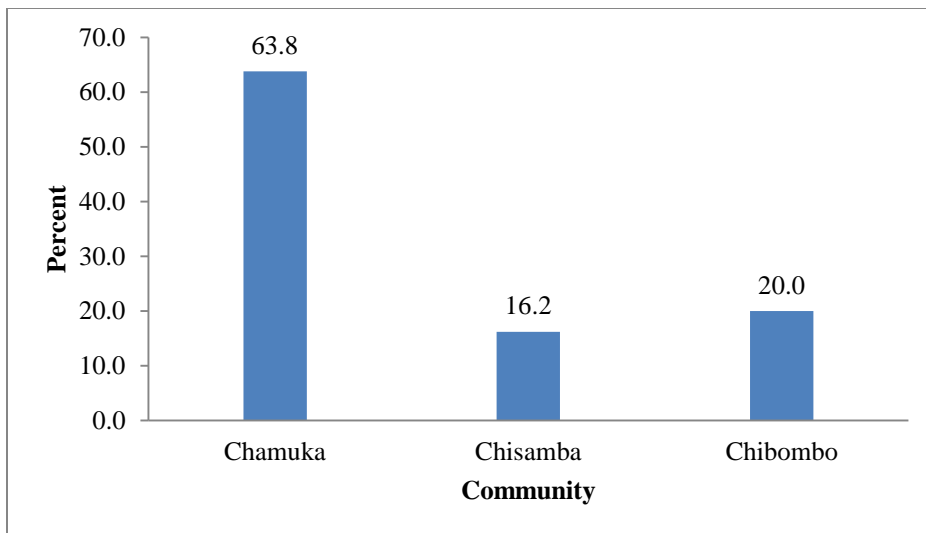
The results in figure 11 revealed that the majority, 63.8 percent of respondents who practiced Chisungu were from Chamuka and 20 percent of the respondents were from Chibombo while 16.2 percent were from Chisamba.

4.14 Age at Entry into Chisungu

Table 10: Age at Entry into Initiation Ceremonies n=83

Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
13.48	13	12	2.32	10	22

Table 10 shows summary statistics on the age at entrance into Chisungu. The results indicate that modal entry to Chisungu was 12 years. This means that most of the respondents reported that girls enter into Chisungu initiation ceremony at 12 years of age. The results also show that the mean age of entrance into Chisungu was 13.48 years; implying that on average girls get into this initiation ceremony at the age of 13 years. The results also revealed that the minimum age of initiation is 10 years with a maximum entry (for those who delay) at 22 years.

4.15 Socio-economic Status and Child Marriages

Figure 12: Percent Distribution of Respondents by Monthly Income n=300
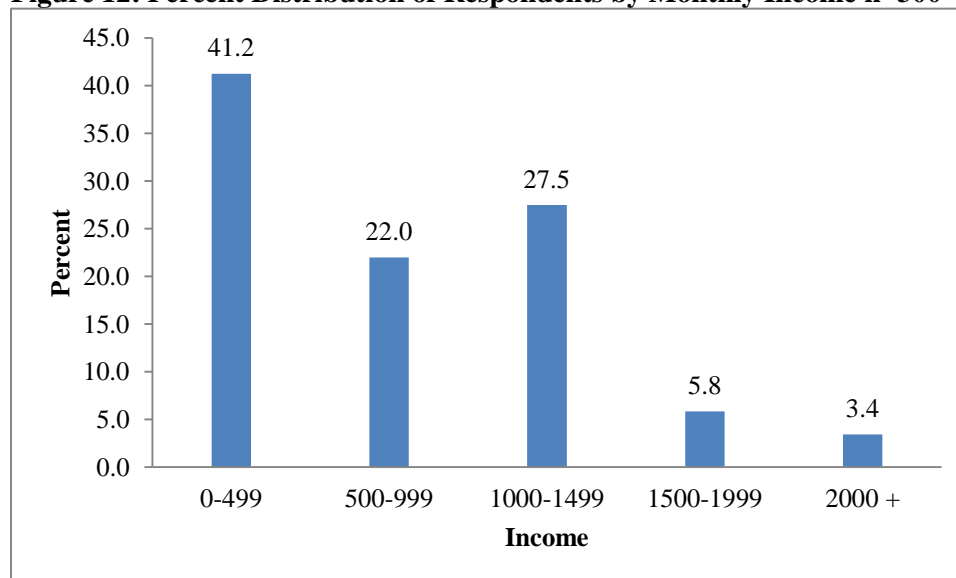
Figure 12 shows the percentage distribution of respondents by monthly income levels. The majority (41.2 percent) of the respondents only earned K500 per month and only 3.4 percent earned above K2, 000 per month.

4.16 Reasons for Engaging into an Early Marriage

The study aimed at getting the understanding of why people in Chibombo entered into early marriages. The married individuals that were reached for interviews were asked to give reasons that prompted them to get into early marriages. The figure below provides the details of the responses.

Figure 13: Reasons for getting into an Early Marriage
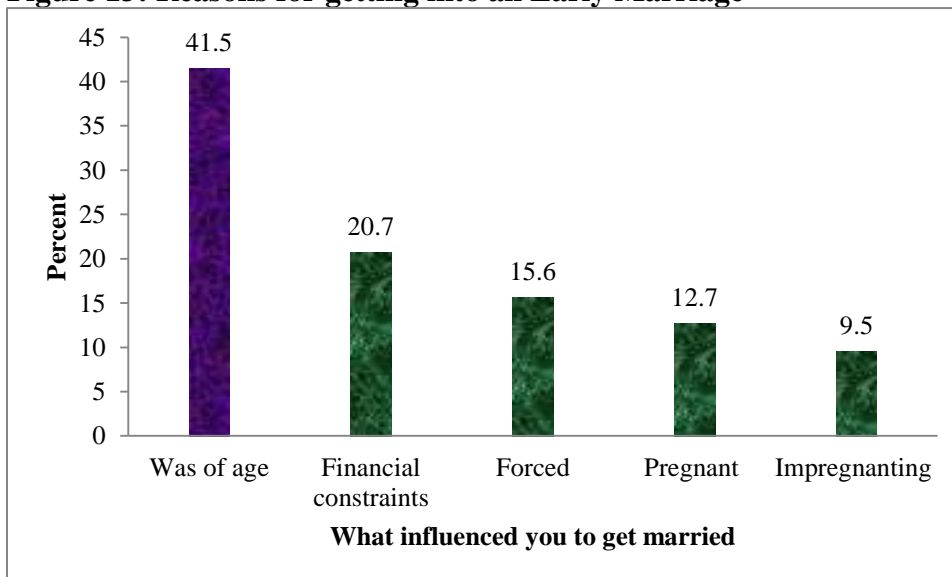
The results in figure 13 show that 41.5 percent reported that it was the right time (was of age) for them to get married, 20.7 percent said that financial constraints made them to move into early marriage, 15.6 percent said that they were just forced, 12.8 percent mainly from the female respondents said that pregnancy led them into early marriage and 9.5 percent of the men claimed that when they impregnated a woman they ended up getting into early marriage.

4.17 Income and Early Marriages

Table 11: Relationship between Income and early marriages

Income (K)	Below 18	Above 18	Don't know age	Total Count	Total Percent
0-499	(57) 19.6%	(44) 15.1%	(19) 6.5%	120	41.2
500-999	(25) 8.6%	(35) 12.0%	(4) 1.4%	64	22.0
1000-1499	(27) 9.3%	(51) 17.5%	(2) 0.7%	80	27.5
1500-1999	(5) 1.7%	(12) 4.1%	-	17	5.8
2000 +	(2) 0.7%	(7) 2.4%	(1) 0.3%	10	3.4
Total	(116) 39.9%	(149) 51.2%	(26) 8.9%	291	100.0

P<0.001

A chi square test demonstrated that there is a strong (p-value 0.001<0.05) relationship between monthly income and early marriages. This means that respondents with lower monthly income levels are vulnerable to early marriages compared to respondents with higher monthly income levels. The results in table 11 revealed that more (19.6 percent) who earned below K500 moved into an early marriage compared to the respondents (0.7 percent) that earned above K2000 per month.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The chapter presents discussion of the research findings. It specifically discusses the results according to research themes or research objectives. This chapter answers research questions that were raised in the research proposal in order to address the research objectives. It focuses on discussing what was reported on the ground (current information) in relation to what has been reported in literature.

5.2 Demographic and Social Characteristics of People Practicing Early Marriages

This objective answers the research question that was raised on the background information such as age and gender of the people involved in early marriages. Studies have shown that child marriages are more common among girls compared to boys (ICRW, 2010). Indeed this study also found out that early marriages in Chibombo district of Central Province were more prevalent among females than among their male colleagues. The situation is similar in Yemeni where approximately half of the girls get married before they were 15 years old (Birech, 2013; Carla, 2009). A report by Gillian et al (2015) claimed that child marriages affect both boys and girls. However, the statistics in Chibombo revealed that early marriages were higher among women than among men. On average, women in Chibombo get married at 18 years with a four years difference from the average age at marriage for men, reported at 22 years.

Discussions with married couples disclosed that people in Chibombo do not follow the legal age at marriage but depends on physical maturity. Once a girl starts developing breasts and starts having menstruation then men start eying her for marriage. Furthermore, Umemoto (2005) ascertained that average age at marriage for girls in Kebbi State in northern Nigeria was reported at just above 11 years, against the national average of 17 years old. In support of this, Nasrin and Rahman (2012) also found out that women in rural Bangladesh got married at an early age due to many social pressures. This clearly confirms that child marriages affect sexes differently; it is more predominant among females than among males.

Boys tend to delay getting into marriage because mostly it takes time for boys to establish themselves economically. In addition, the factors that affect maturity in boys delay to show up compared to females. For instance, when a girl reaches puberty, one can easily tell due to changes in body structure which were reported to stimulate or attract men's sexual appetite. Unlike boys who were only forced into early marriages, for instance, because of impregnating girls.

Level of education also affects the prevalence of child marriages; for instance early drop out in school forces a lot of children especially girls to move into marriage. Statistics revealed that married men and women with higher level of education did not (p=0.0001) move into an early marriage. This agrees with the study predictions from the conceptual framework. Similarly, Panos Institute Southern Africa (2014) established that limited access to formal education for many children often leaves them impoverished and thus vulnerable to early marriage because they have limited options for survival. Another study by Nangoma (2013) established that girls who got pregnant could not continue with schooling and instead were forced into an early marriage with the view that marriage could be the best alternative to take care of themselves.

Interestingly, in this study, married women in Chibombo district disclosed that early marriages were significantly affecting their lives in that it contributed to larger family size due to long period of exposure to fertility. It was further reported that early marriages swayed low levels of education as most of the people in the district could not complete primary education or further their education because they got married early. However, most of the women argued that although they were forced to drop school and get married because of pregnancies and poverty amongst other reasons, they maintained that they regret to have opted for marriage instead of furthering their education. On the other, men reported that they do not regret to have married early.

5.3 Accessibility of Information on Early Marriages

According to UNICEF, early marriage is a formal/informal union involving a child or an individual prior to age 18 years (Raj et al., 2009). The results indicated that people in Chibombo district received the information on child marriages. Most of the people that received this information got it through community discussions by Plan International Zambia. Plan is a non-

governmental organization working to promote health and education rights for children especially girls. However, child marriages still exist in the district. The results demonstrated that most of the people were not aware of the legal age at marriage.

Although people expressed knowledge about the consequences of early marriages, they do not know the other effects of child marriages; what came out clearly was that people were aware of health related issues such someone failing to give a normal birth (through the birth canal) but they were not aware of the legal consequences and this makes it evident that people are not aware that it is illegal to marry a child. Information from both the FGDs as well as the questionnaire reviewed that people who had heard about child marriages did not know the legal age at marriage. Most of people cited that it was still acceptable someone as early as the age of 15 years as long as they have reached puberty. Adebambo (2010) argued that any child marriage constitutes a forced marriage, in recognition that even if a child appears to give their consent, anyone under the age of 18 is not able to make fully informed choice.

5.4 Cultural Practices and Child Marriages

The survey results uncovered that there are some 'harmful' (referred by the study) cultural practices in Chibombo district that perpetuated child marriages. Nangoma (2013) reported that Chinamwali and Nyau initiation ceremonies of Eastern Province were observed to have strong influence on early marriages. Similarly, in Chibombo district particularly in Chamuka, Chisungu is highly practiced among the Lenje ethnic grouping. Chisungu is Lenje name that refer to an initiation ceremony that prepares young girls into adult life particularly marriages. Young girls are initiated into Chisungu when they reach puberty. During this ritual passage, girls are kept indoors and taught how to sexually satisfy a man and also how to observe certain traditional customs and beliefs in marriage amongst other things. In a similar fashion, Gillian et al (2015) states that initiation ceremonies involving preparation of children for marriage influence early marriages in that young people develop a desire for marriage because they feel grown up after the rites.

Apart from that, Chisungu makes young girls to drop out of school as would not go back to school after a long period of staying indoors; they would not even realize the value of school due to the fact the initiation ceremony does not prepare them for any formal education. As indicated

in the second section of this chapter, early drop out from school prompts young people to move into marriage. In addition, Chisungu could be promoting the spread of HIV/AIDS infection as the training is normally based on sexual practices that do not encourage practice of safe sex. Thus this calls for another research to look at the effects of traditional/marriage initiation ceremonies for young girls on the spread of HIV/AIDS in Central Province.

Parents make sure that they charge and get 'good' dowry (lobola) from a child who has successfully gone through the ceremony. This entices parents to encourage their child to get married as soon as possible whilst she has lots of information on the training she received and also to ensure that she maintains her virginity until marriage. As a result, the child is driven into an early marriage. Studies in India revealed that girl's virginity is highly valued and this makes parents push their children in marriage at an early age when virginity is still intact (Birech, 2013).

5.5 socio-economic status and Early Marriages

The study answered questions on whether poverty influences early marriages. The poverty levels in Chibombo district are very high with the majority of the respondents living below K500 per month. This contributes to the prevalence of early marriages in the district as parents fail to provide descent food for their children. Hunger makes children particularly girls vulnerable to sexual abuses which often result into pregnancy. It was reported that parents were not ready to keep a girl once she gets pregnant and as such the parent make sure that they force the girl into marriage with the man or boy who made her pregnant despite their age (whether young or not). Furthermore, it was observed that girls take themselves into marriage due financial constraints. Girls who never had someone to support their basic needs such as cosmetics (soap, lotion and other) rushed into marriage with the hope that their husbands would provide for them.

According to Birech (2013), families with limited resources often opt to marry off a girl at an early age in order to earn some income or wealth. This study also found out that parents did not necessarily want bridal wealth but pushed children into marriage in order to reduce the family size or minimize the economic burden of feeding the family (providing food for the family). Consequently, this increased the prevalence of child marriages in Chibombo district of Central Province. Discussions with married women affirmed that parent do send children in marriage but

would later regret as such marriages mostly do not last long (they are prone to divorce). In practice, the cycle for early marriages continued as young parents fail to provide the basic needs to their children hence their children also become victims of early marriages.

5.6 Child Marriages and Health

High prevalence of child marriages has the potential to threaten the health of the population particularly for the mothers in the reproductive age group as well as infants and children. The study revealed a high prevalence of early marriages in Chibombo district and this may explain one of the major reasons for increased maternal mortality for central Province. The 2010 census of population and housing recorded an observed maternal mortality ratio of 907 deaths per 100,000 live births; much higher than the national observed maternal mortality ratio of 836 deaths per 100,000 live births (CSO, 2010).

Institute of Health Management (2002) ascertained that child marriage often has devastating consequences on a girl's health. It encourages the initiation of sexual activity at an age when girl's bodies are still developing and when they know little about their sexual reproductive health. Child brides face higher risks of death in childbirth and are particularly vulnerable to pregnancy related injuries such as obstetric fistula (Institute of Health Management, 2002).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

The general objective of this study was to investigate factors that influence high prevalence of early marriages in Chibombo district of Central Province. The study revealed that early marriage prevalence in Chibombo is at 39 percent, though slightly lower than the national prevalence rate which was reported at 42 percent in 2010. High prevalence of early marriages in Chibombo has contributed to high poverty levels, malnourished children and increase in maternal deaths. The study ascertained that various factors influence the prevalence of child marriages but the most prominent one are low education levels, lack of sufficient awareness information, traditional cultural practices and high poverty levels. The study established that child marriages are more prevalent among girls as a result of forced marriages which were influenced by high poverty levels in the district.

The study found that the vast majority of the people in Chibombo only attained a primary level education and some did not have any formal education. Lack of education has a serious effect on their ability to access and use information given on the consequences of early marriages. This was evident by the high (66 percent) proportion of people who received information on child marriages but still could not tell the major consequences or results of person indulging into child marriages. This could explain why the prevalence still remains high though communities have received information on child marriages yet they do not understand the ramifications.

Furthermore, the initiation of young girls into Chisungu (marriage initiation ceremony) indicate that people in Chibombo were still ignorant about how such ritual passage has on changing girls' behaviour in a way that influence early marriages. Marriage initiation ceremonies do not only make girls pursue womanly responsibilities but also impede their education. In addition, poverty is a top driver of early marriages in Chibombo. Parents who fail to support their children indirectly predispose their children harmful vices like early marriages and pregnancy which becomes a health problem. However, in some cases girls forced themselves into an early marriage so that they could have a husband to provide their basic needs knowing too well that

their parents could not support them. The study can conclude through given evidence that the health of the girls of Chibombo is in danger as they are likely to suffer maternal health problems as a result of early getting pregnant at a young age. Their economic opportunities also are at risk because of the loss of education opportunities imposed by child marriages.

6.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made with a view that if implemented they may help in mitigating early marriages in Chibombo district of Central Province:

Enhance awareness messages. Information and communication strategy should be aimed at reaching the local communities and should be given continuously. Local people should be engaged in spreading clear messages informing people that child marriages are illegal/not allowed; stating also the resulting consequences for anyone found wanting. People should be aware that despite the legal aspect, child marriages are contributing to poverty levels in the communities as well as affecting the health of mothers. Maternal mortality is one of the major problems that results from child marriages as the young mothers experience a lot maternal health problems like obstetric fistula and hemorrhage. Walker, (2012), observed that girls who are younger than 15years are 5 times more likely to suffer child birth complications. This implies that policy measures have to be instituted to increase age of marriages to prevent child marriages. Child marriages should be criminalized because it is clear from many studies that they have maternal health implications on the health of girls involved

The primary education curriculum should include lessons on effects of early marriages. Starting from lower primary schools children should start learning about the effects of early marriages so that as they grow they know how to avoid temptations of early marriages. Once children learn about the disadvantages of child marriages, they will grow up to become responsible parents who would not force their children into early marriages. Promotion of girl child education should continue to avoid early drop outs from school.

Marriage Initiation postponement: for those practicing initiation ceremonies, these should be postponed to a time when girls are closer to marriage age because some girls want to practice sex after going through initiations which expose them to lessons on sex and how to please a man.

Further Research: Further research is required to understand the quality of life of those that have gone through child marriages as part of learning for the others. This could explore the health (psychological and physical) as well as economic effects of child marriages.

6.3 Dissemination Plan

The research forms part of the key concerns for public health and social development. The dissemination of findings was therefore done through a library publication in the public health Library of the University of Zambia and a peer review journal. The copies of the research will be of great value to key line ministries which include: MCDMCH, MOH, MOE and MCTA. Furthermore, the research findings will benefit other key INGOs like Plan International, Save the Children and World Vision International. In addition, UNFPA and UNICEF are among other key UN agencies to benefit from the results of the study to inform their future programming in the area of child marriages which is now an issue of serious concern.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: Work plan

The entire research work was executed as indicated in the work plan below:

Table 12: Study Timeline

	Activity	2015				2016			
		Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April
1	Develop a research topic	███							
2	Organize literature review		███						
3	Develop a research proposal			███	███				
4	Design data collection tools					███			
5	Submit the proposal to the ethics committee						███		
6	Pre-testing the tools						███		
7	Data collection						███		
8	Data entry							███	
9	Data analysis							███	
10	Submit the draft report to the supervisors								███
11	Receive comments & make corrections								███
12	Submit the final report								███

Annex 2: Budget

Table 13: Study Budget

No	Activity	Unit Cost	Frequency	No	Total (ZMW)	Total (USD)
1	Stationery and printing	Lump sum	1	1	2500	250
2	Recruitment of data collectors	Lump sum	1	1	500	50
3	Training of data collectors	400	2	10	8000	800
4	Data collectors transport	100	2	10	2000	200
5	Data collectors Lunch	100	2	10	2000	200
6	Data Collectors Fees	700	2	10	14000	1400
7	PI's stipends	5000	1	1	5000	500
8	Contingencies	1000	1	1	1000	100
9	Ethics review and Clearance	1000	1	1	1000	100
10	Data Entry	2000	2	1	4000	400
11	Report printing and binding	600	1	1	600	60
						0
	Total				**40600**	**4060**
	USD Rate: 1 USD = K10					

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethics Committee Approval

2nd March, 2016

Ref. No. 2015-Sept-014

The Principal Investigator
Mr. Joseph Mwamba Yowela
The University of Zambia
School of Medicine
Dept. of Public Health
P.O. Box 50110,
LUSAKA.

Dear Mr. Yowela,

RE: FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE HIGH PREVELANCE OF CHILD
MARRIAGES AMONG MARRIED MEN AND WOMEN IN CHIBOMBO
DISTRICT OF CENTRAL PROVINCE.

Reference is made to your corrections dated 1st February, 2016. The IRB resolved to approve this study and your participation as Principal Investigator for a period of one year.

Review Type	Ordinary	Approval No. 2015-Sept-014
Approval and Expiry Date	Approval Date: 2nd March, 2016	Expiry Date: 1st March, 2017
Protocol Version and Date	Version – Nil.	1st March, 2017
Information Sheet, Consent Forms and Dates	• English.	1st March, 2017
Consent form ID and Date	Version-Nil	1st March, 2017
Recruitment Materials	Nil	1st March, 2017
Other Study Documents	Household Questionnaires, Key Informant Interview Guides, Focus Group Discussion Guides.	1st March, 2017
Number of participants approved for study	385	1st March, 2017

Specific conditions will apply to this approval. As Principal Investigator it is your responsibility to ensure that the contents of this letter are adhered to. If these are not adhered to, the approval may be suspended. Should the study be suspended, study sponsors and other regulatory authorities will be informed.

Conditions of Approval

- No participant may be involved in any study procedure prior to the study approval or after the expiration date.
- All unanticipated or Serious Adverse Events (SAEs) must be reported to the IRB within 5 days.
- All protocol modifications must be IRB approved prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce risk (but must still be reported for approval). Modifications will include any change of investigator/s or site address.
- All protocol deviations must be reported to the IRB within 5 working days.
- All recruitment materials must be approved by the IRB prior to being used.
- Principal investigators are responsible for initiating Continuing Review proceedings. Documents must be received by the IRB at least 30 days before the expiry date. This is for the purpose of facilitating the review process. Any documents received less than 30 days before expiry will be labelled "late submissions" and will incur a penalty.
- Every 6 (six) months a progress report form supplied by ERES IRB must be filled in and submitted to us.
- ERES Converge IRB does not "stamp" approval letters, consent forms or study documents unless requested for in writing. This is because the approval letter clearly indicates the documents approved by the IRB as well as other elements and conditions of approval.

Should you have any questions regarding anything indicated in this letter, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at the above indicated address.

On behalf of ERES Converge IRB, we would like to wish you all the success as you carry out your study.

Yours faithfully,
ERES CONVERGE IRB

Dr. E. Munalula-Nkandu
BSc (Hons), MSc, MA Bioethics, PgD R/Ethics, PhD
CHAIRPERSON

Appendix 2: National Health Research Authority Authorization

THE NATIONAL HEALTH RESEARCH AUTHORITY
C/O Ministry of Health
Ndeke House
P.O. Box 30205
LUSAKA

In reply please quote:

No................................
MH/101/23/10/1

29 March 2016

Joseph Mwamba Yowela
University of Zambia, Department of Public Health
P. O. Box 50110
Lusaka

Dear Mr. Yowela,

Re: Request for Authority to Conduct Research

The National Health Research Authority is in receipt of your request to conduct research titled **"Factors that influence high prevalence of child marriages among Married men and women in Chibombo district of Central Province."**

I wish to inform you that following submission of your request to the Authority, our review of the same and in view of the ethical clearance, this study has been approved to carry out the above mentioned exercise on condition that:

1. The relevant Provincial and District Medical Officers where the study is being conducted are fully appraised;
2. Progress updates are provided to NHRA quarterly from the date of commencement of the study;
3. The final study report is cleared by the NHRA before any publication or dissemination within or outside the country;
4. After clearance for publication or dissemination by the NHRA, the final study report is shared with all relevant Provincial and District Directors of Health where the study was being conducted, and all key respondents.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. P. Chanda-Kapata
For/Director
National Health Research Authority

Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

TITLE OF RESEARCH: **FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE HIGH PREVALENCE OF CHILD MARRIAGES AMONG MARRIED MEN AND WOMEN OF CHIBOMBO DISTRICT**

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AND YOUR INVOLVEMENT: The Principal Investigator is a student in the School of Medicine at the University of Zambia. He is currently conducting a study on factors that influence high prevalence of child marriages among married men and women in your community as partial fulfilment for the award of a masters' degree in Public Health at the University of Zambia. The PI is mostly interested in your opinions and ideas on that the factors influencing high prevalence of child marriages in your community. There are 385 people that have been randomly selected in your community to express their ideas and opinions on the topic under study.

If you are willing to participate, we will proceed through four sections: i). demographics; ii). Accessibility of information on effects on child marriages; iii). Cultural factors and child marriages; iv) socio-economic factors and child marriages. The purpose of this study is to understand your views on factors influencing child marriages and also explore the relationship between these views and other characteristics such as education, culture and poverty. The PI needs this information to learn on the factors influencing child marriages and also to develop recommendations that may help stakeholders to reduce or end child marriages in your community. This discussion will take about 15 to 20 minutes of time; all questions will be asked in the language you are comfortable with.

CONFIDENTIALITY: your interview responses and any other information that you will provide during this interview will be treated with confidence. There will be no use of your name or any other personal identification features, and no one outside the research team will have access to survey responses. These responses will be analysed in aggregate terms hence no one would be able to identify your responses.

PARTICIPATION: participation into this study is entirely on voluntary basis. During the interview, you are free to stop the interview at any time or refuse to answer any question you are not comfortable.

BENEFITS: There are no direct benefits of your participation into this study though you might find it interesting to discuss child marriages in your community. Your feedback in this study will be useful to better understand child marriages in Chibombo district.

RISKS: there are little or no risks that may come as a result of your participation into this study. As it is stated above, all your answers will completely be confidential and your name will not be attached to your responses.

Appendix 4: Questionnaire

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

DEPARTMENT OF POPULATION STUDIES

ORAL SCRIPT

Dear Respondent,

My names are……………………………… I am a student at the University of Zambia. Am currently collecting information on child marriages in your community. This information will be used for academic purposes; it will help me write a thesis which is a requirement for the award of a Masters' degree in Public Health from the University of Zambia. You have been randomly selected to provide information on this topic. However, participation into this topic is entirely voluntary, and as such you may wish to refuse or stop the interview at any time or refuse to answer a question that you may not be confinable with. I would also like to assure you that whatever information you may provide in this study will be confidential, it will not be shared with anyone.

This interview will last about 15 to 20 minutes. At this point I would like to know if you have any question or we can go ahead with the interview?

Agreed ☐

Refused ☐

Community		Date of interview	
Village		Enumerator	

Section A: Demographic characteristics of Respondents

1. Gender?   1. Male ☐   2. Female ☐

2. What is your age at last birthday (*in completed years*)?……………………………

3. What is your marital status?

   1. Married ☐   3. Divorced ☐

   2. Never married ☐   4. Other specify…………………………………

4. What is your tribe?………………………………………

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5. What is your highest level of education?

    1. Primary ☐   3. Tertiary ☐

    2. Secondary ☐   4. Never been to school ☐

6. What is your religious affiliation?

    1. Catholic ☐   3. Jehovah's witness ☐

    2. Pentecostal ☐   4. SDA ☐   5. Others specify...................................

7. What is your occupation?...

Section B: Awareness of Child marriages

8. Are you married?   1. Yes ☐   2. No ☐

9. If yes, when did you get married?...

10. What is the age of your spouse?...

11. Do you have children? 1. Yes ☐   2. No ☐

12. If yes, how many children do you have?.............................

13. Have you ever received information on the minimum age at which a person can get married?

    1. Yes ☐   2. No ☐

14. If yes, what is the minimum age at which a person can get married?...

15. Are there any consequences of marrying early? 1. Yes ☐   2. No ☐

16. If yes, what are those consequences (*multiple response*)?

    1. Face legal consequences ☐   2. Poor health ☐   3. Low education levels ☐

    4. Live in poverty ☐   5. Others specify...

Section C: Cultural Practices and Child Marriages

17. Is there any cultural training/initiation that a person has to go through to prepare him/her for marriage in your community? Yes ☐   2. No ☐

18. If yes, name the cultural practices that a person has to undergo before marriage?

....

19. At what age is a person initiated into the cultural practices mentioned above?.....................

20. How old were you at your first marriage?

    1. Below 15 years ☐   2. 15-18 years ☐   3. Above 18 years ☐

21. If not above 18 years, do you have any regrets for having married early?

        1. Yes ☐   2. No ☐

22. If yes, what makes you regret to have married early (*multiple response*)?

1. Contributes to low level of education ☐
2. Contributes to poverty ☐
3. Contributes large family size ☐
4. Specify..

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Section D: Socio-economic Status and Child Marriages

23. What is your estimated monthly income in Zambian kwacha?

   1. Below 500 ☐   3. 1000-1500 ☐   5. Above 2000 ☐
   2. 500-1000 ☐   4. 1500-2000 ☐

24. What influenced you to get married?   I got pregnant ☐   2. I impregnated ☐

25. I was forced ☐   4. I was of age ☐   5. Financial constraints ☐

26. What do you think are the causes of child marriages in your community?

Rank	First rank	Second rank	Has no influence
poverty			
culture			
early drop out of school			

27. What do you think should done to end child marriages?..
....

END, THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!!

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Appendix 5: Key Informant Interview Guide

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE HIGH PREVALENCE OF CHILD MARRIAGES AMONG MARRIED MEN AND WOMEN IN CHIBOMBO DISTRICT OF CENTRAL PROVINCE

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What are your views on the issue of child marriages in your community?
2. Are the people in your community received information on the consequences of early marriages? If yes, highlight the sources of information.
3. Are there any cases of child marriages in your community? If yes, kindly explain how child marriages take place.
4. How is the relationship in terms of age between male and female who engage in child marriages? (*probe; is it adult to child, child to child or highlight on age*)
5. Have the people in your community received information effects of child marriages? If yes, briefly explain kind of information received.
6. What factors influence child marriages?
7. Is there any relationship between early marriages and girl child education? If yes, explain.
8. Are there any mechanism put in place to reduce child marriages in your community? If yes, explain.
9. What do you think should be done to end child marriages in your community?

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Appendix 6: Focus Group Guide

**FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE HIGH PREVALENCE OF CHILD MARRIAGES
AMONG MARRIED MEN AND WOMEN IN CHIBOMBO DISTRICT OF
CENTRAL PROVINCE**

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Are you aware of the existence of child marriages in your community? If yes, kindly explain how such marriages take place (*probe for more information*).
2. Have you received information on the consequences of child marriages? If yes, mention the effects of child marriage.
3. What are the causes of child marriages? (*Probe more as issues are coming out*).
4. Do parents in anyway plays a role in the practice of child marriages? If yes, explain. (*Allow for discussion*).
5. Does culture in anyway play a role in the practice of child marriages? If yes, explain.
6. Does the socio-economic status in anyway play a role in the practice of child marriages? If yes, explain?

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Appendix 6: Graduate Forum Letter

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Telephone: 252641,
E-mail: commed@unza.zm

P.O. BOX 50110,
Lusaka, Zambia.

10th September 2015.

The Assistant Dean (PG)
School of Medicine
University of Zambia
Lusaka

Dear Sir

Re: GRADUATE PROPOSAL PRESENTATION FORUM- JOSEPH MWAMBA YOWELA

This is to confirm that, the above named student doing research proposal entitled "Social-Cultural Factors Influencing the Prevalence of early Marriages among Married Males and Females aged 10 – 49 years of Chibombo District" focusing in MPH in Population and Health Studies has done the necessary corrections which were raised during the Gradate Proposal Presentation Forum in Livingstone on 29th April 2015.

I therefore, recommend that he can proceed for submission to research ethics committee.

Yours faithfully

DR J BANDA