

**EXPLORATION OF THE ZAMBIA CHILD PROTECTION
SYSTEM: ADDRESSING CAUSES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL
EFFECTS OF EARLY MARRIAGES IN GIRLS OF CHINSALI
DISTRICT**

By

Humphrey M. Mwewa

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Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Master of Arts in
Child and Adolescent Psychology**

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LUSAKA**

2019

DECLARATION

I, hereby declare that the work which is submitted here is the result of my own independent investigation and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this work has not been previously presented to meet requirements for an award, at the University of Zambia or any other institution for similar purpose.

Student's Signature

Mwewa, Humphrey Musongo

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APPROVAL

This Dissertation of Humphrey Musongo Mwewa has been approved as fulfilling the requirements for the award of Master of Arts in Child and Adolescent Psychology by the University of Zambia

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Examiner1	Signature	Date

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Examiner2	Signature	Date

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Examiner3	Signature	Date

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Chairperson Board of Examiners	Signature	Date

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Supervisor	Signature	Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my children Malumbo, Kasela, Mwewa, Mukuka and Mukumbang'ombe for their love and time sacrificed when I (dad) was at school instead of spending more time with them and also my wife Elizabeth for her sacrifice and encouragement. Above all God Almighty for the gift of life.

Hope this document will serve as an inspiration to my children in future.

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It has been a long journey but worth taking!

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CAMFED	Campaign for Female Education
CHIN	Children - In - Need Network
CSO	Central Statistical Office
FAWEZA	Forum for African Women Educationists of Zambia
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
NGO	Non Governmental Organizations
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PWAS	Public Welfare Assistance Scheme
SNDP	Seventh National Development Plan
STI/STD	Sexually Transmitted Infections/ Sexually Transmitted Diseases
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNZA	the University of Zambia
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States of America for International Development
VSU	Victim Support Unit
WHO	World Health Organization
ZCCP	Zambia Center for Communication Programme
ZHDS	Zambia Demographic Health Survey

ABSTRACT

It is confirmed that early marriages is a violation of human rights around the world and does not take girls psychological or physiological readiness into consideration for marriage. Qualitative information was collected from 52 participants comprising Non Governmental Organizations, community leaders, parents/guardians, and children of the target population. Results showed tradition/culture, poverty, poor quality accessed education and several gaps than strengths in the Zambia Child Protection System as reasons for early marriages. Results further revealed that girls in early marriages were affected psychologically and hence may experience psychological distress, depression, anxiety and other mood disorders. In order to prevent causes and consequences of early marriages in girls and fill existing gaps in the Zambia Child Protection System addressing early marriages; coordination of development programmes was vital, stakeholders needed a holistic approach to achieve one objective, the idea of addressing issues as individual entities may not yield positive results in the fight against early marriages. Despite devastating consequences of early marriages in girls felt and known at an individual level, family and society at large, people had deliberately perpetuated practicing early marriages; a wide range of individuals and organizations needed to continue creating awareness on the adverse impact of early marriages on women's health. Especially, increasing opportunity cost of early marriages for education. Findings show that access to quality education by girls greatly contributes to ending early marriages. An environment should be ensured where children can get proper care and facility to grow up completely and properly.

Key Words: *Early marriages, psychological distress, coordination, education, proper care.*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Marriage is a social institution that unites people in a special form for mutual dependence. Under customary law in Zambia, recognition of a marriage requires the payment of bride price (*Lobola*) and failure to do so may lead to a father not recognizing the legitimacy of his children into marriage (Zambia child protection mapping & assessment report, 2012). Pathfinder International (2006) stipulates different ways that may legitimize the bond in marriage such as through a public act, religious or traditional ceremony. In most cases, people prefer the traditional ceremony because it is cheap and in some cases the age limit, their psychological and physiological readiness for childbearing is not taken into consideration and most often marriage takes place at ages much earlier than the legally ratified minimum age generally referred to as early marriages or child marriages. Getting reliable data on early marriages is difficult, but estimates show that almost half of Zambian women are married by the age of 18 with a reported national prevalence of 31.4 percent – one of the highest prevalence rates in the world (Population Council, UNFPA & Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2017). According to ZDHS Report (2013 – 14) statistics indicate that early marriages are more common among girls (17 percent) than boys (1 percent). Thus, in Zambia, early marriage is defined as marriage of children below the age of 18 years and applies to both boys and girls although the practice usually affects girls (Zambia National Gender Policy, 2014). In addition, UNFPA (2012) states that early marriages occur more frequently among girls who are least educated, poorest and living in rural areas. On the whole, marriage occurs relatively early in Zambia (Zambia National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council. The Revised National HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework, 2014 - 16).

In terms of population structure in Zambia, more than half of the total population (50.7 percent) constitutes women and girls (CSO, 2011). The child population in Zambia (18 years and younger) is estimated at 52.5 percent of the total country population, of which the majority reside

in rural areas. The Living Conditions Monitoring Survey 2010 indicates that most Zambians are classified as being poor and that poverty has continued to be more prevalent among rural than

urban residents. Consequently, the Zambian population is predominantly young, rural based, and with great potential for continued growth. A young population structure implies that the country has a high dependency ratio; which poses great challenge for socioeconomic development and provision of adequate child welfare services (CSO, 2011).

Early marriages in some cultures are seen as an effective strategy in preventing pre-marital sex among young women. McIntyre (2006) observes that some parents see marriage as a cultural rite that provides protection for their daughter from sexual assault and offers the care of a male guardian. Other parents often feel that a young girl is an economic burden and therefore wish to marry off their young daughters before they become an economic liability (Center for Global Development, 2008; McIntyre, 2006).

Nevertheless, early marriages have been recognized internationally as a human rights violation and a number of children that are affected have remained very high. Early marriages are most common in South Asia and in West and Central Africa and lower percentages are observed in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the Arab States and East Asia and the Pacific. In Latin America and the Caribbean, prevalence is higher just under East and Central Africa. Zambia has one of the highest rates of female child marriage in Africa (UNFPA, 2012).

1.2 Background to the Study

In reality, the practice of early marriages is still high and many developing countries lack evidence to document prevalence and trends and are therefore unable to develop appropriate policies and programmes addressing early marriages. Zambia as a country is also struggling with appropriate ways of eliminating early marriages even though various prevention and protection programmes are being implemented in the Zambia Child Protection System. These programmes are not adequately backed by a single principal guiding implementation framework in the national supreme law as Zambia practices a dual legal system where both statutory and customary laws are recognized [The Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No. 2 of 2016].

Thus, in Zambia there are various definitions of a child within Zambia's policies and legislative frameworks. For instance, the Zambia National Gender Policy (2014) defines a child as a person

below 18 years in conformity to the UNCRC and the Zambia National Child Policy (2006). The Penal Code, Act No. 29 of 1976, Chapter 37 of the Laws of Zambia and the Education Act, 2011 on the one hand define a child as one below the age of 16 years. On the other hand, the Employment of Young Persons and Children's Act Chapter 274 of the laws of Zambia defines a child as a person under the age of 14 (As amended by Act No. 40 of 1938, Government Notice 233 of 1964, 36 of 1967 and 4 of 1991). Further, the Anti – Gender Based Violence Act (2011) defines a child as a person below 16 years. In the context of contemporary Zambian society, a child is not defined by the actual age measured in the number of years attained. Instead communities tend to define a child in terms of developmental milestones and achievements (Serpell & Nsamenang, 2014; Mann, Quigley, & Fischer 2015). For instance, adulthood is generally defined in terms of attaining puberty, developing a beard or simply being able to fend for oneself. This definition of a child in contemporary Zambian society raises complications in providing guidance in who a child is. Besides, the Zambia child protection mapping & assessment report (2012) states that legislative shortcoming exists around the age of the child - issues arise on the age as many children in Zambia do not have birth registration documents. For purposes of this research study, a child was defined as a person below 18 years.

Furthermore, the constitution under article 23 (4) allows for customary law to be practiced in matters of personal law which includes marriage. The Marriage Act establishes the legal age for marriage at not less than 21 years of age (section 10), but states that if he or she is under that age, consent for the marriage must be obtained, without defining who gives consent. Section 33 of the Marriage Act provides that a marriage between persons either of whom is under the age of sixteen years shall be void. However, the provision can be averted where an application is made to a Judge of the High Court, who can consent to the marriage if the particular circumstances of the case are not contrary to the public interest. In this scenario, the Education Act, 2011 which provides for an offence against any person who marries a learner however, becomes ineffective in the face of superior's constitutional provisions which seemingly legitimize customary marriages involving minors and grants exceptions. The USAID's (2012) vision for Africa stipulates that existing laws are often poorly enforced or superseded by customary and religious laws in the fight against early marriages. For purposes of this research study, early marriage was defined as a marriage of girl children below the age of 18 years.

Other challenges in addressing early marriages were likely to occur in the empowerment packages. The educational bursaries to high school children and women economic empowerments had not been paid due attention in the fight against early marriages by stakeholders in the implementation interventions because most recipients had not recorded advancements from increased access to higher education services and advancements from high poverty levels to self-sufficient levels. To help reveal these weaknesses, below were some highlights of findings from studies conducted with the aim of identifying obstacles faced by small enterprises, and determine what foster their growth:

One set of studies examines the impact of providing business training along with capital grants to female-owned micro-enterprises in Tanzania and Sri Lanka (Buvinic et al., 1990 – 2010). Findings indicate that business training combined with cash grants may increase the profitability of female-owned businesses, but this effect may not be long-lasting. Another set of studies looks at interventions that provide capital in cash or in-kind to micro-enterprises in Sri Lanka and Ghana (de Mel et al., 2008; de Mel et al., 2009; de Mel et al., 2012; Fafchamps et al., 2011). Findings indicate that grants in cash or in-kind often fail to generate growth in female-owned enterprises, except in businesses that were relatively large and successful (thus had more potential to grow) to begin with. Other studies show that woman's economic empowerment results in greater investments in children's schooling and health, and reduced poverty for all. Yet Buvinic et al. (1990 – 2010) observes that there has been a crucial knowledge gap regarding the most effective ways to advance women's economic prospects and ensure interventions are appropriately designed for different economic and cultural contexts. The key question is whether the empowerment programmes administered were effective in increasing the earnings of targeted women relative to an unconditional cash transfer. This comparison required making an assumption about how the women would spend the cash transfer. As reviewed above, Fafchamps et al. (2011) find that unconditional cash transfers are less effective than transfers in kind due to self-control issues.

Lastly, another challenge in addressing early marriages in Zambia maybe that causes and psychological effects and/or other psychosocial negative consequences of early marriages in girls were not adequately documented and publicized to discourage other individuals, families, communities and/or society at large in practice and approval of early marriages.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

From the above background, it had been shown that early marriages are a big problem among girls with adverse consequences on both the country's development and an individual level. In Zambia, it had also been pointed out that weak linkages exist in the legal system which encompasses the principal guiding implementation framework for various stakeholders in the Zambia Child Protection System (Zambia child protection mapping & assessment report, 2012). Besides, few studies were conducted in Zambia to establish the effectiveness of the Zambia Child Protection System addressing early marriages in girls. Additionally, teenage pregnancy and motherhood was a major social and health issue in Zambia. Data for the 2013 – 14 ZDHS showed onset of childbearing at an early age has a major effect on the health of both mother and child. Early pregnancy causes severe health problems for both the mother and child. Moreover, an early start to childbearing greatly reduces women's educational and employment opportunities and is associated with higher levels of fertility and childhood mortality is relatively higher among children born to mothers under age 20 and over age 30 compared with children born to mothers in the 20 - 29 age group (ZDHS, 2013 - 14). Furthermore, the Population Council in its 2004 Early Marriage Brief estimates showed majority of married girls who had already given birth, could not read, and had not completed school.

Given the diverse range of players involved in child protection from prevention through to response, a strong coalition of partners that may act together to end the practice of early marriages was possible. However, this coalition was hampered by poor coordination which resulted in not taking stock of empowerment activities and no single register of beneficiaries. Hence, perpetuating high poverty levels for it was envisaged that same people benefited from different programmes being implemented by various stakeholders. Consequently, people may have taken advantage on some weaknesses in the Zambia Child Protection System. While it was assumed that same people benefited from these empowerment programmes, resources were meager for what may be required as startup capital for poor people and surpassed their basic needs, and may not have advanced their children's education and health services to inspire these children for greater successes in employment prospects and health living. People with few resources may only think of consuming and not investing in businesses that are profitable to stand a taste of time because that according to Longwe (1995), was the first stage in the Sara

Longwe's five "levels of equality" in the Women's Empowerment Framework called 'welfare stage'. That meant improvement was only in socioeconomic status, such as income, better nutrition, etc. This level produces nothing to empower women. This research study therefore, focused on exploring the Zambia Child Protection System: Addressing Causes and Psychological Effects of Early Marriages in Girls.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The choice of the topic on which this report was based emerged from a concern that despite considerable efforts stakeholders had put up in the fight against early marriages, early marriages continued escalating which has devastating consequences on women and girls' health and it is confirmed that early marriage and early childbirth leads to higher rates of adolescent fertility and pregnancy related complications. Ahmed, Khan, Khan, & Noushad (2014) stipulates that girls who marry in teenage do not develop properly, physically and psychologically and they also do not have access to education and are more prone to diseases arising from pregnancies and isolation. In Zambia, although general observations indicated that negative traits such as negative traditional beliefs and practices which included early marriages were detrimental to achieving rapid progress in development (SNDP, 2017), the Government may not seem to adequately address early marriages because it is preoccupied with development in different pillars of the country i.e. economic diversification and job creation, poverty and vulnerability reduction, reducing developmental inequalities, enhancing human development and creating a conducive governance environment for a diversified and inclusive economy. However, Asrari (2015) points out that countries that fail to prevent early marriages, risk missing development targets which, has wide-ranging negative consequences for development and it is also fundamentally damaging to the individual.

Therefore, this report aimed at exploring the effectiveness of the Zambia Child Protection System: Addressing Causes and Psychological Effects of Early Marriages in Girls in Chinsali District. Thereafter, came up with recommendations on best practices and pointed out those seemingly perpetuate approval of early marriages in order to scale up, revise or get rid – off strategies for programmes' enhancement. Ultimately, promote the Zambia Child Protection System's effectiveness and efficiency in addressing early marriages in girls.

1.5 Overall Objective of the Study

The key objective of the research study was to explore the Zambia Child Protection System addressing causes and psychological effects of early marriages in girls.

1.5.1 Specific objectives of the study

1. To identify underlying causes of early marriages in girls.
2. To explore psychological effects of early marriages in girls.
3. To investigate effectiveness of social protection programmes addressing early marriages in girls.

1.6 Research Questions:

- 1 What are underlying causes of early marriages in girls?
- 2 What are psychological effects of early marriages in girls?
- 3 How effective are Social Protection Programmes addressing early marriages in girls?

1.7 Significance of the Study

Most research studies on early marriages had not documented the effectiveness of the implementation framework in response to the fight against early marriages. The effectiveness of the implementation framework in this study required key stakeholders to simultaneously attend to the complex community contexts, economic, social, demographic, political and environmental in an effort to eliminate early marriages. Similarly, efforts in eliminating early marriages had proved difficult due to inadequacies around the legality of marriage in the national supreme law both statutory and customary laws [The Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No. 2 of 2016] and also lack of synergy as shown in the way social protection programmes were being administered among stakeholders hence perpetuating high poverty levels.

The aforementioned reasons provided a framework for which this research study was founded and the study exploring the effectiveness of the implementation framework addressing causes and psychological effects of early marriages in girls was important because the outcomes were useful in a number of ways;

Firstly, it may help parents, social practitioners and society at large to understand and appreciate the effects of early marriages on the country's development and affected children (girls).

Secondly, it may help children who are involved in early marriages to become agents of change on one hand. On the other hand, stakeholders may realize some mistakes in the process of implementation and learn from some good practices, help raise public awareness and provide those working on behalf of children with a wider evidence base with which to develop more effective prevention and response interventions, ones that resonate with families and communities and are perceived as legitimate and in turn may lead to advocacy for better ways of dealing with the scourge and facilitate development of appropriate programmes' design and implementation framework. Ultimately, Government and its cooperating partners may also be kept abreast with relevant information and minimize role conflict and enhance synergy among various child protection activists.

Lastly, researchers may also benefit from a body of knowledge that is generated and fill the existing gap in the field of child protection in Developmental Psychology.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The research study made an effort to investigate the Zambia Child Protection System by identifying the prevention, protection and promotion programmes of children's rights and how these programmes can effectively be implemented towards the elimination of early marriages. Hence, examine the Zambia Child Protection System for effective programming in the fight against early marriages. The research study was confined to the Zambia Child Protection System, and whilst the conclusions made an effort to generalize the findings.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

In this research study therefore, the International Centre for Research on Women – (ICRW, 2014) *Theory of Change* and Wahhaj (2014) *Theory of Child Marriage* were applied because both theories offer a means by which findings that showed causes, consequences and solutions were understood.

The *Theory of Change* (ICRW, 2014) showed the main causes, consequences, and solutions that were expected on the ground and the *Theory of Child Marriage* (Wahhaj, 2014) affirmed the expected actions in preventing early marriages. Therefore, the knowledge gap on early marriages on the causes, consequences, and solutions among stakeholders were low and both theories provided the researcher a guide on retrieving what kind of information.

These two theories were therefore related to this research study exploring the Zambia Child Protection System: Addressing Causes and Psychological Effects of Early Marriages in Girls as most of its recommendations were centered on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of birth and marriage registration systems, especially their coverage and accessibility in rural areas, and enforcing the legal age at marriage, and strengthening the penalties for non-compliance and increased access to quality education services or adolescent development programmes.

A careful analysis of the drivers, consequences and solutions of early marriages seemed to clearly suggest that the approach to early marriages prevention were to find ways to combine both macro and micro level factors in ways that impacted a girl's life, by giving her opportunities to make informed choices and operate within a safe environment free from violence. For example, poverty reduction programmes were to be accompanied by related shifts in changing aspirations and values of girls, and schools and open spaces needed to be made safe for girls to realize their aspirations and potential. As a result, Government programmes, policies and laws at the same time were to be reinforced and implemented well, and were to focus not only on those at risk but also those who were married and been denied education because of marriage. Therefore, the interdependence of various factors were easily understood within an ecological framework, where a girl's life impacts and was impacted upon by factors that operate at various levels (ICRW, 2014).

1.10 Theoretical Review

In order to understand why implementers in the Zambia Child Protection System lacked some knowledge on how to effectively deal with exploitation issues such as early marriages, two theories that attempted to explain strategies used in preventing early marriages in girls were considered. The considered theories were:

The *Theory of Change* developed by the ICRW (2014) is accredited for contributing to the recognition that prevention of early marriages has to be addressed within cultural sensitivities and to achieve that, synergy must be provided by stakeholders such as child, family, community, institutions and policies. These can be considered as five pillars of the Theory of Change intended to end early marriages (ICRW, 2014).

Another theory referred to in this study was a *Theory of Child Marriage* by Wahhaj (2014). This theory recognizes that the practice of early marriages for women remains prevalent in developing countries around the world today, and is associated with various health risks, including infant mortality and maternal mortality as a consequence of early pregnancy. Wahhaj (2014) develops a dynamic model of a marriage market to explore whether a norm of early marriage for women can prevail in the absence of any intrinsic preference for young brides. Wahhaj (2014) shows that if a certain desirable female attribute, relevant for the gains from marriage, are only noisily observed before a marriage is contracted, then its prevalence declines in each age cohort with time spent on the marriage market; thus, age can signal poorer quality and require higher marriage payments. In this situation, Wahhaj (2014) shows that interventions that increase the opportunity cost of early marriage can trigger a virtuous cycle of marriage postponement even if the original intervention is not sufficient, in itself, to persuade all women to turn down offers of early marriages.

1.11 Operational Definitions of Constructs

For purposes of this research:

1. A **Child** was defined as any person below the age of 18 years.
2. **Early Marriages** was defined as marriages of girl children below the age of 18 years.
3. **Social Protection Programmes** was used as a number of measures that protect and promote the livelihoods and welfare of people suffering from critical levels of poverty and deprivation and/or are vulnerable to risks and shocks.
4. **Women Economic Empowerment Programme** was used as an intervention in the child protection system and ICRW (2011) definition was adopted which stipulates that women economic empowerment was when a woman had both the ability to succeed and advance economically and had the power to make and act on economic decisions.
5. **Zambia Child Protection System** was used as an implementation framework addressing early marriages in Zambia - UNICEF (2010) definition was adopted which stipulates that child protection system describe a set of measures through which families, communities, structures, institutions and society at large can prevent and/or respond to abuse, exploitation or neglect of the community's children and that a comprehensive child protection system also includes measures to address families that are vulnerable or in crisis. The legal and normative framework forms an integral part of any child protection system and includes policies, laws (including customary law), regulations, and services needed across all sectors to support prevention and response mechanism.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

Building upon research into best practices for addressing early marriages, this study explored the Zambia Child Protection System: addressing causes and psychological effects of early marriages in girls in Chinsali District. The study focused on other studies done globally and Zambia inclusive in order to appreciate other efforts responding to ending early marriages which requires commitment, involvement and collaboration of a diverse network of partners, who bring unique perspectives, skills, and resources to face a daunting challenge.

2.2 Empirical Review

There were some similar studies around the globe investigating the effectiveness of implementation frameworks in addressing causes and consequences of early marriages in girls and below were some cited relevant literature under the following subheadings:

2.3 Reasons for Early Marriages

Early marriages are most common in the world's poorest countries and are often concentrated among the poorest households within those countries (ICRW, 2006). Population Reference Bureau (2005) states that early marriages are highly prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of South Asia, the two most impoverished regions of the world. The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine – (NRCIM, 2005) research showed that household economic status was a key factor in determining the timing of marriage for girls (along with education and urban-rural residence, with rural girls more likely to marry young). In fact, girls living in poor households were approximately twice as likely to marry before 18 as girls living in better-off households. In almost all developing countries, early marriages are more common among the poorest people than the wealthiest (NRCIM, 2005). For this reason, early marriages are closely linked with poverty and low levels of economic development. In families with limited resources, early marriages are often seen as a way to provide for their daughter's future. But girls who marry young are more likely to be poor and remain poor (ICRW, 2006).

To enhance deep understanding, determinants of early marriages among females are presumably believed as the factors behind female transition to marriage. Several researches are conducted in determining female age at first marriage. Vu (2009) finds that education, place of residence, wealth, current age, region, and ethnicity are significantly related to age at first marriage in Vietnam while Agaba, Atuhaire & Rutaremwa (2011) indicates that educational attainment, religion, district of residence, and birth cohort are strong socio-economic determinants of first marriage in Western Uganda. Both of these studies boldly underline the influence of educational attainment of girls in determining their age at first marriage. This finding is also supported by Manda & Meyer (2005) who find that women with higher levels of educational attainment are far more likely to enter marriage at later ages than those without any or with little education. This confirms that the issue of development, in which the comprehensive education for girls take place, provides a clearer explanation on why early marriages happen mostly in a lower educated girls characteristics (Jones, 2010; Jensen & Thornton, 2003; Singh & Samara, 1996)

In India, Johnson-Lans & Jones (2011) examined the relative importance of economic and social factors in determining the probability of a girl becoming a child bride. The findings reveal that economic factors is way behind social conformity in explaining early marriages as none of economic variables such as household income, poverty status, and land ownership significantly affect the probability of early marriages in rural India. Sarkar (2009) uses logistic regression analysis in order to find determinants of early marriage in Bangladesh. His study shows that education, working status, husband's education, and places of resident exert the significant effect on early marriages. In case of Indonesia, Savitridina (1997) indicates that women's education, work status before marriage, husband's education, and current residence are the predictors for early marriages in Java, with education as the strongest one.

Finally, Azebri, Lamawal & Oweibo (2015) conducted a descriptive survey study which sought to evaluate the perception of people toward early marriages in selected compounds of Amassoma Southern-Ijaw local government area, Bayelsa State in Nigeria. Findings from the study showed the following as reasons for early marriages which were strongly associated to poverty, lack of education experiences, parents encouraging their children for desire of having grandchildren early, and so on.

2.4 Consequences of Early Marriages

A child should go through several changes from childhood to adolescence accompanied with bodily changes and it's the time when a child needs support, confidence, and advice. It is envisaged that people ignore the fact that a child below eighteen years is young to marry and still sorting things out, getting settled and figuring out who she/he is in life. Kakar (1978) points out that an adolescent bride has to adjust to the unfamiliar set up of her new home. She also has to cope with the post pubescent bodily changes along with the feelings and sensation that are unfamiliar and people with whom she must maintain a respectful distance. A girl becomes a mother; she is crushed under multiple responsibilities of being a wife, mother, and daughter-in-law at very tender age (Population Council, 2006). Likewise, a girl child tends to be more attached emotionally to her parental family than a boy child. She is more prone to psychological stress and tension because of detachment from parents after marriage. Many women get depressed following the incident. They suffer from an inability to enjoy things, find it difficult to sleep and eat, face concentration problems, and experience feelings of guilt and decreased self-esteem. UNICEF (2001) states that early marriage, along with little or no education, economic dependence, denial of decision-making power, inequality within the home, and sexual exploitation adversely affect the mental health. Also, early marriage typically cuts girls off from established support networks and friends and has ripple effects on children born from these mothers and according to the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2009) states that;

Serious depression in parents and caregivers can affect far more than the adults who are ill. It also influences the well-being of the children in their care. Because chronic and severe maternal depression has potentially far-reaching harmful effects on families and children, its widespread occurrence can undermine the future prosperity and well-being of society as a whole. When children grow up in an environment of mental illness, the development of their brains may be seriously weakened, with implications for their ability to learn as well as for their own later physical and mental health. When interventions are not available to ensure mothers' well-being and children's healthy development, the missed opportunities can be substantial.

In addition, pregnancy-related medical complications are cited as the second highest cause of death amongst girls aged 15-19 (WHO, 2014). Levine, Lloyd, Greene & Grown (2008) also pointed out that for every maternal death between 15 and 30, girls and women survived with chronic disabilities. A child born to a mother in her teens was two times more likely to die before they reached the age of one than a child born to a woman in her 20s (Jain & Kurz, 2007). UNFPA (2012) states that child brides are at greater risk of contracting STD because many child brides married much older men who themselves had a greater chance of having an STD. Decreased ability to negotiate safe sex in unequal relationships, and a lack of access to sexual health services or information, leaves girls at greater risk of contracting an STD.

Further, Women are most of the time not allowed to go out and in many cases; permission of the family is required - Girls are restricted from moving freely. Giuliano (2014) says that certain societies have developed a cultural belief that the natural place for women is within home. Higher exposure helps in personal development and proper socialization of a girl. Exposure to mass media and life satisfaction is highly interrelated (UNICEF, 2015). Similarly, once married, girls are rarely permitted to continue their education, except in a few families. The value of education has lost meaning in most societies because education is perceived as a gate way to employment and not that education will allow one to arm him/her to be independent and self-reliant, and hence have a fighting chance in life. Lack of education, as a determinant of early marriages, leads to less access of contraception for girl and violence against wife and abandonment. UNICEF (2015) states that providing girls with an education helps break the cycle of poverty: educated women are less likely to marry early and against their will; less likely to die in childbirth; more likely to have healthy babies; and are more likely to send their children to school. Moreover, Requejo, Victora, & Bruce (2012) revealed that missing out on education because of early marriages meant that child brides typically had less power and decision-making ability in their households, for example over family planning, and therefore less ability to make decisions about when to have children and how many to have, which can lead to higher maternal and infant mortality rates. Asrari (2015) observes that mothers with little or no schooling are less likely to educate their children, perpetuating poverty across generations. Overall scenario says lack of education means lack of life satisfaction, less exposure to media, more denial of education and freedom. Also, access to contraception is significantly very low.

Furthermore, Lawrence, Azebri, Amakoromo & Igbans, (2015) conducted a descriptive survey study on awareness about the consequences of early marriages in Nigeria. Results showed most respondents knew early marriages had effects on the couples. The study concluded that early marriages had numerous challenges both at global and regional level, and had major consequences for public health, national security, human rights, gender equality, economic and social development.

In summary, the range of developmental factors that early marriages affect is substantial and therefore has a direct impact on a country's economy. The USAID (2012) vision for action stated that early marriages are both a symptom and a cause of ongoing development challenges and further the practice of early marriages contributes to economic hardship, human rights violations, and under-investment in the educational and health care needs of children. Parsons, Edmeades, Kes, Petroni, Sexton, & Wodon (2015) stipulates that while the consequences of early marriages are felt most keenly at the individual level, early marriages are likely to also have profound and far reaching effects at national and global levels in the forms of lost earnings and intergenerational transmission of poverty. In short, the economic impacts and cost of early marriages are likely to be very high for the girls who marry early, their children, their families, their communities, and society at large.

2.5 Social Interventions and Benefits in Preventing Early Marriages

Regardless of its roots, early marriages constitute a gross violation of human rights, leaving physical, psychological and emotional scars for life. Sexual activity starts soon after marriage. Pregnancy and childbirth at an early age can lead to maternal and infant mortality as above. Here below are some studies to show interventions and benefits in preventing early marriages:

Lal (2015) in India conducted a study whose among objectives were to examine the implications of early marriages and to analyze constitutional and legal measures against early marriages and their implementation. The findings showed that families discriminated between boys and girls in investment on education. Consequently, male children were treated as future assets and economic base of the family whereas female children were treated as burden on the family economic base and they were treated as someone else's asset as they were to be given to

someone in marriage. Lal (2015)'s conclusion was that elimination of early marriages was a clear starting point in gender equality and suggested the following strategies:

1. Challenge the traditions that surround early marriages. Inform parents, community members, and youth about the negative consequences of early marriages.
2. Develop strong support systems to keep girls in school. Provide scholarships where necessary and encourage teachers to support girls - teachers who can empower girls to negotiate with their parents.
3. Expand training for health and community workers on the dangers of early marriages, engaging them as advocates and change agents in their communities and institutions.
4. Strengthen and establish community networks and partnerships involving girls clubs, teachers, elders, local government officials, women and youth groups, community and religious leaders, etc., that jointly work towards ending early marriage.
5. Strengthen the role of the judicial system particularly the police, judges, and persecutors through training on enforcement of the law against early marriages.
6. Bring leading professional women to communities to talk to girls as role models and a source of inspiration.
7. Lastly, given the factors motivating early marriages, all efforts should aim at changing the gender biased attitudes of parents and society by imparting proper education on one hand and eradicating poverty on the other.

Furthermore, Asrari (2015)'s study pointed out that Ministry for Education in the commonwealth countries i.e. Zambia, Malawi, South Africa, Bangladesh, Singapore, Canada, Jamaica, Cyprus, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, India etc. must comprehensively address safety in and around learning environments, ensuring that reporting systems are in place to enable teachers

report concerns about girls at risk of early marriages to local government and judicial systems. The report by Asrari (2015) concluded while stating that high-level policy shifts have not led to change on the ground and greater action is required to end early marriages. Moreover, educating girls and women contributes to broader social goals such as building foundations for democracy and empowering women to make life choices that improve their welfare. As the Education For All Global Monitoring Report states, ‘as well as boosting their own chances of escaping poverty, getting jobs, staying healthy and participating fully in society, educating girls and young women has a marked impact on the health of their children and accelerates their countries’ transition to stable population growth, with lower birth and death rates (UNESCO, 2012). For these reasons, education is widely held to be one of the most significant factors for delaying the age at which girls’ marry. Whilst, all education can assist in increasing the age at which girls marry, there is a direct correlation between years of schooling and age of marriage (Malhotra, Warner, McGonagle & Lee-Rife, 2011).

Research suggests that if all women completed primary education, the under-five mortality rate would fall by 15 per cent in low and middle income countries, saving almost a million lives annually and if all women completed secondary education, the under-five mortality rate would fall by 49 per cent, saving 3 million lives annually (UNESCO, 2012). Consequently, educated women tend to have fewer children, which reduce dependency ratios and raises per capita spending, eventually lifting households out of poverty. Increased maternal education also transmits intergenerational benefits by boosting the survival rate, educational level, and nutritional status of children (Tembon & Fort, 2008).

Finally, as a means of addressing early marriages, USAID (2012) early marriages interventions have also been incorporated into broader development programmes in the areas of economic growth, health, food security, and child protection, in an effort to bring out the importance of addressing early marriages throughout development efforts. USAID (2012) supported programmes in addressing early marriages and project evaluations and research findings suggest the following interventions to have the greatest promise for reducing early marriages:

In Zambia, USAID (2012) is using education development assistance and PEPFAR funding to assist the Ministry of Education with strengthening educational support for vulnerable students in its community schools. Scholarships cover all school-related expenses for OVC needing financial support for entering community schools in grade eight. By providing financial support and special services, the hope is that students will be able to remain in school and in an environment where they can learn to care for and protect themselves – in turn reducing their risk.

In Nepal, the USAID (2012)'s Reproductive Health for Married Adolescent Couples Project built on existing communications networks to improve the reproductive health of married adolescents. During implementation, the peer educators recognized the need to address norms relating to early marriages, so they established early marriage eradication committees, conducted rallies, and organized a conference on early marriage and dowry system eradication. Evaluation data showed positive shifts in attitudes and behaviors.

Lastly, in rural Yemen, USAID (2012)'s Safe Age of Marriage Project used community mobilization efforts, including school and community-based awareness sessions and mobile clinics to bring up the age of marriage in two districts. As a result, the most commonly reported age of marriage of girls rose from 14 to 17 over the duration of the project. The project also helped avert early marriages and helped the first ever female school principal be appointed in Al Sawd District, encouraging parents to enroll and keep their daughters in school. From baseline to endline, there were statistically significant increases in the proportion of people identifying benefits to delaying marriage.

2.6 Conclusion

Review of the literature shows that early marriages are a violation of human rights and a critical social problem with multifaceted consequences - particularly for girl children. Literature confirms poverty and low levels of economic development, low levels of education attainment and cultural beliefs and/or social norms as reasons for early marriages and community need to be wary and supportive in ensuring early marriages come to an end. Literature also confirms pregnancy-related medical complications lead to higher maternal and infant mortality rates. Literature has also brought out education as key in the fight and is widely held to be one of the

most significant factors for delaying the age at which girls' marry. Literature further revealed that child protection systems need to be strengthened to involve all key stakeholders from policy formulation to programme implementation with all implementing agencies fully participating.

Social transfer programmes impact on early marriages, mainly through combination of school attendance graded transfers and school attendance conditions. Several evaluation studies provide information on this. In some social transfer programmes, designers have paid attention to enrolment rates and dropout rates for different school grades. The transition from primary to secondary school is often associated with a spike in dropout rates, especially for girls. To address this issue, some social transfer programmes provide transfer levels graded to retain children at school. Mexico's *Progres/Oportunidades* provides higher level of transfers for secondary school students, rising with school grade and also at different level for boys and girls. This is intended to provide financial incentives to households to keep children and especially girls, at school (Attanasio, Fitzsimons, Gomez, Gutiérrez, Meghir & Mesnard, 2010; Borkum, 2012; de Janvry, Finan, Sadoulet & Vakis, 2006; Khandker, Pitt, & Fuwa, 2003). In fact, the evaluations of *Progres/Oportunidades*, and other human capital accumulation programmes with similar transfer level incentives, show reduced drop-out rates and higher retention effects for girls than for boys (Barrientos, Byrne, Peña & Villa, 2014). A study of Bangladesh's Female Secondary School Stipend concluded that the transfer programme had been effective in closing the gender schooling gap between boys and girls and reducing the incidence of early marriages and child bearing. The stipend was conditional on girls remaining unmarried (Khandker et al., 2003). The Zomba pilot programme in Malawi tested the impact of an unconditional cash transfer linked to girls' sexual behavior and found a reduction of 48 percent in child early marriages and 38 percent in early pregnancy (Baird, McIntosh, & Özler, 2011). An experimental transfer scheme in Uganda demonstrated that the provision of transfers through saving accounts, workshops, and mentorship led to a reduction in sexual risk-taking among participant children (Ssewamala, Han, Neilands, Ismayilova, & Sperber, 2010).

Lastly, although a considerable effort of research have been conducted in discovering the prevalence of early marriages in the world and factors causing early marriages known, not much research has been conducted to ascertain how the scourge could be reduced by examining

various specific programmes in the child protection system and since the turn of the century, many low- and middle-income countries have introduced or expanded programmes providing direct transfers in cash and/or in kind to families or individuals facing poverty and vulnerability (Barrientos, 2013). There is considerable diversity in the objectives, design and implementation of social transfers, but they share the overall objectives of reducing poverty and fostering economic and social inclusion. The fact that a majority of people in poverty in low- and middle-income countries are children is reflected in the share of programme participants who are children and often in the explicit objectives of programmes (Barrientos & DeJong, 2006). Antipoverty transfer programmes have a variety of effects which enhance child survival, well-being, and development.

In summary, regardless of the Zambia Child Protection System calling for serious remedy, affected individuals should also realize and show concern to liberate themselves from the recycling circles of poverty. This research study therefore examined the potential outcomes of these programmes on child protection understood as the prevention and reduction of the damaging exposure of children to violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect reflected in prevalence rate of early marriages which formed a baseline for this research study. However, poverty impedes negatively on the programmes aimed at addressing child concerns. Ricciardi (2013) states that;

Being Poor means coping not just with a shortfall of money, but also with a concurrent shortfall of cognitive resources. Findings buttress what's known as the limited resource model of self-control according to which being poor depletes a person's ability to control future decisions and actions because of the constant "trade-offs" and self-control demands that poverty imposes on the individual.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

The study used qualitative research method. Detailed discussion about the techniques and data collection instruments and procedures is given below in the proceeding subsections.

3.2 Research Approach

In this study, qualitative approach was employed whose main focus was to examine the underlying legal, policy framework; social, cultural, and economic factors that underpin child protection structures. It also helped the researcher to better understand the child protection structures' shortfalls and deficiencies, dynamics and implications in programmes implementations. Firstly, exploration of norms and practices of marriages were conducted in each research site. Thereafter, In-depth interviews were conducted in order to bring out experiences about early marriages, how children in early marriages regarded education in their life, its benefits and literacy impact. FGD were conducted in order to come up with evidences on the root causes of early marriages. Key informant interviews were conducted for general exploration of issues related to early marriages in girls.

3.3 Study Site

Muchinga province was chosen because it is a rural province and being rural entail it has high levels of poverty and high prevalence rate of early marriages as shown in Figure 2. The study was conducted in Chinsali district of Muchinga province as shown in Figure 1 because it is one of the highest prevalence rates of early marriages in Zambia. The Population Council, UNFPA & Government of the Republic of Zambia (2017) states that child marriage is highest in Northern Province, Muchinga, and parts of the Copperbelt Provinces. Specifically, the districts of Isoka and Chama in Muchinga Province, and Masaiti, Mpongwe, and Lufwanyama in the Copperbelt Province are hotspots with the highest likelihood of child marriage. They are followed by Kaputa and Chilubi districts in Northern Province and Mpika and Chinsali districts in Muchinga Province. In these districts, an adolescent girl is most likely to marry before she is 18 years of age.

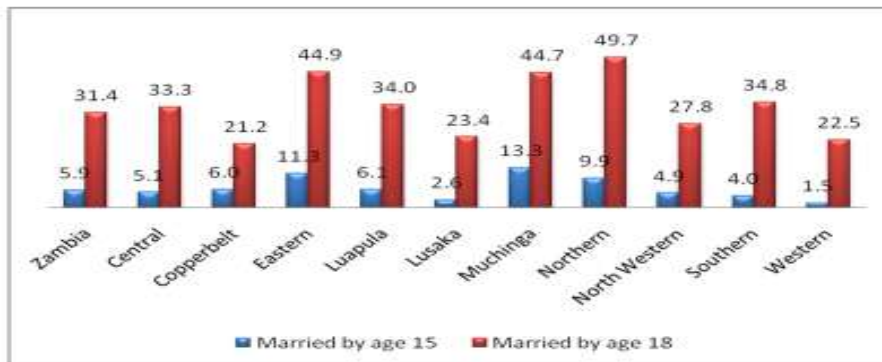
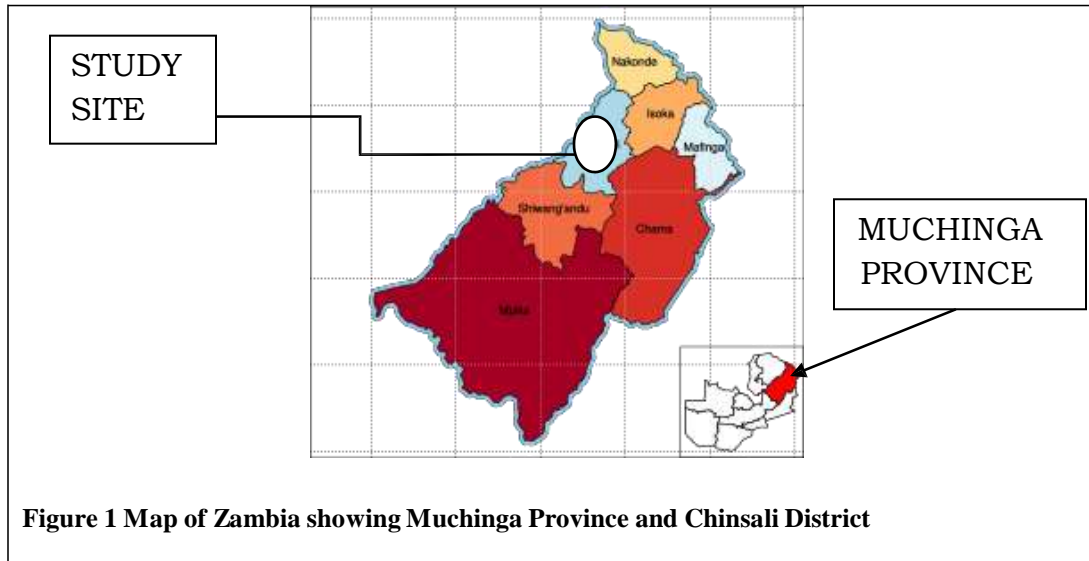


Figure 2 Child Marriage prevalence in Zambia

Source: Population Council 2016

3.4 Study Sample

The sample size of 52 respondents was small; this was as a result of conducting research in one district (Chinsali) than the intended sample size of 120 respondents from two districts (Chinsali and Mpika) of Muchinga Province of the following subgroups in Table 1.

Design/ How	Objectives	From who?	From where?	Participants (p) #/ages (years)	Thematic focus
Focus Group Discussions	Identify underlying causes of early marriages in girls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unmarried girls - Unmarried girls - Married girls - Unmarried boys - Unmarried adolescent mothers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In school - Out of school - Out of school - In school - Out of school 	Total of five groups (25p)/ (15 – 19 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ideals of being a woman/man; wife/husband - Social norms and practices around early marriage and education - Changes in the above
	To explore psychological effects of early marriages in girls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fathers and Mothers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who have adolescent girls 	Total of two groups (8p)/ (35 – 60 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comparative views of men and women on ideals of masculinity and femininity - Comparative views of mothers and fathers on social norms around marriage and education for sons and daughters - Views and perceptions on changes over time - Views and perspectives on laws, policies and programmes to address these issues
In-depth interviews	Identify underlying causes of early marriages in girls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unmarried boys with adolescent sisters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A mix of in- and out-of-school 	- 12p/ (15 – 19 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boys' views of ideals of being a woman/man; wife/husband - Social norms around marriage and education - Changes in the above
Key informant interviews	To explore the Zambia Child Protection System addressing early marriages in girls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government: ministries - UNICEF, - legal experts - Religious leaders - Cultural leaders - Other elders 	-	- 7p/ (25 – 60 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For general exploration of issues related to early marriage and education

TABLE 1: Qualitative Information Data Collection Instruments, Design and Sample

Table 1: *Illustrates how data was collected until it reached data saturation.*

3.5 Sampling technique

Chinsali has more than 750 villages. To select participants, a purposive sampling technique was used by targeting places of high prevalence rates of early marriages in Chinsali District. In view of this, Kabungo and Maluba villages under Nkula chiefdom were identified.

3.6 Research Instruments

The qualitative information was collected through key informant interviews, in-depth interviews and FGD adapted from Overseas Development Institute (2015). See attached Appendix 2.

3.7 Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were used with Zambian Government Officials, UNICEF Official, Legal experts, Religious leaders, Cultural leaders, and other elders to collect information about demographic, social, and economic characteristics, as well as early marriage related situations, patterns and initiatives on early marriage good programmes' design from local people and other key stakeholders.

3.8 In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were used with unmarried boys with adolescent sisters to explore consequences of early marriages on girl children.

3.9 Focus Group Discussions

In this research study, FGD were used with Unmarried girls in school, Unmarried girls out of school, Married girls out of school, Unmarried boys in school, Unmarried adolescent mothers out of school, and Fathers and Mothers (parents with adolescent girls) to extract information on causes and consequences of early marriages in girls' health and education, impact of the interventions in reducing poverty, suggestions on the benefits for ending early marriages and how to improve on the programmes' implementations in the fight against early marriages.

3.10 Procedure

Permission was obtained from relevant authorities at district levels. Further, permission was obtained from chiefs and headmen. Headmen or chiefs' representatives were debriefed about the

study. Children and adults were recruited from communities of high prevalence rates of early marriages. The researcher worked with two research assistants from ZCCP - an NGO promoting and protecting children's rights.

3.11 Data Collection

The researcher conducted seven focus group discussions with a total of 33 participants - Five groups were children with 25 participants and two groups were parents with eight participants. 12 participants were children in in-depth interviews and key informant interviews had seven participants who were some of the key stakeholders in order to understand the phenomena under study. Participants were encouraged to seek clarification whenever necessary and for some items local languages were used to make things clearer.

3.12 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed for the scores from the exploration of the Zambia Child Protection System: addressing causes and psychological effects of early marriages in girls. Thematic analysis - emphasis was on the content of a text, "what" was said more than "how" it was said, the "told" rather than the "telling" (Riessman, 2002). Thematic Analysis was used to identify, analyse and report recurring themes within the collected data. Similar responses were grouped for ease of presentation and understanding as described in results.

3.13 Limitations of the Study and the Need for Further Research

Owing to limitations of time and finances, data collected and analyzed in this study was only for Chinsali district in Muchinga Province. As such, there may, therefore, be value in extending this study to cover more districts from across the country and also to include more other variables in the study.

3.14 Ethical Considerations

This study raises some ethical issues because:

The participants were a vulnerable group since some were living in absolute or relative poverty.

The study touched on very sensitive issues such as the Zambia Child Protection System which mainly boards on governance, policy formulation and implementation of the country Zambia.

The study may have triggered emotions in some adults and children.

To address the above and other ethical concerns, this study was first submitted to UNZA Research Ethics Committee for approval. The researcher informed participants about the purpose of the study, methods used, and possible use of the research findings. The participants were informed about the obligations in the study. After the children had been identified their parents were informed in writing about the study and informed consent was sought from them for their children to take part in the study. Children then gave assent to take part in the study (see Appendix 1). All information given during the study was held in strict confidence and names were concealed by assigning numbers to each one of the participants. Participants who took part in the study were allowed to leave any time they felt so and for children who may have shown heightened emotional disturbances their participation would have been terminated and referred to specialist attention.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

This chapter presented findings of this qualitative study in order to gain an understanding of the phenomena under study. The major research themes were developed and presented as follows; Reasons for Early Marriages, Consequences of Early Marriages and the Zambia Child Protection System. The quotations as verbatim were used to illustrate and explain the sub-themes that were developed. Table 2 shows summary of the major and sub-themes that emerged from the data. These themes were the basis for presentation of the data and were discussed thoroughly below the table.

Table 2: Major and Sub – themes

Major Themes	Sub - Themes
Reasons for Early Marriages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Tradition/culture ii. Poor quality accessed education iii. Poverty
Consequences of Early Marriages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverse impacts on women’s health and may lead to psychological distress, depression, anxiety and other mood disorders.
The Zambia Child Protection System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Strengths of the Zambia Child Protection System; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Protection programmes ii. Weaknesses of the Zambia Child Protection System; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate funding • Low staffing levels • Poor coordination • Lack of policy harmonization • Lack of synergy among stakeholders <p>Overall, the implementation framework is reactive instead of being proactive. Thus, there are several gaps than strengths in the Zambia Child Protection System.</p>

4.2 Current Situation on Reasons for Early Marriages

In this section, the findings on reasons for early marriages are presented. Though there were few or no statistical data that showed causes of early marriages in girls in Zambia, summary of information therein was obtained from key informants, in-depth interviews and FGD reported **tradition/culture** to have greatly contributed to the causes of early marriages. Other factors were **poverty** and **poor quality accessed education** by girls to have also contributed to school drop outs into early marriages. Under this theme, tradition/culture, and poverty and education are discussed.

4.2.1 Tradition/Culture

This section showed the most common monogamy type of marriages as customary and religious. Customary marriage is the most form of marriage widely practiced especially in rural areas and mostly involves young girls. Religious form of marriage understood from a biblical point of view has more advantages however expensive than customary as claimed by a key informant;

Religious marriage was openly conducted than customary which was assumed to be done secretly (Sub chief, aged 56 years).

Similar sentiments were echoed by another key informant as he said that;

Bride price was given at marriage because it was tradition passed on from one generation to another and it consists of money, other goods and material wealth such as goats, chickens and if bride price were not given, others did not give out their daughters for marriage or when they did, children culturally did not belong to a man's side lest they divorced, a woman was to go with her children who were regarded as a precious asset (Headman, aged 60 years).

The results showed changes in the practice of customary marriages since 1990s as a result of missionaries, media (i.e. radio, newspapers and television) and education. The above views were justified by key informants as below;

Long before, parents would arrange a girl for a man and it was perceived to be a good practice because families to marry from were known by their characters... (Headman, aged 60 years).

Traditions were disadvantaging girls/women and others followed tradition as their roadmap or guide in presiding over social issues... (Sub chief, aged 56 years).

The study further revealed some of the factors why girls continue to marry at early ages as personal, society or community based as asserted by key informants with similar sentiments as below.

The usual age for girls' marriage were mainly after a girl attains puberty and immediately, was taught how to keep a home and what goes on in the bedroom that made girls more seemingly mature than their boy counterpart. These education girls received upon reaching puberty, made society regard them as grownups and respect were commanded from everyone including male parents and elder brothers. That meant girls could even be married off regardless of the legal age of above 21 years (Sub chief, aged 56 years).

... There is a lot of pressure from members of the community. For example, a girl of a particular age still in school and doing fine but, if most of her friends are married, the one who is in school is more vulnerable than others who have probably left school... unfortunately a girl tend to have very few reference points... a girl will be told that your friends are married and getting children and by the time you will be getting married, you may have passed your child bearing age. Generally, all the community members although it is a bit difficult to see who is responsible for that, I see a situation where we seem to have contradictions, we will want to see girls not marry at a tender age and people will fairly appreciate the reasons for girls not to marry but, there is this strong perception where they feel they need to marry at that time and unconsciously or unknowingly, they will

be supporting early marriages by the comments they make or the views that they hold regarding those that have gone in early marriages (Government Official, aged 43 years).

Lastly, the study revealed limitation on the general recreation facilities in the district as another challenge. Recreation is very important to everyone for relaxation and play, but without it, one may engage in illicit activities as asserted by one of the key informants as he said that;

There are very limited sporting facilities such that if young people cannot go at a school, they will not have any other recreative activity which would engage their energies. As a result, because the district do not have most of those structured facilities or services, most of the juveniles or young people are getting into activities that are not helpful to their well being as well as their lives i.e. others get into abuse of narcotic substances and alcohol while others such as female adolescents engage in unprotected sex and at the end of the day they get impregnated and drop out from school and in some extreme cases others may contract diseases that affect them negatively in terms of their future (Government Official, aged 43 years).

4.2.2 Education

This section showed why education for girls and boys is important. In this study, it was found that parents and children emphasized on the value of education.

Nowadays, there are drawbacks if one had not gone far in education because one needs to have an average education to understand the changing world in terms of technology such as access to banking services and so on (Female parent V, aged 37 years).

In this study, results revealed that parents' preferences were to have their children get education first and thereafter marriage and there are good role models to inspire girls for greater achievements in almost all settings as justified by members of FGD as below;

If children got well educated, it is normal for them to leave and settle elsewhere and does not need parental guidance all the time because education makes them become mature and responsible to face life head on.... Men find girls more marriageable if they have a higher level of education because they will have a better paying job, more money and were able to provide everything a woman needs (Male parent Z, aged 59 years). There are good role models in the communities to inspire girls' education with good livelihood and successful marriages; we see them - tulabamona abakashana mukwaii, such as female teachers, nurses, women police and other employees (Male parent Z, aged 50 years).

The results of this research study highlighted accessibility to education services and sponsorship that girls get as key issues. Although, it is feasible for a child of a poor family to reach the highest level of education if there were support from other family members and institutions.

When I talk about sustainability for instance you may find some girls have done well but they may not be able to access the school they would have loved to go to and that may in itself affect what they have wanted to achieve. In terms of sponsorship, we are talking about those that would have made it to either a particular level but do not have sponsorship be it at family level or maybe the programme that is supposed to provide assistance is not so well funded or have limitations on what they may provide to a girl. For girls one thing you also need to appreciate is that while you have a boy child and girl child going to school in the same grade. Naturally, we need to understand that the needs for a girl child will be slightly more of which very few guardians and family members appreciate those needs such that when a girl child is asking for some of these necessities, it tends to look as if the girl is too extravagant or she is asking for things which are not necessary and those things tend to have a bearing on how they progress or how they advance in terms of education because eventually they might start thinking that maybe am putting too much pressure on my parents perhaps let me just drop out and get into marriage or something else... (Government Official, aged 43 years).

One of the members of FGD with a similar opinion echoed by saying that;

If one is not educated, treatment is different and people in the community attaches more respect to education and one who attains it regardless of sex because it is not easy to attain due to poverty, walking long distances to schools, more time and commitment dedicated to education... (Male parent X, aged 54 years).

Finally, the study further revealed that there are low progression levels of girls to other grades and most girls have dropped out of school on an account of being married off which is a big problem. Generally, performance for girls is poor. The above views were justified by an interviewee as he reported that;

Experiences of boys and girls in schools were different. Most girls' experienced sexual abuse from some male teachers and before coming to school, girls were made to perform a lot of household chores and came to school whilst tired and as a result got demoralized to continue with their education because of poor performance and resorted to early marriages.... School experience was good because we learn important and useful things that prepare us well for the future... It was every family's wish to have their children complete their education and competed for higher paying jobs, but other factors such as poverty constrained them (children) from completing (Boy child, aged 17).

In conclusion, there are linkages in early marriages. For instance, if a girl drops out of school and go into early marriage and eventually they start child bearing. To a certain extent, they will create a cycle that will keep on repeating itself because it is very likely that a girl who has dropped out of school and have managed to sustain their relationships with their husbands and they seem to be staying well, in a number of instances most of those may not look at education as important; they actually start looking at themselves as role models as they are happy with a person there with which might work well for them but for their children and other people it may not work out.

4.3 Current Situation on the Consequences of Early Marriages

In this section, the results showed consequences of early marriages in girls. Summary of information therein was obtained from key informants, in-depth interviews and FGD reported that early marriages have **adverse impacts** on women's health.

The study revealed a number of consequences because most young people that are in early marriages are not psychologically prepared. They fail to handle those challenges of marriage life and unfortunately in some instances it has led to families breaking up or losing life as asserted by members of FGD and a key informant as below;

For most of the people traditionally, I think we still have those that believe that the moment a girl has attained maturity or puberty, for them that girl is old enough.... But, you will agree with me that from a health point of view, a girl at 13 may have attained puberty but, may not be ready physically to handle a pregnancy or even child bearing tasks neither is she psychologically ready for the challenges of child bearing. While you have a scenario where there is an indicator to say that this child has attained puberty..., frankly speaking the child may not be ready for that undertaking... (Government Official, aged 43 years).

Members of FGD echoed similar sentiments by saying the following below;

some of the disadvantages of marrying at an early age are that girls fail to give birth and go through forced labor, still birth, death of either mother or child and/or both and it is a burden to the girls' family (Girl child, aged 17 years).

Other effects were sexual and psychological abuses, leading a stressful life, depression, negligence, death and child labour (Girl child A, aged 18 years).

Mothers to unmarried girls also become depressed and may experience divorce on an account that they did not provide adequate counseling to their daughters... (Girl child B, aged 18 years).

There are no advantages in marrying early... (Girl child C, aged 18 years).

The study further revealed that it was common practice for girls to have children before they were married. Most often girls fail to continue with their education and become mothers at a young age, which becomes a burden on a girl's parents because boy fathers do not give adequate support to their children.

Girls for example if they were in school and happen to get married, it probably means that is their end of education and will never get back to school. Getting back to school is not that easy, the willingness maybe there but the environment in which they are may not be supportive because they would have picked up these other responsibilities. People, who ideally would have supported girls, would say "whom are you going to leave your children with or whom are you going to leave the management of your home with when you go back to school and all sorts of things" (Government Official, aged 43 years).

Another member of the FGD with a similar opinion echoed by saying that;

Boys who father children when not married usually do not take full responsibilities because they do not plan for it and only depend on their parents for support of which is not adequate (Male parent, aged 50 years).

Finally, the results also showed that when girls with children decides to get married later, it was either to older men who had divorced or were widowers which results into abuse of them and their children.

Future marriage partners accepted these children and later abused, neglected and did not adequately support them... (Male parent, aged 50 years).

In conclusion, the study revealed the following reported problems/challenges adolescent girls faced when pregnant, unmarried and/or in early marriages as abandonment, lack of necessities, obstructed and/or forced labour, still birth, premature or low birth weight babies, poverty, burden to their parents to provide for the baby, lack of proper care to the born child from spouses, lack of napkins and decent shelter.

4.4 Current Situation of the Zambia Child Protection System

Issues around young people in general and girls in particular are very interesting and delicate age in human development. Some of the issues border on the general protection that children have to get from their home environment, families, community and other extended institutions. There is a lot that each of these players has to do in ensuring that young people fully develop, become adults and meaningfully contribute to national development. Understanding causes and consequences of early marriages in girls was important when exploring the Zambia Child Protection System, in this section; the findings of the effectiveness of the implementation framework are presented. Summary of information therein was obtained from key informants, in-depth interviews and FGD reported that there are **several gaps than strengths** in the Zambia Child Protection System.

4.4.1 Strengths of the Zambia Child Protection System

In this section, findings of the study showed some of the strengths in the Zambia Child Protection System. From the pieces of legislation, Zambia is a part to the UNCRC which guarantees several rights of children that are of primary concern among them; non discrimination, best interests of the child and protection of rights. From that point of view, Government of the Republic of Zambia and NGO have programmes especially in the area of advocacy to highlight how detrimental early marriages are to society. These programmes which aim at eliminating early marriages consider social norms for example; PWAS provides social support to vulnerable people in society including children as asserted by one of the key informants who said;

When a family is receiving support, it does not mean that members of the extended family would cease to provide any assistance that they can provide because this person is a beneficiary. The programme is there to supplement their efforts. It is not there to fade other relationships that they have. Social norms are considered but over time, maybe due to economic hardships a lot of people shun from some of those responsibilities (Government Official, aged 43 years).

The research study revealed some of the programmes underway to address child related concerns under different portfolio functions across sister and line ministries of the Government of the Republic of Zambia as follows; under the Ministry of Education, Government has a policy where every child should have access to education. A school curriculum now have two parts; the academic part and as well as the vocational part. If a child cannot progress academically in a particular field, she or he can pick up certain skills or vocation which can help later on in life. Under the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs, there are programmes engaging traditional leaders to address some of the traditional practices that have a negative impact on the upbringing of girls i.e. World Vision is working with His Royal Highness Senior Chief Nkula in the prevention of GBV and the programme emphasizes the need for girls to get back to school. In the Ministry of Health, there are efforts being made to ensure that young children have access to ‘Youth Friendly Services’ where they provide certain services such as counseling and testing.

The Ministry of Youth, Sport and Child Development and the Ministry of Gender have some empowerment programmes for some youths to improve their livelihood (Government Official, aged 43 years). Government in some selected districts have a relative new programme ‘Keeping Girls in School Programme’ which is trying to promote girls’ education especially among the girls from families that are under Social Cash Transfer programme. Nevertheless, some of the successful programmes in preventing early marriages are the Ministry of Education for example; the re-entry policy has some positive benefits where girls who fall out of education because of pregnancy or early marriages may go back to school. Other successful programmes are a general campaign against early marriages which has been embraced by most of the traditional leaders.

Furthermore, the research study shows some other programmes supported by NGO such as; Camfed, FAWEZA who are trying to promote girls’ education. Other multi-lateral NGO such as two United Nations Agencies (UNICEF and UNFPA) has a programme called ‘Global Programme on Accelerating Action to End Child Marriage’ funded by multi - donors. This programme supports Government of the Republic of Zambia in the development of national strategies on ending child marriages. It is a three year programme ending in 2018. The above programmes have been asserted by a key informant as below;

Generally, from the Government's point of view, there are some opportunities where young people can still better their lives depending on the grounding or foundation which young people have set in order to benefit from those empowerment services (Government Official, aged 43 years).

Similar sentiments were echoed by another key informant as he said that;

Since the turn of the 21st century, there are specific groups and people such as ZCCP, VSU, Camfed and also chiefs and head-teachers, are working to move the desirable age of marriage for girls through community radio programmes, advocacy during community and church gatherings and there has been positive change.... (Sub chief, aged 56 years).

The findings further showed some sort of support stakeholders may get from other staff or agencies when they work together. For instance, the Ministry of Education provide feedback on children that are under the department of Social Welfare 'School Sponsorship Programme' on how they are performing and where they think the department needs to adjust to continue dealing with the assistance to children as asserted by one of the key informants who said that;

Feedback is very helpful in that where someone is on the programme and is under performing, they were relaxed on the assumption that they will continue to be supported until they complete school (Government Official, aged 43 years).

In terms of sustainability, results also showed that there should be continuous education for all community members in order for children to enjoy their childhood.

If community members allow children to go through childhood, children will be more prepared to handle the challenges that come when they are adults because it would have given us (stakeholders) an opportunity to impart knowledge and skills on how they can handle those situations when they get older... (Government Official, aged 43 years).

4.4.2 Weaknesses of the Zambia Child Protection System

Early marriages are still rampant in communities despite some sensitizations trying to fight the problem. In this section, the findings reveal some of the weaknesses in the Zambia Child Protection System such as; limited funding or inadequate funding - stakeholders may want to assist as many clients as possible but are constrained with resources. Lack of synergy among stakeholders - there needed to streamline what stakeholders support its clientele for because this is a general responsibility where everyone needs to take part. Poor coordination - there is also need to involve local beneficiaries in the programmes' design unlike top – down programme design arrangement where it is felt that if this particular programme is introduced, will yield certain results. Beneficiaries are only involved when trying to get feedback from them. Ultimately, stakeholders need to have a holistic approach, the idea of addressing issues as individual entities may not yield results as asserted by key informants with similar sentiments as below;

One of the biggest gaps in the Zambia child protection system is funding and that... coordination has not been very good in that stakeholders need to have a common or a shared understanding of what kind of society they would want at the end of the day or what kind of a young child they need to see today and also visualize those children maybe 20 years or 30 years as adults. If all stakeholders have that common understanding, then it will be very easy for different players and stakeholders to know what it is that they can contribute towards that desired state of affairs. There are different stakeholders with different goals, but we (stakeholders) should have a common understanding or a common goal on what we desire for the young children, as we encounter any problems, then you ask the relevant institutions or agencies to do what they are suppose to do, the other stakeholders be it families or communities, they should also come in and do their part... there are strengths in working together because all stakeholders have one common objective that is the best interest of the child. When stakeholders collaborate, it helps a lot because one gets to check and strengthen on their area of weaknesses. In short, it makes the programme to be as effective as possible.... We had interventions withdrawing girls from marriages back to school, and a

number of those programmes where girls were withdrawn were not sustainable. For instance, a girl maybe on a programme for two or three years, thereafter, the fund agency runs out of resources or the project under which the intervention was made as come to an end. If this girl has to go back to the community, community members who may not have appreciated the importance of education, the next thing they may do is allow this girl go into marriage. But when stakeholders are working together, it may be easy to have her continued on another similar intervention... Lack of synergy in programmes implementation although there are ministries responsible for providing coordination among stakeholders, these ministries have failed because their mandates are not clear coupled with disintegrated scarce financial and human resources (Government Official, aged 43 years).

There are some existing laws, programmes or policies particularly on early marriages, but are weak and punishment is not strong and therefore people do not fear practicing early marriages (Headman, aged 60 years).

Overall, Zambia has laws and policies to address the many child protection concerns. Laws and policies are in place to address the issues. The challenge I see is the implementation of these nice laws developed by the Government. For instance, the Education Act of 2011 prohibits marriage of a learner (child going to school below the age of 16) but has anyone been convicted for marrying a learner? No record (UNICEF Official, aged 46 years).

The research study further revealed that adolescent girls have access to reproductive health services such as safe deliveries but, some of the obstacles to using these services were lack of awareness and confidentiality. Mostly, to have access to these services was when one got married or pregnant.

There was insufficient information about sexual and reproductive health. There needed to come up with support networks to improve on coordination in information flow in the community (Headman, aged 60 years).

Furthermore, findings revealed that there is need for harmonization in the way programmes and policies speak to each other during implementation as emphasized by one of the key informants (Government Official, aged 43 years) when he said that;

... Most policies do not speak to each other. For example, under Social Welfare Department there is a programme called PWAS which supports children get education from the Ministry of Education. The two government agencies; Ministry of Education and the Department of Social Welfare do not seem to have a policy that helps them. In an event that one department is not funded in this area, the other one should continue providing a service because it is not the fought of those children that there are no resources. Thus, there is no communication or synergy if someone qualifies to be assisted under a particular programme, she/he can still get another service, it does not have to be dependent on the organization that sponsor them that they do not have resources... as the Zambia child protection system implementation framework is, there are some challenges because some of the agencies have failed to do what they were supposed to do because of funding. Even protection services, the police for example only react if the case seems to arouse a lot of emotions and things like that. But that is not the way it is supposed to be. If a child is neglected and it is established that the parents have been negligent and whatever, there is need to go all the way and do much better or intervene at a particular level where everyone knows what they are supposed to do with matching resources to meet some of those things that the young children might need.

In conclusion therefore, the findings showed that the general performance of the Zambia Child Protection System has not been very good. Mostly, it has been very reactive instead of being proactive, certain things are preventable before they happen other than having to react to issues. For instance, there are a lot of early marriages campaigns and advocacy programmes, but these are reacting to the large numbers of girls seen dropping out of school getting into marriages. The ideal situation is to invest more resources in prevention programmes.

4.5 Summary of the Findings

This chapter presented the results on the exploration of the Zambia Child Protection System: addressing causes and psychological effects of early marriages in girls in Chinsali District. The results were presented according to the three objectives in this particular study. The objectives were; to identify underlying causes of early marriages in girls, to explore psychological effects of early marriages in girls and to investigate social protection programmes addressing early marriages in girls. The study showed that early marriages are closely linked with poverty and low levels of economic development and that education is very important in the fight against early marriages. Thus, partially affirm global reasons for early marriages i.e. tradition/culture, poverty and poor education infrastructure among them. The study also showed that early marriages have adverse impacts on women's health and hence may lead to psychological distress, depression, anxiety and other mood disorders. The study finally showed that there are weaknesses in the Zambia Child Protection System coupled with disintegrated scarce financial, human resources and no clear mandates for ministries responsible for providing coordination among stakeholders. As a consequence, there are several gaps than strengths in the Zambia Child Protection System.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the Zambia Child Protection System: addressing causes and psychological effects of early marriages in girls in Chinsali District. The study contributed to the existing literature on early marriages in a number of ways. First, it was one of the few empirical studies in a Zambian setting. Second, it was one of the few studies that identified causes of early marriages, and explored psychological effects of early marriages in girls in Chinsali District. Finally, the study investigated the social protection programmes addressing early marriages in girls. Thematic Analysis was then conducted to develop appropriate themes for ease of reference. This chapter discussed the findings of the study in relation to other research works, the extent to which they may be generalizable. The discussion was in line with the major themes. Thereafter, concluded and also presented relevant recommendations to the study. The chapter also included areas for further research.

The results reiterated the theoretical framework introduced in this research study and pointed out that early marriages among girls was caused by among other factors poor coordination of social protection programmes aimed at reducing poverty of the family, lack of access to proper quality education infrastructure (i.e. walking long distances to schools which puts girls vulnerable to sexual abuse and other dangerous vices), lack of knowledge on the psychological effects of early marriages and tradition/cultural values.

Similar to the findings of a large of previous studies, Hotchkiss, Godha, Gage & Cappa (2016) who examined risk factors associated with the practice of early marriages among Roma girls in Serbia, early marriages were found to be associated with a number of socio-economic characteristics, including household wealth, education, and urban/rural status. In Bangladesh, poverty-stricken parents are persuaded to part with daughters through promises of marriage, or by false marriages, which are used to lure the girls into prostitution abroad (Kabir, 1998).

Poverty is one of the major factors underpinning early marriage. Where poverty is acute, a young girl may be regarded as an economic burden and her marriage to a much older – sometimes even elderly – man, a practice common in some Middle Eastern and South Asian societies, is a family survival strategy, and may even be seen as in her interests. In traditional societies in Sub-Saharan Africa, the bride's family may receive cattle from the groom, or the groom's family, as the bride price for their daughter (Rwezaura, 1994). While these findings suggest that economic factors may be playing an important role in influencing early marriages, other factors suggest that parents seem to offer protection of a girl child from engaging into early sex. Richard & Rao (1999) point out that in some societies, parents withdraw their girls from school as soon as they begin to menstruate; fearing that exposure to male pupils or teachers puts them at risk. These practices are all intended to shield the girl from male sexual attention, but in the eyes of concerned parents, marriage is seen to offer the ultimate 'protection' measure.

Early marriage is one way to ensure that a wife is 'protected', or placed firmly under male control; that she is submissive to her husband and works hard for her in-laws' household; that the children she bears are 'legitimate'; and that bonds of affection between couples do not undermine the family unit (Caldwell, John & Caldwell, 1977). Parents may genuinely feel that their daughter will be better off and safer with a regular male guardian. In conflict-torn Northern Uganda for example, some families marry their young daughters to militia members in order to defend family honour or secure 'protection' for themselves and the girl (A Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International Report, 1997). The same thing has happened to girls in Somalia in the course of that country's conflicts (Stockman, Lorne, Barnes & Mohamed, 1997). It is important to emphasize that results in this study and other literature show that early marriages are practiced even in well to do families either in rural or urban areas depending on the motive of parents behind marriage, if they see a child or an orphan as a result of losing biological parents because of HIV/AIDS as an economic burden on their part, protection measure or one to end the poverty of the family etc.

Early marriage deprives a girl of her adolescence. Additionally, in many traditional societies, the idea of an adolescent period between puberty and adulthood is alien. A girl who menstruates can bear a child, and is therefore 'a woman'. This sits awkwardly with the fact that the UNCRC

covers everyone up to age 18 and regards childhood as a process of development – one that does not end with a definitive physical maturity marker.

Furthermore, Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu & Ergöçmen (2014) uses logistic regression analysis in order to find determinants of early marriage in Turkey. Results indicate that becoming a child bride is highly associated with the educational level of women; increase in the level of education decreases the risk of being married before age 18. The almost unchanged risk of being a child bride for women with little education highlights the importance of further raising women's educational level.

Nevertheless, the results of this study are similar with Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu and Ergöçmen in that if a girl does not get married while young gives her more opportunity to finish education and fulfill her life dreams and also prepares her to become more mature when giving a hand in marriage later on in life as she is not able to marry at a young age which causes girls to quit their education at very early ages and accordingly to lose their right to education. But, when girls delay marriage as according to the *theory of child marriage* increases access to secondary schooling or adolescent development programmes which eventually increases high levels of participation in the labor force and having an opportunity to decide a person she marries. The results of this study on education also showed that one need to have an average education to understand the changing world in terms of technology i.e. access to banking services and that education makes people become independent and supportive to their families. The results further showed that if one were not educated, treatment was different and people in the community attached more respect to one who was learned regardless of sex.

Literature points out that educating a girl enhances the probability of improved reproductive health, family planning, well-being of children, higher economic earning, and improved household management. Similar to these findings, results of this study also revealed that there are no advantages in early marriages. This and other studies reveal that early marriages negatively impact on women's health and education. Klugman, Hanmer, Twigg, Hasan, McCleary-Sills & Santamaria (2014) and Mensch, Singh & Casterline (2006) also show similar findings that early marriage has emerged as an important social issue in recent years due in part

to increased concerns among reproductive health advocates about the harmful consequences for young women marrying too early. These consequences can include: dropping out of school; health risks that result from early sexual activity and pregnancy, including sexually transmitted diseases and maternal mortality; being prevented from taking advantage of economic opportunities; and if they have children, child malnutrition and mortality.

It may also be thought that parents approve and practice early marriages because they are ignorant of its negative consequences upon their daughters. Results of this study also revealed that lack of knowledge about the negative impacts can never be an explanation for its prevalence. Nonetheless, some studies uphold the relentless efforts for sensitizations on the disadvantages of engaging in early marriages even though most of the consequences are well known.

There is also concern that early marriages deprive girls of their basic human rights and puts them at risk for harmful practices and disadvantage, including exploitation, intimate partner violence, and abuse (Jain and Kurz, 2007). Given these concerns, there is increased interest in efforts to empower children and adolescent girls in low and middle-income countries in order to protect their human rights and the overall wellbeing of women and children. Results of this study also showed departure from some traditions which promote early marriages; some people nowadays are alienating from some cultures which belonged to the third generation and adopting good practices around marriage. Moreover, results in this study further showed some chiefs who are the custodian of cultural values and morals implementing measures that would deter people from engaging in early marriages. Suffice that, other people have a way of dodging decrees and openly ignored the provisions of the law with an impression that it poses no or little threat.

The results of this study furthermore pointed out lack of synergy in programmes implementation contrary to the *theory of change* which advocates for the need for intensive engagement between government and non-government and community based institutions. Although, there are ministries responsible for providing coordination among stakeholders, these ministries have failed because their mandates are not clear coupled with disintegrated scarce financial and human resources. However, literature affirms for clear programmes' objectives especially those that target specifically empowerment of children. Thus, results of this research study showed that

the Zambian Child Protection System has no clear objectives on child protection and empowerment. For example, the recently launched SNDP for the period 2017 to 2021 have not clearly spelt out child empowerment programmes but are embedded in broad pillars aimed at attaining the long-term objectives as outlined in the Vision 2030 which states that the SNDP departs from sectoral-based planning to an integrated (multi-sectoral) development approach (SNDP, 2017).

In conclusion, the findings from this study and other empirical studies suggested areas where action to prevent, promote and protect children's rights should be directed when formulating and strengthening policies and programmes aimed at improving the effectiveness of the Zambia Child Protection System.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

This research study has contributed to a number of works conducted in early marriages. A number of researches have been conducted in the world which looked at some causes and consequences of early marriages and their economic effects on the country and world at large.

The researcher looked at the effectiveness of the Zambia Child Protection System addressing causes and psychological effects of early marriages in girls in Chinsali District. The results from thematic analysis showed that early marriages exist and that gaps in the Zambia Child Protection System exist due to poor coordinating mechanisms among stakeholders mandated to spearhead the prevention, protection and promotion of children's rights as another factor that greatly contributes to failure in addressing early marriages. The results also showed tradition/culture, poverty and poor quality accessed education as other factors that contribute to early marriages. People are aware of some health implications of early marriages in girls but have ignored them and perpetuated early marriages because it was tradition.

Literature also affirms promotion of girls' education by ensuring removal or minimizing barriers to accessing quality education in the fight against early marriages in girls. This promotes development on an individual level by increasing earnings and minimizing intergenerational transmission of poverty which in turn brings development to the nation and global levels at large.

Lastly, this research study brought to light the importance of conducting research especially child protection intervention based research in Developmental Psychology.

6.2 Recommendations

Early marriage is recognized as a violation of human rights and a critical social problem with multifaceted consequences - particularly for girls. The practice is also recognized as a barrier that inhibits young girls from attaining education that would otherwise have a lasting positive impact

on their life and well-being. Based on the research findings and the conclusion the researcher would like to make the following recommendations:

6.2.1 Enhance Coordination in the Implementation Framework

The findings of the study showed that coordination is very poor as a result efforts aimed at improving the welfare of people are fragmented. Stakeholders need to have one objective or a common shared interest in order to have a holistic approach, the idea of addressing issues as individual entities may not yield positive results as shown in the Zambia Child Protection System. Therefore, Government of the Republic of Zambia need to establish a coordinating body that will facilitate the coordination of development programmes. This will be intended to promote synergy and minimize role conflict with other stakeholders in the implementation of the various child related programmes.

6.2.2 Increase Opportunity Cost of Early Marriages: Education

The findings of the study showed that early marriages are a major cause for girls to discontinue with their education. However, advising parents to send their daughters to school when schools are too far will not work. Making schooling for girls more accessible is very important but, increasing incentives that may make girls to remain in school than opting for early marriages especially in rural areas may as well be important avenue for addressing early marriage.

6.2.3 Law Enforcement

A more rigorous enforcement of existing laws and policies is required to discourage early marriages. Government should strengthen law enforcement bodies to enable them to effectively discharge their duties and responsibilities, with due attention to the implementation of the family law and respect for children's rights. Strengthen reporting channels i.e. from community members to community leaders through to police and courts or from community members to school teachers or health institutions through to police and courts. Check and monitor the extent to which courts are implementing the existing relevant laws regularly. Despite the laws, most parents do not feel threatened by government interventions if they marry their daughters off at a young age.

6.2.4 Address Traditional/Cultural Values and Norms

The study findings indicated that traditional/cultural values and norms are important determinants of early marriage. As early marriages is a tradition that has been maintained through generations, sometimes parents may be unaware of the dangers, or may feel that the dangers are justified for cultural or economic reasons. Even where parents and children understand the negative implications of early marriages, societal pressure to challenge traditions that promote early marriages is important.

Government should support Community-based organizations, empower support networks by building capacity of youth associations and provide them with information and knowledge they can use to convince families and community members. Community leaders, social workers should also be sensitized and mobilized to change the mindset of the people and jointly raise awareness through strict implementation of the acts about marriage preventing ill health of girl children. Media should take the themes of social relevance to spread the message of adverse consequences of early marriages on all of them and the country at large. Moreover, parents should be discouraged from escaping their responsibilities of raising children in a dignified manner by empowering their daughters with life skills enhancing self-esteem. Lastly, ministries responsible should work jointly with religious, health, and educational leaders to develop an information and education strategy about the negative effects of early marriage.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Informed Consent Form

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am a Psychology graduate student in the school of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zambia. I am asking if you would allow your child to participate in a study exploring the Zambia Child Protection System addressing causes and psychological effects of early marriages in girls of Chinsali district. This study will help victims of early marriage become agents of change and stakeholders may realize some mistakes in the process of implementation and also provide and facilitate development of appropriate programmes' design and implementation framework.

Should you consent to your child participating in the study, the child will be in a focus group of six children for 45 to 90 minutes of discussion. All information collected on the child will not be used for any other purpose other than for this study. Furthermore, the child's participation will be anonymous and the identity will be withheld on all documents. Like in most studies, this particular study carries minimum potential risk for the participant. Possible risks might include heightened emotions for some participants. Participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time during the study a child wishes to withdraw his or her participation, they are free to do so without prejudice.

If you have any questions about your child participation in the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on the following phone numbers +260 966 927 092 +260 976 686 007. If you agree to allow your child to take part in the study please complete and return the consent below.

Mwewa, Humphrey Musongo

RESEARCHER

Appendix 2: Key Informant Interviews, In-Depth Interviews and Focus Group Guide

Key Informant Interviews Guide – Target Individuals

Questionnaire and interview guide to determine the gaps and strengths of empowerment programmes administered by stakeholders of the Zambia child protection system aimed at reducing poverty in preventing early marriage.

1. Do social transfer programmes (Empowerment programmes by line ministries such as Youth Empowerment, Women Economic Empowerment, Citizen Economic Empowerment, Social Cash Transfer, Food and Support Package, Literacy and Orphan and Other Vulnerable (OVC) school support programmes among them) have explicit child protection objectives?

a. If yes, list them below;

b. If not, does your institution have direct child social transfer programmes – child empowerment programmes with explicit child protection objectives? List them below;

c. How do you measure the trickle down effects of the programmes on child protection system?

2. Does your institution conduct direct effects on the impact studies of your programmes?

a. If yes how?

b. If not, how does your institution measure the programmes viabilities?

3. How are poverty-mediated linkages between social transfer programmes and child protection, including changes in child protection risks and outcomes? Describe.

4. Are there significant synergies associated with the implementation of social transfer programmes as above and the work of child protection agencies? If yes describe.

5. If not, what should be done to enhance synergies?

In-Depth Interviews Guide

Questionnaire to examine legal, policy framework, social and economic support programmes meant for children.

1. What is your ministry – child related sector doing in the prevention of early marriage?

2. What programmes are being implemented in curbing early marriage?

a. What are some achievements in the implemented programmes?

b. What are limitations in the implemented programmes?

c. What role(s) does your institution play in coordination of implemented programmes?

d. If so, whom do you coordinate with and in what area and why?

i. Whom?

ii. What area?

iii. Why?

e. What are benefits of coordinating with other institutions in the elimination of early marriage?

3. What is child protection system in your opinion?

4. Whom do you think play a key role in child protection system?

a. Why do you think so?

5. What constitutes child protection system in Zambia?

6. How is a child defined in the child protection system?

7. Who is involved in the upbringing of a child?

8. Who else is involved in the upbringing of a child?

a. Why do you think so?

9. Who are not performing their roles in preventing early marriage?

10. What should be done to end early marriage?

a. Why do you think so?

11. Who are the most affected in early marriage?

a. Boys

b. Girls

12. If your answer was b. 1.) Do facilities exist which girls can attend, and if so,

i. can girls get to school?

ii. What is the cost of schooling? and

iii. What are community attitudes to education?

13.

i. Whilst in school, can girls learn?

ii. Are girls provided with the skills they need to make decisions about their own futures and be actively involved in decision-making in their community?

iii. Is what they're learning challenging negative social norms?

14. Can girls get to school safely, and while at school, remain safe and free from violence?

a. Are girls aware of their rights, which can help them, seek and receive support to prevent abuse or deal with its consequences?

b. Do schools support and engage with the improvement of child protection systems and have comprehensive child protection mechanisms and reporting systems in place to ensure teachers can report concerns about girls at risk of early marriage to local government and judicial systems?

i. What child protection system mechanisms are in place?

ii. How many cases have been reported to local government?

iii. Which institution(s) of local government is/are responsible for receiving teachers' reports as above mentioned?

iv. How many cases are referred to the judicial system?

v. How are disposal details?

c. If the answer was negative in question 14 b. above, what are challenges?

15. Sex education should be included in the school's curriculum; as this will develop a positive perception of people towards early marriage and prevent its occurrence.

a. What are the reasons why sex education is not included in the primary or secondary school's curriculum?

b. From a religious point of view and a global concern, why is sex education not taught to children?

Focus Group Discussion Guide

Questionnaire and interview guide to determine the gaps and strengths of empowerment programmes administered by stakeholders of the Zambia child protection system aimed at reducing poverty in preventing early marriage.

1. Do social transfer programmes (Empowerment programmes by line ministries such as Youth Empowerment, Women Economic Empowerment, Citizen Economic Empowerment, Social Cash Transfer, Food and Support Package, Literacy and Orphan and Other Vulnerable (OVC) school support programmes among them) have explicit child protection objectives?
 - a. If yes, list them below;
 - b. If not, does your institution have direct child social transfer programmes – child empowerment programmes with explicit child protection objectives? List them below;
 - c. How do you measure the trickle down effects of the programmes on child protection system?
2. Does your institution conduct direct effects on the impact studies of your programmes?
 - a. If yes how?
 - b. If not, how does your institution measure the programmes viabilities?
3. How are poverty-mediated linkages between social transfer programmes and child protection, including changes in child protection risks and outcomes? Describe.
4. Are there significant synergies associated with the implementation of social transfer programmes as above and the work of child protection agencies? If yes describe. If not, what should be done to enhance synergies?

Key Informant Interviews Guide – Professional specific

Questionnaire to examine legal, policy framework, social and economic support programmes meant for children.

1. What ministry – child related sector doing in the prevention of early marriage?
2. What programmes are being implemented in curbing early marriage?
 - a. What are some achievements in the implemented programmes?
 - b. What are limitations in the implemented programmes?
 - c. What role(s) does your institution play in coordination of implemented programmes?
 - d. If so, whom do you coordinate with and in what area and why?

- i. Whom?
 - ii. What area?
 - iii. Why?
 - e. What are benefits of coordinating with other institutions in the elimination of early marriage?
3. What is child protection system in your opinion?
 4. Whom do you think play a key role in child protection system?
 - a. Why do you think so?
 5. What constitutes child protection system in Zambia?
 6. How is a child defined in the child protection system?
 7. Who is involved in the upbringing of a child?
 8. Who else is involved in the upbringing of a child?
 - a. Why do you think so?
 9. Who are not performing their roles in preventing early marriage?
 10. What should be done to end early marriage?
 - a. Why do you think so?
 11. Who are the most affected in early marriage?
 - a. Boys
 - b. Girls
 12. If your answer was b. above
 - i. Do facilities exist which girls can attend, and if so, can girls get to school?
 - ii. What is the cost of schooling? and
 - iii. What are community attitudes to education?
 13. Whilst in school, can girls learn?
 - i. Are girls provided with the skills they need to make decisions about their own futures and be actively involved in decision-making in their community?
 - ii. Is what they're learning challenging negative social norms?
 14. Can girls get to school safely, and while at school, remain safe and free from violence?
 - a. Are girls aware of their rights, which can help them, seek and receive support to prevent abuse or deal with its consequences?

- b. Do schools support and engage with the improvement of child protection systems and have comprehensive child protection mechanisms and reporting systems in place to ensure teachers can report concerns about girls at risk of early marriage to local government and judicial systems?
- i. What child protection system mechanisms are in place?
 - ii. How many cases have been reported to local government?
 - iii. Which institution(s) of local government is/are responsible for receiving teachers' reports as above mentioned?
 - iv. How many cases are referred to the judicial system?
 - v. How are disposal details?
- c. If the answer was negative in question 14 b. above, what are challenges?
15. Sex education should be included in the school's curriculum; as this will develop a positive perception of people towards early marriage and prevent its occurrence.
- a. What are the reasons why sex education is not included in the primary or secondary school's curriculum?
 - b. From a religious point of view and a global concern, why is sex education not taught to children?