

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (UDS)

REDUCING THE INCEDENCE OF EARLY MARRIAGE IN THE ZUJUNG COMMUNITY
OF THE TAMALE METROPOLIS

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UDS/MDE/0020/14



UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature.....

Date.....

Candidate's Name: Sulemana Naziru

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the university for Development Studies

Supervisor's Signature.....

Date.....

Supervisor's NameMahama Shani



DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my wife Zainab and my two sons (Husni and Haaziq) as well as my ever reliable friend Sandow for their support during the course of the study



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I will like to thank almighty Allah profoundly for guiding me through this work successfully

My sincere thanks go to my parents, wife and children for guiding and supporting me through childhood till now. I will also like to extend my gratitude to the supervisor – Mr. Mahama Shani for making time out of his busy schedule to guide me in writing this study.

I am also very grateful to all the respondents who pour out their whole heartfelt experience about the study during the interview and the people of Zujung in general for their compliance.



REPORT SUMMARY

Zujung is located in the Tamale South Constituency and under the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly. It is located in the outskirts and southern part of the Metropolis and shares boundaries with Builpiela to the North-West and Lamashegu to the East.

Recently, the incidence of early marriage has been very high in Ghana. The project therefore, was designed to explore the effects of child marriage on the young people and the Zujung community at large and finding ways to reducing the incidence of child marriage in the community. The researcher adopted the action research strategy and the design method used in this study was the qualitative research design strategy. This design method dealt with identifying and finding solutions to social phenomena, thus, reducing the incidence of early marriage in the Zujung community. Both secondary and primary sources of data were used to elicit information from the metropolitan assembly, victims of early marriage, parents and opinion leaders, as well as reports and other documents written by people on the study area.

With respect to factors that lead to child marriage, it was evident that poor parenting, poverty, peer influence were the major causes of teenage pregnancy. Again, it was an evident that early marriage has several negative consequences on the people as well as the community in general. The study revealed that most of the teenage mothers drop out of school, most of the child brides suffer financial challenges, most child brides indulge in adultery and prostitution due to the fact that they do not love their husbands and again do not have the financial ability to cater for their basic needs, hence forcing them in to prostitution, maternal as well as infant mortality among child brides since they are not fully ready for child birth.



LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquire Immune Deficiency Syndrome
APA	American Psychological Association
BPS	Board of Pharmacy Specialist
CBS	Central Business District
EMS	Express Mail Services
FEDEX	Federal Express
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
HIV	Human Immune Virus
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IPPF	International Professional Practices Framework
LI	Legislative Instrument
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PHC	Population and Housing Census
UNCF	United Nations Children Fund



UNPFA

United Nations Population Fund

Activities

WBO

World Bank Organisation

YHFG

Youth Harvest Foundation Ghana



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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This chapter highlights on the background of the project including the perceived problem answering the what, and how of the topic under study. It further delineates the relevance of the study, research questions and objectives among others.

1.1 Background to the Study

In recent times, there has been an overwhelming call for general education and support to adolescents in developing countries throughout the world, particularly in response to the increasing rates of HIV infections among teenagers, domestic abuse meted out to young girls by their supposed husbands, dropout from schools as well as the reproductive health of the adolescents. However, the growing concern to previous research on teen marriage and programs has been limited to only the unmarried, with little or no concern given to the young people who are married during the teenage years (Bello, 2007).

Early marriage is said to be marriage under the age of 18 (USAID, 2009). It is also defined as the official or unofficial coming together (male and female) within the period of adolescence and before adulthood. Again, it is an experience for both boys and girls, even though girls are mostly the victims (UNICEF, Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse, 2016). Basically, child marriage is defined as marriage before the age of 18; this is not limited to only one country but the world as whole (United Nations, 2000).





Globally, marriage is considered as a period of celebrations and enjoyment as one has been able to fully develop into a complete adult. Unfortunately, the practice of early marriage throughout the world does not grant such celebrations to the couple. Most often, these marriages are imposition on the young people which limits their childhood and abuse of their fundamental right (Agbaje, 2013) s. Early marriage is prevalent in South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and in the Latin America and the Caribbean; where 48%, 42%, and 29% of women respectively, aged 15 - 24 marry before the age of 18. It is also common in parts of the Middle East, North Africa as well as the West and South African countries (Asrese, 2014).

It is estimated based on data from 60 Demographic and Health Surveys that, the region with the highest overall incidence of child marriage today, as estimated through the incidence of child marriage among women borne between 1985 and 1989, is South Asia where 45.4 percent of women born between those years were married below the age of 18. Sub-Saharan Africa is next, with 38.5 percent of women born in those years marrying below the age of 18. The Middle East and North Africa region comes next, with an incidence of 31.5 percent, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean, East Asia and the Pacific, and finally Europe and Central Asia with substantially lower incidences (Wodon, 2013).

The issue of early marriage is getting renewed attention among policy makers. This is because child marriage remains highly prevalent despite efforts by several non-governmental organisations and various governments globally and locally to discourage and even outlaw the practice. It creates a violation of the rights of the girls who are either willingly or forced to marry early, and it profoundly affects their lives through

substantially lower education prospects, health complications (such as vesico-vaginal fistulae, a higher likelihood of acquiring HIV/AIDS, and higher levels of infant mortality with early pregnancies), and higher risks of violence in the home as well as social exclusion (Quentin, 2012).

This study is relevant in diverse ways, including the finding of solutions to issues of early marriage in the Zujung community, among them is the fact that it will help to identify the various causes of the early marriage in the community. It will also reveal the challenges young people face in their early marriage life. Furthermore, the study will help to establish strategies that will seek to reduce the incidence of early marriage among the people of Zujung and further proffer measures to prevent the issues of early marriages in the community.

The study will serve as a guide document for Civil Society Organisation's and NGOs who work in the area of girls and early marriages. It will also add up to the existing work which has been carried out in the area of early marriages. It will also serve as a reference material for students who wish to carry out research in a similar field.

1.2 Perceived Problem

The constant prevalence of early marriage in Ghana more especially in the northern region could be as a result of yet to be identified challenges. Data from the Ghana Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2011 (MICS 2011) revealed that 6% of women from 15 to 49 years of age married before they attained 25 years old, whereas 27% of women married before 18 years of age. Also in the rural areas, the incidence of girls marrying before the age of 15 increased to 8%, whereas the urban settlements got to 4%, adding to





a total of 33% of girls marrying early (Owusu-Ekuful, 2015). In relation to the continuous surge of child marriage in the northern region, most of these teenagers are victims of school dropout, lacked skills enough to earn them jobs and are also vulnerable to sexual transmitted diseases. Again, they are mostly the major victims of domestic violence from their elderly husbands since they are usually been forced without love for their partners. Early marriage holds the girls back, denying them of their health and education as well as the chance to succeed in the society. Child marriage again serves as a stumbling block to the growth and development of their families, communities and the nation at large (YHFG, 2015).

1.3 Evidence

The northern region is the third highest with the issue of early marriage in Ghana, with about 36% prevalence of child marriage in the region (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey , 2006). Again, statistics from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) indicates that more than 30% of young girls married before the age of 18, 14% before the age of 15. Also the (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey , 2006) indicate that 26.4% of women in the northern region got married before their 18th birthday. Thus nearly one out of four women gets married while still a child. The situation worsened off after the 2011 data reveal of about 36% of women got married before the age of 15, while 27% married before the age of 18 (Astem, 2014).

Evidence about the issue of early marriage particularly in the Zujung community, with data collected from the bulpeila health center from the Zujung community shows that out of 260 recorded births for the first half of 2015, 74 of the expected mothers were between the ages of 15 to 19 representing 28% of girls marring before they attain

adulthood. The remaining half of the 2015 recorded 330 births with 122 recorded births of girls between the ages of 14 and 18, representing 36% early marriage incidence.

The issue of early marriage is inimical to child development. This is because, it denies the young girls the opportunity to be physically, psychologically, emotionally and financially ready for the challenges and responsibilities of early marriage and child bearing. Early marriage also increases social isolation and launches girls into a cycle of poverty, gender inequities, and higher risk of dying from complications of pregnancy and childbirth. Early marriage forces young girls to assume responsibilities and handle situations for which they are often physically and psychologically unprepared. The world today is in serious crises as to the ever growing nature of child marriage in our societies, hence the need for stakeholders involved and governments as well take the necessary measures to curb these menace. It is therefore by these reasons this study seeks to take an action by reducing the incidence of early marriage in the Zujung Community which is under Tamale Metropolitan Assembly.

1.4 Causes

Traditions and issues concerning marriage, in addition to the age limit desired for the selection of a spouse varies from one society to the other. Also, the impressions and duties of family vary across the globe and are always bound to grow (UNICEF, 2001).

Early marriage has insightful physical, intellectual, psychological and emotional effects and therefore an impediment to the progress of both boys' and girls' education and personal growth. For girls, in addition, it brings premature pregnancy and childbearing. The society also in one way or the other suffers as a whole when girls are not educated





and are not ready for their duties as mothers and contributions to the society. These bring challenges to the individual households and the society at large (Abebe, 2014).

The main reasons for early marriage in most families are the desire or the willingness to maintain the family's good name and societal reputation as well as status. In certain families, it is used as a measure of manhood and community status, and as a determinant of the success of such family. Again, a daughter's success depends on her making a good marriage and establishing a bond between other families in the community. Also, the fear of losing one's virginity and teenage pregnancy is prevalent among families, though not nearly as significant as the issue of the status of the family (Bogalech, 2007).

Furthermore, Poverty is another challenge which is constantly influencing child marriages in most communities. In a situation where there is much poverty, young girls are taken as a financial liability and are therefore married to rich men irrespective of their age but only for economic gains (Agbaje, 2013). Again, early marriage has been identified by many families as a way to ensure that young girls (wives) are protected by entrusting them under men control, and that, the children she bears becomes legal and belong to a family and may not be seen as bastards. Parents feel proud that their daughters are well protected and safer with legitimate male guardian (UNICEF, 2001).

1.5. Purpose of the study

This study is limited to only Zujung, which is a community under the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly. Drawing on Phenomenology and Critical Realism, the study seeks to understand how the community views marriage, including the phenomenon of early marriage, and possibly child marriage. Again the study intended to examine

women's experiences of marriage, how they got in marriage, the challenges of child /early marriage and ways of reducing the incidence of early marriage in the Zujung community.

1.6. Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study was to address the various causes and challenges of early marriage in the Zujung community, hence, reducing the incidence of early marriage in the area.

Specific objectives are as follows:

- 1.6.1 To ascertain the potentials of the youth this will contribute to the development of the community.
- 1.6.2 To examine the various causes of early marriage in the community.
- 1.6.3 To assess the negative consequences of early marriage that are faced by the young people of the community
- 1.6.4 To identify strategies to clamp down on the incidence of early marriage in the community

1.7. Research Questions

The achievement of the objectives is based on finding answers to the following research questions:

- 1.7.1 What are the potentials of the youth in the Zujung Community to be enhanced for the development of the community?



1.7.2 What is perceived as early marriage by the people of the community and the negative consequence of early marriage on the younger generation as well as the Zujung community as a whole?

1.7.3 What are the available opportunities that exist in the community for girls to involve in?

1.7.4 What are the relevant and available strategies identified to help reduce the incidence of early marriage in the community?

1.8. Significance of the Study

The significance of this research study is that it addresses the various questions surrounding the issues of early marriage in the Zujung community, among them is the fact that it helps to identify the various causes of the early marriage in the community. It is identified that many families have the desire or the willingness to maintain the family's good name and societal reputation as well as status, hence forcing their wards into unwanted marriages. Again, in a situation where there is much poverty, young girls are taken as a financial liability and are therefore married to rich men irrespective of their age but only for economic gains. Another significance of the study is that, it also reveals the hidden pains and challenges that the young people involved are facing. Early marriage has insightful physical, intellectual, psychological and emotional effects and therefore an impediment to the progress of both boys' and girls' education and personal growth. For girls, in addition, it brings premature pregnancy and childbearing. Furthermore, the study tries to establish strategies to help reduce the incidence of early marriage among the people of Zujung and further lay out measures to prevent the issues of early marriages in the school community.



CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a working definition of various concepts relevant to the study area. This will allow an easy and effective discussion of various ways and means by which early marriages can be reduced in our communities, especially at Zujung. A search will be made into the works of various people on the causes, effects and ways of reducing early marriages. Different people have done some research in related issues, whereas this research is aimed at reducing the incidence of early marriage in the Zujung community, a suburb of Tamale Metropolitan Assemblies.

2.2 Global View of Early Marriage

The world as a whole has failed to protect the rights of the marginalized group due to the continuous neglect of the challenges facing the vulnerable young people in our societies. This mainly occurs in parts of South Africa, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. Majority of young people are being muzzled into early marriage, which are as a result of negligence and discrimination against the vulnerable young generation. Several laws have been adopted by most countries to stop the menace but have failed to yield a significant result (IPPF, 2006, P.2).

2.3. Definition of Early Marriage

Basically, child marriage is defined as marriage before the age of 18; this is not limited to only one country but the world as whole (United Nations, 2000). Although several countries have adopted and passed into laws accepting 18years as the constitutional age



for marriage, most of the times are not applied due to societal, economical, and traditional challenges that seem to propagate the practice. Various challenging elements such as poverty, low level of education as well as poor healthy conditions, are directly linked with higher rates of child marriage (Feldman-Jacobs, 2011). Whereas child marriage varies in forms and in terms of causes, there is one challenge that is relevant in addressing the issue of child marriage. Irrespective of the victim being a boy or a girl, early marriage is an abuse of the right of the child. Under the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as other instruments, every child has the right to free and full approval to a marriage (UNICEF, 2001).

In recent times, the emerging countries have continued to abandon millions of child brides which in turns create overwhelming effects on the child, most of them just above puberty are prevented from accessing health care services, education and economic opportunities. Good numbers of them are engaged in roles and errands as house wives and mothers with little or no support (IPPF, 2006, p. 6).

2.4. Early/Child Marriage in Ghana

Interestingly, Ghana is among the countries noted for high incidence of early marriage globally. Averagely among four girls, one is being married before the age 18 (Youth Harvest Foundation Ghana, 2015). Also, the Ghana Demographic Health Survey in 2008 made a revelation of about 25% of women between the ages of 20-24 were married under the age of 19. Again, the 2011 Multi Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) rated Ghana around 28% and 6% for engaging in early marriage at the age of 18 and 15 respectively. Also at the regional level, various past researches indicates that the northern sector of Ghana has the highest incidence of child marriage, with 50% recorded

in the Upper East, 39% and 36% with Upper West and Northern regions respectively. Categorically, the statistics shows that child marriage is a major delinquent situation in Ghana and particularly in the northern regions and should therefore be addressed (YHFG, 2015).

2.5 Causes of Early Marriage

Child marriage has many causes: cultural, social, economic and religious. In many cases, a mixture of these causes results in the imprisonment of children in marriages without their consent. Marriage deals with issues of customs and traditions which consider the required age and manner of choosing a partner depending on various societies and family duties, organisations, culture, one's self as well as the general tasks of the society. There are different views and opinions concerning the role of the family in the world today, and the situation continuously evolved (Boydon, 1993).

Poverty is one of the major causes of early marriage. In some societies, child marriages are considered as a financial endurance approach in order to live a meaningful life in their societies. In a situation whereby a family is financially incapable, teenage girls are considered as a liability and are married to an elderly whom they think is capable of shouldering the economic burden of the family. These practices are mostly in common Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East and South Asian countries (Rwezaura, 1994).

Current study by the UNICEF in West Africa revealed that financial challenges are among the reasons causing the rise in child marriages in the continent as well increasing the rate of child marriage among the societies that were not one way or the other involved in the practice (Assani, 2000). In most situations, young men lack the financial power to marry which intends causes delay in their girl counterparts, hence the





danger of teenage pregnancy is feared among parents who eventually give out their daughters to the elderly and rich men in the community (UNICEF, 2000).

Another major factor causing early/child marriage is that of the intention of the parents to protect the teenage girl not to have children out of wedlock, hence they are kept under a man's control and serve him as a husband in the man's home. In effect, these will guarantee the rightfulness of the children she bears (Caldwell, 1997). Many families believe that their daughters are safer in the hands of a responsible man who will guide and cater for her as in a case of major war torn areas and conflict zones whereby young girls are raped and abused. In some part of Africa, girls are married to militia in order that they may be protected from enemies attack and to guard their family dignity and property (Watch, 2014).

In addition, teenage girls are given out for marriage in order to prevent the girl child from engaging in premarital sex. Several communities and families reward virginity afore marriage and consequently play a major role in informing the decision to marry the girls early enough before their virginity is broken. It is therefore by these reasons many communities around the world indulge in the female circumcision to reduce the feeling sensation for sex at a younger age. In other communities, it is abominable for a girl to be self-reliant during the teenage years. Even though women are accorded with the needed respect and value, they are also expected to be submissive to their husbands and in-laws for them to be protected. For instance, in Kenya, violence against disobedient wives is generally accepted (Muthengi, 2000).

Research in East Africa conducted by HIV/AIDS researchers also revealed that orphanages and caregivers for the young girls often marry the girls to men since they



find it hard to cater for them. Other nations involved in conflicts and wars are much affected and the result is that, there is an increase in child prostitution, child slavery, and increase in the numbers of street children, child labor, and child trafficking total desertion. The fact remains that these issues increase the tendency of early marriage in those communities. In Burundi to be precise, girls are married out as early enough to prevent and reserve their family honor (Black, 1998).

Early/child marriage in certain countries are inconsistent with regards to laws regulating the marriage. In some particular cases, child marriage is frowned upon in the civil or common laws of the state, whilst it is largely accepted by “customary and religious laws and practice”. It is also more difficult to address in a situation whereby the colonial masters brought legislations to curb the menace but still allowed the customary practice to continue, and at a point were categorized and made as laws. In Benin for instance, Article 68 of the 1931 “Coutumier du Dahomey” directing customary marriage indicates that: “a marriage is not resolved by the interested parties, but by their father, or in his absence by his elder brother or by the head of the family” (WGFM, 2000).

2.6. Challenges of Early Marriage

Early marriage is indeed one of the most critical human right and development challenge in recent times. The issue of early marriage does not only affect young mothers but also their family, communities, economies as well as nations globally. Among many damaging effects of child marriage include; domestic violence, vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, withdrawal from school, maternal and infant mortality and basic human rights abuse (Pelayo, 2015, p. 13).



Orthodox believes about early/child marriage remains resolute with a perception that child marriage is an optimistic communal custom with social and economic benefits. On the contrary, various research works done on the health and societal repercussions indicates a much alarming consequences. The world today has generally accepted that child marriage is health threats that violates global human rights laws and conventions and thus seek to promote the growth and welfare of the affected people in the society (Thomas, 2006, p. 9).

Several communities across the world associate early /child marriage to poverty. In the sense that it has emotional impact more specifically on the poorest and vulnerable in the society, hence, increase in poverty among generations. Early mothers incline to bear more children with little or no income opportunities. It also occurs that early mothers are left to suffer abuse from families and the community as a whole due to early divorce or the death of their husbands. In such circumstance, young mothers are at risk of domestic violence, economically handicapped and vulnerable to disease. This contributes to most fathers marrying their daughters at a young age with the notion that it helps provide protection and security for the family (Thomas, 2006, p. 15).

Education as well as social growth is another major sector several child brides are denied when they marry early. Girls are sometimes pulled out of school when they attain sexual maturity to undertake domestic chores and particularly for marriage. This occurs in most parts of Asia, Africa, and in other parts of Middle Eastern countries. In these areas, women's roles are perceived to be only as daughters, mothers and wives, and are limited only to the domestic duties, hence forth are denied education and employment outside the home which is considered as needless (Thomas, 2006, p. 16).



Generally, girls are biologically vulnerable to acquiring HIV as their sex organs are not properly enclosed and easily penetrated during intercourse. Further on, girls are embedded with socio-economic inequalities which serve as a multiple threat of getting infected with the HIV. Unfortunately, child marriage increases the chance of married girls' infection since they do not have a say and control of their husbands, who in most cases indulge in external marital affairs, and may contract the disease outside their homes and tend to infect their powerless and vulnerable young wives (Bagalech, 2008, p. 5).

Early marriage can also lead to early death of the child bride. Reasons been that, child bride gave birth at a time their bodies are not physically and psychologically matured enough to withstand the pain of pregnancy and delivery. Globally, majority of maternal mortality cases are the main cause of death among pregnant mothers. Child mothers under age 15 stand more at risk of death than old women. Also, the issue of infant mortality is another challenge facing child brides. According to World Health Organisation, children born to child brides are around 75% of reported cases of infant mortality. Those who survive too are not left out, are either born premature or low birth weight (BPS, 2010)

2.7 Curbing Early Marriage

Various activities and strategies are required to reduce the incidence and consequence of early/child marriage. Strategies that will ensure that the rights of the child brides are reinstated as well as preventive measures intended at the society as a whole. Parents and the younger generations actively involved in the early marriage

canker must be made to be aware of the consequence and are encouraged to resist the practice (UNICEF, 2001).

Global agencies, NGOs and several countries labor to curb the growing negative effects of child marriage, such as illiteracy, disease, hunger, poverty, as well as human rights and gender related issues. In recent times, there are emerging programs aimed at curbing menace of early marriage throughout the world. These programs are great gauge, school and incentive based programs that involve cooperation among state ministries, multilateral organisations such as the World Bank, as well as specialist from the education and health sectors. Again scholarships, subventions, and cash enticements have been the major focus of NGOs in collaboration with governments and the use of the school systems (Pelayo, 2015, p. 18). In order to reduce the incidence of early marriage, several issues need to be dealt with. These include;

2.7.1. Addressing the Cultural and Traditional Values and Norms

Both customs and tradition are one of the major factors contributing to the high incidence of child marriage in our societies. In many communities, most families are ignorant about the negative effects of early marriage, which has led to the continuation of the practice through generations. In a situation whereby families understand the dangers of the practice, they still face the communal compression to accept and condone the act. There is therefore the need to stop these customary and traditional norms in order to save the society. These could be achieved through youth empowerment, which is by informing and educating them about the negative consequence of child marriage to them as individuals and to the society at large. Also, organise sensitisation platforms



such as the Savanna Signatories and Child Bride organisations to help address the situation of child marriage (Pathfinder, 2006, p. 48).

2.7.2. Education for Empowerment and Intellectual Development

The development of the younger generations, absolutely rely on acquisition of knowledge and skills, in order to live a meaningful life in the society. Families must be made to send their children to school and making sure that they attain basic education, as it is their right. This will at a long run help the family and the individual in terms of knowledge and skill acquisition as well as economic social benefits. For that matter will create an automatic delay of early/child marriage among the youth in the society (Nzomo, 2000)

2.7.3 Support for Physical Health of the Youth

Basically, this is aimed at sensitizing the youth on sexual and reproductive health which will enhance upon the knowledge of the youth about the dangers involved in indulging on premarital sex, reproduction as well as early marriage. “Information should replace ignorance plus early marriage” as a policy of premarital sex prevention. It is common to see many societies rejecting reproduction and sexual education among adolescent boys and girls for the purpose of religious and cultural beliefs, with the fear that it promotes sexual relationships and pregnancy. In deed, such misconceptions are mischievous, and do not promote early pregnancy. In fact, relevant information concerning the issue revealed that in societies where there is no sex education, majority of the youth involved themselves in unsafe sexual relations which largely lead to early pregnancy as well as acquiring sexual transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS and gonorrhoea (UNICEF, 2001, p. 13).





2.7.4. Law Enforcement

It is necessary to ensure that the laws are enforced globally to prevent and discourage early marriage in our societies. There must be cooperation between law enforcing agencies and stakeholders to allow the existing laws work effectively. Also, state institutions must be resourced well enough to fight crime such as early marriage and the abuse and violations of human rights of the younger generation. Even though in some particular communities, parents do not adhere to the threat by state institutions against child marriage, they are most at times arrested and prosecuted in courts and sanctioned if guilty. It is therefore essential for government to intervene by providing the necessary logistics to facilitate the work of the law enforcing agencies. With more emphasis on the basic human rights of the child as well as implementation of the family law (Pathfinder, 2006, p. 49).

2.7.5 Economic Empowerment

Young people especially girls and women, can only live safely in their communities if they are economically empowered and secured. Financial assistance to the youth may help motivate families to reduce the incidence of child marriage and reconsider their daughters as a treasure and blessing within the family instead of a liability to the family. Supporting child mothers and teenage girls with financial packages such as loan schemes, microfinance and local savings would help them to be independent and cater for their needs rather than relying on families or husbands. Again, guiding girls to learn about banking and finance and be able to create accounts in order to save their income would also guarantee their future economically hence empowering them financially (Girls Not Bride, 2016).

2.8 Various Related Theories On Early/Child Marriage

2.8.1 Sociological Explanations Of Early Marriage

First of all, girl brides are preferred choice in the local communities because of the fact that they are believed to have a longer period of fertility before them, hence can be able to bear more children and are also assumed to be obedient and submissive. Again, young brides are more likely with little or no experience, be willing to learn and serve their husbands and also learn the rules and custom of the household at large perfectly (Goody, 1990). Dixon (1971) related the historic occurrences of child brides across the world to the existence of clans and lineages which support newly married couples financially and socially, and are therefore pressurising them to bear children to sustain the lineage. By contrast, the traditional emphasis on individual responsibility in the western family system means that newly married couples were expected to be able to provide themselves and their children, which by coincidence causes marital delays while the potential groom and bride acquire knowledge and skills, resources as well as maturity to manage an independent household.

Another social enlightenment of early marriage comes from the view of family honor and female or girl's purity. Ortner (Ortner, 1978) states that, many communities throughout the world rely on the dignity and purity of their women as a family pride and honor. The family therefore in trying to protect the honor involved in marrying their girls at a very tender age. According to Kandiyoty (1998), he defines this family honor as a piece of communities with patrilocal and patrilineal surrounding communal groups in parts of Africa, Middle East as well as South and East Asia. Largely, this family honor depends on the virginity and behaviour of the young girls in the family



2.8.2 Theory of Change

This theory according to Karolinekraft (2014) has seven stages that are very significant in its relationships with one another and agreed that it shows a broader perspective of how transformation will ensue. The various levels include:

Problem: To begin with, it is important to appreciate and comprehend the challenger of early/child marriage, to understand the various forms of child marriage and the stakeholders involved as well as being aware of how essential it is to solve the problem of early marriage.

Catalysing strategy: This strategy recognizes the need to solve the problem of early marriage using a comprehensive outline of development and human rights to realize gender equality and put an end to early/child brides. Child marriage is a global phenomenon that requires global attention in order to address the canker.

Strategies: generally, the most common ways of reducing the incidence of early marriage deals with women or girl's empowerment, creating services, mobilising communities and families as well as creating and executing laws and policies. Fortunately, these strategies are related and generally supporting, hence the need to bring together the stakeholders to end child marriage.

Outcomes: The forth level is the outcomes level, which seeks to address the result of change that is targeted at girls, families and communities, service as well as laws and policies. For instance, if the young girls are made to know of their rights and also acquire skills to support themselves, they will be able to resist early or forced marriage in their communities. Again, creating the awareness of families and the communities as a whole through the media, about the negative consequence of child brides would make





them stop the practice, hence, reducing the incidence of early marriage. Furthermore, laws and policies are the main strategies employed to improve upon services, social norms and girl's empowerment.

Results: The results, on the other hand, “reflect the demonstrated changes in behavior on the part of individuals, families and communities, program implementers, and law enforcement officials as a consequence of surrounding changes in attitudes and conditions.” Depending on the given region and context, “different combinations of the results will be necessary to prevent child marriage and support married girls.”

Impact: A lasting impact is achieved when girls are eventually in the position to choose when and whom to marry or even not to marry at all; it constitutes “a shift in decision-making power to girls and new social norms.”

Vision: Girls not Brides do not only aim to end child marriages before the age of 18, but seek to “ensure that [children] acquire the skills, connections and capacities that child marriage impedes, and have the opportunity and freedom to thrive.” In order to achieve this, gender equality is essential.

2.8.3 Theory of Empowerment

According to topical study on rising gender equality by Inglehart and Norris (2003), some influences that promote female empowerment were discovered. Among the theories identified, research found the following three to be relevant to this study.

Socioeconomic development: Activities are needed to empower girls and enable them to exercise their rights, for example through programs which equip girls with training, skills, information, as well as the provision of safe spaces and support networks. Supporting child mothers and teenage girls with financial packages such as



loan schemes, microfinance and local savings would help them to be independent and cater for their needs rather relying on families or husbands. Again, guiding girls to learn about banking and finance and be able to create accounts in order to save their income would also guarantee their future economically hence empowering them financially.

Historical legacies stemming from a society's customs and traditions: Creating the circumstances in which such subjects can be addressed, especially in traditional rural societies and ethnic groups where early marriage is common, is a vital pre-condition for hastening its end. Advocacy is needed at all levels of society, but particularly at household and community level, to influence attitudes. The benefits of postponing marriage for wives, husbands, families and communities need to be shared with religious and community leaders, while those who exert role model influence, as well as government personnel, need to be engaged.

Institutional design factors: This literature holds that variation in institutional characteristics and mediates mass support for women's empowerment and the pool of women eligible for political office in ways that either enable or constrain women's attainment of independence and political leadership in their communities.

2.9. Conceptual Analysis

The following concepts as used in the study is explained bellow

ADVOCACY – At its simplest definition, advocacy means 'speaking up' for oneself or others (Forbat, 2005). Advocacy is also defined as stating a case, influencing decisions, ending assumptions, getting better services, being treated equally, being included,

protecting from abuse, redressing the balance of power, becoming more aware of and exercising rights' (Atkinson, 2005).

CHILD MARRIAGE - Child marriage is defined as marriage before the age of 18 either legally or illegally married (UNICEF, 2015).

COMMUNITY – A group of people living in the same defined area sharing the same basic values, organisation and interests (Hopkins, 2006).

DOMESTIC-VIOLENCE – This is defined as abuse enacted by one or both partners involved in a romantic (LAWS, 2017).

MARRIAGE -the state of being united as spouses in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law (Webster, 2017).

POPULATION – The whole number of people or inhabitants in a country or region. Also, population is the total of individuals occupying an area or making up a whole (Webster, 2017).

POVERTY – The state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions (Webster, 2017).

TEENAGE PREGNANCY – Defined as usually a teenage girl within the ages of 13-19, becoming pregnant (UNICEF, 2008).

VESICO-VAGINAL FISTULA – Vesico-vaginal fistula (VVF) is a subtype of female urogenital fistula (UGF). Is an abnormal fistulous tract extending between the bladder and the vagina that allows the continuous involuntary discharge of urine into the vaginal vault (Spurlock, 2016).



CHAPTER THREE

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the research process. It explains the type of research design used and justifies its usage. The community profile as well as sampling and sampling techniques used are also explained and justified, how data was collected, managed and processed have also been explained. Reliability of the study as well as the ethical issues considered have all been captured in this chapter. The intervention strategy employed and how the strategy was consummated.

3.2. Research Design and Strategies

This study is an action research strategy. According to O'Brien (1998), "Action research...aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to further the goals of social science simultaneously. Thus, there is a dual commitment in action research to study a system and concurrently to collaborate with members of the system in changing it in what is together regarded as a desirable direction. Accomplishing this twin goal requires the active collaboration of researcher and client, and thus it stresses the importance of co-learning as a primary aspect of the research process."

The research design used in this study is the qualitative research design. This design method deals with finding solutions to social phenomena. It seeks to create the opportunity for people to understand the community in which they live and why things occur as they are. It is more interested in the social way of the world and therefore



intends to find meaning to; why people behave the way they do, how opinions and attitudes are formed, how people are affected by the events that go around them as well as why and how cultures and traditions have developed in the manner they have (Bervely, 2007). Both secondary and primary sources of data were used to elicit information from the metropolitan assembly, victims of early marriage, parents and teachers, opinion leaders, as well as reports and other documents written by people on the study area.

3.3. Population

The study was carried out in Zujung, a suburb of Tamale under the Tamale metropolitan assembly. The Tamale Metropolitan Assembly was established by legislative instrument (L.I. 2068). At present, it is one of the six Metropolitan Assemblies in the country and the only Metropolis in the three regions in Northern Ghana, namely: Upper East, Upper West and Northern regions.

3.4 Location and Size

Zujung is located in the Tamale South Constituency and under the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly. It is located in the outskirts and southern part of the metropolis and shares boundaries with Builpiela to the North-West and Lamashegu to the East. Zujung is strategically located in the Tamale metropolis and by this location, the community has a market potential for local goods from the agricultural and commercial sectors from the other districts in the region and the southern part of Ghana. By its location, the community stands to gain in trade from some neighboring districts such as East and Central Gonja districts. The Community has a total estimated land size of 46.9sqkm (MLG, 2010). Geographically, Zujung lies between latitude 9°16 and 9° 34 North and



longitudes 0° 36 and 0° 57 west. The community is considered as one of the rural communities under the metropolis, and still lacks basic social and economic infrastructure such as good road network, school blocks, hospitals, market and recreational centers (MLG, 2010).

3.5 Demographic Features and Population Size

Historically, the Northern Regions of the country had vast land cover with smaller population sizes. This area began experiencing high population growth after people migrated from other areas from Tamale central communities such as Lamashegu, Aboabo, Hausa Zongo, Sankpagla in the central Gonja district and many more. According to the 2010 PHC, the population of the Zujung community is about 3,252. The numbers of males are 1,109 (34.1%) and the number of females is 2,143 (65.9%). This implies that there are more females than males in the community.

3.6 Economic Activities

Agriculture is the dominant occupation of the people of the community, accounting for about 62% of the total employment of the people. The major crops grown are millet, sorghum, maize, rice, groundnuts, pepper, and livestock such as cattle, sheep, goats, etc. Poultry especially guinea fowl production is quite significant. Yields are very low as compared to other parts of the metropolis due to poor soils, unrealistic rainfalls, etc. Also, farmers who are not able to get enough organic manure or purchase chemical fertilizers normally get low yields.

The community has no large scale manufacturing industry. Industrial sector in the community is characterized by small-scale food processing, craft and manufacturing



firms. Examples include smock weaving, pottery, blacksmithing, and cotton ginning/spinning/weaving. There are a few auto-mechanic and spraying workshops in the community. Some metal fabrications are being undertaken by wayside welders and carpentry.

3.7 Literacy and Education

Education is a key policy of every government to provide adequate resources and an environment that is safe for learning and training its future human resources. It is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to fully develop individual capacities for societal well-being (Sagor, 2016). In the 2010 Population and Housing Census, Literacy referred to the respondent's ability to read and write in any language.

3.8 Sampling

A sample may be defined as the segment of the population that is selected for investigation. It is a subset of the population. The method of selection may be based on probability or a non probability approach (Richard, 2009).

3.8.1 Sampling Strategies

This study adopted the non probability sampling method. With this type of sampling, the probability of the selection of each respondent is not known. It is often used in small scale research and generally easier to set up and less easy to generalise in statistical terms (Richard, 2009, p. 22). Purposive and snowball sampling procedures were used in selecting respondents for the study. The purposive sampling technique helped to purposefully select respondents who can really provide the needed information for the study. After purposefully selecting and interviewing the initial subject, the researcher



used the snowball sampling procedure to ask for assistance from the subject to help identify people with a similar trait of interest. The researcher then observed the nominated subjects and continued in the same way until fifteen (15) respondents were interviewed.

With the purposive sampling approach, the researcher makes judgements about interest. It is often used when looking at specific phenomena where characteristics may be narrow, easily defined, and where unusual (Richard, 2009, p. 23). The purposive approach was employed to interview the victims, parents and opinion leaders of the community.

With the snowball sampling technique, the researcher makes initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the study topic and uses these to establish contacts with others. With the snowball sampling approach, the study identified a victim of child bride in the Zujung community who intends led the researcher to other victims.

3.8.2 Sample Unit

This consists of individuals who were interviewed, which included victims of early marriage, parents and others who may have relevant information for the study.

3.8.3 Sample Size

The sample size for the research is 15 respondents. These include: 10 victims (teenage mothers), three parents and two opinion leaders.

3.9 Intervention

The major intervention strategy used was Advocacy and Sensitization. The researcher relied on female role models, the clergy, musicians and NGO's to disseminate information to the people.

Female role models were made to visit women groups to encourage them not to take the back seat but to be conscious of their rights, health and the several challenges facing early mothers which are hindering the development of the girls as well as the community. The clergy was persuaded to include the negative consequences of child bride on the individual and the community at large in their sermons so as to appeal to the conscience of opinion leaders who mostly are men and served as decision makers in the community. Selected musicians in collaboration with "Dance4life", a Netherlands based NGO in Ghana were made to lead the crusade in the awareness creation of the dangers in early sex as well as early marriage to the young people. Students were made to dramatize the situation to send message to the school and the community about the negative consequences of early marriage as far as the development of the individual and the community is concerned.

3.10 Data Collection

The study relied on both primary and secondary data from Zujung. An interview method (semi-structured) was employed through the use of an interview guide in eliciting information (primary) from respondents. The questions asked during the interview centered on the four research objectives of the study. The interview sessions were carried out on one on one basis. The study also relied on relevant documents, registers, reports, newspapers among others to elicit secondary information. The researcher used a



mobile phone voice recorder to record the discussion with the respondents for later transcription; this was to ensure fast and efficient data collection. The interviews had an average duration of seven minutes.

3.11 Reliability

The qualitative approach has most of the time been subjected to criticism about issues of reliability because of its subjective nature. The researcher introduced the inter-rater reliability measure in the present study. In this process, two other parties (M.A holders in Leadership and development) familiarized themselves with the raw data by listening to the interviews and helping with the transcription process. These two later assessed the results for consistency.

3.12 Ethical Consideration

This study followed accepted principles regarding research. Throughout the process, the anonymity of respondents was maintained and this even made most of the respondents to open up and give out relevant information. The study conformed strictly to the American Psychological Association (A.P.A 2009) ethical guidelines such as informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. Data collected was kept safe and secured under password protection.



CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

Chapter four seeks to explain how data collected was analysed. Since this research is designed qualitatively, the analysis of its findings was done by qualitative data analytical strategies. These strategies are the variety of progression and procedure whereby the study moved from the qualitative data that have been collected into some form of explanation, understanding or clarification of the people experience. It is usually based on a revealing philosophy. (Nigatu, 2009, p. 24). Data was analysed using thematic content analysis.

4.2 Thematic Content Analysis

According to (Yardley, 2004) thematic analysis is aimed to gain an understanding of older people's perceptions of falls prevention advice and how best to design communications that will encourage an older person to prevent falls. 'Thematic analysis revealed that participants interpreted 'falls prevention' as a means of hazard reduction, use of aids and restriction of activity...advice about falling was often depicted as common sense. This presents the analysis of the qualitative data in order to answer the research questions. It involved the description and breakdown of the data and a detailed discussion (comparisons, similarities and differences) of the data with respect to findings on the research questions. The present study sought to reduce the incidence of early marriage in the Zujung community, a suburb of Tamale.





First, familiarization with the data was essential for the generation of initial ideas. This was achieved through the process of transcription, reading and re-reading through the transcribed data. Initial codes were generated in a systematic fashion throughout the entire data. The coding phase involves the organisation of data into meaningful clusters: this is essential to qualitative analysis (Nigatu, 2009, p. 26).

The study also deals with the reviewing of the themes for “internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity”. Further analysis went on to refine the themes. This resulted in distinct classifications of each theme. The final stage of the analysis was characterized by the write-up of the report. This stage witnessed the careful selection of intense citations and examples towards answering the research questions and comparing it with empirical literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This systematic framework was adopted because the study aims at reducing the incidence of early marriage in the community.

4.3 Analysis of Related Theories of the Study

In view of the sociological theory in chapter two of this study, it is understood that child brides are much preferred due to the assumption that they have a much longer period of fertility before them, hence can bear more children and are also assumed to be obedient and submissive. Again, young brides are more likely with little or no experience, willing to learn and serve their husbands and also learn the rules and custom of the household at large perfectly. According to most of the respondents, **“most of us (parents) assume that the role of a girl is to give birth and serve their husbands. Because of that they are given out in marriage immediately the girls are 12 to 13 years old. If you don’t marry her out she will end up running out for men which will bring shame on to the family.** The ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection launched a National



Campaign to end Child Marriage in Ghana. In 2014, five national dialogues were held for a total of 450 participants including media houses to enable them to use their platforms to engender discussions on issues of Child marriage. Among the issues discussed included safeguard the security, safety and protection of the rights of the vulnerable in society, especially the girl child and women, promote effective child development in all communities, especially deprived areas, protect children against violence, abuse and exploitation and as well as ending the incidence of early marriage in Ghana.

Furthermore, the theory of empowerment in chapter two also unveil various ways to empower the child bride to live meaningfully in the community and these included; socio-economic development, historical legacies stemming from a society's customs and traditions, and institutional design factors to help curb the challenges facing the child brides. The researcher made a discovery during data collection which reveals the lack of economic empowerment to the child bride in the community of which they (respondents) alleged that, **“poverty is the main cause of early marriage in this community; we don't have jobs to cater for our basic economic needs and are therefore compelled to marry early”**. The respondents also alluded to the fact that there was a little support from the government, NGO's and stakeholders to protecting the girl child and addressing the challenges facing the child bride in the community, **“we as young girls do not have people to fight for us in this community therefore our rights are violated and hence are forced in to early marriages. The government should enforce the laws of the state so that parents who are negligent and forced**

their children into early and unwanted marriages are punished to serve as deterrent to others in the community” (respondent).

The government of Ghana through parliament passed the Domestic Violence Act 2007 (DVA) to provide protection for women/child brides from domestic violence. A fund was also established by government funded through voluntary contributions from government, individuals, NGO’s and the private sector. Moneys are also approved by Parliament for payment into the Fund. It is coordinated by the ministry of women and children’s affairs with technical assistance from the Victims of Violence Management Board. The programme was designed to prohibit all forms of violence that could be meted against women and children. Victims receive free medical support and counseling. Legal aid is also provided to aid them in court.

Government again came out with the program of “Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty” The programme was started in 2006 and is co-ordinated by the ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment. It is funded by government of Ghana and UNICEF. The programme is delivered by several ministries and departments some of which are: Manpower, Youth and Employment, Department of Social Welfare, Food and Agriculture, Health, Local Government and Rural Development, Women and Children’s Affairs etc. It was designed to provide financial assistance to the extremely poor and vulnerable people in Ghana. Women, child brides and polygamous households are some of the preferred recipients. It is aimed at improving basic needs, health and education of the beneficiaries.



4.4 Findings

Below are some findings made by the study, about the young people (boys and girls) of the community.

4.4.1 Economic Potentials of the Young People in the Community

Farming and trading were the predominant sources of income among the people of the community. Most of the young girls were engaged in learning hair dressing, dress making and petty trading, whereas their male counterparts were involved in carpentry, motor mechanic and farming. One of the respondents alluded as follow, **“as for me the job that is available in this community for people to engage in particularly when there are few job opportunities, but we usually send the boys to learn carpentry, and motor mechanic which will help them and I. As for the girls, they are involved in petty trading, tailoring as well as hair dressing. This will help them to be independent and are always engaged in so that they do not loiter around”** (Respondent). In the opinion of the respondents, this potential can only be unearthed if governments and NGOs could come to their aid in terms of finance which will enable them acquire related tools and equipment to enhance productivity. **“Initially some people came around to assist the young people (youth employment) by engaging them in dressmaking and hair dressing, it is my wish that if they could come back to recruit the girls so that they will be engaged in it and will also help them leave a meaningful life in the community”** (Respondent). The opinion expressed by the respondent is marginally true but contrary to that view, the researcher thinks that the people themselves can organise on their own ways to help improve their standards of living. Apart from the youth employment services, apparently the abundance of land in



the community if put into proper use, will help crop produce such as grains, cereals and tubers for the development of the community.

The interview further reveals that if the girls receive financial assistance to engage in this petty trading and skill acquisition it will help improve their living conditions and that of their parents and the community at large, **“some of the young girls’ parents cannot afford to look after them so if we get financial support such as credit facilities from the micro finance companies we will be able to live independent and also look after our parents” (Respondent).**

Furthermore, during the interview, most of the respondents were unable to identify the specific opportunity which young people with specific skills in the community could engage in. However some of the respondents think girls in the community could take advantage of the availability of arable land to engage in farming especially maize, cotton and groundnuts as well as engage in dressmaking and hair dressing **“actually, there is no specific work or job opportunity in this community by which the young people with specific skills can be employed in except farming and this has led to several of them getting married early since they are not able to fend for themselves” (Respondent).**

The researcher observed that the young people in the community could engage themselves in farming of crops and rearing of animals. Guinea fowls are on the high demand in the Tamale metropolis, and young people could jump on to the opportunity to rear them in commercial quantities. The researcher again observed the abundance of many “sheanut” and “dawadawa” trees in the community which the girls could engage



in for the production of sheabutter and dawadawa. These two products are highly consumed by the people of the region and in recent times have been exported to other parts of the region as well as outside the country. This, if taken seriously by the people, will help improve the lives of the people as well as the development of the community.

4.4.2 Early Marriage and its Causes in the Zujung Community

All the respondents when asked as to whether there is early marriage in the area or not, responded affirmatively. It was therefore deduced that child marriage is not new to the people of Zujung. They acknowledged the existence of child marriage in the area but regrettable, they should say. There were however different views by respondents as to the causes of early/child marriage in the Zujung community.

Among the causes mentioned during the interview included; disrespect and disobedience towards parents as most of these young people are no longer forced into marriage in the community, **“children who do not listen or obey to the advice of the parents, when she is sent to school she won’t go, when asked her to do anything she won’t obey, and when a man touches her small she will easily fall for him which will lead to early pregnancy hence early marriage” (Respondent)**. The researcher is of the view that the alluded cause stated by the respondent is largely blamable on the parents. It is the duty of the parents to ensure that proper care and control is taken over their children since they are the bread winners of the family. Strict measures must be made to ensure that children adhere to the rules and regulations of the parents and should not be allowed to do things on their own way.

On another occasion, some also stated poverty as the main cause of early marriage in the community. In fact, this cause (poverty) cuts across all the respondent statements during





the interview. As some of them stated, “ **suffering from poverty is the usual cause of early marriage in this community, if you a parent are very poor and cannot take care of your children especially the girls, you are compelled to marry them out to men who can actually take good care of them**” (Respondent).

In other situations, some of the parents give out their children out in marriage in fulfillment of either a promise been made to a friend or a kind gesture towards a friend or chief. “**most parents assume that immediately the daughter is 12 or 13 years old if you don’t marry her out she will end up running out for men which will bring shame to the family, because of these some give out their children in marriage to fulfill a promise they made to a friend or a chief so that they will be part of the royal family**” (respondent).

Another purported cause of early marriage in the Zujung community is the act of fostering of girls in the area. Majority of the girls in the community are living in foster homes with their aunties, uncles or grandparents. Many of these foster parents leave their own children to attend school whilst the fostered child remained in the house to do the house chores. They bear all labor and difficult tasks in the house and are mostly denied food when they are not able to complete a task. They are subjected to physical assault and abuse of their rights and these forces most of them to seek to marrying early to be safe from the suffering been meted out to them by the foster parents, even though they are usually not matured enough for marriage but they see it as an opportunity to escape the hardships from the foster parents. “**Some of us it’s due to hardship and suffering from our foster aunties that led us into early marriage, we usually think**

that if you marry early you will be safe from those hardships and abuse that are meted out to us by our foster parents” (respondent).

4.4.3 Consequence of Early Marriage in the Zujung Community

The researcher asked the respondents to state the negative consequence of the child/early marriage in the Zujung community, and their responses were that, most of the child brides suffer financial problems. Since they did not learn any skill or trade before they got married, they found it very difficult to raise money to take care of their basic needs as well as cater for their children. As a matter of fact, almost all the respondents have cited finance as a major challenge facing child bride. One of the respondents said, **“If you are not matured enough for marriage, most especially when there is no skill or work to do, even to get common soap to wash your children’s rags you can’t afford it. Also pomade to smear your baby or yourself and again your personal needs becomes difficult for you to get since you have no work or skill and the husband as well don’t have anything to give you”.**

The researcher also realized through the interview that most child brides indulge in adultery due to reason that most of them do not have love for their husbands, since they were compelled by situations to marry them. In this regard they go out to meet their preferred choices secretly to satisfy their desire. **“when you are been forced into marriage, already you don’t love the man you are married to, and anytime you go across your love you are tempted to have an affair with him because he is your true love and people will say you are doing prostitution, meanwhile you don’t love your husband and you cannot also run away” (respondent).**



Another negative consequence of child bride as mentioned by the respondents during the interview was that the young girls are denied formal education. Many of them were still at the basic level when they got married and could not continue schooling due to pregnancy and child nursing. Some of the respondents made mentioned that, **“your school is finished, your life is finished after all you didn’t even have any skill or learned a trade and you can’t also go back to school”**. It is rather unfortunate that this issue still exists in this modern day, and the view of the researcher is that, girls should be allowed to complete school before marriage.

It is also a common knowledge that most of these child brides find it very difficult during delivery and sometimes it even leads to the death of some of them. This is because they are likely not well developed enough physically to enhance easy delivery, which may lead to stillbirth and other maternal complications. **“Some are there because they are not well developed physically, they encounter challenges during birth and in some cases lose their lives”**, (respondent).

Most of these child brides are also subjected to physical abuse by their husbands and this is because they are not able to contribute one way or the other to support the man, or do not love the man, which usually infuriates the men to subject the wives to severe beating. In other cases, since the child bride does not have enough experience about marriage and may not even know anything about sex, their husbands usually beat them into submission in order to have sex with them. During the interview, some of the respondents said that, **“as am talking, my son, I was forced into marriage to a certain old man by my father and the old man used to beat me until the whole of my body swells up just to have sex with me, and these have not helped, even our**

children will struggle in life because there was no love between I and the father. Because if you force and have sex with your wife, your children born out of that will be cursed and suffer in the society because there is no love”.

The researcher finds out that the issues of child bride is largely practised by the people of the Zujung community, and have dire consequences to the individual, the family as well as the community at large. A community cannot develop when children are forced into marriage at early age as these will put an end to their education, and also make them a burden to their husbands as they do not have any skill to survive on. Women are regarded globally as agents of development and hence need formal education to be able to survive and help in communal development. This argument is supported by the words of a renowned Ghanaian educationist Dr. Kwegyir Aggrey who said; “If you educate a man you have educated one person but if you educate a woman you have educated a whole nation” (Gillard & Blanchett, 2014).

4.4.4 The Way Forward to Reducing the Incidence of Child Marriage in Zujung Community.

Indeed, early/child marriage cannot be fully eliminated from our communities but could be reduced significantly if proper measures are taken into consideration. “the authorities in this area must wake up and let government hear our plight so that even if we cannot eliminate the issues about early marriage, it will be reduce from its current level”(respondent).

Most of the respondents noted that though various governments and NGO’s have made several advances in finding lasting solutions to the incidence of child marriage in the





community, they have achieved little because of inadequate finance to disseminate information through sensitization and advocacy to seek for change in bad attitudes and traditions of the people. It is worth noting that almost all the respondents had the conviction that the path to reducing the incidence of child bride can only be cleared by the people themselves. **“most of the children of today are very difficult to control, but this doesn’t mean that our parents should relent on their efforts to correcting us but rather they should try their possible best to force them to go to school, ensuring that you trace at the school or even call the masters to find out if your wards are in school, because this children are the future leaders of the community”** (respondent). This was a response from a respondent as what role the parents can play to reduce the incidence of early marriage in the community.

The researcher also found out during the interview that the various religious leaders could also in one way or the other help in reducing child bride in the community. **“In my opinion the religious institutions are the best people to solve the problem of early marriage than any other institution, the religion is for Allah and He has written in His Holly books that we should allow the children to be matured and also bring their choice of husbands or wives instead of been forced into an unwanted matrimony. So the Imams and pastors can include this in their sermons and preach it to the people”** (respondent).

“Yes, NGO’s and government can collaborate to seek funds to solve the incidence of child marriage in our community”, this was a response given by a respondent to the question as to what the government and the NGO’s can do to reduce the incidence of child marriage. Not only that, another respondent suggested that, **“the poor in the**



community out numbers the rich, but the rich men are standing between the poor and government and the poor do not benefit from government funding. I will like government and the NGO's to form poor people association and assist them directly so that they can be able to cater for their family needs which will intend prevent the girls from going to men for money, as it is one of the reasons why most of the girls engage in early sex hence child marriage".

The researcher again observed that most of the people in the community do not get justice from the opinion leaders and chiefs and will like government to ensure that parents who force their children into early marriages must be punished according to the laws governing the country. **"It's good that government should enforce the laws of the state so that parents who are negligent and forced their children into early and unwanted marriage are punished to serve as a deterrent to others in the community".**

4.5 Presentation of Themes

Findings from the study reveal that, the major issues surrounding the high incidence of early/child marriage in the Zujung community included; religion, irresponsible parenting, poverty, illiteracy, lack of respect for laws and authority among others. This section presents the meaning of the themes, their contexts and processes involved in reducing the incidence of early/child marriage in the community.

4.5.1 Religion

Religious reasoning for child marriage can be found in countries throughout Africa. No one religion alone is associated with the practice. Livingston (2006) defined religion as



the structure of deeds and beliefs focused on what is assumed to be sacred value and transforming supremacy.

The issues of religion featured in almost all the interviews conducted. Religious considerations have in one way or the other impacted positively and negatively on the incidence of child marriage in the community. Below is a quote from one of the respondents; **“ when a girl attain a certain age the parents says is a curse to still be living with them and that is why they give you out in marriage to any interested person or their friend, without considering whether you love the fellow or not”**.

Another respondent had a contrary opinion about the influence of religion on child marriage, **“the religion has helped us to cover ourselves and to stay away from sexual relationships until we are fully matured enough for marriage”**.

The researcher observed that girls are the major victims in the community in relation to religiously induced marriage. Boys are allowed to attain maturity as well as finish their education or acquire specific skills before they got married. That was not to be said with the girls who rather are forced out of homes to search for husbands immediately they attain puberty.

4.5.2 Poverty

The researcher identified poverty as the major factor leading to the incidence of early marriage in the community. Indeed poverty was pervasive in all the interviews conducted. Respondents explained that being redundant and spending the whole day sitting at home without anything to do forced them to get married. According to respondents, being redundant was arguably the biggest causative factor for child marriage. Explaining the role of poverty in their decision to get married before the legal

age, three respondents said; **“I married too early because of poverty with the hope that I would get a better life. So for me poverty was the reason I got married”**.

In other circumstances where there is acute poverty, a young girl may be regarded as an economic burden and hence her marriage to a much older well to do man. This is a considered as a survival strategy and may even be in the interest of the girl child. **“My parents do not have money to look after my siblings and I but my husband accepted to do that and that was why I married him”**, (respondent). In view of this, addressing the issue of poverty among the people of the community will go a long way to reducing the incidence of child bride in the community. Financial empowerment among the child bride through micro finance loan schemes will help reduce the challenges been faced by these people as well.

Efforts to eradicate poverty in Ghana have been a regular activity. The movements which is dubbed “stand up take action end poverty now” is intended for the MDG, it is expected that by the year 2020 poverty will be completely eliminated from the country. The MDG have taken the pains to campaign in many part of the country to create awareness and to educate people as to how they can help themselves from fleeing from the glimpse of poverty. The MDG's campaign against poverty has been able to involve the youth of about 4,065,972 drawn from the educational sector in its eradication, and this shows the readiness of the youth to help fight against poverty for their futur (M.G, 2009).





4.5.3 Illiteracy

Another theme of concern raised by the respondents was the issue of illiteracy and how it pushes teenagers into early/child marriage. That is, girls who drop out of school are more likely to engage in early sexual activities thereby resulting in early marriage. Also girls who are married at an early age are more likely to drop out of school. Available statistics have shown that about seventy percent (70%) of people in the Zujung community are illiterates (GSS, 2010). A respondent responded to why she married early and was not in school, and her responds was that; **“as for me I didn’t go to school because I was fostered by my paternal aunt who did not send me to school and only kept me at home for nursing her children and doing house chores. I was later compelled to marry my current husband who is a friend to my aunt’s husband”**.

An enlightened populace helps facilitate growth and development as many people tend to understand the dangers of early marriage and strive to eradicate it. Usually people with low level of literacy were easily swayed away from the truth and manipulated to take part in early marriage. It is, therefore, important for all Ghanaians, especially non-literates, to be equipped with knowledge through functional literacy, as this will make them more discerning and independent minded, thereby enhancing meaningful decisions that will lead to progress hence reducing the incidence of child marriage in the community.

4.5.4 Respect for Law

Generally, every country or community is governed by rules and regulations which will ensure serenity and development of the community. In this case, the researcher realized that people who were forced into early marriage did not get justice as well as no



sanctions against the perpetrators of such crime. A respondent mentioned that; **“parents who are negligent and forced their children into early and an unwanted marriage are punished to serve as a deterrent to others in the community”**. The researcher again observed during the interview that irresponsible parenting was another reason why early marriage was on the rise and there were no regulations to monitor and sanction the individuals involved. **“There used to be a communal task force (bilchinsi task force) that ensures that a child stay at home during the night and parents whose children were found culpable was sanctioned as well as their parents, but now it is no more there and the children roam any how without fear” (Respondent)**.

The government of Ghana in 2014 set up “An Ending Child Marriage Unit” to solve the issues of early marriage. Also, the ministry, in collaboration with UNICEF developed a three-year national strategic framework to end child marriage. In February 2016, the Government of Ghana launched a national campaign to end child marriage as part of the African Union’s regional campaign to end the practice in the region (Girls Not Bride, 2016).

Ghana government also has a comprehensive legal frame work, including the Children’s Acts of 1998 that prohibits child marriages, criminalizes child marriages, apart from entrenching it in the Criminal code. There is also an increased community engagement and dialogue with stakeholders, media campaigns and mass media communication materials, documentaries and advertisements to drum home the message against child marriages (Reynolds, 2015). Also, the researcher adopted the non-probability sampling technique. Indeed purposive and snowball sampling procedures were used in selecting respondents for the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This section of the study covers the summary of findings of the study, the causes and effects of child marriage as well as recommendations and suggestions by the researcher as to how to reduce the incidence of child marriage in the Zujung community.

5.2 Summary of Findings

This research was based on reducing the incidence of early marriage in the Zujung community, a suburb of Tamale metropolitan assembly in the northern region of Ghana. Zujung is located in the Tamale South Constituency and under the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly. It can be found in the outskirts and southern part of the metropolis and shares boundaries with Builpiela to the North-West and Lamashegu to the East. According to the 2010 PHC, the population of the Zujung community is about 3,252. The numbers of males are 1,109 (34.1%) and the number of females is 2,143 (65.9%). This implies that there are more females than males in the community.

The study was based on action research strategy. The research design used in this study was the qualitative research design. This design method deals with identifying and finding solutions to social phenomena. Both secondary and primary sources of data were used to elicit information from the metropolitan assembly, victims of early marriage, parents and teachers, opinion leaders, as well as reports and other documents written by people on the study area. The sample size for the research was 15 respondents. These included: 10 victims (teenage mothers), three parents and two opinion leaders. The



major intervention strategy used was Advocacy and Sensitization. The researcher relied on female role models, the clergy, musicians and NGO's to disseminate information to the people. An interview method (semi-structured) was employed through the use of an interview guide in eliciting information (primary) from respondents. The questions asked during the interview centered on the four research objectives of the study. The interview sessions were carried out on one on one basis.

Unfortunately, there has been an age long incidence of early marriage in the community. This was mainly as a result of; religion, irresponsible parenting, poverty, illiteracy, lack of respect for laws and authority among others. Regrettably, the situation had led to several negative consequences on the people of the community. Among them included financial challenges since they were not matured enough to learn a skill or trade in order to survive, withdrawal from school, hence denial of formal education, domestic violence and abuse of their basic human rights by the husbands and family, maternal and child mortality, prostitution as a result of lack of love for their supposed husbands and many others.

There is definitely a solution to every problem, as many of the people in the study area believed that if the right mechanisms are put in place, the incidence of child marriage will be a thing of the past. They were of the view that religious leaders leading crusade against early marriage to the area could do the miracle. Also, government and NGO's as well as self-discipline could as well help to put an end to the incidence of early/child marriage in the Zujung community.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings through interactions with the people of the study area, it was recommended that government, NGO's, civil servants as well as various stakeholders must be involved to help teenage mothers in their psychosocial development and job skills development to help them acquire jobs to cater for their needs in order to live a meaning life in the society. The following recommendations were also made by the researcher to help reduce the incidence of early marriage in the Zujung community.

First and foremost, Marriage is regarded as a private, even sensitive subject. In many societies in Ghana, it has traditionally been unthinkable to discuss sexual relations even between husband and wife. Creating the circumstances in which such subjects can be addressed, especially in traditional rural societies and ethnic groups where early marriage is common, is a vital pre-condition for hastening its end. Advocacy is needed at all levels of society, but particularly at household and community level, to influence attitudes. The benefits of postponing marriage for wives, husbands, families and communities need to be shared with religious and community leaders, while those who exert role model influence, as well as government personnel, need to be engaged. Public education campaigns must reinforce activity in schools and health facilities. Emphasis should be on the need to protect and support the adolescent period, especially by keeping girls in school

In addition, given the educational, social, economic, and employment histories common among teenage parents, career development is a priority for helping this group make the transition from adolescence to economic independence. These early parents are in special need of psychosocial development, life skills development, career awareness,





and job skills development. Governments should prioritize the career development of teenage mothers.

Again, a number of psychosocial factors can affect the education and training of teen parents. These factors include low self-esteem; low aspirations, motivation, and expectations; unrealistic goals and ambitions; limited emotional resources for support and maintenance; and lack of role models. To help teen parents overcome the ramifications of their disadvantaged backgrounds, attention should be given to the building of their self-concept and support systems; learning how to meet the challenge of combining work and family roles; learning how to give and receive emotional support and enhancing interpersonal communication and relationships.

Moreover, as stated earlier, teens that drop out of school have fewer opportunities for themselves, and their children are also less likely to succeed in schools or careers. For this reason, it is important to support and encourage child brides in getting their education. In addition to the formal education system, there are also some other options for child brides in some areas: Special schools for pregnant or parent teens, programs to help pregnant teens finish school and non-formal education.

Very often, the only option for girls and women in situations of extreme marital stress is to run away. In the northern part of Ghana many runaways end up in poor urban communities such as Komkomba market, Agbogbloshi in Accra, as well as Kejetia and Aboabo in Kumasi basically for head porting (kayeye). Some local NGO's working in this field has begun to assist such girls and women, but their efforts are generally confined to towns and cities. Girls who run away from unhappy marriages need emergency support, as do those running away from parents forcing them into an

unwanted marriage, or punishing them for entering a partnership without their permission. Government should therefore step in to house these people in order to provide them with access to education, health and skills acquisition.

Furthermore, they also need someone to encourage them through the hard times and help them reach their goals. Parents, teachers, school counselors, social workers and peer support groups should provide them with the needed support to help them complete their education and skills development programs.

In Ghana, thousands of marriages go unregistered, depriving women of their rights in marriage, including their rights over property. Programs to promote birth and marriage registration, via community structures and religious leaders, should be promoted. Governmental action is required to review customary and civil law in the light of internationally agreed human rights standards on marriage. For example, restrictive laws concerning an adolescent's access to services such as reproductive health should be removed. Existing laws should be enforced, and a rights culture fostered by providing appropriate training for the judiciary, lawmakers and the police.

Finally, poverty was one major problem revealed by the study as a cause of teenage pregnancy. To address this, it is recommended that the government should strengthen families to be able to provide the needs of their members including adolescent girls. Early marriage is closely associated with, and contributes to, poverty. Some interventions on behalf of adolescent girls should be focused on improving their economic situation as a means of granting them higher status and more control over their lives – including their options in marriage. Approaches may include training in livelihood skills, support for teenagers in the labor market and ensuring that marriage is



not a pre-condition for eligibility for schemes such as microcredit programs and savings clubs as it is done in most communities.

5.4 Conclusion

The research was carried out to find lasting solutions to the incidence of early/child marriage in the Zujung community. Specific areas that have been dealt with include; the overview of early marriage globally, early marriage in Ghana, the Northern Region as well as early marriage in the Zujung area which happens to be the major study area of the research.

The desire or the willingness to maintain the family's good name and societal reputation as well as status, coupled with poverty, lack of education as well as laws to regulate and punish crime, are the major reasons causing the issue of child marriage. In certain families, it is used as a measure of manhood and community status, and as a determiner of the success of such family. Again, a daughter's success depends on her making a good marriage and establishing a bond between other families in the community. Also, the fear of losing one's virginity and teenage pregnancy is prevalent among families, though not nearly as significant as the issue of the status of the family.

One major contemporary social problem confronting most countries in the world today is early marriage. From the first world countries such as the United states to the third world countries such as Ghana, this problem has been a source of worry for policy makers, social workers and other human service providers due to its negative repercussions on the girl-child.

Early marriage is a health and human rights issue, especially for women in the developing world. A growing body of evidence has linked early marriage with negative





health, education, and economic outcomes. Early marriage has insightful physical, intellectual, psychological and emotional effects and therefore an impediment to the progress of both boys' and girls' education and personal growth. For girls, in addition, it brings premature pregnancy and childbearing. The society is also one way or the other suffers as a whole when girls are not educated and are not ready for their duties as mothers and contributions to the society. This study has revealed that young women who marry early are more likely than their peers to experience early school departure, lower earning capacity, earlier and more frequent childbearing, complications in pregnancy, higher maternal mortality, subjected to violence and abuse, and higher in infant mortality. From a human rights perspective, many women who marry before age 18 do not have the opportunity to decide for themselves whether and when to marry and, in many cases, this single event shapes their entire adult lives. Nevertheless, early marriage continues to be widespread and is still socially accepted in many cultures.

In sum, it can be concluded from the study that early marriage is indeed one of the most critical human right and development challenge in recent times. The issue of early marriage does not only affect young mothers but also their family, communities, economies as well as nations globally. Among many damaging effects of child marriage include; domestic violence, vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and other related Sexual Transmitted Diseases, withdrawal from school, maternal and infant mortality and basic human rights as well as domestic violence and abuse.

Conventional believes about early/child marriage remains resolute with a perception that child marriage is an optimistic communal custom with social and economic benefits. On the contrary, various research works done on the health and societal repercussions

indicates a much alarming consequences. The world today has generally accepted that child marriage is health threats that violates global human rights laws and conventions and thus seek to promote the growth and welfare of the affected people in the society.

It is evident that there is no magic bullet for child marriage. Given the multiple levels of predisposing factors of early marriage, single intervention strategies by single sectors will not solve the canker. What is required is a comprehensive approach that incorporates the home, the school, the community, the healthcare setting, government and Non-Governmental Organisations as well as change at the structural level.



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APPENDIX

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Interview Guide regarding reducing child marriage among the people of Zujung

TOPIC: Reducing the incidence of early marriage in the Zujung community, a suburb of Tamale metro

Introduction

My name is Sulemana Naziru, a final year student of the Faculty of Education, University for Development Studies. I am interested in the reduction of the incidence of early/child marriages to improve upon the development of the individual and the community. I believe that reducing the incidence of child bride will enable young people especially girls to attain maturity enough for marriage, hence will acquire education and skills to enable them leave a meaning life and be independent in their communities

With your permission, your comments will be recorded. Please be assured that all your responses will be kept confidential: This means that the interview responses will be used for academic purpose only; the report will not identify you as a respondent. Also, your participation in this survey is absolutely voluntary and you reserve the right to withdraw at any point in the process or choose to answer some questions and not others. Thank you for accepting to participate in this research.

This guide contains four aspect of questions which include; potentials of the young people towards community development, causes of early marriage, challenges and



effects of early marriage, and finally the way to reducing the incidence of early marriage in the community

1. Potentials of the young people towards community development

What do you think are the potentials of the youth which can be harnessed for the development of the Zujung community? Give specific examples

How can these potentials be harnessed to enhance the development of Zujung community?

What specific opportunities abound in the community for the youth with specific skills to engage in?

2. Various causes of early/child marriage

In this community how will you describe the issues of early marriage?

State reasons for your description above

Are the young people allowed to marry freely by their own will and choice?

Have you had any young girl or boy being forced in to marriage in this community?

What social, cultural and religious factors contribute to the issues of child marriage in the community?

3. Challenges faced by child bride in the community

Briefly give a narration of the problems encountered by child brides in the community.

Why do you think these challenges exist?



How has our belief system prevent both boys and girls to attain maturity before marriage?

How do people in this community perceive girls who refused to be forced into early marriage?

4. **The way forward to reducing the incidence of child marriage in the Zujung community.**

What role do you think opinion leaders, groups and individuals should play in order to reduce the incidence of child marriage in the community?

What role do you think government should play in this regard?

What role do you think NGOs should play in this regard?

What societal or attitudinal change needs to be effected to enhance the growth and development of the community?

