UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, TAMALE

EARLY MARRIAGE IN THE WA MUNICIPALITY: PERSPECTIVES AND

POLICY IMPLICATIONS.

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

ADEL ELYASU

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BY

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THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AND GENERAL STUDIES, FACULTY OF INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR A MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES.

MARCH, 2020

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration:

I, Adel Elyasu, declare that, this thesis is my original work and that it has not been and will not be submitted to any other university for similar or other degree award.

……………………………   ……………………………

SIGNATURE   DATE

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Supervisor's Declaration:

I, Dr Baataar Cuthbert K.M, declare that, the preparation and presentation of the thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation/thesis laid down by the University for Development Studies.

………………………………..   ……………………………

SIGNATURE   DATE

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father Mr. Eliasu Issah, my mother Madam Mariam Mahama and my brother Mr. Fatawu Alhassan who is a Senior Lecturer at Tamale Technical University for their financial support and encouragement through my educational cycle, I appreciate your efforts. This work is for you.

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ABSTRACT

Throughout the world, marriage is regarded as a moment of celebration and a milestone in adult life. sadly, the practice of early marriage gives no such cause for celebration. All too often, the imposition of a marriage partner upon a child means that a girl or boy's childhood is cut short and their fundamental human rights are compromised. Several international conventions and laws exist to prevent early marriage but yet the situation still exists. The main objective of this research is to investigate perspectives of early marriage in the wa municipality and policy implications. Specifically, the thesis sought to examine the reasons influencing the practice of early marriage, to examine the effects of early marriage and to explore local driven policies needed to prevent early marriages in the wa municipality. The study employed the phenomenological research design and the qualitative research approach. Participants were drawn from the selected communities from the five zonal councils in the wa municipality using the simple random sampling which include Jonga, Sagu, Boli, Zingu and Kpongu.The study was guided by the theory of change on early marriage (2014) Girls Not Brides developed by UNICEF which recognizes local content solutions to ending early marriage and empowerment of young girls and that, there is no single solution to early marriage, everyone has a role to play.

Both probability and Non probability sampling techniques were used to select a total of 110 respondents for the study which consist of five categories. Out of these, 30 of the respondents were teenagers who married before attaining age 18 which were selected through snowballing and are interviewed. 20 of the respondents were their age category who were not married and are in schools, who were also selected through simple random sampling. 30 were parents, who were also selected using purposive sampling. 20 of the respondents were teachers who were also selected

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through the simple random sampling and finally, 10 were staff of human rights who were also selected through purposive sampling.Both primary and secondary data sources were used and the secondary data is mostly used to support the primary data in most of my analysis. The research employed In-depth personal interviews, Focus Group Discussions, Key Informants Interviews and Direct Observations as data collection methods. The data were collected, transcribed and analyzed using text through the conventional content analysis involving identification of themes and presented in a narrative form. The findings revealed that early marriage exist in the wa municipality and is influenced by parental irresponsibility, Religious Values, Single Parenting, Gender inequality and Peer Influence. Also, school dropout, partner violence, lack of voice in decision making and malnutrition were also reported as the effects of early marriage in the wa municipality. In exploring local driven policies to help prevent early marriage, supporting female education, developing protective by-laws, theatre/ Drama, and collaboration between traditional and religious leaders were reported as ways of ending early marriage in the municipality.The study concludes that early marriage exists in the wa municipality and it is a worrying situation which is much prevalence among girls than boys. There is no single way of ending early marriage but a collective effort of all. So therefore, the study recommends that, early marriage should be included in both primary and junior high school educational curriculum and also individuals and other social groups in the communities that oppose early marriage need to be supported.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AGI	Adolescent Girls Initiative
CDCP	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDF	Children Dignity Forum
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CFEM	Child Forced Early Marriage
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRR	Center for Reproductive Rights
DALY's	Disability Adjusted Life Year's
FGC	Female Genital Cutting
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FiDA	International Federation of Women Lawyers
FMRWG	Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IAC	The International African Committee
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
NCTPE	National Committee on Traditional Practices in Ethiopia
OXFAM	Oxford Committee on Famine Relief
PNDCL	Provisional National Defence Council Law
UHDR	Universal Declaration on Human Rights

UN-ECA	United Nations-African Economic Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organisation
WiLDAF	Women in Law and Development in Africa

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

This chapter comprises of the background to the study, problem statement, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study and research questions and objectives of the study, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Early marriage refers to any form of marriage that takes place before a child has reached 18 years. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the most comprehensive international bill of rights for women states that "any betrothal or marriage of a child should not have any legal status. The Committee that monitors this convention states further in General Recommendation 21 (Article 16(2)) that the minimum age for marriage for both male and female should be 18 years, the age when they have attained full maturity and capacity to act". Most early marriages are arranged, customary and religious and based on the consent of parents. It is often failed to ensure the best interests of the girl child.

A child has the right to refuse betrothal, to be a subject of a dowry or transaction and to be married under 18 years. In cases where juveniles are forced to marry, action is instituted at the Court and the parents of the juvenile together with the would-be-husband are restrained from executing the marriage. Current estimates in sub Saharan Africa and South Asia show that approximately 82 million girls between 10–17 years will be married before they reach 18 years by 2015, of this 331 million girls aged 10–19 in developing countries (excluding China), 163 million will be married before they are 20. Although early marriage is predominantly a female problem, a minority of

boys may also be forced to marry early. There has been any research done on young boys who marry early in Ghana to the best of the author's knowledge, therefore it is again an area which further research can be done (WHO 2001).The Marriage Ordinance Act 127 in Ghana makes the legal age for marriage as 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys respectively. Customary and religious practices in the Northern Region of Ghana lead to both early betrothal and marriage of girls. Where it can be proved that the "girl's consent to an early customary marriage was absent, a prosecution for forcible marriage can be carried out. Of course, many females do not know that they have the right to refuse early marriages". Many feel compelled to cohabit with a man by circumstances such as poverty. Public education is geared towards educating families about the health hazards of early marriage to the girls and encouraging parents/guardians to allow girls to go to school and spend more years in school before marrying and starting families. Current estimates in sub Saharan Africa and South Asia show that "approximately 82 million girls between 10–17 years will be married before they reach 18 years by 2015, of this 331 million girls aged 10–19 in developing countries (excluding China), 163 million will be married before they are 20. Although early marriage is predominantly a female problem, a minority of boys may also be forced to marry early".

There has not been any research done on young boys who marry early in Ghana to the best of the author's knowledge, therefore it is again an area which further research can be done (WHO 2001). UNO (2000) explained that in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, on average, only five per cent of men marry before they are 19-years-old. In Europe this figure is only 1 per cent. Early marriage is more prevalent in developing countries, particularly in the poorer rural sections of the community. The marriage of

girls and sometimes boys before the legal age of marriage has been a global phenomenon. This type of marriage, often called child marriage, is particularly widespread in some regions of the world especially in the sub-Saharan Africa. The latest comparable figure for the sub-Saharan Africa region suggests an incidence of 39 per cent (UNICEF, 2016). Child marriage poses both adverse health and socio-economic consequences for the victims and their societies. However, as a results of many campaigns in the last couple of years by some local and international organizations, the global incidence of child marriage has declined significantly (Nguyen and Wodon, 2015). Child marriage is the outcome of the interplay of economic, structural and social factors (Karam, 2015). Child marriage could be an avenue for parents to reduce the economic burden of providing for their young daughters. In societies where bride prices are paid, parents may make some economic gain in the process. There is an incentive to marry girls off early in countries where dowries are paid as part of the marriage contract since the cost of the dowry increases with the age of the girl.

The second causal factor identified by Karam (2015) is structural, that is the lack of educational opportunities. In a study on the causes of child marriage in Kenya and Zambia, Steinhaus et al. (2016) identified lack of educational opportunities as one of the direct causes of child marriage. There is pressure for girls "to get married when parents cannot afford to pay for their daughters' education or when the girls do not get good grades to transition to the next level. Lack of job opportunities when girls end schooling could exacerbate the situation by pushing them into marriage especially if they enter into relationships with men for financial reasons". Another set of drivers of child marriage is social factors which include, cultural norms and practices and

religious perspectives. For example, "in societies where a premium is placed on virginity prior to marriage and pre-marital pregnancy casts shame on girls' families, parents will marry off their daughters at an early age to avoid this". Pre-marital pregnancy can place girls in the difficult position of having no choice but to get married (Steinhaus et al., 2016). Inadequate sex education, ignorance about the use of contraceptives and difficulty in accessing contraceptives can also result in early pregnancy and marriage before girls attain the legal age. Girls thus become victims of child marriage not necessarily because parents make the decision to marry them off but because they find themselves in circumstances which require that they get married. These causes are not mutually exclusive.

Ghana is one of several countries that has translated international conventions and agreements that prohibit child marriage into national laws. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child takes a firm stand against child marriage. Article 21 (2) states that 'child marriage and the betrothal of girls and boys shall be prohibited'. Article 16 (2) of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) states that `the betrothal and marriage of a child should have no legal effect'. Ghana has ratified both these international instruments - CEDAW in 1986 and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in 2005. Article 14(2) of Ghana's Children's Act (560) of 1998 sets the minimum age for marriage at 18 years and Article 14 (1) explicitly states that a child should not be forced to be betrothed or married. Child marriage adversely impacts the well-being of the girl child and can have inter-generational dimensions. The literature on child marriage is replete with evidence of the adverse effects of child marriage (Otoo-Oyortey 2003; Jensen & Thornton, 2003; Walker, 2012; Morhe, et al., 2012). While

the adverse effects of child marriage mostly affect the victims, its ripple effects on the entire society are significant. According to UNICEF (2005), early marriage "hasa profound physical, intellectual, psychological and emotional impact, cutting off educational opportunity and chances of personal growth. The entire society is however affected when the victims are not able to contribute meaningfully to socio-economic development". Studies on the harmful effects of early marriage on the health of the victims have revealed that girls who are married off before the age of 18 years often experience early sexual debut, give birth to more children and lose more children to neonatal and childhood disease (Jensen & Thornton, 2003; Walker, 2012; Morhe et al., 2012).

According to Jensen and Thornton (2003), early marriage leads to early childbirth, which sometimes adversely affects the reproductive health of the victims. As a result of their physiology, most child brides often experience prolonged labour and difficult delivery, which sometimes lead to permanent injury. One of the problems currently debilitating against the economic fortunes of Ghana is youth unemployment. Even though the country in recent months has put together a number of strategies to address the unemployment problem, child marriage poses a potential threat to effectiveness of some of these strategies. Apart from usually being denied the chance of acquiring formal education (Walker, 2012), the victims tend to give birth to more children who are most likely to tread the path of their mothers. Eventually, there would be more youth ready and available to work but not physically and psychologically matured to be productive in the labour market. Additionally, early marriage predisposes girls to abuse in their marriages. Walker (2012) identified child marriage as potentially affecting the physical well-being of the victims. Child brides are vulnerable to and

experience physical, sexual and emotional abuse. They can be socially isolated because their husbands restrict their movements and who they can socialize with. As Otoo-Oyortey (2003) and Diop et al., (2002) noted, early marriage often isolates girls from their peers. Several studies have concluded that early marriage deprives children of their childhood. Despite having national laws that prohibits child marriage and in spite of the numerous adverse consequences of early marriage on the victims and the entire society the practice persists in Ghana and is present in all the ten administrative regions of the country. It is therefore necessary to understand trends in the incidence of child marriage in Ghana in order to inform the design of effective policies to address the problem. Early marriage is prohibited in Ghana under the constitution and by law.

According to the Ghanaian constitution of 1992, "any person under the age of 18 is a child and can therefore not marry or be married off, This is underscored by the 1998 Children's Act, which sets the legal age of marriage at 18 for both boys and girls. Despite this legal framework, the prevalence of child marriage in Ghana remains high, and one in five girls marries before her 18th birthday (20.7%) and one in 20 girls (4.9%) marries before her 15th birthday. Although child marriage can occur among males as well, the prevalence is much lower: only 2.3% of men aged 20 to 24 years are married by age 18 in Ghana".

The highest prevalence of child marriage in Ghana occurs in the three Northern regions, where more than one in three girls marry before age 18. In addition, the child marriage "rate is higher in rural areas, among the poorest population and among uneducated women. The aggregate rate of marriage before age 18 has been decreasing from 35% in the 1990s to 28% in 2003 and 25% in 2008, but remained stable between

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2011 and 2014". However, data from the latest two nationally representative surveys shows that the rate of child marriage increased in the three Northern regions (from 26.4% in 2011 to 33.6% in 2014) and decreased in the other regions (from 20.9 to 18.5% and from 19.2 to 18.5% in the Central and Southern regions respectively), increasing disparities between the North and the rest of the country". Despite a large global evidence base on the consequences of child marriage, in-depth studies studying dynamics and consequences of child marriage in Ghana specifically are scarce. A better understanding of the dynamics around child marriage is important to motivate more action around reducing child marriage rates, particularly given that decreases have stalled in recent years, and to inform programming assisting child brides.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Marriage is seen as a moment of joy, ecstasy and happiness and a transition in adult life throughout the globe but unfortunately, early marriage do not bring such joy in their lives. The proper development of boys and girls is cut short and their fundamental human rights abused when they are married off at a tender age which has effects on their physical and psychological lifestyle because of the roles assigned to them in society which they are not ready to take. Many have no choice about the timing of marriage or their partner. Some are coerced into marriage, while others are too young to make an informed decision.Globally, poverty is a major cause as well as a consequence of early marriage for many young girls under the age of 18. In many traditional settings, poor families use the early marriage of daughters as a strategy for reducing their own economic vulnerability, shifting the economic burden related to a daughter's care to the husband's family.

Unfortunately, while this strategy may in some instances place the girl in a better-off family environment, in many cases the negative effects reinforce her vulnerability and that of her children to poverty in her marital home. The younger the age at the time of marriage, the lower the probability that girl will have acquired critical skills and developed their personal capacity to manage adverse situations that may affect their overall welfare and economic well-being.Premature marriage "deprives them of the opportunity for personal development as well as their rights to full reproductive health and wellbeing, education, and participation in civic life". child marriage is an old tradition in many societies and if not keeping to the traditions, it can disgrace the whole family. If the girl does not follow the social norm of entering an early marriage,

the whole family can risk being excluded from their community. Also, decreasing the risk of shaming the family through the daughter having a child out of wedlock or other inappropriate behavior for girls are important factors in the matter. In the countryside, where many of the young female spouses are located, "girls are often pulled out of school at the time of their first menstruation in order to safeguard their sexuality". Education for the girl can also be seen as unfavorable when the central point is being a spouse and mother in the future, not focusing on attaining more knowledge.

This trend is continued through generations and is maintaining the legitimatization of child marriage. (UNFPA, 2006:19) Since the HIV and AIDS epidemic was brought to our attention, the number of child marriages has increased significantly. "The most plausible reason for the encounter is the families attempting to protect the girls from such infections and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) by child marriage. In some unsecure warfare areas are young girls in hazard of being captured by "freedom fighters" and forced into the sex industry or slavery". In these possible scenarios, having a spouse is considered the best option to keep the girl safe. In areas where sexual assaults are common, marrying a man with a higher position is desirable for safeguarding the young girls. Therefore, entering an early marriage can be seen as protection of the girl for various reasons. (UNFPA, 2006:20).

If there is no reduction in the practice of child marriage, up to "280 million girls alive today are at risk of becoming brides by the time they turn 18. Due to population growth, this number will approach 320 million by 2050. The total number of women married in childhood will grow from more than 700 million today to approximately 950 million by 2030, and nearly 1.2 billion by 2050". The number of girls under age

18 married each year will grow from 15 million today to 16.5 million in 2030 to over 18 million in 2050. However, we know that progress has occurred over the last three decades. If the current rate of progress is sustained, "the proportion of women married as children will continue to decrease: from 33 per cent in 1985 to 22 per cent by 2030 and to 18 per cent by 2050". Despite gains, this rate of decline is barely fast enough to keep pace with population growth. Even if progress continues, the total number of women married as children will still be around 700 million in 2050, although nearly 490 million girls will have avoided early marriage. The highest prevalence of child marriage in Ghana occurs in the three Northern regions, where more than one in three girls marry before age 18. In addition, the child marriage rate is higher in rural areas, among the poorest population and among uneducated women.

The aggregate rate of marriage before age 18 has been decreasing from 35% in the 1990s to 28% in 2003 and 25% in 2008, but remained stable between 2011 and 2014". However, data from the latest two nationally representative surveys shows that the rate of child marriage increased in the three Northern regions (from 26.4% in 2011 to 33.6% in 2014) and decreased in the other regions (from 20.9 to 18.5% and from 19.2 to 18.5% in the Central and Southern regions respectively), increasing disparities between the North and the rest of the country. Despite a large global evidence base on the consequences of child marriage, in-depth studies studying dynamics and consequences of child marriage in Ghana specifically are scarce. Many girls especially with 14 and 15 years are forced into marriage by parents or guardians or relatives therefore they facing a lot of problems [Children Dignity Forum, 2010]. For instance, those young female who forced to enter into early marriage does not able to cope with marriage life, because "their age does not allow them to handle well the

family matters. Adolescent mothers are also notable to reading the different gestures of their child such as illness, hunger, or pain. This puts both the mother and the child in poor health. Child marriages also deny girls an opportunity for education and decision making. The parents\ guardians living in a poverty are often tempted to marry off their young girls to obtains bride price in which they believe will relieve them from the economic hardship, but in reality parents\ guardians are not familiar on the practice of young girls marriage and their impact of their health and welfare of young females". According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (2011) by the UNICEF, about 27 per cent of women aged between 20 and 24 were married before 18 years in the wa municipality of the upper west region of Ghana. Pointing to statistics, the communiqué said: "While child marriage is common in Ghana, the Upper West Region (with 39 per cent prevalence rate of child marriage) is second to the Upper East Region, which has 50 per cent prevalence rate," and stressed that: "This is indeed alarming and calls for action. on average, one out of four girls will be married before their 18thbirthday.

According to statistics from Unicef(2015), it shows that child marriage is much prevalence in Northern part of Ghana mostly in the rural areas. It further added that, upper west region is second in child marriage in Ghana after the upper east region. Four out of every 10 married female is below 18 years in the upper west region; this has over the year reflected in the lives of young girls in the upper west region. Girls have been vulnerable in violence and abuse which contributes to increase in teenage pregnancy and school dropout. The upper west region is struggling with rising child marriages with more teenage girls being forced to drop out of school to assume roles and responsibilities as mothers which have shattered their academic dreams. Young

girls as early as 12 years are denied access to basic education on the basis of cultural practice. There remained a lot to do as the situation shows no sign of slowing down any time soon. According to CAMFED (2017) on why child marriages affect us all: the ambitious SDG's agenda serve to create progress that will improve lived across the world. But every year, 15 million girls are locked away from better life. Child marriage is standing in the way of progress towards many of the 2030 Global goals. For as long as child marriage continue to exists, so will poverty, inequality, violence against women and girls, high global maternal mortality rates and an ever underling educational gap between the sexes.

The SDG's are underpinned by investment in girl's education and gender inequality, when girls are excluded from education, they are invisible and powerless. These girls are mostly neglected in decision making even in matters that affect their own lives. Their voice are silent when it comes to decision making such as when to get pregnant and the number of children to give birth to, this has led many of them to unwanted pregnancies in their relationship and their fundamental human right are been compromised.

According to data from the Wa municipal Health Service (2018) there is persistent increase in the trend of teenage deliveries in the Wa Municipality. In the year 2015, 531 cases of teenage deliveries were recorded, out of these, 9 were between the ages of 10-14 and 522 were between the ages of 15-18 years. In 2016, 626 cases were recorded and out of these, 7 were between the ages of 10-14 and 619 were between the ages of 15-18 years. In 2017, 720 cases were recorded and out of these, 11 were between the ages of 10-14 and 709 were between the ages of 15-18 years. In 2018, 677 cases were recorded and out of these, 12 were between the ages of 10-14 and 665 were between the ages of 15-18 years. The data revealed that more young girls of

school going age are now mothers which is a worrying situation in the wa municipality and has caused school dropout among these girls. The data further revealed that some of these girls lose their lives in the course of delivery. The data further showed that the trend of maternal death in the municipality is a worrying situation. In 2015, 11 maternal cases were recorded, 9 were recorded in the year 2016, 13 were recorded in 2017 and 14 were recorded in 2018.

The lives of these young girls could have been longer if their education were supported to further their education. So many national laws and conventions exist in efforts to eradicate early marriage such as the marriage ordinance Act 127 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana and the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. In spite of these laws and conventions and the dangers associated with early marriage, the situation still persist.

Early marriage is not a new phenomenon. It has been with us for so many years now and people are still talking about it, not only among illiterates but also among some educated persons which affects policy outcomes. Not much has been written about local driven solutions that can help solve the issue of early marriage in the wa municipality and Ghana at large and failure to prevent early marriage despite international conventions and national legal regulations prohibiting such marriages denotes that, this problem cannot be solved only through laws, that is why I seek to listen to the people and build an understanding base on what is heard to come out with local solutions that can help solve the problem in the wa municipality.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

1.3.1 Main research question:

What are the perspectives and policy implications of early marriage in the wa municipality?

1.3.2 Specific research questions:

1) How do the people of wa municipality perceive early marriage?

2) What are the Reasons driving the practice of early marriage in the wa municipality?

3) What are the effects of early marriage in the wa municipality?

4) What are the local driven policies that can help reduce the problem of early marriage?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.4.1 Main research Objective:

To investigate the perspectives and policy implications of early marriage in the wa municipality.

1.4.2 Specific research Objectives:

1) To Determine how the people of wa municipality perceive early marriage.

2) To examine the Reasons driving the practice of early marriage in the wa municipality.

3) To Ascertain the effects of early marriage in the wa municipality.

4) To explore local driven policies that can help solve the problem of early marriage in the wa municipality.

1.5 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The research provides literature for scholars to review and stimulate further research in other regions, municipalities and districts to know the perspectives of the people and policy implications of early marriage.The findings of this study and recommendations is an eye opener to parents to help them abandon early marriage among young girls.It is also useful to policy makers and stakeholders of human rights and domestic violence to review their social policy on early marriage. It gives a greater understanding of the causes, effects, challenges as well as local driven policies that can help reduce early marriage in the wa municipality to help policy makers and other stakeholders work in partnership with both victims and perpetrators in order to find a lasting remedy to early marriage. A better understanding of the dynamics around early marriage will motivate more action around reducing early marriage rates, particularly given that decreases have stalled in recent years and to inform programming assisting teenagers who married before attaining age 18. It will also generate useful data that would prompt further research into the subject.

1.6 LIMITATIONS

I was confronted with certain difficulties in the course of the study which are worthy of mentioning. It was noted during discussion with the girls that, some were worried, this resulted in too much time wasting. Financial constraints for assisting me for data collection from the five communities through payment of transport, was also one of my major challenges because the research was self sponsored. illiteracy was part of my limitations, some of the respondents may have proper information about the study but they hide it because they do not understand the importance of the study. I was considered an outsider, so therefore, some do not give full accounts of themselves

with the view that, giving full information about their experience is like selling themselves and the entire community to rest of the world.Despite clarifying my mission and intention from the beginning, I still got a lot of requests for interventions and handouts. Some of the respondents threatened to withdraw their participation if I was not willing to provide some assistance. However, I made it clear to them that I cannotmake any promise nor provide the requested assistance but gave them references of relevant authorities who could look into their issues.

1.7 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This study is arranged into five chapters. Chapter one deals with the introduction and discussion of the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions and objectives of the study, the significance, limitations, ethical considerations, definition of key terms and organization of the study.

Chapter two touches on the review of related literature on Early marriage taking in consideration, the concept of marriage, the value of marriage then and now, age at marriage, legal age of marriage in Ghana, disparities between age of consent to sex and legal age of marriage in Ghana, forms of marriage, the concept of early marriage, brief history of early marriage in the world, early marriage in Ghana and beyond west Africa, reasons for early marriage, effects of early marriage, policies and conventions on early marriage, local driven policies to ending early marriage and finally the theoretical framework guiding this study.

Chapter three contained the methodology. It presents arguments for the choice of the research methodology. Specifically, it touches the profile of the study area, selection of field, research design, research method, target population, sampling technique and sampling size, data collection methods as well as the sources of data. The fourth chapter is devoted to data analysis and discussion, here, the conventional content

analysis of the qualitative content analysis approach was used to analyzed the data, responses from the participantswere translated into English which were further reduced into themes through coding and condensing the codes and finally represented in tables and figures as well as narrative explanation. The final chapter which is chapter five concentrated on the summary of findings, conclusion drawn and recommendations as well as Areas for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

 Introduction

This chapter presents the reviewed literature from other scholars and researchers related to this Study. The literature is reviewed using the following sub-headings: Marriage, Marriage Then and Now, Age at first Marriage, Legal Age of Marriage in Ghana, Disparities between Age of Consent to Sex and Legal Age of Marriage, forms of marriage, Concept of Early Marriage, Brief history of Early Marriage, Early Marriage in Ghana and beyond West Africa, Causes and Effects of Early Marriage and Policies and Conventions on Early Marriage. The chapter also discusses the theoretical framework that guided the study.

2.1 Concept of Marriage

Marriage refers to a union between a man and a woman after they have gone through all the necessary processes in society and are therefore legally recognized as husband and wife so that their children would also be recognized as legitimate (Kottack, 2009). Marriage is more than an agreement between a man and a woman, it is a societal affair that involves the relation of both partners.

 It is a moment of joy and a milestone into adulthood which cause for celebration among the couples involved. marriage unites people from different families and background which bring about social cohesion and togetherness in society leading to peaceful coexistence and harmonious living (Qurisunbing and hallman 2003). In the African traditional setting, marriage is not about choice but a compulsory activity for all adults which is associated with procreation and without procreation, there was no

marriage and the couples would be regarded as useless people in society (Kihuha, 1992, Mbiti, 1990) people enter the marriage contract for purposes of child bearing. Having children is a process through which family membership is increased, because new members of society are created. When more people die without having children, human existence on the surface of the earth may gradually come to an end. It is in view of this that, both the Holy Bible and the Holy Quran also instruct mankind to be fruitful and multiply in order to fill the earth. In most societies, marriages are arranged especially in sub-Saharan Africa and negotiations are done by the parents without the consent of either one or both couples (Ember et al 2002). The Western style of marriage is different in that, the two people getting married choose their partners and decide when to get married. In this case, marriage is seen as comparism between two people to the exclusion of all others and procreation need not result from the Union (Mbiti, 1990).

2.1.1 The Value of Marriage Then and Now

The view of marriage is changing with high rate of divorce instead of "death do us apart" when couple realized their marriage have developed a lot of challenges, The only way to do away with such challenges is to divorce. In the 1950's, marriage lasted longer and divorce was considered as a taboo. Marriages has become difficult and more difficult to be sustained considering how divorce rates has rise in the last few decades. Hundreds of research studies has been reviewed in a book titled, "making marriage work " to understand how and in what ways marriage has changed. The evidence shows that marriage has become difficult and a number of reasons accounted to that, such as the adoption of no fault laws in the 1960's which tells us that breaking up in marriages was a choice by any of the couple or both which was acceptable and

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the reason for breaking up cannot be questioned by anybody. The laws gave people the free will to choose their own way of doing things. The negative stigma associated with divorce is removed which allows couples to regain their good image in the society. It also promotes gender equality. women do not rely on their husbands for financial security because there are more and better employment opportunities which they engage in to be financially stable. Women no longer suffer in a long standing relationships because they can divorce if they are not satisfied in their marriage. They can wait as long as they want before they can marry or remarry.

Prior to the 1960's, men have control over women in the marriage institution but the situation is changing. In the past, men have the power and control of the marriage such as decision making even in matters that affect the lives of women but today, women advocate for gender equality and challenges men dominance over them in the society. men and women have different roles which are given differential value by society giving much power to men over women. In the past, men were seen as bread winner of the house and women were regarded as house wives whose main responsibilities are to maintain the home, taking care of the children among others.

Today, some women are household heads in some parts of Ghana such as the wa municipality and Africa as a whole. In the past, marriage was the only avenue one could have sex but today, marriage has lost one of its most famous and exclusive benefits. As far as human interactions are concerned, conflict is bound to happen. couples in the past disagree with one another in their marriages, women were beaten to some extent have been denied food and sex as a punishment for misbehavior. All these happens to couples but were done in silence because to them, once the marriage has been sealed, only death can separate them but today, if one of the couples feels

threatened or unsatisfied with their circumstance, the next action to be taken is to call for a divorce. Marriage was the only legal avenue for child bearing and nurturing of children. Most fathers rejected children who were born out of wedlock and are raised by either their grandparents, other close extended relatives or charity homes. but today the enachment of child support laws, child care centers, paternity test among others, a mother or father who is financially sound can better take care of his or her child without a partner. this makes child bearing like sex to become acceptable outside marriage.

After carefully looking at how marriage was in the past and now, I came out with the conclusion that, there are substantial changes that occur in the institution of marriage taking into consideration people's perception about marriage. The processes involved, the roles couples play in marriage, the value of marriage, the types and forms of marriage that exist, the types and forms keeps increasing as we move from one generation to another. the next section touches on the age of marriage. Here, I will be looking at what constitute the right or legal age of marriage taking into consideration what the laws of Ghana talks about right or legal age of marriage and also what age is not legally accepted for marriage or the age category that constitute early marriage in Ghana.

2.1.2 Age at Marriage

The age at marriage is of much attention because it is the beginning of a milestone to adulthood in many parts of the would thereby denying them education, employment and participation in societal decision making whiles exposing them to risks of pregnancy and childbearing. women who marry early have a greater risk of unwanted

pregnancy leading to higher completed fertility. Differences in age helps in explaining changes in fertility across populations and also helps to explain the trends in fertility within individuals over a period (United Nations, 2005: Eze and Dodoo, 2007). Age at marriage varies with societies and at different times. In Africa, for examples, age at marriage for females is few, this is because, laws on marriage do not strictly spell out a minimum age. Uche 1976 and Khasiani 1995 also found out that most Kenyan communities supported early marriage. It is observed that, the median age at marriage is going up due to education opportunities. In industrialized countries, however, marriage before age eighteen was relatively uncommon among the older group of women and continues to remain so situated in young women (Alam Guttmarcher Institution 1998).

Marriage at age 11 in predominantly Christian societies is also generally higher (Bledsoe and Cohen, 1993). This is perhaps due to their greater emphasis on formal education and monogamy. GiKenye (2007) asserts that in some cultures, providing equal education for both boys and girls clashes with their indigenous lifestyle yet it is a recognized fact that when boys and girls acquire education they develop skill and acquire more information and knowledge which makes them better fit in a changing would especially in the changing job market. The difference in culture, religion and government intervention have therefore, been shown to affect the age at first marriage. Many of these young girls who are married early, pubertal growth is still progressing and they have neither reached full mental nor physical maturity. They also have not had the opportunity to finish their primary education (GiKenye, 2001).

Dolphyne (1991) rightly observed that arranged marriages or child betrothal and subsequent early marriage may have worked well in the past but now things have

changed and continue to change so that a girl may refuse to marry without her consent. This may create problems if she cannot be persuaded to marry the chosen partner or suitor, the bride wealth that may have been already transferred to the girl's father has to be refunded which sometimes may not be possible as the parents, depending on their economic status, may have already used it. This may be followed by coercion or tricking the girl and sometimes outright force. At times, the girls may try and succeed in running away and may be lucky to find rescue from outsiders since such girls do not expect any sympathy from their families as they are supposed to have let them down.

The experiences the young brides and would be brides who may be as young as 12 years go through can be quite traumatic. Young brides sometimes suffer permanent damage to their health in the process of child bearing because their bodies are not matured enough to support it (Gikenye, 2001).To help reduce early marriage, programs can foster policies and norms that support later marriage and offer services, resources and options to families to delay marriage. Assuring girls school attendance, even if not at the appropriate grade for age is protective of girls reproductive health fostering delayed marriage, delayed sexual debut among those sexually active, increased contraceptive and condom use. The next section touches on the legal age of Marriage in Ghana.

2.1.3 Legal Age of Marriage in Ghana

A number of laws in Ghana do not support marriage below eighteen years. some of the relevant laws include the marriage Act 1884-1985 and the children's Act 1998 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana. It is given in section 13(2) of the children Act 1998 that anyone of eighteen years and above can legally go into a marriage. This is

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because any person who is eighteen years and above is given the right to vote which is recognized in the laws of Ghana. Aside Ghana, there are other international conventions and or practice which recommends eighteen years as pre-requisite to enter into marriage. Across the Globe, 82 percent of the countries in the world prescribed eighteen for marriage, sixty – seven countries in Africa also prescribed eighteen years, they have come to a common consensus on the age because of the difficulty in enforcing a higher age for marriage and not that it is widely practiced by most countries in the world indicating acceptance. The minimum age of eighteen years given is better than below eighteen years. About thirteen countries in Africa, has prescribed below eighteen years for marriage whiles some have given as low as 13 years if a girl attain puberty at an early stage.

However, some African countries (5) have recommended above 18 years with highest been 21years for marriage. Increasing marriage age to 23 makes them physically, socially and psychologically strong before they give birth to children is discriminatory and may not be true for every woman that, at age 18, she would not be socially, physically and psychologically strong enough to give birth to children. Maturity of a person do to directly goes with age so therefore, increasing the age of marriage is not sufficient that the person will be able and ready to assume responsibilities in the marriage.

 Also certain cultural practices in Ghana such as the "Trokosi" requires a young girl to get married at a tender age. It is important to note that, the laws of Ghana frawns upon anyone who force a person below eighteen years into marriage which is treated as an offence and the culprit is to suffer one year in prison or a fine of five hundred Ghana Cedis or both. The state need to review this punishment to a more harsh one which

will deter people from this practice. The next section touches on the Distinction between age of consent to sex and legal age of marriage.

2.1.4 Disparities Between Age of Consent to Sex and Legal Age of Marriage in Ghana

According to statistics from UNICEF(2014) and Ghana's multiple Indicator for Cluster Survey (MICS), 15 million girls across the globe marry before their 18th birthday and out of these 4,000 young girls get married everyday. In Sub Saharan Africa, where there is much prevalence of this phenomenon, it is expected that the number of early marriages could increased by 2050. In Ghana, one out of four girls marry before 18th birthday. These statistics shows that early marriage is a worrying situation which gave birth to a global call for action to eradicate early marriage by 2030. In Ghana, the legal age for marriage and the age of consent of sex are similar to international ranges from 13 – 18 years. In most cases, the age of consent to sex is much lower than the legal age for marriage in many countries of the world. Most international conventions such as the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, the united nations conventions on right of the child gives a common age of 18 years as recognized age for marriage.

Similarly, under the law of Ghana, 18 years is the recognized age for marriage which can be seen in the children Act and criminal code Act of Ghana. Before this universal agreed age for marriage, age for marriage use to vary depending on whether it is by ordinance, religious laws or customary laws thus when they reached puberty. There is a long standing debate on the age of marriage and age to consent to sex. Some argued that the age of consent to sex should be raised to 16 years whiles others wanted it to

be in the same level to age for marriage. The debate is still in existence after almost two decades which comes mainly as a result of efforts in trying to end early marriage in Ghana by 2030.

Those who are of the view that the age to consent to sex should be raised draws their stand from the children's Act which defines a child as someone below the age of 18, meaning a 16years old child is still a child and so therefore, cannot make right decision as to when to have sex and the implications of having sex and protecting him/her self from unwanted pregnancies. Abortions has become the only option for these young girls who got pregnant at age 16 because she cannot legally marry at that age and these abortion comes with their own problems thereby compounding the woes of these young girls.

They are too young to protect themselves from the implications and consequences associated with having sex at age 16 so therefore, should not be allowed to have sex. Others are also of the view that it is in the interest of the child as required by law if the age of consent is raised. They believe that if a 16year old child is old enough to have sex then he or she is also old enough to face the consequencies associated with it. They added that, it should not be tolerated even though teenagers have sex at that age. Our society will be much corrupted in terms of morality if every child at that age is having sex. The law should encourage them to do the right thing. Aside, these arguments, some are also of the opinion that there are no problems with the laws governing age for marriage.

They added that, the age of consent to sex is in line with international practices which are usually accepted and are in the best interest of the child. Children develop physical changes in their bodies when they reach puberty which makes them attractive to the opposite sex. These bodily development are natural which comes with affection

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and attraction, no matter the constraints imposed, some will definitely find a way to satisfy their curiosity. We need to find ways to ensure that teenage who are sexually active do not engage in indiscriminate sex to get unwanted pregnancies and be forced to marry at a tender age we can learn from the way other people are handing it in their countries and try to learn from them and implement some of their ideas that are tensible in Ghana to help eraduate is one way by which comprehensive sexual education young girls about then we can use to educate young girls about their reproductive health and the teenage get the right information, they will given knowledge and their attitude will change.

Contraceptives should be made available for these teenagers and they should also be taught on the right use of these contraceptive so as not abuse them. They concluded by saying that, what we needed as a country is education and making available contraceptive so that teenagers can have control of their sexually we need to support effort to eradicating early marriages in Ghana because of the damage associated with it such as increase illiteracy, poverty and against our fundamental human right among others. If we really want to make any meaningful impact in our effort to ending early marriage in Ghana, the country is making efforts to eradicate early marriage by the year 2030.

2.1.5 Forms of Marriage

Marriage is a cross-cultural institution that enjoins two people together in sexual union, taking into account the socio-cultural beliefs, norms and practices, as well as meeting the legal requirements of the society in which the marriage is being conducted. Marriage has a strong cultural entreaty, and that normally distinguishes marriages from one society to another. The types of marriage differ for different

societies, with culture and religion acting as the primary drivers of what is acceptable as marriage in most countries. In general, marriage comes in many forms, including monogamy, polygamy, polygamy, polyandry, cohabitation, child marriage, and same-sex marriages. Child marriage and same-sex marriages are illegal in many countries. In the case of Ghana, the Criminal Code (Act 29), 1960 as amended criminalizes child marriage and same-sex unions. Customary marriage is the most common form of marriage practiced in Ghana, and is contracted through acceptance and simple rituals between family members of the prospective couple. Customary marriages are registered under the Customary Marriage and Divorce Registration Law, 1985 (PNDCL 112). The processes that are followed and the specific practices involved with customary marriage in Ghana vary from group to group depending on the culture, beliefs, and practices of the local area and the particular ethnic group(s) found there. Among the Akans, customary practice requires the man to present some predetermined list of items, including physical money, to the woman's family on the day of marriage (Owurasah, 2015).

As a sign of affirming mutual agreement between the man and the woman, the woman's family representative openly asks the woman thrice as to whether the items should be accepted for the marriage to proceed, and the woman would have to respond in the affirmative, testifying that the marriage is not being forced on her. This affirms the fact that customary practices in Ghana generally do not encourage forced marriages. Marriage in Ghana also has a strong unifying tool, not only between the man and the woman involved, but also between their families (Agyekum, 2012); implying that at all times families strive to have mutual consent for marriage to occur. Such a strong family role in marriage has the tendency to overshadow the preferences of the prospective spouses. Betrothal marriages, for instance, have historically been

initiated by family members of prospective spouses whilst the latter were still young, below the ages of consent. Although such betrothal marriages are consummated only at adulthood, there is subtle Page coercion that compels the betrothed to accept the terms of the marriage agreement and to consummate the marriage. The next section touches on the concept of early marriage. So many definition emerges as to what constitute early marriage from different international conventions which has generated some debate but for the purpose of this thesis, my definition of early marriage will be based on what the laws of Ghana says about early marriage which is marriage that takes place without the full consent of one or both parties and 18 years is set for all forms of marriages, any marriage below 18years is regarded as early marriage.

2.2. The Concept of Early Marriage

Early marriage refers to any form of marriage in which one or both parties are below 18 year (UNICEF, 2005). According to (UNIFPA, 2006), early marriage is also referred to as child marriage which is defined as "any marriage carried out below the age of 18 years before the girl is physically, physiologically ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage and child bearing" it also involves any form of marriage without the consent of one or both couples whether the marriage is registered or not, the most comprehensive bill for rights for women thus the convent on the elimination of all form of discriminations against women states that, any marriage below eighteen years should not be given legal status and must not be encouraged. It further recommended that the minimum age for marriage should be 18 years. by that time, "they have attained full maturity and capacity to act".

However, according to (UNICEF, 2000), most marriages are not done to the interest of young girls because majority of the marriage include some element of coercion and are based on the consent of their parents. There is no single definition of early marriage in the world which has generated debate among some scholars and activist. Some scholars argued that the focus should be eliminating the consequences of early marriages instead giving an age bench mark for which boys and girl can enter into marriage (UNIFPA, 2006). Those who disagreed with the universal age for marriage are of the view that, we are different people from different geographical settings and our way of life is not the same and we have different world view and understanding of who a child is so therefore, it will be very difficult to determine which marriage is appropriate and which is not. How some people may define early marriage will be different from how other people from a different cultures will preserve it. However, any marriage below eighteen years will be regarded as early marriage in this thesis, the next section touches on |Brief history of early marriage in the world.

2.2.1 Brief History of Early Marriage in the World

According to Boyte (2010), early marriage is an old tradition wayback in the Ancient Greece. Marriage of younger girls at a tender age of 14 was not uncommon but was a common practice in Ancient Rome (Sheri and Stritof, 2009). he further mentioned that young girls were married off at tender age between 12 and 14 years because women were under the custodian of their fathers.McLaughlin(1997) points out that, according to the Medieval Canon Law, Any boy or girl above seven years and below 14 years for males and 12 years for females is meant a child. Usually, the marriageable age starts at 12 years and they were not counted as child marriages. Women enter into marriage at age 14 during the middle ages when the practice of

early marriage continued. In 1371, due to the persistent increase in early marriages, the average age of marriage for men was increased to 24years and women to 16 years. By 1427, men delayed their marriages until they were in their mid thirties (30's). Rich girls at the time marry at a younger age than poor girls. According to Herlihy (1985), during the medieval times, in Italy, the average age for marriage was 17 years for girls, in England and Germany, it was 18 years and in France, it was 16 years. All these was for their first marriages. However Melisende (2007) gives the following examples as exception: in 1350, some marriages were done at age 13 years such as the marriage of Bianca of Savoy and Duches of Milan. Also, in (1158) Theodora Comnena, who was 13 years of age, married King Baldwin III of Jerusalem. In (1182), Agnes of France was married to Andromcus comnenus at age 12 when she was a widow. St. Elizabeth of Portugal was married to king Denis of Portugal and gave birth to three children at age 12 and shortly after their marriage, Catherina Sfora was betrothed at the age of 9, enter into marriage at age 14 and gave birth a year after her marriage thus age 15. The next section touches on specific dimensions of child marriage in Ghana and beyond West Africa.

2.2.2 Early Marriages in Ghana and beyond West Africa

The probability to read and write is sex percent lower and seven percent lower of completing secondary school education every year if teenagers marry before attaining age 18, (World Bank, 2014), one of the regions in the world with the highest rate of child marriage is the sub – Saharan Africa but now the situation differ to a large extents within other region (UNIFPA, 2012). There is a clear variations in the roles of men and women in the society where girls mostly depend on and assisted by her husband. Early marriage enables men perform the role of taking care of their partner

financial as required by society (UNIFPA, 2006). It becomes difficult for young girls to assume the role of being a wife and a mother so therefore; these young girls mostly are left on their own without the necessary support or assistance (UNFPA, 2006). According to (UNICEF, 2001), early marriage is associated to rurality, poverty and level of education. In view of this, UNICEF(2001) added that in most part of the world, women who are poor in rural areas used early marriage a way of moving away from their economic hardship, it is also used as a way of safeguarding the virginity of the young girls, prevalence of sexual transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS and poor implementation of laws prohibiting early marriage. The report also outlined the consequences associated with early marriage which include partner violence, denial of education, reproductive health issues, psychological issues and abandonmentof young girls.

In conclusion, the report suggested the need for researchers to research in the impact of early marriages on the social, economic and psychosocial well being of the teenagers. supporting the well being of girls, Assisting girls with vocational opportunities to improve their economic wellbeing, providing incentives to support female education, advocacy, building the self confidence of adolescent girls to take charge of their own development. In all, the recommendations given by UNICEF (2001) centered around education in efforts to eradicate early marriages, supporting teenage mothers as well as advocacy and building network. Another report on the " Traditional and cultural practices harmful to the girl child" by the United Nations African Economic Commission (UN, ECA): what is the way forward to eradicate early marriage?

A review of child marriage interventions shows that reform of legal and policy framework is necessary but not sufficient to eliminate early marriage (Malhotra et al, 2011). Powerful interventions exist when, they, build the confidence of young girls with the right information and skills, girls have access to quality education as well as providing economic support and incentives for families to help keep their girls in school to delay their marriages geared towards improving upon the quality of their lives. Individuals and other social groups in communities who are kicking against early marriage need to supported. Reconstruction of girls movement into adulthood without marriage requires building an understanding on the issue with influential people such as community and religious leaders to arrive at a consensus on what constitute early marriage and ways of dealing with it. In many communities, early marriage is deep rooted in their religious values and cultural practices which is very complex and sensitive so therefore, changing behavior and attitude of the depend on their world view (Gemignani and Wodon, 2015). In efforts to build support for policies towards ending early marriages, we need to carefully assess the causes and dangers associated with early marriage by bringing on board faith based organizations and community leaders (Karam, 2015).

In some countries in the world, the involvement of faith and community leaders can be part of deliberations to make family law reforms and building the confidence of women and young girls but would not be sufficient to bring about success (Walker, 2015). In this thesis, the main objective is to provide data for such a dialogue by providing local driven policies that can help solve the issue of early marriage in the wa municipality where respondents shared their experiences and local realities on how the issue can be solves using local content solutions after several attempts by

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national laws and international conventions as well as agreements to eradicate early marriage, yet, the situation still persist. The hope is that such data can help reduce the menace which requires the collective efforts of all stakeholders because no one person can do it alone.

2.3 Perspectives of early marriage

There are a number of theories and debates towards explaining and understanding of early marriage and these explanations differ from place to place because, early marriage is rooted in the culture and traditional beliefs of the people which also vary from region to region. Despite the differences in view of early marriage, we could have a common voice and agenda in efforts to eradicate early marriage (Heimonen, 2002). Considering the issues highlighted above, I have reviewed literature on the perspectives on early marriage in the local, regional and global context which is further grouped into socio-cultural, right based, economic and human development approach.

2.3.1 The Socio-Cultural Framework: Customs and Traditions Related to Early Marriage

The socio-cultural framework can be explained as "customs and traditions", as the two related items influencing early marriages. Customs and traditions are artificial beliefs, practices and stories which are inherited from forefathers and passed down to the current generation (Hemonen, 2002). The age and time for marriage are given by culture which are accepted by the people and as such hold it in high esteem (UNICEF 2001). Marriage and other cultural practices such as female genital mutilation are part of the sustainability of ethnic groups and family structure. There are several studies on

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marriage but often fail to talk about early marriage in the wider picture on marriage in terms of the age, time, processes involved and its acceptance or rejection by the society (NCTPE 1997).The reasons behind the practice of early marriage are many and different when viewed from the perspective of socio-cultural context, some of which include virginity of the girl in marriage and keeping relations between families. Some are even betrothed in arranged marriages even before they are born, and some families give girls to men for marriage who are wealthy in society without a second look at the consequences involved (FMRWG, 2000;2001;2003: Heinonem, 2002).

The consent of the girl is silent in arranged and coerced marriages. Early marriage is likely to be high in societies where the honor of the family depend on its women. Every family wants to protect its dignity in society and as such will marry off their daughters at a tender age to keep that honor. Virginity is also noted a condition for marriage and if a girl loses her virginity or gives birth outside of marriage, the girl is not regarded as a woman even if she is twelve (12) years old or below (Heinonen, 2002). The reason why most parents marry off their daughters at a tender age is the fear factor of being dishonored in society for delaying their child marriages to create links between families and to secure good marriages for their daughters (FMRWG, 2000; Heininem 2002), but it does not explain to us why girls are mostly married off than boys. The main reason is discrimination between the sexes in their roles which are giving differential value by society (FMRWG, 2001, 2002, 2003).

2.3.2 The Economic Framework: The Links between Early Marriage andPoverty

Young girls are seen as a means of moving out of their financial woes because these girls have seen as burden on the family economy and are therefore, married off to

salvage the family economic situation. Some are also of the view that when they marry them off, it will be followed by some economic benefits (Hemonen 2002). Here, the main aim of marrying them young is to ease economic burden but which subsequently deny them education to give the boys chance to further their education. Which is not fair? Married young girls are abducted and raped in order to cement their marriages because of the high bride price demanded by some parents in some 25 rural communities of Ethiopia. (TeshmoeSequi, 2002). recent studies depict that poverty and illiteracy are the main causes of early marriages "Globally", early marriage and early child bearing have been more or less abandoned by the wealthiest section of society, even in poor and highly traditional countries.

Virtually, everywhere, poor women in rural areas tend to marry younger than those in urban areas and educational levels also play a critical role (UNICEF, 2001).

FMRWG (2003) further indicated that, "poverty is a major cause, as well as consequence of early marriage for many young girls under the age of 18. Marrying young girls to men who they largely depend on for survival is likely to put some of them in a good family environment but largely, the dangers and consequences add up to their vulnerability and her children. "the younger the age at the time of marriage, the lower the probability that girls will have acquired critical skills and developed their personal capacity to marriage adverse situations that may affect their overall welfare and economic wellbeing" (FMRWG, 2003). According to Tan (2004), he argued that, girls once married, would not be able to study in school, Isolated in society and vulnerable who are likely to give birth to children who will grow up and follow same trend.

2.3.3 The Human Development Framework: Early Marriage Hinders Overall

Development

Early marriage hinders overall development and in order to get a complete understanding, I will conceptualize it in the concept of "human development" in terms of "education". The concept of human development is explained around the concept of education. Education was "rediscovered" as a development theme in the 1970s, which is very important and was viewed as a measure of development in terms of economic growth which was adopted by the world Bank, "education was a form of "human capital" capable of generating high returns for economic growth (OXFAM, 2000). According to them, education open doors and improves upon the quality of the lives of the people through the acquisition of skills and knowledge necessary for our development. It is seen as the fundamental human rights of the people and denial of it is likely to cause poverty " the intergenerational cycle of poverty and illiteracy admittedly involves many complex, deep rooted issues for which there is no simple solution". (OXFAM, 2000). Understanding the link between human development in relation to early marriage and education, the social development and educational attainment of young girls is hampered by early marriage which has implications for the wellbeing of the girls and their families. Denial of education by early marriage limits girl participation in discussion and debates on issues of their personal and national level development (UNICEF, 2001).

The under development of girls perpetuates, when they drop out of school for early marriage because it limits their life opportunities and are therefore, more likely to end up in poverty as well as their children (FMRWG, 2000). The perception held by many families of the girls is that, when they pushed resources into the girl's education, she

goes further to the highest level and the family of the husband will rather benefit from her and not her parents hence the more reason why boy's education is mostly supported and girls married off because their position in the house is temporal while that of the boy is permanent (FMRWG, 2003). Rural communities are well noted in perpetuating this gender gap in education. According to (AGI,1997) there is low school attendance for married girls between the ages of 15-19, most research findings shows that, the main cause of school dropout is early marriage. The dwindling nature of female enrolment and their limited access to resources in society must be given the needed attention by stakeholders in order to deal with it. "women's lives are to a large extent, bounded by their activities and responsibilities as wives, mothers and food producers, processors and distributors. Women are seriously vulnerable to physical dangers of an attended birth. It is also noted that high parity (high birth rate), which leads to a high risk of mortality greatly impaired their health." (Adepotu and oppong 1994, in HirutTerefe 2000).

2.3.4 A Right-Based Approach: Early Marriage and the Human Rights of Girls and Women.

The universal principle of human rights sets a common standard that every one is subjected to once you are a human being because they are indivisible, independent and universal which are enshrined in the international agreements, conventions and declarations (FMRWG, 2003). Early marriage is regarded as a human rights issue. In Ghana, there are national laws that set to protect the human rights of its citizens particularly in area of early marriage.Early marriage has breached a number of Human Rights of the girls such as freedom of association, right to consent among others which all vollates the fundamental rights of the girls. Ghana is part of countries

that have signed international agreement in eliminating early marriage such as the convention on the eliminating of all forms of discrimination against women. in most countries like Ghana, we have recognized three types of marriages which include the customary, religious and marriage by ordinance. there is unequal age of marriage for boys and girls in countries that have legal minimum age of marriage. the legal age of marriage for boys is mostly two years higher than that of the girl. most of these marriages in this part of our world does not seek the consent of the girl but based on the choice and consent of their parents. girls are Mostly regarded as persons who cannot make decisions for themselves but unfortunately, many girls in sub-sahara Africa who are below 15 years are not regarded as Children while they are physically developed (FMRGWG, 2003). Government who has signed agreements and conventions must make conscious efforts to deal with early marriage because the impact of early marriage on the lives of these girls is numerous. it also violates a number of human rights including those mentioned in the convention on the rights of the child and the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW). The CEDAW committee recommended that "the minimum age be set at 18 because men and women marry, they assume important responsibilities and consequently, marriage should not be permitted before they have attained full maturity and capacity to act". also opposing to coerced marriages is the United Nations children's fund and they believe that "because marriage under the age of 18 May endanger a wide range of Human Rights (including the right to education, Leisure, good health, freedom of expression, freedom from discrimination), the best way to ensure the protection of children's right is 2 sets the minimum age limit of 18 for marriage". there are still debate across the globe most especially in African on what constitute early marriage.

 Despite the international conventions and agreements in defending and protecting the rights of children and safeguarding them from the consequence of early marriage, some girls are married early in some African countries such as Ethiopia for purposes of culture and economic reasons. According to (Bunting, 1999), she argued that, there is no relevance in setting a minimum age of marriage because every Society has its own definition for early marriage which are associated to their culture. she proposes that governments should be allowed to set age for marriage below 18 years but that should notcall for any form of discrimination against them. She added that, this makes more meaning than the minimum age of 18 set by the international conventions. Women suffer more discriminations in the world because they are Seen to be different to men in terms of their roles in Society this brings about male dorminance in our Society (Strathern 1972, In Messer 1996). According to (Savell, 1996) the focusing on women's experiences is necessary,with this perspective, outsider assertion about the nature and reasons for the continuation of a certain culture practice can be tested and perhaps, challenged. Secondly, we can appreciate the form and content of the internal struggles, debates surrounding the issue.

Finally, we might subsequently engage in a form of criticisms that supports those internal agitators in culturally appropriate ways. he further added that, external criticisms should not be silenced by cross culture Dialogue such criticisms should be constructive and supportive to the issue of International debates and norms. the next section touches on the reasons influencing early marriage which was reviewed from Literature in Ghana and beyond West Africa.

2.4 Reasons of Early Marriage

A number of factors influences early marriage in the world which differ from region to region according to UNFPA, early marriage and poverty are inteetwined, early marriage is likely to emerge where poverty dominates, families attempts to marry their girls to men as a way of reducing the economic burden of the family which happens when the girl is at a tender age (UNFPA, 2006). Similarly, according to the world Health Organization (WHO), one of the main causes of early marriage in the world is poverty. Other factors also include the differential treatment of men and women and the discrimination of women across the world(WHO,2013). The continuation of the trend despite efforts to eradicate it, is as a result of the standards and roles set by society for girls(World Bank, 2012:102). there are other factors that affect the prevalence of early marriage which are further discussed as follows.

2.4.1 Poverty.

poverty is a crucial factor perpetuating early marriage in the world.a young girl is Mostly married at a younger age to older men a way of escaping from their financial woes by most families which is much practice in some Middle Eastern and South Asia societies. in some traditional communities in sub-Sahara Africa, the groom's family receive bride wealth for their daughter in the form of cattle, Sheep, goats among others (Rwezura, 1994) this is because, in Africa, the value of those items is associated to marriage. bride wealth is used to exchange a girl for her labour and fertility in the form of either cash or kind. marriage is seen a transaction in communities where early marriage is practice which has an economic impact for a family and the young girls represent the commodities and at other times, these girls are used as avenues to settle old debts.(Eaw,1993).Bride wealth promotes the

practice of early marriage in most communities of Africa because bride wealth is valued much which has motivated many parents to marry their children at a tender age (UNICEF, 2007).

Furthermore, the Education of young girls is not given much attention but much preference to boys education in some communities. for instance, Young girls in some countries are often hired into marriage by fishermen who have the cash. therefore, the girls become resources for their parents who married them off at an early stage as a means of lessening the family economic woes. (international center for research on women, 2007) According to Ackerly, (2009). the idea of using girls as means of improving the family economic level in low-income family's has push them into marrying off young girls at a tender age. Globally, girls from 20% needy household are more likely to end up in marital homes at a tender age. poverty together with cultural practices and suicidal preference for boys encourages parents to take boys to school and also, Walker (2012) revealed that the situational context that gave birth too early marriage in Africa is poverty, uncertainly, vulnerability and above all, poor families economic Burden are reduced when they marry their girls before age18 because, their responsibilities of providing the basic life Necessities of those children are relieved.

2.4.2 Traditional and Cultural Practices

Traditional and cultural practices contribute to early marriage such as female genital cutting which is defined as removal of part or whole of the clitoris of girls for cultural reasons. Female surgery is another name which is used in place of it and are mostly performed in different countries of the world such as parts of Africa, Asia, south America and the middle east. Those who practice it believes that the procedure

enhances the health chastity of the girl. However, the origin of this practice is still unknown. According to (WHO, 2006), An average of 140 within women have undergone FGC globally, with 4 to 5 million processes performed every year on female infants and girls, in Kenya, FGC is mostly practiced by the Mausai, Abagusii, Ameru among others and the essence of the practice is to reduce the sexual temptation and pleasure of girls thereby protecting their chastity. According to (FIDA, 2009), the rite is performed when a young girl attain adolescent stage, approximately between 14-15 years among the pastoralist communities. Sadly, this is the stage at which the girls would either be completing her primary education or class two of her secondary education in Kenya.

The resulting effect on the circumcised is that, they are ready for marriage. According to (FIDA,2009), 99% of Somali girls are circumcised and according to the Somali culture, virginity of girls in marriage is valued much and a means of ensuring that girls remain as virgins until marriage so therefore, the rite is very necessary in their life (Jadelsa et al, 2005). The reasons influencing early marriage vary from one country to another. According to ICRW study conducted in Ethiopia, keeping alliances between families was the reason why most children were betrothed before birth. Although, it has reduced drastically as a result of social change, it is mainly practiced among the maasai in Kenya. In south Africa, a young girl can be married as early as 12 for females and 14 for males because the laws provides respect for traditional marriages (Nawal,2006).

2.4.3 Women's Status in Society

The status of women in our Society encourages early marriage. women are seen as people with little brains and cannot contribute to development so therefore, are mostly neglected and despised (UN, 2004). Cohoon, (2010) analysis showed that traditional and cultural beliefs gave birth to women lower status in Society which kills their efforts and confidence to participate equally in roles in the society. for instance, in Nations that are experiencing cases of early and coerced marriages, there are regulations paving way for girls to marry earlier them boys and once these girls are denied acess to education, they will grow up to be uneducated mothers who will lack the necessary human resources to challenge future developmental challenges in our Society and are likely to perpetuate early marriages in the future.

for instance, a girl is seen as a stranger in the family because she will grow up and end up at another man's home so therefore, the birth of a girl is treated as moments of sorrow and heartbroken even among some educated families in the sub-Sahara Africa thus a girl is mostly seen as aburden and boys are seen as defenders of the family so therefore, much preference is given to their education and girls are mostly married off at a younger age. in Mali, there is 72:1 of female: male ratio of marriage before age 18 whilst it is 21:1 in Kenya (Nawal, 2006). gender inequality is associative to cultural practices which gives much importance two male children leading to poor treatment of women and girls in Society.

2.4.4 Religion

Young girls who have reached puberty have a greater chance of committing adultery, religion frowns upon sex before marriage so therefore the only way to maintain their

chastity and protect them from having sex before marriage is to marry them early and guide them to live in accordance to the will of their creator. For instance. Islam prescribes a young boy or girl who reaches puberty stage to be married immediately so that they will not be polluted withthe indecency of the world (CDF, 2008). The relationship between religion and child marriage differ in the report. According to the (ICRW, 2007), There is no relationship between any specific religion and child marriage across the globe. But various religious beliefs and practices can have influence on early marriage in different regions of the world.

According to (UNFPA, 2012), Religion plays a role in perpetuating early marriage in some parts of the world but has not been discussed into detailed in the report however, religion has not been discussed much in most of the reports concerning early marriage in the world. According to Macklin (1999) under a Muslim culture, a female valued for her reproductive capacity and it can significantly promote the occurrence of early marriage of girls in that community. Owning o this reason, according to him, Muslim tradition has strongly impacted the marriage of young girls because generally, the Muslim community fears that unmarried girls will become promiscuous once they enter adolescence, as a result of which the family will be put to shame. A daughter's promiscuous daughter who engages in sex before marriage. In Malabar, rural plut of kerala, the traditional nature of child marriage has given rise to Arab marriage in which grooms from Saudi Arabia maryy adolescent Muslim girls (Govind, 2002) .

According to the Priest of Kasulu, he argued that '' these days with western ideas spread everywhere; girls stay unmarried as late as 30 years. It is very Scientific and modern, but in our church it is prohibited such girls are neither clean nor

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blessed"Thus this strong religious message enforce the view that marrying early is best as supported by the one of the priests representing Ethiopian's Orthodox Church.

2.4.5 Honour and keeping the family from disgrace

Early marriage is not a new phenomenon, it has been with us over centuries and it still exist which can disgrace the whole family if it not kept to tradition. Families risked of been excluded from the community if their girl refuse to go into early marriage. In some areas of the world such as the country side. Where there are many girls, in order to safeguard their sexuality, girls are mostly taken out of school when they experience their first menstruation. The young girl is groomed to assume responsibilities as a mother and wife to take care of the home rather than continuing their education to attain more knowledge's. This trend exist among generations thereby maintaining the existence of early marriages (UNFPA, 2006).

Acoording to (CDF,2008) argued that in Daressallam and coastal region, poor parenting is indicated as a reason of child manages. Some children start their sexual life very early because most parents do not have the skills necessary to educate the on their sexual affairs so therefore, parents were blamed for failing to proper nurture theIr children and as such do not teach them good conduct and behaviour.

2.4.6 Parental irresponsibility

Parents were blamed for their irresponsible behavior as the cause of early marriages in Dar es Sallam. These parents were of the view that many children begin having sex very early because they do not have proper care and nurturing at home and some do not have the necessary skills to be able to educate their children to be of good conduct and behavior as far as sexual activities are concerned(CDF, 2008). The next section

touches on the effects of early marriage by some scholars and researchers in relation to works done within the scope of Africa.

2.5 Effects of Early Child Marriage

Several factors affect the lives of teenagers who marry early before attaining age eighteen 18 across the world. Even though boys are sometimes affected, girls are mostly affected and these effects vary from individual to individual. There exist more dangers associated with early marriage which negatively affects the lifestyle of these girls and can be both physical and psychological. Others are also denied the right to decision making, association and do not have a voice as to when to get pregnant and the number of children to give birth to thereby compromising on their fundamental human rights. Instead of continuing their education, most of these girls are forced to stay home and assume the role of taking care of the home which is likely to psychologically affect their lifestyle and in worst situations, leading to some committing suicide (Saylu, Ayaz and Yuksel, 2014).

Some of the young girls lose their lives due to early pregnancy by developing complications while others lose their lives in the process of delivery (Svanemyr, Chandra-Mouli, Sigurdson Christiansen anfMbizvo, 2012:1). Furthermore,there are additional consequences of early marriage that exist which are explained below:

2.5.1 Denial of Participation and Decision-Making

Education is a basic human right that every child is entitled to. It is enshrined in international treaties and conventions that are legally binding to signatory states such as Kenya. For example, Article 26 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights states that

everyone has a right to education which should be free and compulsory at least in the elementary and fundamental stages.

A girl has the confidence to act when she can make contributions in decision-making without Fear or panic(Klugman et al 2014). Similarly, associated to this is gender inequality which is the deprivation of women and girls from having a voice in decision-making even in matters that affect their own lives, family and the community at large. Young girls' ability to contribute to the development of society is hampered by a number of vulnerabilities such as under education and are mostly neglected in household decision-making. These girls are mostly under the power and control of their husbands and mother-in-laws thereby limiting the opportunity to make their own plans and aspirations in life. Including the above is their inability to continue education, not having a voice as to whether to continue their education or not but all decisions lies in the hands of their husbands thereby limiting the girls' literacy skills (Malhotra et al 2011: plan UK 2011: Volgestein 2013).

These young girls are not regarded in the family as people who can contribute and manage the finances of the household (Becker Fonesca-Becker and Schenck-Yglesias 2006: Blumberg et al 1995, Haddad, Hoddinott, and Alderman 1997: Jain and Kurz 2007: World Bank, 2012).Dropping out of school, isolation from friends and the workplace denies them of social support which is very crucial to their emotional well-being which reduce their access to social networking thereby reducing their productive levels. (Duflo, 2011) To add up, the conjugal rights of women and girls are trampled upon because they do not have the capacity to determine when to have sex and the number of children to give birth to thereby producing more children than the economic capability of the family to better take care of them which adds up to the

cyclical poverty level of the family. (Raj 2010, UNFPA 2013) and most times, these girls do not have the confidence to speak up and report such cases.

The power of young girls to make decisions regarding their lives in the household therefore becomes very limited.Husbands and mother-in-laws have full control of decision-making to the detriment of the young girls which limits their economic lifestyle because, these girls cannot take any initiative to improve upon their economic status without the approval of the husband or mother-in-law. Women and girls cannot own certain resources in society including land for farming. All these have a great impact in their economic decisions. When women are allowed to make family economic decisions, it will help in raising household expenditure in education and health (IFRII, 2003). Similar studies indicated that, with increase in a woman's access to credit and income, household expenditure on food, clothing and children's education would also increase (Backiny-Yetna and Wodon 2010: Bussolo et al, 2011, Hoddinott and Haddad 1995).

There is also inequality in agricultural productivity because women are not allowed to own resources such as land which limits the contribution of girls in the agricultural sector which is another gap that needs serious attention (The World Bank and ONE 2014).Early marriage comes with intra and inter-generational effects on the individual and the community in which they live which can result in reduced community investments. This form of intergenerational effects can take you down to the other generations as a result of constant neglect of the needs, interests and aspirations of women in decision-making in society. This has a long-term effect towards the achievement of our development goals (Klugman et al 2014). According to (Beaman

et al, 2012: Chattopadhyay and Duflo 2003: Chen 2009, Ramaswani and Mackiewicz 2009), the involvement of women in political decision-making increases the greater chance of investment in social services such as those that are closely related to education and economic growth and development.

2.5.2 Denial of Educational Attainment

Young girls' education ends prematurely when they are married early which makes them less productive beings in society because, they do not acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them contribute meaningfully in society.According to Field and Ambrus (2008) and Nguyen and Wodon(2015), they indicated that,early marriage can lead to a dramatic decrease in the probability of young girls to complete Secondary Education each year.

Early marriage has negative impact on young girls' progress in education to the highest level because, they drop out at any level of their engagement which is mostly at the basic level, this data is from a survey from parental and teacher responses on the reasons why girls drop out of school (Nguyen &Wodon 2015: Wodon, Nguyen &Tsimpo, 2015). Girls' financial earning and productivity are reduced which is as a result of their lower educational attainment, denying them the chance to learn important skills (Khanna, Verma&Weiss 2013). The lack of education of these young girls comes in various forms. The effects can trickle down to the unborn generation depriving them of voice in decision which all accounts to the woes of these girls. It also comes with both short-term and long-term effects. Formal education will enable these girls to acquire the necessary skills and confidence that will make them proactive to be able to participate in developmental discourse in society and

contribute meaningfully in the development process. Girls who married early are denied these social networks and look isolated in their relationships (UNICEF 2014). Dropping out of school weakens girls' capacity to engage in open discussions and debate towards national level development.Dropping out of school also makes it difficult to get accurate and useful information on the health and well-being of themselves and their families (Abu Ghaida and Klasen 2004; Semba et al 2008).

It is expected that when there is an increase in the knowledge and resources of the household, it will have an effect in sustainable increase in the education and health of their children (Boyle et al 2006). Mothers who are educated are able to provide good nutrition to their children to look healthy and in instances where mothers' educational level are low, their children are likely to look malnourished and affected with diseases (Pfeiffer, Ghoyd& li 2001: Smith &Huddad 2015).In rural areas, secondary education often means that a girl must leave home to live in a school dormitory. Parents fear that this may expose her to risks including premarital sex and pregnancy. To protect the girl-child from being sexually harassed by male teachers and boys in school, parents opt to withdraw their daughters when they are still young and marry them off before their virginities are broken. The removals from school limit the girls' opportunities to develop their intellect. They also lose out on socializing, making friends outside their family circle, and many other useful skills. This reduces their chances of developing their own independent identity (UNICEF, 2001).

2.5.3 Labor Force Participation

Early marriage denies young girls' access to education as discussed earlier which affects their employment opportunities and the type, nature and terms of their

employment. It is a hindrance to enter into the formal paid employment (Grown et al, 2005). There is a drastic reduction in the economic growth and development of communities when there is little or no participation in the labor force which also have implications for the women and their families (Chaaban& Cunningham 2011: Elborgh Woytek et al 2013: Smith &Haddad 2015).Labor force participation is greatly linked with secondary and post-secondary education (Cameron, Dowling&Worswick 2001: Mammen&Paxson 2000) but sadly, most girls who are married early do not reach that stage. Young girls who married and drop out of school do not have the necessary skills and knowledge needed at the formal paid jobs which makes them limited to the informal sector and community level work which are mostly seen with inferior working conditions (income).Large family size and the assumption of women as housewives have a great impact on labour force participation negatively.

Early marriage can delay entry into the labour force thereby reducing the growth and competition in the marketplace. Also, the traditional and cultural norms associated with early marriage reduce the likelihood of women participation because, women are not allowed to participate in certain activities in society as men and women play different roles in society which are associated to culture. Early marriage leads to frequent pregnancies and child bearing which are linked with higher risk of complications and morbidity (Prata et al 2010). Women face health and economic consequences when they give birth and requires some time to recover which is likely to take them out of the labor force participation (Koblinsky et al, 2012: UNFPA 2014).

2.5.4 Violence

Marrying young girls below eighteen (18) years is considered to be a form of violence against girls (Amin 2014: Solotaroff&Paude 2014). Gender norms which gives much preference to boys over girls influence the practice of early marriage thereby promoting the acceptance of violence. Many girls are married off by their parents with the mind of safeguarding them from violence and sexual harassment (UNFPA, 2012) but in actual fact, such protection is not cemented. These girls still suffer physical and sexual violence from their partners once the marriage is sealed (plan UK, 2011). These young girls who are married at a tender age suffer emotional trauma in their marital home and also experience a greater sense of isolation and depression in their marriages (Le Strat, Dubertret& Le Foll, 2011: Nour 2009).

Intimate partner violence is more likely to exist among girls who are married below eighteen (18) years than those who marry after eighteen (18) years (Clark, Bruce & Dude 2006). Young girls who are married before eighteen (18) years are more likely to suffer sexual, emotional and other forms of violence in their marital home at the hands of their mother in-laws and husbands (UNICEF, 2014). These young girls are unable to speak up and report these acts of violence because they depend on them for survival. According to (Kanesathasan et al 2008) who conducted a study in two states of India indicated that, girls who married before age eighteen (18) were twice as likely to report intimate partner violence than girls who marry after age 18. Intimate partner violence comes with numerous effects which include but not limited to severe injury, chronic pain, sexual and reproductive health problems (Campbell 2002: Lamb and Peterson 2012: World Health Organization 2012). It also affects girls' mental well-being leading to depression, anxiety and stress disorder (Carbone- lopez,

Krutschnitt& Macmillan 2006). According to data from the government on harmful traditional practices in Afghanistan, the data revealed that, in each year, 2,400 women may commit self-immolation in the country with early and forced marriages as well as domestic violence stated to be the causes (Khana et al 2013).Even though intimate partner violence affects the individual directly, children are also affected too (Duvury et al 2013: UNICEF 2014). The effects on the children can be measured in both short-term and long-term.A child school performance, and health can be affected by violence (Anand, Desmond Marque and Fuse 2012). When children witness any form of abuse, they are more likely to replicate and multiply it in their own homes. (Kushor& Johnson 2014).

2.5.5 Health

There is higher rates of malnutrition, isolation and depression among girls who are married earlier (Le Strat, Dubertret& Le Foll 2011: Nour 2009) and high maternal death rate than girls who marry after 18 years. Children are also likely to suffer the effects from their parents, which is termed as intergenerational effects. Early marriage has a strong association with tradition, gender norms and poor mental health (Nour, 2009). Young girls are not able to determine when to have sex with their husbands thereby making them have unwanted pregnancy and violation of their conjugal rights (UNFPA, 2013: Walker et al, 2013).

In Africa, children are seen as resources, therefore, girls are pushed by their husbands and mother in-laws to give birth to many children immediately when the marriage is sealed, which results in unhealthy birth spacing. Early marriage is associated to increased induce abortion in Uganda (Kaye et al 2007). The combination of young

girls' physical status and poor medical care during pregnancy put them at a greater risk of complications (Xu et al, 2003). According to UNFPA 2013: World Health Organization 2014), complications during pregnancy are the second leading cause of adolescent death each year with nearly 70,000 recorded deaths. The health effects of early marriage go beyond a young girl but also the unborn child is also affected too (UNICEF, 2014). The children of these young girls are also likely to suffer low birth weight and malnutrition (Wachs 2008).

The health of a married young girl has implications to the betterment of the household. When a girl suffers ill health, then there is the likelihood that the child will look malnourished and unexpected illness can affect the family income because large sums of money will be used to buy drugs and to cater for the medical expenses which all contributes to the family economic woes because, money that could have been used for some productive activities will be directed to meet those unintended costs all of which multiply the cycle of poverty.The next session touches on the various policies and conventions on early marriage both in Ghana and at the international level.

2.6. Policies and conventions on early child marriage

There are a member of international and human rights conventions that exist to deal with issues of age, gender equality, early marriage as well as the rights of women and children. For instance, women and men have the right to marry and form a family if they are of full age which is stated in the Article 16 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of human rights(UNICEF,2001:3). Some other conventions include Article 1 of the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of slavery , slave trade and

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institutions and practices and the 1966 International Convenant on Economic, Social and cultural rights as well as the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political rights. Men and women have equal right to freely make a choice of their life partner and to enter into marriage any time of their choice which is stated in Article 16.1 of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women.(UNICEF,2001) . Every child has the right to protection which means that no body should compromised on the rights of these children by abusing them, maltreatment , mental or physical violence, sexual abuse as far as their existence in the society is concern.(UNICEF,200). Early marriage is a complex phenomenon which is mostly found in sub Saharan Africa. There are some generalization in the causes, effect and solution to early marriage which can be applied in any where. There are so many varying studies and reports in effects to understand and find a lasting solution to this phenomenon.

Due to the complex nature of early marriage, multiple researchers made efforts to understand the dynamics surrounding early marriage but yet the situation still remain with us as stated in the reports of UNICEF. Specifically, UNICEF defines early marriage as any form of marriage where one or both couples are under the age of 18years so therefore any marriage at age 19 or 20 is not regarded as early marriage in this thesis based on the age definition of 18. The social understanding of early marriage is gradually changing so therefore the report is still relevant even though it was written in 2001. Other reports does not acknowledge the fact that the causes of early marriage differ between regions such as the report written by World Bank on empowering women and young girls for shared responsibility (2014). Some conclusion is made in the UNFPA report on ending early marriage from 2012 which

presented a description of the differences that exist in areas where early marriages are prevalence, giving the differences between different areas was brought to the surface on a gathering of different influences and effects of early marriages in different regions. The next section touches on review of some local driven policies in dealing with early marriage in some parts of Africa.

2.7 Local driven policies that can help eradicate the issue of early marriage

2.7.1 Drama Performance:

Safeer Ullah Khan(2013) the Bedari theatre program argues that theatre performance resonates with people in a way laws cannot as we try to change community behavior and attitude towards early marriage.

2.7.2 Developing protective By-law

The findings of UNICEF.(2017) in Malawi states that traditional leaders and chiefs build support to ending early marriage by developing local laws in their various communities by revising rules which give legal consequences to men who perpetuate early marriages by marrying these young girls whiles also educating parents to take responsibility by sending and taking care of their children in school. This approach worked very well for them with tremendous improvements in the areas as far as ending early marriage is concerned.

2.7.3 The role of Traditional and Religious leaders:

The findings of Gillian, Mann and Fuscher (2005) work in Zambia stated that community and religious leaders who advocate against early marriage had a positive impact on behavior and attitude in their respective communities. The next section

touches on the theoretical framework of the research and I have adopted the theory of change on early marriage developed by UNICEF in 2014.

2.8 Theoretical framework

I have done a careful research on different adequate theories and have found four theories which include the theory of change on early marriage developed by UNICEF(2014), social conflict theory , social feminist theory, psychological social development theory among others, yet a suitable theory for my research in my opinion in trying look for local solutions in dealing with early marriages in the Wa municipality, I will focus on the theory of change on early marriage developed by UNICEF (2014) in my analysis of ways in dealing with early marriage. The theory calls for greater partnership of all stakeholders in efforts to develop local messages geared towards educating communities on positive behavior and attitudinal change. it also recognizes collaboration between state institutions, organization and diverse practitioners on the need to partner with communities and volunteers in communities who are against early marriage to arrive at a common understanding about actions needed to eradicate this menace. The theory recognize that, there is no single solution to ending early marriage but requires the collective efforts of everyone to contribute his/her quota and that these efforts must respond to local context solutions.

2.9 Conceptual framework

Marriage before the age of 18 years in Ghana is a violation of a constitution of Ghana and a number of international human rights conventions. However, for many young girls in the wa municipality, marriage is perceived as a means of securing their future survival and protecting them. Girls are forced into marriage by their families while

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they are still children either in school or out of school in the hope that marriage will benefit the girls and their families both financially and socially. The study is guided by the impact of Early Marriage Model (IEMM) which was adapted by the researcher. The model is based on the association among perception of the concept of early marriage itself and the moderating variables that influence early marriage as well as developing local content solutions in dealing with early marriages. The interaction among the determinant, intervening and outcome variables is presented in the IEMM, figure 2.1 below
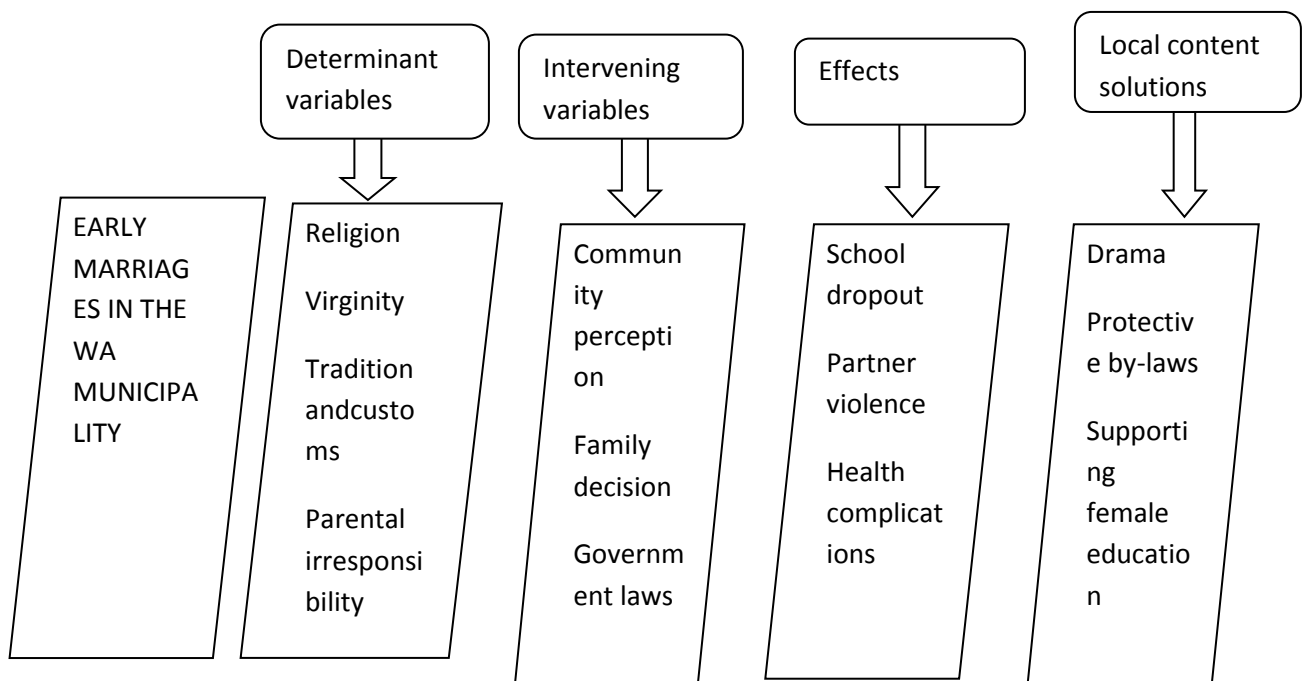
This model shows the Determinants variables, intervening variables, effects and local content solutions of early marriage in the wa municipality. Research and literature have exposed a good number of factors for early marriages in the world, in Ghana, in the upper west region and wa municipality in particular. The factors range from traditions and customs, religious ties and ignorance of the human rights. Also early marriage is considered as a means of protecting girls from early sexuality, pregnancy

and HIV/AIDS. The literature review section of this study explains in detail the determinant factors for early marriages. There are three moderating variables identified by the researcher in relation to early marriages. The first variable relates to the decisions made by the girls' families. This is because children themselves, according to existing literature have no decisions regarding their own marriage. Thus, the fact on whether to marry or not depends on the families where the girls belong. Community perception on the practice is another variable which stands in between early marriages and their effects.

The laws regarding early marriages can also be considered as other moderating factors. According to Children's Dignity Forum (2008) the protection of human rights, particularly children's rights, has received little attention in sub saharan africa. Literature on early marriages and the child's education has focused much on the way a child herself is affected. It is the fact that early marriages deny girls from accessing education. Therefore, this model strives to provide local contents answers in dealing with early marriages to bring down its effects in our society.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This part of the thesis consist of profile of the study area, selection of the field, research design, research approach, sample techniques, target population, methods of data collection, sources of data and ethical considerations.

3.2 PROFILE OF STUDY AREA

The wa municipality is the hence tone of the 11 administrative district that make up the upper west region of Ghana. The municipality portions administrative boundaries with Nadowli district to the North, the Wa East district to the east and the Wa West to the west. The municipality has between latittude 9?50N to 10?20N and between longitudes 9?40W to 10?15W.it has a country of about 234.74Km, approximately 6.4% of the country of upper west region. The deduction of the location of the municipality is heightening bilateral trade and commercialism with neighbouring francophone countries. The wa town has the possible to turn and be upgraded into both an industrial and commercial hub for the north-western corridor of Ghana. The wa municipal assembly was created out of the wa district in 2004 with legislative instrument (L1) 1800 in pursuant of the policy of decentralization started in 1988. The assembly is empowered as the highest political and administrative organic structure of the municipality charged with the duty of ensuring the execution of national policies. Under subdivision 10 of the local government Act 1993(Act 426), the assembly exercises deliberative, legislative and executive functions. By this Act, the assembly is responsible for the overall development of the municipality.

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Figure 3:1 Map of Wa Municipality
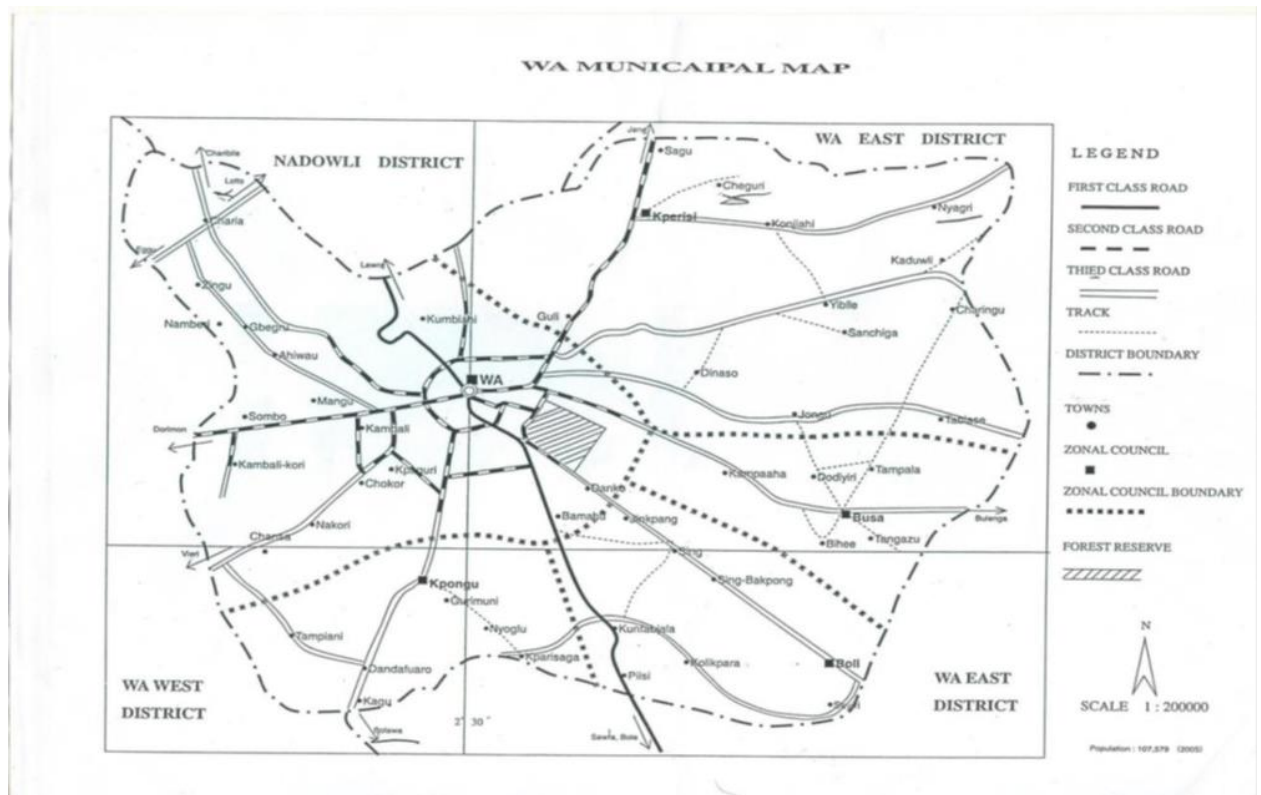
Source: GSS 2010, Population and Housing Census

3.2.1 Population

The upper west is the youngest part in Ghana. In 2010, the population of the region stood at 702,110 with a growing rate of 1.9% per annum. Harmonizing to the 2010 population and Housing Census, the wa municipality has an entire population of 107,214. Presently, the entire population of the stands at 127,284 with males constituting 61,826 and females of 65,458 with an urbanized population of 71,051(GSS,2012) representing 66.3% compared to the national urbanized portion of 50.9% and the regional urbanized portion of 16.3%. This implies that, the wa municipality entirely accounts for a 62% portion of the region's urbanized population in the twelve month of 2010. The municipality besides is reported as holding an urban

population growing rate of 4% as compared to the national urban growing rate of 3.4% (Wa municipal Assembly, GSS 2012, GSS 2005). The population construction of wa municipality revealed a preponderance of the young person over the aged and females(51%) over males(49%). The young person organize 49% of the entire population with a possible working population of 47% and 4% aged. This means a high dependence ratio since the economically active population is 47% compared to the dependent population of 53%.

3.2.2 Educational Attainment and Literacy

Over 6 out of every 10 persons 51,067(67%) aged 11 years and older in the municipality are literate whiles the remaining 27,206(34.8%) are not literate. More than half of the literate population 51,067 representing 60.7% are literate in English and Ghanaian languages, 33.7% are literate in English only and 2.8% are literate in Ghanaian language only. The least language of literacy is French with 0.3%. Again, 28,498 of males representing 55.8% aged 11 years and above are literate and 9,974 constitute 36.7% are not literate. Literate females of 22,569 representing 44.2% and that of non literate females 17,232 constitute 63.3%(GSS 2010). Educational institutions found within the municipality include 87 Early childhood development schools, 76 primary schools, 59 junior high schools, 4 Technical vocational schools, 1 secondary/ technical school, 7 senior high schools, 2 special schools, 1 polytechnic, 1 teacher training college, 1 nursing training college and 1 university. The proliferation of educational institutions at all levels means that young girls have greater chance to go to school to highest level which is a way of delaying their marriages when their education is encouraged and supported. Despite the presence of a number of tertiary institutions such as the university for Development studies of wa campus, a

polytechnic, nursing training college as well as teacher training college in the municipality, less than half of the population 11 years and older are literate. One contributory factor could be that the university and other institutions mainly serve non residents. Measures must be taken to ensure that the population benefits from the location of these schools thus the wa municipality. Also, attention should be paid to upgrading the standard of schools at all levels of education in the municipality.

3.2.3 Religion

Three main religious denominations exists in the wa municipality which include Islam, Christianity and the African traditional religion. slam is the largest religious group in the municipality. Muslims make up 65.9% percent of the population, Traditionalists is 4.1 percent and other religions (0.4%). Persons with no religion accounts (0.6%) who has no religion. Islam has the highest proportion of males (65.4%) and the highest proportion of females (66.3%). There are more females than males in Islam (66.3%). For the rest of the religious groups except Catholic males (18.5%) there are more males than females. There is a peaceful coexistence and harmonious living among these religious groups although they have differences in the worship of the almighty. Islam and Christianity are the dominant religious groups in the municipality and all have their various educational units at the basic level to help promote education among people of their faith. Even though all have their various units but it does not brings about discrimination as far as education is concern. Muslims allow their children to attend Christian schools and the vice versa.

3.2.4 Supporting Organizations / Institutions

The wa municipality has been grouped into five zonal councils which include Busa, Kperisi, Boli, Kpongu and Wa town with 73 unit committees. Each community in the municipality has a unit committee members who work through the electoral area to the assembly. In the assembly, there exist five sub committees who run the affairs of the assembly which include finance and administration, Development planning, Social services, Security and Justice(GSS 2017). It works in collaboration with different organizations to help solve the problems of the people.

In education, the municipal assembly makes conscious efforts in the design, monitoring and implementation of programs and projects such as the provision of educational infrastructure. The municipal assembly is a major stakeholder of the Ghana School Feeding Program(GSFP).its function include releasing resources and receiving reports during the programs implementation. Besides, the assembly design and implement measures to enhance female enrollment, attendance and retention in school(GSS,2017). Traditional authorities role to the development of the municipality and the country at large cannot be ignored because any development that is taking place without recognizing the value of culture is bound to fail. Traditional authorities in the municipality plays a vital role in ensuring good governance which relates to matters concerning land administration, conflict management and peace building and their ability to mobilize revenue.

In the area of Non Governmental Organizations, a good number of NGOs exists in the wa municipality which include but not limited to the Ghana Red Cross Society, Methodist Agricultural Project, the Diocesan Development Office of the Catholic Church, Baptist Agricultural Project, North West Development Agency, Plan International, Ghana Suntaa-Nuntaa among others. The activities of these

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organizations complement the development efforts of the municipal assembly. For example, they provide educational needs for students of poor homes and organize literacy programs on the need for education. Vulnerable groups such as Girls have been their focus and by extension the entirety of the female population in the wa municipality.

The NGOs sometimes collaborate with state and local institutions for the achievement common objectives. For example, they often engage in public education to create households awareness on the role of female education, their inclusion in decision making and the need to benefit from educational interventions such as the GSFP. The success of the GSFP, for instance, will depend on support of organizations such as NGOs that are operating in the wa municipality (GSS,2017).

3.2.5 Social and Cultural Structure

Available data from the population and Housing census (2010) revealed that about 80.4% of the inhabitants in the wa municipality originated from the Mole-Dagbani group which consist of the Dagaabas, Waalas and the Sisaalas. However, there also exists an influx of other ethnic groups in the municipality who migrated from other parts of the country and have settled in the municipality. Even though majority of the three main groups speaks their mothers tongues, the influx of other ethnic group made learned and speak other languages which helped in reducing language barrier as far as human interaction in the municipality is concerned.

There is also a considerable number of inter marriages that exist among the people in the wa municipality. For example, if a waala man wants to marry a Dagaaba woman, then he must follow the necessary cultural procedures laid down by the Dagaaba people as far as their marriages is concern and so is the Sisaala and the vice versa.

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This form of inter marriages has brought about ethnic tolerance and peaceful co-existence and harmonious living among them in the municipality. Majority of the Waala and the Sisaala have adopted Islam whiles the Dagaaba people have also adopted christianity as religion of their faith. Aside, these three major ethnic groups in the municipality, there are also a number of other existing ethnic groups within the municipality which include the Dagomba, Moshies, Frafra, Ewe, Gonja, Grushi and Zabarima among others who are engaged in secular work and other commercial activities. Inter marriages also exist among these minor ethnic groups as well as the major one which has helped in reducing social tension and marginalisation in the municipality.

3.2.6 Gender Mainstreaming

There is a great sense of inequality betweenthe sexes in the municipality.men and women, boys and girls are seen differently and therefore are given different roles in the municipality which are given differential value. Men are the decisionmakers in the house and women are seen as house wives and therefore cannot contribute to development and are mostly left to activities such as cooking, fetching of water and perpetuating of the home whiles girls on the other hand are given roles such as sweeping, fetching of water and marriage.

They see a young girl to be ready for marriage once she is physically developed without considering her age and maturity to assume the role as a mother. Women and girls do not own resources such as land and are mostly voiceless even in matters that affect their lives these forms of inequalities is against their fundamental human rights and are marginalized which kills their efforts to realize their full potentials so as to contribute to the development of the municipality and the country at large. Many

women are engaged into petty trading, hawking and or being home makers. Few are engaged into the public sector. Despite their weak position in the municipality, these women assume most responsibilities at home and some women are even breadwinners of some families so therefore, women need to empowered to build their confidence to take development into their hands so as to enable them contribute meaningful to their development and the municipality at large. For one thing, women are prone to discrimination in their reproductive role because of polygamy, early marriages and patriarchy. In another vein the weak economic position of women expose them to prostitution, neglect and other forms of abuse like widowhood inheritance, and exclusion from decision-making process. For instance there are few women in management positions in the Assembly.

Culturally, men and women are inhibited from taking joint decisions at the household family and community level. This calls for culturally sensitive approaches to planning and management of development programs. Such an approach will help educate both men and women on health, education, and also obnoxious cultural practices like Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), early marriages, elopement and widowhood rites and inheritance.

This will also promote mutual respect between the male and female as partners in development and members of the human role who deserve equal human, legal and political rights, justice and security. Poverty has remained a persistent feature/characteristic of the life of women in the Municipality. The combined effects of societal bias and other economic hindrances have resulted in the slowing down of the advancement of women. Majority of women therefore continue to operate under very difficult conditions. It therefore suggested that a community based support system should be established for women. This may include representatives from the

unit committees, traditional rulers, religious leaders and recognized opinion leaders who will provide support for victims of violence and other harmful traditional practices in the communities.

3.2.7 Marriage

Marriage refers to a union between a man and a woman after they have gone through all the necessary procedures laid down in the society and are, therefore, legally, religiously and customarily recognized as husband and wife. In the wa municipality, marriage is more than an agreement between a man and a woman. It is a communal affair that involves the immediate relatives of the couple and other members of the extended family system. It is the man's family that makes a marriage proposal to the woman and not the other way round. When a man meets a woman and the two agree to marry, the man informs his father or elderly person of their family about his decision. After the man's family is satisfied with the history of the woman's family background, the head of the man's family then proceeds to ask for the hand of the woman in marriage.

 As a matter of courtesy, marriage proposals are often accompanied by at least Colanuts for the Waalas, fowl, cows, cowries for the Dagaabas, cows, sheep, goats for the Sisaalas. Acceptance of these items means they have accepted the proposal and the vice versa. A day is therefore chosen by mutual consent of the two families for the formal proceedings to begin. However, there are also arranged marriages that exist in the municipality. The parents of the man or woman choose the potential spouse with or without the consent of the partners concerned. There have been cases in which young girls have been betrothed at birth to men without their knowledge and are forced to marry such men. Young girls suffer from early marriages in the municipality

which affects their educational progression and personal development. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2017), About four in ten (45.4%) of the population aged 12 years and older are married, 48.2 percent have never married, 0.5 percent are in consensual unions. Those who are widowed constitute 4.0 percent and those who are divorced constitute 1.1 percent. Among the married, 55.0 percent have no education. Of all married groups, the highest proportion that had no education is from the widowed category (81.8%). The highest proportion of the entire married group that had basic education is divorce (27.0%).

This may mean that there is less incidence of divorce among the educated compared to the uneducated (54.0%). Especially because the lowest proportion of the divorced are those who have had vocational, technical, and commercial education (2.6%) and tertiary education (3.3%). The proportion of married males who have no education is 45.3 percent and that of females is 63.0 percent which shows that the uneducated married females are more, proportionally. In the same vein, the proportion of married females with tertiary education is 2.0 percent compared to the proportion of married males which comprises 8.0 percent.

3.3 Research Design

Research designs are plans and procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analyses (Creswell, 2009).The research adopted the phenomenology. Phenomenology is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants. Understanding the lived experiences marks phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method and the procedure involves studying a smaller number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Moustakas,1994).in this process, the researcher brackets or set aside his or her own experience in order to understand those of the participants in the study(Nieswiadomy,1993).

Understanding the lived experiences of respondents on early marriage enabled the researcher to better understand the dynamics that surrounds early marriage in the wa municipality which enabled me to fully realize the objective of the research by drawing their perspectives, reasons for their engagement into early marriages, the consequences that are associated with early marriage as well as local content solutions in dealing with early marriages. The data collected for this research consist of in-depth interviews and multiple interviews with the respondents. The analysis go through the data and significant statements, quotes that provide understanding on how respondents experienced early marriage are highlighted. These significant statements and themes are then used to write a description of what the respondents experienced. Understanding the common experiences shared by respondents on early marriage can be valuable for groups such as policymakers and community members to help know

the dynamics of early marriage and device local driven policies that can help eliminate early marriage in the Wa municipality.

The research was a thorough one and note taking was systematic which enabled me get more realistic responses. The study focused on a small group from the population such as teenagers who married before attaining age 18,the teenage age category who were not married and are in school, Parents, Teachers as well as Staff of human rights in determining their perspectives, reasons for their engagements, the impact as well as local driven policies that can help solve the issue in the Wa municipality base on what is heard from my respondents, because these are what the study seek to address. Data were collated into a manageable form and narratives constructed around it whiles some examples were also used and also some numerical data were shown in the analysis.

3.4 Research Approach.

The research adopted the qualitative research approach for the study. One major feature of well collected qualitative data is that they focus on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings, so that, we have a strong handle of what 'real life' is like. That confidence is buttressed by local grandness, the fact that the data were collected in close proximity on early marriage, the influences of the local context are not stripped away but are taken into account the possibility for understanding latent, underlying issues. The research being one that involves the perspectives from the people and policy implications, was done in a manner that allowed for the sharing of experiences of persons involved in early marriages to enable the researcher better understand the problem. This approach was used to allow respondents share their lived experiences to enable me understand the various dynamics of early marriage

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including reasons, beliefs, opinions, practices and knowledge on early marriages in the wa municipality.

This approach was used throughout the study using qualitative data collection instruments such as in-depth personal interviews, FGDs and field observations to collect qualitative data on their perspectives, reasons, consequences and local solutions to eliminating early marriages in their own word which was analyzed and presented in figures, tables as well as narrative explanations.

3.5 Target Population.

It is the population for which the findings of the research are applied or for which information is required. In this research, the target populations include teenagers who married before attaining age 18, their age category who are not married and are in school, parents, teachers and staff of human rights. The reason for the selection of these categories of respondents is their experience, knowledge in early marriages in the municipality and concern for human rights.

3.6 Sample Size.

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2006:pp88), sample is a sub set or a small proportion of the target population from which specific information is collected. This means that a sample must give a true representation of the population. Sample size is therefore the exact number of units in the sample. My sample size for this research constitute 110 respondents who are well endowed with knowledge and experiences about early marriage which constitute a small proportion of the study population. The breakdown of the total number of respondents is as follows.

Table 1: Sampling Distribution of Respondents

Target Population	Sampling Technique Used	Sample Size
Teenagers who married before attaining age eighteen(18)	Snowball	30
Age category of teenagers who were not married.	Simple Random Sampling	20
Parents of teenage boys and girls	Purposive	30
Teachers	Simple Random Sampling	20
Staff of Human Rights	Purposive	10
TOTAL		**110**
	KEY INFORMANTS	
Chiefs	Purposive	3
Village Elders	Purposive	5
Gender Desk Officer	Purposive	1
Assembly Members	Purposive	5

Source: Field Data (2019)

3.7 Sampling Technique.

Sampling is the process of choosing the units of the target population to make up the sample to become the basis for estimating or predicting a fact, a situation or an outcome. It offers the opportunity to collect detailed information because it may not be possible to cover the entire population because of the large numbers involve. In this research, both the probability and non probability sampling techniques were employed for the study.

3.7.1 Probability Sampling

This is where each element in the population has an equal and independent chance of selection in the sample. The advantage here is that, as they represent the total sampling population, the inferences drawn from such samples can be generalized

(Frankel & Walled, 2000). This was used to select Twenty (20) of the age category of teenagers who were not married and Twenty (20) Teachers as respondents as well as selecting Five (5) Communities for the study. After deciding about the broad field of my field work, I had to still narrow it down. The wa municipality has been grouped into five zonal councils which include Kperisi, Busa, Boli, Kpongu and Wa township. Before, I started my field work; I informally visited all the five zones and have a series of informal discussions with some few selected persons such as the Assembly members of each community.

After some few deliberations, following the Simple random sampling technique, I ultimately selected one community from each of the five zones in the wa municipality and do my field work in them. Five communities were selected from the five zones in the wa municipality for my field work which include Sagu, Jonga, Boli, Kpongu and Zingu. The goal of the simple random sampling is to achieve a desire representation from the various sub groups in the population. Below is a tabular representation of the number of respondents from each community and the corresponding zonal community to which they were selected as well as the sampling procedure used to select the communities.

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Table 2:Zonal councils, Communities and Number of Respondents

Zonal councils	Communities Randomly selected from the corresponding zonal councils	Number of respondents from each community
Busa	Jonga	24
Kperisi	Sagu	23
Boli	Boli	19
Kpongu	Kpongu	18
Wa township	Zingu	16
	Staff of Human Rights	10
TOTAL		**110**

Source: Field Data(2019)

3.7.2 Non Probability Sampling

The non probability sampling are used when the number of elements in the population is either unknown or can't be individually be identified (Kumar, 2011). In such cases, the selection of the elements is dependent upon other considerations. The selection of respondents when using this technique does not necessarily require the use of statistical procedure. Snowballing and purposive sampling were the two main sampling techniques used in this research.

3.7.2.1 Snowball Sampling

In a research like this, the snowball sampling technique is more appropriate to enable me gain access to my respondents. In this case, the researcher begins with a respondent who subsequently recommends the next respondent and this continues till

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the right size is required. Under this sample method, the researcher has little or no control over the respondents but that is where objectivity is more enhanced. My first respondent was identified with the help of a local network of contact who subsequently identified a colleague and so on until I had about thirty (30) young girls and boys who married before attaining age 18. This sampling method was used because the research is very limited to a small sub group of the population. Above other sampling techniques, snowball sampling is relatively cheap and cost effective thus the researcher invests less money and time in sampling.

3.7.2.2 Purposive Sampling.

The researcher intentionally selects an individual who is supposed to be knowledgeable in the subject matter. This sampling technique is used when the knowledge about the issue is not evenly distributed in the population. The limitation here is that, it does not give every individual an equal chance of being part of the sample but base on the knowledge of the subjects in the subject matter. Here, only suitable persons were targeted thus people with particular characteristics that were better able to assist in the research. It was used to select thirty (30) parents of the teenage boys and girls and five (5) Staff of human rights as respondents for the study and also, it was used to select the municipal gender desk officer, five (5) Assembly members, five (5) village elders and three (3) Chiefs as key informantsbecause they are knowledgeable and had adequate and useful informationabout early marriageand are willing to participate.

3.8 Sources of Data

Globally, researchers used two sources of data for research which include primary and secondary sources. The primary data involves data gathered from the field by the researcher whiles the secondary data were already published documents which deals with parts or aspects of the study such as journals, scholarly articles on early marriage.

3.8.1 Primary Sources.

It refers to records of eye witness to events (Baker 1994: pp276). The primary source of data constitute information obtained directly from the field, these were obtained through in-depth interview by the use of an interview guide to collect information from Teenagers who married before attaining age 18, Age category of teenagers who were not married and are in school, parents of teenage boys and girls, Teachers and Staff of human rights on their socio-demographic characteristics, Reasons for their engagements, consequences associated with early marriage as well as local driven solutions towards eliminating early marriage in the Wa Municipality.

3.8.2 Secondary Sources.

It refers to records which are written materials which describes and/or interpret some past event either close to the time it occurred or in later years (Baker 1994: pp276). Data from secondary sources are information which are not collected by the researcher or work done by another researcher. The secondary sources used for this research include already published documents to solicit information and any other material that deals with parts or specific areas which include books, scholarly articles, internet and journals among others. The secondary data provided useful information

which enabled the researcher to get a grasp of the problem statement as well as reviewing literature based on the objectives of the research which inform the researcher about the various dynamics and challenges in the research area. In most instances of my analysis, the secondary data was employed to back up the findings of the research.

3.9 Data Collection Methods

Data collection is done to reflect the views of the respondents and you must be able to let the respondents freely give the information. This was done to enable me understand and explain the phenomenon. The researcher employed the unstructured and semi-structured types of interviews. The unstructured interview was conducted using a open ended questions as well as the semi-structured interviews. Extensive field notes were taken through multiple sources. The researcher used in-depth personal interview, Focused Group Discussions, Key informants interview and Direct Observation to collect qualitative data.

3.9.1 In-Depth Personal Interview.

According to Kvale (1996: pp19-37) an interview is a conversation, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meanings of the described phenomena. I employed in depth personal interview using interview guide. In-depth personal interviews enabled respondents provide a historical information about their situation and also allows the researcher have control over the line of questioning which gives the researcher the opportunity to probe for more details during question administration.open ended questions were asked throughout to enable respondents freely construct the answer which enabled me to ask follow up

questions on answers given to questions that are not clear, for clarity. The follow up questions enabled me to pursue unexpected trends, thoughts or outcome from the respondents based on the objectives of the research which include perspectives from the respondents, reasons for their engagement, consequences associated with early marriages and local driven policies that can help in eliminating early marriage in the wa municipality. The questions during the interviews were asked in the local languages (Dagaare and Waale) of the people to which they understand better and response were recorded with their consent and transcribed into text in the English language. Data collected were reviewed to arrive at a consensus during Focused Group Discussions.

3.9.2 Focus Group Discussion

It is an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic with a goal in mind. The group is guided by a facilitator who proposes a topic and guides the discussion process. The facilitator here is interested in group understanding or you want to understand consensus (Patton,2002) . This wasused to gather relevant data from key informants and other relevant people that have in-depth knowledge in the subject matter under study. Despite the fact that some respondents will not want to give certain vital information because of the presence of other respondents, it is one of the best ways in finding common solution to problems affecting communities.Four different Focus Group Discussions were held at different locations in the municipality with the help of a FGDs guide. The first One was with the teenage mothers and the age category who are not married and are in school in Boli community, the second one was with the parents in Jonga community, the third one was with a selection of participants from all the category of respondents in Kpongu community and the final

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one was with Teachers in Wa. Below is the breakdown of the number of focused group dicussions held and the number of people constituting each group as well as the communities in which each og the focused group discussions were held.

Table 3: Breakdown of Focus Group Discussion

Name of Community	Number of Respondents	Category
Boli	8	Teenagers
Jonga	8	Parents
Wa	10	Teachers
Kpongu	11	Mixed

Source: Field Data 2019

The teenagers group consisted of Eight(8) which include four teenagers who married before attaining age 18 and Four(4) of the age category who were not married and are in school, the second one consisted of eight(8) parents which include four males(Fathers) and four females(Mothers), the third one was a mixed, which consisted of Eleven(11) participants which include a chief, Two(2) village elders, Assembly member, two(2) parents,Two(2) teenagers who married before attaining age 18, Two(2) of the teenage age category who were not married and are in school and the municipal Gender Desk Officer and the final one was with five female teachers and five male teachers in Wa.

The FGDs were selected through purposive sampling and the objective was to explore explanations for some of the observed,opinions, perceptions and views of the community about early marriage given by the respondents. The languages used during the FGDs were Dagaare and Waale which are the languages of the people. The

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discussions lasted between 45-60minutes. Their voices were recorded and played back to them at the end of the discussion.

3.9.3 Key Informants Interview

Key informants interview were conducted by the researcher. Key informants interviews are qualitative in-depth interviews with people who know what is going on in the community. The purpose of using key informants interview was to elicit information from the key informants on what they know vis-à-vis the focus of a particular study (Gillham,2000). I introduced myself and what the interview is all about to equip the key informants so that they will be able to answer the question in the right way.. I also showed to them an introductory letter covering the research from the university.

The interviews were conducted in two local languages of the people (Dagaare and Waale). The researcher's fluency in these languages was an added advantage in building rapport with the respondents before starting the interview. I audio-taped and recorded all the interviews with the full knowledge of the respondents which were translated word to word into English language and the resulting texts were analyzed. A total of fourteen (14) key informants were purposively selected and interviewed. They included: five village elders, three chiefs, five Assembly members and the municipal Gender Desk officer. These were people with a wealth of knowledge about the community and they helped provide the relevant information needed. The study sought their opinions, views, perceptions concerning the Reasons and consequences associated with early marriage and local driven solutions to eliminating early marriage in the wa municipality

3.9.4 Field Observation

Field observation is a very good data collection technique. It is usually used to complement interviews in a way that it clarifies the data collected. it captures facial expressions, gestures, body language and non verbal indications that come with oral narrations that participants provide (Polkinghorne,2005). This thesis used observation during in-depth interviews to understand the responses that were provided. Any time one of the respondents is giving a response, non verbal expressions were noted. When a respondent is shaking his head or frown his face clearly indicates his disapproval whiles Nodding or smiling indicate their approval. These were written down immediately so as not to forget the vivid picture of these expressions.

3.10 Data Analysis and Presentation.

The process of data analysis involves making sense out of text and image data. It involves conducting different analysis moving deeper into understanding the data, representing the data and making interpretation of the larger meaning of the data (Creswell, 2007). It involves collecting open ended data based on asking general questions and developing an analysis from the information supplied by the respondents. In this research, the conventional content analysis of the qualitative content analysis is used to analyze the data. Here, the researcher is deeply involved in the data to pursue unexpected trends or thoughts. This allows for theories adopted for the research to be discussed in the research. The discussions include how data from the research contribute to knowledge by predicting a fact, a situation or an outcome as well as suggesting area of future research to deal with other dynamics that might have influence in increasing the issue or help in minimizing it.

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The main reason for using the conventional content analysis is to organize and elicit meaning from the data collected and to draw realistic conclusions from it. The problem here places emphasis on people's lived experience; so therefore, the data collected was qualitative data. The questions were asked in the local languages (Dagaare and Waale) and verbal responses from respondents in their local language were audio recorded with their consent and translated into English which was reduced into themes through coding and condensing the codes and finally represented in tables and figures as well as narrative explanations.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethics in research is creating awareness on how to conduct quality research. Taking into consideration the human rights of respondents so as not to violate their rights and also to avoid other unethical behavior such as plagiarism. Ethical issues begin and end with the researcher. Proper identification of myself was the first step in trying to be on a good ethical grounds. I duly identified myself and explain to them the purpose of the research and the type of questions to ask was made known to them. I also made them aware that, participating in the research is voluntary and one can withdraw at anytime. They were also made to know that whatever information that is collected from them would be treated as confidential. To ensure good ethical standard, I obtained an introductory letter which is an ethical approval from the Department of African and General Studies of the University for Development Studies, wa Campus. The work has not been attributed to anyone who do not contribute to the research. I also make sure that, all works that deals with part or aspects of the research that have been used in the research are appropriately acknowledged.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction.

This chapter of the thesis is based on data collected from the field and supported by literature review in the analysis which covers the demographic status of respondents and the four objectives of the research. The data is presented using tables with frequencies as well as text with narratives.

Table 4: Respondents Demographic Status

Category of		Age			Religion			Education					Sex		
		10-14	15-17	18 yrs above	Islam	Christianity	ATR	No. Edu	Primary	JHS	SHS	Tertiary	M	F	Total
Teenagers ... bre age 18		10	20	-	18	8	6	5	4	20	1	-	9	21	30
Their age c... and are in s...	not married	14	6	-	10	8	2	-	1	19	-	-	10	10	20
Parents		-	-	30	18	7	5	5	7	9	7	2	15	15	30
Teachers		-	-	20	12	8	-	-	-	-	-	20	10	10	20
Staff of hu...		-	-	10	2	8	-	-	-	-	-	10	7	3	10
		24	26	60	58	39	13	10	12	48	8	32	51	59	110

Field Data

Below is the breakdown of the table above on the Demographic status of the respondents.

The study also involved five categories of respondents which include teenagers who married before attaining age 18years, their age category who were not married and are in school, parents, teachers, opinion leaders and staff of human rights. The findings on the demographic status include Age, Religion, Educational level and Sex. To begin with, Age is very important in the demographic statistics of the research which enabled me to know the age group of the respondents. The findings showed that, out of the 30 teenagers who married before attaining age 18, 10 were between the ages of 10-14years and 20 wee between the ages of 15-17years. This means that early marriages is more among teenagers between the ages of 15-17years in the wa municipality. Among 20 of their age category who were not married and are in school, 14 were between the ages of 10-14years and 6 were between the ages of 15-17years. The parents(30), teachers(20) and staff of human rights(10) were all above 18years. In all, 24 were between the ages of 10-14years, 26 were between the ages of 15-17years and 60 were above 18years.

On religion, the data showed that, out of the 30 teenagers who married before attaining age 18years, 16 were Muslims, 8 were Christians and 6 were African traditional worshippers. Among the 20 teenagers who were not married and are in school, 10 were Muslims, 8 were Christians and 5 were African traditional worshippers. Among the 30 parents interviewed, 18 were Muslims, 7 were Christians and 5 were African traditional worshippers. Among the 20 teachers interviewed, 12 were Muslims and 8 were Christians. Among the 10 staff of human rights interviewed, 2 were Muslims and 8 were Christians. In all, 58 belong to Islam, 39

belong to Christianity and 13 belong to the African traditional religion.On the Educational level, the proper development of an individual or a group or a country is inseparable from high level of educational attainment. The research unveiled the level of educational of the respondents and the data showed that, out of the 30 teenagers who married before attaining age 18years, 5 do not have formal education, 4 had primary education, 20 had junior high school education and 1 person had senior high school education. Here, only three of the boys were able to continue their education but all the girls dropout of school. Among the 20 of their age category who was not married and is in school, only 1 person is in the primary school and the rest of the 19 were in the junior high school. Among the 30 parents interviewed, 5 never had formal education, 7 were primary complete, 9 had junior high school education, 7 were secondary complete and 2 had tertiary education. Both teachers(20) and staff of human rights(10) all had tertiary education.

And finally on Sex, out of the 30 teenagers who married before attaining age 18years, 9 were males and 21 were female. This means that early marriages is much prevalence among girls than boys in the wa municipality. Among 20 of their age category who were not married and are in school, 10 were boys and 10 were girls. Among the 30 parents interviewed, 15 were males and 15 were females. Also, among the 20 teachers interviewed, 10 were males and 10 were females and finally on the 10 staff of human rights interviewed, 3 were females and 7 were males. In all, 110 respondents participated in the research and out of these, 51 were males and 59 were females. This means that more females participated in the research than males.

4.2 Perspectives of early marriage

Stakeholder perspectives were drawn from the various categories of respondents in the wa municipality such as perspectives from teenagers, parents perspectives, teachers perspectives, perspectives from opinion leaders as well as staff of human rights.

4.2.1 Teenagers Perspectives

Early marriages mostly occur as a result of teenage girl being pregnant or a teenage boy impregnating a young girl and are mostly forced to marry each other even when they are not ready to. When unplanned pregnancy occurs, children are not given the voice to make a decision regarding their lives because they are considered to be immature to make or take decisions so therefore, parents are always the decision makers. Some girls are coerced into these unplanned marriages without their consent whiles others go into it with believe that, marrying early will give them power to decisions on their own. Also, the economic status of the husband also a motivating factor for the girls early engagement into early marriage. They are mostly pushed or forced to marry men that their parents perceived could take better care of them. Most of these girls who are pushed to marry rich husbands suffer at the long run because they do not enjoy their marriage as they wish and hence suffer a lot of abuses. One of the teenage mothers from Sagu lamented on her situation,

> *"Before we got married, he use to give me a lot of money and my parents for my up keep but after the marriage, I was left to feed myself and my child. He told me am no more a small girl so therefore, I should try and get myself something doing because that is what other women out there are doing. I went and complained to my mother*

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and she told me to go and stay with him like that and pray to God because all men

are like that."

Majority of the girls regretted having married at that tender age because it retards their development. This issue of early marriage limits their education and proper development in the society. Most of the teenage respondents indicated irresponsible parenthood as the leading reason of their engagement into early marriages followed by religion. Efforts to help eradicate this menace requires collective efforts of the various key stakeholders toplay their roles as expected of them by providing the basic life necessities of children as well as giving them sex education and also government intervention to supporting girl child education. Most parents leave them onto nature for survival with the saying that "Mwining Kaarabie" this term literally means "it is God that takes care of the child" which is a killer term and the main reason causing their parents irresponsible behavior.

4.2.2 Parents Perspective

The issues of early marriage are complicated because so many variables come to play in trying to understand the nature. Parents find it difficult to understand the laws of Ghana determination of early marriage because most girls below 18yrs flirt around with boys and men any how all in the name of them not been matured for marriage per the laws of Ghana and they end up in teenage pregnancy messing their lives so they have no option than to give them out for marriage at that tender age. To the parents, once a boy or a girl is able to impregnate or get pregnant, you are ready for marriage. One of the parents from Boli said:

"We see these 18yrs of admitting that one is matured enough as problematic. How

can girls flirt around but cannot be permitted to get married? They questioned, If our

laws in Ghana seek the consent of a 16yrs old girl to have an affair with a man then,

she is old enough to get married. Children now a days are disrespectful and do not obey their parents which makes it very difficult for us to nurture them well especially when they attain puberty."

Teenagers, especially girls, tries to challenge the authority of their parents regarding their sexual life and behavior when they start to see their physical development andthink that they are now fully grown. These girls mostly think that, they have attained the status of womanhood so therefore, do not respect parents pieces of advice especially when one does something wrong and a parent want to correct her.

These girls tend to respect their male counterparts more than their parents. so therefore, all efforts to bring the girls on truck when they are going wayward do not materialize. They end up becoming pregnant at that age, most parents at this point have no option than to give her out for marriage to the one who impregnated her so that she can go there and assume responsibilities as a woman she desired to be. all these mess can be corrected if we all join hands to speak against it and also the law which supported consent to sex at age 16 should be reviewed because it is deceiving the girls to have sex indiscriminately leading to teenage pregnancies.

4.2.3 Opinion Leaders Perspective

Elders within the communities under study strongly adhere to the belief that early marriage is a part and parcel of their culture they inherited from their forefathers. They are of the view that, it was practice long before they were born which pass through generations to their era so they see early marriage as part of them and reject the Ghana's law system which gives a particular year range as a definition of early marriage. To them, that definition has no place in their geographical setting. They

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questioned that, who decides that age bench mark? Is it not human beings? To them, those people are from different geographical setting who tries to impose their ways of doing things on them which will fit into their ways of doing things, they held the notion that,age cannot determine when a girl is ready for marriage but through the appearance of the physical features God has given to her as a woman. Formal education which was introduced by the whites succeeded in weakening their traditional practices and early marriage is not an exception. Early marriage comes with its own benefits which no one can deny. In the wa municipality, a child has no right and cannot decide on anything without the approval of the elders even in matters that affect their own lives. One of the village elders from Jonga gave a strong proverb in the local language that

> *"The chicken has no seat in the gathering of hawks" which was translated that, a woman or girl cannot make or take decisions in the presence of men. These analogies suppress women and girls and are denied to take decisions even in matters that affect their lives such as early marriage".(KII,2019).*

All the Assembly members within the various communities under study kicked against and condemned early marriages. Despite that it is referred to as a cultural practice, The consequences associated with early marriages in our communities suggest that, it is not a good practice and that we must join hands to do away with this practice because it is inimical to theirdevelopment and the society in general. They emphasized that, education is key to the development of our communities. It will help shape our minds to do away with harmful cultural practices that hinder our development such as early marriage. The Assembly member from Kpongusaid,

> *"Shaping the attitude of our traditional leaders to understand that early marriage is immoral to our development cannot happen overnight, it is a gradual process where the various stakeholders that are involved in early marriages needed to be given the*

right information. When this happened, they will gain knowledge and their attitude

towards early marriage will also change. Everyone has a role to play. Teenagers,

parents, teachers, opinion leaders, community members as well as religious leaders

should all play the advocacy role before we can get any meaningful results in our

efforts to arrest early marriage.(KII,2019)"

Also, a traditional leader from Sagu also said

"Children of today think they are smart, How can you tell us that early marriage is

not good when we have inherited this from our forefathers and are still practicing it.

You were just born three minutes ago and you are telling us what you have no

knowledge of. Telling us to stop marrying early is like challenging our culture and

our forefathers.(KII,2019)."

The statements above clearly shows that early marriage is viewed culturally by the

opinion so therefore, efforts to eradicate this menace should not start with messages of

condemnation but they needed to be given the right information to make them aware

of the consequences associated with early marriage so that it will help change their

attitude towards the practice of early marriage.

4.2.4 Teachers Perspectives

The Teachers indicated that early marriage is a worrying issue that hurts a lot looking

at the circumstance of these girls which are mostly affected with this menace. The

issue is very complicated with different variables accounting to the practice in the

municipality. The teenagers themselves sometimes are the cause of their engagement

into early marriage, parents sometimes also push them into it. These children are

sometimes affected by societal classification and definition of boys and girls in our

society. The behavior of some girls led to their engagement into early marriage in the

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sense that these young girls mostly flirt around with the opposite sex and subsequently having unprotected sex leading to unplanned pregnancies and parents on this note do not hesitate but to marry them off to those responsible without a second thought of the capability of the male partner to take responsibility as a husband. There is a long standing perception in society that girls home makers and house wives and as such see schooling as an activity for the boys and marriage for themselves. A JHS two Teacher from Sagu said;

> *"The girls still have the attitude of saying school is for boys and marriage is for girls, they need to see women teachers and office workers as role models and be encourage on education.(In-depth interview,2019)."*

When these teachers were asked on the way forward to deal with early marriage, they responded by saying that it is a collective efforts which requires the contribution of all such as the parents and the teenagers themselves and other stakeholders to join hands in dealing with early marriage. Respondents identified the formation of school clubs on early marriage as one of the effective ways of children learning about their rights and education on their sexual and reproductive life which they do not learn at home as well as their fundamental human rights so as to enable them resist attempts to coerced them into early marriages. a JHS one teacher from Boli said during a Focused group discussion that,

> *"We the teachers have to guide the children to form school clubs on early marriage so as to enable them share their experiences and views about early marriage. Through this, these teenagers will be able to get the right messages to help change their attitude and behavior about early marriage. He further added that, schools should always set exams questions covering early marriage to the students at the end of every term on a non-scoring basis to reawaken their consciousness about early marriage as they go on holidays"*

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These teachers viewed parent's attitude towards their children education as poor and therefore call on them to take the girls education very serious for their future development. Thereexists clear distinction tounderstanding of early marriage among those interviewed. The age of a girl is silent as a condition for her marriage when she is physically developed without recourse to her mental development to assume responsibilities as a mother.

4.2.5 Staff of Human Rights Perspectives

There are so many explanations given to early marriage ranging from national to international but these human rights activists indicated that when trying to explain the phenomenon of early marriage, reference is always made from Ghana's constitution under Article 14(1) of the children's Act which explains early marriage as a situation where either one or the two persons are under the age of 18 years. So many human rights violations come to play because of girls engagement into early marriages which ranges from her inability to continue their education, she may suffer domestic violence and by marrying without consent, her right to make choices will all be violated because of patriarchy and religious reasons. Married young girls in the municipality are not much aware of their fundamental human rights so therefore are voiceless in the hand of their husbands and therefore could not protect themselves in the households which make them suffer a number of human rights abuses.

Their little knowledge about their fundamental human rights coupled with the cultural and religious reasons make the country's minimum age of marriage very hard to be enforced. When respondents were asked on the way forward to deal with early marriage, there were of the view that the sanctions imposed by the laws of Ghana to

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punish perpetrators of early marriage such as a fine of five hundred Ghana cedis or one year in prison or both need to be reviewed for a more punitive sanctions that will scare people away from engaging into early marriages. It was added that our messages towards eradicating early marriage should not start with condemnation of the people's culture but they needed to be given the right information that will help change their behavior and attitude towards early marriage because most of them are ignorant about the phenomenon. Speaking on the way forward is the Deputy Investigator of human rights at the Commission on Human Rights;

> *"If we really want to make any meaningful impact towards ending early marriage, we must not use messages that condemns the culture of the people but we must respect their culture and use their traditional means of communication to give out the messages to them because these people respect their local channels of communication and would accept and act on messages through them which are likely to change the mindset of the people about early marriage. He further added that, household heads need to educate their children on early marriage so as to enable them understand the need not engage into the practice. He concluded by saying that institutions like CHRAJ, NCCE, GCSP, Department of social welfare and Teachers need to educate children to understand early marriage from the human rights perspective which will enable them to report or resist any attempts to get them engaged into early marriage.(In-depth-interview, 2019)."*

it is evident from the findings of the human rights activists that, teenage girls are ignorant about their fundamental human rights and as such the reason behind their lose engagement into early marriage and some parents are also ignorant about early marriage and its related consequences hence the reason behind forcing their children into the practice. These stakeholders are needed to be given the right information geared towards attitudinal change about early marriage.

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4.3 Reasons for engaging into early marriage

During Focus Group Discussion (FGD) meetings, in the study, the groups of respondents mentioned Parental irresponsibility, Religious values, Gender inequality, Single parenting and Peer influence as the main reasons for their engagement into early marriages in the wa municipality. The abovementioned reasons were developed and ask the respondents what they considered high and they reported that parental irresponsibility was the highest. The eventual results look like the following table.

Table 5 : Reasons for engaging into early marriages in the wa municipality.

Reason	Parental irresponsibility	Religious Values	Gender Inequality	Single Parenting	Peer Influence
Parental Irresponsibility					
Religious Values	PI				
Gender Inequality	PI	RV			
Single Parenting	PI	RV	GI		
Peer Influence	PI	RV	GI	SP	
Total	04	03	02	01	0
Rank	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th

Source : Field Data 2019

Note : Parental Irresponsibility = PI, Religious Values = RV, Gender Inequality = GI, Single Parenting = SP and Peer Influence = PF.

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From table 2 above, it can easily be concluded that, in the wa municipality, all the present reasons given by the respondents as reasons of early marriages, parental irresponsibility is the highest followed by Religious values then Gender inequality, Single parenting and Peer influence. The analysis of the above reasons is given below.

4.3.1 Parental Irresponsibility

This study found that respondents reported parental irresponsibility as the highest reason of early marriage practice in the wa municipality during a pair wise ranking during a Focus Group Discussion meeting. This irresponsible behavior is said to have taken the form of unwillingness or inability of parents to provide the basic life necessities of children such as shoes, books, school fees, clothing as well as other necessities of children as the reason why some parents could not perform their roles. The negligence of some Parents to provide these life necessities makes them feel neglected and rejected. These Children withdraw their respect when they realized that parents are not sensitive to their basic needs. When the situation becomes serious and there is no comfort at home, these teenagers look elsewhere from anybody including men for happiness.

They tend to sleep with men and boys outside just to get some of their basic life necessities which lead them to pregnancy at a tender age. After becoming pregnant, these parents give out these pregnant girls to the men who are responsible for their pregnancy without taking into consideration the willingness and readiness of the young girl and also responsibility of the male partner to assume role as a husband. Confirming these findings is 13yr old teenage girl from Boli.

"My mother who couldn't afford to buy me clothing, soap, etc rather have enough money to buy me cooking utensils, baby dresses, pack of clothes for my new home and told me that, am now a woman and therefore should accept responsibilities as a woman.(in depth interview,2019)".

Parents do not nurture their children to be socially responsible in society thereby allowing children to live by nature with the perception that it is God who provides and therefore will provide for the children without making efforts to give better care to these children. These actions from the parents are inimical to the development of these young girls. These findings are in support with the findings of CDF,2008 in Dar es Sallaam who stated that much blame is given onto parents for failing to guide their children to positive behavior and attitude as well as their negligence to give these children their basic life necessities which makes them discontent with their circumstances leading to unplanned pregnancies.

4.3.2 Religious values

Religious beliefs and values are reported by the respondents to be a contributory factor in their engagements into early marriages. The cultural values in the municipality give much preference to boys whiles allowing girls to marry at a tender age. Religious values were the second highest after the pair wise ranking. Islamic beliefs and values has become a justification towards their engagements into early marriages in the wa municipality. Respondents indicated that, Islam prohibits fornication and sex before marriage and the only situation to keep them away from indecent and immoral acts is to give them out for marriage so as to fulfill half of their faith as stated in the Quran. Confirming the findings is a 34yr old parent from Jonga who said

"We are Muslims and early marriage is not prohibited in Islam. Our prophet Muhammad(SAW) married Aisha at age 9, so if it was not something worthy of doing, the prophet wouldn't have done that and Allah would have instructed him not to do that, so therefore, we don't see it as a problem.(FGD,2019.)"

Also, a 14yr old teenage girl lamented,

"My father called me and told me he has given me out for marriage and that my prospective husband will take me to their family house for introduction. I asked my father why at this age and he told me, in Islam, a man is responsible to look for a husband for his daughter and so therefore, he has found a husband for me. I have no choice than to go by his orders. I was at JHS two and that was were my education ended.(interview,2019)."

Because Muslims are dominants in the municipality, early marriage is encouraged with the view that it is accepted in Islam despite the fact that some are against it, it is widely practiced by majority of Muslims in the municipality. On the other hand, most Christians in the municipality are totally against early marriage whiles insisting on girl child education. Even though they discourage the practice, some were engaged into early marriage. The African traditional religion sees early marriage as part of their belief system. From the analysis given, it is clear that Islamic beliefs and values encourage early marriage in the municipality. These findings are support with the findings of Govind (2002) who specifically mentions that the most influencing reason towards people's engagement into early marriages in the northern region of Kerala is the presence of vast majority of Muslims in that region who still practice it.

These studies emphasized that as a result of religion's influence, girls' early marriage is widespread among Muslims in the rural area. However, the study is in disagreement with the work of ICRW which posited that there is no mutual relationship or

connection between a single religion and early marriage in the universe but depending on the belief and practices of any religion, can have a strong effect on early marriage in different geographical settings. However, there is a debate within the Muslim fraternity about Islam stand on early marriage, those who are in support of early marriage are based on the premise that the prophet Muhammad married Aisha at age 9 whiles those who are against it are on the stand that, early marriage has no definite stand in Islam and that the sharia'ah(Islamic laws) which govern the Muslim community across the globe does not supports it and also the Quran do not give a particular age limit for marriage but only talks about the maturity and consent of the girl as the benchmark for her marriage.

4.3.3 Gender inequality

Women and girls are regarded as housewives, mothers and home makers and men and boys are also seen as breadwinners, household heads which give them much dominance over women in the municipality. Gender inequality was the third highest among the reasons given as the basis for their engagement into early marriages. Inequality and injustice between boys and girls where much preference is given to boys in society is a contributory factor to their engagement into early marriages in the wa municipality.

Women are not allowed to talk or make contributions in the gathering of men. This situation has caused serious problems where husbands or men take decisions without giving chance to the females to have their take which makes women voiceless in terms of who their daughter get married to. Due to patriarchal family system in the wa municipality, young girls have no voice in decision making so therefore, could not

dispute decisions taken by their parents who not favor them even in matter that affect their lives. Decision making in the family is the sole responsibility of the man in the house. He takes decisions whether good or bad without any consultations. Confirming these findings is a 38yr old mother from Sagu said

> *"In this part of our setting, a woman does not own a child. It is the father that owns a child. When the issue of my daughter's marriage popped up, I was not in support of it but I have nothing to do to stop it. When you want to challenge this as a woman, they will say you are a 'man-woman' so in order to avoid this tag, I kept quiet and allow things happen the way the man want.(in-depth interview,2019)."*

Also, a 32yr old woman from kpongu said

> *"We are often neglected in terms of decision making. The only time our husbands sit to discuss with us is when there is no food or when sickness befalls on any member in the house. aside that, nothing else. When I challenged my husband over our daughter's marriage at age 13, he told me, he own the child and that, when I was coming from my parents house, I did not come along with children so therefore, I should keep quiet and allow him to handle issues as the man of the house.(FGD,2019)."*

In most communities in the wa municipality, females are not given the chance to talk even in matters that affect their lives which is unfair and against their fundamental human rights. These findings are in collaboration with the findings of (Cohoon,2010) who stated that women and girls are less valued in society which is born out of cultural beliefs and traditional practices leading to unfair treatment to these girls and women in society.

4.3.4 Single parenting

Single parenthood comes with hardship because one person assumes a double role together as mother and father. The fourth highest reason given among the reasons given is Single Parenting. Teenagers who find themselves in this circumstance find themselves in loneliness. Even in situations where both parents re-marry, they become victims of mind poisoning and abuse by step mothers or fathers which does not allow effective child nurturing. This creates unhappiness for the children and makes them discontent with their circumstances. There are a lot of single mothers and fathers in the municipality, this makes it extremely difficult for most teenagers to get proper care, hence end up in marrying at a tender age. Some of these girls enter or agree to marry early with the view of moving away from their current life difficulties in their parents' house. One of the teenage girls from Sagu shares her story;

> *"My step mother consistently accused me of stealing money even though she knew that no money had been stolen just to cause problems between me and my father. My father would beat me and this created fear and panic in me to the extent that, I become afraid to speak to either my father nor my stepmother so I felt that in other to avoid these circumstances, the only option for me is to marry and have my independence. My difficult life led me to get married. I met my husband when I stopped schooling and was working at a local food joint who showed interest in me and I decided to live with him. I was 16years old by then and he was about 34years.(interview,2019)."*

The findings supports the work of Mann, Quigley and Firsher (2005) in Zambia who stated that step children are mostly coerced by their step parents to marry early so that the children will become self reliant to reduce the burden on their family income

4.3.5 Peer influence

Peers relate to each other in a more informal manner. A powerful peer group can influence and re-socialize a person and thereby making him or her discard the values transmitted by the family. Even though Influence recorded low mark of zero but its impact cannot be down played. Children follow their peers blindly and are influenced into all forms of deviant behaviors which lead them to unplanned pregnancies. The desire by most of these teenage girls to live a flashy life style led them to flirt with boys and men coupled with peers continuous talk about sex cause some of them to experiment it at a tender age leading to their unplanned pregnancies and when this happens, parents marry then off to those responsible for their pregnancies for marriage even when they are not matured enough to assume responsibilities as mothers.

Confirming the above is a 15yr old teenage mother who said,

> *My friends seduced me with sex so I decided to try it. I remember forcing myself on one guy and he broke my virginity at a village night club and I got pregnant after a series of sexual intercourse with the guy. I stop school and stay back in the house until when I delivered; my parents married me to the guy.(interview,2019).*Another 29 year old woman said, *I asked my daughter not to go out after 9:00pm and she told me, she is no more a small girl where I can restrict her movement. She told me that, all that I have as a woman, she is also having some and the thing that I have been receiving, she is also receiving some so I shouldn't shout on her like that. Subsequently she got pregnant when she was in JHS three and pack her clothing and other belongings and move to the man's house* "So you see, sometimes*, it is not always our fault but it is a generational disease which cuts across. (FGD, 2019)."*

here, children curiosity to experiment lifestyle of their peers have contributed to their marriage at a tender age after getting pregnant but parents could have resort to

different ways of dealing with the situation rather than just given them off for marriage when they got pregnant this indicates that both parents and the children are to be blamed for the early marriage of their children. These findings are in support with a study conducted by (Girls Not Brides,2018) supported by UNICEF that pressure from friends to marry and early exposure to pornography and experimentation in adult relationships have been highlighted as a driver of early marriage in Uganda.

4.4 Effects of early marriage

Four effects were recorded as a result of the practice of early marriages in the wa municipality which include Domestic violence, School dropout, Health complications, Lack of voice in decision making.

In the research, the groups of respondents mentioned School Dropout, Health Complications, Lack of voice in decision making and Partner violence as the effects of early marriage in the wa municipality. List of the effects were developed and respondents were asked which they considered high and they reported that School Dropout was the highest. The eventual results look like the table below.

Table 6: Effects of early marriage in the wa municipality.

Effect	School Drop Out	Health Complications	Lack of Voice in Decision Making	Partner Violence
School Drop Out				
Health Complications	SD			
Lack of Voice in Decision Making	SD	HC		
Partner Violence	SD	HC	DM	
Total	03	02	01	0
Rank	1st	2nd	3rd	4th

Source : Field Data 2019

Note: School Drop Out = SD, Health Complications = HC, Lack of Voice in Decision Making = DM and Partner Violence = PV.

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From table 3 above, it can be concluded that School Dropout is the leading effect of early marriage in the wa municipality followed by Health complications then Lack of voice in decision making and Partner violence. The analysis of these effects is shown below.

4.4.1 School Drop Out

When girls are married early, it limits their chances to continue the process of formal school and education which means that they stop acquiring knowledge and skills in formal education that will take them through life hence kills their efforts as productive members of their households, communities and the nation at large. It was agreed that teenagers stop schooling once they got married at a tender age. School Drop Out is the leading effect of early marriage in the Wa municipality as reported by the respondents during the pair wise ranking of the effects mentioned by the respondents at a Focus Group Discussion meetings.

All teenage mothers who married before attaining age eighteen could not continue their education after they were married at a tender age. They stopped formal education at JHS level and assume the roles and responsibilities as mothers hence low literacy level among these girls. Early marriage affected most of the girls education forever, those who marry at a tender age in the municipality are often expected to take responsibilities at home which are given much importance over attending school. Even girls who still have the will to go to school, finds it difficult to blend their home responsibilities and schooling so therefore have no option than to quit school. Their inability to continue schooling limit their choices and opportunities throughout their lives. Confirming the above is a 15 year old boy from Kpongu who said,

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"When I got her pregnant, I was forced to marry her and I did. I felt that I cannot blend education with taking responsibilities as a husband, so I quit school in JHS Two. (Interview, 2019)."

These confirms the findings of Abu Gaida and Klasen,(2004): Semba et al (2008) which states that withdrawing from school lessens the girl's ability to engage in community and national level discussions and debates or engage in political processes as well as making it difficult for girls to access information on health and welfare for themselves or their children.

4.4.2 Health Complications

Early marriage can affect girl's physical and mental wellbeing in a number of ways. Girls who are married young experience higher rates of malnutrition, isolation and depression (Le Start, Dubertret& Le foll 2011, Nov 2009). These effects can be both immediate and long term: Health complications have been reported by the respondents as the second leading effect on teenage girls who marry at a tender age during a Focus Group Discussion meetings. Health complications exist as an effect of early marriage among girls in the municipality.

Early marriage directly affected the wellbeing of teenage girls who marry at a tender age as well as their children. Complications and malnutrition are reported by the respondents as some of the consequences they suffer in the municipality. There are largely due to the girl's physical immaturity. They are not experience enough to take responsibilities as mothers hence their inability to better take care of their health and well being of their children which makes them malnourished and are exposed to unexpected illness. These unexpected illness results in medical expenses and less

saving at the household level which affects family income at the long run which increases their woes as teenage mothers. Complications during pregnancy make them weak and as a result, they experience difficulty in giving birth. Confirming these findings is a 16 year old Patricia from Sagu who said,

> *"When I was in labor to give birth to my first child, I suffered a lot and at some point in time, I taught, I was dying but I couldn't deliver myself but had to be operated. I shouted aloud why I got myself into this: she lamented. My children and I, are all looking malnourished because I don't eat the right balanced diet to make me stay healthy so it affected my children too. Because I was looking malnourished and weak, I was not having enough breast milk to feed my child so therefore, the child also becomes malnourished.(interview,2019)."*

It is evident from the teenage mothers that they are not enjoying in their relationships. These findings are in support with the finding of (Wachs, 2008) who stated that children of adolescent mothers are also more likely to have low birth weight and suffer poor nutritional status when they are born and throughout childhood.

4.4.3 Lack of Voice in Decision Making

Women and girls are mostly marginalized in terms of decision making even in matters that affect their own lives which is noted in the way society perceive women and girls. Girls are seen as people with low brains and therefore cannot make any meaningful contribution towards decision making, this kills their effort in bringing out their concerns as far as matters of their lives is concern. The data presented revealed that lack of voice in decision making is the third highest among the effects mentioned by the respondents in the wa municipality. Women and girls have no voice as far as their marriages are concern. These girls suffer conjugal rights issues. They cannot determine when to have sex and the number of children to give birth to. All these

decisions mostly lie in the chest of the man. Even when the girl is not in the mood for sex but the man upon whose sexual libido arise at any time jump into the girl for sex thus these married girls often lack the ability to negotiate sexual activity as well as the number of children to give birth to. Respondents further added that, Mother in-laws mostly determine the role of the married girl in the home. They are mostly restricted to assume the role of a house wife performing activities such as cooking, fetching of water, going to farm and general out keep of the home.

These married girls cannot engage themselves in any economic activity of their own to improve upon their economic level neither could they speak against the challenges that they face in the hands of their husbands and mother in-laws. Research suggests that women's greater involvement in political decision making increase the likelihood of greater investment in social services, including those directly related to economic growth such as education Beaman et al (2012; Chattopadhyay&Duflo (2003); Chen (2009).It is evident from the findings that, the concerns, interest of girls are increasingly neglected as far as early marriage is concern. Confirming this, is a 16 year old Zenabu from Jonga said,

> *"I was not consulted before giving me out to a village elder it was my father who negotiated the marriage with the village elders and it was just one evening. I was asked to pack and leave to my husband's house. I was accompanied by my father and some two others to the man's house and that was how I got married at that age.(interview,2019)"*

Also, when the father of Zenabu was asked how his daughter got married, he said,

> *" She did not come into this world by herself; I am responsible for her existence into the world and so therefore, must act accordingly as the man in charge so who she marries is my sole responsibility.(interview,2019).*"

These findings is supported by the findings of Ray (2010): UNFPA (2013) who states that married girls often lack the ability to negotiate sexual activity, contraceptive use, or birth spacing with their husbands.

4.4.4 Partner Violence

Early marriage itself can be considered a form of violence against girls (Amin 2014; Solotaroff&Pande 2014). It was reported by the respondents that Partner violence is among the effects of early marriage in the wa municipality. Married girls experienced partner violence in their marital homes. The effects of their exposure to partner violence have both immediate and long term effects. Children who see their parents abusing each other are likely to replicate it when they also grow up. The violence experienced by these married girls comes in different forms such as sexual violence, physical violence as well as emotional violence.

Husbands physically assault their married girls severely whenever one makes a mistake at home and sometimes, they are forced to have sex out of their will. Mother in-laws also play a part in these violence acts. It was revealed that, these mother in-laws rain unnecessary insults on these girls whenever one makes a little mistake and some of the insults are born out of hatred for these girls. Confirming this is a 16 year old Patricia from Sagu who said,

> *"I got miscarriage on my first pregnancy as a result of constant beatings and harassment from my husband. So I was not of myself and I think a lot. The depression and sadness in me led to the miscarriage". Also, my first child was about one year old when my husband impregnated me again and I gave birth so all my children including myself are looking malnourished.(Interview,2019)."*

It clear that mother in-laws who were supposed to educate and guide these girls in their marital homes, are rather increasing the woes of these young girls. The findings from my respondents is supported with the findings of Clark, Bruce and Dude,(2006) who stated that the risk of girls who marry at a tender age is higher and are more likely to undergo or encounter partner violence than those who delay their marriages and Carbone-Lopez, Kruttshritt&Macnuillan (2006) also argued that younggirls have a greater chance of encountering malnutrition, Abortion, Unwanted pregnancy and violation of their conjugal rights.

4.5 Regrets of Engaging in Early Marriage by the Teenage Mothers

Teenage mothers who married before attaining age 18 were asked whether if their engagement in early marriage had led to any regrets, Majorityof the teenage mothers regretted to have engaged into early marriage because, they were experiencing ill health as a result of malnutrition and partner violence which makes them frustrated in their homes, they wish, if they could get another chance to make good use of their lives. Confirming the above is a 14year old teenage mother from Jonga, who said,

> *"when I sit-down to reflect on my current situation, I wish, if I could get a second chance to be a virgin, I will not engage into acts that are likely to make me get unwanted pregnancy or anyone to force me into such marriage. Sometimes, when I compare myself with my age mates who are in school, am always worried but I can do? What I can confidently say now is that, I will never allow any of my child to engage into early marriage whiles am still alive. Over my dead body would such happen to my children again. She lamented.(interview,2019)."*

The above narration from the teenage mother confirms that teenage mothers had shown regrets for not continuing their education to the highest degree which limit their proper development in society. Also, one of the respondents who is of the view

that early marriage has positive effects said during a FGD that, *Some of us who married early are always proud when we see our children growing up with us. In this part of our world, the greatest resource one can ever get is children so marrying early will give you the opportunity to have many children.(FGD,2019).* It evident from the findings that teenage mothers are not enjoying their marriages and this calls on the need for parents to compare the life of those girls who married early and those who delay their marriages so as to learn some lessons which will enable them not to force or encourage young girls into early marriages but to delay their marriages and support their education for their proper development to improve upon the quality of their lives.

4.6 Resistance to Early by the Teenage Mothers

There are different reasons which accounted for you g girls engagement into early marriages in the wa municipality such as parents negligence or inability to fulfill their responsibility of proper nurturing of these girls, these children were not given the chance to make or take decisions in matters which concern their lives so therefore, were pushed into early marriage without their consent, children eagerness to emulate their partners in a blind manner whiles others also see marriage as a way of having an independent life. Despite these influencing factors of early marriage in the wa Municipality, some young girls resisted attempts to marry them at a tender age. Narrating their situations, a fifteen year old girl from Sagu and a Sixty-four years old man from Boli were able to resist attempts to get engaged into the practice of early marriage which is good sign that early marriage can be avoided if the actors or the stakeholders involved take or make strongdecisions to delay the marriages of these girls. Delaying their marriages is a collective effort and girls are needed to be empowered to resist any attempt to force them into early marriage.Zulaiha is a

15years old girl from Sagu gave an account on how she was able to resist early marriage. She said,

"when i realized that my father was planning to marry me to a man of about thirty years old whom I have never met or seen before, I asked my father why he wanted to marry me to the man, he replied, am old enough to be in a man's house because he married my mother at that same age and she gave birth to many children including me. You are the fifth born and you wouldn't have been given birth to if I had not married early. I asked him whether if he is aware of the consequences that are involved and he told me if there were any, then my mother whom he married at age 15 would have experienced some, there I realized he is ignorant about issues involving early marriage. so, I quickly reported the issue to my class teacher who also took me to the headmaster. He, together with the headmaster visited my father at our house in the evening to discuss the issue with him. They had a series of discussions until my mother was called to join them. They discussed on the need for them to keep me in school as I already told him. After several deliberations, my father agreed to keep me in school to the highest level. My father lamented that he did not know that it was wrong pushing his daughter into early marriage. This was the step I took to stop the process of marrying at a tender age. (interview, 2019)."

Also, Issaka Bukari (64 years) from Boli said,

"I wanted to marry her to a man at a tender age because am getting old and wanted all my female children to be in their marital homes. In our religion (Islam), it is said that when you have female children and you are able to nurture them and give them out for marriage, it comes with its own blessings if you die, so, am also old and nearer to the grave hence my decision to marry her at this age (14yrs) because she is my last born but I decided to change my mind because she insisted that she wanted to stay in school and continue her education. My three daughters all had their share of early marriages and do not have good lives. When I sometimes reflect on the lives

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that they live, it pains me a lot and wish to get a second chance hence, my decision to

delay this one and allow her to continue her education. My piece of advice to parents

especially fathers is that, they should not get their daughters marry early irrespective

of whatever circumstances that arise, but to keep them in school for the betterment of

their future and development of the community.(interview, 2019)."

It can be seen from the above narrations that, sometimes, the right information do not get to the people so therefore, they are not aware of the risk and consequences of their actions sotherefore, we need to make them aware of the risk involve in early marriage by giving them the right information to become aware and when they become aware, they will gain knowledge and it will help them in changing their attitudes towards early marriage. Girls need to be empowered so that they will know their rights to be able to resist any attempt in forcing them into early marriages.

4.7 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This section explores appropriate responses to address early marriages in the wa municipality. Early marriage is a complex phenomenon and cannot be deal with only through laws and conventions. So many national laws and international conventions exist to deal with early marriages but yet the situation still persist, so therefore, the research sought to get local driven policies that can help eradicate this menace based on the solutions given by the respondents as part of efforts in dealing with early marriage through local content solutions which requires a collective efforts of everyone because no one person can do it alone.

In the research, the groups of respondents mentionedsupporting female education, developing protective by-laws, Collaboration between traditional and religious leaders and Theatre/Drama as the local driven policies to ending early marriage in the wa

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municipality. List of the above mentioned solutions was developed and respondents were asked which of the solutions they considered high and they reported that supporting female education was the highest. The eventual results look like the table below.

Local Policy	Supporting Female Education	Developing Protective By-Laws	Collaboration between Traditional and Religious Leaders	Theatre/ Drama
Supporting Female Education				
Developing Protective By-Laws	FE			
Collaboration between Traditional and Religious Leaders	FE	BL		
Theatre/ Drama	FE	BL	TR	
Total	03	02	01	0
Rank	1st	2nd	3rd	4th

Source : Field Data 2019

Note: Supporting Female Education = FE, Developing Protective By – Laws = BL, Collaboration between Traditional and Religious Leaders = TR and Theatre/ Drama = D.

From table 4 above, it can be concluded that supporting female education is the highest followed by Developing protective by-laws then Collaboration between traditional and religious leaders and Theatre/ Drama. The analysis of these local content solutions is given below.

4.7.1 Supporting Female Education

An investment of 2.5% billion dollars over a period of five years into education projects is promised by world bank group in 2016 to benefit young girls. Supporting and increasing girls education is regarded as the best strategy in dealing with early marriage during pair wise ranking at a focus group discussion meeting which was the highest solution given by the respondents. They argued that, girls are very difficult to handle in terms of their needs and aspirations than boys so therefore, when their education is been supported, it will keep them in school to the highest level which will intern delay their marriage to the time they are physically and psychologically fit to marry.

The teenagers who marry before attaining age 18 ends their education at JHS, faceless decision making in the households and partner violence which puts a stop to their hopes and dreams. From the expressions given by the respondents, supporting girls education has a critical role to play in ending early marriage.A teenage mother lamented,

> *"Now look at me, after ending my education at JHS two, my colleagues are now in the SHS and anytime they return from school for holidays and I see them, I always feel like crying and wish not to have been married at my age, she lamented. They look healthy and active and am here weak malnourish like my child."*

*(In-depth-interview).*from the above narration, it is clear that if girls keep long in school, it will empower girls to work collectively and help in ending early marriage in their communities. The findings are in collaboration with that of World Bank (2016)who stated that, girls who delay their marriages and further their education have a good income level, looking healthier and are able to give better care to their children for their future development. It is further stated that those who further their education to the secondary level are less likely to marry at a tender age and likely to reduce early marriage by 5% each year.

4.7.2 Developing Protective By-Laws

Protective bylaws in our various communities have been identified as a local way of dealing with early marriage in the municipality. Developing protective by-laws was reported by the respondents as the second leading solution to ending early marriage in the wa municipality at a Focus Group Discussion meetings during a pair wise ranking of the solutions mentioned by the respondents. Developing protective local bye-laws that, prohibit early marriage and penalize men who engage in the practice including significant fines paid in cow, sheep, goat and land is essential to eradicating early marriage in the municipality. Each community is required to form a task force group which will monitor and enforce the acceptance of these by-laws. When these bye-laws are successfully implemented, it will help in the elimination of early marriages in our communities.

When girls are prevented from engaging into early marriages, girls can now go higher in their education, community members will now agree to the importance and

appreciate the value of girl's education and will not force girls or resist attempts to force girls into early marriages. One of the village elders fromJonga said,

> *"We can use clay to design a young girl with pregnancy and place it at the centre of the community so that it will be visible to everyone to see with the implication that, early marriage is not acceptable in the community. When opinion leaders together with the community accepts this symbolic gesture, it will help in awareness creation among community members on the need to stop early marriage.(KII, 2017)."*

Also, a 48years old woman from Jonga said,

> *"we can put in some drawings at the front of every house which depicts meanings of the community's rejection to early marriage so that all households in the community will be aware of the community rejection to early marriage'' for instance, selected Agricultural produce are mostly placed at the entrance of a house and anybody coming into that house will know that he/she is entering the house of a farmer or the skin, horns, bones of wild animals placed are placed at the entrance of a house indicating that it is a house of a hunter. Likewise, we can also put in some drawings which indicates the community's rejection to early marriage at the fore front of every household which will help us in conveying messages to the people as part of efforts in eradicating early marriage in the municipality. (FGD, 2017)."*

From the narrations given above, one could depict thatdeveloping protective bye-laws can help in eradicating early marriage in the Wa municipality. These findings are in support with the findings of UNICEF (2017) in Malawi which states that traditional leaders and chiefs developed local by-laws in their communities as part of efforts to ending early marriages. These by-laws came with punishments for victims who will be found perpetuating early marriages whiles encouraging parents to take good care of their children by delaying their marriages and send them to school. This approach

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worked very well for them with tremendous improvements in the area as far as ending early marriage is concerned.

4.7.3 Collaboration between Traditional and Religious leaders

Traditional leaders are seen as the power house of the culture of the people who impact their traditions and beliefs unto the younger generations. They have authority needed to decrease the acceptance of early marriages which is also a traditional practice and their voices are particularly important when it comes to conveying messagesto the community members. Collaboration between the traditional and religious leaders was the third highest solution given by the respondents. The support of these peopleis very vital part in the process of getting community membersto reject the practice ofearly marriages in our various communities.

 Religious leaders are respected people in the society and so therefore, their voices on issues are given weight and they determined which behaviors are acceptable and which are not in society. They are seen to be normally upright and as such, people take them as their role models. Collaboration between them will be very vital in efforts to eradicate early marriage in the Municipality. Respondents added that, these people must be engaged in the community processes of getting marriage so that, when an issue of early marriage pops up, these people can give counseling to the parties involved as well as their parents to stop such a marriage.

Confirming this, is a 44 years old man from Boli, he said, *our traditional and religious leaders should come together to preach against it. When our community members see these people joining hands to campaign against it, the community members will have know options than to go by their campaign and I think It will help in shaping our attitudes and behavior*

towards early marriage and gradually it will fade off and our unborn children will be safe from it. (FGD, 2019).Also, a 32 year old madam Christabel said, during a FGD that,

> *"The Imams should preach against it during their Friday sermons and our pastors should also do same during our church services so that their followers will be informed about the need to stop marrying early in our society. It is very sad to see this issue still happening in this 21ˢᵗcentury. Those, whose faith lies on the lesser gods, should also gather their followers and pour libation to also create awareness among their followers on the need to stop early marriage. We have to collectively come together to fight this issue if we want positive change in attitude because no single individual can do it.(FGD 2019)."*

The findings of this research are in support of the work done by Gillian,Mann and Firscher (2005)in Zambia who stated that Community and Religious leaders who advocated against early marriage were seen to have yielded positive results in changing their behavior and attitude of the people towards eradicating early marriages.

4.7.4 Theatre/Drama

According to Shakespeare, in human life, Drama is a very good platform in forming social collectivity to give out messages to people which can be in different topics in many situations among different category of people. People are now realizing the impact of drama in changing people's attitude and perceptions and a tool for social change in the world. Theatre/Dramawas amongthe solutions mentioned by the respondents to be one of the local driven policies that can help in eradicating early marriages in the wa municipality. Members in the various communities have to engage themselves as participants to occasionally stage a drama performance highlighting the risk and dangers associated with early marriages to the people.

Respondents further indicated that, the drama can engage two groups as families, one family to be seen engaging into early marriage with its negative impact onto their lives and the other to reject the practice with the resulting effect on improving upon the quality of their lives, it will make clear to the audience and community members how negatively early marriage affects the development of the family who practice it and also to show the progressive rate of development on the family who refuse to practice it so that community members will see and know the risk and consequences associated with early marriages so that lessons learnt during the drama will be put into practice. Community members and the participants in the theatre will contribute towards selecting and arranging of themes for the performance which will bring out creativity in the form of improvisation.

The respondents added that, this theatre/drama can be staged during major events and a yearly practice in the communities. After watching the show, the facilitator will engage with the audience to respond to questions or issues so that the facilitator will explain to enable them understand the dynamics, risk and consequences involved in early marriage. The drama performances will be used to convey messages and educate communities on early marriage. A village elder from Zingu said,

> *"We have to resort to the drama performance if we really want attitudinal change on early marriage. It is a platform where there is a social collectivity to give out the messages that we want to give to the community members. Look, in the past, if there is an issue that is not going on well among our community members and we want to change it, we use drama performance where we sing, dance and act inline with the issues we want to address and these have meaning in communicating the messages to the people. For instance, dirges can be used in the drama to insult and condemn parents who force their children into early marriage and men who marry these girls*

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at a tender age. when this happen, they will feel the pain and will not want to

continue it again, to me, we have to go for drama to be able to get the necessary

change we so desired.(FGD, 2019)."

It is evident for the above narrations that, drama performance is one of the ways of dealing with early marriage in the Wa municipality as reported by the respondents. These findings are in support with the findings of Safeer Ullah Khan(2013) the Bedari theatre program who argues that theatre performances resonates with people in a way laws cannot as we try to change community attitudes towards early marriage.

4.8 Theoretical Implications

The research demonstrates that early marriage phenomenon is complex and inter-connected which requires a multi-faced approach where every stakeholder has to contribute his or her quota for a any meaningful development take place which is in line with the Theory of changedeveloped by UNICEF in 2014 on early child marriage was adopted for this research which revealed that, efforts to eradicate early marriages requires the collective contribution of everyone to contribute his or her quota and that there is no particular way or individual efforts in dealing with early marriages but a collective efforts of all stakeholders whiles also placing emphasis on girls empowerment and response to local context solutions as suggested from my respondents on ways in dealing with early marriage.

The theory is relevant to this research because it enabled me analyzed perspectives from the various categories of respondents on early marriage in the wa municipality. For example, local content solutions geared towards eliminating early marriage. It also helped me examined the impact of early marriage on girls who married before attaining age 18. The patriarchal nature of the municipality hinders girls and women

participation and involvement in development activities such as education and decision making even in matters that are of their private concern. girls and women are suppressed so therefore cannot even decide on when to have sex and the number of children to give birth to. Also, boys are given much preference in terms of education whiles girls are also given preference in terms of taking care of the home as house wife so therefore girls' education is not given much attention but are mostly encouraged to get married. It is posited that early marriage is caused by parental irresponsibility, religious values, single parenting, peer influence and gender inequality which is promoting patriarchy in the wa municipality.. Early marriage and early pregnancy are closely related which has diverse effects on the lives of these young girls such as reproductive health complications, school dropout, partner violence and lack of voice in decision making. The theory which recognizes girl's empowerment and local content solutions as a way of dealing with early marriage was some of the ways that were given as ways of dealing with early marriage in the wa municipality which include girls empowerment, collaboration between traditional and religious leaders, developing protective by-laws and theatre/drama.

However, the weaknesses of the theory is that, it places much emphasis on girls empowerment as a way of dealing with early marriage but early marriage do not only occur among girls, boys are also affected even though it is much prevalence among girls. It is therefore appropriate to design strategies targeting boys and girls as well as their families if we want any meaningful development as far as early marriage in the wa municipality is concern.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides summary of findings, conclusion drawn and recommendations of the study that examines early marriage perspectives and policy implications in the wa municipality. This chapter has three sections, the first section deals with the summary of findings, the second section touches on the conclusion drawn and the final section presents the recommendations made as well as Area of future research.

5.2 Summary of findings

5.2.1 Objective one: To find out how the people of wa municipality perceive early marriage

The research sought to look for the perspectives from the teenagers, parents, teachers, opinion leaders and staff of human rights about early marriage in the municipality. Respondents were asked about what they perceive about early marriage. The teenagers responded by saying that it is unfair and against their fundamental human rights and that they are not given a voice to make a decision regarding their lives because they are considered to be immature to make or take decisions so therefore, parents are always the decision makers. Most girls are force into these unplanned marriages without their consent.

From the parent's perspective, they disagreed to the laws of Ghana definition of early marriage. To the parents, once a boy or girl is able to impregnate or get pregnant, he or she is ready for marriage. They see 18yrs of admitting that one is mature as problematic. They are of the view that, if a 16yrs old girl can be given the opportunity to have sex then she is ready for marriage too.

They held the view that the 16yrs old age of consent to have sex should be removed from our system because it is deceiving the girls to have sex indiscriminately leading to unplanned pregnancies.

Elders within the communities under study strongly adhere to the view that marrying early is part of their culture they inherited from their forefathers. They see early marriage as part of them and also reject the Ghana's law system which gives a particular age as the definition of early marriage. To them, that definition has no place in their geographical settings.

The staffs of human rights also give a number of human rights violations as far as early marriage is concerns which include violation of their right to consent, right to Association and against their fundamental human rights. They further added that, messages geared towards eradicating early marriage should not start with condemnation but should go in conformity with the culture of the people because any development that is taking place without recognizing the value of culture is bound to fail.

5.2.2 Objective two: To examine the reasons of early marriage in the wa municipality

The research revealed that five reasons were behind their engagements into early marriages which include parental irresponsibility, religious values, gender inequality, peer influence and single parenting.

From the findings, respondents indicatedparental irresponsibility as the leading reason behind the practice of early marriage during a pair wise ranking of the reasons mentioned by the respondents during a Focus Group Discussion meeting. Parent's unwillingness or inability to provide the basic needs of these teenagers makes them

feel neglected and rejected. When the situation becomes serious, they look elsewherefrom anybody including men for happiness and when they get pregnant in the process, they are married off to those who impregnated them by their parents. Religious values was the second highest they considered among the reasons mentioned and theyindicated that the Islamic beliefs and values has become a justification to their engagement into early marriage in the wa municipality. Gender inequality was also reported by the respondents as the third highest they considered to be a contributory factor of early marriage in the municipality. Due to the power given to men by the culture of the municipality, girls have no voice in decision making and so therefore, could not strongly oppose decisions taken by their parents even in matters that affect their own lives.

Women and girls are seen as house wives, mothers and home makers whiles boys and men are also seen as breadwinners and household heads. The respondents further indicated that single parenting is the fourth highest reason towards their engagements into early marriage in the municipality. Teenagers who found themselves in these circumstances find themselves in loneliness; this creates unhappiness for the children and makes them discontent with their circumstances.

Girls sometimes agree to early marriage as a way of moving out of the challenges that exists in their lives. Respondents indicated peer influence tobe one of the reasons towards their engagements into early marriages in the wa municipality. The desire by most of these teenagers to live a flashy lifestyle led them to flirt with men coupled with peers continuous talk about sex makes some of them to try it at a tender age leading to unwanted pregnancies which force parents to marry them to those responsible for their pregnancies at a tender age.

5.2.3 Objective three: To ascertainearly marriage effects in the wa municipality.

Four effects were recorded to be the impact of early marriage in the wa municipality which include; school dropout, health complications, low decision making power and partner violence. From the findings, respondents identified school dropout as the major leading effect of early marriage among the effects mentioned by the respondents during a focus group discussion meeting. None of the teenage mothers continued their education after their engagement despite efforts made by the teachers to bring them back to school. They stopped formal education mostly at the JHS level to assume responsibilities as mothers. Health complicationswere also reported by the respondents as the second highest effect of early marriage in the wa municipality.

Teenage mothers suffer malnutrition largely due to their physical immaturity to be a mother. They are not experienced enough to take responsibilities as mothers hence their inability to better take care of their health and the wellbeing of their children which makes them weak and malnourished together with their children. The findings also revealed that respondents reported lack of voice in decision making as the third highesteffect of early marriage among the effects mentioned. says women and girls have no voice as far as their marriages are concerned. Women and girls are seen as people with low brains and therefore cannot contribute meaningful to decision making in the house. They are mostly neglected even in matters that affect their lives.

Finally, it was reported that Partner violence is least effect of the effects mentioned by the respondents in the wa municipality. Girls experienced partner violence in their marital homes. Husbands physically assault their married girls severely anytime one makes a little mistake at home.

5.2.4 Objective Four: To explore local driven policies that can help eradicate early marriage.

The research explored local driven policies that can help prevent early marriage in the municipality. Four local driven policies were suggested by the respondents which include supporting female education, developing protective by-laws, collaboration between traditional and religious leaders and theater/drama.

Respondents indicated support for female education as the highest leading way they considered in dealing with early marriage in the Municipality. They argued that, these teenagers have different needs and aspirations but girls are more difficult to handle in terms of their needs and aspirations than boys so therefore when their education is been supported, it will keep them in school to the highest level which will in turn delay their marriage to the time they are physical and mentally fit to marry.

Protective by-laws have also been reported by the respondents as the second highest solution among the solutions mentioned. protective by-laws can prohibit early marriage and penalize those who engage in the practice including significant fines paid in the form of cows, sheep, goats and lands among others, are essential to eradicate early marriage in the municipality.

Collaboration between religious and traditional leaders was the third highest solution given among the four solutions mentioned by the respondents. The support of these people is a vital part of the process of setting community members to reject early marriages in the municipality. They have authority to decrease acceptance of early marriages which is a cultural practice and their voices are particularly important when it comes to conveying messages to the community members.

Theater/drama was also reported by the respondents to be one of the local driven policies in dealing with early marriage in the municipality. The respondents said that, community members can engage themselves as participants to occasionally stage a drama on the dangers and consequences about early marriage to the people through a facilitator who will explain the drama to the audience for them to understand it better. He will respond to questions from the audience and lessons learnt to be put into practice. The findings suggests, early marriage is multi dimensional and inter connected which requires a multi faceted approach in making efforts to eradicating early marriages in the wa municipality.

5.3 Conclusion

The study revealed that early marriage exists in the Wa Municipality which is a real problem that brings about school dropout among teenage girls. It is a complex phenomenon which affects both boys and girls in the Municipality but the situation is much prevalence among the girls and has contributed to their school dropout. So therefore, girl's education needs to be supported to keep them in school to the highest level so as to delay their marriages. Participants have little or no voice in decision making therefore, they were unable to challenge some of the decisions taken by their parents with regards to their choice of life partner and when to assume responsibility as a mother which is unfair and against their fundamental human rights.

Most of the teenage mothers regretted marrying at a tender age and would wish to be given second chance as virgins to make appropriate decisions to improve upon their lives because they are not enjoying in their relationships. Even though some of the girls were pushed into the practice, others also went into it due to pressure from their homes to attain self independence. But largely, majority of them married early due to unplanned pregnancies.Despite some influencing reasons fueling early marriage in the municipality, some were able to resist engagements into early marriage which clearly indicates that, early marriage can be prevented if girls are empowered to make or take decisions regarding their lives. These findings have implications for policy makers, planners and NGOs that are into child protection to develop local sensitive programs and interactions geared towards addressing the needs and aspirations of the teenage girls in the wa municipality. The reasons influencing the practice of early marriage and the effects are multi-dimensional and inter-connected. So therefore, a multi-

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dimensional approachesneeded in dealing with early marriage in the municipality which requires that everyone should contribute his/her quota in dealing with it such as Programs that empower teenage girls and their families with the right information about the risk and effects of early marriage are needed to help change their attitude.

There is much that still needs to be done in the wa municipality to fully understand the extent of the problem and the dynamics that surrounds their engagements into early marriages in the municipality. The research findings are in collaboration with the work of Haralambos and Holborn (2011) who argued that the physical effects of early marriage are inimical to the development of the girls since their marriages do not support their proper development.

5.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

1) The role of mother in-laws should be critically assessed. We often overlook the role these mother in-laws play as far as early marriage is concerned but they can help us eliminate early marriage. most a times, these mother in-laws influenced their sons to marry girls which they perceived to be energetic to come and help them in their farming activities especially during the harvesting of farm produce and others also to give them many grandchildren.

2) Early marriage should be part of our educational curriculum starting from the lower primary to junior high school so that children would start learning about the dangers and risk of early marriage so that when they grow up, they will know how to avoid temptations of early marriages. They will grow up to become responsible parents who will not force their children into early marriages.

3) The various key stakeholders responsible for eliminating early marriage such as the commission on human rights, religious bodies, traditional leaders among others should collaborate with volunteers in our various communities for design and implementation of programs such as theatre productions where participants will use their local communication channels to drama on the effects and dangers of early marriages so that communities will be well informed about the dangers associated with early marriages and lessons learnt will be put into practice.

4) Individuals and other social groups such as women group etc in the communities that oppose early marriage need to be supported and build their

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confidence in campaigning against early marriage. When community members sees their own campaigning against early marriage, it will be the fastest way of shaping people's attitude thereby informing positive behaviour towards efforts in eliminating early marriages.

5) The various religious and spiritual leaders should be engaged to develop messages which will give them the right information about early marriage. When community members are well informed about religion stand on early marriage, they will gain knowledge and subsequently leading to attitudinal change on the practice of early marriages.

5.5 Area of Future Research

Conducting further researchon the role of mother in-laws towards their son's engagements into early marriage is required to help us understand the various dynamics as part of efforts in finding local context solutions to early marriages in the Wa municipality.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX "A"

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEENAGERS WHO MARRIED BEFORE AGE 18

Name of Community…………………………………………..

Sex ……………………………………………………....

Age ……………………………………………………

Educational Status…………………………………………..

1)Can you explained to me how you got married?

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……………………………………………………………………………………………

2) Howdo you think about early marriage?

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3) What do you think are the causes of early marriage?

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4) Do you have any regrets having married early? If yes, Why?

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5) What in your view, is the best way of solving early marriage locally?

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APPENDIX "B"

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR AGE CATEGORY OF TEENAGERS WHO WERE

NOT MARRIED.

Name of Community…………………………………………..

Sex ………………………………………………………….....

Age ……………………………………………………………

Educational Status…………………………………………..

1)Are you aware of the existence of early marriage in this community?

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2) Why are you not engaged into early marriage?

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3) How do you perceive early marriage?

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4) At what age do you want to get married and why?

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5) What do you think are the causes of early marriage?

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6) How do you think early marriage can be solved locally?

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APPENDIX "C"

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Name of Community…………………………………………..

Sex …………………………………………………………....

Age …………………………………………………………

Educational Status………………………………………..

Marital Status…………………………………………..

1)What do you think about the practice of early marriage?

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2) How is early marriage decided in your community?

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3) Can you explain to me how your son/daughter got into early marriage?

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4) What do you think are the causes of early marriage?

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5) How do you think early marriage can be solved locally?

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APPENDIX "D"

KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE

Name of Community…………………………………………..

Sex …………………………………………………………....

Age ……………………………………………………………

Educational Status…………………………………………..

1)What is the right age of marriage in this community?

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………………………………………………………………………………………

2) What is your perception about early marriage?

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3) What do you think are the causes of early marriage in this community?

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4) Have you witnessed any case of early marriage? If yes, can you describe how it took place?

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5) What do you think are the local ways that can help solve early marriage?

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APPENDIX "E"

CHECKLIST FOR FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION

1) Are you aware of the existence of early marriage in this community? If yes, explain?

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2) What is the right age of marriage in this community?

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3) How long has early marriage existed in this community?

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4) How do you perceive early marriage in this community?

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5) What do you think are the causes of early marriage in this community?

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6) What are the effects of early marriages in the community?

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7) what recommendations would you make to prevent early marriages in this community?

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APPENDIX 'F'

OBSERVATIONAL GUIDE

The following were the issues observed during my field work;

1) The behavior of girls who got married before attaining age eighteen (18).

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2) The behavior and Actions of parents towards married girls.

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3) The sentiments of the girls when narrating their situation.

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4) The behavior of the community members towards victims of early marriage.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

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