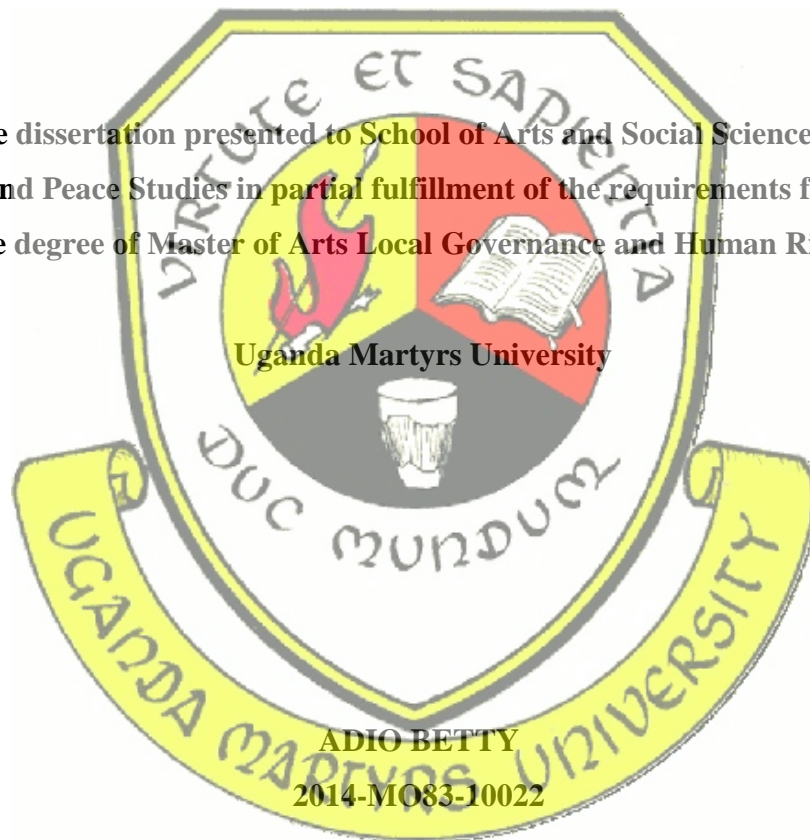


**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF CHILD MARRIAGE ON GIRL CHILD
EDUCATION IN SOROTI DISTRICT**

CASE STUDY: ARAPAI SUB COUNTY

**A postgraduate dissertation presented to School of Arts and Social Sciences, Department of
Governance and Peace Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Award of
the degree of Master of Arts Local Governance and Human Rights**



**ADIO BETTY
2014-MO83-10022**

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my children and my grandchildren for their prayers, love and support to my academic dream. It is also dedicated to my dear sisters and brothers especially Mr. Oedo George. My nephews; Etoru Deogratus, Echolu Philip and Eswagu Peter. To my spiritual leaders and friends, thank you for being there for me whenever I was faced with challenges. Having you in my life is a great blessing.

MAY GOD THE ALMIGHTY FATHER, BLESS YOU ALL

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A List of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HC	Health Centre
HIV	Human Immune deficiency Virus
ICRW	International Centre for Research on Women
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LC	Local Council
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non Government Organization
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OVC	Orphans and other Vulnerable Children
PAG	Pentecostal Assemblies of God
PS	Primary School
SASS	School of Arts and Social science
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UDHR	Universal Declaration for Human Rights
UDHS	Uganda Demographic and Health Survey
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education

USE Universal Secondary Education
VSO Volunteer Services Overseas
YWCA Young Women Christian Association

Abstract

This study set out to assess the effects of child marriage on girl child. Its specific objectives were to establish the factors influencing child marriage among school going girls; to determine the effect of child marriage on the girl child and propose strategies to reduce child marriages among school going girls in Arapai sub county, Soroti District

Given the nature of the study and its requirement of seeking understanding of factors influencing child marriage; its extent and strategies to address it, a qualitative research approach was used in the context of a case-study research design. Purposive and stratified purposive sampling techniques were used to select respondents for the study. These were studied by use of in-depth interview research method with in-depth interview guides.

The study revealed that, child marriage occurs in poor, economically deprived communities as a result of poverty, gender discrimination, cultural beliefs, religious beliefs, lack of decision making skills. Poor school environment directly affected girl child education and health to mention but a few. Girls are overworked and their health gets worse; they became pregnant early and led to maternal and child mortality rate. The study also revealed that girls' are faced with domestic violence from their homes and even when they are married the mother in law mistreat them at home. Most of them suffer from sexually transmitted infection with a high risk of acquiring HIV/AIDS resulting in school drop out

It is therefore recommended that the community be involved in awareness creation; Government education programmes to benefit both girls and boys and improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching, flexibility schedules to allow girls meet personal needs Net working and collaboration by different actors. Legislating against child marriage and promote girls' voices. Power at multiple levels is also vital to their self efficiency. Empowering the youth in peer-to-peer approach, sexuality education in schools and life skills as determinants of child marriage from girl's own perspectives be enhanced, systematic documentation, monitoring, evaluation and research remain very paramount in the fight against child marriage.

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The study focused on the effects of child marriage on the girl child education in Arapai Sub County in Soroti District as a case study. This chapter presents the background of the study, the problem statement, and objectives of the study, research questions, and scope of the study, conceptual framework, and significance of the study, justification of the study and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Child marriage is globally recognized as a blatant violation of fundamental human rights (Adekola, 2016). Article 1, of the Convention on the Rights of a Child, states that a girl must have reached her 18th birthday to enter a marital union. Also, there must be free and full consent on the choice and timing of her marriage. So, by international conventions, 18 years has been established as the legal age of consent to marriage. In Nigeria, under articles 21 and 23 of the Child Rights Act, marriage before the age of 18 is illegal.

UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), (2011), UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), (1989) broadly resists premature and coerced marriages. For instance, Article 12 of the CRC (1989) highlights the rights of children to participate in decisions that affect them and Article 16.2 of UDHR (1948) states that spouses should give their full and free consent to marriage (Ganira et al., 2015). Similarly, on 16th June, 2015 the government of Uganda launched a strategy to end child marriage and teenage pregnancy 2014/2015 – 2019-2020 (Kabuzire, 2015).

According to Adebambo (2010), child marriages are mostly conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and are a marriage in which duress whether physical or emotional is a factor. It is generally believed that any child marriage constitutes a forced marriage, in recognition that even if a child appears to give her consent, anyone under the age of 18 years is not able to make a fully informed choice whether or not to marry. Besides, child marriage is a

direct form of discrimination against the girl child who, as a result of the practice, is often deprived of her basic rights to health, education, development and equality. Girls aged 15 to 19 give birth to 15million babies a year (UNICEF, 2001). Despite the nearly universal condemnation and global campaigns against it, this harmful tradition thrives as approximately 51 million underage girls are married. If nothing changes, another 100 million girls will be married within the decade (ICRW, 2007).

These marriages are mostly against the girls' will and in violation of international laws and conventions on women's rights. With limited education, limited or near-zero entrepreneurial skills and economic opportunities, child brides are often condemned to a life of poverty, social isolation, and powerlessness, infringing on their human rights, health, and well-being. Also, births resulting from child marriages are said to be "too soon, too close and too many" (Abimbola 2017). For example, a high percentage of girls in Ethiopia (25%), Uganda (42%), and Mali (45%) have given birth by the age of 18 compared with only 1% in Germany, 2% in France, and 10% in the United States (Nour, 2006). The problem with "children delivering children" is that the young mothers are at a significantly higher risk than older women for debilitating illness and even death. It is globally recognised that delaying marriage until a lady is physically and physiologically mature improves her health (Abimbola 2017).

Child marriage is a global human development problem as marriage remains common in many parts of the developing world. It is endemic in sub-Saharan Africa (particularly Niger, Mali, Ethiopia, Chad, Kenya, Nigeria, etc.), Southeast Asia (particularly Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Indonesia, India, Myanmar, Cambodia, etc.), Latin America (particularly Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Chile etc.) and the Middle East (e.g. The Philippines, Iraq, etc.). It is mostly common among the rural poor and populations under stress. According to Population Council (2004), a third of the more than 330 million girls and young women aged 10 – 19 who currently live in developing countries were or will be married by their 18th birthday. Countries such as Niger, Ethiopia, Mali and Kenya have over 40 per cent of their teenage girls married before their 18th birthday. In Nigeria, child marriage is endemic in the north, especially in the Northeast and Northwest geopolitical zones with over 45 per cent of teenage marriages and the highest level of female illiteracy in the country. In these regions, girls enter marriage and begin their sexual experience

when they are young, sometimes as young as 10 years old. It is further observed that, the young girls are usually married to older men chosen for them by their parents. In all these endemic areas, rural girls and women are particularly affected as they continue to bear the health risks, social and economic costs of early and forced marriage, non-consensual sex and early pregnancies Adekola (2016).

Emirie (2005) argues that education is an important social objective of any society. The role it plays and its possible contribution to the intellectual growth and development of the society have become points of common concern in both developed and developing countries. Education enables individuals and the society to make an all-rounded participation in the development process by acquiring knowledge, abilities and skills. Education also plays a role in promoting respect for human rights and democratic values, creating the condition for equality, mutual understanding and cooperation among people. Thus, it is an indispensable prerequisite for developing the capacity of participation in all aspects of development. It is further argued that education is a backbone for both social and economic advancement and primary education is the foundation especially in those developing countries where the majority of the population lives in rural areas. The provision of appropriate rural primary education for both sexes is also instrumental to increase women's participation in development.

According to Montazeri (2016), adolescence is a critical age for girls throughout the world. What takes place during a girl's teenage years shapes future life circumstances. For many girls in the developing world, the mere commencement of puberty marks a time of increased vulnerability to early marriage and entry into sexual life. Thus, marriage is central to any discussion in the area of the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents because of the universal valuation of marriage and the taboos and religious sanctions against premarital and extramarital sexual relations. It is further observed that today, there are estimated 580 million teenage girls in the world of whom 88 percent live in the developing countries. While the age of marriage is rising for both sexes, early marriage has still remained a problem in these societies. United Nations Population Fund (2012), states that nearly one in three girls continues to marry as a teenager in many parts of the developing world. The extent of early marriage varies between countries and

regions. The highest rates are reported in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, where 44 percent and 39 percent of girls, respectively, were married before the age of 18.

Early and forced marriage impedes girls' education, psychological well-being and health. This practice inevitably denies young women of school age right to education necessary for personal development, preparation for adulthood, and effective contribution to future well-being of family and society. In each year, around 70,000 girls die in labour since their bodies are not mature for child bearing, (WHO and UNICEF, 2012). Further still about 14 million teen and adolescent girls get married, and others are forced into marriage arrangement by parents yearly, (UNICEF 2012). To reverse this, education is crucial in mitigating incidences of early and forced marriage. This means that enhancing access to quality education for girls while at the same time enlightening communities to amend societal norms that enable early and forced marriage to continue is important (Ganira, 2015).

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995) set the age of marriage at 18 years. However, getting married formally or informally before the legal, age known as child marriage, is a common practice across the country. Arranged marriages for adolescent girls without their consent are also common in Uganda especially in the rural areas. Age at first marriage varies by residence, educational level, wealth quintile and across the different regions of the country. According to UBOS (2006), Women aged 25-49 living in urban areas marry about 2 years later than rural women (20 years compared with 17.6 years) and the median age at first marriage is higher among the better educated and the wealthier. The median age at first marriage for women living in Northern Uganda is lower (16.9) as compared to western and south western (18.1 and 19.9 respectively). The eastern and east central Ugandan women however engage in sexual relations much earlier (16.3 and 16.2 respectively). Roughly two years later a UNFPA (2013) report also indicated that prevalence of child marriages is highest in Northern Uganda estimated at 59% followed by western region (58%), eastern region (52.%), east central (52%), west Nile (50%), central (41%), south west (37%) and lowest in Kampala (21%). Since marriages in Uganda are not always officially declared and recognised it is important to compound these statistics with the age of first sexual intercourse and with the percentage of teenagers who have begun child bearing (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2015)

Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (1999), argues that, the status and treatment of the girl child and the education of women are crucial to the development of women's role in society. Positive socialization of a girl child and young age represent a key to change by instilling positive values, confidence and self-esteem through activities at home, school and in the community. The status of women is lowered by their lack of access to education which in turn affects their involvement in all other activities. The educational attainment of girls and women falls behind that of men. This is partly historical since formal education for girls started later than that for boys. The change is rather slow. In 1995, 59% and 29% of rural women and men in Uganda were illiterate, respectively, while the urban sector showed a smaller gap (24% and 14%). Girls' enrolment rates decline as educational levels increase accounting for 47% of primary school enrolment rates, 39% at secondary school level and 25% in tertiary institutions (MGLSD, 1999).

In 2013, the Uganda government launched vision-2040 with the National Vision Statement "A Transformed Ugandan Society from a Peasant to a Modern and Prosperous Country within 30 years". Various strategies have been put in place to achieve the vision 2040 focusing on strengthening the fundamentals of the economy to harness the abundant opportunities around the country. The opportunities include; oil and gas, tourism, minerals, ICT business, abundant labour force, geographical location and trade, water resources, industrialization, and agriculture (Vision, 2040).

However, the future population quality remains a critical determinant in realization of the vision, especially women who constitute about 50% of the total population. Unfortunately, Uganda is globally ranked among the hot spots with high rates of child sexual abuses. Currently, for every 10 Ugandans, 5 people are below the age of 15 years and of the 5 people, 3 are girls on average. Child sexual abuses undermines the girls ability to meaningfully contribute to national development and hence Uganda's vision 2040. Eradication of child sexual abuses therefore, should be a high priority on the government's development agenda. Uganda is a signatory to several international instruments that offer protection to girls and women from all forms of discrimination and attempts have been made to domesticate them into the national policy and

legal system. The international legal instruments include; the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, Convention on the Rights of Children, CEDAW and Uganda ascribes to the millennium development goals and the post 2015 development agenda.

The government of Uganda has ratified key international legal instruments including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child among other international and regional instruments to promote and protect the rights of children. The domestication of these instruments into domestic laws demonstrates Government's commitment to respect and fulfill the rights of children. Government commitment to improving the welfare of and protection of children is demonstrated in the Constitutional provisions, related policies, systems and structures in place, including; Children's Act (2006), the Orphans and other Vulnerable Children (OVC) Policy (2007); the Universal Primary Education policy (1997), the Universal Secondary Education policy (2007), the Domestic Violence Act (2009), and Penal Code Act, to mention but a few. The government has also put in place an institutional framework aimed at adherence to the rights of children. These include; The National Council for Children; The Uganda Human Rights Commission (Vulnerable Persons' desk), The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development Departments of Youth & Children, secretaries for children affairs at all levels of local government and the family and children's courts in the Police Structure.

According to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (1999), education and other developmental rights include the right to education, play, leisure, cultural activities, access to information, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Some of the issues relating to these rights include participation rights which encompass children's freedom to express opinions, to have a say in matters affecting their own lives, to join associations, and to assemble peacefully. As their capacities develop, children should have increasing opportunities to participate in the activities of society, in preparation for adulthood. This can only be achieved when girl child is given an opportunity to be at school as child marriage directly violates her rights to health, education, equality and non-discrimination, consensual marriage, employment, and to live free from violence and discrimination, which are enshrined in international human

rights standards and institutions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Uganda Human Rights Commission, (2016), asserts that marriage is used in its widest sense to cover a betrothal or union between two people, recognised under civil law, religious law, customary rites and understood to be binding by the spouses concerned, their families and the wide community, whether or not it has been formally registered in law. Marriageable age or minimum age for marriage has been prescribed by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child as being 18 years of age. The right to family and marriage is provided for in the Constitution of Uganda which also sets the age of consent (minimum legal age for marriage) at 18 years for both males and females.

In spite of the legal provision, the traditional practice of child marriage persists among many ethnic groups in Uganda, it should be noted that child marriage affects both girls and boys although girls are disproportionately affected. The Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (UDHS) Report (2016) reveals that 25% of adolescent aged 15-19 years in Uganda have begun childbearing and 19% of women aged 15-19 have given birth. Adolescent childbearing is more common in rural areas at 27% and in urban areas at 19%. In 2013, Uganda was ranked 16th among 25 countries with the highest rates of early marriages; with 46% of girls marrying before 17 years, and 12% before they are 15 years (Uganda Human Rights Commission, 2016).

In Soroti district, young girls are at a risk of being married off at an early age. According to Kiwuuma et al (2014), girls in Teso are sold into marriage for sh50,000. But, if you don't have sh50,000, a bag of dry cassava is one of the items parents ask for as bride price in exchange for their underage daughters. The practice is being perpetuated by the rising famine and poverty levels in Teso. During famine, girls are married off so that the bride price can be used to feed the remaining members of the family. Experts say early marriage could potentially lead to a spike in the HIV/AIDS rate in the region. 'Let me get what I can out of you before I die' (Odongo, 2013).

Edwomu (2017) puts the rate of child marriage in Soroti at 80%. Quoting the district probation officer, Amos Oluka, the numbers of young children who are forced to early marriages have met

complications in life such as fistula and other sexually transmitted diseases. The majority of the people crowded in prisons are culprits of defilement; both simple and aggravated defilement. In a period of five months alone Soroti district registered a total 58 cases of defilement between the months of October 2016 to April 2017 (Odongo, 2013). The same report points out that the practice has led to increased prostitution in urban setting as a result of trauma by the young girls and boys who failed with marriage.

In conclusion, child marriages have a diverse effect on the girl child. Child marriage also puts an end to any education girls may have been receiving bearing in mind that education can be a significant barrier to the traditional cycles of poverty. Much as efforts have been put in place to uphold a girl child, much still needs to be done to further assess the effects of child marriage on girl child education which remains in our communities.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Education is a fundamental human right as well as a catalyst for economic growth and human development (Okumu *et al.*, 2008). Education is valued because it contributes to the national development through the provision of an appropriate human resource that helps to stimulate productivity and eliminate hunger, poverty, disease and ignorance (Republic of Kenya, 2005).

Kapinga (1992) affirms that education liberates man from socio-political forces which weigh upon him and mould a new personality at global level. According to Schultz (2002), investing in education leads to faster growth for developed and newly industrialized countries. That is the reason why; developing countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, are now paying attention to invest in education from primary, secondary and tertiary levels by increasing enrolment and improving education quality. In Uganda, this is evident by the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE), Universal Secondary Education (USE), and the district quota system admission to public Universities; this is where students compete at this district level and the recently introduced Higher Education Loan for students. It is therefore expected that with all these in place parents would encourage their children to go to school. However, many school age going girls mostly in the rural areas of Soroti district who expected to be studying for free are married off by their parents or relatives.

Sometimes different development actors and the district have usually given reports on girl child education and child marriage in the district, this may be based on perceptions. It is not known what proportion of the school going girls are affected by child marriage; the drivers and what can be done to stop early girl child marriage. This study seeks to provide scientific data on the effects of early girl child marriage on education.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 General Objective

To assess the effects of child marriage on the girl child education in Arapai sub county, in Soroti District.

1.3.2 Specific objective

- I. To establish the factors influencing child marriage among school going girls in Arapai sub county, Soroti district
- II. To determine the effect of child marriage on the girl child in Arapai sub county, Soroti District
- III. To propose strategies to reduce child marriages among school going girls in Arapai sub county, Soroti District

1.4 Research questions

1. What are the drivers of early marriage among school going girl children in Soroti district?
2. How does child marriage affect girl child in Soroti district?
3. What strategies can be used to reduce early marriages of school going girls in Soroti district?

1.5 Scope of the study

1.5.1 Geographical scope

The study was conducted in Soroti District, Arapai sub county located approximately 8 kilometres (5.0 mi) by road, north of the central business district of the town of Soroti, on the road between Soroti, in Soroti District, and Amuria, in Amuria District. This location is approximately 345 kilometres (152 mi), by road, northeast of Kampala, Uganda's capital city and largest metropolitan area.

1.5.2 Content Scope

The content scope covers the effects of child marriage on the girl child education in Arapai Sub County, Soroti District.

1.5.3 Time scope

The study covered the period 2014-2017 as this is the period the researcher was doing the academic studies at Uganda Martyrs University. During this period the researcher carried out research as a requirement in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the award of Master of Arts Degree Local Governance and Human Rights of Uganda Martyrs University.

1.6 Significance of the study

The research study provided information and knowledge that was envisaged to help the researcher to specifically come up with the factors influencing child marriage and identify the effects of child marriage on the education of a girl child. It may help government to understand the general attitude of the public towards child marriage. The research may as well benefit the policy makers to be able to formulate policies that aim at preventing, protecting and supporting the girls who fall victim for purpose of legal protection against domestic violence and gender based violence policies. It may also help legislators to move beyond legislation and ensure that laws around child marriages are implemented. The study may also assist in awareness creation among communities about the dangers of child marriages and be able to address the challenges of this silent evil which sees many young girls being married off openly while the communities are doing little or nothing about it. Academicians may also use the findings of the study as a basis for their research in the area of effects of child marriage. The findings may work as drivers that will promote behavioral change among the violators of children's rights.

1.7 Justification of the study

To recognize the issue of child marriage is important in society today. This is in part because child marriage remains highly prevalent despite efforts by many developing country governments to discourage and even outlaw the practice. For example, girls with lower education prospects because they may be weaker academically face smaller expected losses in future earnings and thereby have lower incentives to continue to study as compared to girls who are academically stronger. These girls may be more willing to marry early or their parents may be more inclined to have them marry early. To lessen the practice of child marriage, it was necessary to come-up with research-based strategies on how to address this matter. This is because child marriage has continued to occur because of lack of complete measures to address this silent epidemic in our communities.

The research has provided a comprehensive analysis of how child marriage affects the girl child education and how it can be addressed with a view of reducing the practice in this area. The research may also help to formulate options to mitigate such risks. The study was carried out as an academic requirement for the award of Masters Degree in Local Governance and Human Rights of Uganda Martyrs University, Nkozi.

1.8 Ethical considerations

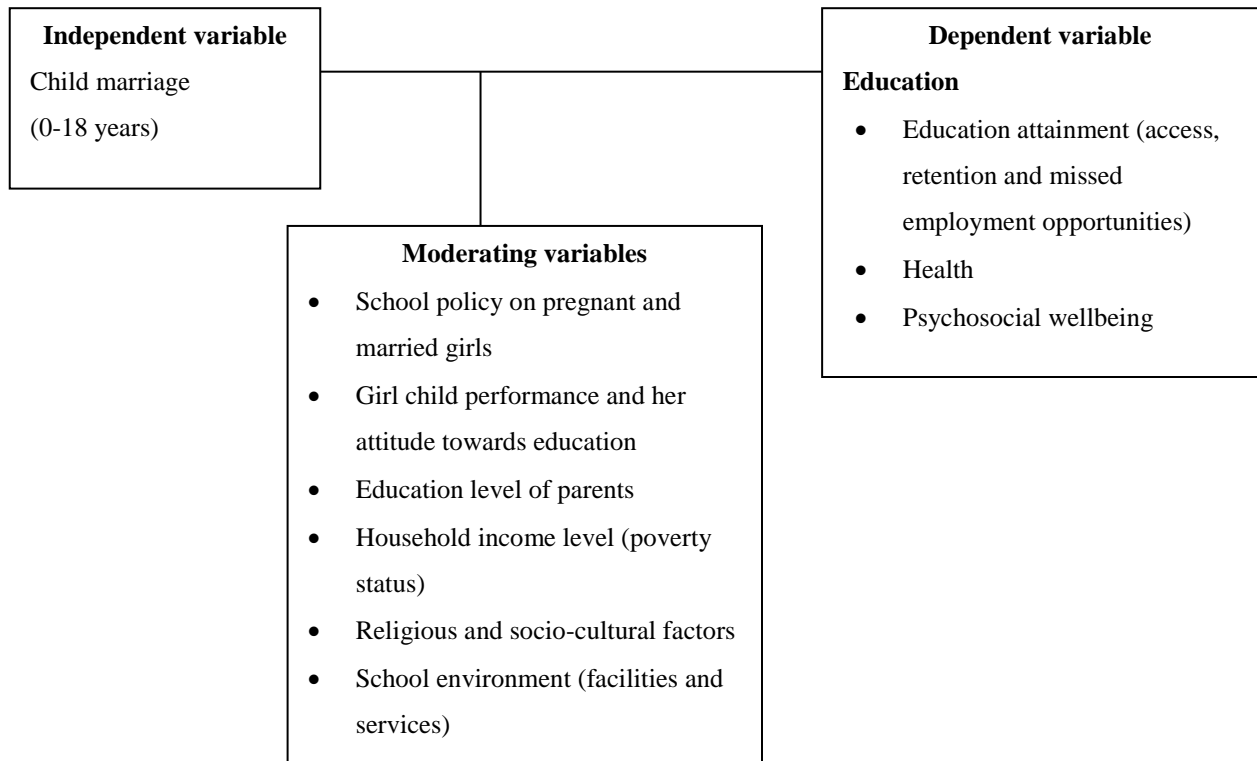
Research ethics is about regulatory codes of practice put in place by various professional organisations to guide researchers. Researchers at all levels must consider them and plan how to follow or cater for them in their projects (Odiya, 2009).

The main ethical issues in the study were privacy and confidentiality by the respondents and responsibility by the researcher. The researcher addressed this by requesting the University administration, School of Arts and Social Sciences to provide an introductory letter that introduced the researcher to the sub county leadership, schools and other respondents who will be useful for the research.

The researcher informed the respondents that the data collected was strictly handled with care and its privacy was to be observed for the purpose of confidentiality. The respondents preferred to remain anonymous and were only named by seeking their permission.

1.9 Conceptual Framework

The relationship between independent and dependent variables of the study are as conceptualized as shown below:



This conceptual framework has been formulated by the researcher to demonstrate relationship between the concepts under study. The study on early marriage of the girl child as an independent variable undermines the education attainment of the girl child, health and psychosocial wellbeing.

Early marriage: Marriage involving a girl below the age of 18 years

Education attainment; Girls who marry young tend to drop out of school and are more likely to bear children during adolescence, thus effectively ensuring that they will not return to school or develop other work skills. Education, even at a basic level, is not only about livelihood and technical skills but more importantly provides social ‘connectedness’ or aptitude which enables one to access key resources to alleviate poverty

Poor health; this is based on evidence that there is a relationship between education, health and child marriage. Girls who marry early have poor health including poor reproductive health.

Psychological well being; aspects such as divorce or abandonment; socioeconomic challenges; stigma among fellow pupils and having to look at their progressive colleagues later in life condemns them to psychological torture.

Other variables such as School policy on pregnant and married girls, girl child performance and her attitude towards education, education level of parents, household income level (poverty status), religious and socio-cultural factors and school environment (facilities and services) may have influence on girl child education access and retention and thus considered as moderating variables in the study.

1.10 Definition of key terms

Stevenson (2010) defines a child as a young or relatively young woman while the term “marriage” refers to the formal union of a man and woman typically as recognised by law, by which they become husband and wife.

Raisha (2015) affirms that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines a child as “every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.”

According to Hodgkinson (2016), child marriage is a marriage entered into when one or both spouses are under the age of 18.

And Hornby (2010), defines Education as a process of teaching, training and learning especially in schools or college, to improve knowledge and develop skills and the same author refers to achievement as something that has been done successfully, especially using their own effort and skill.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher dealt with the review of related literature concerning the effects of child marriage on a girl child education. The researcher carried out a review of other people's ideas and perspectives, with the main aim of having deeper understanding of the topic of study. The literature reviews and presents literature thematically according to the three objectives that guide this study.

2.1 Factors influencing child marriage

Gender inequality

Gender inequality has influence on child marriage. In most cultures where women and girls are devalued, child marriage can end in domestic violence, marital rape, and deprivation of food, lack of access to information, education, healthcare and all sorts of impediments to mobility.

The status of women in society plays a key role in child marriage, women are seen as inferior, and hence, they are neglected and despised (World Youth Report, 2003). As a matter of fact, in India, the birth of a girl is often an occasion of heartbroken sorrow and despair, even in relatively affluent and educated families. A girl is seen as a burden given the fact that she will get married and leave the natal family. The parents prefer to educate boys and marry the girls off at an early age. A male child is more likely to gain full education, gain employment and pursue a working life, thus tending to marry later. In Mali, the female: male ratio of marriage before age 18 is 72:1; in Kenya, it is 21:1 (Nawal, 2006).

It is further stated that, girls and women assume lower status emanating from cultural and traditional beliefs. Such beliefs suppress girls' capability to participate in equal roles in society. For instance in 10 nations experiencing greatest incidences of early and forced marriage, 5 contain regulations consenting girls to be married much earlier than boys. Once denied access to

formal education, young girls develop into uneducated adults with inadequate tools and resources for future generation of educated women (Ganira K., et al., 2015)

Similarly, Rhaisa (2015) argues that, as a result of social and cultural traditions, attitudes and beliefs that deny women and girls their rights to have an equal role in homes and communities, women and girls continue to occupy a lower status than men in many societies. Though gender roles differ between different societies, cultures and generations, gender norms in sub-Saharan Africa have generally disadvantaged women of all ages. In many African societies, the home is seen as the place for young women, and this is compounded by the fact that they are also seen to have a low status within the household and community because they are young. Many communities do not see the value of educating girls since they are expected to leave once they are married, which is worsened by the perception in many societies that girls do not have the same skills or capabilities as their male peer. This contributes to the view in many societies that marriage is the best way to secure a girl's wellbeing. Furthermore many countries with high rates of early marriage also have unequal laws of consent for boys and girls. According to UNFPA (2010), 158 countries had 18 years as the minimum legal age for marriage for women without parental consent or approval by a pertinent authority, compared to 180 countries for males while in 146 countries, state or customary law allows girls younger than 18 to marry with the consent of parents or other authorities, with the corresponding number for boys being 105. In 52 countries, girls under the age of 15 can marry with parental consent compared to almost half (23) for boys. The lack of gender equality in the law's treatment of the issue of consent reinforces social norms that imply that it is somehow acceptable for girls to marry earlier than boys. Social norms and customs may further dictate that once a girl is married, she will be regarded as a woman, regardless of her age. Finally, in many patriarchal customary laws and traditions, women and girls are given less negotiating power around issues of marriage, sexual and reproductive health and rights issues compared to men of the same age.

Poverty

More often than not, child marriage takes place due to poverty. Where poverty is acute, a young girl may be regarded as an economic burden where one less daughter is one less mouth to feed. It can be argued that poverty is related to culture to a certain degree. This is due to the fact that

some people do not work hard and have cultivated the spirit of dependence. Where there is acute poverty, a young girl may be seen as an economic burden, who when purchased, will relieve the family financially and socially (International Center for Research on Women, 2007). Hence, marriage is considered a transaction, a significant economic activity. In most African communities, bride wealth is associated with marriage. In the context of Poverty, therefore, this practice encourages child marriage. In addition, some communities do not regard the education of the girl highly as that of the boy. The girls are married off early and are seen as a source of wealth. (Birech, 2013)

Child marriage is most common in the world's poorest countries, and in those countries, tends to be highest among the poorest households. It impacts on household decision-making and may result in girls being viewed as an economic burden. The perception of a low potential of girls to earn an income combined with the high cost of raising children results in girls being married off as a solution. For many families in chronic poverty, marriage often seems like the best way to safeguard girls' future and lighten their economic burden. Many families also believe that this would give them the opportunity to take care of the other siblings, especially boys. Some studies have also found that some girls agree to early marriage because they believe it would help improve their own economic situation and that of their family, in addition to increasing their social status (Rhaisa, 2015).

Furthermore, poverty fuels the prevalence of child marriage in many communities in Uganda where the girl may be conserved as an economic asset from which families can gain. However, on one hand, parents may see their daughters as a source of wealth through bride price and encourage or force them to get married early sometimes to old men who are able to pay the bride wealth; on the other hand, especially in poor households, girls may be seen as an intolerable economic burden due to inability of their parents to meet their basic and other needs. Similar findings have been reported by Bell and Aggleton (2014) in their study in Eastern Central and Central (Uganda) where it emerged that child marriage is seen as the best option for girls especially in households characterized by insufficient provision of basic necessities from parents. Parents encourage the marriage of their daughters while they are still children in hope that the

marriage will benefit them both financially and socially, while also relieving financial burdens on the family.

Education and Low Retention of Girls in Schools

Clifford C. (2007) asserts that, education is a basic right for all children around the world, yet in the developing world there are almost two billion children, most of whom are not receiving a proper education, or any education at all. According to the Global Fund for Children one in five children, 120 to 125 million children, are not enrolled in school. Of those who do receive an education, mostly in the developing world, one in five will not make it past the fifth grade. The lack of education for much of the world's children is of grave concern, and continues to impact not only the lives of the children themselves, but the development and progress of entire nations. If a large majority of countries children are not educated, the prospect of future business, political, religious leadership is marred for many generations. As a world community we are fighting poverty, disease, war, child labor, child soldiers, human slavery, trafficking, and so much more, yet our biggest fight and the root of so many issues is a lack of education. Children and adults who are illiterate or uneducated are more susceptible to victimization and thus may decrease life expectancy.

Low educational attainment is linked with early marriage. According to UDHS (2006), 37 percent of women between 25 and 50 who were married before their 14th birthday had no education compared with those who married later (26 percent). A larger percentage of women married after age 18 attained secondary education and above, compared with those who married at younger ages. In the Western region, few women attained secondary school education at all. .

Illiteracy

According to Naveed et al, (2015), illiteracy or lack of education also contributes to early marriage. Parents are not willing to invest in a daughter's education since a girl has to leave her parental home at the time of marriage and thus any investment on her is considered as a waste. In addition, a girl's prospects for education after marriage are extremely grim due to her lack of mobility, domestic burdens, child bearing and social norms that make marriage and education incompatible. Early marriage limits a girl's development of skills, resources, knowledge, social

support and mobility, which limit her negotiating power with her husband or in-laws. Subsequently, the increased vulnerability exposes girls to a likelihood of violence, abuse, divorce or abandonment. Illiteracy or lack of education among parents perpetuates the practice as it is often accentuated by poverty and limited economic opportunity and lack of awareness about the consequences of child marriage on teenage girls.

Teenage pregnancy is perpetuated by increased level of illiteracy among community members who married at early age. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2008) noted that communities are not aware of the effects to the girl child and that child marriages often end up in separation and children growing up without proper parenting. Illiteracy is also attributed to loss of productive labour for government.

Power Control

Lack of power in the relationship is often associated with high levels of violence in the marriage. Naveed et al, (2015) further argues that power control influences child marriage. Child marriage is often used as an instrument to perpetuate power relations and maintain gender based control. It is generally believed that the younger girls can be easily tamed the way male elders want. It becomes (exchange marriages) a way of maintaining the balance of power between families by ensuring that their girls are exchanged in marriages for daughters-in-law. Invariably, the exchange involves at least one if not both to be child marriages. These marriages are mostly arranged by fathers or elder male members of the family. Young people, particularly females, are not consulted in decisions pertaining to their marriages. In fact, it is considered 'shameful' to take the opinion of a female regarding her marriage.

Individual and interpersonal drivers

The drivers or influences at individual and household level include personal beliefs and practices that promote and perpetuate the practice of child marriage. The individual influences are often shaped by the environment where the girls live and the personal situations they are predisposed to. Conflict situations and refugee environments have for instance been found to drive the practice of child marriage. Children who grow up in such high risk settings internalize and develop attitudes that support child marriage. Rural communities with families where child

marriage is a norm lead the children to believe and aspire to get married early. For many families in traditional ethnic communities child marriage is associated with parental need for protection of their daughters against early sexual encounters and pregnancy so as to keep the family's dignity. Child marriage is seen as offering lifelong security for the young girls (Rubin et al., 2009). This is linked to the low value attached to girls' education where parents feel that educating a girl is a waste of time and resources when she is expected to get married.

Community-level drivers

According to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (2015), Community level factors that increase risk based on community and social environments and include an individual's experiences and relationships with schools, and neighborhoods. For instance, many teenage girls who get pregnant find marriage the only practical survival solution. Pre-marital pregnancy precipitates child marriage. Pre-marital pregnancy remains shameful and causes stigma - associated with disrespect, bad omens, embarrassment, disgrace to the family, and curses; and the teenage mother is seen as a bad influence in the community. However, in some communities social norms around virginity appear to be bending (except among Muslims, who continue to uphold premarital virginity as a strong social/religious norm to be guarded at all costs, including through child marriages) implying tacit acceptance since premarital pregnancy/sexual relations have become so common

Preserving Traditional and cultural practices

Both tradition and culture are probable causes of the phenomenon of child marriage. The tradition of child marriage has existed for a long time and it may be difficult to change the attitudes. The tradition of marrying a virgin is often important in many societies and the lower the age of the girl, the greater chance of her being a virgin. The fear of being left without a spouse and consequently being stigmatized is also a factor to take into consideration. The different view upon the age of adulthood also seems to vary and menstruation can often be seen as an evidence for leaving the adolescence and becoming a woman who is ready for being a wife and a mother. Marriage at a young age according to the social norm and considered normal behavior, these local traditions are the most difficult to change, whereas lots of effort must be put in this matter in order to make a change (Johansson, 2015).

It is further argued that negative social and religious norms also perpetuate and can help to justify child marriages (Rhaisa , 2015). Child marriage can therefore be seen as a safeguard against premarital sex, and the duty to protect the girl from sexual harassment and violence is transferred from father to husband. This is becoming more common in Southern Africa with the high level of defilement and rape, and studies have shown that parents may prefer to marry off their children early to ensure they are married as virgins. Girls may be married off early to older men in the belief that a husband would provide a safeguard against ‘immoral’ or ‘inappropriate’ behaviour. In situations where girls become pregnant through consensual sex or rape, to avoid stigma, families may view the girls’ rights and wellbeing as secondary to the preservation of family ‘honour’. Early marriage can also be as a means of consolidating relations between families or appeasement or compensation for a wrong done to one family, tribe or clan, by another. Bride-price systems, common in Southern Africa, in which gifts or money change hands in exchange for a bride, can offer powerful financial incentives for families to push girls into early marriage. Finally, some traditional societies believe that once girls reach menarche or puberty, they are sexually mature and ready for marriage.

Agege (2017) further argues that child marriage is rooted in some cultural traditions. Child brides often come from patriarchal societies where parents and elders play very significant or domineering roles in selecting spouses for their children. Strong cultural norms place emphasis on a girl’s virginity, which is closely tied to a family honour. Parents are disposed to marrying off their daughters at a very tender age to ensure they marry as virgins and retain the family honour. The practice of child marriage is also strongly followed as a way of protecting the girl child from sexual assault and unwanted extra marital or teenage pregnancies. That is, given the facts regarding sexual activities among unmarried children as young as 10years old.

Religion

Religious leaders influence government as well as followers of their respective sects. So their supportive interpretation about child marriage influences the parents thus they do not hesitate marrying their children at an early age. Those who seek to justify child marriage on religious grounds argue that Islam emphasises early marriage of children and it is considered a sin not to

marry off a daughter who has reached puberty. A sizable section of religious leaders also propagate this view by justifying that it would reduce the corruption in the society. On the other hand, few religious leaders are of the view that the mere onset of puberty is not a sufficient marker signaling marriage for girls and that psychological and physical maturity are also relevant factors in assessing the age for marriage. It can be said that Islam is not precise about the age of a girl's marriage which gives leverage to the religious leaders to interpret this matter in different ways. According to Montazeri (2006), since Islam is silent on age of marriage, there is a wide belief that it is acceptable.

Workineh (2015) states that, in the orthodox religion, for a deacon to become a priest he should have to marry virgin girl. The orthodox religion recognizes the age of marriage is between 13 – 15 for girls. Religious leaders further argue that even 'Eve' married Adam at the age of 15 years; religious people said that it will be difficult to get a virgin if the girls are left to get older, because virginity could be lost without engaging in sexual intercourse and doing heavy work and carrying heavy load, therefore it is only assured at early age.

Kingah (2010) notes that religion especially in the Roman Catholic faith and Islam, the division accorded to women is often reflected openly. They limit female participation in shaping these dogmatic movements. This reality has been transcribed into many African traditional societies and has had the debilitating fallout of perpetuating the role of the woman as second fiddle at the beck and call of the man. An area where in the discrimination against a female kid is most marked is education. Irrespective of the fact that there are well documented inter-links between female education and infant mortality the education of a male child is prioritized over that of girl child. Even in those rare situations where girls have the opportunity to attend school, they are often the objects of sexual harassment and abuse.

The strong religious messages also enforce the view that marrying early is best as supported by the following views of one priest representing Ethiopians Orthodox Church. He argues that "these days with western ideas spread everywhere' girls stay unmarried as late as 30. *It is very scientific and modern, but in our church it is prohibited. Such girls are neither clean, nor blessed* (Bayisabge, 2010)

Bride Wealth

The aspect of bride wealth is one of the factors contributing to child marriage. It is a cultural phenomenon not only in Africa but also outside. In India, bride wealth as a gift to a daughter during marriage is like a bribe to the groom for taking one's daughter off one's hands (Rao, 1993). This is closely tied to the fact that culturally women are of low status as compared to men. Additionally, grooms of different professions have unspoken but well established rates for bride wealth. In some, the bride price decreases as the girl gets older. This implies that parents would want to marry off the daughters as fast as possible. Bride wealth enhances the practice in most African communities as it is highly valued and encourages parents to marry off their children soon (UNICEF, 2001). It is a source of wealth and prestige when given in the form of livestock such as cattle, goats, and sheep among others. The more livestock one has, the wealthier one is, hence, more respect (Birech, 2013)

In a similarly, Mabafam et al, (2013), asserts that parents who therefore know that, if they enroll their girl children they may not have the opportunity to withdraw them from school for marriage purpose may not send them to school at all. Such parents may prefer to deny their girls access to education if they have in mind to exchange them one day. In this sense, they may not face similar challenges when the time is due for the girls to be exchanged. This is because girls will be ignorant of their rights and may accept to go on exchange marriage without any resistance or people fighting for them. The consequence of the relationship is that, as more girls are involved in betrothal marriage arrangement, more girls are either denied access to school or drop out of school. It also means that, the girls may not have internalized schooling as part of their personal value, because, the society has not previewed them to the importance of education but rather had transferred marriage as against education as a cultural value.

Weak Laws and legal protection

Early marriages in some countries are widespread, to an extent that prosecutions are rare. While nations have legalized right to marriage, including minimum age and consent, these laws may not be applied and few prosecutions are brought against law breakers. Consequently marriage is not considered directly in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Practitioners regard other

rights (e.g. health, education, life, development and survival) or the CRC general principles such as interests of the child. To this effect, guidelines for Periodic Reports requiring that governments must indicate minimum marriage age for girls and boys should be effected (Ganira et al., 2015)

In many countries, young people still do not have legal protection from early marriage. Some countries, even Southern Africa have legal ages of marriage as low as 14 years old, and some countries still allow marriage of girls below the age of 18 years with parental consent. Furthermore, in many countries, girls who have been married will often find it difficult to dissolve their marriages as legal systems are not designed to meet their needs. Even in countries with the requisite laws to protect girls from marriage, failure to enforce legislation, especially in remote rural areas, means that girls do not get the protection they need. General awareness of the laws may also be very poor in some countries, and families may not even be aware that in marrying their daughters they are breaking the law or some may believe that that customary law overrides common law. In some countries, child marriage is so common and prosecutions seldom brought, such that there is a general belief that such marriages are acceptable and penalties are unlikely (VSO, 2015)

Societal and peer pressure

Girls who are over 20 years and not going to school and not married are scorned or made fun of by their peers and the community in general, and they are called *mahure* meaning prostitutes in Malawi (Rhaisa, 2008). The social pressure related to such labeling undermines the effort to delay marriage among girls for fear of being seen as social outcasts. It is observed that women are more respected when they are called “Mrs”. In addition, women going to the borehole to fetch water, those who are married, pregnant or with babies are given priority.

It is observed that parents are always reluctant to discuss sexual and reproductive issues with children because of the taboos surrounding sexuality education in some cultures. A study of children between 12 and 17 years showed that young people are free to share reproductive health issues with fellow friends and yet sometimes they do not have the right information (Panday et al., 2008). Peer pressure can affect a girl child’s academic performance and is therefore a driver

to child marriage. For teenagers, it is important that they be accepted by their peer group. This means that their peer group's approval gets placed above that of their parents and teachers. This in turn has a direct effect on their academics. Sometimes their academics are affected because despite being capable of performing well, they choose not to because in the eyes of their peers it makes them look 'uncool'. Sometimes their academics are affected because in an effort to fit in with their peer group, they place more emphasis on being social rather than working on their academics. Children can easily adopt dangerous habits and more extreme forms of peer pressure propagate bad habits such as alcohol consumption, smoking, drug abuse. Technically, teenagers know that these are not good habits to cultivate but they excuse it with the brash confidence youth and are also motivated by the need to feel accepted. At this point of time, long term consequences don't really occur to them. Peer pressure also makes children feel ashamed or bad about themselves and their family. At the average school, the student body is composed of students who come from various economic backgrounds. Sometimes these economic backgrounds are vastly disparate and for many children, this becomes a hope of contention. If they come from poor economic backgrounds or come from a family which might not give them money to spend extravagantly, children end up feeling bad or ashamed about themselves and their family, because in the eyes of their peers, they are somehow 'lesser' or 'weird' individuals. Distances from family and friends is common for teenagers to think that nobody understands them and that the whole world is against them. However, in a few cases, the influence of peer pressure is such that it draws teenagers completely away from family and friends who mean well. They shut themselves off and fall into bad company

Peer pressure kills individuality and gives rise to a set of people who are merely clones of each other. Often what people do not realize is that although there exists the garb of a similar fashion or a similar trend that masks these clones, the actual faces behind these facades are unique. Loss of individuality can be the biggest setback anyone can suffer in his or her adulthood. It is very important for adults themselves to realize that it is never about fitting in a set mold of characters and skills; it is about being part of the group and yet retaining your individuality. Succumbing to peer pressure in taking important decisions of your life can only land you in sorrow. One is likely to encounter huge expenses which they cannot afford. This with time becomes a burden to the individual and the family at large (Maina, 2015).

According to Sibeko (2012), Peer group is the most important socialization agent. Not only is the peer group a primary source of information on sexuality issue but they also create an environment in which peer pressure is extended on the teenager to indulge in sex because “everyone does it” or because they do not want to “feel left out”. Peer pressure sometimes involves exclusionary practices, as when sexually inexperienced teenagers are sent away during the discussions of any sexual matters.

2.2 The extent child marriage has affected a girl child

Child marriage has been recognized under international law as a form of violence against women. In patriarchal societies in South Asia where fixed gender roles are imposed on girls, marriage is generally understood as constituting consent to sex. Underage girls are effectively forced into nonconsensual sexual relationships that would be considered criminal acts if committed outside of marriage, including rape and statutory rape in many instances. Moreover, the significant age gap frequently seen between parties to a child marriage can intensify unequal power dynamics and social isolation, making married girls more vulnerable to numerous forms of gender-based violence (Centre for Reproductive Rights, 2013)

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and social Development (2015) observes that child marriage affects all aspects of a child’s life and is a violation of children’s rights, as recognized globally and nationally. It exposes children, especially girls to multiple vulnerabilities and significantly impacts on development of their capabilities. Child marriage and adolescent pregnancies are interlinked with significant negative consequences on girls’ physical and psychological wellbeing, and general development of girls including their education opportunities and outcomes. Evidence shows that in spite of Government’s support and implementation of Universal Primary education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE) which has expanded access to education for Uganda, many girls are increasingly dropping out of school. The completion rates both at primary and secondary level remain behind those of the boys estimated at 66 percent and 24 percent compared to boys 68 percent and 52 percent respectively. Progression to secondary school education is more limited for girls (46.6percent) than the boys (53.4). Child marriage and teenage pregnancies are among the major causes of school dropout.

Low primary level completion rates and the very low progression to post primary education imply that large number of girls leave school with limited ability to be productive in the labour market, thus their economic capabilities and employment opportunities and options are limited.

Meanwhile OHCHR (2008) notes that ascertaining the exact number of child marriages is a key for measuring the magnitude of the problem and for designing mechanisms for ending it. However, gathering accurate statistics remains a challenge for researchers and child rights advocates at both national and International levels. In most cases child marriages are unofficial and unregulated.

Relatively few studies have attempted to carefully measure the impact of child marriage on education. The main difficulty is that the decision by a girl (or her parents) to marry early is likely to be itself a function of the girl's education potential. For example, girls with lower education prospects because they may be weaker academically face smaller expected losses in future earnings and thereby have lower incentives to continue to study as compared to girls who are academically stronger. These girls may be more willing to marry early or their parents may be more inclined to have them marry early. Similarly, independently of their academic abilities, girls less interested in pursuing their education may also marry earlier and might have dropped out of school even in the absence of marriage. Because education and marriage decisions are jointly made, it is technically difficult to assess the impact of child marriage on education attainment (Osakinle et al., 2015)

When entering an early marriage, Johansson (2015) affirms that, there are negative outcomes further complicating the lives of young girls. Consequences coming from child marriage can be both physical as well as psychological. This is most often coming from sexual abuse, which is strikingly common. Other issues documented are deprived childhood, denial of right of expression and being forced to stay home taking care of the housing instead of continuing school. From these consequences, girls are likely to experience psychological problems such as anxiety, which can in worst case lead to suicide. Child marriage can even be the cause of death due to early pregnancy causing internal complications

Violence, abuse and forced sexual relations

Abuse is a daily reality for many married girls. Women who marry younger are more likely to be beaten or threatened and to believe that a husband might be justified in beating his wife. Even where girls are not physically abused, the psychological impact of early and forced marriage is hard to quantify. Young brides are often marginalized from society with few support systems. This contributes to a lack of confidence and low self-esteem which in turn increases their powerlessness and vulnerability to poverty (Jongizulu, 2012).

Girls who marry young are essentially forced into sexual relationships that expose them to early pregnancy at the cost of their physical and mental health. Because of pressure to become pregnant immediately or soon after marriage, child marriage means early sexual activity and early and frequent pregnancies. However, because their bodies are not yet fully developed and they have repeated and too closely timed pregnancies, girls who marry before the age of 18 experience much higher rates of life-threatening or debilitating conditions as a result of pregnancy such as obstetric fistula, uterine prolapse, hemorrhaging, and even death. Notably, complications from pregnancy and childbirth continue to be the leading cause of death among girls aged 15 globally, accounting for 70,000 deaths each year. The risk of unplanned pregnancies is significantly higher for girls married before the age of 18 as they often lack access to reproductive health information and services and are powerless to demand the use of contraception (Centre for Reproductive Rights, 2013).

Low Status and No Power for Decision Making

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (2015) observed that negative consequences of child marriage include limited decision making. According to Rubin et al. (2009), women who marry before the age of 14 years were less likely to make decisions in their households compared to those who married at the age of 15 or older. Women who marry young are more vulnerable to gender based violence. The UDHS reports indicate a slightly higher proportion of ever-married women who married before the age of 18 years who had ever experienced physical violence since age 15 years compared to those who married at age 18 or

older (UBOS 2006; 2011). Girls who marry young enter into informal unions which deny them basic protection and social status and leads to isolation with limited support structures.

Exposure of girls to vulnerability

Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (2015) argues that child marriage affects all aspects of a child's life and is a violation of children's rights, as recognized globally and nationally. It exposes children especially girls to multiple vulnerabilities and significantly impacts on development of their capabilities. Child marriage and adolescent pregnancies are interlinked with significant negative consequences on girl's physical and psychological wellbeing; and general development of girls including their education opportunities and outcomes. Evidence shows that in spite of Government's support and implementation of Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE) which has expanded access to education for Ugandans, many girls are increasingly dropping out of school. The completion rates both at primary and secondary level remain behind those of the boys estimated at 66 percent. Uganda's adolescent fertility/birth rate is among the highest in the Eastern Africa region estimated at 134 per 1000 women aged 15-19 years. Marrying at young ages causes lifelong poverty and retards a country's economic and human resource progress. In fact, child marriage is both a cause and a consequence of poverty and gender inequality.

It is further argued that child brides may also suffer vulnerability to HIV/AIDS (Kabeer, 2005; Umashankar, 2006). Being young and female in Africa is a major risk factor for infection and young girls are being infected at a considerably disproportional rate to that of boys. Whilst early marriages are sometimes seen by parents as a mechanism for protecting their daughters from HIV/AIDS, future husbands may already be infected from previous sexual encounters; a risk which is particularly acute for girls with older husbands. The age disparity between a child bride and her husband, in addition to her low economic autonomy, further increases a girl's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. It exacerbates the abilities of girls and women to make and negotiate sexual decisions, including whether or not to engage in sexual activity, issues relating to the use of contraception and condoms for protecting against HIV infection, and also their ability to demand fidelity from their husbands.

Limited educational attainment

Adekola (2016) asserts that limited educational attainment is almost the most grievous of all unpleasant effects of child marriage on young spouses. For example, in Taraba State, Child marriage has brought about a shift of focus from education to family life and child bearing among several thousands of young ladies as most girls who marry early have to drop out of school. Most times it marks the end of a girl's ambition of schooling for personal development, preparation for adulthood and contribution to the wellbeing of her family and society. Most child wives felt they had to face an entirely new challenge of being a wife, mother and facing other marital duties and responsibilities as soon as they were espoused. Withdrawing a young girl from school to get her married limits several opportunities; including limiting her opportunity to develop her intellect, other useful skills such as entrepreneurial skill and chance of developing her independent identity.

As stated by Okerere (2013), early marriage results to school-drop-out and its chain effects. For example, in Northern Nigeria, 12 million girls aged around 13-14 are married in the region. The denial of education reduced such girls to that of dependence and subservience. It is also stated that Gender inequality present in all aspects of society, including education leads to girls often lacking life skills and negotiating power. Husbands of young wives are often older men who expect, their wives to follow tradition, stay home and undertake household and childcare duties. The thought of continuing schooling is often lost. Schools often have a policy of refusing to allow married or pregnant girl or girls to return. Even if they do not permit girls with babies to return, the school environment rules, time tables and physical conditions can make it difficult for a girl to attend school and perform her duties as wife and mother at the same time. Early marriage subsequently undermines the Millennium Development Goals (2 and 3) that seeks to achieve universal primary education, and promote gender equality and empower women. This also affects, not only the health of the child of the illiterate mother, but the child's all round development. There is also a relationship between maternal literacy and school child's academic achievement. It is also supported that literate women are more aware of health and reproductive issues and the importance of children's education. But early marriage limits girls' educational

opportunities. It was found that “early marriage is more likely to limit girls’ educational opportunities than early childbirth”.

Physical, Psychological and sexual abuse

Adebambo (2010) argues that when a child bride is married she is likely to be forced into sexual activity with her husband, and at an age where the bride is not physically and sexually mature this has severe health consequences. Child brides are likely to become pregnant at an early age and there is a strong correlation between the age of a mother and maternal mortality. Girls aged 10-14 are five times more likely to die in pregnancy or childbirth than women aged 20-24 and girls aged 15-19 are twice as likely to die. Young mothers face higher risks during pregnancies including complications such as heavy bleeding, fistula, infection, anaemia, and eclampsia which contribute to higher mortality rates of both mother and child. At a young age a girl has not developed fully and her body may strain under the effort of child birth, which can result in obstructed labour and obstetric fistula. Obstetric fistula can also be caused by the early sexual relations associated with child marriage, which take place sometimes even before menarche (Women's International Network, 2000; IHEU, 2006).

According to Smedt (1998), good prenatal care reduces the risk of childbirth complications, but in many instances, due to the limited autonomy or freedom of movement, young wives are not able to negotiate access to health care. They may be unable to access health services because of distance, fear, expense or the need for permission from a spouse or in-laws. These barriers aggravate the risks of maternal complications and mortality for pregnant adolescents. There is also a clear link between Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and child and early marriages. Communities who practice FGM are also more likely to practice child marriages and in some FGM practicing communities FGM is carried out at puberty and then marriages are arranged immediately afterwards. It is also common in FGM practicing communities for a man to refuse to marry a girl or woman who has not undergone FGM, or to demand that FGM is carried out before marriage.

Psychological and social consequences is a huge responsibility for a young girl to become a wife and mother and because girls are not adequately prepared for these roles this heavy burden has a

serious impact on their psychological welfare, their perceptions of themselves and also their relationship (Forum on marriage and the rights of women and Girls, 2001). Women who marry early are more likely to suffer abuse and violence, with inevitable psychological as well as physical consequences. Studies indicate that women who marry at young ages are more likely to believe that it is sometimes acceptable for a husband to beat his wife, and are therefore more likely to experience domestic violence themselves. Violent behavior can take the form of physical harm, psychological attacks, threatening behavior and forced sexual acts including rape. Abuse is sometimes perpetrated by the husband's family as well as the husband himself, and girls that enter families as a bride often become domestic slaves for the in-laws. Early marriage has also been linked to wife abandonment and increased levels of divorce or separation and child brides also face the risk of being widowed by their husbands who are often considerably older. In these instances the wife is likely to suffer additional discrimination as in many cultures divorced, abandoned or widowed women suffer a loss of status, and may be ostracized by society and denied property rights (UNICEF, 2004)

Failure to Enforce Laws

Failure to enforce legislation means that in some areas families are not even aware that in marrying their daughters they are breaking the law. Girls themselves may also not be aware of their rights and legal status. In Nigerian states that have legislation abolishing early marriage there is much more awareness of the importance of abolishing early marriage in countries such as Malawi, Bangladesh and Niger, most girls will be married before the age at which they can legally do so, and yet prosecutions are seldom conducted, contributing to a belief that such marriages are acceptable and penalties are unlikely. Equally, marriage brokers and others who actively perpetuate the problem are seldom prosecuted, meaning that the financial rewards from brokering a marriage continue to outweigh the legal risks. In many countries, young people still do not have legal protection from early and forced marriage. Countries across Africa, the Middle East and Latin America have legal ages of marriage as low as 14 years old. Girls who have been married often find it difficult to dissolve their marriages as they try to negotiate legal systems that are not designed to meet their needs (Myers & Harvey, 2011).

Divorce or abandonment and Early Widowhood

Some desperate girls and women who have been forced into marriage try to run away or take other avenues to leave their spouses; others are abandoned by their spouses. However, the girls and women are usually left with the responsibility of raising children without the husband or family's financial support, thus making them more likely to live in poverty. In many cultures, husbands are often many years older than their young brides, and consequently die while the girl is still young. Traditionally, girls were not allowed to remarry or were passed onto their dead husbands' brothers. Furthermore, the girl's families are unlikely to accept her back once she has become widowed, (UNICEF, 2001). In cultures that permit polygamy, the youngest co-wife is required to care for elder co-wives. This relationship is sometimes a daughter/mother relationship, but in many cases the elder wives view the younger with bitterness and resentment.

It is worth emphasizing that apart from the violation of human rights that child marriage often entails, and apart from the negative impact of child marriage on health and the risk of disempowerment of the girls who marry early, the fact that child marriage has a large impact on education attainment is likely to make programmes and policies to reduce child marriage cost effective promoting growth and poverty reduction, that is, given that the returns to secondary schooling tend to be large, the positive economic impact of reduction in child marriage on growth and poverty reduction through education is likely to be large.

After they marry girls find very limited possibilities for an independent life. Many young married girls report that they were unable to continue their education without the support of the husbands, which they received relatively rarely. Community consensus regarding what makes a "good wife" explains much about why this is so, a good wife defined almost exclusively in terms of the work she does for her husband, children, and home, furthermore while there was general agreement that domestic abuse had decreased, domestic abuse thrives in relationships where the wife has no access to an independent income and becomes socially isolated due to economic reliance in her partner (Nicola et al., 2014).

In conclusion, while the extent of child marriage is felt most keenly at the individual level, it is likely to also have profound and far-reaching effects at national and global levels in the forms of

lost earnings and intergenerational transmission of poverty. In short, the economic impacts and cost of child marriage are likely to be very high for the girls who marry early, their children, their families, their communities, and society at large. It is therefore clear that reviewed literature seems to agree that child marriage affects the socio economic development of both children and the community. However, a lot has remained unanswered besides some literature being old hence need for recent helpful literature.

2.3 Strategies to address the issue of child marriages

According to Asrari (2015) ending child marriage is a crucial step towards achieving girls' rights across the Commonwealth: child marriage is a violation of human rights, undermines women and girls' equality and empowerment, perpetuates and reinforces negative social norms and curtails girls' opportunities. Preventing child marriage is not only essential to ensuring the rights of the individual girls concerned, but is also fundamental to breaking the cycle of inter-generational poverty and to achieving the post-2015 sustainable development goals (SDGs). The practice causes girls to leave education too early, thus limiting opportunities for them to develop their knowledge, skills and qualifications. Given that girls represent half the future workforce; this has a significant impact on potential family incomes and tackling poverty. It also impacts on national efficiency and productivity and represents an economic cost in respect of lost GDP growth and the broader benefits of education such as improved health and citizenship.

Education

Education of parents is just as important as education of children because education will broaden their horizons and help convince parents of the benefits of having their children educated. It is important to provide education that involves more than reading, writing and maths. Teaching these young girls life skills - including reproduction information - how to have fun and how to play in sports is proving to be a positive way to change their lives and futures. Girls who are able to complete primary school tend to marry later and have fewer children. Girls who marry as children (under 18) are often susceptible to the health risks associated with early sexual initiation and child bearing including HIV and obstetric fistula (Enige, 2015).

Child participation

Uganda recognizes the right to participation by all persons in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995), the Local Government Act (Cap. 243), and the Children Act (Cap. 59). Several efforts by both government and Civil Society Organizations to promote child participation have been initiated. The National Child protection Guide is designed to contribute to the realization of participation as a right for all children and to respond to the good intentions of actors promoting child participation. Children must participate in all societal issues that affect them directly or indirectly. Every effort must be taken to ensure that all children including those with special needs have access and opportunity to participate in order to make sure all children are involved, consider the visible and invisible requirements and the likely immediate and long term impact on the lives of children (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 1997).

Laws and Policies

Driven by a growing recognition of human and economic costs as well as an international consensus regarding the impact of early marriage on girls' human rights , countries around the world have moved, albeit unevenly, outlaw the practice. However, as Brown (2012) notes, due to uneven enforcement even 'strong legislation has often delivered weak results'. In India, for example, early marriage has been illegal for three decades. Similarly, in Uganda, where a 1990 law raised the age of consent from 14 to 18, in order to protect adolescent girls from the sexual exploitation of 'sugar daddies', prosecutors have primarily targeted young, poorer men rather than the older, wealthier men at whom the law is aimed (Osakinle et al., 2015).

However, according to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and social Development (2015), Uganda has created greater opportunities for girls' education and promotion of a conducive legal and policy environment for protection and promotion of women and children's rights. Government programs such as the respective Universal Primary Education (UPE, 1997) and Universal Secondary Education (USE, 2007) together with initiatives such as the additional "1.5 Points Scheme" for girls entering university to bridge the gender gap in higher education, have led to an increase in girls' enrollment and completion of school. In addition, numerous pieces of legislation that have been passed including the Penal Code Act, the Children's Act, the Domestic Violence Act and the Female Genital Mutilation Act have all worked in synergy to create a sense

of increased protection of the girl child in Uganda. However there is increasing evidence that all Government's efforts to end discrimination against women and girls notwithstanding, harmful traditional practices such as child marriage have persisted, and with adverse consequences for the girls, their communities and national development. The people should also respect and put into use the key legal instruments such as United Nations Conventions and Declarations, Guidelines as this will help to address challenges of child marriage.

Community based approach

Osakinle (2015) argues for developing community-based approaches, tackling the deeply ingrained discriminatory social norms of parents, communities and traditional authorities. Poverty needs to be tackled at a household level so that families do not have to resort to selling or trading their girls into marriage or relying on rich 'sugar daddies' for survival. It is also important that access to quality education be improved so that girls can be able to go to school and enroll. Enrolling alone may not help but it needs to be coupled with employment opportunities that make educational investments pay off.

Using mass media to increase the awareness of the whole community

The use of media is critical in ending child marriages, the consequences of early marriage on girls themselves, and their family and on the community as a whole. Once communities are sensitized, the parents can send their girls to school and support them to stay on. This leads to the empowerment of girls into skills for self-confidence, assertiveness, speaking out, decision-making and negotiation. Gaining access to communities deeply rooted in the practice of early marriage is one of the biggest obstacles for programs to tackle. Media campaigns using radio and other traditional communication methods must be used to reach communities, especially those in rural areas. All these measures will help to ensure the domestic applicability of the national, as well as international legal, instruments already ratified about girl's human rights.

Research

At present there is serious lack of data on all aspects of child marriage. More indicators, may be needed for use in standard surveys and existing research methodologies should be assessed for their usefulness in capturing necessary data. According to Montazeri (2016) there is immense

need to undertake research on deeper understanding of the determinants of early marriage from girls' own perspectives. It will contribute to designing and developing culturally responsive interventions and improving health and education programs for these girls.

In conclusion, while the troubles caused by child marriage are harsh, the benefits of ending the practice are transformative and far-reaching. Tackling child marriage is a strategic way to advance women's rights and empowerment in several areas, ranging from health, education, work, freedom from violence, and participation in public life, to mention but a few. In order to do so, it is essential that all relevant stakeholders, including community and religious leaders; school teachers and administrators; health care workers; police, prosecutors, and the judiciary; government officials; media; parents, and of course, girls and boys understand and commit to their role in ending child marriage. Unless measures are taken to address child marriage, it will continue to be a major stumbling block to the achievement of human rights.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methods and approaches that were used to collect data from the field. It involves research design, area of study, study population, sampling procedures including Sample size and sampling techniques. The chapter also presents data collection methods and instruments, quality control methods, data management and processing. It also presents data analysis, ethical considerations, limitations and delimitations of the study.

3.1 Research design

The research was conducted through a case study design that was mainly qualitative. According to Oso et al. (2008), case study is intensive, descriptive and holistic analysis of a single entity on a bounded case. Its purpose was to study a single entity in depth in order to gain insight into the larger cases; to describe and explain rather than predict a phenomenon. This study used qualitative approach to assess effects of child marriage on the girl child education. A qualitative research design was used to bring the researcher and the respondents together and help the researcher to have in-depth understanding of the variables under study. The study adopted qualitative approach because it provided detailed views, experiences and practices from respondents. A case study design therefore, helped the researcher to describe the research findings in detail, in context and holistically.

According to Sarantakos (2013) such a design allows an easy description and interpretation of people's opinions. The interview guide will be useful in this regard.

In their view, Ader, Mellenbergh, & Hand, (2008) assert that design is a way of going about the research process, as one concerned with turning research questions into a research project. Pamela & Susan (2008) credit qualitative case study design as a right design for studying complex phenomena within their contexts and applaud it for excellently bringing understanding of complex issues as well as widening the body of knowledge.

3.2 Area of Study

The study was carried out in the parishes of Dakabela and Aloet in Arapai Sub County, Soroti District. Currently Arapai sub-county has 4 parishes and 33 villages out of which, the study covered only two parishes of Aloet and Dakabela. The researcher selected the two parishes because Aloet parish is semi urban and hosts a big market every Thursdays which attracts traders and buyers from far and near. Most of the children in Aloet do not attend school on this day preferring to go to the market. While Dakabela parish is a rural setting with minimum economic activities taking place in the area. It is also evidently an impoverished community.

Arapai is a settlement in Dakabela County, Soroti District in Eastern Uganda. It is a suburb of the town of Soroti, in Soroti District, in the Teso sub-region. The study area was within the area that was adversely attacked by Lord's Resistance Army between 2003-2007. This instability resulted into some of the people getting internally displaced while others lost quite a lot of their property. Arapai is located approximately 8 kilometres north of the central business district of the town of Soroti, on the road between Soroti and Amuria districts. This location is approximately 345 kilometres northeast of Kampala, Uganda's capital city and largest metropolitan area.

3.3 Study population

The study population refers to the large groups of people or things (Ruane, 2005). In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the study population for this research comprised of married girls, parents, Local Councilors, Police officer in-charge Family and Child Protection Unit, primary school Teachers, cultural/clan leaders, religious leaders, boys, girls, husbands of the girl children, health workers. These categories of people have been chosen for this research because they are knowledgeable on issues of child marriage practice in this community and have experience in this practice. This selection is important because it is only those who have been involved in one way that explained and shared the challenges they experience on the issues of child marriage.

3.4 Sampling

Sampling is the procedure a researcher uses to gather people, places, objects or items to study (Kisilu & Tromp, 2011). The elements chosen to be studied must be representative of the study population; therefore, findings are regarded conclusive.

3.4.1 Sample size

According to Trochim (2005), Sampling is the process of selecting units (e.g., people, organizations) from a population of interest so that by studying the sample we may fairly generalize our results back to the population from which they were chosen. A total of 115 participants turned up for interviews out of the planned 150. They included; 8 police, 14 primary school teachers, 18 Parents, 6 husbands of the married girls, 20 married girls, 10 Religious leaders, 5 Cultural leaders, 6 Local Councilors, 6 health workers, 12 primary schools girls, 10 primary school boys.

3.4.2 Sampling techniques

This is a description of the strategies which the researcher used to select representative elements/subjects/respondents from the target/accessible population. In this research purposive sampling and Stratified Purposive sampling techniques were used. Purposive sampling was ideal since it aims at selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study in form of in-depth interviews (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2006; Kisilu, & Tromp, 2011).

This technique, helped in-depth interviews with the categories of people identified. It also helped the researcher to target specific elements that the researcher did not want to miss out in the selected sample. Schools in this study were also chosen purposively due to their locations and the researcher targeted government schools and private school.

3.5 Research Procedures

The research made three days field survey across the two parishes of Aloet and Dakabela in Soroti district in Eastern Uganda prior to the research study. This aimed at identifying a potential area of the study along conceptual and locational measures. During this survey visit, the researcher identified elders and community leaders with whom she remained in contact. Before

going to the field for the study, an introductory letter was got from the School of Arts and Social science (SASS) Uganda Martyrs University, which was presented to the sub county Chief who gave the researcher a go ahead to meet the categories of people she was interested in. The Sub County Chief (Senior Assistant Secretary) granted permission by endorsing on the letter. The researcher used the same letter to introduce herself to the local leaders in the area and to the respondents.

3.6 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

Both primary and secondary sources of data collection were used, which were corresponding to data collection methods and instruments.

3.6.1 Primary Sources

In-Depth Interviews and Interview Guide was used for all the respondents

In-depth-interview was used to collect data about the three specific objectives and their corresponding questions. An in-depth interview research method is a one-to-one data collection method, which involved an in-depth discussion of specific topics between the interviewer and the interviewee (Hennink, Hutter & Ajay, 2011). According to Walliman (2011), interviews allow interviewer to get insights into the attitudes of the participant with an aim to get relevant data for the study. While conducting the interviews, the researcher was guided by an interview guide to avert the tendency of asking irrelevant questions which would affect the reliability and validity of the research findings. That was to obtain information which was not biased and distorted in nature. The interview guide was consisting of probing questions which were asked in the course of the interviews that gave wider views on the issues under interrogation.

The in-depth interviews of this study focused on; factors influencing child marriage among school going girls; determining the effect of child marriage on the girl child and propose strategies to reduce child marriages among school going girls but described in semi-structured questions. Liamputtong and Ezzy (2006) describe in-depth interviews as focus interviews, unstructured interviews, and active interaction interviews among others.

Since this research study required seeking information on individual or personal experiences encountered by community members, in-depth interviews helped the researcher to know and

understand what factors contributed to child marriage. Similarly, an in-depth interview is suitable for this research work since it is appropriate for venturing into sensitive issues. It also helped the researcher to know peoples' feelings and emotions about child marriage which was a conceptual area of study. Most importantly by use of this research method, the meanings people attach to their experiences can be clarified. Under the guidance of In-depth interview data-collection method, semi-structured interview guide was used as data collection instrument.

3.6.2 Secondary Source

Secondary sources used included internet sources, reports from police, text books, encyclopedias, journals, articles and conference presentation papers and research papers. These were reviewed before the field work study, to inform the research topic. The findings from secondary source were presented as well.

3.7 Data Quality Control

Data quality control ensured correcting and validating. Data was extracted from the informants without bias; the research participants' confidentiality, reliability and privacy were respected; intellectual honesty was observed throughout the research process; and acknowledgement was given wherever due. To enhance internal validity, purposive sampling was used to ensure the selection of participants rich with issues of child marriage. Internal validity is "the ability of the research design to adequately test the questions" (Bordens & Abbot, 2011, p. 114)

3.8 Data management and processing

The data was collected through recordings processed by strict verbatim transcription at the end of the field research and were subjected to presentation, interpretation, critical but objective analysis and informed discussion. To complement the recordings mentioned above, notes-taking was done, to take note of key issues that would arise in the interview session for clarity and probing. The researcher also took some photographs with permission from the interviewees.

3.9 Data Analysis

The study being a qualitative research, content analysis was used. Content analysis was done by two forms of qualitative analysis, that is; Pre-determined categories mostly for secondary data and Interpretative themes for primary data (Step, 2009). By pre-determined categories one decides what s/he needs to know; he/she can look through the data and records the events,

findings, perceptions according to categories. Similarly, the researcher presents literature according to categorized themes, corresponding to objectives. Content analysis means analysis of the contents of an interview in order to identify the main themes that emerge from the responses given by the respondents. For primary data, this was done under interpretative themes, which is “one way of doing the analysis by reading and re-reading documents or transcripts of interviews to identify themes that appear relevant to the program” (Step, 2009). These themes help to explore new areas and uncover obstacles or problems that the researcher may not know.

3.10 Ethical considerations

The researcher considered the research values of voluntary participation, anonymity and protection of respondents from any possible harm that could arise from participating in the study. The researcher introduced herself as a student of the School of Arts and Social science (SASS) Uganda Martyrs University. This letter was shared and endorsed by the sub county chief to allow the community to cooperate with the research in the data collection process. Therefore the researcher, introduced the purpose of the study as an accomplishment of a Masters’ Study program and not for any other hidden agenda. The researcher requested the respondents to participate in the study on a voluntary basis. Refusal or abstaining from participating was permitted. The researcher assured the respondents of maintaining their privacy about information gathered from them. All the interview sessions were conducted with clear consent of the respondents at the beginning of each session. Likewise, introductions were made at the beginning of each session. The researcher also considered the anonymity of the respondents’ names in the data presentation.

3.11 Limitations of the study

Oso et al. (2008), refers to limitations as hindrances or anticipated constraints of potential weaknesses of the study imposed by the methodology of the study. The researcher experienced some limitations when conducting the research. The major challenge was, the month of July when the research was conducted was a time when the region was hit by serious hunger due to dry spell and poor harvest that left everyone busy looking for food. Another challenge was fear by the respondents to give information to the researcher. The researcher faced a challenge as the intended respondents were not willing to give information unless they were given money.

Limited finance was also a major obstacle since the research was self sponsored and thus the researcher depended on meager resources.

3.12 De-limitations of the Study

In response to the issue of hunger in the community, the research made sure that the respondents were met on individual basis. Some of them were interviewed on the road side as they moved to look for food. The researcher also made sure that not much of the respondent's time was wasted during the interview to give them time to go look for what to eat. On the issue of the respondents wanting to be given money during the interview, the researcher assured the respondents that this was purely an individual research work done for academic purpose not for an NGO and encouraged them to voluntarily participate. The researcher used personal relationship since this was her place of origin to explain to respondents that their participation in this research was important for the development of their sub county and made them get interested in participating.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study whose main objective was to assess the effects of child marriage on the girl child education in Arapai Sub County, in Soroti District. The presentation of the data is guided by the specific objectives of the study which were to: establish the factors influencing child marriage in Arapai sub county, Soroti district; assess the extent to which child marriage has affected a girl child in Arapai sub county, Soroti District and propose strategies to address the issue of child marriages in Arapai sub county, Soroti District. The researcher presents the views of the participants, engages in meaning making, analysis and discussion of the research findings in light of the literature reviewed in chapter two. Since the methods of data collection and the nature of data collected were qualitative, findings have been presented, analyzed and interpreted qualitatively.

4.1 Bibliographic information of the Respondents

The study sought the views of the elders for their input as far as this vice (early child marriage) which tends to destroy the future of the children is concerned. Eighteen (18) men and women (parents) were interviewed of whom three were married female in the age bracket of 48-52. Their highest level of education was primary education and they were peasant farmers. They had between 5-8 children. The males contacted were 15, married and were in the age bracket of 58-64, primary school was too, their highest level of education and are also they were peasant farmers and had between 8-13 children. None of them was employed in the formal sector.

The views of the elders are very important in this study as they have the experience of comparing how marriage was done during their old days and what they think is bad with current practice from which way forward can be forged.

The second category of the respondents interviewed were the police officers. This is because the duty of the police according to the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995) is to maintain law and order. All the cases of early marriages were supposed to be reported to them. The

purpose of including them therefore was to find out how many cases of this nature they had registered over the selected time period. The researcher interviewed eight (8) of them.

Others that took part in this study were 14 primary school teachers mainly male between the age of 24-45, they at least had ordinary level certificate which is the minimum level of education for joining the teaching profession.

At least two (6) health workers were interviewed. The purpose of including them in this study was to identify the implications of child marriages from medical point of view, and also to establish how often they register such cases in their respective hospitals, and sought their views about possible strategies from them. The nurses interviewed were married and were between the age bracket of 24-30. The health workers shared their experience about married girls who visit the health centre and the complications that they were faced with.

Another category of the respondents contacted were the local Council One (LC1) officials. This is because ideally problems in the community are first supposed to be reported to the local council officials, they are supposed to write a recommendation letter to victims of child marriages and forward them to the police. Six (6) of them participated in the interview. The purpose of the letter is normally to identify that the victims are from that particular village and that the case has been reported to them. This therefore makes them the first contact person at the village level who are expected to have a record of how many such incidences occurred in their respective villages. The LC officials were interviewed, they were between 31-51 years old, had both primary and secondary level of education.

Other groups interviewed were the married girls, this was meant to find out what they went through ever since they got married including how it has affected their education, what pushed them to get married that early and what they think could be done to solve the issue; twenty (20) of them were interviewed. Ten (10) Religious leaders and five (5) Cultural leaders were reached; twenty four (12) school girls and twenty (10) school boys were among those interviewed. The researcher also interviewed six (6) husbands of the married girls.

Even though data was collected, presented, analyzed, and discussed thematically in correspondence with the three objectives of the study, this chapter begins with; (a) Factors Influencing Child Marriage in Arapai Sub County, Soroti; (b) effect of a girl child marriage in Arapai sub county, Soroti District; (c) strategies to address the issue of child marriage.

4.2 Factors Influencing Child Marriage in Arapai Sub County, Soroti

Three categories were extracted from the deep descriptions of the participants including; school environment, family structure, low autonomy in decision-making and response to needs. These categories consisted of other sub categories.

School environment

Interviewees commented that the pupils have experienced challenges in the school environment including lack of mid day meals for them. Secondly, with the availability of male teachers at school, some of them were reported to want to make girl children their wives. This has definite implications in the teaching and learning environment of pupils at school, since a high priority should be placed on pupils accessing school and retention in order to maintain the purpose of the school.

The girls also shared that the number of female teachers in the school is insufficient leaving most of the girls not assisted when in need, especially during menstrual period, hence leaving most of the girls unattended to at the time they need help.

On our encounter, some of them explained that;

“Hunger at school is unbearable. We leave home in the morning without tasting anything. Break time we do not have money to buy cassava chips, lunch time we stay without food till 5pm in the evening, by the time you go home, you have to go home and begin preparing super. That time you feel like dying of hunger. At least during mangoes season we can eat mangoes for break and lunch even when we are going back home in the evening.” (Interview with a pupil in Aloet primary school on 19/7/2017)

“At times even teachers want to make us their wives. He will ask you to take books to his home and he follows to begin touching your buttocks, when you want to run away he will warn you not to tell anybody. So we tend to keep quiet so that the teacher does not turn against or beat you in class. Some of them even ask us to go and cook for them in their homes then we also take that food at lunch time but later someone will ask to sleep with you in the process” (Interview with P.7 pupil in Arabaka P/S on 19/7/2017)

The boys pointed at a shelter which the girls use as a changing room that was almost open to the public. They said the girls go there to change and they look at them through the open spaces in the shelter.

One of the explained that;

“when the girls go in the shelter to change their dresses during menstruation, we can see them from far. Some of them now do not want to use this shelter and prefer to go away from school and not come back” (interviews with a P6 pupil in Arabaka primary school)

Every child has their share of school challenges and learning as result of lack of mid day meals, teachers in relationship with school girls, poor menstrual hygiene to mention but a few. Sometimes there is a poor pupil teacher relationship while some relationships are not healthy between a teacher and a pupil. Inappropriate conflict management often produce uncondusive classroom atmosphere. Common symptoms of an ineffective learning environment include declining motivation resulting into poor grades. Without healthy school environment, children tend to run away from school and prefer getting married. Similarly the issue of school feeding in schools is failing many government programmes including its attempt to retain children especially girls at school. Most children do not complete school as they are forced to run away from school in search for food which opens an avenue for these young girls to be misled by mature men who will marry them when they are still underage. School feeding is the responsibility of the parents but many times they say education is for free and the government should do everything which is not right. Unfortunately, these silent cries for help go unnoticed.

Penalties for male teachers who seduce girl pupils should be considered. According to Education Act(2008), the board is empowered to monitor the behavior and performance of both the teaching and non-teaching staff of the school and recommend to the relevant authorities for appropriate action.

“as a teacher of this school, I have taught here now for 17 years and the challenges that we face is mainly lack of learning teaching materials like desks. Sometimes even UPE comes very late. I teach in P.5 but the children are sitting on a very dusty floor. We lack desks and this matter was forwarded to the office of the sub county but nothing has happened yet. The girls sometimes come with very small mats from home but because of the congestion in the classroom, they squeeze a lot in that mat which eventually does not help them. This year three girls got pregnant in first term - two from P.6 and one from P.7. These are some of the conditions that make girls run away from school and prefer to

get married and never come back to school. Even for us teachers it disrupts our preparedness to teach the children. (Interview with a primary school teacher in Ogoloi P/S on 26/7/2017)

There are also difficulties being experienced by teachers which sometimes affect the learning and teaching process for example; in lesson preparations, disruptions of teaching-learning process, lack of teaching-learning materials, poor classroom management and the challenges that affect the personal lives of teachers. The challenges on the personal lives of teachers have directly influenced their commitment to teaching and support towards the war affected children. In some schools, Teachers do not have a conducive environment that can allow them to have ample time to make their schemes of work and plan lessons of the week. However, teachers in urban setting do not experience the same conditions of life when compared to teachers in the camps. The social emotional difficulties faced by teachers in their place of work cut across the three cases. Uncertainty and increasing feelings of incompetence were some of the inclinations in the interviewees expressions. Teachers have continued to have no regard of support from both the Government of Uganda and the International communities to their situation of primary and secondary traumatic work related stress. Effects of occupational stressors on health outcomes of the teachers were reflected in the teachers conflicts with the children affected and inability to control their emotions. Nonetheless some humble and friendly approaches have been used in some situations to resolve the conflict between peers and teachers with their learners. Some trust was realised between teachers and the children. On the side of administration use of government policies has been useful. Teachers needed to be guided where they seem to go extreme with the children s behaviour difficulties. School rules and regulations also were applied as one way of curbing indiscipline actions by children (Oto R. 2006)

Family Structure

Family structure as the first category refers to socioeconomic difficulties, cultural family values, and religious beliefs that propelled the study participants to early marriage.

“What I see that makes these girls to get married when they are still young is the sharing of houses with their parents. You find a man does not want to build for his children a separate house. This forces these girls to begin engaging in sexual activities when they

are still young. It is good to separate houses with these children after sometime. For us when they come to us we tell them off” (Interview with the LC1 Aloet 30/7/2017)

“Some parents do not stay together. They have divorced leaving the children to survive on their own with a lot of difficulty. A case in point is one of the women living in this area, her husband left her and she also later left for prostitution and left her four daughters who were going to school alone in the house. The house became a lodge where all these bodas you see there were sleeping with these girls. We had to intervene as local government. Now all the girls have left to unknown destination. They no longer go to school, their father left their mother first and later the mother also took off leaving the children alone in the house. They should be married now somewhere. You see... (Interview with the LC1 Akum village on 29/7/2017)

Families that eventually divorce may be different in a variety of ways from those that do not long before marital disruption occurs. They may be more likely to exhibit poor parenting practices, high levels of marital conflict, or suffer from persistent economic stress. Exposure to these conditions may compromise children’s economic, social and psychological wellbeing in later life. Parental separation has been associated with a wide range of adverse effects on children’s wellbeing, both as a short-term consequence of the transition and in the form of more enduring effects that persist into adulthood. These findings are in line with what Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (2015) claims that child marriage affects all aspects of a child’s life and is a violation of children’s rights, as recognized globally and nationally. It exposes children, especially girls, to multiple vulnerabilities and significantly impacts on development of their capabilities. Child marriage and adolescent pregnancies are interlinked with significant negative consequences on girl’s physical and psychological wellbeing; and general development of girls including their education opportunities and outcomes.

Socioeconomic Difficulties

Most participants had grown up in dysfunctional family with socioeconomic difficulties. They had experienced difficult and excruciating childhood. This was a fundamental reason that persuaded them to get married.

“I had a difficult childhood because my father died and my family was poor. I could not get everything that I needed. I had a big and extended family. My mother was not able to take care of us at all. We [my sisters and I] could not tolerate this

difficult situation. My mother wanted to get rid of her responsibilities toward her children, so I thought if I get married, everything will be better.”

Another participant added,

“Marriage was the best way that I could get rid of my family problems. Both my mother and father would leave for the market every Thursday very early in the morning and leave me alone with the children at home. I would do all the work including looking for what the children would eat. My father upon return would demand for food from me yet he did not leave anything for me to cook. He would abuse me that I should go and get married since he can no longer stay with two women in his home. I thought it wise to go and suffer in a marital home rather than suffer in my father’s home but you can see how I have grown thin and ugly hhhmmm” (Interview with married woman at Odudui on 14/07/2017)

This finding means that girls who have parents who cannot support their needs end up getting married hoping that things will change for them in marriage. Unfortunately, in most cases, they end up in a very difficult situations mixed with reproductive health complications.

Where there is acute poverty, a young girl may be seen as an economic burden, who when purchased, will relieve the family financially and socially (International Center for Research on Women, 2007).

The high levels of poverty in Uganda have contributed to the persistent vice of child marriage. According to the United Nation’s Fund for Population (2015), Uganda currently has 34.5 million people, about 23.1 million are prone to poverty, and about 8.4 million of them (about 24.5 percent) are trapped in absolute poverty.

Further studies indicate that, about 67 percent of Ugandans are either poor or highly vulnerable to poverty, the expenditure review for Uganda 2012 by the Directorate of Social Protection in the gender ministry has revealed. 67 percent represented both Ugandans who spend below the poverty line of \$ 1.20 (about sh3, 170) per day and those who are below twice the poverty line, \$2.40 (about sh6, 340) per day.

Where poverty is acute, a young girl may be regarded as an economic burden where one less daughter is one less mouth to feed (UNICEF 2001; Forum on marriage and the rights of women and Girls 2001; Mathur 2003 and Nour 2006).

Parents encourage the marriage of their daughters while they are still children in hope that the marriage will benefit them both financially and socially, while also relieving financial burdens on the family. Additionally, poor families tend to marry off girls at the same time to help reduce the burden of high marriage ceremony expenses

Cultural Family Values.

According to the participants, one of the main factors influencing their marriage-related decision making was traditional and cultural family values.

One of the participants pointed out this,

“People think when a girl grows up physically, she is ready for marriage. My family believed that it’s better for girls to get married early. My sisters all got married before they turned 16 too. Most of them had challenges while giving birth, they were not ready. what is so disturbing is that our parents cannot learn from this suffering my elder sisters went through, you see your classmates going to school and your parents instead of giving you school fees, they are busy asking your hand in marriage in exchange of few sick cows, unknown to them if they could educate you, you might even give them things far bigger than what they are getting now. The challenge with them is that they consider education a waste of time and resources but not an investment.” (Interview with one of the married girl at Tukum on 18/07/2017)

“Since I was a young girl my father used to tell me that I had no garden in his land. He said I was going to get married and leave his home. He said only people who had a place were the boys. So I stopped studying in P.3 when my father refused to buy for me books and a pen. They kept on chasing me home from school because I was not writing what the teacher was teaching. This happened many times until I decided to stop going to school. I was forced to get married to a fellow villager and now I am here with three children. Later this boy brought another girl and we are now two. I survive by working in people’s gardens to earn a living (interviewed teenage mother in Aliloi 22/07/2017)

This is in line with Nawal (2006), who argues that a girl is seen as a burden given the fact that they will get married and leave the natal family. The parents prefer to educate boys and marry the girls off at an early age. A male child is more likely to gain full education, gain employment

and pursue a working life, thus tending to marry later. For example, in Mali, the female: male ratio of marriage before age 18 is 72:1 and 21:1 in Kenya.

These findings mean that some of these girls are married off against their interest. When they see their colleagues going to school, they also feel like following them but they do not get the support they need from their parents because to the parents the best is for them to get married and they get the share of their cows.

Maturity and Responsibility

Some participants believed that marriage makes people become more mature and responsible.

The following excerpts were taken from two participants.

“I wanted to marry because I thought if I get married, I will become more responsible. I think I know more than my friends who are still single. I have a sense of primacy. I feel I am mature than them. Marriage was very important for my family. My mother said to me I am not a little girl anymore after marriage. I will become more mature mentally than I used to be. I can make more plans for the future.” (Interview with one of the respondents at Aloet on 21/07/2017)

“I used to like hearing children calling their mothers toto, toto (mother) and I also wanted to get a child who would call me toto. Even to be called so and so wife I felt it was more respected rather than being called by my name, those two things made me get married and get my own child who would call me mummy (toto). So I used to tell my mother and she said I should get my own” (Interview with one teenage mother in Aloet on 21/07/2017)

This is a scenario where a girl who trusts her mother has been misadvised. Most girls have a strong relationship with their mothers; they, in most cases take what their mothers tell them as the gospel truth. Ideally this relationship would have been good if the mother was advising her to do the right things. Unfortunately, the mother has given her wrong advice, a mother advising her daughter to get married as a way of showing maturity and responsibility confirms the need for sensitization for these parents.

From the participants’ perspectives, being encouraged to marry by family influenced their marriage-related decision making process. One of the participants pointed out,

“I was looking for an excuse not to get married, but my parents convinced me by describing all the benefits of marriage. I only agreed to marry in order to please them” (Interviews with a married girl in Tukum on 22/07/2017)

Another participant added;

“ my family believed every girl has to get married eventually. They justified it in this way; I didn't want to disobey them. That was why I agreed to marry. But also sometimes I am reminded that a girl is not supposed to stay in their home for ever. She is supposed to get married when she grows (Interviews with a married girl in Tukum on 22/07/2017)

I was studying in P.6 in Tukum Primary school. During term three holidays, my big brother brought a girl and when the parents of the girl came demanding for dowry, my father ordered me to get married so that the cows are given to the inlaws. I am now married with one child and expecting the second one. (Interviews with a married girl in Tukum on 22/07/2017)

The Spouse's personal situation was another factor that propelled the participants to marry. Regardless of the girl's age, if any suitor was morally and economically in good condition, parents would encourage their daughter to marry him:

*“My dad told me, the boy is a nice person to marry and I shouldn't reject his proposal”
“The boy was polite, hardworking, educated and had a good job. He also had no problem with me to continue my education after getting married. My mom wanted me to marry him and they requested him to first give them two bulls for ploughing as he looks for the other part of the dowry” (Interviews with a married girl in 22/7/2017)*

One of the participants expressed,

My cousin insisted that I must get married to a boy from our village, but he was jobless. . I had to marry a stranger man who I didn't know previously but he had a shop so I had no problem getting married to him.

Religious Beliefs

For most participants, marriage related decision-making was influenced by the adherence to religious beliefs. One of participants explained,

“My mother and elder sister advised me to marry as soon as possible because marriage is one of our prophet’s recommendations that no one should disobey”. Another participant added, “My Pastor believed that marriage can protect me from sin [outside of marriage sex]”

“The father of this child is a son of a pastor in PAG. When I got pregnant while still at school, my parents demanded to know who was responsible for the pregnancy. I told them and they went to meet the boy’s parents who told them that they can only pay him dowry if I moved to stay in their home and be wedded to the boy so that I can also be going to the garden with other family members to produce food for the family since the bulls that have been ploughing for that food were going to be given to my parents”(Interview with a married girl in Arabaka 29/07/2017)

This revelation points out that religious beliefs have impact on early marriages. This finding is in line with UNFPA (2006) which stated that in communities where child marriage is prevalent, there is strong social pressure on families to conform. Failure to conform can often result in ridicule, disapproval or family shame. Invariably, local perceptions on the ideal age for marriage, the desire for submissive wives, extended family patterns and other customary requirements, are all enshrined in local customs or religious norms.

The Orthodox Church dominates life in Ethiopia, and its priests are some of the country’s most respected figures. So when priests take child brides, often age 15 or younger, it’s not something that’s questioned by the community. Rather, it’s expected. Tradition dictates that a priest must marry a virgin. “Before, the priests used to think that marrying a girl over 15 years old, after her menstruation starts, is a bad thing, it lowers her quality,” says Melak Birhan Ewenetu Yetemegne, the second top priest in his region, a rural area in southern Amhara in the cool Ethiopian highlands. His district includes 56 churches and more than 2,000 priests. And his experience with child marriage is personal. When he was 22, he married a girl who was only 9. (Colin C. 2015)

In many contexts child marriage is legitimized by patriarchy, and related family structures, which ensure that marriage transfers a father’s role over his girl child to her future spouse. The marriage or betrothal of children in some parts of Uganda is valued as a means of consolidating powerful relations between families, for sealing deals over land or other property, or even for settling disputes

According to the results, family structure was one of the basic factors that propelled the girls to early marriage. In the literature, some dimensions of family structure have been recognized including the family as a system, family norms, roles, communication, the balance of power within the family system, and intergenerational aspects (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2014).

In Iran as an Islamic country, marriage is a valuable event (Tremayne 2006) and is strongly recommended on religious, moral, social, and psychological grounds. In this cultural context, the idea that marriage seems the only way to obtain an identity has remained unchanged among three generations of Iranian women. Regardless of the great diversity in marriage patterns in some regions and the level of education and achievements in other aspects of life in women, marriage itself is fundamental to the social identity of all women, and force on women to marry persists (Tremayne 2006). Consequently, early marriage has remained common and it is still encouraged by Iranian culture

Low Autonomy in Decision-Making

Low autonomy in decision making due to insufficient life skills including decision-making, problem-solving, negotiation, and critical thinking skills were other reasons for propelling the participants to early marriage.

“my wife told me to marry a young girl who will be helping her to do work at home. For her she is now old and tired when cannot be carrying water for me for bathing, she can no longer wash for me clothes. So I had to marry the daughter of my long time friend. I also did not want our cows to be taken to a family that I did not know. (Interview with one of the husbands of a married girls in Ogoloi 17/7/2017)

Many times these young girls wonder how they are going to play marital roles at a young age because they are not told any specifics since their parents sometimes speak generally about marriage. Then, the idea of being called a wife and being referred to as sister-in-law may not sit well with her. The young girl may be praised and welcomed by her new relatives. The man will be praised for having brought a beautiful and promising young wife. This is the most unpleasant thing to ever happen to a young girl. People will eat and make merry but this gathering will not last as one by one, people will retreat to their homes and leave the young girl with the old man

she still perceives as a stranger and her future will be ruined as she will no longer continue with her education as she cannot make personal decision.

This is line with UDHS reports which indicate a slightly higher proportion of ever-married women who married before the age of 18 years who had ever experienced physical violence since age 15 years compared to those who married at age 18 or older (UBOS 2006; 2011). Girls who marry young enter into informal unions which deny them basic protection and social status and leads to isolation with limited support structures

Inappropriate Decision-Making Skills

Most of the participants believed that they were not able to make appropriate decision concerning their marriage because they could not foresee consequences of their decisions. Therefore, they accepted the marriage-related decisions made by their parents. The following quotations were stated by three participants.

I told my parents, at my age, I can't make proper decisions about marriage, so I leave the decision making to you because I might make a mistake. If you [her parents] confirm [the marriage] I'll agree to it.

I had never thought about marriage or the girl who I was going to marry. I couldn't make a decision appropriately. It bothered me so much because I was not ready for marriage and had to marry while still being a kid. (interview with a husband of a married girl in Aloet 19/7/2017)

"My father decided to negotiate with his friend to make me a wife of his friend's son. He used to send me to take water for the wife of his friend little did I know that I was being prepared for the son of that home till one day when I was asked to spend a night in that boys hut and never to go back to our home which was 5 kms away. (Interview with a teenage mother in Tukum 15/07/2017)

Most participants mentioned that they did not have enough information regarding marriage and could not find anyone for consultation to make proper decision. One participant said,

"My parents wanted me to marry. I didn't know what I should do. I didn't have anyone to ask for any advice. I had no choice except to accept my parents' decision"

Marriage had occurred suddenly and untimely for most participants. For them, marriage was considered as a stressful life event and teenage girls had no sufficient skills for coping with such a stress. They believed that they could not make proper decision related to their marriage under stressful circumstances. In this regard some participants said,

“Everything happened so suddenly that I was unable to think about it logically . . . at that time, I couldn’t justify to my parents”. I used to be a calm person, but after the marriage proposal, I’ve got so stressed out that felt like I was losing my balance. It was very surprising for me. Until then, I hadn’t thought about marriage at all. I was just a kid, going to school, and had never thought of marriage. Whenever they talk to me regarding marriage, I would get angry and upset. I cried so much and I couldn’t do anything. (Interviews with a married girl in Aloet on 15/7/2017)

Inadequate Problem-Solving Skills

Some participants were pushed toward marriage to escape from school. They had not learned the skills that help them to solve their problems.

In this regard, one participant stated

“I was weak in math at school and I didn’t like my math teacher. He too did not like me,, so I didn’t like going to school. My dad said that if you do not like to go to school, then you have to marry. . . To escape from attending classes, I got married”

Insufficient Negotiation Skills

Most participants expressed that they were not ready psychologically for marriage and its responsibilities. They intended to postpone their marriage until reaching the proper age, as well as achieving their educational and occupational goals. However, they were not able to convince their parents to delay their marriage. In this regard, one of the participants pointed out,

Another participant said,

“When my family suggested to get married, I cried all day because I was so young. I told my mother I don’t like to marry now. I was at first grade of high school at that time; I wanted to finish my education before getting married. But my parents were older than me and I could not convince them to accept my explanations”. (Interviews with teenage mother in Tukum on 22/07/2017)

Lack of Critical Thinking Skills

Some participants believed that they were not able to predict and evaluate consequences of early marriage and concerned about the continuation of their marriage. Therefore, they gave marriage-related decision-making over to their parents. One participant stated,

I'm not sure about marriage consequences. I ask myself whether the marriage is good or not. Can I have a successful life? Can I continue with my education? Will the marriage take away my freedom? I told my brother I can't make a decision because I can't imagine what will happen in the future . . . they [my parent] decided for my marriage. (Interview with a husband of a married girl in Olegei 20/7/2017)

Another participant said,

"I am not mature enough to evaluate people's mind and behavior yet. I didn't feel well about marriage because I didn't know her well. That is why, I'm afraid that I couldn't get along with her and our marriage ended up in divorce. . . I completely gave everything over to my family. (Interview with a husband of a married girl in Tukum 20/7/2017)

Response to Needs

According to the participants, marriage was an opportunity to meet some of their social emotional and sexual needs.

Social Needs

The social needs that propelled the participants to early marriage were the needs to receive respect, serenity, and independence. In this regard, two participants stated the following:

I really needed to have peace in my life, because there were lots of financial and family related problems in my life [living with my parents]. I thought by getting married, I will be relieved of these sufferings. (Interviews with a married girl on 29th/7/2017)

I couldn't get any respect within my own family, while the family of my husband treated me with respect. I had lots of fun and didn't want to go back to my parent's house at all. (Interviews with a married girl on 29th/7/2017)

For one of the participants, marriage was a way to achieve her life goals in a peaceful life. She stated,

When I was single, it was so bad. My parents were very strict with me; I couldn't even choose my field of study. My wish was to study and become a dentist. That was why I married in order to reach my dreams in a peaceful life but things have changed. (Interviews with a married girl on 29th/7/2017)

The participants believed that they could achieve their personal independence through marriage and acquiring the spouse identity. One of them said,

I thought marriage could be a new life for me and I could establish my own family too. Marriage is starting an independent life. I have the opportunity to make my own decisions. I manage my own time; I personally have control over all my plans and wishes in my life. (Interviews with a child mother on 29th/7/2017)

Emotional Needs

Satisfaction of emotional needs was another reason to persuade the participants to early marriage. They believed that marriage could give them the feeling of being loved. One of the participants stated,

For the first time in my life, I felt I was going to be in love. I was experiencing emotional feelings toward the opposite sex. This experience was a new good and welcome thing for me. I really needed to be loved by someone. (Interviews with a child mother on 29th/7/2017)

Sexual Needs

Based on the participants' beliefs, marriage was a way to satisfy their sexual needs. In this regard, two participants insisted that

"I had to get married to that girl, because it protected me from falling into depravity. Every boy at this age has sexual needs which could be satisfied through marriage I am a handsome boy and many girls were attracted to me. I thought if I didn't get married, it is possible to fall into the trap [sex outside of marriage]" (Interviews with a husband of a married girl in Tukum on 22/07/2017)

According to some participants, video was one of the factors that reinforced their sexual desires. One of the participants mentioned,

Neither at home nor at school anyone had not taught us anything about sex. I had to learn these things from the video. . . Some of the things that I saw video increased my sexual drive. (Interview with a Teenage mother at Akaikai on 19/7/2017)

Low autonomy due to lack of adequate life skills including decision-making, problem-solving, negotiation, and critical thinking skills played the major role in propelling the girls to early marriage. Life skills are a group of psychosocial competencies and abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the challenges of everyday life (UNICEF, 2005). The results revealed that although all participants were educated until marriage, they had not learned essential life skills and were not empowered enough to make proper decisions for their marriage.

Due to lack of sufficient life skills, most of the participants were not able to anticipate the consequences of early marriage and also had not sufficient autonomy in marriage-related decision making. Therefore, they had to allow their parents to decide for their marriage. Evidence has shown that the high level of literacy in parents has not only led automatically to the empowerment of girls and education without life skills has not added any apparent real value to their lives (Tremayne, 2015).

In relation to this, in Iranian society for example, even though early marriage has been a common practice (Hosseini and Erfani, 2014), families and educational institutions appear to have not put sufficient effort in empowering girls to prepare for marriage and accept marital responsibilities. Furthermore, young people have insufficient access to information on these matters, whether from parents, teachers, or health services. One of the other factors that propelled the participants to accept early marriage was response to their social, emotional, and sexual needs. The participants viewed marriage as a way to achieve the independence and social identity as an essential part of their transition to adulthood. They thought that marriage would bring for them more respect, peace, love, and autonomy in decision-making in their future life. However, they did not have essential substructures to reach their goals and suffered from inadequate life skills.

Similarly, previous studies have argued that transition to marriage for teenage girls is often associated with limited access to knowledge and impeded autonomy (Haberland & Chong, 2003) and married girls have very limited ability to make decision about their own health (UNFPA, 2012). In addition to meeting social and emotional needs, the participants believed that marriage allows them to satisfy their sexual needs. In other cultures, given that extramarital sexual relations are legally and morally prohibited, families intend to encourage their children to marry as soon as possible in order to meet their sexual needs and protect their chastity (Turner, 2013).

Uganda is a country in transition from traditional to modern society and customs related to marriage are no exception. In this transition, the mass media plays an important role in people's beliefs, attitudes, and family values]. It can also stimulate them via erotic visual images, music, and pornographic movies (Kempadoo & Dunn, 2002)

Mistreatment from home by parents

Some parents punished their children without explaining to them why they were being punished. This, in most cases does not go down well with the girls as narrated by this respondent below.

“My parents mistreated me, everything I was doing was wrong in their eyes and attracted unnecessary punishment, the message was clear, that I should get married hence I was left with no option but to fall for this man for whom I am not in love nor ready for him, now look at me, I look as if I am in my 30's yet I am making 20 next month, these are all because of stress”. (Interview with one of the girls at Ogoloi on 22/7/2017)

“I was forced to get married because my father kept mentioning that he was tired of feeding people's wives meaning myself. He would buy a piece of soap and would keep it to himself. Both we children and our mother had to find our own soap for bathing. He never wanted to hear anything about buying for us books, uniforms and other school materials. One day he came back drunk and could not hesitate to mention his feeling. He started shouting before reaching home saying he has only one wife and the rest if you know you are a woman, you should leave his home and give him peace. That was when I started falling in love with one of the boda boda riders whom I met in the market one day and he assisted to give me a lift back home and he also gave me 2,000=” (interviews with a married girl in Arabaka on 29/7/2017)

This means that mistreatment of these girls can lead to an early marriage. There is therefore need for parents to stop mistreating their girls. This finding agrees with that of Birech (2013) who also

noted that child punishment for reasons they do not understand is among the causes of early marriage. He observed that if a child knows the reason of her punishment, most times they remain at home trying not to repeat the mistake which caused them the punishment. However, if a child has no idea of why he has been punished, she will consider it as mistreatment hence will have no option but to escape from home and get married regardless of her age.

Low level of Education among parents

One elder stated that one of the major causes of early girl child marriages is lack of education of the parents. He had this to say

“Most of our people here are uneducated, how then do you expect them to know the value of education while for them they are not educated he asked? He added that whereas there are some parents who never went to school but highly educated their children; those are the ones who have been exposed. They have seen something which other people have not, that is why they normally work hard to ensure that they give their children the best education.” (Interview with a parent at Arabaka, on 23/7/2017)

“Ireero ber ijo atutubet na Arusi na keere, mam ijo iwanyuni iduwe cut lu atamata aisiom ayekar ingaren cut. Balaat yen isiomit akere isalit atukot na P.5 arai P.7. Arai ejai ayekar senior erai caat nasodit aria naiyareit. Inyo ibore epedi kwa nat ikoku angi aitodikin lucie iduwe. Toni ikecuriak da kwapekwangin. Emamei asioman nabeit araida” (Interview with an a parent in Arusi 23/7/2017)

This finding means that the level of education of the parents also influences the education level of their children, there seems to be a relationship between the parents level of illiteracy and that of the children which in turn influences level at which they go into marriage.

This finding is supported by Naveed et al (2016), illiteracy or Lack of Education also contributes to early marriage which has a correlation with illiteracy or lower levels of education particularly for girls. Parents are not willing to invest in a daughter’s education since girl has to leave her parental home at the time of marriage and thus any investment on her is considered as a waste. In addition, a girl’s prospects for education after marriage are extremely grim due to her lack of mobility, domestic burdens, child bearings and social norms that make marriage and education incompatible. Early marriage limits a girl’s development of skills, resources, knowledge, social

support and mobility, which limit her negotiating power with her husband or in-laws. Subsequently, the increased vulnerability exposes girls to a likelihood of violence, abuse, divorce or abandonment. Illiteracy or lack of education among parents perpetuates the practice as it is often accentuated by poverty and limited economic opportunity.

Local Disco in the villages

These local discos are ones set up in the village were in an open place where everyone comes to dance, since it is in an open space, there is no control as far as age of the people who turn up is concerned, it is also free giving entry to all. It is usually organised on big days or when there are functions like wedding, introduction and last funeral rites. It is common during holidays especially the Christmas break. This tends to lead to early marriage as noted by a parent

“These local discos are spoiling our children, when they meet in these discos given the fact that they are sexually active, they end up having unprotected sex resulting to early marriages and end of education especially for the girls, they are called “okadibong”. They leave you to go to sleep and they go at night and return early in the morning. This is a very common practice towards the end and the beginning of the year when there are many functions such as marriages, last funeral rites” (Interview with a parent at Arusi on 25/7/2017)

4.3 Effect of a girl child marriage in Arapai sub county, Soroti District

Child marriage is a widespread violation of human rights. It is an impediment to social and economic development, and it is rooted in gender inequality. The low value placed on girls and women perpetuates the act and acceptability of child marriage in societies where the practice is common.

High exposure to HIV infection

“Early marriage can lead to HIV infection because at that young age they do not know much about protection such as abstinence. This can lead to the risk of contracting this deadly disease which comes with its associated problems” (interview with a teacher on 18/7/2017)

This means that young people who involve themselves are at higher risk of contracting HIV/AIDS which comes with more social and economic burden including stigma. This finding is in line with National Strategy on early child marriage (MGSLD 2015) which states that Teenage

pregnancy is an indicator of unprotected sex, and hence exposure to risk of HIV infection (Sekiwungu and Whyte 2009). According to the UDHS (2011), about 44.4 percent of girls and 34.9 percent of boys aged 15-19 years in Uganda have already had sexual relations. Adolescents with no education (56 percent) are more likely to have had sex and to engage in high-risk sex (16.6 percent) than those with education. Among adolescents aged 15-19 years who have ever had sex, half of the boys (50.4 percent) reported using a condom at last sex episode compared with just 27.5 percent of the girls (Amin et al. 2013).

Participation and Decision-Making

“most of these girls who get married early cannot participate in decision making process, this is because they are still young and most of them actually do not know what to do, they require all important decision to be made for themselves, at times including telling them what to do, this in the long run affects the growth of the family as family growth is a joint effort activity” (interview with one of the cultural leader at Aloet on 28/7/2017)

This agrees with the observation of Klugman et al. (2014) who stated that a girl has voice and agency when she can make decisions about her life and act on those decisions without fear of retribution or violence. Related closely to lack of voice and agency, and rooted in gender inequality, is alienation from participation and decision making about issues in one’s own life, as well as those facing a household, family, or community. Child brides often experience overlapping vulnerabilities. They are young, often poor, and undereducated. This affects the resources and assets they can bring into their marital household, thus reducing their decision making ability. Child marriage places a girl under the control of her husband and often in-laws, limiting her ability to voice her opinions and form and pursue her own plans and aspirations.

This finding further is in line with UDHS data, Rubin et al. (2009) which reveal that women who married before the age of 14 years were less likely to make decisions in their households compared to those who married at the age of 15 or older. Women who marry young are more vulnerable to gender based violence. The UDHS (2006 and 2011) indicate a slightly higher proportion of ever married women who married before the age of 18 years who had ever experienced physical violence since age 15 years compared to those who married at age 18 or older (UBOS 2006; 2011). Girls who marry young enter into informal unions which deny them

basic protection and social status and leads to isolation with limited support structures (Bantebya et al. 2014; Schlecht et al. 2013).

This lack of power and decision making autonomy can have a significant influence on economic decisions. Where women have decision making power and their priorities are reflected in how household resources are allocated, household expenditures on key areas such as education and health tend to be higher (IFPRI 2003). Similarly studies have found that an increase in a woman's income share or access to credit will increase the share of household expenditures on food, clothing, and children's education (Yetna & Wodon 2010; Bussolo et, al. 2011; Hoddinott & Haddad 1995).

Health Complications during Delivery

“Most of these young girls have complications during labour because their bodies have not fully develop to have babies, so in most cases when they are brought here in the hospital they have to be operated, the bad news is that at times they wait for so long before bringing the girl so by the time they reach here they are at the point of death, if the doctor is not on ground by the time you look for the doctor the situation would have worsened and either the child will die or the mother and even at times both, these young girls should be advised by the parents to wait until their right time, marriage cannot run away, this thing has been here, it will be here and we shall leave it here” (Interview with a health worker in Dakabela H/C III on 22/7/2017)

... you can even find that when these girls come for antenatal clinic, they are emaciated, anaemic and you wonder whether she will give birth normally. In most cases we refer them to Soroti Referral hospital where they can be handled especially when it comes to blood transfusion which we do not administer. At that point even the so called husband cannot afford to transport this girl to Soroti because he has not money. Sometimes the delays to transport them to Soroti forces us to deliver them from here but in most cases either the mother or the child dies. But mostly the babies do not make it. (Interview with a health worker in Arabaka Health centre 11 on 22 /7/2017)

There is a clear association between education and improved health. Girls' education has a positive effect on the level of health in society. Being able to read and acquire knowledge will enable mothers to better look after their own and their children's health. This has a positive impact on maternal and child health. Knowledge influences women's choices when it comes to pregnancy check-ups, childbirth and nutrition. Educated girls and women turn to the health services to a greater degree.

This finding implies that some of the death of mothers while giving birth and that of their babies is as a result of early marriage. Therefore as the campaign of no woman should die while giving birth is being advocated for by several development partners, there is need to look beyond what is happening in the hospital alone. There is also need to look at its root causes, one of which is early marriage. Therefore, as people to advocate that mothers should not die while giving birth, there should also be strong fight against early marriage to stop the problem.

Evidence shows that poor health outcomes are associated with child marriage. The poor health outcomes include low nutrition status, high maternal mortality and increased risk for HIV infection (Rubin et al. 2009). Married women aged 15- 24 are five times more likely to have HIV/AIDS than those who are not married (Ministry of Health and Macro 2006). Child marriage is closely linked to teenage pregnancies since the young brides are expected to get pregnant soon after they are married (MGLSD 2011). Women who marry early are likely to experience pregnancy complications that lead to death or disability, obstructed labor and obstetric fistula (Bantebya et al. 2013; Schlecht et al. 2013). All these negatively affect economic progress of adolescent girls in terms of unhealthy and less productive human resources as well as necessity for increased health expenditure. Child marriage has implications for fertility and population growth, and the latter in turn have negative implications on economic growth (UDHS 2006; 2011).

The negative consequences of teenage motherhood are well documented. Evidence shows that adolescent mothers are twice as likely to die from pregnancy and delivery complications compared to those who are older, have high fertility rates and their babies or children have higher chances of dying (UWONET 2010; FIDH and FHRI 2012; Sekiwungu and Whyte 2009). In addition, teenage motherhood has negative effects on the socioeconomic status of the mother, and hence the child because it inhibits girls participation in education and hence limits her economic opportunities (FIDH and FHRI 2012). Unmarried adolescent mothers often experience stigma, shame, rejection and exclusion in their community in the process of reintegration, and can become destitute (Murungi 2011).

The health effects of early marriage extend beyond the girl herself in a number of ways. Infant mortality among babies born to mothers under age 18 is 60 percent higher than among those born to mothers over age 18 (UNICEF 2014a). 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 (Wachs 2008).

The effects of poor child nutrition can be seen throughout the life course, with negative impacts on educational attainment and health into adulthood. Furthermore, a married girl's role is integral in the day-to-day functioning of her household and, as such, her health influences all household members. When a girl suffers from poor health, be it physical or mental, there are both immediate direct costs for health care, and longer-term economic impacts and resulting costs in terms of lost productivity and earning potential. Unexpected illness can result in large medical expenses, lost earnings, and less saving at the household level due in part to large income shocks from illness in the family, all of which perpetuate the cycle of poverty

Lifelong poverty

“When a girl marries early, chances are highly that she might produce many children which her family cannot support, this is because of their poor family planning resulting from early marriage, this can lead to increased pressure on the limited family resources like land which normally ends up in family breaking, additionally the poor spacing usually leads lifelong poverty.(Interview with teacher on 21/07/2017)

“the girls who have left school for marriage look very emaciated and skinny. They are carrying children who are malnourished. They look much older than any of their schoolmates. This is because they are overworked by especially their mothers inlaw, their husbands also need attention from them yet they even have to go to the garden very early in the morning without eating anything in the morning. Their first meal can be at 3pm which serves as both lunch and super yet they are breastfeeding. They are reminded that they should work and pay back the cows that were used to marry her. They will live in poverty throughout their lives even the children they produce will live the same life. (Interview with one of the teachers in Arabaka P/S on 18th /07/2017)

Forced marriage as a result of poverty is in itself a risk factor for child marriage. It has a considerable psychological impact of which children are the victims. Especially if the ensuing divorce means that the child must leave school. This certainly affects her education, health and her future as well.

In many parts of the developing world, the health of the children is a big concern, especially if they are facing poverty. If there is not enough food or sufficient clean water to keep girls nourished and healthy, they may not be well enough to attend school.

This implies that early marriage can lead to many children in a family which in the long run can lead to lifelong poverty as the demand of the family members cannot be met by the small resources of the family. This finding is in line with UBOS (2011) observing that Uganda's adolescent fertility/birth rate is among the highest in the Eastern Africa region estimated at 134 per 1000 women aged 15-19 years. Studies confirm that marrying at a young age is most likely to condemn one to lifelong poverty (Rubin et al., 2009; Schlecht et al., 2013) and retards a country's economic and human resource progress. In fact, child marriage is both a cause and a consequence of poverty and gender inequality (Warner et al., 2013).

Low Level of Educational Attainment

“Most of these girls who marry early end up not continuing with their education. That explains why the school completion is lowest among them; unlike the boys, after impregnating girls they can come back to school and continue with their education leaving them to suffer with the pregnancy at home, the girls cannot come. First of all the school policy does not allow pregnant students, secondly the stigma and shame that comes with this pregnancy is even more than the school rules that prohibits pregnant students so as a result most of the victims absentees themselves before even being suspended. This in the long run affects the entire family in many aspects ranging from access to health information to usage of family resources among others” (interview with the teacher on 30/07/2017)

With the current policy, once a girl gets pregnant, that is the end of her education and this has far reaching effects on the family because as the saying goes, when you educate a girl, you educate the whole family. Therefore, when girls are married early, their educational trajectory is altered. Formal schooling and education often cease, which means they stop acquiring knowledge and skills that would carry them through life, including as productive members of their households and communities. They are also removed from the social network and support structure that schools provide. The earlier a girl marries, the more likely it is that she will have a low level of schooling. Field and Ambrus (2008) and Nguyen and Wodon (2015a) suggest that each year of early marriage below the age of 18 can lead to a decrease of 4–6 percentage points in the

probability of secondary school completion for girls, with, in some cases, an impact of the number of years of early marriage on literacy as well

Lack of education also makes it more difficult for girls to access information on health and welfare for themselves or their children (AbuGhaida & Klasen 2004; Semba et al. 2008). Girls' education is linked to increased health knowledge and increased use of household resources to promote the education and health of their children (Boyle et al. 2006). Mothers with more education spend more family resources on child nutrition. Children of less well-educated mothers are less likely to be well nourished and immunized against childhood diseases, and more likely to die (Pfeiffer, Gloyd, & Li 2001; Smith & Haddad 2015). Girls whose mothers have had no education are more likely to be married early, contributing to the cycle of poverty in subsequent generations.

4.4 Strategies on how child marriages can be handled in Arapai sub county, Soroti District

In recent years child marriage has gained increasing prominence on international and national development agenda. Today, we have a unique opportunity to act on this momentum and accelerate our efforts to help change the lives of girls and young women. Ending child marriage requires work across all sectors and at all levels. It requires us to understand the complex drivers behind the practice in different contexts and adapt our interventions accordingly. Since ending child marriage is a collective responsibility, it explains why this study sought various views of the respondents namely; Teachers, parents, religious leaders, cultural leaders, married young people (both girls and boys), Local Council officials, school children and the Police.

The respondents were asked about what in their opinion should be done to eliminate child marriage; this question was meant to solicit views from the respondents about the activities which they think should be done to reduce child sacrifice. The responses from the different categories seem to be similar. Below are their responses;

According to the cultural leaders who formed part of the key respondents;

Sensitizing the parents

There is need to sensitize the parents about the dangers of early child marriage and the benefits of educating their daughters. This is what one of the cultural leaders said:

“There is need to sensitize these parents about the value of education, education plays a key role in a family, parents these days here look at the short term gain, they have forgotten the old saying that when you educate a woman you will be sure that she can do everything properly , some of them cannot even read the names of their children, they cannot read the medicine dosage prescribed for their children, feeding in terms of balanced diet becomes a big problem, when a child does not feed well, he will be prone to diseases, all these would have been avoided if these girls who are the mothers of tomorrow are educated. We should also teach them if these girls are educated we get a lot from them as opposed to when we give them away for few sick cows, we should give them examples of these successful women who are holding key government positions like Angelina Osege the MP of Soroti District.” (Interview with cultural leader in Tukum on 26/07/2017)

The finding implies that there are many parents out there who need to be sensitized both on the dangers of marrying their daughters early and the benefit of sending them to school. This will enable them to send their daughters to school which delays early girl marriages and eventually leads to a better life.

This finding is related with that of Olson (2014) who stated that some parents from traditional communities believe that child marriage is a way of protecting their daughter: providing for her economically so she will be taken care of; safeguarding her from harassment and sexual violence before she reaches puberty, and preventing premarital sex which is still taboo in many countries across the world. Unfortunately, families often do not know the negative and harmful effects of early child marriage, including pregnancy at such a young age which can lead to many complications as a girl’s body will not be ready for childbirth. Such parents will benefit from being educated on the very serious harmful effects of forced early childhood marriage

The school and the learning it provides can play an important role in changing gender stereotypes and attitudes and in promoting gender equality. It is then vital to include knowledge and understanding of gender equality and gender sensitivity in the development of the curricula and to include knowledge of human rights and sexual reproductive health rights.

Establish and Implement Laws and Policies

Some of the police officers interviewed had this to say;

“The existing law is very weak and has a lot of loopholes, there is therefore an urgent need to establish some new by-laws to punish especially the parents who marry their daughters off, for us as police we do not know about some of these cases unless they are brought to our attention, now imagine a situation where both parents connived together, how could we know? He wondered. If there was a law that severely punishes parents who are involved in marrying their daughters, most of them would have not dared to marry off their girls”. (Interview with a police officer in Aloit police post, 22/07/2017)

“araida ebakai ebe ejai ekisil, erai auriak apese acamanar kedauriak esapat olosete kwi ainerun ait akecekituk omam itunga luatutubet ejenete. Acepak papake apase arai kede onaceke bon elosete amurake. Ijaunete kwi ikeboru olosete. Aria mam epote ber kwi awanyun do konye aomun bala elosi etunganan acok ape olosi jet kede ikeboru” (Interview with one of the parents in Arusi 29/7/2017)

Translation: *“even if they say the law is there, the parents of the girl and the ones of the boy will decide to go and agree when people do not know. At times it is the father of the girl and her brother who will go to the inlaws home to receive the dowry and they will drive them as if they are herding. (Interview with one of the parents in Arusi 29/7/2017)*

The laws in place should be implemented to address the issue of child marriage. If you have legal provisions in place and a legal document to fall back on, you can fight for your right and build on it.

This finding reveals that there are still shortages in the existing laws besides enforcers having challenges implementing the existing ones, an issue the government needs to address urgently if girl child marriage is supposed to be reduced. This finding is in line with the recommendations given by Girlsnotbrides NGO that also recommended that Laws and policies play an essential part in preventing child marriage. They noted that Uganda lack robust legal and policy frameworks which can help to prevent the practice and support married girls. A strong legal and

policy system can provide an important backdrop for improvements in services, changes in social norms and girls' empowerment.

However for change to be truly transformative, governments must show strong political leadership by making the issue of national importance and providing adequate financial resourcing across ministries to tackle the issue holistically

Provision of cheap education

The teachers stated that if girls could be encouraged to go to school then early marriages would have been stopped. One had this to say

“Whereas there is Universal Primary Education and Universal Secondary Education, additional points for girls joining Universities, there is still a big problem at the grass root here, most of the parents of these girls cannot even afford school uniforms, they cannot afford the 2,000 shillings for examinations coupled with the hunger they end up dropping out of school” (Interview with one Teacher, at Aloet P/S, on 21/07/2017).

“For us here, a parent can decide to marry off his daughter and we only get to know of it when she stops coming to school through the classroom register. These marriages are done privately by the parents sometimes even the LCs are aware and sometimes it even takes place in the bush. Should you make a mistake to inquire what happened to the girl, you should be ready for a transfer. They will make sure that they make your life difficult in the community. They can begin stealing your chicken even food from the garden. So for us we hear and we just keep quiet. Hmmm they are not serious moreover even with UPE in place” (Interview with a teacher, at Akaikai primary school on 23/07/2017)

This finding implies that the “free” education provided for by the government is not as free as many might think. The small costs cannot be met by the majority out there due to the biting poverty. Therefore the teachers are recommending that education can reduce girl child marriage if it is accessible to all who wants. Therefore, the government should think of making education cheaper if they want to reduce early girl child marriages. This concurs with The Ministry of Labour And Social Development (2015), which observed that increasing access to accessible, high quality and safe schooling is a critical strategy in ending child marriage and ensuring married girls have the opportunity to complete their education. Education builds knowledge, opens new opportunities and can help to shift norms around the value of girls in the community.

The very act of girls attending school can reinforce to the community that girls of school-going age are still children.

Keeping girls in school is an effective way to prevent girls from marrying but it is not enough. Girls need support to make the transition into secondary school. For married girls, it is important that schools encourage and support them to continue with their education in either an informal or formal setting such as being part of a safe space programme, undertaking part-time, remote or vocational learning.

This further is in line with Johansson (2015) who also stated that the key to girls' progress is education and learning. Persuading parents to keep their daughters in school and ensuring that they receive a basic education, as is their right, is important for a number of personal and family, as well as wider social and economic, reasons including postponement of marriage. Both Sri Lanka and the state of Kerala in neighbouring India have relatively high age of first marriage. They also have something else in common that has contributed to this phenomenon: both have given high priority to education for women as well as men. This has changed the way men and women perceive their roles and potential, and have led to greater support for the rights of women than is found in many other parts of this region.

While there has been a recent drive to increase participation of girls in basic education, the more significant gender gap is at the secondary level. Throughout the developing world, with the exception of Latin America and the Philippines, boys have higher rates of secondary school enrolment. The decline of girls' enrolment and attendance after age 12-13 is most marked in sub-Saharan Africa. In Tanzania, for example, enrolment of girls and boys is equal at age 12-13 but by the age of 16-17 girls' attendance is only 71 per cent of boys'.

Attempts to close gender gaps in education have included approaches to make schools more girl-friendly. These include building schools close to communities so that parents are less worried about their daughters' safety; employing more female teachers; improving the relevance of the curriculum and the quality of teaching; flexible schedules to allow girls to meet domestic

responsibilities; in-school childcare facilities; penalties for male teachers who seduce girl students; and separate sanitary facilities for boys and girls.

Continuous sensitization of the public through media

When asked what could be the best strategy for reducing child marriages, this was what one of the local council officials had to say

“We have many radio stations these days, the good news is that at least even with the poverty, a number of the households have FM radios. So if the government can partner with NGOs and do some massive and continuous sensitization programmes on these radios, it would go a long way reducing this early child marriages in this district especially this sub county where it is a bit high” (Interview with the Secretary for Youth, at Otucho, on 20/07/2017)

Because of social stigma, matters of sexual education are sometimes not discussed with children. It is therefore important that children too get to understand what should be done in case such a situation accrues.

This finding implies that there is hope of stopping these early child marriages if enough sensitization was done. Sensitization of the community about the dangers of early child marriages and advantages of sending these girls to school as a way of reducing early girl child marriages is indeed very important. This recommendation also is in line with that of Osakinle (2015) whose observations were that developing community-based approaches, tackling the deeply ingrained discriminatory social norms of parents, communities and traditional authorities could lead to reduced early girl child marriages. Poverty needs to be tackled at a household level so that families do not have to resort to selling or trading their girls into marriage or relying on rich ‘sugar daddies’ for survival

Instilling Christian values in children

One religious leader gave this recommendation

“The general increase in the number of girl child marriages is due to partly poor upbringing, there are some parents who never step in a Church. This in the long run affects the spiritual growth of this child and can lead to an early marriage because these children never value their body as the temple of God. Therefore, if we want to reduce early child marriages here, let’s teach our children right

morals, and instill in them the fear of God, because that will be the beginning of wisdom. They will see these colorful weddings and gets inspired” (Interview with one of the religious leaders, Aloet 25/07/2017)

“Even in church here, you find a girl coming to sit on the front desks knowing very well that her dress is very short. Then when she sits she does not care what she is exposing and to whom she is exposing. One time one girl came here and sat in front, when she realized that her dress was pulling backward and getting shorter and shorter exposing her privacy, she tried to pull it forward. I interrupted my sermon and I told her to stop pulling her dress because it stops there and by the time she dressed and left home she was well aware that the dress was short and if she wants to continue coming to church next time she should wear a long descent dress” (Religious leaders from Odudui 18/07/2017)

Instilling Christian values in children at an early age is important. As what Proverbs 22:6 says, “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.” As parents, it is our responsibility to mold our children into morally upright human beings. By following the way of Christ, our children can be directed into the right path in life. However, following Christ’s character is rather easier said than done. One of the most important things that can be done to the children is to help them develop it.

This findings support the belief that children brought in church have good morals and stand a better chance of getting married at the right age than a child who does not know much about Biblical teaching.

This finding agrees with the Child conference which took place in Lusaka, Zambia (2015) which indicates that Religious leaders have a huge role to play in ending early child and forced marriage since many people around the world are guided by their religious beliefs. This was one of the key discussion points when the YWCA and the African Union convened a meeting on the Role of Religious Communities in Ending Early and Child Marriage.

Economic security

Economic security is very important in all aspects. According to one of the Chairperson of women association in Arapai Sub County, there is need to empower these girls economically so that they cannot easily be persuaded with money by these so called rich people. She noted a poor girl will accept as low as 500 shillings in exchange of sex which can lead to pregnancy if lucky or AIDS. Most of these young girls who are in marriage end up in such marriages because of

hardships in their respective parents' home. Therefore, any person who has little money can easily lure them into marriage.

“apesur nuapolokoto ikisinga erai kwa isawana kere atuanar kede akinyet. Do idumuni ijo kesi mam esalete osokoni onapitos idabadai bala ikiliok. Do kere ikonin mam abongorete ore sek erai toni esokoni adaun. Apak na esokoni mam epote osomero arai da aicak. Idumuni ijo arai da okadionbong mam esalete. Angoli pucit kere mam esalete. Aria ber okaru je apesur bala auni apotu opotuutu osomero alo. Arai kwa kede isubusin ngun do ijo alimun haaa (interview with a boy pupil in P.6 Akaikai primary school 17/07/2017)

Translation: *“girls who have grown big breasts all the time smear with oil. And you find they do not miss going to the market and they put on trousers as if they are men. And you find that they do not go back home until the market is over. That day they do not come to school not even stepping. You find that they do not miss to go for parties in the village. Last year three girls got pregnant in our school. You find them with those business men should you comment haaaa”*

Parents should be supported and provided with pathways and support to earn family-supporting wages. They should provide children, both boy and girls, with high quality early childhood education to create a vibrant and economically competitive future.

This finding implies that most girls who are poor are more liable to be lured into sex and early marriage than their counterparts who come from economically stable families since their parents can provide them all their essential needs instead of those needs being taken care of by strangers in exchange of sex which normally ends up costing their lives.

Her views have been supported by those in the National Strategy to end Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy (MGLSD 2015) which noted that Girls and women also need to have economic security if they are to live safe, healthy and empowered lives. Introducing economic incentives that keep them busy making some cash monies will encourage families to consider alternatives to child marriage by alleviating their economic hardship and reframing the daughter as a valued part of the family rather than an economic burden.

Economic empowerment schemes such as microfinance or village savings and loan schemes can help girls to support themselves and their families without having to be married. Furthermore, ensuring girls have the opportunity to become financially literate and have the ability to open and

easily and access a bank account (without male supervision) can help them save in a secure way and become financially independent.

Thus empowering women starts with educating the girl child and hence a village of equal opportunity. This empowering manifests in a variety of ways, including ability to bargain for resources within the house hold, decision making, autonomy control over their fertility and participation in public life. Any intervention that helps a woman develop and expand her personal and intellectual resources and improve her potential for participation in society, in the economy and in the family is a source of empowerment. Educating girls does all these things.

This is further supported by UNICEF (2014) report which indicated that early marriage is closely associated with, and contributes to, poverty. Some interventions on behalf of adolescent girls have focused on improving their economic situation as a means of granting them higher status and more control over their lives, including their options in marriage. Approaches may include training in livelihood skills, support for teenagers in the labour market and ensuring that marriage is not a pre-condition for eligibility for schemes such as microcredit programmes and savings clubs.

High quality, youth-friendly health services

The government should provide cheap proper health care facilities at sub county levels. Most youths have unmet health information needs. Most of these young girls do not know much about self-production, this was what a nurse had to say;

“Sexual education to adolescents is very important if girl child marriages are to be reduced, the government should therefore set up health centers where the youths can go to get sexual reproductive information for example abstaining from sex, unwanted pregnancies etc.” (Interview with a Nurse in Arabaka Health Centre II on 22/07/2017)

Cultural and custom barriers in the developing world generally position youth to be peripheral to reproductive and HIV/AIDS services, even though they are one of the demographic groups most likely to contract sexual diseases. This, combined with limited information and access to reproductive health and HIV/AIDS services, leads youth to be even more prone to contract sexual and reproductive health diseases. The initiation of the Youth Friendly Services may help

to tackle this dilemma by establishing special care deliveries that are accessible and available for youth, mainly those who are at high risk of contracting sexual and reproductive health problems.

This implies that timely provision of health education to the young girls to some extent can reduce early girl marriages as this will enable them to protect themselves. This is in line with the recommendation of Asrari (2015) who observed that both unmarried and married girls need high quality, youth-friendly health services to live healthy and safe lives. Many girls in the developing world have an unmet need for sexual reproductive health care which can put them at risk of early pregnancy and contracting HIV and other STIs. Making sure health services are youth-friendly and that girls are able to access care without judgment and without male supervision is also important.

There is need of ensuring that both girls and boys learn about sex, reproduction and the related risks at an early age. Information should replace ‘ignorance plus early marriage’ as the child sexual protection strategy. Proposals that adolescent males and females should be given sex education and have access to reproductive health services have often been greeted with resistance. In a number of African and Asian cultures, there is reticence about, or an actual taboo on, the discussion of sex. This feeds fears that sex education will encourage early sexual relations and pregnancy. The work of UNAIDS has demonstrated such fears to be unfounded, and that sex education does not lead to promiscuity.

**CHAPTER FIVE:
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study based on the findings on of the three objectives.

5.1 Summary of the findings

Factors influencing child marriage in Arapai sub county, Soroti district

The first objective of this study was to establish the factors influencing child marriage in Soroti district, taking Arapai Sub County as a case study. The study found out that there are several factors which are influencing child marriage in this area. The study found out that when girls are mistreated by their parents/guardians at home, they tend to take refuge in marriage. Parents with low level of education tend to marry off their girls early because they do not value education. Divorce of parents was also seen as a major problem in exposing girls to child marriages. Culture as well was found to be promoting child marriages as well as religious beliefs. The presence of local discos in the villages was also found to be influencing child marriages in the village. Other factors found to be responsible for child marriage includes, school environment, Social Needs, Emotional Needs, Sexual Needs, Socioeconomic needs, and cultural and family values among others.

Effects of child marriage in Arapai sub county, Soroti District

The second objective of the study was to assess the extent to which child marriage has affected a girl child in Arapai sub county, Soroti District. Just like the effect of early child marriage in any part of the world, the study found out that the effect of the child marriage has far reaching effects not only on the individual house hold but can affect the entire country. Some of these effects are high level of exposure to HIV infection. The government of Uganda has invested a lot of resources in both prevention and treatment and yet the progress attained in the last two decades seems to be threatened. Early marriage has been found to put these young girls at high risk of contracting this deadly disease. The study found that participation and decision making of girls

regarding marriage is limited. For example, they cannot question the HIV status of the potential partner. This study also found that early marriage comes with health complications especially during delivery since these girls are in most cases not fully developed to give birth normally. Lifelong poverty; low level of education as a result of early marriage leads to poor or limited access to information, which definitely leads to a lifelong poverty which affects the wellbeing of the entire family

Low Level of Educational Attainment; the immediate effect of child marriage is loss of education. As soon as these girls are married off in Arapai sub county, the girl drops out of school. This leads to loss of economic opportunities. The education effect of a girl child affects not only the girl but the entire family. This has both retarded their personal development and frustrated government effort in increasing the level of literacy in the country

Propose strategies to address the issue of child marriages in Arapai sub county, Soroti District

The last objective of the study was to propose strategies to address the issue of child marriages in Arapai sub county, Soroti District. The study through interview with the key stakeholders of the sub county made a number of strategies if adopted can reduce or even stop child marriages in the sub county. Some of these major proposed strategies include the following:

Sensitizing the parents

Most parents are found to be in doubt as to whether girls can do what boys can; it was proposed that there is need to sensitize parent and guardians that girls are equally capable of doing what boys can do so that they can start sending their daughters to school instead of marrying them off early.

Establish and Implement Laws and Policies

It was also found that current laws are weak in terms of punishing people who marry off these girls, so it is therefore proposed that the existing laws be revised and enforced so that child marriage is made a no go area for anybody.

Provision of affordable education

The government policy on universal primary and secondary education where the cost of education is borne by government is inadequate. Whereas government takes care of teacher salaries and infrastructural development, parents are expected to provide scholastic material such as books and uniforms. Most parents also revealed that schools charge examination fees without which children are sent home. The findings indicate that these charges are unaffordable to some parents and girls are sent home prompting parents to marry them off. It was suggested that government subsidizes provision of scholastic requirements to make education affordable to the girl child.

Continuous sensitization of the public through media

A concerted effort is required to sensitize the public on the negative effects of early marriage as well as existing laws through multimedia. The opportunity is that the population now has access to various media including newspapers and radio stations.

Economic security

Most of these girls have been found to be lured into sex over petty things like provision of pads etc. so it is proposed that providing them with economic security will help them from being exposed to these men who take advantage of them by encouraging them get involved in income generating activities such as sowing table clothes, baking pan cakes during holidays for some little income that can help them raise some funds for their personal needs..

High quality, youth-friendly health services

Most health facilities in the Arapai Sub County do not have youth friendly services where you can be given reproductive health information; it was proposed that this should be put in place so that the youths can get reproductive health information.

Instilling Christian values in children

Since knowing God is the beginning of wisdom, it was proposed that parents should instill Christian values in their children by not only taking them to churches but also having family prayers together.

5.2 Conclusion

Child marriage is prevalent in societies whose cultural beliefs and attitudes are difficult to change. Girl child marriage is a cultural gender practice which discriminates equal opportunities and places the girl child as a second class citizen in her society. The research study revealed that early girl child marriage as a cultural gender practice is prevalent in Arapai Sub-County, Soroti district. Girls who marry early have little decision making power within the marital home, a greater likelihood of school dropout and illiteracy, lower labor force participation and earnings, and have less control over productive household assets. Because child brides often become mothers during adolescence, they and their children are likely to experience poorer overall health and nutrition. Girls who bear children early have more dangerous, difficult, and complicated births, and tend to have less healthy and less educated children than their peers who marry later. Adolescent mothers are significantly at higher risk of maternal mortality and morbidity than mothers just a few years older, which comes with a wide range of economic and social costs and impacts at the individual and household levels. Finally, while the consequences of child marriage are felt most keenly at the individual level, child marriage is likely to also have profound and far reaching effects at national and global levels in the forms of lost earnings and intergenerational.

5.3 Recommendations

The issue surrounding child marriage require a multifaceted approach

There is need to promote and support the establishment of community child protection structures to prevent child marriage through awareness raising and counseling. This will help to address the issue of lack of life skills in things such as decision make that is one of the factors contributing to child marriage. When there are enough community members ready to change, for example; to abandon the practice of child marriage then it is important to organize public declarations events in which a whole community pledges to promote and protect the rights of girls to education and health and not to get them married before the age of 18. These public declarations are very important because they signal to all community members the willingness of community as whole to abandon the old social norm and adopt a new one, thus all parents will feel “safe” to abandon the old practice because they are not afraid any more that they will be judged as bad parents if they do not marry their daughters as soon as they reach the puberty. Furthermore these public

declarations will signal to all men that girls under the age of 18 are not marriageable any more as one of the strategies to address child marriage in Arapai Sub county.

The government should increase support for Universal Primary and Secondary Education to provide equal access to quality primary and secondary education for both girls and boys. This can be by ensuring free and effective participation of the children in programme activities including conducting mentorship programmes such as formation of school clubs for girls and boys to discuss various issues such as child marriage. The government and other organizations should put emphasis on supporting schools with scholastic materials; carry out refresher trainings for teachers and other programmes that create conducive learning environment for the retention of girls in schools. For example “go back to school” programme focusing on enrolling and retaining girls in schools until they complete and attain quality learning outcomes should be maintained among communities. Government should also implement a comprehensive national school feeding programme to improve primary school enrolment and regular attendance and reduce dropout rates. Improving access to quality education by simply enrolling girls in school is insufficient. Schooling must be coupled with employment opportunities that make educational investments pay off.

The responsible authorities should improve the relevance of the curriculum and the quality of teaching, flexibility schedules to allow girls meet personal needs such as attending to menstrual challenges as a strategy to stop child marriage. Boys and girls should have separate facilities both at school and home. Those concerned should employ more female teachers in schools so that they can be able to help girls in attending to menstrual hygiene and eliminate gender discrimination in teaching and learning processes.

The government, civil society organisations and other stakeholders including the local community should support role models to tell their stories. Ensuring that all girls have access to higher education and to benefit from it not only helps adjust parents’ views about schooling, but also begins to build a group of role models who demonstrate what girls can do. Therefore facilities to celebrate girls who choose to follow alternative routes should be investigated, as it can be difficult, dangerous and lonely.

Reforms must take cognizance of the power of traditionally structured family. But parents, family heads, traditional rulers and other stakeholders must realize there is need for change of attitudes towards child marriages. Awareness must be created so that they are not views seen as fighting against some religious beliefs but to save the lives of the girls from all the attendant consequences.

Legislating against child marriage alone is ineffective. While it does provide a structure around which other policies can be hung, promoting girls' voices and power at multiple levels is also vital to their self efficiency. Move beyond legislating and enforcing laws around child marriage, child marriage laws provide an escape route for girls being married against their will. However, laws prohibiting child marriage are insufficient to prevent it, and need to be combined with other forms of legal empowerment for adolescent girls. Influence on policy changes in behaviours, relationships, attitudes and agenda must be done. Policies, bylaws, programmes should be rolled out. There is need to strengthen the linkage between the lower local governments at the village level to district level to revamp, emphasize and enforce child protection from all forms of abuse and exploitation.

Ending child marriage requires joint efforts of all organizations and stake holders including government and civil society organizations. Therefore, networks, coordination and collaboration of all different stake holders and organizations from community to national level should be strengthened.

As child marriage is common among illiterates and marginalized groups, community networks and vigilant groups comprising all concerned stake holders can be formed and mobilized to intervene in programmes to end child marriage. Empowering the youth to manage their sexual and reproductive issues through different approaches for example; peer-to-peer approach, comprehensive sexuality education in schools, life skills based education and youth information centers is key.

Mothers are said to be more supportive to their daughters compared to fathers. The government should support women enterprise development programmes, by establishment of a targeted fund

for women to address credit access constraints so that they can support education of their daughters. This will help in tackling income poverty at a household level so that families do not need to resort to 'selling' their girls into marriage or relying on rich 'sugar daddies'. They should persist with rights-based approaches. In the context of poverty and food security, households invest in food security initiatives to ensure that girls are not traded for food. In a situation where girls have already been married, they should be provided with options for schooling, employment and livelihood skills, sexual and reproductive health information and services (including HIV prevention), and offering alternatives from violence in the home;

Further research to deepen understanding of determinants of child marriage from girls' own perspectives, systematic documentation, monitoring and evaluation remain very important in the fight against child marriage. It will contribute to designing and developing culturally responsive interventions and improving the educative programs for these girls.

Since these child brides are constantly exposed to sex and sexually transmitted diseases, there is need for approaches to adolescent healthcare that provide services that are accessible to married and unmarried youth as well as provision of skills education for sexual health and regulation need to be provided in the classroom, youth clubs, newsletters and radio programmes. Girls must be empowered through education

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Appendices

Appendix I: In-depth interview Guide

Introduction:

You are welcome Mr./Mrs/Ms./ Amojong/Epolon_____ for today's sharing. My name is Adio Betty. I am conducting a research to assess how child marriage has affected the education of girl child and how this can be addressed. I am conducting this research as a requirement of my masters' course at Uganda Martyrs University. The study is interested in establishing the factors influencing child marriage among school going girls; to determine the effects of child marriage on the girl child and to propose strategies to reduce child marriages among school going girls in Arapai sub county.

Back ground information

Name of the interviewee: _____

Age: _____

Job/ position _____

Place of residence: _____

No. of interview: _____

Opening question

Mr/Mrs/Ms._____ how is life in this village?

Questions about factors influencing child marriage

1. What is your understanding of child marriage?
2. Does this happen in this community? If yes, explain what happened
3. What is your opinion on child marriage of young girls?
4. Why do you think girls get married when they are still young?

Questions about the extent child marriage has affected girl child

1. What in your opinion is the effect of child marriage on the girl-child in this sub-County?
2. What is your perception of child marriage and girl-child education? (Access and retention)
3. What is your perception of child and maternal health (probe: fistula, child health, child morbidity and mortality, maternal deaths).
4. Have you witnessed any case of child marriage in your community? If yes, can you describe how it took place?
5. What are some of the challenges/hindrances these young girls face in their married life?
6. In your view, are there any benefits that can be derived from child marriage?
7. In your opinion, how do the married girls cope up with these challenges?

Questions about strategies to address child marriage

1. Are there any mechanisms put in place to counter early marriage in this community?
2. In your opinion, what do you think should be done to eliminate child marriage in your community?
3. Can you share with me the categories of people that you think can help to address the issue of child marriage in your community?
4. Why do you think that the category you have named are the best to address the issue of child marriage in this community?

Appendix III: A Map of Arapai Sub county showing the Parishes of Aloet and Dakabela where the study was carried out

