

**THE SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC DRIVERS OF CHILD MARRIAGE AND
THEIR EFFECTS ON THE WELL-BEING OF WOMEN IN NYAKACH SUB-COUNTY,
KISUMU COUNTY**

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DECLARATION

This project paper is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other university.

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This project paper has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.

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Prof. Wilfred Subbo

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my dear children, Chel and Hum- thanks for being a pillar of strength and inspiration. Above all to God, without whom I am nothing.

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ABSTRACT

This is a descriptive cross-sectional qualitative study on the socio-cultural and economic drivers of child marriage in Nyakach Sub-county, Kisumu County. Specifically, the study sets out to determine their effects on the well-being of women who are or were once married before attaining the age of 18 years. This is because the study attempts to contribute to upholding or disapproving the much-stressed ideas and beliefs about this age-old cultural practice. By taking place in a rural setting, the study intends to shed light on how the changing socio-cultural, religious and economic conditions in this area contribute to Child Marriage (CM).

The practice of child marriage is still rampant in Nyakach since it is deeply engrained in gender inequalities and the conviction that girls and women are in some way substandard to boys and men, girls are not as treasured as boys are. It is also driven by patriarchal values and the desire to control female sexuality. Parents guard girls' sexuality and virginity in order to shield the family's honor. Furthermore, tradition perpetuates child marriage for it has always happened for generations. The practice habitually goes undisputed for it has been part of the community's lifetime and distinctiveness for a long time. In Nyakach Sub-County, the bride wealth is remunerated to the girl's family and it is often welcomed for poor families to pay debts, manage disputes or resolve social, economic and political agreements. Many families often marry their daughters' young since they consider it best for them, normally to guarantee their well-being in areas where girls are at high threat of child marriage as well as physical and sexual assaults.

The study utilized in-depth interviews, case narratives, key informants and focus group discussions. Purposive sampling was used to recruit 40 participants for the in-depth interviews who were spread around different areas of Nyakach Sub-county, Kisumu County. Case narratives of four participants were purposively chosen through snowball sampling based on their personal experiences with child marriages and their willingness and availability to share the experiences. Four key informants provided in-depth understanding of child marriage and explained issues from knowledgeable perspectives. Two FGDs were held separately in two divisions whereby one with the husbands of the sampled women and the other with the wives in order to take advantage of group dynamics and use group interaction to generate more data and insights on the issues under discussion.

The findings indicated that girls who drop out of school due to teen pregnancy are encouraged to marry as soon as possible so that their husbands can take control of their sexuality and to cushion them from further pregnancies before marriage due to low value attached to a girl's education.

The study findings show that women married as children in Nyakach Sub-county are living below poverty lines. Their economic situation is deplorable. They lack proper source of income to fend for their families. Children born to them are malnourished and sickly. This finding is supported by Klugman et al. (2014) that educated women are healthier, active in formal employment, richer with less children, offered better health care as well as schooling to their children than the ones with no schooling.

The study recommends laws prohibiting the practice of child marriage to be strictly adhered to so that anybody found culpable face the full force of law. Institutions dealing with the children's rights to emphasize on the need to protect children from abuse such as child marriage. There is an urgent need for an elaborate study to look at how COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to child-marriage.

LIST OF ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	— Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CEDAW	— Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CM	— Child Marriage
CRC	— Convention of the Rights of the Child
GBV	— Gender Based Violence
HIV	— Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDIS	— In-Depth Interviews
KDHS	— Kenya Demographic Health Survey
KIIS	— Key Informant Interviews
NIGEE	— Nyanza Initiative for girls’ Education and Empowerment
SA	— Sub-Saharan Africa
SDG	— Sustainable Development Goals
STD	— Sexually Transmitted Diseases
STI	— Sexually Transmitted Infections
UDHR	— Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	— United Nations
UNFPA	— United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	— United Nations Children’s Fund
VAWG	— Violence against Women and Girls
WHO	— World Health Organization

1.0. CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

Child Marriage (CM), a manifestation of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) against children, is a marriage of a girl or boy below 18 years of age and is a common cultural observance for many nations around the world (AlAmodi, 2013). CM also known as any formal or informal marriage entered into by boys and girls before adulthood (UNICEF, 2015). The minimum age that has been ratified by 194 countries for reaching adulthood is 18 years (CRC, 2015). Child marriage can also refer to marital unions where both spouses are 18 years or older but other factors such as their standard of holistic growth make them unprepared to agree to marriage. CM is more prevalent among girls than boys (Spencer, 2015). The practice of child marriage was traditionally upheld by cultural norms in many patriarchal societies. However, in modern times child marriage has been proscribed in many countries. Specifically, 194 countries around the globe have ratified international conventions and enacted laws that proscribe child marriage (UNICEF, 2016). Despite global, national and local efforts to end child marriage, the practice still continues unabated in many developing countries especially in South Asia and Sub-Saharan. It is estimated that nearly 15 million girls in the world are married every year before they reach the age of 18 years (Ahmed, 2015). UNFPA (2018) predicts that in the next ten years, 100 million girls will be married before they attain adulthood. Because of these revelations, CM has started to receive increased global attention.

In Kenya, like elsewhere in the world, CM is widely practiced in many rural areas where deeply entrenched cultural traditions and norms continue to influence the lives of many people. In widely dispersed Kenyan communities such as the Gusii, Maasai, Kamba, and Kipsigis child marriage has traditionally been promoted, accepted, supported and condoned by the prevailing cultural norms. In many rural villages in Kenya, parents encourage and/or give away their young daughters to get married in the hope that they will fetch bride wealth, which will benefit the family both socially, and financially (Ahmed, 2015). CM is rampant in poor families in the developing world whereby due to dire poverty, folks occasionally consider the act as a gateway to prosperity. Parents therefore, consider CM to reduce family burdens and amicably solve family matters (CRW 2015). Generally, rural families in Kenya often consider girls an economic

burden or commodity for exchange with money and livestock. Culture, tradition, religion and poverty normally drive the economic transactions.

A report dubbed “Emerging Crimes, The case of kidnappings in Kenya Report, 2017” elaborated that rape cases normally turn to marriage whereby parents compromise in order to maintain peace. Rape or romantic kidnapping as a driver of early marriage is still a practice among communities such as Turkana, Pokot and Maasai (Yusufzai, 2010; Essien and Ben, 2013). In one of the Kenyan local dailies, Reverend Charles Maina, Manager at PCEA Girls Rescue Center, The Daily Nation January 10, 2019 has since rescued a 12-year-old girl in Kajiado West after she trekked 30km to escape child marriage for her studies from home in Torosei village where her mother wanted to marry her off. According to the mother, she wanted to marry off her daughter as a way of getting property as cattle to enable her take care of the family. These studies are, therefore, limited in covering the plight of girl child in Nyakach Sub-County due to low reporting at the national level yet County-specific Statistics point to high incidences of child marriages. Nyanza Initiative for girls’ Education and Empowerment (NIGEE) organization in 2013 and 2014 alone helped more than 300 local girls to get back into school and more enroll by creating safe havens thus saving girls living within informal settlement or slums of Kisumu, Homabay, Migori and Siaya counties from early marriage.

However, over the past decades CM has increasingly been identified by a number of international and regional human rights and civil society organizations as one of the most pervasive violations of human rights and impediment to girls’ health and social wellbeing in the world (UNICEF, 2010). Child marriage is a violation of Article 16(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states “Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses”. Article 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) states that women should have the same rights as men to “freely choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent” and that the “betrothal and marriage of a child shall have no legal effect”. Kenya has ratified a number of these international human rights laws relevant to child marriage. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention of the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Consent of Marriage, minimum Age for Marriage and registration of

Marriage, among others. In addition to these international instruments, the government of Kenya has enacted laws including the Children's Act, Marriage Act, Female Genital Mutilation Act, Sexual Offenses Act and the Constitution among others that might and protect the rights of young girls from harmful cultural practices including child and forced marriages, female genital mutilation and gender-based violence among others.

Despite the government of Kenya enacting a new Marriage Bill that outlaw's nuptial below the age of 18 and imposing stringent punishments on whosoever engages or betroths to a child, the practice persists particularly in the rural areas. While there is no reliable statistical estimate on the prevalence of the problem in the Kenya, the available data indicate that in rural areas, 43% of girls are married when 18 years compared to 11.6% for boys, which exceeds the national average, at 34% for females while 1.4% for males according to (Plan International, 2011:1). Statistics indicate that Kilifi has the biggest number of CM at 47.4%, then Homa Bay and Kwale at 38% and 37.9% respectively. Others are Bondo at 29.5% while Tharaka Nithi at 25 per cent (Plan International, 2011:1). The drivers of child marriage in Kenyan context are not susceptible to easy identification. This is largely because no research has been carried out in the country to unearth these factors. Much of the existing literature is on studies carried out in other countries especially in the developed countries where the socio-cultural, economic and political factors greatly differ from those that prevail in Kenya. The factors identified in the literature as the key drivers for CM include gender disparity and the subjugation of women and girls by boys and men. Others are lack of economic resources, famine or epidemics, insecurity, especially during war, economic survival strategies, protecting family honor, control over women's sexuality, lack of education, cultural traditions and practices as some of the factors that perpetuate the practice (American Jewish World Service, 2015; UNFPA, 2017). In addition, to these, patriarchy and the urge to take control over female sexuality and desire for families to guard their daughters' sexuality and virginity in order to protect the family honor have also been cited as other drivers of CM (American Jewish World Service, 2015).

CM has been identified as a major cause of many detrimental physical, emotional, psychological and health related impacts on the well-being of girls. The WHO (2013) points out that child marriage often leads to short- and long-term reproductive health complications for girls that last beyond adolescence. In developing countries, women who are married before adulthood struggle

with the health effects of early pregnancy and often with little spacing between children. Generally, girls married at an earlier age are said to be more probable to experience birth related complications including fistulas, premature and stillbirths and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as cervical cancers, UNFPA 2013. Furthermore, CM makes women vulnerable to poor fertility control, fertility-related outcomes and low maternal health care use. In India, a younger bride is more economically valuable even as her education remains compromised. Girls without education are six many more times more probable to being married off earlier when compared to the ones with ten or more years of education (International Center for Research on Women, 2013). These consequences include poor achievement in school and vulnerability to abuse.

Klugman et al. (2014) report that women with education are healthier, active in payable employment, more economically stable with less children and offer better health care as well as schooling to their children compared to women with less or no schooling.

Nyakach sub-county indeed has highest prevalence of CM in the former Nyanza province (Ochieng' and Erulkar, 2008:9). Surprisingly, little information exists regarding child marriage in Nyakach sub-county. Specifically, the study pursued to scrutinize the degree to which socio-cultural and economic drivers influence child marriage and the effects of such marriages on women's development in Nyaksach Sub-County.

1.2. Problem Statement

Ideally, the legal age of marriage for women and men in Kenya is 18 years, according to 2014 Marriage Act, which advocates for the protection of women, men and children from all forms of violence including CM. More so, critical legislations such as the 2006 sexual offence Act clearly show a commitment to eradicate CM. It is a right of every adult human being to choose whom and when to marry without fear, coercion or undue pressure through informed decision (ICPD, 1994). It further calls for countries to outlaw CM and to enforce laws that ensure free and full consent. Given a choice, girls would, develop social-economic assets, delay marriage and ensure they gain full potential of schooling and health services (UNFPA, 2012).

Previous studies have shown how CM affects the lives of many girls and women. Moreover, a study by Kenya Demographic Health Survey (KDHS), 2014 showed that 22.9% of adolescent

girls are married before they are fifteen years. The prevalence of CM before adulthood is still too high with North Eastern being the highest at 56%, followed by Coast at 41%, Nyanza at 32%, Rift Valley 30% and Western being the lowest at 27% (KDHS, 2014).

Of the 115 million children around the world, 62 million girls lack education, UNICEF 2004. According to Nour, (2008), women from third world countries lack elementary health care and face life-threatening health problems comprehending maternal mortality, CM, HIV/AIDS, and cancer. These women are more prone to lifetime and recurrent psychiatric disorders as they lack the freedom to air opinions and defend themselves from retrogressive cultural norms (Le, 2011). This physical, mental and social torture invites grater emotional disorders like immobility, poor self-esteem as well as severe depression, Sing (1996) and eventually obesity, poor health and child bearing, (Alamu, 1988). Furthermore, Raj (2010) suggests that since girls marry older husbands with greater control over decision-making, they are likely to experience violence from such husbands and the in-laws. Much older and more educated spouses beat up and look down upon some married as children women whenever they fail to fulfill all the requirements (UNICEF, 2005). Effects of CM have far reaching implications for the well-being, education and health of a large proportion of adolescent girls in Kenya (UNICEF, 2015).

More so, the studies above have pointed to trends and patterns of CM in other places but no research on this has been conducted in Nyakach sub-county. As a result, an account on lived experiences of women, drivers, and effects of child marriage on women in Nyakach Sub-county required thorough investigative attention. Failure to study Child Marriages in Nyakach Sub-county and effectively handle its effects such as sexual abuse would be unavoidable. The following research questions would guide the study in order to address the identified gaps.

1. What are the socio-cultural drivers of child marriages in Nyakach Sub-County?
2. What are the economic drivers of child marriages in Nyakach Sub-County?
3. What are the effects of child marriage on the well-being of women in the region?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of the study is to establish the socio-cultural and economic drivers of child marriage and its effects on the well-being of women in Nyakach Sub-county.

The specific objectives of the study:-

1. To establish the socio-cultural drivers of child marriages in Nyakach Sub-county.
2. To examine the economic drivers of child marriages in Nyakach Sub-county.
3. To determine the effects of child marriage on the well-being of women in Nyakach Sub-county.

1.4. Assumptions of the study

The following were the assumptions:

1. There were different socio-cultural and economic factors that influenced the CM in Nyakach-Sub-County.
2. Child marriage adversely affected the well-being of girls and women in the region.

1.5. Justification of the study

Much of the existing empirical literature on child marriage is based on research done in the developed countries and in developing countries in Asia. Relatively little research has been conducted in Kenya generally and Nyakach sub-county in particular, where the socio-cultural, environmental, political and economic conditions may differ significantly from those in the developed countries and Asia. The study was designed with the major purpose of establishing the drivers and effects of child marriage in the face of the rapid changes taking place in Kenya generally and Nyakach Sub-county specifically. The study attempted to contribute to upholding or disapproving the much-stressed ideas and beliefs about this age-old cultural practice. By taking place in a rural setting, the study intended to shed light on how the changing socio-cultural, religious and economic conditions in this area contributed to child marriage. Due to such changes, fresh studies into child marriage and its effects on young and old women not only provided and welcomed new perspectives but also generated new empirical data to fill the gaps in knowledge and our understanding as well as in the literature about this important yet under-researched area of gender analysis.

The study was not only important, but also appropriate as it was conducted at a time when the government has put in place legal mechanisms to combat child marriage in the country. The study was therefore an opportunity to explain the factors that made the practice to persist despite laws and regulations that combat CM. The practice of CM was still rampant in Nyakach since it is deeply engrained in gender inequalities and the trust that girls and women are by some means

substandard to boys and men, girls are not as treasured as boys are. Patriarchy was also a driving factor. Furthermore, tradition perpetuates CM due to its longevity. The practice habitually goes undisputed since the community considers it part of their identity. In Nyakach Sub-County, the bride wealth was remunerated to the girl's family and it was often welcome for poor families for socio-economic and political gains. It was also critically important not only to highlight the plight of girls and boys who were forced into child marriage at a tender age but also to raise national awareness about the negative effects of child marriage. The study findings would benefit human rights as well as gender activists, NGOs, donors, academia and other stakeholders whose efforts are geared towards ending child marriage. The study presented an opportunity for the researcher to offer suggestions and ideas, which would reinforce efforts to design appropriate interventions that would ultimately bring about benefits and possible changes that would prevent child marriages. This in turn would benefit the whole country.

1.6. Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study specifically established and examined the factors that drove these young and old women who were married as children into child marriage and the effects such marriages have had on their lives. The study employed a descriptive research design to draw a sample, with qualitative methodologies being used to collect the required data. The sampling method produced data that was confidently generalized to larger populations. Considering the sensitivity of the study regarding the possibility of victimization of participants, the researcher ensured complete anonymity and confidentiality of collected information in interviews and in any published material.

1.7. Definition of Key Terms

Child Marriage: Based on this study, CM is a union involving a boy or a girl before attaining the age of 18 years.

Experience: In this context, experience means married as children women undergo these human rights violations as they occur in the course of time.

Gender: In this context, gender means privileges, roles, responsibilities and norms assigned by the society to define men, women boys and girls.

Marriage: Based on this study, marriage is two people uniting to live permanently, commit to one another and mutually fulfil each another's conjugal rights.

Sexual exploitation: Based on this study, women were more sexually exploited by men due to their powerlessness state.

Violence against women (VAW): This may be any form of gender-based violence, which could result in physical, sexual or emotional harm and suffering to women, including threats of like acts, coercion or arbitrary denial of freedom. These may occur in public life or in private life, *World Health Organization*.

Bride price: Based on this study, bride price is any economic property including money, herds of cattle, sheep as well as goats given to the girl's family.

Patriarchy: Based on this study, patriarchy was defined as men's rule over women whereby the men were sole decision makers in a household.

Culture: According to this study, culture was defined as "people's ways of doing things" whereby men and women involved in different activities, (Tylor, 1958).

Poverty: Based on this study, poverty meant lack of economic resources that lead to women's powerlessness, poor health, lack of food and suffering to women.

2.0 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This study aimed to focus on the experiences of women who have been in CM. The literature reviewed in detail different aspects of the following topics: The drivers of Child Marriage Practice, typology of CM, the experiences of women on CM, Normalization of CM practice, effects of CM on women and the existing laws to end CM. Books, journal articles and websites were among the sources used in this review. The section, finally reviewed the theoretical frameworks that guided the study.

2.2 Drivers of Child Marriage Practice

Jain and Kurz (2016) suggest that poverty, instability, conflicts, humanitarian crises coupled with traditions and gender norms emerging from patriarchy and ideologies form the basis of CM. Likewise, Nour (2006) believes that despite marriage being a bridge between tribes, clans and societies, the base upon which CM is laid varies considerably with parents being anxious about their daughter's purity. Child marriage is therefore, used to cushion girls from unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STI), (Nour, 2006).

Steinhaus et al (2016) carried out a study in Kenya and Zambia and found out that school dropout and teen pregnancy punctuated with the girl's immediate socioeconomic environment have a direct bearing to CM. Nour (2016) further echoes that girls' surrounding, but parents' fault necessitates CM. Feminization of poverty denies girls the freedom of choice, (Otoo-Oyortey and Pobi, 2013). UNICEF 2016 carried out a study in Kenya and found out that some girls were seen as assets, rather than individuals with rights, that could bring in wealth. This prompted CM since a report by UNICEF 2017 reported that drought conditions deteriorated in Kenya in 2017, resulting in 2.6 million food insecure people requiring humanitarian assistance. The same report indicated that children were susceptible to family disintegration. Furthermore, Nour (2006) in his study found out that the relationship between poverty and power relationship influences CM in Sub-Saharan African as poor women lack the ability to negotiate for safe or proper sex practices. Their economically stable husbands subdue them to dependency Nour

(2006), thereby contributing to CM, Van de Walle (2005), mostly in rural setting with low educational development, Bove and Vallengia (2009).

Walker (2012) and Gage (2013) in their studies found out that psychological distress among girls contributes to Child Marriage. Raj (2010) affirms that gender based violence has a lot of significant impact on vulnerability to Child Marriage. Plan International (2015) further suggests that lack of maximum education perpetuates CM. Walker (2013) and Enige (2015) in their studies report that education is not only a weapon to end CM but also a powerful tool to help mitigate the impacts of CM while Hodgkinson (2016 p.35) confirms the bond between CM and education. Fieldman-Jacobs and Hervish (2011) concludes that efforts to eradicate CM involve girl child empowerment as one of the approaches to gender equality.

Irin (2002) in the year 1999 carried out a research in Gauteng, South Africa and reported that 32% of the study participants believe that sexual intercourse with virgin girl cures HIV/AIDS. Reshma (2004) confirms that most countries of Africa, Asia, Europe as well as the Americans believe in the myth. In Zimbabwe, Steve (2006) reported that the myth of virgin cleansing continues since the blood got from raping the girls can heal men who are HIV positive. Virgin cleansing myth is promoted by culture-based gender roles that prize innocence and ignorance in girls and that accept sexual licentiousness in men, UNICEF 2003. This makes the myth be a driver of child marriage in Africa. UNICEF 2003 concludes that these cultural factors demand that older men only marry young girls hence child marriage.

2.3. Typology of child marriage practice

An illustration by David H. Olson and Blaire J. Fowers (1992) shows visualized couples, harmonious couples, traditional couples, conflicted couples and devitalized group as five broad types of marriage. Explanatory group exploration, duplication of the explanatory outcomes and cross validation are further classifications of the typologies as shown below.

Table 2. 1Empirical typology of marriage

Vitalized couples (Happy Couples)	<i>Explanatory group exploration</i>	<i>Duplication of the explanatory outcomes</i>	<i>Cross validation</i>
	High relationship quality	High relationship quality	High relationship quality
	Happy with the partner's conducts and nature	Felt happy with how they communicate with each other.	Were capable of discussing their problems peacefully
	Seemed to have lived long in marriage.	More learned	Higher income and job satisfaction
	Higher marital satisfaction	Less stress on relationship	Satisfaction overall and none being separated
Harmonious couples (Ideal Couples)	Seemed be older and young in marriage	More educated	Higher job status
	Higher marital satisfaction	Often had only one child	Considered themselves satisfied overall
	Women earn more than husbands	Wives worked full time	None had considered divorce
	Somewhat more satisfied with their extended family	More satisfied with their friend relationships	Less than 1% were separated
Traditional couples	Most satisfied with handling parenting	Most satisfied with handling children	Worshipped together as a family

	duties		
	Younger and married for a longer period of time	More educated	Higher income
	Gave birth to many children	Wives are not overworked	Neither had considered divorce
	Appeared to be traditional	Stayed I their first marriage	Less than 1% of them were separated
Conflicted couples	Relatively greater consensus on having egalitarian roles	Difficulties on communication	Difficulties in resolving conflict
	Younger and married more recently	Less educated	Low income and job satisfaction
	The spouse contemplated divorce	The spouse regretted their decision to marry each other	Had relationships outside marriage
Devitalized couples	Younger	Young in marriage	Did not take their time to know each other before marriage
	Less learned	Have low social class	Husbands juggled between two jobs more often
	Likely to discriminate	Had considered divorce	Were dissatisfied overall

Source: Olson et al. (1989)

2.4. Experiences of women who have been in Child Marriage Practice

Kaye et al. (2007) in his study in Uganda reported how women experienced increased likelihood of lifetime including abortion and medical care negligence during pregnancy and delivery. A woman, Jacinta Adhiambo now 16 years at Seme Village in Kisumu County got married at 12 years exposing her to other subsequent marriages three times. Gage (2013) reported in his Ethiopian study that women who had been married as children experienced suicidal ideation. Raj, Saggurti et al. (2010) narrated how some married as children women reported their experience as physical violence survivors. In the same vein, Le Start et al. (2010) reported in his United States findings that women married as children experienced substance use disorders and psychological problems. Using their data from India, Raj et al. (2010) reported that women married as children gave birth to malnourished children. Furthermore, women married as children experienced short inter-pregnancy intervals, unwanted pregnancies and high lifetime fertility Raj et al. (2009), higher rates of HIV, Glynn et al (2001) and the inability to negotiate for safe sex lifestyle. Rubin et al. (2009) in his data from the national Demographic Health Survey (DHS) reported that Ugandan women married as children experienced inability to make their own decisions thus low sexual relationship power which resulted into intimate partner violence, Hutcher et al. (2012). Atuyambe et al. (2009) echoed the same in his study in Uganda that lack of decision-making power exposed married as children women to powerlessness in their marriages.

A study by Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey (NPC 2004) on girls aged 15 to 24 years reported that married as children women experienced high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity due to less attention paid to their maternal health care. In fact, many girls in particular a 14-year-old married girl with two pregnancies, no education and two co-wives experienced a lot of anxiety during their pregnancy with no body to turn to. UNICEF (2014), Ending Child Marriage, reported another case from its study in Turkana, Kenya whereby women married as children experienced inaccessibility to family planning. The topic of contraception was immorally up right for school-going child according to them. This pushed a nineteen-year-old girl to drop out of school after unplanned pregnancy. Kadii from Kilifi County then 18 years conceived while 16 years and regretted becoming pregnant. Being a mother of a two-year old

girl, she had to drop out of school and start marriage life while still young with a boy her age Daily Nation, Monday, (2019, March 18).

2.5 Normalization of Child Marriage Practice

Child marriage has been widely accepted world round as normal. In Brazil, the BOGOTA (Thomson Reuter Foundation) in their research reported that girls opt for marriage to older men due to unwanted pregnancies, lack of empowerment and gender based violence. Birth et al. (2013) suggests that girls in India live with a mind-set of marriage within a socially determined frame whereby 45% of women aged between 20 to 24 years get married as children. Similarly, in Yemen, almost half the girls get into child marriage at the onset of puberty as early as 8 years despite the 15 years put as the minimum age for marriage in Yemen, Birch (2013) and Carla (2009). Nasri and Rahma (2012) reiterates that in rural Bangladesh, societal pressures push girls into child marriage by making their parents and even the girls themselves guilty in the occurrence of delay for marriage.

The said normalization is evident in World Youth Report (2003) where Birch (2013) confirms the perception of most African and Asian societies towards women as inferior citizens that cannot earn income nor take care of themselves hence subordinate to men. In Kenya, the Maasai community clearly displays the normalization of child marriage through Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) that push girls into child marriage to preserve her valued virginity and to bring pride price, Birch (2013). Nangoma (2013) suggests that initiation ceremonies such as ‘Chinamwali and Nyau’ of Eastern Province in Zambia perpetuates child marriage by making girls ripe for marriage after the rites. Gillian et al. (2015) confirms that such initiation ceremonies accompanied by trainings normally instill a sense of readiness for marriage. The author condemns the relationship between socioeconomic status of girls and child marriage that makes wealthier polygamous men to take undue advantage over poor girls.

Additionally, Nour (2009) cited by Nasrin and Rahman (2012) confirms the relationship between monthly income and child marriages as normalizing child marriage. Worth noting is how religion perpetuates child marriage particularly in Islamic community. Religious and cultural norms inspire child marriage, Nasrin and Rahman (2012). Sah et al. (2014) recommends that female

education should be universal up to secondary and higher level to help end child marriage. This will enable girls to stay longer in school and become powerful in decision-making.

2.6 Effects of Child Marriage Practice

Parsons et al. 2015 and Malhotra 2013 researched on the global epidemic of CM and found out that there is a close connection between negative effects for the married as children women and the adverse health consequences on the children of such women. These negative outcomes include lower educational attainment, too much exposure to violence, and lack of bodily stability.

2.6.1 Direct Effects

Malhotra (2010) and Mayor (2004) in their study found out that maternal morbidity and mortality of the married as a child woman are normally because of the woman giving birth while still too young to overcome pregnancy and delivery related problems such as obstructed labor coupled with hypertension, eclampsia, postpartum hemorrhage and fistula, (Nour, 2006). Other than physical and mental repercussions of child marriage, social isolation denies the married as a child woman the freedom of association. Vogelstein (2013) reports that premature termination of a girl's education does not only prevent her from attaining educational opportunity programs but also experiential knowledge outside family unit, UNICEF (2014) hence psychological risks, (Carbone-Lopez et al, 2006). In Kenya for example, 46% of girls who started standard one in 2007 failed to complete their primary education in 2018, (Daily Nation 3 December 2018). This translated into an eighth of girls aged 15 to 19 being married, separated, divorced or widowed, KDHS (2014). Rahman et al. in his Bangladesh study reports that there is high likelihood that married as a child woman faces physical abuse and intimate partner violence, UNICEF (2014). In 2004, International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) conducted a study in Kenya and Zambia and reported its findings that women married as children, 15 to 19 years had higher susceptibility to contract HIV than sexually active but unmarried girls did their age. The same study reveals that CM snatches women of their childhood and throws them into the periphery of chockful liability of home chores, motherhood and sexual activities. In the same regions, Stud Fam Plan reported its findings from a study which explored why married women had higher risk of HIV infection. The findings revealed that married as children women were normally under pressure to have unprotected intercourse from their disproportionately older polygamous husbands. Schmauz R. and Okong P cited in Int. J. Cancer claimed that married as children

women in Sub Saharan Africa were prone to the pandemic of cervical cancer prompted by their husbands having multiple sex partners. Because of these studies, it is worth noting that girl child empowerment by providing information, skills, changing attitudes and practices is a strategy to curb CM.

2.6.2 Indirect Effects

There is little literature available to assess the adverse effects on the children of the married as children women to notify that child marriage does not only affect such women but also children from such unions and the future generation. Results from a research done in India revealed a clear association between CM, morbidity, and infant mortality, (Raj et al., 2010). This happens during obstructed labor, which might lead to the fetus dying if there is no cesarean section. Furthermore, ICRW, (2003) carried out a study in Tanzania on mothers between 20 to 29 years and reported its findings that children born to such mothers are at high risk of acquiring HIV at delivery or during breastfeeding due to the untreated sexually transmitted infections, STIs, of the mother. Furthermore, Macro International (1996) in its Demographic and health survey comparative study reported that premature delivery, neonatal infection and blindness in children from women married as children come about after untreated Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). Nour (2009) in his study about negative effects of child marriage found out that pregnancy and delivery related complications eventually lead to low birth weight and infant morbidity. Rodrigue (2016) and Black et al. (2013) in their study reported that children from child marriage unions suffer from stunted growth normally linked to morbidity, mortality, impaired psychomotor, cognitive development, weak educational attainment and eventually poor labor force task. Changing the narrative of gender norms in our societies focusing on education and reproductive services can help stop CM, early pregnancy, mortality and morbidity in child mothers and their young ones.

2.7 Existing laws and regulations on Child Marriage

In India the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) defines child marriage as marriage in which either the girl or the boy is underage, that is the girl is under 18 years of age or the boy is younger than 21 years. According to Marriage Act, if the boy is over 18 years of age at the time of marriage then he will be treated as an offender and can be punished as well as the parents of the child, including any member of any organizations or associations that associate with CM or is

negligent about preventing it. The Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPOs) are responsible for the implementation of the Act through preventing CM, collecting evidence for prosecution, creating awareness about the issue and the Act, counselling and advising individuals about CM, sensitizing the community and maintaining and distributing statistics.

Kenya has ratified to the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in the Rights of women in Africa, the CEDAW and CRC all of which condemn CM. In Kenya's national legal framework, CM is prohibited under the Children's Act 2001. In addition, Kenya's constitution, chapter five (5) as well as the Marriage Act, 2014 contains provisions against CM.

Kenyan laws provide for the rights and protection of the child through the Penal Code (Cap. 63 Laws of Kenya) which outlines crimes, offences and prescribes penalties to them. The Penal code protects children, in that acts and omissions, which amount to child abuse, are classified as punishable offences.

The Basic Education Act 2013 has ensured that Kenya conforms to the constitution in order that there is free and compulsory education to all children especially in the elementary stages.

2.8 Theoretical framework

2.8.1 Empowerment Theory

Empowerment theory analyzed powerlessness as the main contributing factor to women's stigma, discrimination, lack of self-worth, self-esteem, alienation from environment and dependence (Giddens, 1984). As a proponent of this theory, Giddens asserts that marginalization of societal processes are the main causes of powerlessness among women who bear the consequences of disgrace and prejudice. Powerlessness, which takes a center place in power struggle between the sexes, allows oppression against women. The oppression does not only deny women their freedom from limitations but also exposes them to conditions of exploitation and inequalities at personal levels, (Giddens, 1991). The main reason for the formation of empowerment theory is to make individual women understand their actions are not only for their own individual desire of improving their lives but they are also external change agents as professionals that are engaged in deliberate revolution processes that give forth to guidelines and resources. Through this, the women can help in the production of a society and its growth to

affect the environment. Powerlessness is insensitive to the specific woman's rights to be proactive but rather emphasizes on her loyalty to a male figure. It also discourages the woman's participation in public decisions. Empowerment theory promotes amplified control of women as well as dominion over their well-beings and surroundings. It advances involvement approaches by which women can take charge of their well-beings. In the empowerment process, women acquire to be culturally responsible, to apply communal competencies, to exercise self-reliance, to cultivate commitments, and to obtain political effectiveness. The analysis of gender inequality in which men as a group dominate women and are the main beneficiaries of powerlessness of women sees helplessness as a societal burden rather than personal challenge, (Rappaport, 1981).

According to the theory, disempowerment of women cultivates hopelessness, which affects the futures lifestyles of the women and the destiny of the whole society. Helpless women, presume a disconnection amid their conduct, expected consequences, and guard themselves by way of life-threatening despair, self-hatred and unimportance to their appalling condition. Similarly, these women are structurally deprived of uniqueness and duties entailing societal importance, and thriving materials, (Solomon, 1985). Gaventa, (1980) puts it clearly that powerless women conceptualize their difficult circumstance and the regrets that come along with it. They allow the societal perceptions define their worthwhile and at the same time accept the society's judgements of their hopelessness thus conceptualizing the community's values, ideas, beliefs and game rules, alongside the ones that demean them. These values, beliefs and rules prompt girls to child marriage than achievement of education.

2.8.2 Relevance of the Theory to this Study

The theory reaffirms that for the empowerment procedures to be achieved, enhancing structures of meaning, authority and power are paramount on the level of the societal system, (Forester, 1989). The theory helped the researcher to analyze the belief systems that explain child marriage and its effects on girls and women particularly in Nyakach Sub-county. The theory enabled the researcher to conceptualize the fact that powerlessness disproportionately affects women and hinder them from undertaking development activities in the society. Women's state of powerlessness permits men to have dominion over them leaving women with no decision powers both in private and public spheres. A woman loses her bodily autonomy and sexual reproductive rights. Hence, on the accounts of powerlessness, the study analyzed the profits men reap due to

child marriages and how such marriages have perpetuated men' dominancy and women's subjugation in Nyakach Sub-county.

Again worth noting, is that child marriage was perpetuated by powerlessness, lack of economic resources, traditional cultural norms as well as women's low status in the society all factors contributed by women's powerlessness. Similarly, child marriages lead to early pregnancy, girls dropping out of school, reproductive health problems such as fistula, stillbirth and retarded growth in children from such unions, lack of decision making and non-participation in politics as shown in Figure 2.1

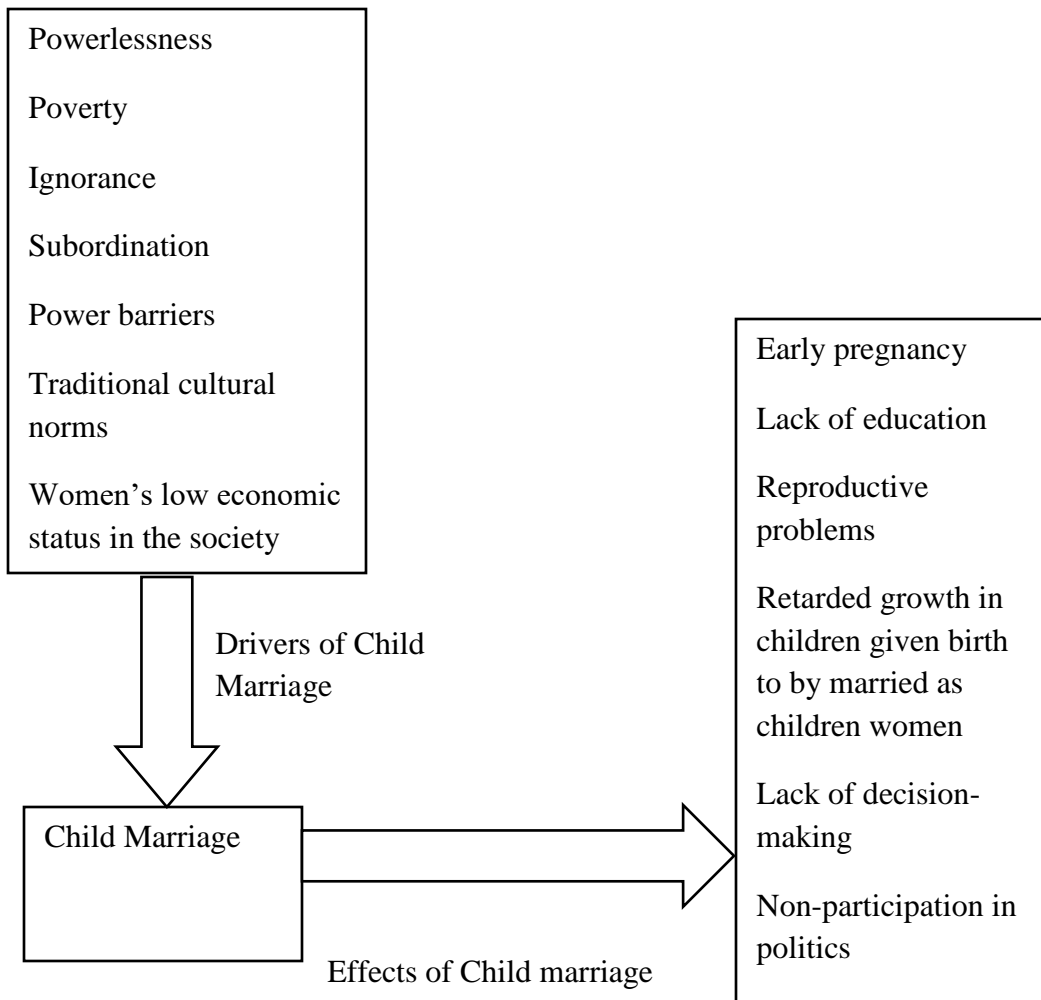


Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework of Empowerment Theory

(Source: Author)

3.0 CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section describes the research site, research design, and study population, sample population, sampling procedure, data collection then the analysis methods. Also presented is a description of ethical considerations that the researcher observed as well as work plan and budget.

3.2 Research site

The study took place in Nyakach Sub-county whose population is approximately 150,320, (Kenya Population and Housing Census, KPHC 2019). The Sub-county is located in Kisumu County, which covers approximately 567 km² on water and 2086 km² land area, representing 0.36% of the total land of Kenya's 580,367 km², Kisumu County Annual Development Plan (FY 2018/2019). It borders Nyando and Muhoroni Sub-counties (see map Figure 3.1 below) and covers area of some 326.7 km² according to the 2019 National Population Census Report. The Sub-county is predominantly inhabited by the indigenous Luos whose main occupation is farming and fishing as the main sources of livelihood and income for a vast majority of the people.

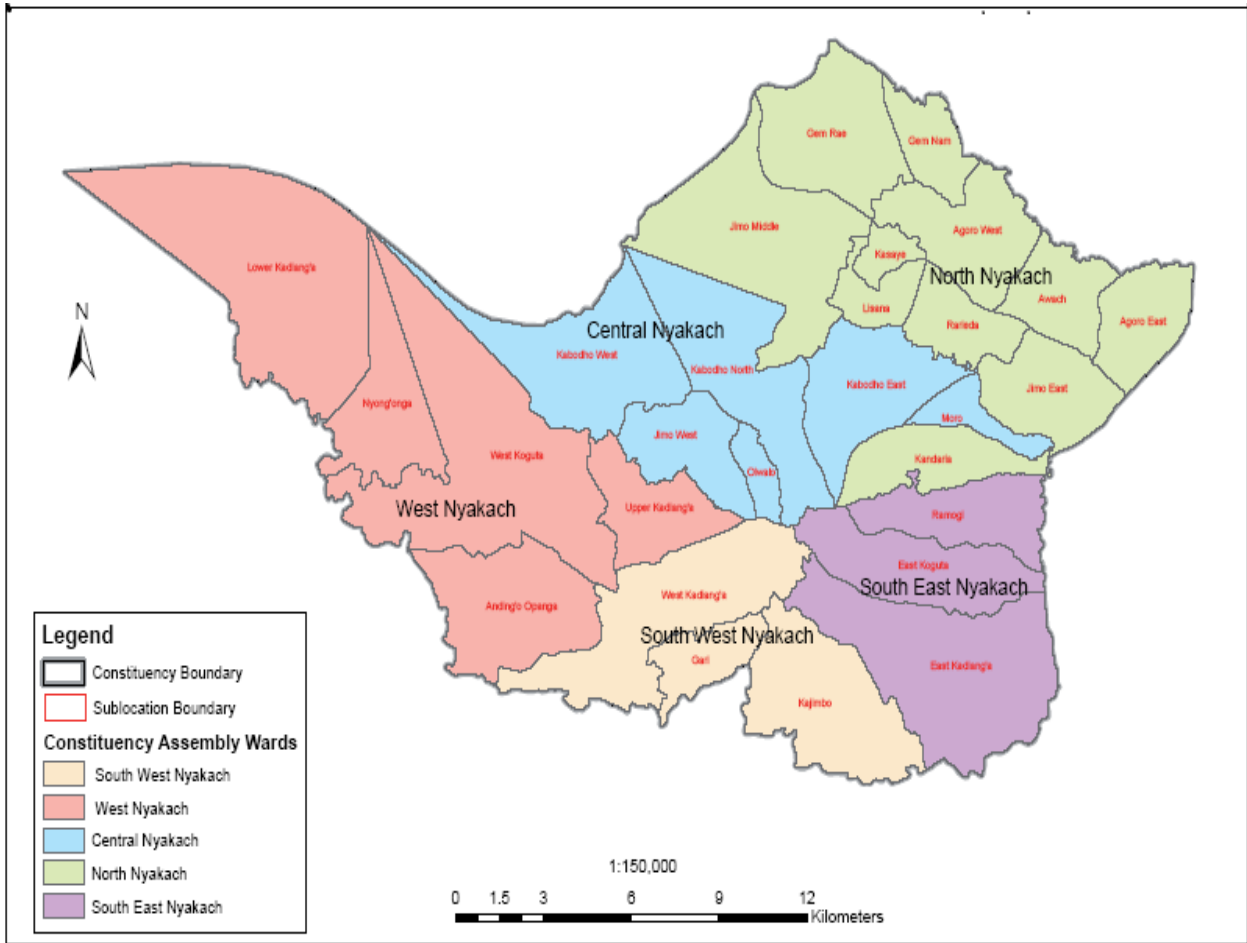


Figure 3. 1Map of Nyakach Sub-County

Source: <https://informationcradle.com/kenya/nyakach-constituency/>

3.3 Research Design

The study employed a cross-sectional design. This design was appropriate since it was to be carried out within a short period with the main goal of capturing a “snapshot” of the socio-cultural and economic drivers of CM and their effects on the well-being of women within which the study is carried out since they might change over time. The study involved qualitative methods of data collection, namely, semi-structured in-depth interviews, case narratives, key informant interviews and Focus Group Discussions. The study involved the use of semi structured in-depth interviews as the primary data collection method, administered to all sampled women who were then in a marriage union. The study also involved case narratives with married

or once married women giving their narrations from a point of personal experience. Key informant interviews involved Gender officer, probation officer, Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA), and local area chief who are knowledgeable people and provided data and insight that could not be obtained with other methods. The data collected was analysed thematically and presented along the emerging themes. During data presentation, verbatim quotes were also involved.

3.4 Study Population and Unit of Analysis

The population under study comprised all women who were or were once married before attaining the age of 18 years. The study population was obtained from a sampling frame based on an inclusion/exclusion criteria adopted for the study where individuals were then or were once married as children women above 20 years old. In this study, the unit of analysis therefore, was the individual woman who at one time or another had been in a child marriage.

3.5 Sample size and Sampling procedure

The research aimed at establishing the social, cultural as well as economic drivers of CM and their effects on the well-being of women in Nyakach Sub-county whereby snowball sampling from referrals of peers who recommended others whom they knew who also met the criteria was used to recruit 40 participants for semi-structured in-depth interviews and 4 case narratives. Four (4) key informant interviews was selected for their first-hand knowledge, information, ideas and insights about child marriage while 2 Focus Group Discussions was conducted for only women who were then married together with their husbands and were selected from members of the community that were accessible.

3.6 Data Collection and Procedures

3.6.1 Semi-structured In-depth Interviews

The main method used to collect data was semi-structured face-to-face in-depth interviews. An interview guide had been developed to guide (Appendix II). Twenty-six (26) women who were then in child marriages were interviewed on their knowledge and relevant opinion about the drivers and effects of child marriage. The respondents for this study were selected through peer referrals and contacted. Participants who were willing and who satisfied the selection criteria

were interviewed to find out their opinion. All in-depth interviews were conducted in English and were tape recorded and a note taker jotted down the main points.

3.6.2 Case Narratives

A guide (Appendix III) was used to capture the experiences of participants as narrated from a personal point of view. The researcher interviewed four respondents. The interviews were conducted in an isolated place of their choice to ensure confidentiality. The interview was audio-recorded and the women were informed beforehand of the recording.

The informants for the case narratives were purposively chosen through snowball sampling based on their personal experiences with child marriages and their willingness and availability to share the experiences. The case narrative participants could only be women married or once married as children who had personal experiences and were willing to share them.

3.6.3 Key Informant Interviews

Four (4) key informant interviews were conducted and involved Gender officer, Probation officer, Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA), and local area chief. The interviews provided in-depth understanding of child marriage as both male and female key informants explained issues from knowledgeable perspectives. A guide (Appendix IV) was involved to capture the expert knowledge on the issues under investigation and the information obtained from them would therefore add depth and rigor to our understanding of child marriage.

3.6.4 Focus Group Discussion

In addition to IDIs, case narratives and KIIs, two FGDs were held separately in two divisions whereby one was with the husbands of the sampled women and the other with the sampled women with the aid of a Focus Group Discussion guide (Appendix V). FGDs were conducted in order to take advantage of group dynamics and use group interaction to generate more data and insights on the issues under discussion. The researcher as the facilitator moderated the focus group discussions while a note taker wrote notes. The data generated from these FGDs provided very useful insights for understanding of child marriages in Nyakach Sub-county. The study involved two FGDs comprising of eight participants selected from the community.

3.7 Data Processing and Analysis

The researcher used qualitative methods to process and analyze data, since the study is qualitative. Data obtained from the interviews were first transcribed, translated, and then sorted thematically and summaries made out of each sets of data. Data was then presented in the form of thematic areas guided by specific objectives.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The study received clearance from relevant bodies before the collection of data started. Approval from the Ministry of Education was given through the National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Prior to the start of any interview sessions, the purpose, target group, selection procedure, duration, the use of the findings, conditions of privacy and confidentiality, the risks and benefits of the study were clearly explained in detail to the participants. They were given an opportunity to seek clarification on any issue that was not clear to them or asked any questions regarding their participation in the study. Once satisfied with explanations, they were asked for their informed consent for all data collected and used after observing the principle of voluntary participation.

Each participant was also informed that he or she was free to refuse or stop any moment in the middle of the interview session if they so wished without victimization. They were also informed that all the information collected were kept anonymous, and that the names and contact details of participants were not to be recorded. Publicly distributed data would not contain personally identifying information and efforts were made to ensure that participant identities could not be discerned via geographic or site specific information. During informed consenting, the benefits and risks such as increased knowledge and discomfort during interviews respectively were explained to the participants. The participants were informed of the overall benefit of being a part, that, the knowledge gathered would be used in policy formulation or improvement towards the issue of child marriage. However, the participants were made aware that 100% confidentiality could not be attained since some of the findings would be shared among the research team but not outside the team. Moreover, some of the respondents would report problems that required medical and/or psychological attention. Such participants were referred to the nearest service, as this was also be made aware during consenting. Moreover, the participant

were made aware of the importance of informed personal decision making towards eradicating child marriage.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

Here entails the findings and goes ahead to interpret the findings backed with literature. The data was organized and presented according to the three objectives of the study, which established the socio-cultural and economic drivers of CM as well as the effects on the well-being of women in Nyakach Sub-County, Kisumu County.

4.2 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

4.2.1 Age of the respondents

Age facilitated the researcher to know the age group of the participants. Fifty- (50) respondents participated in the study. The study findings showed that 34% and 16% of the participants were within the age bracket of 20-25 years and 30 up to 35 years respectively as below.

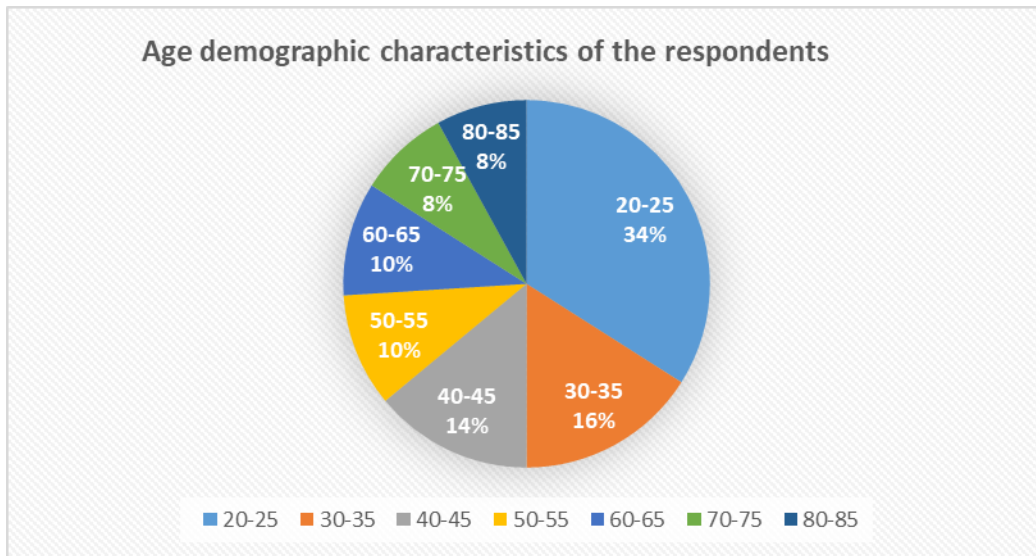


Figure 4. 1: Age demographic characteristics of respondents

Only one (1) male respondent was older than 80 years with three (3) female respondents older than 85 years just like shown below.

Table 4. 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Age	Frequency		Percentage
	Males	Females	
20-25	3	14	34%
30-35	2	6	16%
40-45	1	6	14%
50-55	1	4	10%
60-65	1	4	10%
70-75	1	3	8%
80-85	1	3	8%
Total	10	40	
Total	50		100%

4.2.2 The number of children in the family

In the study, 50% of the respondents had about five to eight children in a family given birth to a short inter-pregnancy interval with high infant mortality.

Table 4. 2: The number of children in the family versus mortality rate

Age	Frequency	Mortality rate	Percentage
20-25	5	2	40%
30-35	8	3	38%
40-45	8	1	13%
50-55	6	2	33%
60-65	7	4	57%
70-75	6	5	83%
80-85	5	5	100%
Total	45	22	

4.2.3 Employment status

The researcher looked into the employment status of the respondents to see its impacts on child marriage. Ninety percent (90%) of the respondents were in informal employment such as casual laborers, small-scale fishing, boda-boda industry, hawking, housekeeping, shop keeping and open-air market trading as below.

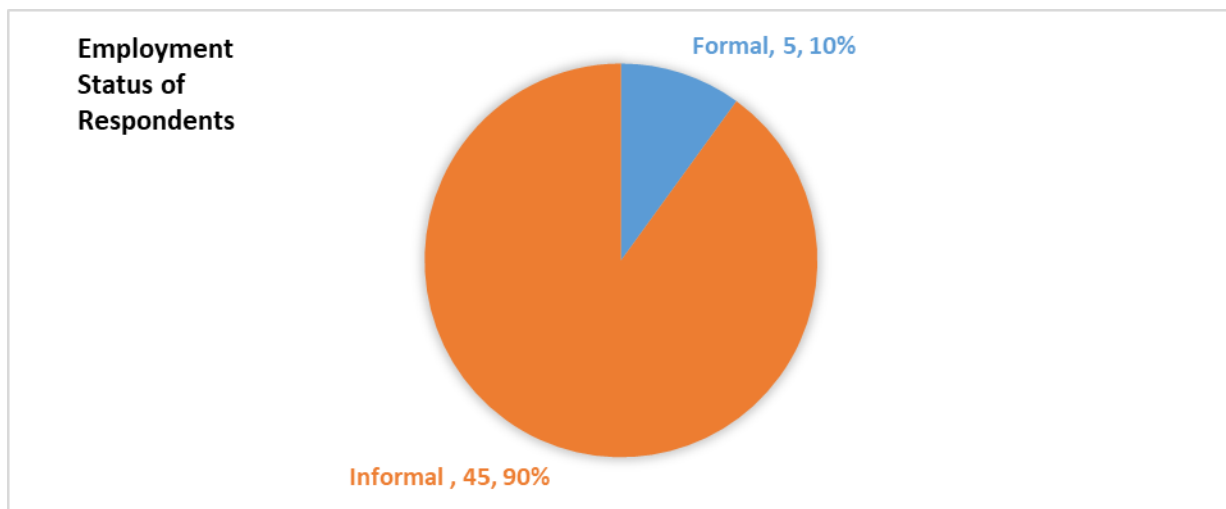


Figure 4. 2: Employment Status of Respondents

4.2.4 Highest level of education

The researcher sought to find out the highest level of education attained by the respondents. The education levels included were below primary education, secondary education and college education. Thirty respondents did not study beyond primary education as shown below.

Table 4. 3: Highest level of education

Education level	Frequency	Percentage
Below primary	30	60%
Secondary	15	30%
College	5	10%
Total	50	100%

Only fifteen had secondary education while only five had college education. Among female respondents, five had secondary education.

4.2.5 Religion of the respondents

Religion plays a major role in influencing decisions and behavior of many respondents towards child marriage. While some churches advocated for sex education among its youths, others considered it a taboo to talk about sex in the church. Those that thought it wise to have the education had less of their teenagers getting into child marriage as compared to the ones that

evaded sex education. Thirty percent (30%) of the respondents belonged to the Catholic Church. Ten percent (10%) belonged to the Seventh - day Adventist, 20% belonged to the African In-land Church, 10% to the Pentecostal churches while another 10% belonged to the Traditional Religion, Legion Maria as shown below.

Table 4. 4: Religion of the respondents

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Catholic	25	50%
Seventh-Day Adventist	5	10%
African-Inland Church	10	20%
Pentecostal	5	10%
Legion	5	10%
Total	50	100%

4.2.6 Marital status

The researcher sought to know the marital status of the respondents to understand the importance attached to the institution of marriage in Nyakach Sub-county and then relate it to the study.

Sixty percent (60%) of the respondents were in their first marriage, 20% of the respondents were widowed or both partners still alive, 10% had been divorced or separated, 2% divorced/ separated and single, 3% divorced/separated and remarried. No male respondent was single as shown below.

Table 4. 5: Marital status

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
First Marriage	30	60%
Widowed	10	20%
Divorced/separated	5	10%
Divorced/separated and single	2	4%
Divorced/separated and remarried	3	6%
Total	50	100%

4.2.7 Nature of the marriage

The study findings showed that fifty percent (50%) of the respondents had customary marriage. Twenty percent (20%) had solemnized their unions after marriage through Christian weddings while 30% of the respondents were cohabiting as shown in Figure 4.3 below.

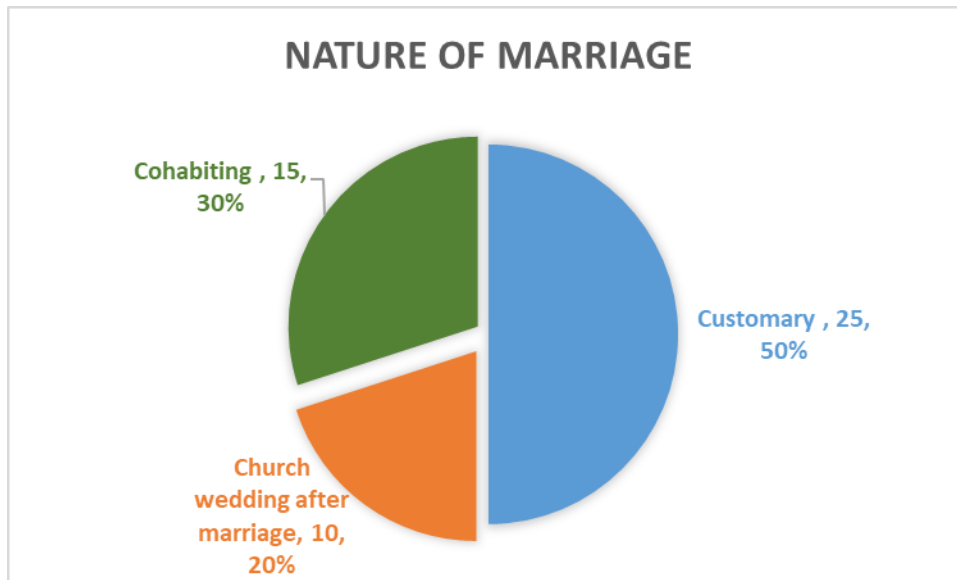


Figure 4. 3: Nature of Marriage

4.2.8 Interpretation of the results

The data presented demonstrates that all the respondents who were purposively sampled got married while still underage. This confirms a study by Ochieng’ and Erulka (2008:9) that former Nyanza province still has one of the highest rates of child marriages. The high number of children in every single household was attributed to lack of Sexual and Reproductive Health

awareness. These young women were discouraged from using contraceptives by their husbands and most of them feared to ask for permission. Demonstrating bodily autonomy would imply promiscuity and lack of morals by the wife.

Most of the respondents had their children die below five years, which was accompanied by complications, associated with premature labor. Low family planning uptake also prompted female respondents to have unwanted and unplanned births due to pressure from their husbands to have more children as a sign of wealth.

All the respondents lived in the rural settings with low economic opportunities. This in turn limited their economic prospects hence ending up in informal employment. This lack of economic empowerment by the women made them end up as homebased caregivers.

The findings also indicated that child marriage cut short the respondents dream to complete their education up to the highest level. This emerged clearly from the responses given especially from the female respondents who dropped out of school to get married at an early age. Furthermore, the findings indicated that child marriage still exists because it has been there for generations so the practice continues without being questioned. The respondents showed that once they reached puberty, they became ripe for marriage in the eyes of the community. This acted as rite of passage to giving girls status in the society as wives and mothers.

As a result of the above, most of the female respondents opted to remain single even after the death of their husbands in order to maintain the status. Those who went through Domestic Violence also remained stuck in their relationships for fear of stigmatization by the community as failures.

The findings showed that more privileges were granted to a man to have more wives as a sign of superiority. No male respondent remained single even after the death of a partner. Remarrying soon or immediately after the death of a partner was considered a sign of strength and bravery unlike the female respondents who were expected to remain single in order to take care of the home. More so, the findings indicated that 50% of the respondents were in customary marriage through arranged marriage by their aunts and uncles while 30% were cohabiting after escape from strict and controlling parents or guardians, orphan hood and negligence from caregivers.

Only ten respondents had solemnized their unions through church weddings years after they got married.

4.3 Perceptions and practices of respondents towards child marriage

It was evident from the findings that most of the respondents were very dissatisfied with the age at which they got married, that is, 18 years. All the respondents cited disrespectful treatment from their partners as well as from their communities. Ninety percent (90%) of the female respondents cited lack of fair chance in decision-making platforms. The women lacked freedom to voice their opinions on matters pertaining to their well-being especially the right to own property and exercise Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights. Seventy percent (70%) of the female respondents were seen as sexual objects by their husbands and were forced to have more children against their wish.

From the findings, it indicated that property ownership is an entitlement of the males. Women were not allowed to own property except child bearing. Both land and cattle belonged to the husband. The women could only enjoy the milk from the cows but the cow itself belongs to the man. During bride-wealth, the cow is given to the man. At least thirty participants alluded that they would not marry at the age they did should they be given another chance citing that they would not recommend anyone to marry at the time they did. However, 10% of the male respondents would still recommend both young and old men to marry underage girls as this is considered gain to them. They believe young girls are more sexually attractive and still productive.

Forty-four (44) of the respondents considered the right age of marriage to be above 18 years. Six (6) male respondents, of which three (3) believed that for girls it is advisable that they get married between the ages of 17-20 years before they get too old and difficult to handle while the other three (3) considered any age as appropriate.

Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents' parents opposed their marriage to their current partners citing reasons like lack of moral uprightness, witchcraft, sorcery, cattle rustling, adultery, violence, premature deaths, accidents by the families they were marrying or getting married to.

4.4 Responses on the Socio-cultural drivers of child marriage

The researcher sought to establish the leading factors that drove the respondents to marry at an early age. The drivers given were as follows:

Among the communities, polygamy is highly encouraged. This deeply entrenched tradition allows a husband to marry younger girls to offer support to the elder wives hence child marriage. The study also found out that the practice had been there for many generations thus became a norm. Twenty six percent (26%) of the respondents alluded that peer pressure also contributed to them getting married at an early age. Teen pregnancy drove 41% of the respondents to child marriage as getting child out of wedlock was considered a disgrace to the family. To escape this shame, they got into child marriage.

Eighteen percent (18%) of the respondents cited psychological distress and physical abuse from parents as a cause for their child marriage. Stigmatization, discrimination and segregation that came along after childbirth from unwanted and unplanned pregnancy was too much to bear.

Lack of education was also a major driving factor to child marriage. School dropout due to lack of fees left responses with no option but to rush to child marriage.

“When I dropped out of school, suitors started trooping in, as they already knew that I was desperate. I had no option but to marry while young as it discouraged me to see my peers proceed with their learning while you are no longer one of them” (20-year-old respondent).

“When one drops out of school, you have not acquired enough skills in life to be independent in thinking and decision-making. One does not know that quality life requires education. When you are unable to proceed with learning, you become idle. An idle mind is the devil’s workshop and child marriage becomes an achievement to replace benefits of education. When you drop out of school, you become bitter and disappointed. You seek consolation from a man. You start regretting especially after giving birth to children. Nothing to enjoy. You cannot afford to feed and educate your children to the highest level without the help of your husband” (23-year-old respondent).

4.5 Responses on the possible Economic drivers of child marriage

Poverty was cited, as one of the major economic drivers of CM. Seventy percent (70%) of poor parents could not afford to pay school fees and offer all the basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter to their children. Female respondents responded that with dire poverty at the homes older and richer men who could provide their basic needs such as clothing lured them into child marriage.

Poor parents also see their daughters as sources of wealth rather than human beings with dignity. They marry young so that the bride price given to their fathers could pay school fees for their brothers in school. Lack of economic empowerment by the parents of the female respondents drove girls to child marriage. Girls could not afford money to buy dignity kits like sanitary towels. They thus became prey to boda-boda riders who give them small money to buy sanitary towels in exchange for sex. In the process, they get unwanted pregnancies, thus, they opt for child marriage. Some also decide to marry the bodaboda riders whenever they become too used to the goodies offered by them.

“It is not easy handling child marriage in this locality as most families in Nyakach Sub-county are poor. With the emergence of bodaboda riders offering temporary relief to most families, girls see them as rich people simply because they can afford their immediate needs. The girls here especially those commuting to schools, as they get free ride from the riders. In the end, they make friendship and finally get married even as second, third or fourth wives to the boda-boda riders. These girls end up causing trouble to such families, which in most cases could be still young. These eventually leads to family breakups.

Most families who still hold on to cultural norms believe that when a girl sleeps in a man’s homestead for more than three days she qualifies to be the man’s wife. These prevent most parents from stopping their daughters from the impending dangers of child marriage. Some parents also decide to force these men to marry the daughters as a way of punishing them for taking undue advantage over their daughters” (Key Informant, a local area chief, 55 years old man).

4.6 Opinions on both the direct and indirect effects of child marriage on the well-being of women in Nyakach Sub-county.

Child marriage had far-reaching adverse effects on the well-being of women in general.

“Child marriage robs the young girls of their rights to go to school and reach their full potential to become self-reliant. When girls marry young, they lose the opportunity to acquire life skills required through socialization with peers. These married as children women have not physically developed to handle pregnancy. They then end up giving birth to underweight children. During labor pains, most of them cannot afford to deliver in hospitals due to lack of money. Some still cannot know the signs of labor pains and wait until it is too late to rush to the hospital; I have to go to their homes to help them deliver. A few girls have ended up losing their lives leaving their infant children as orphans. Some suffer obstructed labor accompanied by psychological distress.

When married young, they lack financial income to buy themselves proper balance diet during pregnancy. They become anemic and even lacking the energy to push the child during childbirth. Most of these young women end up poorer as they give away the little wealth they have such as goats, sheep or chicken as payment for the services I offer during and after delivery (Key Informant, area Traditional Birth Attendant, 60 years old woman).

Other than disruption of the girl-child’s education as well as detrimental physical and psychological effects, the researcher strived to know of other effects. These included; domestic violence especially when resources become scarce, lack of economic empowerment, economic dependence, vulnerability to sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS, resentments in life and engagement in criminal activities especially by the children born to such child-brides.

The findings indicated that over 70% of the respondents agreed that child marriage did not offer any positive effects on the well-being of women in Nyakach Sub-county.

“Child marriage does not offer any positive effects on the well-being of women in Nyakach Sub-county. Girls get into marriage life when still young to older men, some as old as their parents. When these husbands get too older to even sire more children, these women being still too young turn to younger men to satisfy their sexual urges. When their husbands find out, this leads to

intimate partner violence as well as domestic violence and eventually separation and divorce”
(Key Informant, a Gender Officer, 50 years old woman).

“Generally, these marriages are characterized by domestic violence. This has led to the perpetrators of these violence, mostly the husbands being arrested leaving their families with no source of income as they are the breadwinners. When the husbands are arrested, the wives end up in prostitution with the boda-boda riders. These makes them to contract HIV/AIDS leading to deaths. Any moment these husbands face the law due to domestic violence, insecurity and fear increases in their families especially when the husbands are released to reunite with their families. The chain of domestic violence increases causing trauma to the children. These children end up running away from their homes and some going to their grandparents causing economic burden to them. The couple also lose trust and confidence in each other” **(Key Informant, a Probation Officer, 45 years old man).**

4.6.1 Regrets of engaging in child marriage

The study sought to investigate if the engagement in child marriage led to any regrets by the respondents. The respondents regretted having engaged in child marriage almost in all aspects of their lives.

“Child marriage leads to long-life regrets. You bring them in as second wife but the moment they start living, the problems begin between the wives. Since you cannot have peace at home, you go out with other women who can give you peace. This in turn brings in more problems” **(FGD participant).**

“If you marry these young girls, it will be your money that attracts them to you and not love. When you can no longer provide, they look for it from other men since they are ignorant and lack the skills to start their own investments or businesses. You end up blaming yourself for the decision of marrying a young girl” **(FGD participant).**

4.7 Narrations from the women who went through child marriage

49-year old woman, Agoro West Location

I got into child marriage since my peers were all married. I suffered a lot in my marriage. I had not reached puberty. My husband wanted children so badly. I gave birth to two children. I could not make decisions for myself. Meanwhile he wanted me to have ten children. Then bride price was used to pay fees for my brothers. One day he brought me my co-wife. He did not consult me about the decision. Now I have ten children against my wish. He could beat me up most of the time. One day he beat me up when I had just given birth.

Girls should go to school. Let them learn up to the highest level. As we speak now, most girls have gone into child marriage due to the pandemic of COVID-19. Girls should be left to choose for themselves marriage partners unlike parents choosing for them. Girls willing to go to school should be left to study even after getting pregnant in order to accomplish their dreams.

Lack of money to buy pads make girls to seek help from boda-boda riders and exchange sex for money to buy the pads. Long before the pandemic, they got pads in school but now they have nowhere to turn to except to the riders. Adverse effects of the pandemic has disrupted business opportunities for parents in such a way that they can hardly meet the expenses. I pray that parents could encourage their daughters to study hard just like you.

72-year-old woman, Kadiang'a Location

I was the first born in a family of eight children. We were so poor. My parents could not afford my school fees. An old man came to our place that he wanted a younger wife. This man was wealthy; he had many heads of cattle. My father was excited. He wanted a bride price to pay for my brothers' school fees. I was forced to marry him as third wife. His first and second wives were much older than I was. I went through many sufferings. When I first got pregnant at the age of fourteen, I did not know anything. I almost died during childbirth at the hands of the TBA. My organs were not yet mature and my breasts were small too.

I could not agree with my husband on so many issues. I gave birth to seven kids. I had to look for food for my kids through difficulties. I had no peace and happiness. He was so authoritative. These days whenever I go to the hospital, they tell me child marriage contributed to my sufferings. I regret a lot. I urge parents to leave their daughters to choose for themselves their own marriage partners once they come of age.

In my community, a girl could not choose for herself a marriage partner as she is considered an outsider who deserves to be disposed of to anybody. With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, girls hung loosely, as they no longer go to school nor church. For boys they engage themselves in boda-boda riding. Girls consider them rich. Since the pandemic, many girls have become pregnant and some have already been married.

Poverty makes parents to offer cheaply their daughters in order to get wealth. From the cows, they get milk and some are sold for school fees. Girls need to go to school so that they can have money of their own. These days there are groups that take girls to school. Let them go to school at all costs.

Thirty-two (32) year-old woman, Sango Location

I got into child marriage because I got pregnant to a boy I was studying together with. I gave birth to a baby boy. In my village, children got before a woman is married are considered as bad omen more so if the child is a boy. My family members rejected me. I had nowhere to take my child. I dropped out of school when I was in form one where I was a day scholar. I felt so embarrassed. People mocked me that no man would ever marry me except an old man since I had given birth to a boy child.

When I lost my cousin, my father forced me to marry her husband. She left behind four children. I drudgingly agreed out of desperation because my father feared I would get another child before marriage. He was a wealthy man since in this place, Sango, he does many activities to get money. For now, we do not stay together. We broke up in May when COVID-19 pandemic struck. We lived for few years. Since the pandemic, he started moving in with schoolchildren who since then have not been going to school. He became wild and provided no food instead spent all his money on the girls. By April, he brought in a girl who did not have any respect for me. He started beating me up every day. I still have the injuries to date. He did not want to see me anymore so I left. I leave a lone. I needed peace. I sell Irish potatoes and fingerlings. I decided to leave everything to God. Given another chance, I cannot repeat the mistake. It majorly happened because we were so poor. I sympathize with girls who marry older men instead of going to school. Child marriage is bad because it denies a girl the opportunity to go to school. Girls should go to school first then get a job before they can marry a man of their choice. Young girls need guidance and counselling to prevent them from men who exploit them.

The above three narratives clearly indicate that indeed child marriage is rampant in Nyakach Sub-county and mostly contributed by poverty. This has adversely affected the well-being of women in the area. They never had the opportunity to advance themselves through education hence their deplorable economic and social situations.

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the key study findings of this research project and gives conclusions drawn from the study findings. The chapter also gives recommendations as per the research objectives then gives suggestions of areas of future research study.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study sought to establish the socio-cultural and economic drivers of child marriage and their effects on the well-being of women in Nyakach Sub-county. It is estimated that fifty percent of the Sub-county is poor, (Kenya Integrated Household Survey 2015/2016). This is due to various factors, which include low and poor quality farm yields due to long harsh climatic conditions like drought and floods. Other factors include poor or lack of elementary health care systems. HIV/AIDS has also made the economic situation to worsen in the area (KENPHIA 2018 REPORT). Study findings revealed that poverty is the leading cause of CM in Nyakach Sub-county hence affects the people in terms of economic advancements. This finding is in agreement with Ahmed's (2015) statement that poor parents encourage and/or give away their young daughters to get married in the hope that they will fetch bride wealth, which will benefit the family both socially and economically.

Parents considered child marriage as a solution to secure the future especially when they preferred to educate boys to girls. It is considered that the girls would not assist the family, as they would sooner get married to their future husbands. In these families, girls are seen as assets rather than individuals with rights and dignity (UNICEF 2016). In most of these poor rural families, when a girl is the first born, she is married off at an early age at the expense of her education in order for her younger siblings especially boys to go to school.

The findings have also revealed that culture as a way of life has contributed to child marriage. The concept of polygamy whereby a man marries more than one wife perpetuates child marriage. The subsequent wives can only be younger to assist the elder wives. Getting a child out of

wedlock is considered a taboo especially when the child happens to be a boy. Only an old man is encouraged to marry such a girl. Young men shy off from marrying such a girl.

The community is patriarchal in nature whereby men hold primary power with many privileges to which women are not entitled. In these communities, men own all the means of production as women are considered secondary beings, inferior to men making them completely dependent on their husbands.

According to the community's culture, when an aunt dies, the husband marries any of his wife's nieces. This denies the girl the right to continue with her education. The reason for this is to take care of her aunt's children and to give birth to more children to the man. Culturally girls are discouraged from expressing their interests on the man they want to marry especially whenever they got a child out of wedlock or they drop out of school. This contravenes the girl's free and full consent to choose a spouse to marry. Culturally girls are pushed into child marriage in order to guard their sexuality and to protect the family honor.

The findings indicated that girls who drop out of school due to teen pregnancy are encouraged to marry as soon as possible so that their husbands could take control of their sexuality and to cushion them from further pregnancies before marriage.

Low value attached to a girl's education was a contributing factor. This supports the ICRW (2013) that girls without education are six times more likely to be married off earlier as compared to those with ten or more years of education. Boy's education was more valued.

In objective three, effects of child marriage on the well-being of women in Nyakach Sub-county were determined. Results showed that a big number of the respondents alluded that there was nothing good that child marriage had on the women's well-being. The WHO (2013) which points out supports this that child marriage often leads to short-and long-term reproductive health complications for girls that last beyond adolescent.

When girls marry when they are underage, they encounter numerous health issues. Being young implies that one has not physically developed. These girls go through birth related implications such as fistula, premature and still births as well as Sexually Transmitted Infections including HIV/AIDS due to low maternal health care uptake. This happens especially when they do not

know about their sexual and health reproductive rights, critical knowledge got from learning. However, in Nyakach Sub-county the results indicated that majority of the women did not complete basic education. As a result, they remained ignorant, naive and gullible about their reproductive freedoms. Findings also indicated that when girls marry at such young ages, they lacked the ability to negotiate for safe or proper sex practices since they lack bodily integrity and autonomy. Child marriage denied the woman control over decision-making. This caused domestic violence and being looked down upon whenever they failed to fulfil all the requirements. This further lead to lifetime and recurrent psychiatric disorders such as low self-esteem and depression as they lacked the right to freely air their views and defend themselves against devastating traditional practices.

The study findings showed that women married as children in Nyakach Sub-county were living below poverty lines. Their economic situation was deplorable. They lacked proper source of income to fend for their families. Children born to them were malnourished and sickly. This finding was supported by Klugman et al. (2014) that educated women are healthier, active in formal employment, richer with less children and can afford health care unlike the ones with zero education.

Over 50% of the respondents pondered over their lack of another opportunity to rewind schooling citing that their lives and that of their children would have been better.

5.3 Conclusions

Poverty and culture are the main drivers of CM in Nyaksch Sub-county based on the results. Child marriage puts crucial burdens on the progress of the girl-child's school life. Poverty and culture are related therefore they deny the girls the right to education in Nyakach Sub-county. Nyakach Sub-county being a rural area, experiences more poverty than most urban areas which in turn made children, male or female not to realize their full potential of becoming economically empowered.

Education is therefore the surest way to reduce and eradicate poverty as well as retrogressive cultural norms, which are impediments to the girl's growth and advancement. When girls exercise their rights to school, they postpone time for marriage and concentrate on education and financial stability for a better prosperous future.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Findings showed that CM is still rampant in Nyakach Sub-County, we therefore recommend that punitive laws of CM needs to be strictly adhered to so that anybody found culpable faces the full force of law. Institutions dealing with the children's rights should emphasize on the need to protect children from abuse such as child marriage.
2. Since the results showed that teen pregnancy exposed adolescent girls to desperation and stigmatization, parents should therefore offer psychosocial therapy to the teenage girls through having cordial relationships with them as a solution in case of such pregnancies rather than opting for child marriage.
3. Findings also showed that the boda-boda riders were exploiting adolescent girls by taking advantage of their economic situation. We recommend that parents should avail common needs such dignity kits as well as economic support to their adolescent girls to avoid such manipulations.
4. Religious leaders should instill moral ethics in children to prevent them from engaging in moral decadence such as adultery and nightclubs that expose them to lack of concentration in school as the results showed.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

- 1) A call for an urgent need of an elaborate study to look at how COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to child-marriage in Nyakach Sub-County, Kisumu County. The researcher recommends a similar study looking into the Sexual and Reproductive Health outcomes on the well-being of women because of the pandemic.
- 2) There is need for a comprehensive and comparative study that looks at how men can be champions and agents for change in reducing the rates of child-marriage.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I- CONSENT FORM

THE PRACTICE OF CHILD MARRIAGE IN NYAKACH SUB-COUNTY, KISUMU COUNTY.

Investigator: Nelly A. Maina

Introduction

I am **Nelly A. Maina** from the Institute of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies, University of Nairobi.

Purpose of the Study: The study seeks to establish the socio-cultural and economic drivers of CM and its effects on the well-being of women in Nyakach Sub-County, Kisumu County. We plan to include about 64 women throughout Nyakach Sub-county. If you join, your taking part will help to empower women and girls in Nyakach Sub-County.

Study Procedures: I will invite you to this conversation and your answerers will be kept between us. The interview will take about 30 minutes. The information is stored securely and can only be accessed by selected study staff. The interview will take place in privacy.

Benefits: Your participation will assist dig deeper into child marriage in Nyakach and identify efforts that can be made to prevent the pandemic. There will be no direct benefit in participating in the study but in case you have any questions or psychosocial needs, the investigator will readily assist you. The study will help establish the drivers of child marriage and their effects on the well-being of women in Nyakach Sub-county. This will help understand the challenges of the women and findings could be used to formulate or review existing policy to empower women and girls.

Costs: no cost for taking part in this study.

Confidentiality: confidentiality is paramount and you will not appear on any study results that we publish or present at scientific meetings.

Please feel free to sign your name.

I _____ accept to be in this study.

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature of Research/Assistant _____ Date _____

APPENDIX II: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

Section A: Demographic characteristics

1. What is your age? (Years)_____
2. How many children do you have? _____
3. Are you currently working? Yes [] No []
4. Highest level of schooling you completed. Below primary [] Primary [] Secondary []
College/University [] none []
5. Which religion do you belong? Protestant [] Catholic [] Islam [] Traditional Religion []
other specify.....
6. Is this your first marriage? Yes [] No []
7. What was the nature of your marriage? Christian [] Civil [] Customary [] others,
specify...

Section B: Perceptions and Practices

8. During the period you have been married, are you Very Satisfied-**VS**, Satisfied-**S**,
Dissatisfied-**D**, Very Dissatisfied-**VD** and Don't Know-**DK** with the following
components of marriage?

	VS	S	D	VD	DK
The age at which you got married?					
Respectful treatment by your partner					
Respectful treatment by your community					
Fair chance in decision making platforms					

Fair chance to exercise bodily autonomy and sexual reproductive rights					
Property ownership between you and the partner					

9. Given another chance, would you marry at the same age you did. Yes [] No []
10. Would you recommend anyone to marry at the same age as you did? Yes [] No []
11. In your opinion, what do you think should be the right one for marriage? 13-16 years []
17-20 years [] as early possible [] above 18 years []
12. Did your parents oppose your marriage to your partner/s? Yes [] No []
13. In your own pinion, what factors contributed to you getting married at the time you did?
14. Would you share any effects of CM?
15. How capable are you of feeding and educating your children up to the highest level of education without the help of your husband?
16. In your view what is the best action against CM in Nyakach Sub-County?

APPENDIX III: NARRATIVE GUIDE

Please narrate to us your most interesting experience as one who has undergone child marriage (Probe for whether still married, divorced, widowed or separated). What is your opinion about the practice of Child Marriage (CM) as well as your personal opinion about this community?
(Case Narrative)

APPENDIX IV: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA)

1. What is your opinion on the issue of child marriage?
2. What are your experiences handling women married as children when they come to deliver?
3. What do you think are the drivers of child marriages in Nyakach Sub-County?
4. Why do you think most of the women married as children prefer you to trained nurses?
5. What are normally the modes of payment for the services you offer?

Local area chief

1. What is your opinion on the issue of child marriage?
2. What are your experiences handling child marriages within your locality?
3. What do you think are the drivers of child marriages in Nyakach Sub-County?
4. What in your view is the best way forward to solve this problem?
5. What are some of the effects of child marriage in your locality?
6. What do you think are some of the cultural norms within your locality that still encourage child marriage?

Gender Officer

1. As a government officer for gender what is your opinion on the issue of child marriage?
2. In your area of work, do you encounter any reports of child marriage?
3. What do you think push older men to marry young girls?
4. Does your office have any programs for women and girls empowerment?
5. Does your office undertake logistical tasks in the administering of trainings about CM that bring behavior change within communities?
6. What in your view is the best way forward to solve this problem?

A Probation Officer

1. What is your opinion on the issue of child marriage?
2. What do you think push young girls into child marriage?
3. What in your view is the best way forward to solve this problem?
4. What are the effects of Child Marriage (CM) you have seen on women?
5. Does your office offer sensitization and create awareness to communities about CM?

APPENDIX V: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. What do you understand by child marriage?
2. How does the society view child marriage? Expound.
3. Why do older men marry young girls?
4. What are the experiences of women who marry while still children?
5. What are the contributing factors to child marriage?
6. What in your view is the best way forward to solve this problem?

APPENDIX VI: WORK PLAN

Main activities	Sub-activities	Timeline					
		Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Aug	Oct
Proposal Preparation and literature review	-Conceptualizing research topic -Reading on related research						
Proposal defense	-Presenting the proposal before the panel						
Data collection	-Conduct data collection activities, including structured interviews; monitor performance and ensure data quality. -Facilitate KIIs and FGDs						
Data processing, analysis and reporting	-Management of the qualitative data. -Qualitative data transcription, verification, listing, description and presentation. -Coding, summary and compilation of qualitative data including FGD transcripts, pictures and drawings.						
Final review, editing and presentation of the final report	-Writing the final report -Final consultations with the supervisor -Binding and presentation to the supervisor						

APPENDIX VII: BUDGET

Items		Unit Type	Quantity	Unit Cost (KES)	Total (KES)
Stationery & services for pre-testing	a) Writing materials/pads	Units	2	40	80.00
	b) Pens	Units	12	10	120.00
Sub-total A					200.00
Stationery & services for data collection	a) Writing materials/pads	Units	24	40	960.00
	b) Pens	Units	24	10	240.00
	c) Document folders	Units	4	40	160.00
	d) Data collection phones	Units	2	4000	8,000.00
	e) SD Cards (32 GB)	Units	2	2000	4,000.00
	f) External Storage device (Backup Hard disk 500GB)	Units	1	10000	10,000.00
	e) Research Assistants (Rate of 1000 per day for 7 days)	Pax	2	7000	14,000.00
Sub-total B					37,360.00
Facilitation	a) Transport for 7 days at 1000 per day	Pax	3	7000	21,000.00
	b) Communication for 7 days at 500 per day	Pax	3	3500	10,500.00
	c) Field accommodation and food for 7 days at 1000 per day	Pax	3	7000	21,000.00
Sub-total C					52,500.00
Project submission	a) Printing of final submission report	Units	8	350	2,800.00
	b) Binding final submission report	Units	8	50	400.00
Sub-total D					3,200.00
TOTAL 2 (Sub-totals A + B + C)					93,260.00

