

**FACTORS INFLUENCING EARLY MARRIAGES AMONG SABAOT  
COMMUNITY IN KENYA: A CASE OF MT. ELGON SUB-COUNTY**

**DANIEL MUTUA**

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**DECLARATION**

This research project is my original work and has not been submitted for any other award in any other university or institution.

Signed:..... Date: .....

Daniel Mutua

L50/70752/2013

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

Signature ..... Date.....

Dr. Stephen Luketero

Associate Professor

Department of Extra-Mural Studies

University of Nairobi

### **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my mother Mrs Irene Muronji Kopi and my son Damian Mutua Kopi.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>CEDAW:</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>FGDs:</b>	Focus Group Discussions
<b>FGC:</b>	Female Genital Cutting
<b>FGM:</b>	Female Genital Mutilation
<b>KDHS:</b>	Kenya Demographic Health Survey
<b>ICPD:</b>	International Conference on Population and Development
<b>MMR:</b>	Maternal Mortality Ratio
<b>SPSS:</b>	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
<b>UNICEF:</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNFPA:</b>	United Nations Population Centre
<b>WHO:</b>	World Health Organization

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study was to investigate factors influencing Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County, Kenya. The objectives of the study were: To establish the extent to which Cultural practices influence early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County, to determine how reproductive health practices influence early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County, establish how education influence early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County, and assess how status influence early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. The study adopted the Theory of Change postulated by Priscilla Lewis. The study employed a descriptive research design with target population of 4562 Households heads. A sample size of 156 was used derived from Miller & Brewer mathematical formula and data was gathered using questionnaires, interview schedules and Focus Group Discussions. Data analysis was done after editing and checking out that all questionnaires were filled in correctly. Data was analysed descriptively using Statistical Package for Social Sciences and the results presented in form of frequency tables and percentages. Results shows that gender inequality and beliefs in traditional cultural practices such as Female Genital Mutilation practices among Sabaot community significantly influenced early marriages. Teenage pregnancy and inadequate knowledge on of use contraceptives among Sabaot community significantly influenced early marriages due to pressure and fear of betrothal to older men for girls and forced marriage for boys usually end up seeking unsafe abortions from untrained people. Most of the respondents were primary certificate holders and therefore access to education. Statistics indicate that most of the households among the Sabaot community were not economically independent and there is high income inequality. The study recommends effective and transformative interventions that eliminate child marriage must span multiple sectors and include different approaches such as programmes that illustrate working with communities and families directly; women and girls, men and boys is a powerful force to change attitudes, behaviors, and gender norms. Increasing family planning and reproductive health knowledge and access to service and sex education in schools, and Increasing education and income, and empowerment and skill based programmes that equip both men and women economically. These findings are useful to County Governments to equip the rural residents on early marriages and its implications on economic empowerment of households.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Marriage is an important institution both for the individual and the society at large. For the individual, it is a significant and memorable event in one's life cycle as well as the most important foundation in the family formation process. It is also a rite of passage that marks the beginning of an individual's separation from the parental unit, even if generations continue to be socially and economically interdependent. For the society as a whole, it unites several individuals from different families and represents the creation of a production and consumption unit as well as one for the exchange of goods and services (Quisumbing & Hallman, 2003).

In most societies marriage defines the onset of the socially acceptable time for childbearing and is the most predominant context for childbearing in most countries. Child marriage, generally defined as marriage before age 18, is not limited to any one country or continent. Age at marriage is of particular interest because it marks the transition to adulthood in many societies; the point at which certain options in education, employment, and participation in society are foreclosed; and the beginning of regular exposure to the risks of pregnancy and childbearing. Women who marry early will have, on average; a longer period of exposure to the risk of pregnancy, often leading to higher completed fertility. Variation in age of entry into marriage helps explain differences in fertility across populations and also helps explain trends in fertility within individual populations over time (United Nations, 1990; Ezeh & Dodoo, 2001). Therefore, age at first marriage has a direct bearing on fertility behaviour (Davis & Blake, 1965; Coale, 1971; Lesthaeghe *et al.*, 1989).

A number of human rights instruments lay down norms to be applied to marriage, covering issues of age, consent, equality within marriage, and the personal and property rights of women. The key instruments and articles are as follows (paraphrased for clarity in some cases): *Article 16* of the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) states: (1) Men and women of full age ... have the right to marry and found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending parties. Similar provisions are included in the 1966 *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* and the 1966 *International Covenant on Civil and Political*

*Rights.* Many have no choice about timing of marriage with their partner. Some are coerced into marriage, while others are too young to make an informed decision. Premature marriage deprives them of the opportunity for personal development as well as their rights to full reproductive health (RH), and well-being, education and participation in civic life (Saxena, 1999:7).

However, Child marriage continues to be a challenge worldwide and especially in southern Asia and Africa. While it affects both sexes, girls are more affected as they are the majority of the victims. Child marriage causes untold suffering to the victims; it curtails the child's education, affects the general health, and puts the affected in a disadvantaged position. Child Marriage refers to any marriage of a child younger than eighteen years old, in accordance to article 1 of the Convention of the Right of the child. According to CEDAW, the right to protection from child marriage in article 16 states; “ The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action including legislation , shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage” (UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1994). While marriage is not considered directly in the convention on the rights of the child, child marriage is linked to other rights such as the right to express their views directly, the right to protection from all forms of abuse and the right to be protected from harmful traditional practices and this is frequently addressed by the committee on the rights on the child. Child marriage was also identified by the Pan African Forum against Sexual Exploitation of children (Mikhail, 2002).

In 2012, the FMU gave advice or support related to a possible forced marriage in 1,485 cases. Where the age was known, 35 per cent of calls were from children aged 17 and below (13 per cent under the age of 15 years) – the youngest at just two years of age. Of the 1, 485 cases, 82 per cent involved women and girls and 18 per cent involved men and boys. The FMU handled cases involving 60 different countries, including Pakistan (47.1 per cent), Bangladesh (11 per cent), India (8 per cent), Afghanistan (2.1 per cent), Somalia (1.2 per cent), Turkey (1.1 per cent) and Iraq (1 per cent), (Plan International, 2011). In Latin America and the Caribbean, 29% of young women were married by age of 18. In Southern Asia 48% (nearly 10 million) of young women were married before the age of 18. In Africa, 42% were married before turning 18 (UNICEF, 2005). In Ethiopia and some West African Countries, some girls get married as early as 7 years. In Bangladesh, 45% of young women between 25 and 29 were married between the age of 10 and 14 (UNICEF, 2001).

Studies have shown that approximately half of Yemeni girls are married before 18, while some as young as eight (Carla, 2009). Initially, Yemeni law set the minimum age for marriage at 15 but

tribal customs often flouted it. In 1999, the minimum marriage age of 15 for women was abolished; the onset of puberty, interpreted by conservatives to be at the age of nine, was set as a requirement for consummation of marriage (Human Rights Watch, 2001). In practice, "Yemeni law allows girls of any age to wed, but it forbids sex with them until the indefinite time they are suitable for sexual intercourse (Carla, 2009). According to United Nations Population Funds (UNFPA) Niger has the highest percentage of child marriage in the world (75%). In Niger one in three girls is married before the age of 15, and 75% of women aged 20 to 24 are married before they reach 18. Deeper analysis reveals that girls are either seen as an economic burden or valued as capital for their exchange value in terms of goods, money and livestock. It is also apparent that a combination of cultural, tradition and religious arguments are used to justify child marriages.

In Uganda, statistics shows 4.9% of marriages were aged 12-14 years, 75.7% were between 15-17 years and 19.2% were between 18 – 24 years. The youngest child in marriage was 12 years. Early marriage is common in Uganda. In 2006, more than half (53%) of women ages 20–49 were married before the age of 18, which is the legal age of marriage for women in Uganda.

Despite the promulgation of a law prohibiting early marriages in Kenya, the practice is still rampant in the country's rural areas. Forty-three per cent of girls are married when they are 18 years compared to boys at 11.6 per cent. This proportion is higher than the national prevalence rate which stands at 34 per cent for females and 1.4 per cent for males (Plan International, 2011:1). Early marriages constitute 25 per cent nationally and the percentage is higher in the former Nyanza Province (Ochieng' & Erulkar, 2008:9). Kenya's new Marriage Bill outlaws marriage below the age of 18. It states that no person shall get engaged or betrothed to a person under the age of eighteen years. The bill imposes stiff penalties on anyone who gets engaged or betrothed to a person under the age of eighteen years. Statistics show that Kilifi has the highest prevalence of early marriage with 47.4 per cent, followed by Homa Bay at 38 per cent, Kwale at 37.9 per cent, Bondo at 29.5 per cent and Mt. Elgon at 25 per cent (Plan International Organization Kenya-2012). According to the United Nations, Kenya is among countries in the world where the number of girls who marry before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday is on the rise. If the current trend continues, the tally of such unions will rise to 14.2 million a year in 2020 worldwide, and 15.1 million each year in 2030. (UN Oct 13/2012, Kenya).



## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Birth, marriage and death are the standard trio of key events in most people's lives. But only one marriage is a matter of choice. The right to exercise that choice was recognized as a principle of law even in Roman times and has long been established in international human rights instruments. Yet many girls, and a smaller number of boys, enter marriage without any chance of exercising their right to choose. Many developing countries face serious economic and social barriers to monitoring and applying legislation that prohibits child marriage. In some countries, the legal system at national and district levels does not have sufficient resources, including trained staff, to ensure the implementation of existing laws. This is particularly the case in rural communities, where many child marriages occur and where children may have to travel significant distances alone to access justice.

Early marriage has been documented as the reason why girls and boys are not in school in Sub-Saharan African countries (UNICEF, 2001:1). Youth's education is interrupted without even completing their primary education in order to get married. In Mt. Sub-County this problem is aggravated by strong cultural practices, poverty and Community inter-conflicts such as recurrence of SLDF that impedes girls into early marriage. Mt. Elgon Sub-County is one of the poorest regions in Bungoma and, therefore, parents continue to give their daughters for marriage at an early age which is below the mean age of eighteen years (CRADLE, 2005:7).

To date, most studies on the effects of early marriage have focused on premature sex and pregnancy and school drop-out. Much work remains to be done, therefore, to analyze the drivers of this practice. The underlying factors that contribute to child marriage are complex and interrelated. They vary within and between countries depending on individual circumstances and social contexts. However, there are some key common factors that drive and perpetuate the practice. It is against this underpinning child marriage that the current study investigated into the factors influencing early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County, Kenya.

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the factors influencing early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County, Kenya.

## **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To establish the extent to which Cultural Practices influence early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County.
- ii. To determine how reproductive health practices influence early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County.
- iii. To establish how education influence early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County.
- iv. To assess how Economic status influence early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

- i. To what extent do Cultural practices influence early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County?
- ii. How do reproductive health practices influence early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County?
- iii. What is the influence of education on early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County?
- iv. How does Economic status influence early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study findings are useful to Policymakers, reformers and women's rights and children's rights movements in addressing the complex factors that fuel child marriage. The researcher also benefitted from the research as he was able to access firsthand information on the outcome of the research hence increasing his knowledge in research work. This information should allow for intervention measures to be formulated and also formulation of a policy to address the problem. The findings will also help County Governments to equip the rural residents on early marriages and its

implications on economic development.

### **1.7 Basic Assumptions of the Study**

The study assumed that the respondents were available and gave information without fear. It also assumed that respondents were conversant with legislation necessary to prevent child marriage, as one of the operational sources in Mt. Elgon Sub-County.

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

Limitations are functions that might impact on the outcome of the study when not taken into account. The researcher experienced a challenge of getting all respondents as some would be out on their own businesses for their livelihood. The topic is new and scanty research has been done according to literature review available in public libraries. Most studies have focused on early marriage and Girls participation on education but the researcher relied on the fieldwork data and related studies on factors influencing early marriages among Sabaot Community. Unpredictable weather conditions and poor transport systems to reach all the target households was expected to hinder data collection process. Respondents' skepticism divulging vital information due to suspicion was expected to be an obstacle but the researcher will reassure the respondents that the research was purely academic and confidential which will mitigate the problem.

### **1.9 Delimitations of the Study**

The research was conducted among the Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County within Bungoma County. The study involved households of married couples and the researcher concentrated on factors influencing early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. Different households were selected for the study. The study was delimited to 156 respondents out of the possible 4562 Households heads in Mt. Elgon Sub-County.

### **1.10 Definition of Significant Terms**

**Child marriage:** Generally defined as marriage before age 18, is not limited to any one country or continent in accordance to article 1 of the convention of the Right of the child

**Influence:** the ability to exercise power over household decisions

**Reproductive health practices:** deliberate actions that enable one to have control over the number and timing of births

**Education:** in this context it's the access to information, number of years of schooling, source of information on safer sex, and child health, family planning, child birth, intimate partner violence and marriage obligations.

### **1.11 Organization of the Study**

The study was organized into five chapters, chapter one, as background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, assumption of the study, definition of significant terms, organization of the study. Chapter highlighted the literature related to the study area and includes conceptual framework. Chapter three entails introduction, methodology, research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedure, research instruments, (interview schedule, questionnaire and FGDs), pilot testing, validity and reliability of the research instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis techniques and presentation. Chapter four describes details on data analysis and presentation of findings and interpretation. Finally chapter five highlights a summary of the findings, Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature related to the study on factors influencing early marriage among the Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. This was in line with the study objectives. A conceptual framework was used to operationalize the variables. It also summarized the literature review done by scholars in the past as done from referenced books, journals, periodicals, newspapers reports, documentaries and magazines.

#### 2.2 The Concept of Early Marriage

In many societies the economic status of the family is significant in determining the age at which people marry. Axinn and Thornton (1992) stated that social and economic conditions in the parental home affect the likelihood of marriage of young people. Marriage is an important institution for the individual and the society at large. For the individual, it is a significant and memorable event in one's life cycle as well as the most important foundation in the family formation process. In addition, marriage marks the beginning to an end of the transition to adulthood as the individual separates from the parental home, even if generations continue to be socially and economically interdependent through the extended family. Age at marriage is of particular interest because it marks the transition to adulthood in many societies; the point at which certain options in education, employment, and participation in society are foreclosed; and the beginning of regular exposure to the risks of pregnancy and childbearing. For the society as a whole, it unites several individuals from different families and represents the creation of a production and consumption unit as well as one for the exchange of goods and services (Ikamari, 2005).

In the traditional African setting, marriage was not an option, but an obligatory experience for all adults. It was associated with procreation and without procreation there was no marriage (Kihuha, 1992:8; Mbiti, 1990:132). In an appreciable number of societies, marriages are arranged, and negotiations are handled by the immediate families or by go-betweens. Sometimes betrothals are completed while the future partners are still children (Ember et al., 2002:353). The western concept of marriage is different in that the two people getting married choose their partners and decide when to get married. In this case, marriage is seen as a companion between two people to the exclusion of

all others and procreation need not result from the union (Mbiti, 1990:132). In some societies marriage defines the onset of the socially acceptable time for sexual activity and childbearing. As such marriage is not only the most predominant context for childbearing but also one of the most important determinants of fertility (Bongaarts, 1983).

### **2.3 Cultural Practices and Early Marriages**

Traditional and patriarchal beliefs towards gender roles, rooted in social, cultural or religious customs, can insulate and perpetuate the practice of child marriage. Research conducted by Plan in West, Southern and East Africa has shown that social norms and beliefs often determine marriage and childbearing as the main life path for girls. In some contexts, entrenched attitudes and beliefs about the expected roles of males and females, combined with a lack of viable educational and employment opportunities for young women, can mean that many parents see little benefit in educating their daughters. Save the Children (2005) indicates that cultural norms and beliefs constrain girls' economic empowerment especially in many developing parts of the world. In these societies, traditional values and some religious beliefs constrain girls from making their own decisions and expressing their own opinions. Chege and Sifuna (2006) examined claim that many cultures favor access to economic resources for boys more than girls.

Cultural norms in Kenya impose barriers for discussing about sexual matters. Even mentioning the word 'sex' can imply the sexual experience and promiscuity that may damage reputation. Hence, many adolescent girls ignore sexual issues discussion in order to preserve their reputation (Marston and King, 2006). Another social norm is early marriages. Girls are married off early because they are viewed as 'someone else's wealth' and even a liability to be got rid of as soon as possible. In addition early marriages are in practice because of the social norm which deems that fathers have to pay higher dowry for older girls. Some parents also think that if they marry their daughter earlier then they can reduce the expenditure of food and education (Sharma, 2002). In many of the countries where child marriage is prevalent, other harmful practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) are also practiced. In Kenyan Maasai communities, girls, some as young as seven, are considered mature after FGM/C has been performed and are quickly married in order to obtain a dowry. In some communities, men refuse to marry girls or women who have not undergone FGM/C. In Sierra Leone, a girl's initiation includes learning how to take on the responsibilities of being a wife.

Parents are also prompted to arrange early marriage for daughters due to a perceived need to preserve girls' pre-marital virginity and to protect her and her family from the risk of shame or dishonour attached to the "immoral" or "inappropriate" behaviour of sex outside marriage. For example, in Malaysia, child marriage has popular support as a way of avoiding *Maksiat* or sexual immorality. If a girl becomes pregnant outside marriage, the stigma can lead families to view her rights and well-being as secondary to the preservation of family honour. Child marriage is also used to punish or control girls who rebel against family or communities' expectations. Study indicate that majority of adolescent girls i.e., 82% in rural and 63% in urban areas got married according to their parents' wish and many were unaware about sexuality at the time of marriage (Choe, et.al., 2004).

Abena (1991) and Atayi (2008) observe that in Africa parents were more concerned about the role for girls at home as in this role, girls do not need empowerment since they are supposed to take care of the children and prepare meals. Falkingham and Baschieri (2006) observed that in Tajikistan many girls attend only religious classes which provide relevant skills for future married life as skilled wives. Sawada and Lokshin (2009) found that purdah (ideal) or seclusion of women was a factor for girls' empowerment. However, traditional values can be different from location to location and in this respect, UNESCO (2010) indicate that traditional values are stronger in rural areas in developing countries compared to urban areas and people often do not allow girls to leave homes even for schools for empowerment.

Many factors contribute to early marriages. Gender inequality, cultural norms, religion, peer pressure, alcoholism are some of the leading factors (IPPF, 2006). It is more prevalent among poor, less educated and rural populations (March of Dimes, 2012). These shape the sexual behavior and fertility of adolescents. Gender roles play a significant role in molding sexual behaviors of adolescents' in turn early marriage. In Nepal, girls' sexual and gender roles (e.g. married, widow) are clearly defined on the basis of their relationship with men. Girls are not considered to be human saying 'nothing was born' when a girl child is born (Francoeur, 2004). Adolescents are generally married to older man with an average six years difference, so husbands have more control on decision making, conception and pregnancy (Mensch *et. al.*, 1998; WHO 2007d). Boys are generally valued more than girls and are given more power. Girls when married are expected to remain faithful to their husband. It is reported that adolescent men who have had sexual intercourse had it with sex workers (Gubhaju, 2002). The females usually do not have social power so she cannot either question their husband in any area or engage in protective behavior (Francoeur, 2004). Therefore,

they are expected to accept any form of sexual activity from their husband and have less control over own body. A study in the sexual experience of adolescent females mentioned that they tended to have sex when their partner wanted even if they do not want to (UNAIDS, UNICEF, 2001).

Parental investment for children's well-being can sometimes become gender biased. Although parents are altruistic to the gender of their children, they do not invest in education equally for all. In this regard, there are considerable evidences in the literature (Glick & Sahn, 2000; Kingdon, 2005) supporting this view whereby that, there is gender bias or pro-male bias in case of parental investment in children. In addition, Leung and Zhang (2008) found that parents' preference for sons encourage more of them to invest for in their sons' well-being to take care of parents in the future. In fact, parental gender bias investment occurs particularly when parents have limited/lower income and resource, causing girls to leave school earlier than boys. For instance, Fuller & Laing (1999) and Grant & Hallman (2006) found an association between a family's financial strength and the likelihood of the daughter's economic empowerment in South Africa.

#### **2.4 Reproductive Health Practices and Early Marriages**

Pregnancy and childbirth is the number one killer of 15-19 years old, (Girl effect, 2012). The WHO (World Health Organization) defines adolescent as individuals within the age group of 10-19 years. During this time most adolescents start exploring of sexuality and some young couples may start sexual relationships (Oringanje, 2010). Adolescents, who are less informed, may not access the appropriate reproductive health (RH) services and are therefore at greater risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs). They are also more likely to become pregnant due to lack of knowledge of appropriate contraceptives. Studies indicate that a significant proportion of adolescents are engaging in sexual activities at younger ages. UNICEF and UNAIDS (2001) says one in five male and one in ten female teenagers have experienced sex in adolescence. This may lead to early unwanted pregnancy. Being pregnant at young age may have its risk. Apart from that, the culture may consider sex at a young age without marriage as undesirable behaviour. This may hinder them to seek health care and family planning (FP) services. Acharya (2009) carried out research in three districts, and reported 20% adolescents being sexually active and 16% having multiple partners. Adolescents are putting themselves at the risk of coercive, unsafe sex since they cannot easily access condoms. Even though sex before marriage is prohibited, these activities still occur increasing the problem further.



Globally, 16 million adolescents give birth each year covering 11% of births worldwide. Ninety five percent of these births occur in low and middle income countries (WHO, 2008b). The data from 51 countries (from mid 1990s to early 2000) indicated that 10% girls are already mothers by the age of 16. This figure is higher in Sub-Saharan Africa. The seven countries where TP and high birthrate are most prevalent are: Bangladesh, Brazil, Congo, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria and the United States (WHO, 2008b). Worldwide survey on 10,000 teenagers signified, many adolescent girls loosed their virginity in 15 years. Fifty two percent of surveyed teen girls reported they had unprotected sex, and 24% of adolescent having STIs reported of still having unprotected sex (Coffey, 2008).

Statistics further indicate that of 14 million unintended pregnancies which occur every year in Sub-Saharan Africa among 15 -24 year olds (Williamson et al, 2009), 5.5 million involve girls aged between 15-19 years (Njeru, Achoki & Muthoni, 2012). Almost all teenage births (about 95 per cent) occur in low and middle income countries, mostly among the poor and less educated rural population. Having babies by teens within these countries has serious consequences for health of the girl and her infant, especially in areas with weak health systems. In some countries they are ignored and are less likely to obtain skilled pre and post natal care than adults (WHO, 2012). According to Jewkes (2009), the assumption that teenage pregnancies are always unwanted is incorrect as it is common for boys to encourage their girlfriends to get pregnant and there is pressure on both sexes to prove their fertility at a young age.

The health and social risk of childbearing magnifies at early ages (WHO, 2008b). Girls who engage in sexual activities from a younger age may experience an array of problems, ranging from increased risk of unwanted pregnancies, maternal morbidity and mortality, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS, or difficulty in prolonging education. Having a child as a teenager may also have consequences for the child. The Guttmacher Institute reported that early childbearing may limit educational attainment, reduce quality of life, and restrict access to proper paid jobs (Mensch *et.al.*, 1998). Pregnant teenagers are also more likely to seek unsafe abortion (UA) and have a higher risk of becoming infertile. In addition, teenage women are more vulnerable to coerced sexual intercourse due to power imbalances with partners who tend to be older (Gubhaju, 2002). The challenge of reducing maternal mortality remains a major problem in Kenya. The 2003 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) estimated maternal mortality ratio (MMR) at 444/100,000

live-births. Other estimates put the ratio at 1,000/100,000 live births, representing a 1 in 25 lifetime risk of dying from a maternal-related cause.

‘Adolescent pregnancy brings lost potential’ (UNFPA, 2007a). Furthermore, it may bring many negative health and social effects for both mother and child. UNFPA (2007a) suggests that when girl aged 15-19 years becomes pregnant, they are twice and adolescent under 15 are five times more likely of dying during pregnancy or childbirth compared to woman over 20 years. School dropout, premature infant deaths, unhealthy children and more children in a shorter period of time can be seen (Acharya, 2010; Glasier, 2006; Plourde, 2012). Multiple marriages, usually to older men, introduce a new dimension in the epidemiology of HIV/AIDS. Women who are taken out of school early to be married to older men, first, become economically dependent on their husbands, and secondly, are likely to be widowed at a younger age. For such women, the death of a husband exposes them to economic hardships that they have to deal with as they find means to provide for their families. The temptation of these women to seek sexual liaisons with other married or single men to ease economic pressures exerted on them cannot be overlooked. Adolescent gives 11% of all births each year worldwide, contributing to 13% of maternal deaths (WHO, 2008b; UNFPA, 2006). It signifies only a slightly increased risk for maternal mortality, but one should take into account that pregnancy among adolescent is likely more frequent in lower socioeconomic status adolescents.

A study from Latin America indicates that adolescent mother under 16 had four times higher maternal deaths than women aged 20 (WHO, 2008b). Abortions are the indicator of unprotected sex and unwanted pregnancy. It is reported that every year 2.2-4 million adolescents resorts unsafe abortion causing high maternal deaths (UNFPA,2007a) and nearly 78,000 of them die (UNFPA, 2003). It is one of the largest global contributors of preventable maternal deaths (IPPF, 2006). Of all UAs carried out in low and middle income countries, 14% are in adolescents (WHO, 2012a). Often these abortions are carried out late in the pregnancy and are not performed by trained professionals or in sterile environments. The younger the adolescent, the greater the likelihood of having sepsis, (Mensch et. al. 1998). Evidence also indicates that becoming a mother during teenage years may pose many health risks such as anemia, tearing of the vagina, fistula, mental disorders, puerperal sepsis, unsafe abortions and complications, pregnancy induced hypertension and many more due to physiological and psychological immaturity (WHO, 2008a).

Whereas it is assumed that the teens are able to make more suitable choices for safe sex and are confident about what they are doing, teenage contraceptive use has also typically been described as

irrational especially among sexually active teenagers who have had benefit of formal sex education and have contraceptive devices available to them (Cvetkovich, 2010; Nicole, 2012). The United Nations Population Fund believes that as much as universal access to reproductive health by 2015 is one of the targets of the Millennium Development Goals, most developing nations still have a long way to go (Chege, 2012). Generally there is an apparent variation of contraceptive usage across the age groups and in essence, young teenagers use contraceptives less often and are likely to be less effective users than older teens. The younger a girl is at first sex, the less likely she is to use contraceptives. The reason for contraception use among the teenagers did not vary substantially by age, race or ethnicity (CDC, 2012; Lowen, 2011).

In East Asia and Pacific region teenagers also appear to have lower contraceptive use and higher unmet needs because of poor knowledge of family planning and less access to information and services on contraceptives. They face unique barriers such as lack of decision making power, access to/or control over resources, socio-cultural norms regarding sexual behaviour, uncooperative health workers and policy/ legal matters (Guttmacher, 2011). Teenage contraceptive use in Africa is 37 per cent (Guttmacher, 2011; Kennedy et al., 2011; Kirby, 2011). According to Cleland (2009) Sub Saharan Africa is the only region where low levels of contraceptive use persist. Often, sexual activity is unplanned and many youth do not use contraceptives or use less effective contraceptives (Chipeta et al., 2010). In sub-Saharan Africa levels of contraceptive use increase with years of education and attendance in school is associated with less sexual activity (Boostra, 2007). The exposure to information on contraceptive use increases with the number of years of education and socio economic status. The younger the adolescents begin sexual activity, the less they are able to use contraception.

## **2.5 Education and Early Marriages**

In developing countries, there is a clear correlation between levels of education and age at the time of marriage: the more education a girl has received, the less likely she is to have been married before the age of 18. Of the 78 developing countries analyzed by the UNFPA, girls with no education were more than three times as likely to marry or enter into union before the age of 18 as those with a secondary or higher education (63 per cent compared with 20 per cent). Girls with a primary education were more than twice as likely to marry or enter into union as those who had a secondary or higher education (45 per cent compared with 20 per cent). Of the 25 countries with the highest prevalence rates of child marriage, 22 have data on the education levels for women who

were married before their 18th birthday. On average, nearly half (49 per cent) of girls were married by the age of 18. Of those countries, an average of nearly 70 per cent of girls with no education were married by 18, compared with 56 per cent of girls who completed primary school, and 21 per cent of girls who had a secondary education or higher. Additionally, Bates *et al.* (2007) found in their study of rural Bangladesh that mothers' education was significantly related to higher age at first marriage of daughters.

In Mozambique, for example, 67 per cent of women aged 20 to 24 with no education and 57 per cent with primary education were married or in union at the age of 18, compared to only 12 per cent of women with secondary education or higher. This finding is also supported by Manda and Meyer (2005) who find that women with higher levels of educational attainment are far more likely to enter marriage at later age than those without any or with little education, given of different model to approach. This confirms that the issue of development, in which the extended education for girls take place, provides a clearer explanation on why child marriage happens mostly in a lower educated girls characteristics (Jones, 2010; Jensen & Thornton, 2003; Singh & Samara, 1996).

Keeping girls in school and delaying marriage can increase income for individuals and boost economic development for nations. A single year of primary school boosts women's wages later in life by 10 percent to 20 percent, while the boost from female secondary education is 15 percent to 25 percent. The families of girls who have married later benefit from their added income, which they are likely to invest in their families and children. Also, when girls stay in school, communities and families reap health benefits, such as decreased risk of HIV and reduced infant mortality. For instance, women in 32 countries who remained in school after primary school were five times more likely to know basic facts about HIV than illiterate women. A child born to a mother who can read is 50 percent more likely to survive past the age of 15. Therefore school enrolment is an impediment to early marriage. Furthermore, there is usually strong social norm preventing person in school from marrying or even from forming co-residential partnerships (Blossfeld & Huinink, 1991; Blossfeld & Jaenichen, 1992; Thornton *et al.*, 1995).

Education and skill development remains a key barrier to women's upward mobility. Basic skills programs will help women build a platform to advance in the future, and targeted professional development training for promising female workers can help them advance in the near term. In certain countries, where mixing of genders is particularly sensitive, separate training courses for women and men may encourage higher participation by women. Girls who receive a quality

education are more likely to develop the skills, knowledge, authority and confidence to claim their rights. Their education, attained in an environment that supports their rights, enables them to develop to their full potential and to broaden and assert their choices in life. They are then better equipped to make free and informed decisions about when, whether and whom to marry. Plan's campaign aims to tackle the barriers that prevent them from accessing and completing a quality education – including child marriage and gender-based violence in and around schools.

We define 'social influence' as the proportion of girls in a village who belong to the family's caste and were married before the age of 18. This variable reflects the prevalence of child marriage at the village and caste level. If a large proportion of a family's caste marries their daughters at a young age, we assume that the family will feel some pressure to adhere to the social norm of the village. Following Manski (1993b), we consider 'social influence' to be an endogenous effect in that individual families have a propensity to behave in a way that corresponds to the behavior of others in their reference group. Behaviour with respect to age of marriage of daughters is endogenous in the sense that any policy intervention that directly affects attitudes about child marriage in one or more families in the group would have a “social multiplier” effect throughout the reference group (Manski, 1993b, p. 533).

In Jones (2010), it reflects at the significant behavioral changes in the hands of parents or older generation and in particular by males of the older generation. Rather than one brought on by revolutionary means, it is seen as a voluntary changes due to its relation on the development. Development includes the development in education, increasing urbanization, and involvement of women in the market sector outside the household, among other things which in a common perception are often referred to in the local dialect as "changing times." There are two important elements influencing the pattern of population, the first one is the impact of cosmopolitan factors such as a more mixed population from different cultures and ethnics, greater contact with foreigners, high exposure to mass media, higher average education level, and a wider opportunities for women in the market sector. The second one is because of the surge movement of large numbers of citizens from metropolitan city.

Despite the obvious advantages for development, women and men in many parts of the world give less priority to women's education. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, formal education is widely perceived as a key to economic success and to improving generally the quality of life. Yet, “education, like other forms of human capital, is less accessible to women than men, not only in

formal schooling but also in the form of on-the-job training and vocational education” (Mueller, 1983: 283). The remarkable developments in education, increasing urbanization, and involvement of women in economic activities outside the household may not result only to the falling of child marriage in Indonesia, but also to the pattern of marriage decision among girls. Parents who are the ones considered as the decision maker, may no longer be a single factor. Characteristics of parents are still decisive but other indicators including the characteristics of daughters or individuals who were married as a child and socio-economic indicators inside as well as outside the family may give a greater impact to the girls' decision to marry, (Jones & Gubhaju, 2010).

## **2.6 Economic Status and Early Marriages**

Basic theories of girls' transition to marriage are modeled in the theories of economic independence, the local marriage markets, and cultural theories of marriage timing (McLaughlin & Lichter, 1997). Economic independence theories suggest that as women's education and earnings increase they will be less reliant on marriage for economic support and that women with greater economic independence will delay marriage. This supports for an attempt to explain the theory of modernization on changing marriage pattern (Goode, 1963). Goode states that global industrialization has brought the family systems in developing world toward the European norm. People with higher social status tend to get married late since they want to have more freedom during modernization process. They who were born and live in big cities are more likely to marry later than those living in rural area or small town. This hypothesis may be a result of greater diversity in life and little social control in big cities than in rural areas. Second theory, local marriage market, is defined as the availability of possible spouses and how that influences marriage timing. This becomes the basis for marriage market explanations of marital timing. Areas where there is a greater availability of unmarried men, especially men with high levels of education or good jobs, should encourage women's marriage. Lastly, cultural explanations of marriage suggest that family background, attitudes toward women's roles, and beliefs about marriage influence women's decision to marry.

Specific studies investigating the determinants of child marriage are conducted mostly in developing countries. In India, Johnson-Lans and Jones (2011) examines the relative importance of economic and social factors in determining the probability of a girl becoming a child bride. The findings reveal that economic factors is way behind social conformity in explaining child marriage as none of economic variables such as household income, poverty status, and land ownership

significantly affect the probability of child marriage in rural India. Qualitative study from Ghosh (2011) in West Bengal divides the causes of child marriage based on four different perspectives in a family; fathers, mothers, elders, and daughters. Fathers and elders are found to put poverty as the first order of preference for the cause of child marriage. Findings from qualitative studies on moving out of poverty in Indonesia also revealed that marriage is sometimes used as a way out of poverty (Febriany, 2005; Febriany, 2006). Mothers and daughters put perceptions that marriage is essential and lack of awareness respectively as the first order of reference. Sarkar (2009) uses logistic regression analysis in order to find determinants of early marriage in Bangladesh. His study shows that education, working status, husband's education, and places of resident exert the significant effect on early marriage. In case of Indonesia, Savitridina (1997) indicates that women's education, work status before marriage, husband's education, and current residence are the predictors for early marriage in Java, with education as the strongest one.

A less obvious mechanism and one that has not been evaluated in the developing country context, is that increasing income inequality may delay marriage decisions. This mechanism may be understood in the context of a search model of marriage market matching as in Loughran (2000 & 2002). In this model, a woman who is on the marriage market sequentially samples marriage offers from prospective spouses, evaluating them in terms of their income. In deciding whether to accept a particular offer, she must decide whether the benefits from waiting for a better offer outweigh the costs of staying unmarried during this period. Widening income inequality makes high earning men relatively more attractive candidates than before, and increases the willingness of the woman to wait for offers from such candidates, and thereby delays her marriage.

## **2.7 Theoretical Framework**

The study adopted the Theory of Change that was postulated by Priscilla Lewis, U.S. in the World formerly with Rockefeller Brothers Fund, (Tony Proscio Grantcraft, 2005). A theory of change is just that: a theory at how change will occur. In this case, we are presumably seeking a change in policy, attitude or public will. It targeted younger Americans with information and e-advocacy tools which put pressure on Congress to increase foreign aid and the ‘Theory of Change on Child Marriage’ to articulate what an effective response to child marriage entails. The Theory of Change outlines the range of approaches needed, demonstrates how they intersect, and aims to provide a basis for identifying common indicators that could be used by diverse practitioners to monitor progress. The Theory of Change has been developed to facilitate greater partnership and collaboration among and across organizations, sectors and levels.

Crucially, the Theory of Change demonstrates that there is no single solution to ending child marriage and that everyone has a role to play. Ultimately efforts to address child marriage must respond to local contexts and accordingly programmes and investments may take different forms. This Theory of Change will be a useful framework and tool for both governmental and non-governmental actors to draw from as they develop their own theories of change to respond to child marriage in their countries. It is intended both for those who are new to the issue, as well as those who work on it through one specific approach to see how their work forms part of a broader effort. Borrowing from the theory, the study sought to determine factors influencing early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County.



## 2.8 Conceptual Framework

Indicators are shown by the main variables under the study to ensure that they are measurable.

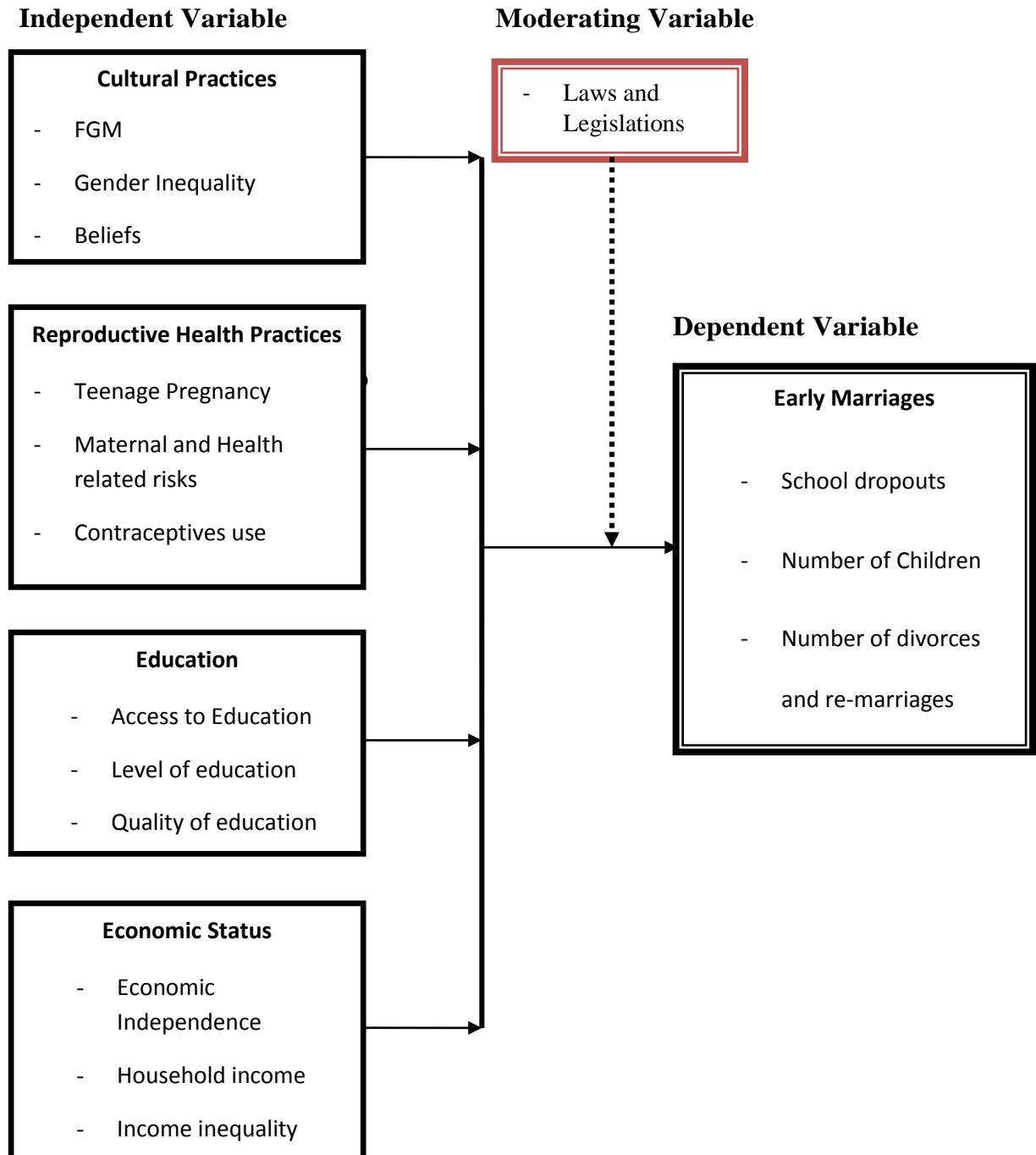


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

## **2.9 Knowledge gap**

As a result of early marriage, large spousal age differences are common, which usually limits married girls' autonomy and decision-making ability. The younger a bride is, the greater the age difference between her and her spouse, promising disparate roles in decision making. Early marriage creates a number of conditions that expose married teens to poverty and violence. Men's control over key resources, social isolation, and the low socio-economic status and dependency of women predispose married teens to violence and poverty (Heise, 1999).

Many young people who are forced to marry early suffer from prolonged domestic violence. Furthermore, early marriage is often linked to wife abandonment. This plunges young girls into extreme poverty and increases the risk of their entering the commercial sex trade, either by force, or because of lack of other options. In developing countries with a rapidly growing youth population, investments in adolescent girls are critical. Ultimately, to meet goals related to poverty, education, gender equality, maternal and child health, and HIV and AIDS, nations and communities must put an end to child marriage. Other studies have been more concentrated on girl child involvement in education but little has been done on influence of early marriage on women economic empowerment

## **2.10 Summary of the Literature Review**

Although most Countries have passed laws declaring 18 as the minimum legal age for marriage, too often the laws are not enforced and social, economic, and cultural realities perpetuate the practice. Certain risk factors, such as poverty, low levels of education, and region, are directly correlated with higher rates of child marriage. Poor families have few resources to support healthy alternatives for girls, such as education, or even to feed and clothe them, and economic gains to families in the form of a bride price may act as further motivation for child marriage. The lack of education for girls as a risk factor for child marriage has been well documented. In a UNICEF study of 42 countries, women between the ages of 20 and 24 who attended primary school were less likely to marry by age 18 than women without a primary education. The same study found that in Tanzania, women with

secondary education were 92 percent less likely to be married by their 18th birthday than women who only attended primary school.

As already mentioned, residency within certain regions in a particular Country may put girls at higher risk for child marriage. At the same time, there are social and cultural norms that exert pressure on families to marry daughters at young ages. Parents may worry that if they do not marry their daughters according to local expectations, they will be unable to marry them at all. They may also believe that marriage will ensure their daughters' safety by preventing premarital sex and out-of-wedlock pregnancy. And traditional cultural norms of older men marrying young, virginal girls to prove their masculinity continue to drive this behavior. These factors must all be taken into account in developing interventions that work to end child marriage and its devastating outcomes.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the methodology that was used in this study. This includes research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedures, research instruments such as questionnaire, interview guide. In addition, validity and reliability of the research instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques and presentation has been explored.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The researcher employed descriptive survey design. This design was appropriate for the study because it aimed at describing variables that influence early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon. It was in with the purpose of the study as it sought to investigate the factors influencing early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. Also this design gave this study the advantage of collecting original data for the purpose of describing a population which is too large to observe directly hence good for the purpose of generalization (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000).

Descriptive survey also gathers data on a one-shot basis and hence is economical and efficient (Morrison, (1993). Descriptive survey was also compatible with data tools which the research used in collecting data (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). According to Kothari (2010); descriptive survey design is used to describe the state of affairs as it exists at present without manipulation. In such a design, research inferences about relationships are made systematically and empirically without direct control of independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred and also because they are inherently not manipulated.

### 3.3 Target Population

The target population is the specific population about which information is desired. According to (Ngechu, 2004), a population is a well-defined set of people, services, elements, event, and group of things or households that are being investigated. It also refers to the population to which a researcher wants to generalize the results of the study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). The target population was household heads of Mount Elgon Sub-County. According to Kenya Bureau of statistics population Census 2009, the Sub-County had a total population of 4,562 Households spread across 12 locations; hence a target population of 4562 individuals was used.

### 3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

Sample design covers the method of selection, the sample structure and plans for analyzing and interpreting the results. This is the entire group of people that the researcher wished to investigate during the research and the choice of selecting the sample size.

#### 3.4.1 Sample Size

A sample is finite part of a statistical population where properties are studied to gain information about the whole (Webster, 1985). To get information about population of interest and draw inferences about it, a sample which is a subgroup of the population is used (Lind et al., 2008). More technical considerations suggest that the required sample size is a function of the precision of the estimates one wishes to achieve, the variability or variance, one expects to find in the population and the statistical level of confidence one wishes to use, (Salant & Dillman, 1994). A sample of 156 respondents was arrived at using Miller, L.R. & Brewer, J. D. (2003) mathematical formula from 4562 target population as shown;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where; **n** = Sample Size

N= Population size =4562 respondents

e = is the margin error/level of precision assumed  $\alpha$  at  $\pm 8$  per cent

Therefore;  $n = \frac{4562}{1 + 4562 (0.08)^2}$

n= **156** Household heads

### ***3.4.2 Sampling Procedures***

It is a process of selecting a number of individual or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group. A purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents from 12 locations of Mt. Elgon Sub-County.

### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

The study employed the use of questionnaires, interview schedule and Focus Group Discussions to collect data. In researching human beings, no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective in any study program. As a result it was imperative to use several methods of data collection to improve on reliability and validity of data collected (Smith, 1975; Kitainge, 2005). Schofield (1996) reported that using a combination of data sources and collection methods are a validating aspect which cross-checks data since the strength of one approach compensates for weaknesses of another approach (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000).

Questionnaire technique was preferred because it covered a wide range of area and also reaches many respondents at a cheaper cost. Questionnaires can be statements or questions and in all the cases the respondent were responding to something written for specific purposes. It also saves a lot of time (Kothari, 2004). The questionnaires developed for this study comprised a combination of both closed and open-ended questions. Crocker and Algina (1986) advised that careful thought should be given to the process of selecting an

item or tool formats while maintaining the clarity of items is critical to eliciting accurate responses from the subjects.

The study interviews were used because they were appropriate and effective. The interview guide contained a list of all questions that were asked giving room for the interviewer to write answers. The questions were related directly to the objectives of the study. Semi-structured interview guides were administered to knowledgeable persons, including community leaders, and women associations structured according to the research questions.

A FGD guide was developed to elicit information on the issues under scrutiny. The guide was used to conduct Focus Group Discussions with four groups of informants: married men, married women, unmarried men and unmarried female adolescents. The parents provided information about their experience regarding early marriage, and unmarried adolescents shared their attitudes about the practice.

### **3.5.1 Pilot Testing**

Piloting was tried out on the respondents who were not part of the main study. Therefore it was necessary to pretest the instruments of the research on a small sample of respondents in a preparatory exercise to find out if there was any weakness so that it can be corrected in this study, a few households from Webuye West Sub-County were selected for piloting purposes with a sample size of 16 respondents using minimum 10% of (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

### **3.5.2 Validity of Research the Instruments**

Validity is the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure or asking the right question framed accordingly. For the instrument to be valid, the content selected and included in the questionnaires must also be relevant to the variables being investigated. For this study, validity refers to the content validity. In this study, it was done by expert opinion (content validity) and the researchers' supervisors were asked to assess the relevance of the content in research tools in relation to objectives of the study.

### **3.5.3 Reliability of Research the Instruments**

Mulusa (1990) defines reliability as an instrument that produces consistent results when used more than once to collect data from the sample randomly drawn from the population. The study employed the Cronbach's alpha coefficient to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire. As a general rule a value of  $\alpha > 0.7$  was used to determine the reliability for each of the data sets where  $\alpha$  was the item being tested for reliability (Kothari, 2010). To ensure reliability of the research instruments, the researcher conducted a pilot study; it involved administering the same questionnaires to households of Webuye Sub-County. The instrument was determined by test and re-test method and also by ensuring thorough accuracy in data collection, recording and discussion of the instruments with the supervisor.

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher obtained a letter of introduction from University of Nairobi and sought permission from County Education Officer, Bungoma, acquired research permit from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation and visit various households of Mt. Elgon Sub-County. Appointments will be booked with Chiefs, Assistant Chiefs and Area leaders in various locations and Sub-locations. Data collection involved identification of respondents for each survey and the administration of the various survey instruments. Supervisors and research assistants checked the filled-in questionnaires and made on-the-spot checking to see whether interviewers conducted successful interviews and recorded appropriate responses. In addition to the supervisors, qualified professionals were assigned to coordinate the overall data collection activities and to ensure correct implementation of the sampling technique. Respondents were asked for oral consent prior to participating in the study. There were no incentives for participating in the FGDs, which was conducted within either the Chiefs camp or women groups.



### **3.7 Data Analysis Techniques and Presentation**

This is the process of summarizing the collected data and putting it together so that the researcher can meaningfully organize, categorize and synthesize information from the data collecting tools. It is the process of creating order, structure and meaning to the mass of information collected (Mugenda, 2009). Each data collected was checked for consistency with data obtained from questionnaire in order to eliminate misleading data which could arise from misrepresentation of questions in the questionnaire. Data was gathered and coded for analysis. This was done after editing and checking out whether all questions were filled in correctly. Quantitative data was analyzed descriptively using Statistical Package for Social Sciences and the results presented in form of frequency tables and percentages to make meaningful conclusions. Qualitative data was analyzed through content analysis which in turn organized into themes, patterns and sub-topics.

### **3.8 Ethical Consideration**

During this research process, the researcher upheld integrity and high moral standards. The researcher sought permission from the relevant authorities before distributing the questionnaires. The researcher kept time, respected the respondents' feedback and decision and treated the information given by the respondents with confidentiality.

### 3.9 Operational Definition of Variables

Study Objective	Type of variable	Indicators	Scale of measurement
To establish the extent to which Traditions and Cultural practices influence early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County	<b>Independent:</b> Cultural Practice	FGM Gender Inequality Beliefs	Nominal Ordinal
	<b>Dependent:</b> Early Marriages	School dropouts Number of Children Number of divorces	Ordinal Nominal
To determine the influence of reproductive health practices on early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County	<b>Independent:</b> Reproductive health practices	Teenage Pregnancy Maternal and Health related risks Contraceptives use	Ordinal Nominal
	<b>Dependent:</b> Early Marriages	School dropouts Number of Children Number of divorces	Ordinal Nominal
To establish the influence of education on early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County	<b>Independent:</b> Education on	Access to Education Quality of education Level of education	Nominal Ordinal
	<b>Dependent:</b> Early Marriages	School dropouts Number of Children Number of divorces	
To determine how Economic status influence early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County	<b>Independent:</b> Economic status	Economic Independence Household income Income inequality	Nominal Ordinal
	<b>Dependent:</b> Early Marriages	School dropouts Number of Children Number of divorces	

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This study investigated the factors influencing early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon. The chapter deals with data analysis, presentation and interpretation of the research findings. In the first section, descriptive statistics are used to provide background information of the respondents who participated in this study. The second section presents the analysis of the responses to the specific objectives of the study as provided by the respondents in the questionnaires.

#### 4.2 Questionnaire Return Rate

A total of 156 questionnaires dispatched to respondents out of which 145 were duly filled and returned giving a questionnaire return rate of 92.9 per cent. Table 4.1 shows the questionnaire return rate for the study.

**Table 4.1 Questionnaire Return Rate of the Study**

Category	Issued	Returned	Return Rate (%)
Households	144	134	93.1
Administration	12	11	91.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>92.9</b>

From the Table 4.1, the percentage return rate was  $(145/156) \times 100 = (92.9\%)$ . According to Nachmias, F. C & Nachmias, D (2009), 80 to 90 per cent return rate is enough for a descriptive research study. This return rate was appropriate for data analysis and discussion for this study. Although the results may be interpreted to indicate a very good response rate, a failure of 7.1 per cent to report may be explained by lack of commitment in filling the questionnaire, inadequate information about early marriages. The high

questionnaire return was as a result of positive response from the respondents who were willing to dedicate their time and talk about early marriage occurrence in their area. The researcher also trained research assistants on the ethical approach to be used while collecting data and this turned out successful.

### 4.3 Demographic Information of the Respondents

The demographic features of the respondents were of interest to the study as they provided the researcher with a base for in-depth information as demographic factors which affected the respondents' social and economic behavior in Mt. Elgon Sub-County.

#### 4.3.1 Gender of the Respondents

In question one, the respondents were required to give their gender from either Male or Female choice given on the questionnaire. Table 4.2 illustrates the results.

**Table 4.2 Gender of the Respondents**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	97	66.9
Female	48	33.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As portrayed in Table 4.2, 97 (66.9%) of the respondents were male and 48 (33.1%) were female. The majority of the respondents were of the male gender despite the fact that early marriage impacts mostly the female gender as indicated in the literature review.

#### 4.3.2 Respondents Age at Marriage

The respondents were required to give their age at first marriage in order to establish the rate of early marriages in households established among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon and Table 4.3 shows the study findings.

**Table 4.3 Respondents First Age at Marriage**

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<15 years	41	28.3
16-18 years	56	38.6
>18 years	48	33.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As portrayed in Table 4.3, 41 (28.3%) of the respondents were married at the age below 15 years, 56 (38.6%) were married at the age between 16-18 years while 48 (33.1%) were married at the age over 18 years Majority 56 (38.6%) of the respondents were married at the age between 16-18 years.

#### 4.3.3 Age of the Respondents

The study sought to determine age distribution of the respondents in the Mt. Elgon Sub-County. Findings are shown in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4 Ages of the Respondents**

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
15-24 years	32	22.1
25-34 years	49	33.8
35-44 years	36	24.8
Over 45 years	28	19.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Findings in Table 4.4 shows that 32 (22.1%) of the respondents were between 15-24 years, 49 (33.8%) ranged between 25-34 years, 36 (24.8%) ranged between 35-44 years, 28 (19.3%) were over 45 years. The mass composition of respondents was 49 (33.8%) ranging between 25-34 years. The lowest representation was the age of over 45 years at 28 (19.3%). The mean age of the respondents from the study was 34 years.

#### 4.3.4 Size of Households of the Respondents

In order to understand household characteristics, the respondents were asked to state their size of households and Table 4.5 shows the study findings.

**Table 4.5 Size of Households of the Respondents**

Household size	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<6 People	34	23.4
6-10 People	75	51.7
11-15 People	21	14.5
>16 People	15	10.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From Table 4.5, results shows that 34 (23.4%) of the respondents had less than 6 people, 76 (51.7%) had between 6-10 people, 21 (14.5%) had a household of between 11-15 people while 15 (10.4%) having a household over 16 people. Most of the respondents had households between 6-10 people by 76 (51.7%) responses. The societal norms around this area permit polygamy hence men marry more than one wife leading to large households.

#### 4.3.5 Respondents distribution by employment status

The respondents were asked to state their main occupation. The categories used to capture information on main occupations of the respondents were classified as employed, unemployed and self-employed. Table 4.6 shows the study findings.

**Table 4.6 Respondents distribution by employment status**

Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Employed	42	29.0

Unemployed	86	59.3
Self employed	17	11.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As indicated in Table 4.6, results show that 42 (29.0%) of the respondents were employed, 86 (59.3%) were unemployed, while 17 (11.7%) of the households were self-employed. Majority 86 (59.3%) of the respondents were unemployed. This result indicates that most households in Mt. Elgon are economically poor. The large percentage who are unemployed lack the economic muscle that could enable them escape the early marriage trap as compared to the minority who are employed and could afford to delay marriage.

#### **4.4 Cultural Practices and Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County**

The study sought to establish how cultural practices influence early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County under female genital mutilation, gender inequality and beliefs themes.

##### **4.4.1 Female Genital Mutilation and Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County**

The study sought to establish how female genital mutilation influence early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. To answer this question, a five point scale of **SA**= Strongly Agree, **A**= Agree, **UD**= Undecided, **D**= Disagree and **SD**= Strongly Disagree was used and Table 4.7 reveals the study findings.

**Table 4.7 Female Genital Mutilation and Early Marriages**

<b>FGM Practice</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly Agree	42	29.0
Agree	64	44.1
Undecided	5	3.4
Disagree	20	13.8
Strongly Disagree	14	9.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Results from Table 4.7 shows that 42 (29.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed that Female Genital Mutilation practices influence early marriages, 64 (44.1%) agreed, 5 (3.4%) were undecided and 20 (13.8%) disagreed while 14 (9.7%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. Majority, 64 (44.1%) of the respondents agreed that Female Genital Mutilation practices Sabao community significantly influence early marriages. This is because early marriages are in practice because of the social norm which deems that fathers have to pay higher dowry for older girls. Some parents also think that if they marry their daughter earlier then they can reduce the expenditure of food and education (Sharma, 2002). In addition, in many of the countries where child marriage is prevalent, other harmful practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) are also practiced. In some Kenyan communities, girls, some as young as seven, are considered mature after FGM/C has been performed and are quickly married in order to obtain a dowry. In some communities, men refuse to marry girls or women who have not undergone FGM/C. In Sierra Leone, a girl's initiation includes learning how to take on the responsibilities of being a wife.

In an appreciable number of societies, marriages are arranged, and negotiations are handled by the immediate families or by go-betweens. Sometimes betrothals are completed while the future partners are still children (Ember et al., 2002:353). The western concept of marriage is different in that the two people getting married choose their partners and decide



when to get married. In this case, marriage is seen as a companion between two people to the exclusion of all others and procreation need not result from the union

#### 4.4.2 Gender Inequality and Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County

In the traditional African setting, marriage was not an option, but an obligatory experience for all adults. It was associated with procreation and without procreation there was no marriage. Therefore, the current study sought to determine gender inequality and its influence on early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. To answer this question, a five point scale of **SA**= Strongly Agree, **A**= Agree, **UD**= Undecided, **D**= Disagree and **SD**= Strongly Disagree was used and Table 4.8 reveals the study findings.

**Table 4.8 Gender Inequality and Early Marriages**

<b>Gender Inequality</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly Agree	76	52.4
Agree	34	23.4
Undecided	2	1.4
Disagree	18	12.4
Strongly Disagree	15	10.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As presented in Table 4.8, results shows that 76 (52.4%) of the respondents strongly gender inequality influence early marriages, 34 (23.4%) agreed, 2 (1.4%) were undecided and 18 (12.4%) disagreed while 15 (10.4%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. More than half, 76 (52.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed that gender inequality among Sabaot community significantly influence early marriages. The entrenched attitudes and beliefs about the expected roles of males and females, combined with a lack of viable educational and employment opportunities for young women, can mean that many parents see little benefit in educating their daughters. Parental investment for children's well-being

can sometimes become gender biased. In fact, interviews with respondents revealed that parental gender bias investment occurs particularly when parents have limited/lower income and resource, causing girls to leave school earlier than boys. As a result, young girls are assigned too much household chores and beliefs that boys are far much important in the family result social inclusion in terms of gender roles.

Another social norm of early marriages is that girls are married off early because they are viewed as ‘someone else’s wealth’ and even a liability to be got rid of as soon as possible. In addition early marriages are in practice because of the social norm which deems that fathers have to pay higher dowry for older girls. In addition, gender-based violence orchestrated by men results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering of women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. The study findings are similar to those by Save the Children (2005) which indicated that cultural norms and beliefs constrain girls' economic empowerment especially in many developing parts of the world. In these societies, traditional values and some religious beliefs constrain girls from making their own decisions and expressing their own opinions. Similar results were reported by Chege and Sifuna (2006) that many cultures favour access to economic resources for boys more than girls. In relation to gender inequality, another study indicated that majority of adolescent girls i.e., 82% in rural and 63% in urban areas got married according to their parents’ wish and many were unaware about sexuality at the time of marriage (Choe, et.al., 2004).

#### **4.4.3 Beliefs and Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County**

Traditional and patriarchal beliefs towards gender roles, rooted in social, cultural or religious customs, can insulate and perpetuate the practice of child marriage. In this regard, the respondents were asked to indicate the influence of beliefs among Sabaot community on early marriages among in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. To answer this question, a five point scale of **SA**= Strongly Agree, **A**= Agree, **UD**= Undecided, **D**= Disagree and **SD**= Strongly Disagree was used and Table 4.9 reveals the study findings.

**Table 4.9 Beliefs and Early Marriages**

<b>Beliefs</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly Agree	40	27.6
Agree	51	35.2
Undecided	6	4.1
Disagree	27	18.6
Strongly Disagree	21	14.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As presented in Table 4.9, results show that 40 (27.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed that beliefs influence early marriages, 51 (35.2%) agreed, 6 (4.1%) were undecided and 27 (18.6%) disagreed while 21 (14.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. Majority, 51 (35.2%) of the respondents agreed that beliefs in traditional cultural practices among Sabaot community significantly contribute to early marriages. Strong beliefs makes young adolescents generally married to older men with an average six years difference, so husbands have more control on decision making, conception and pregnancy (Mensch et. al., 1998; WHO 2007d). These cultural norms and beliefs in Kenya impose barriers for discussing about sexual matters. Even mentioning the word ‘sex’ can imply the sexual experience and promiscuity that may damage reputation. Therefore, any slight mistake by adolescents puts them in an awkward position and decisions are made to marry off in order to safeguard family reputation. Moreover, theses traditional values can be different from location to location and in this respect, and a study conducted by UNESCO (2010) indicated that traditional values are stronger in rural areas in developing countries compared to urban areas and people often do not allow girls to leave homes even for schools for empowerment. These beliefs are more prevalent among poor, less educated and rural populations (March of Dimes, 2012).

#### **4.5 Reproductive Health Practices and Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County**

Child marriage is a public health issue as well as a human rights violation. The study sought to determine how reproductive health practices influence early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County under female teenage pregnancy, maternal and health related risks and contraceptive use themes.

##### **4.5.1 Teenage Pregnancy and Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County**

Early pregnancy is one of the most dangerous causes and consequences of child marriage. Traditionally sex before marriage was discouraged. The traditional way of educating the teenagers on their morals has gradually vanished and has been replaced by current modern way of life, with the breakdown of family and morals due to Westernization. This exposes teenagers to the risk of sexual behaviour since the adolescent are vulnerable due to body changes. This study therefore, sought to establish influence of teenage pregnancy on early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. To answer this question, a five point scale of **SA**= Strongly Agree, **A**= Agree, **UD**= Undecided, **D**= Disagree and **SD**= Strongly Disagree was used and Table 4.10 reveals the study findings.

**Table 4.10 Teenage Pregnancy and Early Marriages**

<b>Teenage Pregnancy</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly Agree	37	25.5
Agree	60	41.4
Undecided	12	8.3
Disagree	25	17.2
Strongly Disagree	11	7.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Findings from Table 4.10 shows that 37 (25.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that teenage pregnancy among Sabaot community influence early marriages, 60 (41.4%) agreed, 12 (8.3%) were undecided and 25 (17.2%) disagreed while 11 (7.6%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. Majority, 60 (41.4%) of the respondents agreed that teenage pregnancy among Sabaot community significantly influence early marriages. Most adolescents start exploring of sexuality and some young couples may start sexual relationships (Oringanje, 2010). The respondents revealed that residency within Mt. Elgon region put teens at higher risk for child marriage due to community beliefs in cultural practices.

In addition, adolescents in the study area are less informed, may not access the appropriate reproductive health (RH) services and are therefore at greater risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs). They are also more likely to become pregnant due to lack of knowledge of appropriate contraceptives. These findings are of great concern because child marriage undermines nearly every Millennium Development Goal; it is an obstacle to eradicating poverty, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality, improving maternal and child health, and reducing HIV and AIDS. Teenage pregnancy decreases the age of first marriage that exposes teenagers' risk for physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse. Delaying marriage can also increase girls' and women's decision-making power and improve their reproductive health.

These findings are similar to those by UNICEF and UNAIDS (2001) says one in five male and one in ten female teenagers have experienced sex in adolescence. This may lead to early unwanted pregnancy. Being pregnant at young age may have its risk. Apart from that, the culture may consider sex at a young age without marriage as undesirable behaviour. This may hinder them to seek health care and family planning (FP) services. Furthermore, Acharya (2009) carried out research in three districts, and reported 20% adolescents being sexually active and 16% having multiple partners. Adolescents are putting themselves at the risk of coercive, unsafe sex since they cannot easily access condoms. Even though sex before marriage is prohibited, these activities still occur increasing the problem further.

#### 4.5.2 Maternal and Health Related Risks and Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County

In the traditional African setting, marriage was not an option, but an obligatory experience for all adults. It was associated with procreation and without procreation there was no marriage. Therefore, the current study sought to indicate the type of maternal and health related risks associated with early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. Table 4.11 reveals the study findings.

**Table 4.11 Maternal and Health Related Risks and Early Marriages**

<b>Maternal Health Related Risks</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Unsafe Abortions	50	34.5
Still births	36	24.8
Maternal mortality	15	10.3
Infection with STI	24	16.5
Sepsis	20	13.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As indicated in Table 4.11, results show that 50 (34.5%) of the respondents indicated unsafe abortions, 36 (24.8%) cited still births, 15 (10.3%) cited maternal mortality and 24 (16.5%) reported infections with Sexually Transmitted Infections while 20 (13.9%) of the respondents cited sepsis as maternal and health related risks that are associated with early marriages in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. Delaying marriage and childbearing can improve the health of a mother and her child. Childbirth complications are the leading cause of death for girls ages 15 to 19 in developing countries. Since the subject of sexuality has received intense arguments, teenagers face numerous challenges when they find themselves in that situation. Due to pressure and fear of betrothal to older men for girls and forced marriage for boys usually end up seeking unsafe abortions from untrained people as indicated by 50 (34.5%) responses. In addition, girls who are married young and pressured to have children

before their bodies are fully developed are at greater risk for obstetric fistula, a debilitating medical condition often caused by prolonged or obstructed labor.

Although child marriage is sometimes believed to be a protective mechanism, the truth is that early marriage can increase young girls' risks of HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Husbands of married girls are often much older than their young wives, with multiple sex partners prior to marriage, making them more likely to be HIV-positive. These married girls have frequent, unprotected sex with little ability to persuade their husbands to abstain or use a condom. Therefore maternal mortality results as indicated by 15 (10.3%) responses. These findings are similar to those carried out by (WHO, 2008b) that health and social risk of childbearing magnifies at early ages. Girls who engage in sexual activities from a younger age may experience an array of problems, ranging from increased risk of unwanted pregnancies, maternal morbidity and mortality, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS, or difficulty in prolonging education. Having a child as a teenager may also have consequences for the child. The Guttmacher Institute reported that early childbearing may limit educational attainment, reduce quality of life, and restrict access to proper paid jobs (Mensch *et.al.*, 1998). Pregnant teenagers are also more likely to seek unsafe abortion (UA) and have a higher risk of becoming infertile. In addition, teenage women are more vulnerable to coerced sexual intercourse due to power imbalances with partners who tend to be older (Gubhaju, 2002).

Other studies by UNFPA (2007a) pointed out similar results that suggest that when girls aged 15-19 years becomes pregnant, they are twice and adolescent under 15 are five times more likely of dying during pregnancy or childbirth compared to woman over 20 years. School dropout, premature infant deaths, unhealthy children and more children in a shorter period of time can be seen (Acharya, 2010; Glasier, 2006; Plourde, 2012). Multiple marriages, usually to older men, introduce a new dimension in the epidemiology of HIV/AIDS.

### 4.5.3 Contraceptive Use and Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County

Another issue of concern to sexual and reproductive health specialist is contraceptive use among teenagers. In this regard, the respondents were asked to indicate the level of contraceptive use and its influence on early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. To answer this question, a five point scale of **SA**= Strongly Agree, **A**= Agree, **UD**= Undecided, **D**= Disagree and **SD**= Strongly Disagree was used and Table 4.12 reveals the study findings.

**Table 4.12 Contraceptive Use and Early Marriages**

<b>Contraceptive Use</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly Agree	15	10.3
Agree	19	13.1
Undecided	10	6.9
Disagree	72	49.7
Strongly Disagree	29	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As presented in Table 4.12, results show that 15 (10.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the use of contraceptives, 19 (13.1%) agreed, 10 (6.9%) were undecided and 72 (49.7%) disagreed while 29 (20.0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. Majority, 72 (49.7%) of the respondents disagreed on the use of contraceptives among Sabaot community. Generally there is an apparent variation of contraceptive usage across the age groups and in essence, young teenagers use contraceptives less often and are likely to be less effective users than older teens. The younger a teen is at first sex, the less likely she/he is to use contraceptives. They face unique barriers such as lack of decision making power, access to/or control over resources, socio-cultural norms regarding sexual behaviour, uncooperative health workers and policy/ legal matters (Guttmacher, 2011).



However, 34 (23.4%) of the respondents asserted that community use contraceptives in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. This statistics are relatively low when compared to teenage contraceptive use in Africa which is 37 per cent (Gutmacher, 2011; Kennedy et al., 2011; Kirby, 2011). This is attributed to the assumption that teens are able to make more suitable choices for safe sex and are confident about what they are doing, teenage contraceptive use has also typically been described as irrational especially among sexually active teenagers who have had benefit of formal sex education and have contraceptive devices available to them (Cvetkovich, 2010; Nicole, 2012).

These study findings are in agreement with others by Cleland (2009) who asserted that Sub Saharan Africa is the only region where low levels of contraceptive use persist. Often, sexual activity is unplanned and many youth do not use contraceptives or use less effective contraceptives (Chipeta et al., 2010). In sub-Saharan Africa levels of contraceptive use increase with years of education and attendance in school is associated with less sexual activity (Boostra, 2007). The exposure to information on contraceptive use increases with the number of years of education and socio economic status. The younger the adolescents begin sexual activity, the less they are able to use contraception.

#### **4.6 Education and Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County**

Similarly, parents' education and teenage education has a significant effect on age at first marriage for both girls and boys that ultimately influence early marriages. This study determined the influence of education on early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County.

##### **4.6.1 Access to Education and Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County**

Education is widely considered to be one of the most important factors in delaying the age of marriage for teenagers. This study therefore, sought to establish influence of access to education on early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. To answer this question, a five point scale of **SA**= Strongly Agree, **A**= Agree, **UD**= Undecided,

**D**= Disagree and **SD**= Strongly Disagree was used and Table 4.13 reveals the study findings.

**Table 4.13 Access to Education and Early Marriages**

<b>Access to Education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly Agree	66	45.5
Agree	40	27.6
Undecided	2	1.4
Disagree	24	16.6
Strongly Disagree	13	8.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Findings from Table 4.13 shows that 66 (45.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that access to education among influence early marriages, 40 (27.6%) agreed, 2 (1.4%) were undecided and 24 (16.6%) disagreed while 13 (8.9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that access to education delay age at marriage that significantly reduces early marriages. Majority, 66 (45.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that access to education among Sabao community significantly influence early marriages. The onset of puberty makes teenagers more vulnerable to sexual violence, harassment and abuse by teachers, staff and other pupils. Poor teaching and unsupportive environments make makes teenagers especially girls less likely to pass critical examinations needed to access higher levels of education. The duration of schooling has strong correlation with age at marriage. For instance, young teenagers aspiring to college education are likely to delay marriage further. Girls often lack basic literacy and numeracy skills because they have to drop out of school. It seeks to enable girls to have more choices in life, to allow them to play an active role in their community and to break intergenerational cycles of poverty, insecurity and ill health. Daughters of young, uneducated mothers are especially likely to drop out of school, marry young and repeat the cycle of poverty

These results are consistent with findings by (Blossfeld & Huinink, 1991; Blossfeld & Jaenichen, 1992; Thornton *et al.*, 1995) who established keeping girls in school and delaying marriage can increase income for individuals and boost economic development for nations. A single year of primary school boosts women’s wages later in life by 10 percent to 20 percent, while the boost from female secondary education is 15 percent to 25 percent. The families of girls who have married later benefit from their added income, which they are likely to invest in their families and children. Also, when girls stay in school, communities and families reap health benefits, such as decreased risk of HIV and reduced infant mortality. For instance, women in 32 countries who remained in school after primary school were five times more likely to know basic facts about HIV than illiterate women. A child born to a mother who can read is 50 percent more likely to survive past the age of 15. Therefore school enrolment is an impediment to early marriage. Furthermore, there is usually strong social norm preventing person in school from marrying or even from forming co- residential partnerships.

#### **4.6.2 Level of Education and Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County**

Educational level was determined by asking a participant if they had ever attended school and the highest level of school attended and its influence on early marriages among the Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon. The results are illustrated in Table 4.14.

**Table 4.14 Education Level of the Respondents**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Informal	42	28.9
Primary	70	48.3
Secondary	21	14.5
College	12	8.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As shown in Table 4.15, majority 70 (48.3%) of the respondents were primary certificate holders as their highest academic qualification while 21 (14.5%) were secondary certificate holders. Another 42 (28.9%) had no formal education and 12 (8.3%) had college/university training. It should be noted that the highest level of academic training primary certificate holders who participated in this study by 70 (48.3%) responses. Regrettably, this proportion of respondents forms the households' decision makers. The scarcity of information on the educational benefits that has a bearing on fundamental decision confronting all societies concerns the type of institutions to encourage or adopt for the conduct of activity knowledge of the domain consequences of different ownership types can serve as input to that decision. Parental educational attainment is also positively related to children's educational attainment, leading to higher age at marriage, because educational goals and priorities are reinforced by parental role models. Additionally, Bates *et al.* (2007) found in their study of rural Bangladesh that mothers' education was significantly related to higher age at first marriage of daughters.

In Mozambique, for example, 67 per cent of women aged 20 to 24 with no education and 57 per cent with primary education were married or in union at the age of 18, compared to only 12 per cent of women with secondary education or higher. The same study found that in Tanzania, women with secondary education were 92 per cent less likely to be married by their 18th birthday than women who only attended primary school. This finding is also supported by Manda and Meyer (2005) who find that women with higher levels of educational attainment are far more likely to enter marriage at later age than those without any or with little education, given of different model to approach. This confirms that the issue of development, in which the extended education for girls take place, provides a clearer explanation on why child marriage happens mostly in a lower educated girls characteristics (Jones, 2010; Jensen & Thornton, 2003; Singh & Samara, 1996).

#### **4.6.3 Quality of Education and Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County**

The study sought to determine the influence of quality education on early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. To answer this question, a five point

scale of **SA**= Strongly Agree, **A**= Agree, **UD**= Undecided, **D**= Disagree and **SD**= Strongly Disagree was used and Table 4.15 reveals the study findings.

**Table 4.15 Quality Education and Early Marriages**

<b>Quality Education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly Agree	39	26.9
Agree	68	46.9
Undecided	7	4.8
Disagree	25	17.2
Strongly Disagree	6	4.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As presented in Table 4.15, results show that 39 (26.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the quality of education positively influence early marriages, 68 (46.9%) agreed, 7 (4.8%) were undecided and 25 (17.2%) disagreed while 6 (4.2%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. Majority, 68 (46.9%) of the respondents agreed that quality of education significantly influence early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. Learning in a safe and supportive environment enables teens especially girls to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to claim their rights. It gives them the chance to reach their full potential and to assert their autonomy, helping them to make free and informed decisions about their life, including whether, when and who to marry, along with decisions affecting their sexual and reproductive health. Social, domestic and economic pressures too often force adolescent girls out of secondary school. Improving the quality of education for girls and boys through revising school curricula, increasing the safety of school infrastructure, recruiting female teachers and training all teachers, and fostering an environment where girls and boys are treated equitably. This increases the likelihood that girls and boys remain in school. In addition, non-formal education and mentoring programs can provide critical reproductive health information and life skills for girls

Despite the obvious advantages for development, Mueller, (1983: 283) asserted that women and men in many parts of the world give less priority to women’s education. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, formal education is widely perceived as a key to economic success and to improving generally the quality of life. Yet, “education, like other forms of human capital, is less accessible to women than men, not only in formal schooling but also in the form of on-the-job training and vocational education.”

#### **4.7 Economic Status and Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County**

The study sought to determine the influence of economic status on early marriages among the Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-county.

##### **4.7.1 Economic Independence and Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County**

This study sought to establish whether households are economic independent and its influence of on early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. To answer this question, a five point scale of **SA**= Strongly Agree, **A**= Agree, **UD**= Undecided, **D**= Disagree and **SD**= Strongly Disagree was used and Table 4.16 reveals the study findings.

**Table 4.16 Economic Independence and Early Marriages**

<b>Economic Independence</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly Agree	16	11.0
Agree	28	19.3
Undecided	11	7.6
Disagree	70	48.3
Strongly Disagree	20	13.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Findings from Table 4.16 shows that 16 (11.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed that their households were economically independent, 28 (19.3%) agreed, 11 (7.6%) were undecided and 70 (48.3%) disagreed while 20 (13.8%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that their households were economically independent which has a bearing to decision making that influence early marriages. Statistics indicate that most of the households among the Sabat community were not economically independent by 70 (48.3%) responses.

These findings are similar to those by Goode, (1963) that reported on economic independence theories that as women's education and earnings increase they will be less reliant on marriage for economic support and that women with greater economic independence will delay marriage. This supports for an attempt to explain the theory of modernization on changing marriage pattern. Goode states that global industrialization has brought the family systems in developing world toward the European norm. People with higher social status tend to get married late since they want to have more freedom during modernization process. They who were born and live in big cities are more likely to marry later than those living in rural area or small town. This hypothesis may be a result of greater diversity in life and little social control in big cities than in rural areas. Second theory, local marriage market, is defined as the availability of possible spouses and how that influences marriage timing. This becomes the basis for marriage market explanations of marital timing.

#### **4.7.2 Respondents distribution by Income Level**

The study sought to determine the level of incomes possessed by the respondents and its inclination on family decision making on early marriages. The findings are demonstrated in Table 4.17.

**Table 4.17 Income Level of the Respondents**

<b>Income (Ksh)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<25000	101	69.7
25001-50000	16	11.0
50001-100000	18	12.4
>100001	10	6.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From Table 4.17, it's evident that 101 (69.7%) of the respondents had incomes below Ksh. 25000, 16 (11.0%) had incomes between Ksh. 25000-50000, 18 (12.4%) had incomes between Ksh. 50001-100000 while 10 (6.9%) of the households had incomes over Ksh. 100001. In any case, poverty and its behavioral consequences can be a strong limitation for the access to education by young children that definitely prolong their time in school. Therefore, the study assumes income level has a significant influence on the quality of life and wellbeing of households. It also influences the purchasing power in the access of the basic needs required by the households. In many societies the economic status of the family is significant in determining the age at which people marry. Similar results by Axinn and Thornton (1992) stated that social and economic conditions in the parental home affect the likelihood of marriage of young people.

The findings reveal that economic factors is way behind social conformity in explaining child marriage as none of economic variables such as household income, poverty status, and land ownership significantly affect the probability of child marriage in rural India. Qualitative study from Ghosh (2011) in West Bengal divides the causes of child marriage based on four different perspectives in a family; fathers, mothers, elders, and daughters. Fathers and elders are found to put poverty as the first order of preference for the cause of child marriage. Findings from qualitative studies on moving out of poverty in Indonesia also revealed that marriage is sometimes used as a way out of poverty (Febriany, 2005;



Febriany, 2006). Mothers and daughters put perceptions that marriage is essential and lack of awareness respectively as the first order of reference.

#### **4.7.3 Income Inequality and Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County**

The study sought to determine the level of income inequality in respondents' households and its influence on early marriages. The findings are shown in Table 4.18.

**Table 4.18 Income Inequality and Early Marriages**

<b>Income Inequality</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly Agree	36	24.8
Agree	58	40.0
Undecided	8	5.5
Disagree	24	16.6
Strongly Disagree	19	13.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Findings from Table 4.18 shows that 36 (24.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed that income inequality was high among the households, 58 (40.0%) agreed, 8 (5.5%) were undecided and 24 (16.6%) disagreed while 19 (13.1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that income inequality was high among the households and this influenced early marriages by young girls in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. Majority, 58 (40.0%) of the respondents agreed that income inequality was high among the Sabaot community and this influenced early marriage decisions. Marriage involves a substantial resource commitment on the part of the woman and of her family of procreation (family of marriage) as well as her family of orientation (family of birth). This is determined by the level of income between families that seek marital status. With limited education and economic opportunities, child brides are often condemned to a life of poverty, social isolation, and powerlessness, infringing on their human rights, health, and well-being.

These findings contradict the marriage market model by Loughran (2000 & 2002) who reported that the mechanism may be understood in the context of a search model of marriage market matching. In this model, a woman who is on the marriage market sequentially samples marriage offers from prospective spouses, evaluating them in terms of their income. In deciding whether to accept a particular offer, she must decide whether the benefits from waiting for a better offer outweigh the costs of staying unmarried during this period. Widening income inequality makes high earning men relatively more attractive candidates than before, and increases the willingness of the woman to wait for offers from such candidates, and thereby delays her marriage.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary of the findings discussed in chapter 4, conclusions and recommendations based on the analysis of the factors influencing early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County, Kenya.

#### **5.2 Summary of the Study Findings**

The purpose of this study was to examine factors influencing early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County, Kenya. The study achieved a questionnaire returned rate of 92.9 per cent. Demographic findings show that 66.9% of the respondents were male and 33.1% were female hence more men were more participated in the study. The mean age of the respondents from the study was 34 years and 38.6% of the respondents were married at the age between 16-18 years. Moreover, majority 33.8% of the respondents had primary certificate as the highest academic qualification.

##### **5.2.1 Cultural Practices and Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County**

The study sought to establish how cultural practices influence early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County under female genital mutilation, gender inequality and beliefs themes. Results show that 29.0% of the respondents strongly agreed that Female Genital Mutilation practices influence early marriages, 44.1% agreed, 3.4% were undecided and 13.8% disagreed while 9.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Concerning gender inequality and early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County, results indicated that 52.4% of the respondents strongly agreed that gender inequality influence early marriages, 23.4% agreed, 1.4% were undecided and 12.4% disagreed while 10.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Traditional and patriarchal beliefs towards gender roles, rooted in social, cultural or religious customs, can insulate and perpetuate the practice of child marriage. In this regard,

the respondents were asked to indicate the influence of beliefs among Sabaot community on early marriages among in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. Results show that 27.6% of the respondents strongly agreed that beliefs influence early marriages, 35.2% agreed, 4.1% were undecided and 18.6% disagreed while 14.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

### **5.2.2 Reproductive Health Practices and Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County**

The study sought to determine how reproductive health practices influence early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County and results show that 25.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that teenage pregnancy among Sabaot community influence early marriages, 41.4% agreed, 8.3% were undecided and 17.2% disagreed while 7.6% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Concerning maternal and health related risks and early marriages, the study established that 34.5% of the respondents indicated unsafe abortions, 24.8% cited still births, 10.3% cited maternal mortality and 16.5% reported infections with Sexually Transmitted Infections while 13.9% of the respondents cited sepsis as maternal and health related risks that are associated with early marriages in Mt. Elgon Sub-County.

The respondents were asked to indicate the level of contraceptive use and it's on early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County and results show that 10.3% of the respondents strongly agreed with the use of contraceptives, 13.1% agreed, 6.9% were undecided and 49.7% disagreed while 20.0% of the respondents strongly disagreed. However, 23.4% of the respondents asserted that community use contraceptives in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. This statistics are relatively low when compared to teenage contraceptive use in Africa at 37 per cent.

### **5.2.3 Education and Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County**

This study determined the influence of education on early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. The results show that 45.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that access to education among influence early marriages, 27.6% agreed, 1.4% were undecided and 16.6% disagreed while 8.9% of the respondents strongly disagreed that access to education delay age at marriage that significantly reduces early marriages.

Educational level was determined by asking a participant if they had ever attended school and the highest level of school attended and its influence on early marriages among the Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon. The results majority 33.8% of the teachers were primary certificate holders as their highest academic qualification while 28.3% were secondary certificate holders. Another 20.0% had no formal education and 17.1% had college/university training.

The study sought to determine the influence of quality education on early marriages among Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. Results show that 39 (26.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the quality of education positively influence early marriages, 46.9% agreed, 4.8% were undecided and 17.2% disagreed while 4.2% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

### **5.2.4 Economic Status and Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County**

The study sought to determine the influence of economic status on early marriages among the Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon Sub-county. Findings show that 11.0% of the respondents strongly agreed that their households were economically independent, 19.3% agreed, 7.6% were undecided and 48.3% disagreed while 13.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed that their households were economically independent which has a bearing to decision making that influence early marriages.

The study sought to determine the level of incomes possessed by the respondents and its inclination on family decision making on early marriages. Results indicate that 69.7% of the respondents had incomes below Ksh. 25000, 11.0% had incomes between Ksh. 25000-50000, 12.4% had incomes between Ksh. 50001-100000 while 6.9% of the households had incomes over Ksh. 100001.

The study sought to determine the level of income inequality in respondents' households and its influence on early marriages. Findings show that 24.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that income inequality was high among the households, 40.0% agreed, 5.5% were undecided and 16.6% disagreed while 13.1% of the respondents strongly disagreed that income inequality was high among the households and this influenced early marriages by young girls in Mt. Elgon Sub-County.

### **5.3 Conclusion of the Study**

Gender inequality and beliefs in traditional cultural practices such as Female Genital Mutilation practices among Sabaot community significantly influenced early marriages among Sabaot community significantly influence early marriages.

Teenage pregnancy and inadequate knowledge on of use contraceptives among Sabaot community significantly influenced early marriages due to pressure and fear of betrothal to older men for girls and forced marriage for boys usually end up seeking unsafe abortions from untrained people

Most of the respondents were primary certificate holders and therefore access to education by both parents and children was a significant determinant on decision to early marriages among Sabaot community.

Statistics indicate that most of the households among the Sabaot community were not economically independent and parents are the ones considered as the decision makers, become a single factor that influences early marriages in order to get material wealth due to high income inequality.

## **5.4 Recommendations of the Study**

To be as effective and transformative as possible, interventions to eliminate child marriage must span multiple sectors and include different approaches. Based on the findings discussed, the study recommends that:

- i. Enhance programmes that illustrate working with communities and families directly; women and girls, men and boys is a powerful force to change attitudes, behaviors, and gender norms. Programs may encourage communities to discuss the underlying cultural norms that support child marriage, create committees to end child marriage, and improve communication between parents and children.
- ii. Increasing family planning and reproductive health knowledge and sex education in schools, and health clinics on the use of contraceptives to avoid unsafe abortions from untrained people
- iii. Expanding access to primary, secondary school and tertiary education by offering financial incentives for disadvantaged girls and boys to stay in school in order to reduces dropout rates which delay early marriages
- iv. Introduction of empowerment and skill based programs that equip both men and women economically.

## **5.5 Suggestion for Further Study**

Due to time and financial constraint, the study further suggests research to be conducted in the following areas:

- i. This study was limited to Bungoma county, Mt Elgon sub-county due to minimal time available to conduct research. The researcher therefore suggests that, longitudinal studies can be done in other areas other than Bungoma County.
- ii. The researcher mostly relied on literature available on the desktop therefore suggests that other researchers can widely and deeply look at literature available in the same area.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I: TRANSMITTAL LETTER OF DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

#### **Ref: Request for Data Collection**

Above refer.

I am a student undertaking an academic research at the University of Nairobi. The research topic is '*Factors Influencing Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County.*' Based on the result of this research, the policy makers, development partners and stakeholders may make informed decisions on issues affecting community economic development.

Kindly assist me so that I can collect the data. I am assuring you that the information you will give will be treated with utmost confidence and will only be used for the purpose of this study. To assist in concealing your identity I request you do not write your name or anything that can lead to the revelation of your identity. Thank you so much for your assistance.

Yours Sincerely,

Daniel Mutua,

University of Nairobi

## APPENDIX II: HOUSEHOLDS QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent,

The researcher is a Master of Arts student of Project Planning and Management in the Department of Extra Mural Studies, University of Nairobi. I am carrying out a study about *'Factors influencing Early Marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County.'* You have been selected to participate in this study. All information given will be treated confidentially.

**Please respond by ticking in the brackets provided and fill in the blank spaces where necessary**

### **SECTION A: Demographic Structures**

Name of Location ..... Division.....

Sub-location..... Village.....

1. Please indicate your Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]
2. Please indicate Marital status: Married [ ] widower [ ] Single [ ] others [ ]
3. Please indicate the highest level of your academic qualification.  
Informal [ ] Primary [ ] Secondary [ ] College/University [ ]
4. Please indicate your age bracket: 15-24 Yrs [ ] 25-35 Yrs [ ]  
35-44 Yrs [ ] > 45 Yrs [ ]
5. What is the size of your household?  
<6 People [ ] 6-10 People [ ] 11-15 People [ ] >15 People [ ]
6. At what age were you married?  
9-12Years[ ] 13-15Years[ ] 16-18 Years[ ] 18+ Years[ ]
7. Please indicate the monthly income  
0-5,000 [ ] 5,001-10,000 [ ] 10,001-15,000 [ ] >15,001

**SECTION B: Open Ended Questions**

1) Does your family practice FGM?

Yes ( )

No ( )

Briefly explain.....

2) Are you aware of any roles assigned to a specific gender in the community?

Yes ( )

No ( )

Briefly explain.....

3) Do you have any widely accepted societal beliefs in Mt. Elgon?

Yes ( )

No ( )

Briefly explain.....

4) Is the rate of teenage pregnancy alarming in the community

Yes ( )

No ( )

Briefly explain.....

5) Are the women in the community exposed to maternal and health risks ?

Yes ( )

No ( )

Briefly explain.....

6) Do you often use contraceptives?

Yes ( )

No ( )

Briefly explain.....

7) Is education access equal to all the genders in Mt. Elgon sub- County?

Yes ( )

No ( )

Briefly explain.....

8) Did you attend school to your desired level?

Yes ( )

No ( )

Briefly explain.....

9) Is your family economically independent?

Yes ( )

No ( )

Briefly explain.....

10) Do different social statuses exist in the community?

Yes ( )

No ( )

Briefly explain.....

11) Is the gap between poor and rich households wide in Mt. Elgon?

Yes ( )

No ( )

Briefly explain.....



**SECTION C: Likert Scale**

On a 5 point scale; 1= **SA**: Strongly Agree, 2= **A**: Agree 3= **N**: Neutral, 4= **D**: Disagree, 5= **SD**: Strongly Disagree, indicate to each of the statement that best describes your feelings, on Early Sexual initiation health choices on Early Marriages among young people

<b>What is the influence of Early Sexual initiation on Early marriages among Sabaot Community in Mt. Elgon Sub-County?</b>		<b>1= SA</b>	<b>2= A</b>	<b>3= N</b>	<b>4= D</b>	<b>5= SD</b>
1	My family practices FGM					
2	I am aware of roles assigned to specific gender in the community					
3	Societal beliefs are widely accepted in the community					
4	The rate of Teenage pregnancies in the community is alarming					
5	High number of women are exposed to maternal and health risks					
6	I use contraceptives					
7	Both the boy and girl child have equal access to education					
8	Social influence can lead to early marriage					
9	I attained the highest level of education as I desired					
10	My family is economically independent					
11	The society is calibrated social statuses .					
12	There is a wide gap between the rich and the poor.					

### **APPENDIX III: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE**

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

### ***APPENDIX IV: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS GUIDE***

8. Are you aware of existence of early marriage in the Sub-County? If so, explain
9. What are your perceptions on girls who marry early?
10. Do these young girls enjoy in this marriage? Elaborate?
11. How does early marriage affect the girl child in your opinion?
12. What in your view is the best way forward to solve this problem?
13. Do parents in any way play a role to this practice of early marriage?
14. Does culture in any way contribute to early marriage?