

DETERMINANTS OF EARLY MARRIAGE OF THE GIRL CHILD IN MALINDI DISTRICT, KILIFI COUNTY, KENYA

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
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DECLARATION

This research project report is my original work and has not been submitted to any other university or institution for examination.

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DEDICATION

I sincerely dedicate this work to my loving family for their unwavering support throughout this course.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....	xi
ABSTRACT.....	xii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study	1
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	5
1.3 Purpose of the study.....	6
1.4 Objectives of the study	6
1.5 Research questions and hypotheses	6
1.5.1 Research questions.....	6
1.5.2 Research Hypotheses	7
1.6 Significance of the study	7
1.7 Delimitations of the study.....	8
1.8 Limitations of the study	8
1.9 Basic assumptions of the study.....	8
1.10 Definition of significant terms.....	8
1.11 Organization of the study.....	9

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction.....	11
2.2 Early Marriage	11
2.3 Consequences of early marriage.....	13
2.3.1 Health consequences of early marriage	13
2.3.2 Denial of education as a consequence of early marriage.....	15
2.3.4 Loss of childhood as a consequence of early marriage	16
2.3.5 Cycle of poverty as a consequence of early marriage	16
2.3.6 Cycle of abuse and neglect as a consequence of early marriage	18
2.4 Early marriage and the human rights of girls'/women	18
2.5 Review of related literature	20
2.6 Poverty and early marriage.....	20
2.7 Gender inequality and early marriage.....	22
2.8 Socio-cultural influence and early marriage	25
2.8.1 Protection of girls	25
2.8.2 Traditional, culture and religion	27
2.9 Education and early marriage	28
2.10 Conceptual framework	30
2.11 Summary of literature review	31

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction	32
3.2 Research design	32
3.3 Target population.....	32

3.4 Sample size and sampling procedure.....	32
3.5 Data collection methodology	33
3.6 Data collection procedure	34
3.7 Validity and reliability of research instruments.....	34
3.7.1 Validity of the research instruments	34
3.7.2 Reliability of the research instruments	34
3.8 Data analysis and presentation.....	35
3.9 Ethical considerations.....	35
3.10 Operational definition of variables	36

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction	38
4.2 Response rate	38
4.3 Demographic characteristics of respondents	39
4.3.1 Age of the respondents	39
4.3.2 Marital status of the respondents	39
4.3.3 Level of education of respondents.....	40
4.3.4 Occupation of the respondents.....	40
4.4 Poverty and early marriage.....	40
4.4.1 Sources of income of respondent's parent.....	41
4.4. Testing of research hypothesis.....	41
4.5 Gender inequality and early marriage.....	42
4.5.1 Age at the time of marriage of respondents.....	43
4.5.2 Age at marriage of the respondents spouse	43

4.5.3 Testing of research hypothesis.....	44
4.6 Social cultural influence and early marriage	45
4.6.1 Perception of respondents on appropriate time of marriage.....	45
4.6.2 Testing of research hypothesis.....	46
4.6.3 Perception of respondents on appropriate age for marriage	47
4.6.4 Reasons for early marriage	48
4.6.5 Reaction of respondents on issues of early marriage.....	48
4.7 Education and early marriage	49
4.7.1 Education level of respondents parents	49
4.7.2 Testing of research hypothesis.....	50
4.8 Analysis of key informants data	51

**CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND
RECOMMENDATION**

5.1 Introduction	53
5.2 Summary of findings	53
5.3 Discussion of findings	55
5.4 Conclusion	56
5.5 Recommendations.....	57
5.6 Suggestions for further research	58
REFERENCES	59
APPENDICES	65
Appendix 1: Letter of transmittal	65
Appendix 2: Respondents questionnaire (Women/ Girls married below 18 years)	66
Appendix 3: Key informants interview schedule (NGOs/Child Protection Centre)	69
Appendix 4: Key informants interview schedule (Provincial/Local Administration).....	72

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1.1: The percentage of 15-19 year olds married in Sub-Saharan Africa.....	1
Table 1.2: The percentage of Kenyan girls aged 15-24 married by age 18.....	3
Table 2.1: The net enrolment rates for males and females after FPE	23
Table 3.1: Operational definition of variables.....	36
Table 4.1: Response rate of respondents.....	38
Table 4.2: Age of the respondents.....	39
Table 4.3: Marital status of the respondents.....	39
Table 4.4: Level of education of respondents.....	40
Table 4.5: Occupation of the respondents.....	40
Table 4.6: Source of income of respondents parents.....	41
Table 4.7: Chi square values on source of income.....	41
Table 4.8: Chi square values on age at marriage.....	42
Table 4.9: Relationship between poverty and early marriage.....	42
Table 4.10: Age at the time of marriage of respondents.....	43
Table 4.11: Age at marriage of respondents spouse.....	43
Table 4.12: Chi square values on spouse's age at marriage	44
Table 4.13: Chi square values on respondents age at marriage.....	44
Table 4.14: Relationship between gender inequality and early marriage.....	45
Table 4.15: Perception of respondents on appropriate time for marriage.....	45
Table 4.16: Chi square values on appropriate time for marriage.....	46
Table 4.17: Chi square values on age at marriage.....	46
Table 4.18: Relationship between socio-cultural practices and early marriage.....	47
Table 4.19: Perception of respondents on appropriate age for marriage	47
Table 4.20: Reasons for early marriage.....	48
Table 4.21: Reaction of respondents on issues of early marriage	49
Table 4.22: Education level of respondents parents	49
Table 4.23: Chi square values on level of education.....	50
Table 4.24: Chi square values on age at marriage.....	50
Table 4.25: Relationship between level of education and marriage.....	51

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

Figure 1 Conceptual framework of determinants of early marriage of the girl child.... 30

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
APR	Annual Percentage Rate
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CRR	Center for Reproductive Rights
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
EDHS	Ethiopian Demographic Health Survey
FPE	Free Primary Education
FMRWG	Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
IRC	International Research Centre
KDHS	Kenya Demographic and Health Survey
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDH	Malindi District Hospital
MGCSD	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development
NCTPE	National Committee on Traditional Practices in Ethiopia
UN ECA	United Nations African Economic Commission
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
WHO	World Health Organization

ABSTRACT

Early marriage remains a widely ignored violation of the health and development rights of girls and young women. Early marriage is culturally packaged as a social necessity, but in many cases this amounts to socially licensed sexual abuse and exploitation of a child. It is considered to be one of the most persistent forms of sanctioned sexual abuse of girls and young women. The purpose of this study was to identify the determinants of early marriage in Malindi District, Kilifi County. The study sought to find out how poverty, gender inequality, socio-cultural practices and education contribute to early marriage of the girl child. The research adopted a descriptive survey research design which enabled the researcher to capture information about attitudes of the respondents that are otherwise difficult to measure using observational techniques. The main instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire due its practicability in terms of reaching a large number of respondents. The study had a sample size of 218 women below the age of 18 years and 10 key informants. The data collected was coded and analyzed using SPSS and presented in frequency tables. The findings of the study showed that poverty was ranked as the highest reason behind early marriage. Gender inequality was also seen to contribute to early marriage. This was evidenced by the disparity in age at the time of marriage between men and women thus proving that early marriage affects girl more than boys. Fear of stigma was also found to contribute to early marriage whereby young girls rushed to get married as a result of early pregnancy. Low level of education was found to cut across different generations thus leading to early marriage as education is not valued by the community. The study recommended that there is a need to urgently address the high poverty levels in Malindi District which was found to be the main reason behind early marriage. Girls should also be accorded equal opportunities for advancement rather than being sacrificed for their families. Finally, sensitization on the importance and benefits of education should be carried out to help alleviate the high poverty levels in Malindi District.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Marriage globally is regarded as a moment of celebration and a milestone in adult life. However, the practice of early or child marriage gives no such cause for celebration as the imposition of a marriage partner upon a child means that a girl's or boy's childhood is cut short and their fundamental rights compromised (Murphy, 2004).

Early marriage is an issue that impacts upon girls more than boys in far larger numbers and with more intensity. In many societies, adolescence means an opening up of opportunity for boys, whereas for girls it often means a closing down of opportunity and personal freedom (Greene, 1998). The experience for boys is, therefore, less likely to be as exploitative or physically harmful as it is for girls. As the table on married adolescents below shows, even in those societies where early marriage is common, very few boys underage 19 enter marriage compared to girls.

Table 1.1: Percentage of 15-19 year olds married in Sub-Saharan Africa

Country	Boys	Girls
Dem. Rep. Of Congo	5	74
Niger	4	70
Uganda	11	50
Mali	5	50

Source: *UN Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Marriage Patterns 2007*

Child marriage is an extremely pressing global human rights issue. An estimated 60 million children are married worldwide. One in every three girls in the developing world is married by the age of 18. One in seven marries before they reach the age of 15. The practice of girls marrying young is most common in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia. In Southern Asia, 48 percent which accounts for nearly 10 million are married by the age of 18 while in Africa, 42 per cent are married before turning 18 (UNFPA, 2004). In Sub-Saharan Africa the practice is more

prevalent in Central and West Africa at 40 per cent and 49 per cent respectively as compared to 27 per cent in East Africa and 20 per cent in Northern and Southern Africa. Many of these young brides are second or third wives in polygamous households (UNICEF, 2001).

A study by the NCTPE estimated the proportion of young girls married before the age of 15 to be at 57 per cent. The same study shows that the practice occurs in its more extreme forms in northern Ethiopia, where girls are married as young as eight or nine years of age. In some instances, they are even pledged at birth (NCTPE, 2003). In Ethiopia, early marriage is seen as a way to improve the economic status of the family, to strengthen ties between families, to ensure that girls are virgins when they marry, and to avoid the possibility of a girl reaching an age where she is no longer desirable as a wife.

Statistics show girls who marry before the age of 18 are disproportionately affected by complicated pregnancies that may lead to maternal mortality and morbidity. Girls aged 10-14 are five times more likely to die in pregnancy or childbirth than women aged 20-24; girls aged 15-19 are twice as likely to die (UNFPA, 2004). Many of these deaths take place within marriage. Premature and forced intercourse often results in harm to the body in general, sometimes leading to death, as well as short and long term problems related to early pregnancy and delivery. Prolonged and obstructed labour can result in obstetric fistulas, which disproportionately affect very young and first-time mothers due to their incomplete development. With an estimated 1,500 new cases annually, Ethiopia has the highest prevalence of obstetric fistula in the world. Though many girls with fistula lack access to fistula repair service, the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital alone admitted as many as 1,200 fistula patients between October 2001 and September 2002 (AFH Annual Report, 2002). This condition leaves girls and women continually leaking urine and/or faeces, frequently leading to abandonment by partners, friends, and family.

The incidence of child marriage in Kenya is high, despite the fact that Kenya has signed and ratified a number of international and regional legal instruments relating to the protection of children's rights. These include the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). The Kenya Demographic Health Survey (KDHS), 2003, shows that, 25% and 5% of girls in the country are married before

age 18 and 15 respectively. The prevalence rates vary between and within regions with higher chances of child marriage taking place in rural (29%) than in urban (18%) areas (Erulka and Ayuka, 2007).

Table 1.2: Percentage of Kenyan girls aged 15-24 who were married by age 18, by Region

Area	%	Region	%
Urban	18	Central	15
Rural	29	Coast	34
		Eastern	16
		Nairobi	12
		North Eastern	56
		Nyanza	34
		Rift Valley	35
		Western	32

Source: *Analysis of DHS Data - Population Council, 2007*

Although child marriage affects mostly girls, it is not unusual to find married young boys as well. In Kenya, the phenomenon affects more girls than boys at a girl: boy ratio of 21:1 (UN, 2000). However, it is not easy to know the exact numbers of young married girls because they are a hard to reach group (Diers, 2005) and most cases are undocumented. The practice is further exacerbated by customary laws that allow marriage of children especially after certain rites of passage such as circumcision. After circumcision many girls are encouraged to leave school and get married.

Inconsistent laws also compound the situation. In spite of the multiple risks early marriage can pose, Kenya's marriage laws do not adequately protect young women. Although the Children Act indirectly defines the minimum age for marriage as 18, the Marriage Act and the Hindu Marriage and Divorce Act both specify that the minimum age of marriage is 16 years for a girl and 18 years for a boy. Customary and Islamic laws generally allow adolescents who have reached puberty to marry regardless of their age (Diers, 2005). Early marriage leads to early childbearing and a longer fertility period, resulting often in numerous unwanted pregnancies

leading to stress, an increased workload, and further financial strains associated with raising children. Often the bulk of the responsibility for upbringing these children fall on the girl child (Blanc, 2001).

In the Coast region about 34% and 10% of girls aged 15-24 were married before age 18 and 15 respectively. In Malindi District in particular, the mean age at first marriage for girls is 12 years as compared to 22 years nationally. There was no data on the same for boys in Malindi which shows that the problem affects girls the most (MDH, 2007). Of the 402 cases reported nationally to the children's department, Coast region had more than 50 per cent at 204, 74 of which were reported in Malindi District (MGCSD, Annual report 2007/08).

Although famed as a tourist destination, Malindi is one of the most hostile places for the girl child. If they are not being forced into sex, they are either being trafficked into foreign countries or being married to older men (Jones, 2006). For instance, in a single week the chief, Malindi Location handles four cases relating to child abuse and marriages, to date the youngest victim being a Standard Four pupil married off to a traditional healer by her mother. Yet this is just a tip of the iceberg as far as the incidence of child marriages in the area is concerned. Child marriages in Malindi District have become so common that local residents are afraid there may be no more girls left in schools in the area in the next few years (GoK, 2008).

At the Malindi District Children Protection offices, social workers are overwhelmed by cases of child marriages. More than half of their work schedule involves rescuing abused children and preparing court bundles against the culprits. In a few cases, they have managed to stop the marriages and send the girls back to school. In other cases, they have lost the battles at the altar of religious and cultural beliefs after some Muslim religious leaders intervened to support such marriages, saying their religion allowed girls to marry even at nine years. According to the Constitution, a person must be over 18 years to consent to marriage. The cases are so rampant in Malindi District that members of community policing have to be used to help arrest the husbands and parents marrying off their young children. These children have their future ruined because many such marriages often end up in divorce (GoK, 2011).

The biggest setback in the fight against child marriages according to the social workers, are the parents who agree to 'sell' their daughters in exchange of dowry. They further attributed the rising child abuse cases to influence from the tourism industry, poverty, culture, religion and illiteracy among parents. Tourism plays a role because many of the culprits are beach boys who get money from the tourist and want to marry the school girls. They use the money to influence the poor parents. Cradle Kenya, a child rights organisation, describes the situation in Malindi as grim. Child marriages, which are part of child trafficking, happen in Malindi every day. They receive at least a case every day but still there many cases that go unreported. Many victims of child marriages undergo physical abuse, forcing them to run away from their husbands and eventually into the streets where they engage in child prostitution (Oywa, 2012).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Child marriage remains a widely ignored violation of the health and development rights of girls and young women. Child marriage is culturally packaged as a social necessity, but in many cases this amounts to socially licensed sexual abuse and exploitation of a child. It is considered to be one of the most persistent forms of sanctioned sexual abuse of girls and young women. The fact that the arrangement is socially accepted does not diminish the reality that a girl is deliberately exposed to sexual abuse and exploitation, usually by her parents and family (De Boeck, 2005).

Many valid reasons are given by parents and guardians to justify early marriage. Economic reasons often underpin these decisions which are directly linked to poverty. Girls are either seen as an economic burden or as a means of capital value which they bring in terms goods, money or livestock. Naana Otoo-Oyortey and Sonita Pobi (2003) in their study on early marriage and poverty agree that these gifts are a central part of marriage transaction. However, they also reinforce the inequality of women and strengthen the notion that females can be exchanged or sold for the value that they bring into the receiving families. When a girl is married early, this reduces the economic burden on the family in caring for the girl, and also increases family assets. The payment of bride price also enslaves a girl in marriage in cases where families cannot afford to return the bride price if the girl chooses to leave an abusive marriage.

A combination of cultural, traditional and religious arguments also justifies child marriage. The fear of stigma attached to premarital sex and children born out of wedlock, and the associated family honour, are often seen as valid reasons. Finally, Governments are often either unable to enforce existing laws, or rectify discrepancies between national laws on marriage age and entrenched customary and religious laws. This is because of the official tolerance of cultural, societal and customary norms that shape and govern the institution of marriage and family (Bunting, 2008).

Hence, the study sought to establish the determinants of early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to examine the determinants of early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County.

1.4 Study Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives;

- i) To assess how poverty contributes to early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County.
- ii) To examine how gender inequality contributes to early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County.
- iii) To establish how socio-cultural practices contribute to early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County.
- iv) To establish how education contributes to early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County.

1.5.1 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions;

- i) How does poverty contribute to early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County?

- ii) How does gender inequality contribute to early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County?
- iii) How do socio-cultural practices contribute to early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County?
- iv) How does education contribute to early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County?

1.5.2 Research Hypotheses

The study sought to test the following hypotheses;

1. H_0 ; Poverty does not contribute to early marriage of the girl child
 H_1 ; Poverty contributes to early marriage of the girl child
2. H_0 ; Gender inequality does not contribute to early marriage of the girl child
 H_1 ; Gender inequality contributes to early marriage of the girl child
3. H_0 ; Socio-cultural practices do not contribute to early marriage of the girl child
 H_1 ; Socio-cultural practices do not contribute to early marriage of the girl child
4. H_0 ; Level of education does not contribute to early marriage of the girl child
 H_1 ; Level of education contributes to early marriage of the girl child

1.6 Significance of the study

This study was aimed at generating both quantitative and qualitative data and to critically examine causes and consequences of early marriage in Kilifi County. Presently, there is limited data on all aspects of early marriage. Earlier research examined the problem in terms of demographic trends, fertility, and educational attainment. While there is ample information on early marriage of a general nature, there are few studies that have examined the practice from a human rights or gender perspective, its impact on families, or the wider society. Data is needed on the psychosocial impact of early marriage on children and the ways in which this determines wider social, political, and economic consequences. This study attempted to fill these gaps.

Furthermore, the findings of this study will enable different stakeholders that is both governmental and nongovernmental formulate policies useful in reducing the prevalence of early marriage of the girl child.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

This study aimed at identifying the determinants of early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County. According to the Malindi District Child Protection Centre under the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development was set up to help address issues on child abuse, neglect and exploitation. Early marriage within Malindi District makes up the majority of the cases referred to the centre and this indeed proved that the practice is widespread within the area.

1.8 Limitations of the study

The following were some of the limitations to this study;

- i) Malindi District is characterized by poor roads and in order to overcome this limitation, the researcher used voluntary child officers based in the villages.
- ii) Communication posed a problem as the majority of respondents could only communicate in their mother tongue due to their low level of education. Translators were used to overcome this hurdle.

1.9 Basic assumptions of the study

The basic assumptions of the study were;

- i) The data collection method chosen will be the most appropriate for the study.
- ii) The respondents will answer questions correctly and truthfully.

1.10 Definition of significant terms

A child - According to the ACRWC (1999) a child means every human being below the age of 18 years however the UNCRC (1989) goes further and defines a child as every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Child marriage - involves either one or both spouses being children and may take place under civil, religious or customary laws with or without formal registration. It can also be defined as any marriage carried out below the age of 18 years before one is physically, psychologically and physiologically ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage and child bearing and is often without consent of the marrying parties and thus also referred to as forced marriage (Walker-Moffat, 1995).

Poverty – pronounced deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions. It includes low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. Poverty also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life (Tomaveski, 2005).

Gender inequality - refers to disparity between individuals due to gender. Gender is constructed both socially through social interactions as well as biologically (UN, 2000).

Socio-cultural influence – this is based on the idea that society and culture shape cognition. Social customs, beliefs, values, and language are all part of what shapes a person's identity and reality (Kimani, 2005).

Illiteracy - The United Nations defines illiteracy as the inability to read and write a simple sentence in any language.

1.11 Organization of the study

The research is organized in the following manner;

Chapter one gives a background of the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions and research hypothesis. It further goes on to describe the significance of the study, delimitations and limitations of the study, basic assumptions of the study and finally the definition of significant terms. Chapter two deals with review of the

literature based on a discussion of the objectives of the study. A conceptual framework is used to show the variables of the study and their accompanying indicators. The chapter concludes with a summary of the literature review.

Chapter three deals with the research methodology which captures the design, target population, sample size and procedure, data collection methodology and procedure, validity and reliability of instruments, data analysis and ethical considerations. Chapter four deals with data analysis, presentation and interpretation. Chapter five gives a summary of findings based on the objectives of the study, discussion of findings, conclusions and recommendations. The reference section is followed by the appendix which consists of letter of transmittal, general respondents' questionnaire and finally a structured interview schedule.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviewed literature on the determinants of early marriage of the girl child such as poverty, socio-cultural influence, gender inequality and illiteracy. It further sought to highlight the consequences of early marriage on the girl child which included health related issues, denial of education, psychosocial impact, loss of childhood, cycle of poverty and cycle of abuse and neglect. Lastly it attempted to show how early marriage is a violation of girls' human rights.

2.2 Early Marriage

Studies on early marriage at the international and regional levels have been mostly conducted by international and regional organizations such as UNICEF (2001), FMRWG (2003), UNESCO (2002), UNFPA (2004), Population Council (2004) and UN ECA (1999). The reviewed studies on early marriage reveal the lack of a universally accepted definition for age of marriage. In other words, one of the difficulties revolving around the understanding of early marriage is with regard to its definition because it is not as simple and straight forward as it may appear.

The global understanding of being ready for marriage is expressed in terms of the legal age for marriage. For instance, Article 16 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 states that 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. Article 16 (2) goes on to say that marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending parties. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990 Article XXI on the protection against harmful social and cultural practices, prohibits child marriage and the betrothal of girls. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979), the most comprehensive international bill of rights for women, states that any betrothal or marriage of a child should not have any legal status. The Committee that monitors this convention states further in General Recommendation 21 Article 16(2) that the minimum age for marriage for both male and female should be 18 years, the age when "they have attained full

maturity and capacity to act". From the above, a working definition of early marriage would thus be marriage before or during adolescence that is a situation where children under the age of 18 enter marriage.

In the majority of such early marriages, however, there is often an element of coercion involved: parents, guardians or families put pressure on children or force them into marriage. Early marriage is accepted as the norm in many societies and girls may give their consent as a duty and sign of respect to their family and community. However, where one of the parties in a marriage is under the age of 18 years old, consent cannot always be assumed to be 'free and full' and is rarely in the best interest of the girl (Lane, 2011).

Various international and regional studies indicate that early marriage, the practice of marriage before 18 years, prevails across much of Africa, Asia and Latin America, and in some form or another exists throughout the world. According to UNICEF (2001), the exact figures of the number of early marriages are difficult to obtain, as so many are unregistered and unofficial. Although statistics and data are unclear, it is undeniable that there are millions of girls and boys forced into marriage while they are still children (FMRWG 2000). There are, according to child-rights activists, an estimated 50 million early (as early as 7 years old and less) married girls across the world. That is young teens or even pre-teen girls whose innocence is being sacrificed to arranged marriages, often with older men, coerced by family and culture into lives of servility and isolation, and scarred by the trauma of early pregnancy and thus child-brides represent a vast, lost generation of children (Salopek, 2004).

While humanitarian campaigns have focused global attention on childhood AIDS in Africa, FGM and child labour, one of the underlying sources of all these woes remains largely ignored and that is child marriage, an entrenched practice long hidden in shadows and identified by the United Nations as a serious human-rights violation. The Population Council (2004) further argues that early marriage is a neglected human rights abuse that affects millions of girls worldwide. In short, various studies suggest that early marriage is most common in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where poverty, traditional taboos about pre-marital sex and fears of AIDS are widespread.

2.3 Consequences of Early Marriage

Early marriage and child bearing pose severe risks for girls who are not yet physically, mentally and emotionally developed. Damaging effects are wide-ranging and have implications for entire societies. Where girls are in poor health, uneducated and ill-prepared for their roles as mothers, costs are borne at multiple levels – from the household to the nation as a whole (UNICEF, 2001).

2.3.1 Health consequences of early marriage

The risks begin, but do not end, with reproductive health. Resisting sexual intercourse isn't an option in most early marriages, where consummation is considered the male's right. Unwillingness to cooperate is generally ignored. Forced sex causes skin and tissue damage that makes a female more susceptible to contracting sexually transmitted infections from her husband. She has little or no say in protecting herself against pregnancy or diseases, although her husband may be sexually active outside the marriage.

A study of 15- to 19-year-olds in the Dominican Republic found that 87 percent of sexually active girls in the age group were married and only 1.5 percent of the boys used a condom the last time they had sex (WHO, 2006). Early marriage raises the risk of contracting HIV, as well as other sexually transmitted infections including Syphilis and Chlamydia. Research in Kisumu, Kenya and Ndola, Zambia indicates that some groups of married adolescent girls had higher rates of HIV infection compared with unmarried, sexually active counterparts (Shelley, 2004).

Girls pushed into a husband's bed during puberty are also likely to conceive before their bodies fully mature. Few have access to reliable contraception and reproductive health advice, and the pressure is high for a bride to prove her worth and secure her social status by having children within a year of marrying. Pregnancy and childbirth are far more hazardous for pre-teens and young teenage mothers than for their older counterparts. Complications during childbearing and delivery are most common in this age set, significantly raising the risk of death, premature delivery, infant mortality and low birth weight. Pregnancy-related deaths are the leading cause of mortality for 15- to 19-year-old girls (married and unmarried) worldwide (UNICEF, 2011). Mothers in this age group face a 20 percent to 200 percent greater chance of dying during

pregnancy than women ages 20 to 24; girls under age 15 are five times as likely as women in their twenties to die. The main causes are hemorrhage; obstructed labor; sepsis, an overwhelming immune response to infection; and hypertension and convulsions (Alemante, 2004).

In girls whose pelvis and birth canal are not fully developed, delivery of the baby can be obstructed. Pressure from the infant's skull during prolonged labour can damage the birth canal, tearing the internal tissue that separates the bladder or bowel from the vagina. It is estimated that some 2 million women worldwide – almost all of them in the developing world – suffer from obstetric fistula. At the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia, more than half of patients said their husbands had left them, and many were destitute (Amera, 2004).

In Niger, where marriage before age 15 is common, fistula counts for nearly two-thirds of divorces (Gwyneth, 2006). In poor and rural areas, few are aware of, have access to or can afford surgical treatment to repair their bodies. The children of immature and undeveloped mothers start life with setbacks: higher risk of being underweight at birth and/or malnourished during the crucial years of early childhood development. Malnutrition in early childhood can result in severe physical and cognitive stunting later in life.

2.3.2 Denial of education as a consequence of early marriage

While lack of education is a risk factor for girls entering into early marriage, denial of education is also a direct consequence of early marriage. Often, the expectation that a girl will soon be married keeps parents from sending her to school. Research shows that in Asian countries, a girl is withdrawn from school when a marriage possibility presents itself (UNICEF, 2011). These actions deprive children of the education they need to develop, prepare for adulthood and make a healthy contribution to family and society.

Although the attitude towards girls' education is beginning to change, even in traditional societies, many parents still consider it a waste to invest in their daughter's education since when she marries she will leave and work in another's home (Tomaveski, 2005). In rural Niger, secondary school often requires children to live away from home something a husband is unlikely to permit. Girls who become pregnant are often not allowed to continue their schooling.

In Uganda, although some efforts have been made to encourage child mothers to return to school after delivery, the majority of teenage mothers never again enter a classroom. The burden of childcare, household responsibilities and the inability to raise money for school fees and expenses are deterrents. Many families believe that girls who have become mothers are now women and no longer belong in school (Nzomo et al, 2000).

The denial of education, which stunts girls' intellectual development and productivity, has grave repercussions for society. Studies have shown that girls' education increases incomes, benefiting both families and nations; reduces the number of children girls will have and ensures that the children will be healthier; decreases the risk of HIV infection; reduces domestic violence; decreases the likelihood of FGM; and can even foster democracy and political participation (Herz et al, 2004).

2.3.3 Psychosocial impact of early marriage

Child marriages are frequently characterized by forced sexual intercourse, domestic violence and denial of freedom. Studies have shown that women married as children are more likely than women who marry later to have husbands who are significantly older. A large age gap between husband and wife may affect power dynamics within the household. It can also mean the husband has had more previous sexual partners, which can increase the risks of HIV or other sexually transmitted infections. Data shows that in Ethiopia, the mean age difference between spouses is 10.1 years when girls marry before age 15. In Burkina Faso, 65 percent of girls have a partner who is more than 15 years their senior; this age difference is likewise found in one-fourth of child marriages in Guinea, Mali, Mozambique and Nigeria (UNICEF, 2005)

Evaluating the large-scale psychological impact of early marriage has often proven difficult. Confinement and the resulting social isolation impede a girl's ability to forge her own identity and limit her access to services and programmes that may benefit her. Painful early initiation to unwanted sexual activity can cause long-term psychological and emotional trauma. For reluctant child brides, the marriage amounts to legally sanctioned sexual abuse. These girls often show

signs symptomatic of child sexual abuse and post-traumatic stress, such as hopelessness and severe depression (ICRW, 2006).

Depression, social withdrawal and loss of self-esteem are common results of early and forced sexual activity. Married girls who are suffering often have no one to confide in because they are surrounded by others who condone their situation. "The indifference of adults towards a young girl affected by child marriage adds to the sorrows she carries with her all her life," notes Sabine Woube (2007), World Vision's national coordinator for gender and development in Chad. "These experiences are simply considered a normal and unavoidable part of life, which plunges the girl into a state of resignation."

2.3.4 Loss of childhood as a consequence of early marriage

A girl who marries early is a child thrown into adulthood. A girl's behavior changes in relation to the change of her status so that she becomes a woman with the mentality of a child, or a woman in some ways but [a child] in others. The girl's life becomes one of deprivation; she does not get to enjoy the games and fun that other children enjoy (Pineiro, 2006).

A child bride loses the label of "child" while still psychologically and emotionally immature. Some observers call this a stage of being a "social misfit" because she fits in neither with children nor with adult women. Girls who marry as children soon look old and tired. They age prematurely as a result of repeated pregnancies, the heavy demands and responsibilities of motherhood, for which they are unprepared, and a heavier burden of house- and field-work (World Vision, 2007).

2.3.5 Cycle of poverty as a consequence of early marriage

Withdrawal from education, severe maternal and child health problems with limited access to services and restricted ability to participate in income-generating activities are among the key factors that contribute to the perpetuation of poverty (Tilson, 2000). Having children may decrease already scarce resources in a poor family. In fact, child brides are significantly more likely to have more children than women who marry later, while being less able to provide for them. Anecdotal evidence shows that in most developing countries, women with three or four

children were married by age 18, compared with just 14 percent of those with no children (UNICEF, 2005).

Abandonment and divorce are also common among girls who are married very young, often plunging them further into poverty as they assume sole responsibility for dependent children. A study in Ethiopia, where nearly half of all first marriages end in divorce, finds that early age at marriage has a significant impact on the risk of divorce (Tilson, 2000). A considerable number of street children in Adama, Ethiopia have been abandoned by their husbands or have fled due to the traumatic experience of early marriage. In Mali and Tanzania reports also show that girls who marry very young tend to be unloved by their husbands and later divorced.

According to a study carried out by World Vision (2007), domestic violence often plays a role in the marital breakdown that leads to divorce. Girls who are married very young tend to have poor management of their homes and families. As a result, they are often beaten by their husbands. Where these problems continue, girls may be divorced or separated from their husbands. Husbands may leave their young wives to find work elsewhere, seek additional wives or stop providing for children. An uneducated girl or woman is left with few options for supporting herself and her children, and may resort to selling sexual favours to survive.

In some cases, divorced or abandoned girls face stigmatisation from their families and communities. Girls who are left behind [after divorce or abandonment] are commonly subjected to verbal and physical abuse and neglect, or are otherwise mistreated by family and communities that perceive them as 'dishonored,' (World Vision, 2007).

A girl's burdens also increase when she loses her husband to death. In many cases, she is given away to another member of the husband's family in a custom known as levirate. The in-laws own the girl, her children and all her resources; in other words, she becomes a possession of her former husband's family. In countries where legal systems fail to protect widows' property rights, a woman who is out of favor with her in-laws may be kicked out of her home and find herself bereft of family or financial support. Child widows are especially powerless (UNICEF, 2011).

2.3.6 Cycle of abuse and neglect as a consequence of early marriage

Girls married as children are significantly more likely to experience domestic violence and abuse. A survey in India found that girls who married before 18 were twice as likely to report being beaten, slapped or threatened by their husbands than girls who married later and three times as likely to have been forced to have sex in the previous six months. They also reported to never participating in decisions about their lives. In Kenya, 36 percent of girls married before age 18 believe that a man is justified in beating his wife, compared to 20 percent of women married as adults (UNICEF, 2005).

Early marriage is most likely to lead to domestic violence when young girls feel that they are dependent on their spouses and must ask permission to engage in activities. Returning to their family home is rarely an option. Girls who run away to their parents' homes are often punished and sent back to their husbands (Pinheiro, 2006). The ultimate result of early marriage is that children raise children, compromising the well-being of both generations. An impoverished young mother, inexperienced and untrained in child-rearing, is at high risk to have children who are malnourished and unhealthy.

The practice of early marriage can perpetuate vicious cycles of poverty, abuse and neglect as the girl begins to relive the life her elders experienced. The damage of early childbearing, social isolation and violence are compounded by a society in which family members and neighbors are indifferent or powerless because they themselves endured the same (ICRW, 2006).

2.4 Early marriage and the Human Rights of Girls'/Women

A right-based approach to early marriage is founded on the universal principles of human rights. Human rights are a set of common standards that every individual is entitled to enjoy by virtue of being human, because they are universal, indivisible, and interdependent and enshrined in international conventions, agreements, and declarations (UHRD, 1948). At the national level, the Governments, which signed the Convention in 1948, are obliged to respect, protect and fulfill the human rights of their citizens; according to this convention.

Early marriage, because of its harmful consequences, violates the rights of children, in particular girls, in relation to such matters as health, survival and development, education, and protection from sexual and other forms of exploitation. Of key concern is the denial of childhood and adolescence; the curtailment of personal freedom, the lack of opportunity to develop a full sense of self-hood; and the denial of psychosocial and emotional well-being, reproductive health and educational opportunity all as a result of early marriage. Human rights not only give power to individuals, they are “rich”, infinitely mouldable raw materials out of which individuals, communities, and societies can shape their reproductive and sexual liberty (Cooke et. al).

However, girls and women’s human rights, and sexual and reproductive decision-making remain contentious in a number of countries because of cultural and religious reasons. The legal context of women’s marriage life often reflects the society’s attitudes towards females. Even in countries that have signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), there is a discrepancy between the legal minimum age of marriage and the actual age of marriage, due to “official tolerance of cultural, societal and customary norms that shape and govern the institution of marriage and family life (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2000).

These social norms make the legal national minimum age difficult to enforce. Additionally, in a number of countries, the law recognizes three types of marriage that is customary, religious and civil. Often the minimum age of marriage is only applicable in civil marriage. In some countries that have a legal minimum age of marriage, there is unequally defined age for boys and girls. The legal minimum age of marriage for boys is often two years higher than that of girls. This lower age of marriage often reflects an influence of tradition and religion (FMRWG 2001). Most early marriages in developing countries result from parental choice, and often do not require the consent of the girl.

In countries where the legal age of marriage is below 18 years, marriage with parental consent does not negate the fact that such marriages are “early marriages.” Any individual under 18 who is willing to marry, which has lifelong implications, is considered to lack the full understanding

required to make an informed decision. Unfortunately, for many girls under 18 in developing countries, they are no longer categorized as children (FMRWG 2003).

In this connection, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF 1993) argues that while at first glance a higher minimum age for men appears to discriminate against women, these laws and traditions tend to be based on ideas of women's inferiority. They imply that women need fewer years to prepare for marriage as their duties are confined to childbearing or domestic roles.

2.5 Review of related literature

A review of related literature on determinants of early marriage of the girl child that is poverty, gender inequality, socio-cultural influence and illiteracy are discussed below.

2.6 Poverty and early marriage

An exploratory study on the link between poverty and early marriage carried out by FMRWG recognizes poverty as a major deciding factor for early marriage of girls especially in poorer households. Girls are viewed as additional burden on family resources and thus married off earlier as a family survival strategy (IRC, 2001). These marriages are often arranged by the family and include an exchange of bride price or wealth. The specific value of the bride payment varies between societies. In agricultural or pastoral communities this often consists of goods, money or livestock.

Unfortunately, while this strategy may in some instances place the girl in a better-off family environment, in many cases, the negative effects reinforce her vulnerability, and that of her children, to poverty in her marital home. "The younger the age at the time of marriage, the lower the probability that girls will have acquired critical skills and developed their personal capacity to manage adverse situations that may affect their overall welfare and economic well-being" (FMRWG 2003).

Mathur (2003) also agrees that poverty is one of the major factors underpinning early marriage. Where poverty is acute, a young girl may be regarded as an economic burden where one less

daughter is one less mouth to feed. Parents encourage the marriage of their daughters while they are still children in hope that the marriage will benefit them both financially and socially, while also relieving financial burdens on the family.

In this context, the link between early marriage and poverty is discussed in terms of ensuring a better future for girls, or of girls being financial burdens to their families. The latter is voiced in terms of "another mouth to feed". The aim is securing the survival of the family, depriving a girl of her education in order to give a better chance to her brothers, since her labor power and children will go to her husband's lineage anyway (Heinonen, 2002). Furthermore, in traditional societies where infant mortality was very high and survival depended on a family's ability to produce its own food or goods for sale, child marriage helped to maximize the number of pregnancies and ensure enough surviving children to meet household labor needs.

The links between early marriage and poverty imply that the tradition of early marriage is part of a circle of "poverty" in its broader sense. Statistics show that there are over 1 billion people living below the poverty line (on less than a dollar a day). The majority of whom are females and mainly live in rural areas of developing countries. This form of poverty is characterized by a lack of human capital such as livelihood, skills, education, interpersonal skills, good health (including sexual and reproductive health) and well-being (UNICEF, 2011).

Additionally the majority of poor people lack social assets and social networks (Diop et al 2002). Married adolescent girls, especially those from rural settings, are at most risk of being poor and will therefore manifest most of these characteristics of poverty. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the majority of married girls in rural communities tend to have mothers who are married early. Marriage becomes the only option available to such girls. Poorer mothers are more likely to transmit intergenerational poverty to their children.

Children born to young mothers will be disproportionately affected by the intergenerational transmission of poverty via nutrition which often begins in the womb of the malnourished mother (Harper et al 2003). Such children become stunted and underweight in early life and also experience slow-cognitive development. This may lead to learning difficulties-and adversely

affect their development of life skills-which will also, in turn, limit their productivity and earning opportunities, thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty into the next generation. This could be financial, material or environmental, or simply about acquisition of social values, knowledge or status. Young girls who have married early will therefore have fewer opportunities to acquire vital capabilities that can be used when they are in vulnerable situation.

Once married, young girls are no longer be able to stay in school. They tend to be socially isolated, sequestered at home to raise another generation of children where daughters are again deprived of opportunities to break out the intergenerational cycles of early marriage and poverty. Ultimately, it is the society, which pays for this. The young brides, as well as their children, face greater risks for illness and death. The young brides also represent “wasted human capital”, reduced to becoming “baby-makers” (Mathur, 2003)

2.7 Gender Inequality and early marriage

Gender inequality refers to disparity between individuals due to gender. Gender is a social construct which asserts that the expectations, capabilities and responsibilities of men and women are not always biologically determined. The gender roles assigned to men and women are significantly defined – structurally and culturally – in ways which create, reinforce, and perpetuate relationships of male dominance and female subordination.

Through the process of socialization within the family, in educational institutions and other social spheres, boys and girls are conditioned to behave in certain ways and to play different roles in society. They are encouraged to conform to established cultural norms by being rewarded or punished for their behaviour (Kimani, 2005).

Many societies endorse values that discriminate against girls and women. Girls are socialized to assume low status and their confidence and participation are discouraged, while boys are socialized into rigid roles to take charge of females. This cultural conditioning creates the norms behind traditional practices that harm girls, such as early and child marriage (UNICEF, 2005).

Gender inequality is a result of the persistent discrimination of one group of people based upon gender and it manifests itself differently according to race, culture, politics, country, and

economic situation. It is furthermore considered a causal factor of violence against women. While gender discrimination happens to both men and women in individual situations, discrimination against women is an entrenched, global pandemic. This is evidenced in the “missing girls” phenomenon in Asia, where it is estimated that due to the undervaluing of women and girls over 100 million girls are missing as a result of the infanticide of girl children, sex selection for boys, allocation of economic and nutritional resources away from girl children, and generalized violence against women and girls (Sagade, 2005). In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, rape and violence against women and girls is used as a tool of war (UNFPA, 2004).

Due to gender inequality, women lag behind men in many domains such as education, labor market opportunities and political representation. Preference is given to men as they are considered to be of more value than women. For instance educating girls is perceived to have low returns thus most families do not see the need to educate them or even keep them healthy. In Kenya, gender disparities still remain high in relation to access to education. Even with higher number of girls recorded after the introduction of Free Primary Education, gross enrolment rate was recorded 101.6 percent (boys gross enrolment rate recorded at 108.0%).

Table 2.1: Net Enrolment Rates (NER) for males and females after the introduction of FPE for 2006/2007 and 2008/2009

Province	2006/07			2008/09		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Nairobi	35.9	41.1	38.3	39.2	40.9	40.1
Central	81.4	81.8	81.6	81.9	87.0	87.4
Eastern	91.4	91.5	91.5	94.9	93.8	94.3
Rift Valley	87.8	85.0	86.6	87.9	85.3	86.6
Western	99.3	97.2	98.2	99.1	94.6	96.8
Nyanza	96.9	96.2	96.6	98.4	97.2	97.8
North Eastern	23.6	14.9	19.6	26.6	18.8	23.0
Coast	72.8	67.7	70.3	75.1	73.3	74.2

Source: Ministry of Education and APR 2008- 2009

When it comes to early marriage, gender inequality is evident whereby the practice affects girls in larger numbers and more intensity than boys. Even before a girl reaches puberty, it is common for her to get married and leave her parents to be with her husband often as a result of parents needing the bride price of a daughter to feed, clothe, educate, and house the rest of the family. Meanwhile, a male child in the same family is able to attain a full education, gain employment and pursue a working life, thus tending to marry later at the expense of the girl child. In Mali, the female: male ratio of marriage before age 18 is 72:1; in Kenya, 21:1 (Nour, 2006).

Gender inequalities continue to perpetuate early marriage through their impact on formal legal systems. In general, men tend to marry at a much older age than women or girls, and this is even reflected in some national laws where the legal minimum age for boys may be two or three years more than that for girls. For example in Ethiopia, Gabon and Burkina Faso, the legal minimum age at which a girl can marry is 15, whereas for boys it is 18. In light of these institutional disparities, it becomes clearer why a family with limited resources would struggle to upend these norms (FMWRG, 2000).

Across the globe, women and girls continue to occupy a lower status in society as a result of social and cultural traditions, attitudes and beliefs that deny them their rights and stifle their ability to play an equal role in their homes and communities. Although gender roles differ between cultures, and generations, and vary in relation to other factors including economic status, class, ethnicity, caste, sexuality, religion, HIV status or disability gender norms generally work to the disadvantage of women of all ages (Bruce et al, 2004). In many societies a young woman's place is seen as in the home. Yet, she is doubly disadvantaged because her youth reduces her status within her household and community. Because she does not have the same standing as her male peers, she is not perceived to have the same skills or capabilities, and so there is less value in educating her. This inevitably contributes to the view that a 'good marriage' is the most important way to secure a girl's wellbeing.

According to a study carried out by IPPF (2006) gender inequality persists in most societies despite global statements of commitment to empower women and improve gender equality. In many societies worldwide power structures are still overwhelmingly male-dominated or

patriarchal. Under such conditions, the marriage of girls is perceived as a necessary way of reinforcing existing norms. It ensures that girls and women accept their domestic roles and have a limited role within the wider society. This clearly results in women's total dependency on men as society does not see the point in enriching a daughter's human capital if society does not have a place for her outside of the home?

2.8. Socio-cultural practices and early marriage

In her study on early marriage and its effects on girl's education in rural Ethiopia, Emirie (2005) explains that the socio-cultural framework can be explored in terms of 'customs' and 'traditions' as two common denominators for the causes of early marriage. 'Customs' and 'traditions' can be understood as 'man made doctrines, beliefs, practices, or stories that are passed from generation to generation, orally or by example' (Heinonen 2002). Customs surrounding marriage, including the desirable age and the way in which a spouse is selected, depend on a society's view of the family—its role, structure, pattern of life and the individual and collective responsibilities of its members (UNICEF 2001).

2.8.1 Protection of girls

According to FMRWG (2005) early marriage is seen as one way of ensuring that a wife is "protected" or placed firmly under male control; that she is submissive to her husband and works hard for her in-laws' household; that the children she bears are 'legitimate. It has been observed that in child marriages there is invariably a large age gap between married women and their husbands—between 7-9 years. This is often because families pledge to give their daughters to benefactors even before birth takes place or after puberty.

The themes of *female purity* and *danger* permeate entrenched beliefs for maintaining the *status quo*. In societies where the honor of the family depends upon the honor of its women, there is a strong link between early marriage and the social goal of maintaining the reputation of daughters. Consequently, *virginity* becomes a necessary preliminary as well as an absolute prerequisite to marriage. This means that there is tremendous pressure on parents to marry off girls early to preserve family honour and minimize the risk of improper sexual activity or conducts (Sageda, 2005).

Girls in rural communities are withdrawn from school at first menstruation to restrict their movements in order to protect their sexuality (UNICEF, 2001). This is because once a girl has lost her virginity, and/or given birth out of wedlock, she is considered a woman, even if she is only 12 years old or younger (Heinonen 2002). Social pressure appears to play a significant role in the girl getting married early. If girls remain unmarried by 15, neighbors, villagers and relatives begin to doubt her chastity and health. Parents are under huge pressure not to give a chance to the society to pass any aspersion on their girls.

Equally, where girls become pregnant, either through consensual sex or rape, the stigma attached can lead families to view the girls' rights and wellbeing as secondary to the preservation of family 'honour'. In rural communities, fetching water and firewood are usually chores undertaken by young girls. There is frequently a serious fear of their being raped (FMRWG, 2005). The rape will be devastating with enormous implications for the girl. In many communities the rape is not considered to be a crime against a girl but against her father, husband, or brothers.

Situations of insecurity and acute poverty, particularly during disasters such as war, famine or the HIV and AIDS epidemic, can prompt parents to resort to child marriage as a protective mechanism or survival strategy. Among some populations which have been disrupted by war (Afghanistan), marrying a young daughter to a warlord or someone who can look after her may be a strategy for physical security or family support. In the worst cases, girls are abducted or kidnapped by armed militia or rebels and forced into temporary marriages which amount to "a combination of child prostitution and pure slavery (Mikhail, 2002).

Displaced populations living in refugee camps may feel unable to protect their daughters from rape, and so marriage to a warlord or other authority figure may provide improved protection (De Smedt, 1998). However, while recognizing that such reasons may derive from the need to protect girls, such marriages are still early and represent a grave denial of girls' sexual and reproductive rights.

2.8.2 Tradition, Culture and Religion

In communities where child marriage is prevalent there is strong social pressure on families to conform. Failure to conform can often result in ridicule, disapproval or family shame. Local myths encourage earlier marriage of girls – such as in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia where people perceive menstruation to be induced by intercourse – and such myths encourage earlier marriage of girls (IPPF, 2006). Invariably, local perceptions on the ideal age for marriage, the desire for submissive wives, extended family patterns and other customary requirements (e.g. dowries or bride price), are all enshrined in local customs or religious norms.

In many contexts child marriage is legitimized by patriarchy, and related family structures, which ensure that marriage transfers a father's role over his girl child to her future spouse. This is often encouraged to take place before a girl reaches the age when she might question it. The reality for many women and girls in rural areas is that their daily lives are more often dictated by customary laws than by national laws (UNICEF, 2005).

However, the most important of the reported reasons for the practice is the cultural value and personal importance of witnessing the marriage of one's children (sons and daughters) and grandchildren. This is considered a mark of manhood/fatherhood. Analysis reveals that what is really sought here is not the satisfaction or well-being of the daughters, but that of the parents. It appears that a man's status in the community is greatly influenced by the success of his children, and for a girl, that means marriage (Senderowitz, 2007).

Still on negative traditional practices, early marriages are essentially a means of relations between families or a way of settling disputes or sealing deals over land and property. In Pakistan, the "Watta Satta" or exchange marriage is a common way of exchanging girls between families in order to strengthen familial ties. Another practice, known either as "Vani or Swara", involves girls being offered as appeasement or compensation for a wrong done to one family, tribe or clan, by another (Lane, 2011).

Religious practices also perpetuate early marriage and this best supported by the following views of one priest representing Ethiopian's Orthodox Church. He argues that "these *days, with*

western ideas spread everywhere; girls stay unmarried as late as 30. It is very scientific and modern, but in our church it is prohibited. Such girls are neither clean, nor blessed". For Muslims, the concept of marriage is a traditional act that is important for the progress of both the individual and society as childbirth and family are central to the purpose of life (Esposito, 2001). One of the requirements of marriage according to Islamic law is that the woman be of sound mind and a consenting adult. However, an adult woman is considered one who has attained puberty and by the standards of pre- Islamic law, this is at the age of nine.

2.9 Education and early marriage

Education in its broadest sense is a mechanism of socialization (Odetola and Ademola, 1985). In any society, there are socially recognized ways in which the norms and values of the society are inculcated into the new members. Without some processes of socialization the society itself would cease to persist. Education involves both *informal (traditional) education* and *formal education (schooling)*.

Informal education occurs primarily in the family groups, its agents are not specified and it may occur at any time and at any place. Formal education, on the other hand, is entirely institutionalized, its agents are trained teachers and it is carried out at specified times and places (Zanolli, 1971). Both formal and informal education systems help the child to acquire various skills, knowledge and attitudes, which will prepare him/her for personhood and the important roles he/she is expected to play in a certain society.

The school is the most important institution outside the family involved in socializing young people into all dimensions of adult roles and responsibilities. More years of schooling have been associated with many positive outcomes, including later ages of marriage, lower fertility, and healthier and better educated children, economic development (Odetola and Ademola, 1985).

Illiteracy and lack of education means many girls and their families see few alternatives for the future. In Niger, where early marriage rates approach the highest in the world, only 15 percent of adult women are literate and less than one-third of girls are enrolled in primary school (UNICEF, 2011).^{*} In Ghana's^{*} Upper-West Region estimates show that 40 per cent of girls with

no schooling are married before age 14, making the practise twice as common as it is for girls with some education (World Vision, 2007). For every 100 married girls ages 15 to 19 in Ethiopia, only three are in school, compared with 34 percent of unmarried girls in the same age set (EDHS, 2006). In the Amhara region, 78 percent of never-married girls and women younger than 24 have attended school, compared with 8.9 percent of married girls (Pathfinder International, 2006)

By contrast, a UNICEF study has found that women with seven or more years of education marry an average of four years later and have fewer children than those with no education (UNICEF, 2001). Uneducated parents are most likely to be ignorant of laws prohibiting child marriage and of the serious health risks that early sexual debut and pregnancy pose for girls. They are also more likely to see the education of females as wasteful rather than a sound investment. School is seen as irrelevant in societies where a girl's role is restricted to the home. Many girls are kept out of classes to do chores such as cooking, tending to animals or fetching water. Girls who manage to attend school are more likely to drop out in the absence of expectations to perform well and advance. Boys are more likely than girls to continue with education, particularly in rural areas and in poor families who can't afford to pay school fees for all of their children. Without educated females to serve as role models in a community, the multiple, proven benefits of educating girls aren't readily apparent (Nzomo et al, 2000).

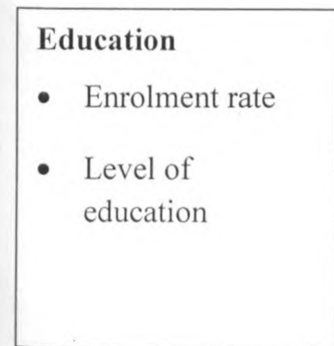
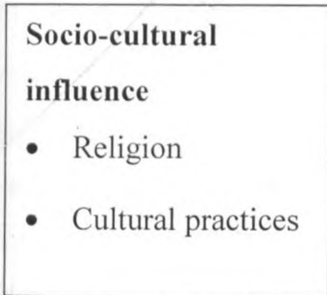
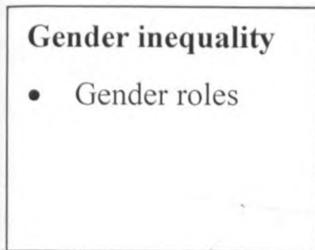
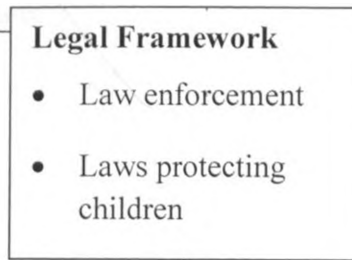
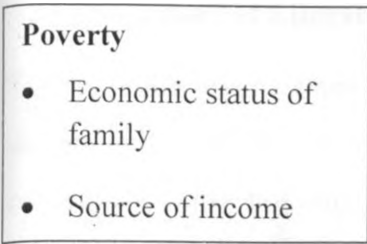
Long distances and lack of transportation also discourage access to education, especially in isolated areas where the closest school can be dozens of kilometres away. Parents fear their daughters may be harassed or attacked at school or while travelling between home and school, or they will engage in illicit relationships that expose them to pregnancy outside of marriage. Uneducated girls have few alternatives for their future because they often lack the life skills and self-confidence to be economically independent. Ignorance of rights, skills and health matters typically deprives young wives of decision-making power and makes them vulnerable to violence and abuse (Laugham, 2007).

2.10 Conceptual framework

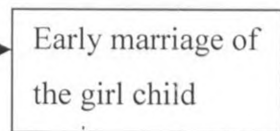
Figure 1. A conceptual framework of determinants of early marriage of the girl child

Independent variables

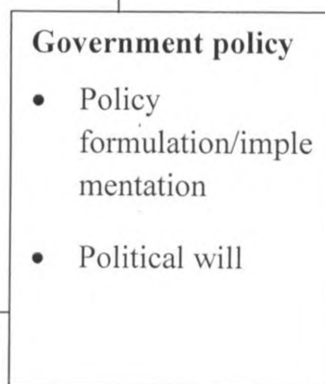
Intervening variable



Dependent variable



Moderating variable



The conceptual framework above shows that poverty, gender inequality, socio-cultural influence and illiteracy influence early marriage of the girl child. However this relationship can be altered by the legal framework and government policies in place.

2.11 Summary of Literature Review

The literature review starts by giving a brief overview of early marriage so as to give a better understanding of the concept. According to the literature, early marriage has far reaching consequences that not only affect the girl child but society as a whole as depicted in the cycle of poverty, neglect and abuse.

Early marriage is a violation of a girl's rights as it denies her the opportunities to develop to her full potential. Of key concern is the denial of childhood and adolescence, the curtailment of personal freedom, the lack of opportunity to develop a full sense of self-hood, and the denial of psychosocial and emotional well-being, reproductive health and educational opportunity all as a result of early marriage.

Finally the study discusses four key factors that stand out in various studies that influence early marriage that is poverty, gender inequality, socio-cultural influence and illiteracy. Poverty is indicated by the economic status of the family which is determined by ability to access basic needs. Gender inequality is determined by gender roles and access to education. Socio-cultural influence is largely influenced by religion and cultural beliefs. Illiteracy is indicated by enrolment rate, level of education and poverty. These factors are well illustrated in the conceptual framework.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the study methodology that was used in the research project. This includes the research design, target population, sampling procedure, methods of data collection, validity and reliability of data collection instruments, methods of data analysis, operational definition of variables and finally ethical considerations.

3.2 Research design

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. Emirie (2005) also used the same design in her study on early marriage and its effects on girls' education in rural Ethiopia. Kraemer (1993) defines a descriptive survey as a means for gathering information about the characteristics, actions, or opinions of a large group of people. Surveys are capable of obtaining information from large samples of the population.

This design was best suited for this study as it was able to elicit information about attitudes that are otherwise difficult to measure using observational techniques. Furthermore, surveys require minimal investment to develop and administer, and are relatively easy for making generalizations (McIntyre, 1999).

3.3 Target population

This study was conducted in Malindi District, Kilifi County. Data available at the Malindi Child Protection Centre revealed that 480 women were married before the age of 18 years. For the purpose of this study, a sample size that formed part of the respondents was drawn from the target population i.e. women married before attaining the age of 18 years. Key informants were also interviewed and they included the Malindi District Child Protection Officers, NGOs dealing with children issues within the district and finally the Provincial Administration.

3.4 Sample size and Sample procedures

The sample size had a far reaching implication to this study. Probability of getting a representation of the target population was of great significance. The participants to the study

constituted of key informants whom the researcher believed would provide the data needed. The sample also consisted of households which possessed characteristics relevant to the study. The desired sample when population is less than 10,000 was given by the following formulae;

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

Where: n= Desired sample size when population is less than 10,000

e = sampling error

N=Population size

At 95% Confidence level the sampling error is 0.05. Therefore

This implied that the desired sample =

$$n = \frac{480}{1 + 480(0.05)^2} = 218$$

By use of the provincial administration and village elders 218 households that fall under the three divisions in Malindi District were purposively selected for this study. The 218 households selected were expected to provide data from individual women survivors of child marriage. 10 key informants that is the Malindi Child Protection Centre, 5 NGOs actively involved in child issues within Malindi District (AMREF, Aphia Plus, World Vision, Child Fund and Cradle) and the Provincial Administration (3 randomly selected chiefs representing locations that fall within the 3 divisions and the Malindi District Officer) also formed part of the study.

3.5 Data collection methodology

Questionnaires and interview schedules were the main instruments of data collection. The questionnaires helped the researcher gather information on knowledge, attitudes and opinions of the respondents on early marriage. The questionnaire was best suited for this study because of its practicability, in that it was used to collect information from a large number of people within a short period of time and in a relatively cost effective way.

It was administered by the researcher and selected enumerators with limited effect to its validity and reliability. Both open ended and closed ended questions were used. Open ended questions

allowed the respondents' to provide sufficient details while the closed ended questions allowed easy quantification of results by the researcher by use of SPSS.

3.6 Data collection procedure

A tool kit comprising of a questionnaire and face-to-face interview guide was used since they were the best tools for this type of study that sought to establish the determinants of early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District. The questionnaire was prepared based on an extensive review of the literature on early marriage. Data collection tools were piloted and suggestions made before finalizing the questionnaire. A seven-point Likert scale was used to answer most of the questions in the survey. The study utilized a self-administered questionnaire and in-depth interview techniques as well as access to secondary data.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of research instruments

Validity and reliability of the research instruments was established as follows;

3.7.1 Validity of the research instrument

Norland (1999) refers to validity as the quality that a procedure or instrument or a tool used in research is accurate, correct, true and meaningful. The research intended to use content validity as a measure of the degree to which data collected using the questionnaire represented the objectives of the study. The instrument was given to the officer in charge of Malindi District Child Protection to assess what the instrument was trying to measure and his views were incorporated in the final questionnaire.

3.7.2 Reliability of the research instrument

Mugenda (2003) says that reliability is concerned with estimates of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results after repeated trials. For the purpose of this research, reliability was determined by a test-retest administered to 20 subjects not included in the sample. Interviewers were instructed to carefully identify ambiguous and inappropriate questions that were not clear or were offending. Valuable input was obtained during the operation, which was used to modify the questionnaire, and a final version was produced.

3.8 Data analysis and presentation techniques

The qualitative data collected from open ended questions was coded to enable for quantitative analysis. The coded data was analysed by use of descriptive statistics namely frequency tables. The hypothesis was tested by use of chi square. Data analysis was done using SPSS 16.0.

3.9 Ethical considerations

All the relevant government authorities were informed prior to the study to avoid any suspicious speculations from the community. There was need to inform other relevant stake holders on the objective of the study and at the same time assure them that the study findings and recommendations would be shared with them after the study. Due to the sensitivity of the study, consent was sought from the respondents whose participation in this study was on voluntary basis. Confidentiality of the identity of the respondents and the information they provided was also guaranteed.

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3.10 Operational definition of variables

Table 3.1 Operational definition of variables

Research Objectives	Type of Variable	Indicator	Measure	Level of Scale	Research Design	Data collection method	Level of Analysis
To determine whether poverty influences early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County.	Independent variable: Poverty	Economic status of family	Ability to access basic needs	Nominal scale	Survey	Questionnaire	Descriptive : Central tendency
To examine how gender inequality contributes to early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County	Independent variable: Gender inequality	Gender roles, access to education	Social expectations, preference in regards to access to education opportunities	Nominal scale	Survey	Questionnaire	Descriptive : Central tendency
To establish the role of socio-cultural influence in perpetuating early marriage in girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County.	Independent variable: Socio-cultural influences	Religion, cultural practices	Adherence to prescribed religious instructions and cultural practices	Nominal scale	Survey	Questionnaire	Descriptive : Central tendency

Research Objectives	Type of Variable	Indicator	Measure	Level of Scale	Research Design	Data collection method	Level of Analysis
To determine whether illiteracy contributes to early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County	Independent variable: Illiteracy	Enrolment rate, level of education	Number of school going children, education attainment	Nominal scale	Survey	Questionnaire	Descriptive : Central tendency

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data analysis and provides the interpretation of analyzed data for this study on the determinants of early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District.

4.2 Response Rate

An analysis of the rate at which questionnaires distributed were returned and completed is discussed in this section.

Table 4.1: Response rate of respondents

Category	Number of cases (N)	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires returned	146	67
Questionnaires not returned	72	33
Total Questionnaires submitted	218	100

The data was collected from a cross-section of young women who had been married before attaining the age of 18 years in Malindi District. Out of 218 questionnaires distributed to the respondents, 146 were submitted back to the researcher giving a response rate of 67 percent. The response rate was above 50 % and therefore a representative sample of the population

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The population under study had varying demographic characteristics including age, marital status, religion and the size of their family. These factors often influence an individual's perception and response to an issue.

4.3.1 Age of the respondents

The study focused on women or girls married below the age of 18 years. Table 4.2 shows 88 percent of the respondents were aged above 20 years among whom only 6 were aged above 40yrs. The remaining 12 percent were aged below 18 years.

Table 4.2: Age of the respondents

Age bracket of respondents (yrs)	Number of cases (N)	Percentage (%)
less than 20	18	12
21-25	36	25
26-30	44	30
31-35	31	21
36-40	11	8
above 40	6	4
Total	146	100

4.3.2 Marital status of the respondents

Respondents had been asked to indicate their marital status. Table 4.3 illustrates 77 percent of the respondents were married, 15 percent were single while 4 percent were divorced. 3 percent of the respondents gave no response to this particular question.

Table 4.3: Marital status of the respondents

Marital status	Number of cases (N)	Percentage (%)
Single	21	15
Married	112	77
Divorced	6	4
Separated	2	1
No response	5	3
Total	146	100

4.3.3 Level of education of respondents

Table 4.4 shows that most of the respondents had acquired basic education with an overwhelming 82 percent indicating that they completed at least primary education. Only 5 percent had completed college while 11 percent gave no response to this question.

Table 4.4: Level of education of respondents

Respondents level of education	Number of cases (N)	Percentage (%)
None	3	2
Primary	57	39
Secondary	62	43
College and above	8	5
No response	16	11
Total	146	100

4.3.4 Occupation of the respondents

Despite their level of education, 33 percent of the respondents were house wives, 29 percent were casual labourers with only 11 percent earning a salary as shown in table 4.5. From these results the number of respondents earning a salary was far less than that of those who did not earn a salary.

Table 4.5: Occupation of the respondents

Respondents occupation	Number of cases (N)	Percentage (%)
House wife	48	33
Wage labor- casual	42	29
Wage labor- salary	17	11
Peasant	17	11
Business woman	6	4
Retired	1	1
No response	15	11
Total	146	100

4.4 Poverty and early marriage

Economic status which is often determined by source of income plays a major role in determining whether a girl will get married early.

4.4.1 Sources of income of respondents' parents

The study investigated the sources of income of respondents' parents as shown in table 4.6

Table 4.6: Source of income of respondents' parents

Source of income	Number of cases	Percentage (%)
None	46	31
Wage labor- casual	39	27
Wage labor- salary	22	15
Business	16	11
No response	23	16
Total	146	100

The study findings revealed that 31 % of the respondents' parents had no source of income. 27 % relied on meager income from casual labour and only 15 % had a salary. 11% of the respondents' parents got income from their businesses. From the above a significant proportion of 31 % of the respondents' parents had no source of income and thus married their girls off early to reduce the burden of raising them.

4.4.2 Testing of research hypothesis

The study sought to test the following research hypothesis:

H_0 : poverty does not contribute to early marriage of the girl child.

H_1 : poverty contributes to early marriage of the girl child.

Table 4.7: Chi square values on sources of income

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
None	46	29.2	16.8
Wage labour-casual	39	29.2	9.8
Wage labour-salary	22	29.2	-7.2
Business	16	29.2	-13.2
No response	23	29.2	-6.2
Total	146		

Table 4.7 shows the observed and expected values for each category.

Table 4.8: Chi square values on age at marriage

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
less than 14	16	29.2	-13.2
15-16	31	29.2	1.8
17-18	67	29.2	37.8
over 18	5	29.2	-24.2
no response	27	29.2	-2.2
Total	146		

Table 4.8 shows the observed and expected values for each category.

Table 4.9: Relationship between poverty and early marriage

	Source of income	age at marriage
Chi-Square	22.014	75.233
Df	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000

Table 4.9 shows that the chi square value computed on source of income is 22.014 at 4 degrees of freedom. The computed value is larger than the table value of chi square which is 9.49. The chi square value computed for age at marriage is given as 75.233 at 4 degrees of freedom. The computed value is also larger than the table value of chi square which is 9.49. This therefore means that we reject the null hypothesis that poverty does not contribute to early marriage of the girl child and accept the alternative hypothesis that poverty contributes to early marriage of the girl child.

4.5 Gender inequality and early marriage

Gender inequality manifests itself differently and for the purpose of this study age at marriage of the respondents and the age of their spouses at marriage was used to show how gender inequality leads to early marriage.

4.5.1 Age at the time of marriage of the respondents

When asked about their age at the time of marriage, 46 % of the respondents said they were married at between the age of 17-18 years, 21 % were married at the age between 15-16 years and 11 % got married before the age of 14. Only 3 percent claimed that they were over 18 years at the time of marriage while 19 percent did not answer this question. From the results, at least 78 percent of the sample population affirmed that they got married before the attained the age of 18 years.

Table 4.10: Age at marriage of respondents

Age at marriage of respondent (yrs)	Number of respondents (N)	Percentage (%)
less than 14	16	11
15-16	31	21
17-18	67	46
over 18	5	3
No response	27	19
Total	146	100

4.5.2 Age at marriage of the respondents' spouses

Table 4.11 gives a summary of the age at marriage of the respondents' spouses.

Table 4.11: Age at marriage of respondents' spouse

Age at marriage of the respondents' spouse	Number of cases (N)	Percentage (P)
Less than 20	27	18
21-25	43	30
26 to 30	39	27
31-35	9	6
36-40	4	3
No response	24	16
Total	146	100

It is evident that unlike the 78 % of respondents who were married before the age of 18, only 18 % of their spouse got married below the age of 20 years with a significant proportion marrying between ages 21-25 years. This showed that most early marriages affected the girl child.

4.5.3 Testing of research hypothesis

The study sought to test the following hypothesis;

H₀; Gender inequality does not contribute to early marriage of the girl child

H₁; Gender inequality contributes to early marriage

Table 4.12: Chi square values on age at marriage of spouse

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
less than 20	27	24.3	2.7
21-25	43	24.3	18.7
26-30	39	24.3	14.7
31-35	9	24.3	-15.3
36-40	4	24.3	-20.3
No response	24	24.3	-.3
Total	146		

Table 4.12 shows the observed and expected values for number of persons in each category.

Table 4.13: Chi square values on age at marriage of respondents

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
less than 14	16	29.2	-13.2
15-16	31	29.2	1.8
17-18	67	29.2	37.8
over 18	5	29.2	-24.2
No response	27	29.2	-2.2
Total	146		

Table 4.13 shows the observed and expected values for number of persons in each category.

Table 4.14 Relationship between gender inequality and early marriage

	Spouse	Respondent
Chi-Square	50.110	75.233
Df	5	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000

Table 4.14 shows that the chi square value computed on spouse's age at the time of marriage is 50.110 at 5 degrees of freedom. The computed value is larger than the table value of chi square which is 11.07. The chi square value computed for age at marriage of respondent is given as 75.233 at 4 degrees of freedom. The computed value is also larger than the table value of chi square which is 9.49. This implies that we reject the null hypothesis that gender inequality does not contribute to early marriage of the girl child and accept the alternative hypothesis that gender inequality contributes to early marriage of the girl child.

4.6 Socio-cultural practices and early marriage

This section sought to establish the role of social and cultural influence in perpetuating early marriage.

4.6.1 Perception of respondents on appropriate time for marriage

The respondents were asked the best period for a woman to get married. Their responses are summarized in table 4.15.

Table 4.15: Perception of respondents on appropriate time for marriage

Best period of marriage	Number of respondents (N)	Percentage (%)
Don't know	17	12
Does not matter	22	15
After primary school	34	23
After high school	54	37
After college/University	19	13
Total	146	100

Statistical results revealed that 37 % of the respondents felt that the best time for a woman to get married was after high school. 23% were for the idea that a woman may be married any time

after primary school while 12 % said they were not sure of the time a woman should get married. Only 13 percent were in agreement that marriage should be after college education. These perceptions could easily influence early marriage in Malindi District.

4.6.2 Testing of research hypothesis

The study sought to test the following hypothesis;

H₀: Socio-cultural practices do not contribute to early marriage of the girl child

H₁: Socio-cultural practices contribute to early marriage of the girl child

Table 4.16: Chi square values on appropriate time for marriage

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
dont know	17	29.2	-12.2
does not matter	22	29.2	-7.2
after primary school	34	29.2	4.8
after high school	54	29.2	24.8
after college	19	29.2	-10.2
Total	146		

Table 4.16 and 4.17 show the observed and expected values of respondents' opinion on the appropriate time for marriage and age at marriage respectively.

Table 4.17: Chi square values on age at marriage

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
less than 14	16	29.2	-13.2
15-16	31	29.2	1.8
17-18	67	29.2	37.8
over 18	5	29.2	-24.2
no response	27	29.2	-2.2
Total	146		

Table 4.18 Relationship between socio-cultural practices and early marriage

	Appropriate time for marriage	Age at marriage
Chi-Square	32.288	75.233
Df	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000

Table 4.18 shows that the chi square value computed on appropriate time of marriage is 50.32.288 at 4 degrees of freedom. The computed value is larger than the table value of chi square which is 9.49. The chi square value computed for age at marriage is given as 75.233 at 4 degrees of freedom. The computed value is also larger than the table value of chi square which is 9.49. This implies that we reject the null hypothesis that socio-cultural practices do not contribute to early marriage of the girl child and accept the alternative hypothesis that socio-cultural practices contribute to early marriage of the girl child.

4.6.3 Perception of respondents' on appropriate age for marriage

When asked about the age a woman should attain before marriage, 32 % of the respondents had no issue with women getting married below 18 years. However, 68% of the respondents were in agreement that women should get married after the age of 18 years. This showed that majority of the respondents were not in support of early marriage and other determinants could have attributed to their early marriage.

Table 4.19: Perception of respondents on appropriate age for marriage

Age for a woman to get married	Number of Respondents (N)	Percentage (%)
Does not matter	18	12
Below 15 years	7	5
Between 15-18	22	15
Above 18 years	99	68
Total	146	100

4.6.4 Reasons for early marriage

This section asked the respondents to rank in order reasons why women in Malindi District were involved in early marriage, the greatest reason was ranked one and the least reason was ranked seven. Table 4.20 shows the greatest reason given for early marriage to be poverty in Malindi district. The least ranked item was self-satisfaction other reasons that were ranked highly include pregnancies among the young women and lack of education. Arranged marriages which is a cultural factor was also lowly ranked showing that social rather than cultural factors greatly influence early marriage.

Table 4.20: Reasons for early marriage

Reason for early marriage	Mean	Sd	Rank
Poverty	2.43	1.26	1
Pregnancy	2.85	1.78	2
Lack of education	3.32	1.83	3
Gender inequality	3.89	1.4	4
Arranged marriages	4.64	4.81	5
Escape parent control	5.39	2.11	6
Self-satisfaction	5.46	1.48	7

4.6.5 Reaction of respondents on issues of early marriage

The researcher went further to examine the respondents' reactions on some selected issues regarding early marriage in Malindi district using a six point Likert scale. Likert scale consisted of responses of strongly disagreeing equaling to 1 to strongly agreeing equaling to 6. Table 4.21 show that the respondents strongly affirm that women should be married after high school at this instance most women usually have attained the age of 18 years. Most of the respondents were in agreement that early marriage affects young women as compared to young men. It was evident from this study that the respondents had limited information on both the existence of government policies on early marriage and organizations that focus on early marriage as evidenced by a low mean of 1.95. The respondents did not agree that early marriages last less than 5 years and also disagreed on the statement indicating that early marriage result in better financial stability. The respondents strongly felt that gender inequality was a major determinant of early marriage.

Table 4.21: Reaction of respondents' on issues of early marriage

Statement	Mean	Sd
Most early marriages in Malindi involve men below 18 years	3.98	1.25
Most early marriages in Malindi involve women below 18 years	4.61	1.24
There are high chances of continuing with school after early marriage.	4.26	1.42
Women should get married after finishing high school	5.78	0.48
Gender inequality negatively impacts early marriage	4.55	1.23
Most early marriages do not last for more than 5 years	2.61	1.46
Am aware of government policies in view of early marriage	1.95	1.1
Early marriages result in better financial stability	2.47	1.09
Am aware of organizations that focus on early marriages	3.16	1.24

4.7 Education and early marriage

The study sought to prove whether the level of education of the respondents' parents contributed to their early marriage.

4.7.1 Education level of respondents' parents

Table 4.22: Education level of respondents' parents

Level of education	Number of cases (N)	Percentage (%)
None	48	33
Primary	56	39
Secondary	34	23
College and above	8	5
Total	146	100

Table 4.22 illustrates that 39 % of the respondents' parents had completed primary school. Only 5 % of the parents managed to proceed to college while 23 % had the opportunity to reach secondary school. 33% had never been to school. This shows that the greatest percentage of parents just like their children had only managed to complete primary school which shows that the community is characterized by low levels of education.

4.7.2 Testing of research hypothesis

The study sought to test the following hypothesis:

H_0 : Level of education does not contribute to early marriage of the girl child

H_1 : Level of education contributes to early marriage of the girl child

Table 4.23: Chi square values on level of education

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
none	48	36.5	11.5
primary	56	36.5	19.5
secondary	34	36.5	-2.5
College and above	8	36.5	-28.5
Total	146		

Table 4.23 shows the observed and expected values on level of education.

Table 4.24: Chi square values on age at marriage

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
less than 14	16	29.2	-13.2
15-16	31	29.2	1.8
17-18	67	29.2	37.8
over 18	5	29.2	-24.2
no response	27	29.2	-2.2
Total	146		

Table 4.24 shows the observed and expected values on age at marriage.

Table 4.25: Relationship between level of education and early marriage

	Level of education	Age at marriage
Chi-Square	34.466	75.233
Df	3	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000

Table 4.25 shows that the chi-square value on the level of education is 34.466, at 3 degrees of freedom. The computed value is larger than the table value of the chi-square which is 7.82. The chi-square value on the appropriate time of marriage is given as 75.233, at 4 degrees of freedom. The computed value is also larger than the table value of the chi-square which is 9.49. This implies that we reject the null hypothesis that the level of education does not contribute to early marriage of the girl child and accept the alternative hypothesis that the level of education contributes to early marriage of the girl child.

4.8 Analysis of key informants' data

Discussions with key informants revealed that the early marriages were on the increase with key determinants being the high poverty levels, gender inequality, effects of tourism and poor implementation of policies on child protection in Malindi District. These key informants included employees of Malindi District Child Protection Centre, non-governmental organizations operating in Malindi and provincial administration officers' administration.

One of the key informants from CRADLE attributed early marriages to inconsistent laws and poor enforcement of the laws on early marriage. In spite of the multiple risks early marriage poses, Kenya's marriage laws do not adequately protect young women and most often majority of the cases of early marriage are not reported.

The key informants further attributed the rising child abuse cases to influence from the tourism industry, culture, religion and illiteracy among parents. They believe tourism plays a major role because most of the culprits are beach boys who get money from the tourists and lure innocent school girls into marriage. They use the money to influence both the poor parents and their

daughters. Poverty in some instances made parents 'sell' their daughters in exchange of dowry. Having many children may decrease already scarce resources in a poor family. Girls are viewed as additional burden on family resources and thus married off earlier as a family survival strategy

While lack of education is a risk factor for girls entering into early marriage, denial of education was quoted as a direct consequence of early marriage according to the provincial administration. Often, the denial of education, which stunts girls' intellectual development and productivity, has had grave repercussions for the community in Malindi. This is because it continues to perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

According to the child protection officers, communities in Malindi have had a history of discriminating against girls and women. Girls are socialized to assume low status and their confidence and participation are discouraged, while boys are socialized into rigid roles to take charge of females. For instance educating girls is perceived to have low returns thus most families did not see the need to educate them or even keep them healthy. In other cases, they have lost the battles at the altar of religious and cultural beliefs after some Muslim religious leaders intervened to support such marriages, saying their religion allowed girls to marry even at nine years.

Quoting from the constitution of Kenya, one of the area Chiefs stated that a person must be over 18 years to consent to marriage but the cases on early marriage reported to his office are overwhelming. This he said has forced the provincial administration to use members of community policing to help arrest parents marrying off their young children.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter contains a presentation of the summary of findings, conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary of findings

The study sought to establish the determinants of early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County and came up with the following findings.

On how poverty influences early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County, the respondents' parents source of income was used to assess this particular objective. The findings revealed that 32 % of the respondents' parents had no source of income. 27 % relied on meager income from casual labour and only 15 % had a salary. 11% of the respondents' parents got income from their businesses. From the above a significant proportion of 32 % of the respondents' parents had no source of income and thus married their girls off early to reduce the burden of raising them.

The second objective sought to examine how gender inequality contributes to early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County. When asked their age at the time of marriage 46 % of the respondents said they were married between age 17-18 years, 21 % were married at the age of 15-16 years and 11 % got married before the age of 14. Only 3 percent claimed that they were over 18 years at the time of marriage while 19 percent did not answer this question. From the results, at least 78 percent of the sample population affirmed that they got married before they attained the age of 18 years.

When asked the age at the time of marriage of their spouses, it emerged that unlike the 78 % of respondents who were married before the age of 18, only 18 % of their spouses got married

below the age of 20 years with a significant proportion of 30% marrying between ages 21-25 years. This showed that most early marriages affected the girl child.

On the role of socio-cultural influence in perpetuating early marriage, statistical results revealed that 37 % of the respondents felt that the best time for a woman to get married was after high school. 23% were for the idea that a woman may be married any time after primary school while 12 % said they were not sure of the time a woman should get married. Only 13 percent were in agreement that marriage should be after college education. These perceptions could easily influence early marriage in Malindi District.

When asked about the age a woman should attain before marriage, 32 % of the respondents had no issue with women getting married below 18 years. However, 68% of the respondents were in agreement that women should get married after the age of 18 years. This showed that majority of the respondents were not in support of early marriage and other determinants could have attributed to their early marriage.

In order to fully understand the role of socio-cultural practices in early marriage, the respondents were asked to rank in order reasons as to why women in Malindi District were involved in early marriage. The greatest reason given for early marriage was high poverty levels in Malindi district. The least ranked item was self-satisfaction other reasons that were ranked highly include pregnancies among the young women and lack of education. Arranged marriages which is a cultural factor was also lowly ranked showing that social rather than cultural factors greatly influence early marriage.

In order to gauge the respondents' reactions to different social and cultural issues relevant to early marriage, the respondents strongly affirmed that women should be married after high school at this instance most women usually have attained the age of 18 years. Most of the respondents were in agreement that early marriage affects young women as compared to young men. It was evident from this study that the respondents had limited information on both the existence of government policies on early marriage and organizations that focus on early marriage as evidenced by a low mean of 1.95. The respondents did not agree that early marriages

last less than 5 years and also disagreed on the statement indicating that early marriage result in better financial stability. The respondents strongly felt that gender inequality was a major determinant of early marriage.

The final objective sought to establish how literacy contributes to early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County. The level of education of the respondents' parents was used to this end. Results showed that 39 % of the respondents' parents had completed primary school. Only 5 % of the parents managed to proceed to college while 23 % had the opportunity to reach secondary school. 33% of the respondents' parents had never been to school. This shows that the greatest percentage of parents just like their children had only managed to complete primary school and only a bare minimum had completed at least college.

5.3 Discussions

The study findings show that poverty in Malindi District was ranked as the highest reason for early marriage. An exploratory study on the link between poverty and early marriage carried out by FMRWG (2003), recognizes poverty as the major deciding factor for early marriage of girls especially in poorer households.

According to the key informants of the study, poverty in some instances made parents "sell" their daughters in exchange of dowry. Having many children was seen to decrease already scarce resources in a poor family and girls are viewed as additional burden on family resources and thus married off earlier as a family survival strategy. Matur (2003) also states that where poverty is acute, a young girl may be regarded as an economic burden where one less daughter is one less mouth to feed. Parents therefore encourage the marriage of their young daughters in the hope that it will benefit them financially by relieving financial burdens of the family.

Gender inequality was evidenced by the disparities at age of first marriage between girls and boys. While majority of the females got married below the age of 18 years, most of the males got married at 20 years of age and above. This confirmed that early marriage affects girls in large numbers and intensity than boys. Nour (2006) says at the age of 20 years and above, a male child has had a chance to attain a full education, gain employment and pursue a working life and thus

tend to marry later. The girl child is not accorded the same privilege as she is married off at the onset of puberty and the bride price given to her parents is often used to feed and educate the rest of her siblings.

In communities where child marriage is prevalent there is strong social pressure on families to conform. According to IPPF (2006), local perceptions on the ideal age for marriage and other customary requirements such as dowry or bride price encourage early marriage of girls. From the study, poverty was ranked as a greatest reason for early marriage and this was because it offered a way out for poor families through dowry. Early pregnancy was also another reason behind early marriage due to avoid ridicule by society. Although some women did not see anything wrong with getting married below the age of 18 years majority were of the opinion that girls should be married after having attained the age of 18 years. This would give them a chance to complete at least high school and therefore able to engage in viable economic activities.

A study conducted by UNICEF (2005) on early marriage found that uneducated parents see the education of females as a wasteful rather than a sound investment. Furthermore they were most likely to be ignorant of laws prohibiting early marriage and of the serious health risk that early sexual debut and pregnancy pose for the young girls. This study confirmed the above findings in that majority of the parents just like their daughters had minimal education qualifications showing that not much importance was placed on education. Had the case been different, then the children would have higher qualifications than their parents.

5.4 Conclusion

Based on the results of this study the researcher was able to draw the following conclusions:- High poverty levels in Malindi District, Kilifi County was the main reason behind early marriage of the girl child. In order to break from the cycle of poverty, parents marry off their daughters with the hope of financial gain through dowry.

Gender inequality plays a significant role in early marriage of the girl child which was evidenced by the higher number of girls getting married at an early age as compared to the boys.

This proved the fact that early marriage affects in large numbers and greater intensity than the boys.

On socio-cultural practices it emerged that fear of being ostracized as a result of early pregnancy contributed to early marriage. Despite the fact that majority of the respondents were married below the age of 18 years they did not advocate for early marriage saying that girls should be given a chance to complete high school first. It emerged that arranged marriages were not prevalent and that other forces such as poverty were the driving factors of early marriage.

Finally from the study it was clear that education is not held in high regard. This was evidenced by the fact that majority of the parents and their children have minimal education qualifications. Thus low level of education in the area does contribute to early marriage.

5.5 Recommendations

The researcher made the following recommendations;

1. The high poverty level in Malindi District needs to be addressed urgently in order to assist in the fight against the practice of early marriage.
2. Efforts should be put in place to ensure that girls have equal opportunities to develop themselves as the boys. They should not be used to advance opportunities for others through early marriage but should also be given a chance to advance themselves. This will go a long way in improving the living standards of the community at large.
3. Negative social and cultural practices that contribute to early marriage should be done away with. The community needs to be sensitized on the negative consequences of early marriage. Furthermore the community members should be made aware of the laws against early marriage and their accompanying consequences to deter them from perpetuating the vice.
4. There is need to increase awareness on the important role of education and especially that of girls. The community members need to be made aware that the benefits of education are far reaching and in effect will solve majority of their problems.

5.6 Suggestions for further research

There is need for further research to establish if providing positive incentives such as financial assistance to parents will make them delay the marriage of their daughters and therefore reduce the incidence of early marriage.

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APPENDICES
Appendix I
Letter of Transmittal

Christine Njagi
P.O. Box 366
Malindi.
Tel: 0722 690216
Email: ckanini@gmail.com
Date

Dear Participant,

My name is Christine Njagi and I am a post graduate student at the University of Nairobi. For my final project, I am carrying out a study on the determinants of early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District within Kilifi County. Since the issue is wide spread and affects the whole community, I am inviting you to participate in this research study by completing the attached questionnaire.

If you choose to participate in this research, please answer all questions as honestly as possible. Participation is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk. In order to ensure that all information will remain confidential, you may or may not include your name. The data collected will be for academic purposes only.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,
Christine Njagi

Appendix 2

RESPONDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

(WOMEN/GIRLS MARRIED BELOW 18 YEARS)

Thank you for taking your time to answer this questionnaire. It seeks to identify the determinants of early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County. The information gathered from the field during this research is solely for academic purposes and will not be shared with any unauthorized person. Although your participation is voluntary, it is important for the purpose of this study that all questions be answered.

Section A: Background information (please tick in the box against your response)

1. What is your age Bracket?

Less than 20 yrs

21 to 25yrs

26 to 30yrs

31 to 35 yrs

36 to 40 yrs

above 40 yrs

2. What is your marital status?

Single

Married

Divorced

Separated

3. At what age bracket were you married?

Less than 14yrs

15 to 16 yrs

17-18 yrs

over 18 yrs

4. What is your occupation?

House wife

Wage labour – Casual

Wage labour - Salary

Peasant

Business woman

Retired

Others Specify. _____

5. What is the highest education level that you completed?

None

Primary

Secondary

College and above

Section B: Poverty

1. What is your father's source of income?

None Wage labour – Casual

Wage labour - Salary Business

Others Specify _____

2. What is your mother's source of income?

None Wage labour – Casual

Wage labour - Salary Business

Others Specify _____

Section C: Gender inequality

1. What was the age of your spouse at marriage?

Less than 20 yrs 21 to 25yrs 26 to 30yrs

31 to 35 yrs 36 to 40 yrs above 40 yrs

Section D: Socio-cultural practices

1. When do you think is the best time to get married

Does no matter After primary school After high school

After College/university Don,t know

2. What age should a woman reach before marriage.

Does not matter Below 15 years

Between 15-18 Above 18 years

3. Rank in the order of reason why some women in Malindi get married before age of 18 years

(1= greatest reason, 7 = least reason) – Indicate the number in the box provided

Arranged marriages Escape parent control

Pregnancy Poverty Self- Satisfaction

Lack of education Gender inequality

4. Select and tick the response category in regard to early marriage that best represent your reaction to each statement. (where 1= strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3=somewhat agree, 4 = somewhat disagree, 5= disagree 6= strongly disagree)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	6
Most early marriages in Malindi involve men below 18 years						
Most early marriages in Malindi involve women below 18 years						
There are high chances of continuing with school after early marriage.						
Women should get married after finishing high school						
Most early marriages do not last for more than 5 years						
Am aware of government policies in view of early marriage						
Early marriages result in better financial stability						
Am aware of organizations that focus on early marriages						

Section E: Education

1. What is the highest education level completed by your father?

None Primary

Secondary College and above

2. What is the highest education level completed by your mother?

None Primary

Secondary College and above

Thank you for your time

Appendix 3

KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (NGOs/CHILD PROTECTION CENTRE)

Thank you for taking your time to answer this questionnaire. It seeks to identify the determinants of early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County. The information gathered from the field during this research is solely for academic purposes and will not be shared with any unauthorized person. Although your participation is voluntary, it is important for the purpose of this study that all questions be answered.

(Please tick in the box against your response to the YES/NO questions. For questions without no/yes options, fill in your answer on the space provided)

Section A: Details of the NGO

1. Name of the organization: _____
2. How long has your organization been in operation in Malindi District?
 1. Less than 5 years []
 2. 6 – 10 years []
 3. More than 11 years []

Section B: Operational Details

1. What are the main areas in which your organization works?
 - a) Health Issues
 - b) Educational Issues
 - c) Child Rights
 - d) Women and Child Development
 - e) Any other (Specify)
2. What is your role as an NGO in dealing with issues of early marriage of the girl child?
 - a) Legal help to people opposing child marriage
 - b) Counselling
 - c) Spreading awareness of problems related to child marriage
 - d) Any other (Specify).....
3. On an average, how many cases of child marriage takes place in this District in a year?

1. Nil [] 2. 1 – 10 [] 3. 11 – 20 [] 4. 21 and above []

4. Are there any special occasions or seasons when mass child marriages take place?

.....

5. What is your source of information about child marriages taking place?

- a) Community []
- b) Social Workers []
- c) Government Departments []
- d) Child Protection Officers []
- e) Media []
- f) Any other []

6. What are the factors leading to child marriage in this area?

- a) Customs and Beliefs []
- b) Family Tradition []
- c) Community/Societal Pressure []
- d) Poverty/Economic factors []
- e) Safety for the girl child []
- f) Bride price []
- g) Any other

7. (a) Is there any particular community/religion in the District where child marriage is more prevalent? 1. Yes [] 2. No []

(b) If yes, please mention the name of the community/religion.

.....

8. What actions have you undertaken to stop child marriages in the District?

.....
.....
.....
.....

9. (a) Do you face resistance when you try stopping Child Marriages in the villages?

- 1. Yes [] 2. No []

(b) If yes, by whom? Share some of your experience.

.....
.....
.....
10. Do you bring to the notice of the Police about child marriage incidents in the villages?

1. Yes [] 2. No []

11. What in your views are effective strategies to combat child marriages?
.....
.....
.....
.....

12. Who has supported you most in your initiatives?

- a) Police []
- b) Child Protection Officers []
- c) Other NGOs []
- d) Community []
- e) Media []
- f) Any Other (Specify).....

13. a) Do you think you have done any noteworthy contribution to decrease child marriages?1.

Yes [] 2. No []

(b) If yes, how? If no, why not?
.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your time.

Appendix 4

**KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
(PROVINCIAL/LOCAL ADMINISTRATION)**

Thank you for taking your time to answer this questionnaire. It seeks to identify the determinants of early marriage of the girl child in Malindi District, Kilifi County. The information gathered from the field during this research is solely for academic purposes and will not be shared with any unauthorized person. Although your participation is voluntary, it is important for the purpose of this study that all questions be answered.

(Please tick in the box against your response to the YES/NO questions. For questions without no/yes options, fill in your answer on the space provided)

Section A: Background Information

1. Name of the District/Location

Section B: Operational Details

1. Is there a custom of performing early marriage of the girl child in your District/Location?

1. Yes [] 2. No []

2. What are the factors leading to child marriage?

- a) Customs and Beliefs []
- b) Family Tradition []
- c) Community Pressure []
- d) Bride price []
- e) Safety of the girl []
- f) Economic Burden / Poverty []
- g) Any other

3. (a) Is there any particular community/religion to your knowledge who perform child marriage?

1. Yes [] 2. No []

(b) If yes, which one and why?

.....

.....
.....
.....

4. Are there any special occasions or seasons when mass child marriages take place? (Specify)

.....

5. What is the prevalent age-group of Child Marriage in the District/Location?

6. What is your source of information on child marriages taking place in your district?

- a) Community
- b) Police
- c) NGOs
- d) Media
- e) Child Protection Officers
- f) Any other

7. (a) Have you been able to contribute towards the decrease in child marriages in your District/Location? 1. Yes 2. No

(b) If yes, how and if no, why not?

.....
.....
.....
.....

8. Has any NGO or institution or individual assisted you in taking steps to stop child marriage?

1. Yes 2. No

9. If yes, who has supported you most in your initiatives?

- a) Police
- b) NGOs
- c) Community
- d) Media

e) Child Protection Officers

f) Any Other..... []

10. What are your views on Child Marriage? (Write the views)

.....

.....

.....

.....

11. What are your views on an effective strategy to combat child marriages?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your time

e) Child Protection Officers

[]

f) Any Other.....

10. What are your views on Child Marriage? (Write the views)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

11. What are your views on an effective strategy to combat child marriages?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your time