

EARLY MARRIAGES AND GIRL CHILD EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS; A CASE STUDY OF BWAMBARA SECONDARY SCHOOL RUKUNGIRI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at early marriages and girl child education in secondary schools; a case study of bwambara secondary school rukungiri district and it was guided by the following objectives; To identify the different causes of early marriages to the students of Bwambara Secondary School, to examine the educational effect of early marriage on Girl Child Education and to identify the different ways how early marriages eliminated in Secondary Schools. This study employed the survey design. This is because it is targeting a big population and size of sample of respondents. The population from which the sample was taken involves the students, Teachers and parents of Bwambara Secondary School. The respondents were got from various classes and different departments at the School. in order to come up with accurate data to help the researcher get all that is needed. This population was total to 320 participants. The target was on 200 Students, 70 Teachers and 50 Parents of Bwambara Secondary School using stratified sampling technique because it is the most effective when handling heterogeneous population's parameters to be obtained like this one, and enables separate estimates of the populations of the parameters to be obtained for each stratum without additional sampling. From the findings, 176 (90%) of the respondents strongly agreed that teen mothers are very likely to drop out of school because of their low ambitions and dedication to getting an education, while 20 (10%) of the respondents agreed that teen mothers are very likely to drop out of school because of their low ambitions and dedication to getting an education; implying that indeed teen mothers are very likely to drop out of school because of their low ambitions and dedication to getting an education. The researcher recommends that girl child education should be prioritized by all stakeholders

Key words: early marriages, girl child education and secondary schools

Background of the study

According to the International Planned Parenthood Federation-IPPF (2018), about 14 million girls under the age of 18 are married annually in the world. One in five girls in the developing world is married before the age of 18, and one in nine girls is married before the age of 15 (Joventi et al., 2023). Countries such as Niger, Chad, Mali, Bangladesh, Guinea and the Central African Republic (CAR) have child marriage rates of 60 percent or more. Child brides are particularly prevalent in South Asia (46 percent) and Sub-Saharan Africa (38 percent) (Locoh, 2018). Countries with the highest early marriage rates in Europe include Georgia (17 percent), Turkey (14 percent), and Ukraine (10 percent) (Joventi et al.,

2023). At least 10 percent of adolescents in Britain and France marry before the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2015). According to the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), which provide most of the current country-level data on child marriage, child marriage is most common in the world's poorest countries. The highest rates are in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, as well as parts of Latin America and the Caribbean (ICRW 2016; NRC/IOM 2015) (1 Ourien Isaac, 2 Dr Ariyo Gracious Kazaara, 2023).

Uganda is one of the countries with the highest number of early and forced marriages. 10% of girls are married before the age of 15 and 40% of girls are married before their 18th birthday (UNICEF 2011).

Received: 10.11.2023

Accepted: 13.11.2023

Published on: 30.11.2023

Corresponding: Author: research.miu.ac.ug/publications

According to UNICEF data from 2011, approximately 46 percent of all women marry by the age of 18, despite the law setting 18 as the legal age for marriage (Aisha et al., 2023). The impact of early marriage on girls, affecting their well-being and the well-being of society, includes education, lack of economic status, and lack of knowledge about reproductive health services, which have enabled them to make informed decisions, improve their ability to use resources, and participate in community decision-making. creation (Kazaara & Kazaara, 2023). Early marriage is a common practice among many ethnic groups in the world including Uganda. However, this has contributed to a number of negative consequences for both young girls and the society in which they live (Vincent & Peter, 2023). It is a violation of human rights in general and the rights of girls in particular (Abdallah, 2015). For both girls and boys, early marriage has profound physical, intellectual, psychological and emotional impacts, limiting educational and employment opportunities and chances for personal growth (Shamim et al., 2023).

Specific Objectives

1. To identify the different causes of early marriages to the students of Bwambara Secondary School.
2. To examine the educational effect of early marriage on Girl Child Education.
3. To identify the different ways how early marriages eliminated in Secondary Schools.

Methodology

This study employed the survey design. This is because it is targeting a big population and size of sample of respondents. According to Creswell, (2016), survey design is effective for collecting qualitative data within a big population. Survey design is also effective in studying relating to demographics of the population. The study also adopted a qualitative research approach. The qualitative approach provided detailed information in form of statements from interviews for in-depth analysis (Fassinger & Morrow, 2013). The information collected was based on what was going on at a particular point in regard to early marriage and girl child education this design was particularly selected because it takes place at a single point in time, allowing analysis of non-numerical variables at once and help in looking at the prevalence of the research problem in the study population (Bordens & Abbott,

Received: 10.11.2023

Accepted: 13.11.2023

Published on: 30.11.2023

Problem Statement

The impact of early marriage on girls' education in Bwambara Secondary School cannot be overemphasized (Anthony, Kazaara, & Kazaara, 2023). This is because nowadays children at the age of 16 attend high school classes and this leads some parents to believe that they should marry without considering the psychological, emotional and academic impact on the teenage girl (Mark et al., 2023). Rather, the academic level of students declines because they fail to effectively balance education and married life (Jac & Kazaara, 2023). In most cases, girls who get involved in early marriage are the ones who get unintended pregnancy, which makes them more vulnerable when it comes to going back to school, and so they end up getting married. Although it is every little girl's dream to go to school and have a bright future, we have continued to witness many girls getting pregnant and ending up running away or getting married while they are still teenagers. Many stakeholders such as politicians condemn the effect of early marriages. The researcher is therefore compelled to analyze the effect of early marriage on girls' education at Bwambara Secondary School in Rukungiri District (Brighton et al., 2023).

2011). Population was explained as a comprehensive group of individuals, institutions, objects and so forth with have a common characteristic that are the interest of a researcher (Creswel, 2013). The population from which the sample was taken involves the students, Teachers and parents of Bwambara Secondary School. The respondents were got from various classes and different departments at the School.in order to come up with accurate data to help the researcher get all that is needed. This population was total to 320 participants. The target was on 200Students, 70 Teachers and 50 Parents of Bwambara Secondary School using stratified sampling technique because it is the most effective when handling heterogeneous population's parameters to be obtained like this one, and enables separate estimates of the populations of the parameters to be obtained for each stratum without additional sampling. Respondents from different branches was then be selected using simple random sampling technique to make the results objective and inferences based on them.

Table 1: Sample Size

Respondents	Target Population	Sample Size	Percentage
Students	200	190	95%
Teachers	70	60	90%
Parents	50	40	90%
Total	320	290	

Source: primary data 2022

The researcher was using primarily data. In collecting Primary Data, the researcher was using questionnaires as tools for collecting the data. This choice of tool was used due to the fact that the targeted population is literate and therefore capable of filling-in the questionnaires. It gives the respondents adequate time to give well thought out answers. Questionnaires was also be self-administered and provide a quick means of collecting data from a large population's sample. This involved tabulation of the collected data using SPSS (Nelson et al., 2022). A quantitative method was used in computation of percentages and totals. Tables was used to present and summarize data for easy interpretation and display of information.

RESULTS

Causes of Early marriage.

To find out the causes of poverty, the following question was asked to the respondents. Describe the causes of poverty in Bwambara Secondary School in Rukungiri District? The findings are presented in the table below:

Table 2 showing the causes of teenage

Causes of early marriage among girls in Bwambara Secondary School in Rukungiri	Response											
	Strongly agree		Agree		Not sure		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Poverty is the critical factor contributing	98	50	39	20	29	15	29	15	-	-	196	100

Received: 10.11.2023

Accepted: 13.11.2023

Published on: 30.11.2023

to early marriage. Where poverty is acute, a young girl may be regarded as an economic burden and her pregnancy to a much older man.												
Traditional and cultural practices such as female genital cutting (FGC) contribute to the early marriage of girls.	122	62	65	33	10	5	-	-	-	-	196	100
The status of women in society plays a key role in early marriage; women are seen as inferior and they are neglected and despised and this leads to early marriage	147	75	39	20	-	-	10	5	-	-	196	100
Poor parenting whereby the girls are exposed to erotic scenes of the parents and or other neighbors having sex may compel the girls also to do the same and end up pregnant	137	70	39	20	-	-	20	10	-	-	196	100
Peer pressure is one of the major factors leading to early marriage whereby girls are easily deceived into sex by their peers doing the same.	98	50	78	40	-	-	20	10	-	-	196	100

Source: Primary data 2022

From the table 2 above, it observed that 98 (50%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the fact that poverty is the critical factor contributing to early marriage. Where poverty is acute, a young girl may be regarded as an economic burden and her pregnancy to a much older man. 39 (20%) agreed, 29 (15%) were not sure and 8 (15%) disagreed. It therefore implies that Poverty is the critical factor contributing to early marriage. Where poverty is acute, a young girl may be regarded as an economic burden and her pregnancy to a much older man (Joventa et al., 2023).

122 (62%) strongly agreed to the assertion that traditional and cultural practices such as female genital cutting (FGC) contribute to the early marriage of girls, 65 (33%) agreed; while 10 (5%) were not sure. This therefore implies that Traditional and cultural practices such as female genital cutting (FGC) contribute to the early marriage of girls (Mercy et al., 2023).

It can also be observed that 147 (75%) of the sample strongly agreed that the status of women in society plays a key role in early marriage; women are seen as inferior and they are neglected and despised and this leads to early marriage, 39 (20%) agreed to the assertion and 10 (5%) disagreed. This implies that indeed the status of women in society plays a key role in early marriage; women are seen as inferior and they are neglected and despised and this leads to early marriage since the majority agreed to the assertion (Annet et al., 2023).

Received: 10.11.2023

Accepted: 13.11.2023

Published on: 30.11.2023

Corresponding: Author: research.miu.ac.ug/publications

137 (70%) of the sample strongly agreed that Poor parenting whereby the girls are exposed to erotic scenes of the parents and or other neighbors having sex may compel the girls also to do the same and end up pregnant, 39 (20%) agreed to the assertion and 20 (10%) disagreed to the assertion. It can conclusively be stated that Poor parenting whereby the girls are exposed to erotic scenes of the parents and or other neighbors having sex may compel the girls also to do the same and end up pregnant (Jac & Kazaara, 2023).

98 (50%) strongly agreed that Peer pressure is one of the major factors leading to early marriage whereby girls are easily deceived into sex by their peers doing the same. 78 (40%), 20 (10%) were not sure and 4 (8%) disagreed. It can therefore imply that Peer pressure is one of the major factors leading to early marriage whereby girls are easily deceived into sex by their peers doing the same.

Effect of Early marriage on the girl child education

Table 3. Showing the effect of early marriage on the girl child education

Impact of early marriage on the girl child education	Response											
	Strongly agree		Agree		Not sure		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The loss of adolescence, the forced sexual relations, and the denial of freedom and personal development attendant to early marriage have profound psychosocial and emotional consequences	147	75	49	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	196	100
Early marriage leads to a girl's loss of mobility and her confinement to the home and to household roles	157	80	39	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	196	100
Teen mothers are very likely to drop out of school because of their low ambitions and dedication to getting an education	176	90	20	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	196	100
Early marriage leads to poor living conditions and the inability to maintain a safe and clean environment for their newborn child. These young women often end up living on welfare and do not have adequate resources for their child. Overall, these young girls are forced to delay and postpone any plans	186	95	10	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	196	100

for their future in order to raise their child												
These young mothers go through many physical changes: from adolescent physical adjustment to having to adapt to the ever changing shape of her body through the pregnancy and her postpartum figure.	147	75	49	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	196	100
The child of a teen mother is very likely to live in poverty because of its mother's lack of financial resources. Essentially, the birth of this child becomes the beginning of a perpetual cycle in many cases.	157	80	39	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	196	100

Source: primary data 2022

Table 3 shows that 147 (75%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the fact that the loss of adolescence, the forced sexual relations, and the denial of freedom and personal development attendant to early marriage have profound psychosocial and emotional consequences, while 49 (25%) agreed that the loss of adolescence, the forced sexual relations, and the denial of freedom and personal development attendant to early marriage have profound psychosocial and emotional consequences. None of the respondents disagreed and none was not sure. It implies that indeed, the loss of adolescence, the forced sexual relations, and the denial of freedom and personal development attendant to early marriage have profound psychosocial and emotional consequences (Vincent & Peter, 2023)

157 (80%) strongly agreed that early marriage leads to a girl's loss of mobility and her confinement to the home and to household roles and 39 (20%) of the respondents agreed and no one disagreed while all the respondents were sure of their respondents. This implies that indeed early marriage leads to a girl's loss of mobility and her confinement to the home and to household roles

176 (90%) of the respondents strongly agreed that teen mothers are very likely to drop out of school because of their low ambitions and dedication to getting an education, while 20 (10%) of the respondents agreed that teen mothers are very likely to drop out of school because of their low ambitions and dedication to getting an education; implying that indeed teen mothers are very likely to drop out of school because of their low ambitions and dedication to getting an education

186 (95%) of the respondents strongly agreed that early marriage leads to poor living conditions and the inability to maintain a safe and clean environment for their newborn child. These young women often end up living on welfare and do not have adequate resources for their child. Overall, these young girls are forced to delay and postpone any plans for their future in order to raise their child, while 10 (5%) of the respondents agreed that indeed early marriage leads to poor living conditions and the inability to maintain a safe and clean environment for their newborn child. These young women often end up living on welfare and do not have adequate resources for their child. Overall,

Received: 10.11.2023

Accepted: 13.11.2023

Published on: 30.11.2023

Corresponding: Author: research.miu.ac.ug/publications

these young girls are forced to delay and postpone any plans for their future in order to raise their child (Kazaara & Kazaara, 2023).

Further still, 147 (75%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the fact that these young mothers go through many physical changes: from adolescent physical adjustment to having to adapt to the ever changing shape of her body through the pregnancy and her postpartum figure, while 49 (25%) agreed that these young mothers go through many physical changes: from adolescent physical adjustment to having to adapt to the ever changing shape of her body through the pregnancy and her postpartum figure. None of the respondents disagreed and none was not sure. It implies that indeed these young mothers go through many physical changes: from adolescent physical adjustment to having to adapt to the ever-changing shape of her body through the pregnancy and her postpartum figure (Kazaara et al., 2023).

157 (80%) strongly agreed that the child of a teen mother is very likely to live in poverty because of its mother's lack of financial resources. Essentially, the birth of this child becomes the beginning of a perpetual cycle in many cases, 39 (20%) of the respondents agreed and no one disagreed while all the respondents were sure of their respondents. This implies that the child of a teen mother is very likely to live in poverty because of its mother's lack of financial resources (Paul et al., 2023). Essentially, the birth of this child becomes the beginning of a perpetual cycle in many cases.

Strategic remedies that used to mitigate teenage pregnancies

Table 4 showing the strategic remedies that used to mitigate teenage pregnancies in Bwambara Secondary School in Rukungiri District

Strategic remedies to mitigate teenage pregnancies	Strongly Disagree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Application of such laws as, imprisonment of any person found guilty of negligence, knowingly and was fully causing a child to become vulnerable to unwanted sex.	137	70	39	20	10	5	10	5	-	-	196	100
Of significance also is the fact that a number of NGOs have been allowed to operate in areas where early marriage is prevalent. They are now educating the people on the importance of taking girls to school rather than marrying them off to older men.	137	70	39	20	10	5	10	5	-	-	196	100

Received: 10.11.2023

Accepted: 13.11.2023

Published on: 30.11.2023

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Through strict intervention of the government there is hope for the children who have been out of school to pursue their lifelong dreams	137	70	39	20	10	5	10	5	-	-	196	100
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From the table 4 above, it observed that 137 (70%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the fact that application of such laws as, imprisonment of any person found guilty of negligence, knowingly and was fully causing a child to become vulnerable to unwanted sex can reduce on the rates of teen pregnancies among the students of St. Joseph Secondary School, 39 (20%) agreed, 10 (5%) were not sure and 10 (5%) disagreed. It implies that application of such laws as, imprisonment of any person found guilty of negligence, knowingly and was fully causing a child to become vulnerable to unwanted sex can reduce on the rates of teen pregnancies among the students in Bwambara Secondary School in Rukungiri District (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023).

137 (70%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the fact that of significance also is the fact that a number of NGOs have been allowed to operate in areas where early marriage is prevalent. They are now educating the people on the importance of taking girls to school rather than marrying them off to older men. This can reduce on the rates of teen pregnancies among the students of St. Joseph Secondary School, 39 (20%) agreed, 10 (5%) were not sure and 10 (5%) disagreed. It implies that of significance also is the fact that a number of NGOs have been allowed to operate in areas where early marriage is prevalent. They are now educating the people on the importance of taking girls to school rather than marrying them off to older men. This can reduce on the rates of teen pregnancies among the students in Bwambara Secondary School in Rukungiri District (Christopher et al., 2022).

Finally, it can also be observed that 137 (70%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the fact that through strict intervention of the government there is hope for the children who have been out of school to pursue their lifelong dreams among the students of St. Joseph Secondary School, 39 (20%) agreed, 10 (5%) were not sure and 10 (5%) disagreed. It implies that through strict intervention of the government there is hope for the children who have been out of school to pursue their lifelong dreams among the teens in Bwambara Secondary School in Rukungiri District since the majority agreed to the assertion (Alex & Kazaara, 2023).

Conclusions

Finding reveals that early marriage affects the girl child education in different ways including poverty, child employment, early marriage and loss of interest in education due to financial struggles. The researcher concludes government policies determine the ability for a girl child to stay in school. The researcher concludes that government plays an important role in reducing teen pregnancies. The researcher concludes that the role of NGOs in fighting teen pregnancies and supporting girl-child education is pivotal.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends that girl child education should be prioritized by all stakeholders
NGOs which support girl-child education should be supported by government

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Received: 10.11.2023

Accepted: 13.11.2023

Published on: 30.11.2023

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