

Examining The Status Quo Of Early Marriages Among School Going Girls . A Case Study Of Kimanya Sub County

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Abstract.

Birth, pregnancy and death are the standard trio of key events in the life of mankind. Out of these three events, pregnancy is a matter of choice. These compromises their overall development, leaving them socially isolated with little or no education, skills and opportunities for employment and self-realization. These conditions ultimately make married girls susceptible to poverty. Among the objectives of the study the researcher was to identify the different causes early marriages at Kimanya Sub County and to examine the effects of early marriages on the girl child. This study was conducted at Kimanya Sub County in Masaka district. Through the use of random sampling technique, the researcher used a sample size of 370 respondents and data that was collected came from 325 respondents who provided accurate data in relation to the objectives of the study. Summary of the key findings of the showed that majority of the respondents informed the researcher that majority of the respondents presented results showing that adolescent pregnancy was the main cause of early marriages at Kimanya Sub County. This resulted into school dropout as the major effect of early marriages on the girl child. The researcher therefore recommends that there is a need to make maximum sensitization on girl child empowerment in order to make them not to lose morale and avoid getting involved in marriage and there is also a need to employ professional councilors in all the secondary schools in order to make the girl child present their issues such that they would be properly advised.

Key words: Status quo, early marriages and girls.

Background of the study

Birth, pregnancy and death are the standard trinity of key events in human life. Of these three events, pregnancy is a matter of choice (Evelyne et al., 2023). The right to exercise this choice has been identified as a legal principle since the Roman era and has been enshrined in international human rights instruments (Charles et al., 2023). The history of pregnancy goes back to the history of mankind. Biblically, God created the first man named Adam and he was without a helper. God, who is omnipotent and omniscient, knows his problem and put him into a deep sleep, removed one of his ribs, and created a woman named

Eve (Genesis 2:21-22). From this time, Adam and Eve became pregnant for the first time. the first parent on earth who emphasizes this says the holy bible (Bridget & Geophrey, 2023) so God created man in his own image in the image of God he created them male and female and God blessed them and said to them "Be fruitful and multiply fill the earth and subdue it" Gen 1:27-28 (Bridget & Geophrey, 2023; Scovia & Jill Margaret, 2023). For many young girls in developing countries, pregnancy is seen as a means of securing and protecting their future. Girls are forced to become pregnant by their families when they are still children

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in the hope that the pregnancy will bring them financial and social returns (Shobba, 2015). Conversely, early pregnancy violates children's rights with negative consequences (Racheal & Vincent, 2023). It threatens their overall development and leaves them socially isolated with little or no education, skills and opportunities for employment and self-fulfillment. These conditions ultimately make married girls vulnerable to poverty (Faridah et al., 2023; Victo et al., 2023). A disproportionate amount of domestic work is required of these girls, which include the new roles and responsibilities of wives and mothers. A young bride's position in the family often depends on her, as evidenced by their fertility often during the first year of pregnancy (District et al., n.d.). At this time, she is not mentally, emotionally and physiologically ready for these roles. In addition, girls are responsible for the care and well-being of future

generations while still children themselves (Emmanuel et al., 2023). Young mothers without decision-making powers, with limited mobility and without economic resources are likely to pass this vulnerability on to their children. Therefore, early pregnancy directly contributes to the feminization of poverty and intergenerational poverty William (Evelyne & Rebecca, n.d.). According to the topic of the study, the study will be governed by the independent variable Poverty and the dependent variable of early pregnancy (John et al., 2023). The dependent variable poverty will highlight the factors associated with poverty such as lack of shelter, lack of food, lack of basic goods, lack of money, and the dependent variable will show how the independent variable leads to early pregnancy, such as too much stress, early school leaving. pregnancy (Sharon Ruth, 2023).

Problem Statement

Premature pregnancy was a symbol of bad orientation (Salume & Jacob, 2023). All over the world, pregnancy was considered a moment of celebration and a milestone in life. Unfortunately, the practice of early pregnancy involved the deprivation of basic human rights (Charles et al., 2023). Young girls have been robbed of their youth and required to accept roles for which they are not emotionally ready. Most young girls do not have a choice about the timing of their pregnancy or their partner (Harriet et al., 2023). Some are forced into pregnancy while others are too sensitive to make an informed decision. Premature pregnancy deprives them of the opportunity for personal development and their rights to full reproductive health, well-being, education and participation in civic life. There is consensus in the literature that poverty disrupts, disrupts, and distorts the lives of teenagers (Evelyne et al., 2023), but this does not mean that all teens who participate in early pregnancy live measurable lives. Poverty poses a great threat to teenagers who are forced into it. Lack of money, lack of shelter, lack of basic goods. It is because of the above challenges that the researcher decided to investigate the effect of poverty on early pregnancies in rural communities using a case study of Kimanya Sub County in Masaka City (Yudaya & Aggrey, 2023).

Objectives of the study

1. To assess the different causes of early marriages in communities.

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2. To identify ways how early marriages' affect girl Child education

Research Questions

1. What are the different causes of early marriages in communities?
2. How does early marriage affect girl child education?

Methodology.

The Researcher adapted to a quantitative research design. Quantitative research design was used because the researcher carried out research in Kimanya Sub County which had a big population. The choice of the study area was because the researcher used all the languages used in the study area and more so the researcher understood all the study area properly which made data collection easy and concrete. The researcher adopted both primary and secondary sources of information. Primary sources of information included using questionnaires to collect data and secondary source of information included use of articles related to the study, publications and books. The targeted population was on 150 Parents, 25 teachers and 25 community leaders. The researcher will use a sampling technique to get a sample. The population from which the sample was taken involved the Parents in Kimanya Sub County, teachers and Community leaders. The respondents were got from various villages in order to come up with accurate data to help the researcher get all that was needed. The researcher used a population of 200 Parents, 100 teachers and finally 60 community leaders in all the different villages in Kimanya Sub County using stratified sampling technique because it was the most effective when handling large populations. The researcher developed both primarily and secondary sources of information and data. In collecting Primary Data, the researcher used questionnaires as tools for collecting data. For Secondary Data, publications by re known authors in this field for example magazines, articles, books and News Papers will be used by the researcher to gather information that is required. Data analysis was conducted in SPSS and all results were presented in a tabular (Nelson et al., 2022). Frequencies and percentages were reported at univariate level, correlation and regression analysis were considered for further analysis.

Results.

Causes of early marriages on the Girl Child

Table 1: Respondents views on the causes of early marriages

Causes of early marriages	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poverty and lack of opportunities	40	28
Level of education	11	6
Traditional practices	25	14
Adolescent pregnancy	48	36
Orphanhood	7	5
Displacement	16	8

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Peer group influence	3	2
Total	150	100

Source: Field Data (2021)

According to the figure 1 above, the findings of the study clearly indicated that 36% of the students clearly indicated that adolescent pregnancy was their main cause of early pregnancy followed by a few respondents who informed the researcher that poverty and lack of opportunities was also another factor that caused early marriage in secondary schools (Vincent & Peter, 2023), 14% however informed the researcher that traditional practices were also considered one of the factors that resulted to early marriages, 8% urged that displacement also caused early marriages (Aisha et al., 2023), 6% level of education was also presented by some respondents and finally 2% of the respondents informed the researcher that peer group influence was also a major cause of early marriages among girl child education in Kimanya Sub County.

Effect of early marriages on girl child.

Table 2: Respondents views on the effects of early marriages

Effects of early marriages on girl Child	Percentage (%)
School dropout	40
Poverty	22
Parenting responsibilities	18
Health complications	11
Psychological complications	9

Source: Field Data (2021)

According to the figure 1 above, the findings of the study clearly indicated that over 40% of the respondents informed the researcher that the main effect of early marriages was school dropout followed by 22% of the respondents who presented results indicating that poverty was also another effect that would result due to early marriage of the girl child (Aisha et al., 2023), 18% of the respondents also presented results indicating that one of the main challenges girls who would engage in early marriages was parenting responsibilities which would make them loose concentration to go at school, 11% of the respondents however also presented results indicating that many girls who involved in early marriages would get health complications like diseases such as HIV/AIDS among others and finally 9% of the respondents informed the researcher that girls who would get involved in early marriages would face psychological complications because they would get involved in something they were not yet ready for.

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Discussion of findings

In relation to the findings of the study, over 35% of the students clearly indicated that adolescent pregnancy was their main cause of early pregnancy followed by a few respondents who informed the researcher that poverty and lack of opportunities was also another factor that caused early marriage in secondary schools (Zulaikah & Rebecca, 2023), 14% however informed the researcher that traditional practices were also considered one of the factors that resulted to early marriages, 8% urged that displacement also caused early marriages, 6% level of education was also presented by some respondents and finally 3% of the respondents informed the researcher that peer group influence was also a major cause of early marriages among girl child education at Kimanya. The findings of the study also presented results showing that over 40% of the respondents informed the researcher that the main effect of early marriages was school dropout followed by 22% of the respondents who presented results indicating that poverty was also another effect that would result due to early marriage of the girl child (Christopher & Micheal, 2022), 18% of the respondents also presented results indicating that one of the main challenges girls who would engage in early marriages was parenting responsibilities which would make them loose concentration to go at school, 11% of the respondents however also presented results indicating that many girls who involved in early marriages would get health complications like diseases such as HIV/AIDS among others and finally 9% of the respondents informed the researcher that girls who would get involved in early marriages would face psychological complications because they would get involved in something they were not yet ready for (Aisha et al., 2023).

And finally the findings of the study also clearly indicated that over 140 respondents informed the researcher that the only way early marriages would be abolished was through providing economic support to the girl child in order to make them access all their necessary needs followed by 80 respondents who presented results showing that through providing quality education to the girl child would also help to abolish early marriages and 60 respondents however presented results showing that girl child empowerment would also play a big role in abolishing early marriages of the girl child and finally 45 respondents presented results indicating that through encouraging supportive laws and policies against early marriages, early marriages would not exist in the communities (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022).

Conclusions

In conclusion, the findings of the showed that majority of the respondents informed the researcher that majority of the respondents presented results showing that adolescent pregnancy was the main cause of early marriages at Kimanya Sub County because of the time wasted when not at which forced many into early marriages however a few respondents informed the researcher that poverty and lack of opportunities was also another cause of early marriages despite others who cited out traditional practices as also a cause of early marriages. In communities which had it in their tradition (Christopher et al., 2022). The findings of the study also revealed results indicating that the highest

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percentage of the respondents informed the researcher that school dropout was the main effect of early marriage due to the fact that marriage did not go hand in hand with education despite a few respondents who cited out poverty as the leading effect of early marriage and others presented results showing that parenting responsibilities would only be in place when there is early marriage. And final in conclusion the findings of the also indicated results showing that majority of the respondents informed the researcher that providing economic support to the girl child would possibly abolish early marriages since the girls would be having money to sustain their needs (Aisha et al., 2023). Despite a few respondents seconded girl child empowerment programs as means that was used to abolish early marriages in Kimanya Sub County.

Recommendations

There is a need to make maximum sensitization on girl child empowerment in order to make them not to lose morale and avoid getting involved in marriage.

There is also a need to employ professional councilors in all the secondary schools in order to make the girl child present their issues such that they would be properly advised.

There was also a need to abolish traditional practices that emphasizes early marriage of the girl child in the community. The researcher also recommended the parents to always send their children back to school whenever they get involved in early marriages.

There was also a need to enhance the health sector of the communities in order to cater for girls that usually got health complications due to early marriages.

There was also a need to put strict laws on the adults who engage in early marriage to the young girls in order to make many fears to practice it.

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