Persistence of Child Marriage in Arusha District Council. A case of Girls from Maasai Community

Rehema John Magesa*,[1] | Ahadi Faustin Mlay[2]

[1]Tengeru Institute of Community Development P.O Box 1006, Arusha, Tanzania

[2]Tengeru Institute of Community Development P.O Box 1006, Arusha, Tanzania

Abstract

Child marriage is a worldwide predicament with a good number of girls falling victim of this situation. Tanzania is among countries in the world suffering from this predicament. Girls getting married before 18 years of are denied their future since they are forced to leave their education after they are married. The Government has taken stringent actions to stop this problem however, the problem persists. Maasai girls from Arusha District are among the victims of this situation since the problem is very prominent in their communities. It is with this concern the current study take initiative to study why the problem persistent despite the efforts to end it. The study applied both quantitative and qualitative approaches to collect data. Probability and Non-probability sampling techniques were applied to select respondents who were girls aged between 10-18 years. A total of 100 including victims and potential victims of child marriage women were selected for the study. From the findings it was revealed that medium awareness to the knowledge of the effects of child marriage might be among the reason this problem persists. Also, it was revealed that lack of sufficient meals in the family 94%, dowry payment 94%, lack of basic needs 91%, low income in a family 83% and other economic disparities 64% contribute to persistence of child marriage in Arusha District Council. Further it was revealed that social cultural factors that influence persistence of child marriage among Maasai girls included customs and traditions 94%, Poor belief 88%, Gender inequality 84%, fear of early pregnancy 83%, Polygamy 80% and inadequate socialization 75%. It is without doubt that a lot of efforts need to be implemented strategically to eradicate this problem. An inclusive approach involving the community, the Government and faith-based organizations must be applied since the problem continues hampering girls' development.

Keywords: Girl, child marriage, awareness, economic factors, social cultural factors

Background to the Study

Child marriage is a worldwide predicament. It is estimated that in Tanzania alone an average of 36% of women aged 25-49 were married before their 18th birthday (TDHS – MIS, 2015-16), and in

Shinyanga alone 59% of women of that age were affected by child marriage (Firelight, 2021). Elsewhere the same problem appears to persists as ICRW, 2013 and BBS 2013 reports that 47% of women in India by 2007 aged 20 to 24 were married before they were 18 years of age and in The Bangladesh nearly 50% of adolescent girls are married by the age of 15 and that 60% of them become mothers by the age of 20. Globally, it is estimated that more than 700 million women alive today in the world were married before they reached the age of 18 years, of who 250 million were in sex relations before their 15th birthday United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2013). Being the case, if the current state of Child Marriage holds it is predicted that about 14.2 million girls will be married annually equivalent to 39,000 girls daily, bringing a total of 140 million girls by 2020 (World Health Organization (WHO, 2013). Child marriage is defined as a formal or informal union entered into by an individual before reaching the age of 18 years. Child marriage may be forced; it may result from elopement of the girl with a man or boy or follow an early or adolescent pregnancy.

Africa has severe cases of child marriage. In a report by UNICEF (2005) it was stated that out of 41 nations with child marriage problems 30 are from Africa. Africa as a continent has been blamed for embracing a number of harmful traditional practices including child marriage. Other practices include female genital mutilation, son preference, high dowry payment, denial of inheritance to daughters, and a lot more. Pastoral communities have practiced this evil act despite a lot of condemnation. They have been practicing it for a number of reasons; one being that when a girl is married at an early age she can bear a lot of children as compared to when married at an older age. Another reason for marrying off their children is the amount of cow they are given as dowry. In these communities having a lot of cows is prestige and a source of wealth so by obtaining a lot of them improves their ego and economy.

According to (UNFPA, 2016), child Marriage is a violation of human rights and that despite to the facts that it is being prohibited by international laws, conventions and treaties, it continues to rob millions of children under the age of 18, primarily girls, around the world of their childhood. Following these practices Child Marriage denies girls' right to make vital decisions about their sexual health and future well-being.

In East African countries, Kenya has the highest number of Child Marriage, counting to 23 percent of Kenyan girls are married before their 18th birthday, and 4 percent are married before the age of 15 (UNICEF 2014). Whereas in Uganda, Child Marriage is one way to ensure that a wife is 'protected' and or placed firmly under male control that she is submissive to her husband and works hard for her in-laws' household. Many societies prize virginity before marriage and this can manifest itself in a number of practices designed to 'protect' a girl from unsanctioned sexual activity (UNICEF, 2001).

In Tanzania, the Government acknowledges that child marriage and pregnancies are the major cause for girls' high dropout rates in primary and secondary schools (URT, 1995; URT, 2014). Despite the measures taken by the government of the United Republic of Tanzania, civil society organizations and international community, Child Marriage is still prevalent in Tanzania where 36 percent of women aged 20-24 by 2016 were married before their 18th birth date (URT, 2017).

Despite being prevalent with profound impacts, child marriage in Tanzania attracts limited attention yet it has become a serious problem in most of the country particularly in Rural areas of Arusha District Council where girls under 18 years are forced into marriage by parents or guardians or relative therefore they facing a lot of problems. The Maasai community in particular practice Child Marriage among girls among other harmful practices towards girls (ACE AFRICA, 2019).

Child marriage in Arusha

With the nation's prevalence of 37% child marriage among women aged 20–24 having been married before they turned 18 (TDHS, 2010) girls,

Arusha has a prevalence of 27%. Arusha region is among 10 regions leading in child marriage. The Maasai community from Arusha practice child marriage among other harmful practices towards girls. It has been estimated that 60% of girls from Maasai community have been married of before the age of 18 (Muigai, 2023). The impact of early marriage among the Maasai community includes; different health complications to the girls, higher rates of HIV/ AIDS; termination of academic endeavor to the girls, increased cycle of poverty to the girls family and her in the future; and trauma to the girl since she was not ready to be married at that particular time (UNICEF, 2004 and Muigai, 2023). A number of reasons have been mentioned to perpetuate child marriage among the Maasai community. Among others Ndanu (2019) have mentioned a desire to 'eliminate' the familial poverty as impoverished families giving a daughter in marriage is a way to reduce expenses particularly if a son's education and expenses are prioritized. Also early marriages are taken as a way to safeguard against immoral behavior. Parents in the Maasai community marry off pregnant girls to protect their family status and name and to receive both dowry and 'penalty' payment from the man responsible for the pregnancy. Finally, many early marriages occur out of desperation as a young girl seeks 'refuge' from neglect or orphan hood.

Statement of the Problem

Tanzania has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world. On average, one in three girls is married before they turn 18 years. In some areas, girls are married as young as eleven, 31% of girls in Tanzania are married before their 18th birthday and 5% are married before the age of 15 (Plan International 2017). Child marriage prevalence rate is 36% (URT, 2017). The prevalence of child marriage is more critical in regions dominated by pastoral societies (Backlund and Blomqvist, 2014).

Despite to the fact that, international and national laws, convections and treaties are prohibiting child Marriages the situation is still worse in some communities. The rate of child marriage in Maasai communities is still very high as it is almost twice the country's rate. It is reported that the rate of child marriage among girls in this community is estimated at 60% while that of the country is 31%. Hence, it is worth studying factors contributing to the persistence of child marriage in Maasai communities' in Arusha District Council.

Definition of concepts

Child

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Law of the Child Act 2009, Tanzania; the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania 1977; the Sexual Offences Special Provisions Act (SOSPA) 1998, Tanzania; the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC); and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Child marriage

Child marriage is defined as marriage carried out below the age of 18 years, before the girl is physically and psychologically ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage and childbearing. Child marriage is the formal marriage or informal sexual union of children under the age of 18 years (UNICEF, 2014). Moreover child marriage refers to any conjugal union (formal or informal) in which either one or both parties are younger than 18 years which is minimum age of marriage (Nandy, 2019).Persistence can be defined as the fact of continuing in an opinion or course of action in spite of difficulty or opposition (oxford dictionary).According to this study Persistence of child marriage among girls means child marriage among girls in the study area lasts for Very long time.

Theory guiding the study

The theory of Change

This study adopted theory of change on persistence of child marriage. According to UNDAF (2015) the theory of change simply means a method that explains how a given intervention, or set of interventions, is expected to lead to specific development change, drawing on a causal analysis based on available evidence. With this theory it is clear that despite different interventions, strategies

and plans ending child marriage has been a myriad complex problem. That proves that development challenges including child marriage are complex, and are typically caused by many factors and layers that are embedded deeply in the way society functions (UNDAF, 2015). The theory of Change, further explains that change is a slow process and ultimately take place within communities, but has to be supported and catalyzed by collective efforts at national, regional and international levels. The Theory of Change demonstrates that there is no single solution in ending child marriage and that everyone has a role to play. Ultimately efforts to address child marriage must respond to local contexts and accordingly programmes and investments may take different forms. Adequate resources must be made available to support effective implementation of strategies. All those working to address child marriage should evaluate programmes, share promising practices, and coordinate their efforts to achieve maximum scale and impact. Recognizing that child marriage does not take place in a vacuum, efforts to end child marriage should not be isolated from broader development efforts and should play an integral part in achieving development goals around the world."

A theory of change on child marriage relate to this study as the theory shows that child marriage is problem that need collective action and adequate resources from national to local level in order to address its persistence. There for the researcher will make deep study to understand factors that lead to the persistence of child marriage in Maasai community in order to come up with solution to address the problem.

Policy Review

The sustainable goal number five stipulates that Gender equality must be attained by 2030. However, child marriage might endanger or slow down all efforts to attain Goal number 5 and other 7 SDGs. The SDGs that will not be attained unless child marriage is eradicated include those SDGs associated to: poverty, food security, health, education, economic growth, and peace and justice. Before the SDGs the issue of child marriage was addressed in a number of international conventions and agreements. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, for example, covers the right to protection from child marriage in article 16, which states: "The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage".

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 Article 24 (3): States parties shall take all effective and appropriate measures with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children.

The Addis Ababa Declaration on Accelerating the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 201431 2(b): Adopt a multi-pectoral approach to address negative social and cultural norms and practices including harmful traditional practices such as early marriage that impede girls' retention and achievement at the primary, secondary, tertiary and vocational levels of education and training; 2(d): Adopt and enforce legislation and other measures, including actions on age-appropriate sexuality and reproductive health training, to end teenage pregnancy, patriarchy, early and forced marriages and female genital mutilation; The girl child (a) Continue to strengthen efforts to completely eliminate early child marriages by criminalizing the practice and enforcing the age of marriage of 18 for girls, in accordance with international norms and standards;

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) article 2 states that;

"Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses".

This declaration emphasizes that girls shall enjoy the same right as men and in terms of marriage, girl child should not be forced to enter into marriage so the study relate to the legal framework as it shows that there is the problem of child marriage among girls and that is why there is International convention to protect them.

In Tanzania the Child Development Policy Tanzania of 2008 is the key policy which gives

direction and guideline on protecting and prohibiting any injustice against the children. The policy directs the Government and stakeholders dealing with children's issues to educate the society that girls and boys should not marry in their early years so as to protect their rights and development. It further emphasizes that the Government in collaboration with non-government organizations should lay down a coordinated system of educating the children / parents/ guardians and the community as a whole on the effects especially the negative ones resulting from early marriages.

Methodology:

The study was conducted in Arusha District Council. The district is one of the seven Districts of the Arusha Region of Tanzania. Different ethnic groups are found in the region but the Maasai, Waarusha, Meru, Iraqw are the predominant groups. The Maasai are predominantly found in Monduli, Longido, Arusha Rural and Ngorongoro district; while the Meru originates from Meru distrct and the Iraqw are from Karatu district. Arusha region also habits minority groups of Datoga, Hadzabe, Sonjo and Gorowa who originates from Karatu and Ngorongoro district councils. Majority of prople from Arusha District are Maasai and Waarusha which are mainly pastoralists.

This study used quantitative and qualitative approaches to collect both Quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative approach characterized by the collection of information that can be analyzed numerically while qualitative approach is characterized by the collection of narratives from respondents (Kothari, 2004). It applied cross sectional research design. Probability and Non probability sampling techniques were applied to select respondents who were girls aged between 10-18 years.

According to the 2022 Census report Arusha District has a total of 51,532 young women aged between 10 and 19 years (URT, 2023). So, by the use of sampling formula by Yamane (1967), a total of 100 young women were selected for the study.

A sample of 100 respondents included victims and potential victims of child marriage. This sample was used to collect information for quantitative data while for qualitative data, information was collected from key informants including Ward executive officers, Community development officers, village chairpersons, teachers, Non-government Organizations, Legal officers, District community development officer and Primary and secondary Education officers.

Tools and Methods for Data Collection

The study used both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was gathered using questionnaires and interview and focus group discussion while secondary data was collected from various sources like research reports and dissertations.

Data analysis

The study intended to measure if awareness, economic factors and social culture factors contributed to the study area. Hence each of the three factors were analyzed as follows;

Awareness on child marriage.

On examining level of awareness data were analyzed using Awareness Index (Index scale).Data was collected using five-point Likert scale. Respondents were required to specify their level of awareness on statements that show the awareness of under 18 years on child marriage by using a five points scale of (1) very low awareness level (2) low awareness level (3) moderate awareness level (4) high awareness level (5) very high awareness level, with the following transformed scores, very high awareness = 5, high awareness level = 4, moderate awareness level = 3, low awareness level=2 and very low awareness level = 1.

Five different spheres of under 18years girls were measured which included child marriage and its effect, tradition entertain child marriage to get income, right to say no to child marriage, proud to get marriage early and child marriage is gender discrimination. Awareness index was established for each level of awarenes and general level of

awareness was established by overall mean awareness Index. The following steps was followed to calculate class mark in order to get mean range

(Level of awareness);

1. Class mark was obtained by greatest taking greatest value-least value i.e 5-1=4 then the answer divides by 5 as it the greatest range that is 4/5= 0.80

2. Mean awareness calculated by adding 0.80 to number 1 and then to each level of awareness

Table 1: Mean awareness calculation

S/n	Level of awareness	categorized mean according to class mark
1.	VLAL	1.00-1.80
2.	LAL	1.81-2.60
3.	MAL	2.61-3.40
4.	HAL	3.41-4.20
5.	VHAL	4.21-5.00

Where VLAL= Very low awareness level, LAL= low awareness level, MAL=Moderate awareness level, HAL= High awareness level and VHAL= very high awareness.

A index scale $= TScore\ obtained\ x100/\ Maxiscore$

Where: A index= Awareness index, T Score obtained= Total score obtained, Maxiscore = Maximum possible score.

Thereafter, general awareness levels were categorized by using mean and standard deviation (SD) Into: Low = < (mean - SD), Medium = between (mean - SD) to (Mean + SD) and High = > (Mean + SD). This approach was also used by (Rao *et al*, 1992: Fita and Trivedi, (2012). Therefore awareness levels were categorized by using overall mean awareness Index and standard deviation.

The following steps was followed to calculate class mark in order to get mean range

(Level of agreement);

1. Class mark was obtained by greatest taking greatest value-least value i.e 5-1=4 then the answer divides by 5 as it the greatest range i.e 4/5= 0.80

2. Mean agreement were calculated by adding 0.80 to number 1 and then to each level of awareness;

i.e

Table 2: **Table 1: Mean awareness calculation**

S/n	Level of awareness	categorized mean according to class mark
1.	Strongly disagree	1.00-1.80
2.	Disagree	1.81-2.60
3.	Neutral	2.61-3.40
4.	Agree	3.41-4.20
5.	Strongly Agree	4.21-5.00

A index scale $= TScore\ obtained\ x100/\ Maxiscore$

Where: A index= awareness index, TScore obtained= Total score obtained , Maxiscore= Maximum possible score

Economic factors

In analyzing economic factors that influence child marriage data were analyzed using frequency distribution and percentage.

Socio cultural factors

Descriptive analysis through frequency distribution was used to analyze social cultural factors influencing child marriage as it provide overview of all distinct values in variable and the number of times they occur. Here indictors like, gender inequality, gender discrimination, polygamy, inadequate socialization, customs and traditions were measured.

Ethical consideration

Ethical issues were highly observed; Permission was sought from District officials before the field work. The study ensured that all respondents voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. Moreover, the study ensured anonymity of respondents so as to safeguard their identity from

any future retaliation. The confidentially was highly observed.

Results and discussion

Questionnaire Return Rate (Response rate)

This study administered 100 questionnaires by means of interview guide to the respondents. All questionnaires were completed and returned hence making the study to achieve a 100 percent response rate. The study intended to assess community awareness on child marriage in Arusha district council.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the characteristics of the respondents particularly age, marital status, and the level of education

Table 3: Demographic characteristics of respondents (n=100)

variable	frequency	percentage
Age of respondents		
10-14	27	27.0
15-17	73	73.0
Marital status		
Single	67	67.0
Married	33	63.0
Education level		
Primary	77	77.0
secondary	19	19.0
Adult	4	4.0

Age of the Respondents

The inclusion of age groups of the respondents in this study was done purposely with an idea that they are likely to have an impact on the study of the researcher. To obtain this the young girls were asked to select their age groups as arranged by the researcher. The findings show that 27% of respondents were between 10 and 14 years old, followed by 73% who were between 15 and 17 years, (Table 3). This means that, basing on the findings it was observed that 73% were between 15 and 17.

Marital Status of the Respondents

Data on marital status were considered with an assumption that marital status could have influenced the persistence of child marriage. In this Study respondents were asked to reveal their status as per the two options, married and single supplied by the researcher. The results imply that, 67% of the respondents were still single or had escaped marriage.

Education Level of the Respondents

The researcher wanted to know the education level of the respondents so as to establish its relation to the persistence of child marriage. Data on education levels shows that 77% of the respondents had primary education, only 19% had secondary school and 4% had adult education (Table 3). This means that 77% of respondents had primary education which is lower education level. The implication of this situation is that, low level of education might be the impact of child marriage hence hindered the young girls to get higher education level. The findings agree with Pambe *et al*., (2013) who stated that education has enabled women to be in a better position to negotiate their terms in matters like decision making, mobility and even control of their income. Harris and Kate (2015) also, argued that literacy is positively correlated with the profitability of small entrepreneurial activities.

Awareness of child marriage among girls

The study aimed to examine level of awareness of young girls on child marriage among girls in the study area. The respondents were given different statements to show their level of awareness on child marriage. Respondent from the study area provided with five statements to indicate their level of awareness, The statements included; I'm aware on child marriage and its effects, I am aware that my tradition entertain child marriage to get income, I have a right say no to child marriage; I feel proud to get marriage early; and Child marriage is gender discrimination. Data collected were analzyed and findings are presented as follows**:**

Table 4: Level of Awareness on child Marriage

S/n	Awareness of Girls on Child Marriage	VLAL f (%)	LAL f (%)	MAL f (%)	HAL f (%)	VHAL f (%)	M	SD	Remark
1	I'm aware on child marriage and its effect	15 (15.0)	12 (12.0)	7 (7.0)	18 (18.0)	48 (48.0)	3.72	1.525	High awareness level
2	I am aware that my tradition entertain child marriage to get income	8 (8.0)	10 (10.0)	1 (1.0)	16 (16.0)	65 (65.0)	4.20	1.326	Very high awareness level
3	I have a right say no to child marriage	31 (31.0)	5 (5.0)	8 (8.0)	13 (13.0)	43 (43.0)	3.32	1.752	Medium awareness level
4	I feel proud to get marriage early	89 (89.0)	5 (5.0)	2 (2.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (4.0)	1.25	0.845	Very low awareness level
5	Child marriage is gender discrimination	9 (9.0)	2 (2.0)	2 (2.0)	15 (15.0)	72 (72.0)	4.39	1.222	Very high awareness level
	Overall mean awareness Index						3.38	1.334	

Where, VLAL= Very low awareness, LAL= low awareness, MAL=Medium awareness level, HAL= High awareness level and VHAL= High awareness level

From the findings it was revealed that on the the 1st statement (48%) of respondents had very high level of awareness on child marriage and its effect, while (15%) of respondents have very low level of awareness on child marriage and its effects. On the 2nd statement findings revealed that (65%) of respondents had a very high level of awareness that their tradition entertain child marriage while (8%) of respondents had very low level of awareness that tradition entertain child marriage to get income. On the statement that; I have right to say no to child marriage findings revealed that (43%) of respondents had a very high level of awareness that they have rights to say no to child marriage while (31%) of respondents to had very low level of child marriage. On the statement that; I feel proud to get married early (4th Statement) findings revealed that (89%) had very low acceptance of this statement.

Thereafter, the general awareness levels were categorized by using overall mean and standard deviation (SD) Into: Low = < (mean - SD), Medium = between (mean - SD) to (Mean + SD) and High = > (Mean + SD).

Low = < (Medium-Standard deviation); Low awareness = 3.38-1.334=2.046

Medium=between (mean - SD) to (Mean + SD); Medium= 3.38-1.334=2.046 to 3.38+1.334=4.714 that means Medium= between 2.046 and 4.714

High => (Mean + SD); High =>4.714

Therefore this overall mean awareness Index of 3.38 falls between 2.046 and 4.714 so it means that the study found that the respondents had medium awareness on child marriage. These findings imply that to some extent respondents are aware of child marriage. The findings are in line with Ferdousi (2014), who revealed that lack of high awareness on child marriage within the community was among the main reasons child marriage persisted. The findings were further supported by qualitative findings from interview as during focus group discussion interview it was revealed that,

…..."*in our area girls are aware of child marriage and its effect but in our norms and traditions, men (father of the child) are the one who decide when and who to marry their girls, but girls and their*

mother must obey the decision made by the father so in order to stop this habit men should be involved, we hate the situation but we have nothing to say on marriage of our child" (Chairperson Enyuat women group i.e focus group discussion 7/9/2021).

The findings from the study further complements those done elsewhere worldwide i.e. A study on early and forced child marriage on girl's education, in Migori country, Kenya by Ganira et al (2015) the study focused on constrains, prospects and policy direction. This study revealed that inadequate education attainment and low awareness promotes early marriage. Also Ferdousi (2014), on his study on Child marriage in Bangladesh: Socio-legal analysis in Bangladesh also revealed that lack of awareness on child marriage was among of the reason of child marriage persistence

Economic Factors that influence child Marriage

The study also intended to find the economic factors that influence persistence of child marriage among Maasai girls in the study area. Table 5 illustrates the descriptive response for the economic factors that might be perpetuating child marriage among the Maasai community.

Table 5: Economic Factors that Influence Persistence of Child Marriage among Maasai Girls

S/n	Economic Factors	Yes		No	
		F	%	F	%
1	Low income in a family	83	83	17	17.0%
2	Lack of basic needs	91	91	9	9.0%
3	Dowry payment	94	94	6	6.0%
4	Economic disparities	64	64	36	36.0%
5	Lack of sufficient meals in the family	94	94	6	6.0%

From table 5 it is clear that, majority of respondents agreed to all economic factors mentioned to them as factors that influence persistence of child marriage among Maasai girls. It was revealed that, the major economic factors that influence persistence of child marriage among Maasai girls in the study area included; lack of sufficient meals in the family 94%, dowry payment 94%, lack of basic needs 91%, Low income in a family 83% and other economic disparities 64%. These findings imply that in study area child marriage persist due to low income in the households.

These findings go hand in hand with findings from elsewhere worldwide i.e. a study conducted by Ahons et al (2019) in Ghana revealed that poverty is among the drivers of child marriage. These findings agreed with Rueckert (2017) who argued that parent and guardians receive dowries from prospective suitors so as to release their child to get marriage due to their poverty status.

During key informant interview it was found that

...... *"In this community child marriage is still persistent because men prefer things which are offered to them during marriage process, men who want to marry have to pay some amount of money, food and animals. To the fathers and uncle's material things, cash and animals are better since they believe it will improve their lives."*

These means that in the study area child marriage persists due to poor economic condition of the family and negative or poor perception of parents that the life might change by receiving those material things by marrying off their children.

Social Cultural Factors that Influence Persistence of Child marriage

The study further wanted to identify social cultural factors that influence child marriage among Maasai girls. From Table 6 it is clear that a number of socio-cultural factors were mentioned as perpetuating factors to child marriage

Table 6: Social Cultural Factors influencing persistence of Child Marriage

Social Cultural Factors	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
Customs and traditions practice	94	94%	6	6%
Gender inequality	84	84%	16	16%
Inadequate socialization	75	75%	25	25%
Polygamy	80	80	20	20%
Son preference	88	88%	12	12%
Fear of early pregnancies	83	83%	17	17%

Findings show that majority of respondents said yes for all items in social cultural factors that influence persistence of child marriage among Maasai girls in the study area. Findings show that, the major social cultural factors that influence persistence of child marriage among Maasai girls included customs and traditions 94%, Poor belief 88%, Gender inequality 84%, fear of early pregnancy 83%, Polygamy 80% and inadequate socialization 75% (Table 6). These finding are supported by Johanson (2015) who argued that in most cases girls located in the developing world are at a higher risk of unequal treatment when being neglected from right to education and health will cause further disempowerment. This was further emphasized in interviews conducted as in one interview the respondent reported that;

………" strong customs and tradition in this area influence child because there is poor exposure and lack of education to women, conservatism of local leaders and the patriarchy system has lead to persistence of child marriage"

These finding means that in the study area girl child is viewed as valueless that's why they are not given their rights including right to education, land and inheritance, it seems that the situation will continue because many women are married while they are young, they are not empowered as they lack education, assets and enough exposure to make

different decisions over men. Other studies with similar studies include that done by Ndaula (2017), Kutwa (2015), Ahmed (2015), (URT, 2017).

Ndaula (2017) on the study on factors contributing to persistence of child marriage among the Maasai girl Students in Tanzania, a case study of Kilosa District, revealed that Society members support child marriage as a way to avoid pregnancy before marriage which is against their tradition and customs. Kutwa (2015) on the same instance did a study on factors influencing early marriage on the girl child's maternal health projects: a case of marital town, Samburu County, Kenya. Through this study it was learnt that early marriage among girls is connected with unique socio-cultural contexts within communities. Ahmed (2015), on another hand did a study in Bangladesh on the same case and discovered that the practice of marrying young children is mainly upheld by tradition and social norms. Another study on Child marriage conducted by (URT, 2017) in Tanzania by using case study design identified that Gender inequality and power imbalances discriminating against women and girls within the home, encourages child marriage.

Conclusion

This study concludes that young girls in Arusha District council had moderate awareness level on child marriage; the reason for moderate level of awarens was due to little exposure of girls in a study area which influenced by bad norms and traditios such as partriachy system where by child marriage is viwed as not being important. Regardles of moderate awarenes young girls on child marriage in the study area they are not in position to say no to marry earlier due to other factors. Among the factors contributing to this situation was the social cultural factors, the economic factors and inadequate awareness of the situation and effects of child marriage.

Reference

1. Ace Africa (2019). Giving children Power to stop early Marriage. Retrieved at https://www.ace-africa.org/giving-children-the-power-to-stop-early-marriage/

2. Ahmed T. (2015). Child Marriage: A Discussion Paper. Bangladesh Journal of Bioethics 2015; 6(2):8-148. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284276993_Child_Marriage_A_Discussion_Paper#fullTextFileContent

3. Ahonsi, B., Fuseini, K., Nai, D., Goldson, E., Owusu, S., Ndifuna, I., and Tapsoba, P. L. (2019). Child marriage in Ghana: evidence from a multi-method study. *BMC women's health*, *19*(1), 1-15.

4. Backlund, H., & Blomqvist, G. (2014). Protecting the girl child or upholdingpatriarchy?: A case study of child marriage in the cultural and legal context ofTanzania. Lund University: SIDA *(2) (PDF) Child Marriage among Maasai Girl Students in Tanzania: The Case of Kilosa District*. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342298391_Child_Marriage_among_Maasai_Girl_Students_in_Tanzania_The_Case_of_Kilosa_District#fullTextFileContent [accessed Sep 01 2023].

5. BBS. (2013). Gender Statistics of Bangladesh (2012). Dhaka. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. Statistics and Information Division (SID). Ministry of Planning

6. Firelight (2021). Community action to reduce child marriage in Shinyanga, Tanzania. Summary report of achievements and learnings – April 2021

7. Ferdousi, N. (2014). Child marriage in Bangladesh: Socio-legal analysis. International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology, 6(1), 1-7. Available at https://academicjournals.org/article/article1390988659_Ferdousi.pdf

8. Ganira K. L., Linda A. Nancy I., Paul A. O, Joseph O., & Boniface Ngaruiya (2015). Early and Forced Child Marriage on Girls' Education, in Migori County, Kenya: Constraints, Prospects and Policy. School of Education, Department of Educational Communication and Technology, University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya.

Available at https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1158598 .pdf

9. URT (2017) Child Marriage in Tanzania at a Glance. 2017. Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children.

10. Available at: http://www.mcdgc.go.tz/data/Child_Marriage_Study.pdf.

11. Johansson, N. (2015). Child marriage: the underlying reasons and possible solutions.

12. Kutwa, L. N. (2015). Factors influencing early marriage on the girl child's maternal health projects: a case of Maralal town, Samburu County, Kenya (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).

13. ICRW Plan. (2013). Asia child marriage initiative: Summary of research in Bangladesh, India and Nepal. Retrieved from http://www.icrw.org/files/publications/PLAN%20ASIA%20Child%20Marriage-3%20Country%20Study.pdf

14. Mehra, M., & Nandy, A. (2020). Why Girls Run Away to Marry Adolescent Realities and SocioLegal Responses in India. Review of Faith & International Affairs, 13(3), 69-80

15. URT (2016) Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MoHCDGEC), [Tanzania Mainland, Ministry of Health (MoH) [Zanzibar], National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Office of the Chief Government Statistician (OCGS) and ICF. 2016. 2015-16 TDHS-MIS Key Findings. Rockville, Maryland, USA: MoHCDGEC, MoH, NBS, OCGS, and ICF. Available at https://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/SR 233/SR233.pdf

16. Muigai R. (2023). Breaking the Cycle of Early Child Marriage in Maasai Communities: Insights from Kenya and Tanzania". Available at https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/title-

breaking-cycle-early-child-marriage-maasai-insights-ruth-muigai

17. Nandi, A. (2019). Why girls run away to marry?

18. Ndanu G. (2019). Early and Forced Marriage. The University of Alabama at Birmingham. Available at https://sites.uab.edu/humanrights/2019/08/14/on-early-and-forced-marriage/

19. Ndaula, J. (2017). Child Marriage among Maasai Girl Students in Tanzania: The Case of Kilosa District (Doctoral dissertation, University of Dar es Salaam,).

20. Rueckert P. (2017) global Citizen At least 80 Girls saved from Child Marriage inTanzania, Government Reports

21. UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), (2013). State of the World Population 2013: Motherhood in Childhood: Facing the Challenge of Adolescent Pregnancy. New York: UNFPA.

22. UNICEF, (2001).Early Marriage: Child Spouses. Innocenti digest 7. Florence,UNICEF. Innocent Research Centre Italy.

23. UNDAF (2015). UNDAF Companion Guidance: Theory of Change. Available athttps://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNDG-UNDAF-Companion-Pieces-7-Theory-of-Change.pdf

24. URT. (2014). The Tanzania Education and Training Policy, 2014. Dar es Salaam:Tanzania Ministry of Education and Vocational Training

25. URT. (2017). National survey on the drivers and consequences of child marriage inTanzania. Dar es Salaam: Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender,Elderly and Children. *(2) (PDF) Child Marriage among Maasai Girl Students in Tanzania: The Case of Kilosa District.* Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342298391_Child_Marriage_among_Maasai_Girl_Students_in_Tanzania_The_Case_of_Kilosa_District#fullTextFileContent [accessed Sep 01 2023].

26. WHO (2013). Child marriages-39 000 every day: More than 140 million girls will marry between 2011 and 2020. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/news/item/07-03-2013-child-marriages-39-000-every-day-more-than-140-million-girls-will-marry-between-2011-and-2020

27. Yamane, T. (1967). Statistics, an Introductory Analysis, 2nd Ed., New York: Harper and Row