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AN EXAMINATION OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF EARLY CHILD MARRIAGE ON THE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN IN WARD 35 OF CHISAMBA VILLAGE DORA, MUTARE.

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ABSTRACT

Early child marriage is a social vice that has cut across childhood and compromised fundamentals rights in many societies. Early child marriage effects, translate to economic stress due to loss of access to education, lack of access to health care, lack of job opportunities, social stratification, low self-esteem, isolation and discrimination which all emphasize gendered poverty. The study derives from the fact that children are different from adults, are in need of particular concern, education and health care and that people within this category are not suitable for marriage. The study thus focused primarily on finding the socio-economic impact of early child marriage and challenges that the marriage bears on children on a daily basis. The research further aimed at producing an updated central to Manicaland study recommendations to curb challenges faced by young children who are married, critically analysing formerly generalized solutions when the setting of the unit of analysis is geographical, socially, politically and economically alien to the Zimbabwean situation. The study employed an explorative research design, quantitative and qualitative research approaches to this effect. The researcher further used purposive sampling to select respondents based on the knowledge of early child marriage. In-depth interviews, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and a socio-economic scale were tools used to solicit information from respondents in Dora ward 35 of Chisamba village. In line with the research objectives, the research findings revealed that early child marriage is driven by factors such as personal willingness/voluntary early child marriage, physical maturity, socialization of the girl child and cultural beliefs. The findings further revealed that early child marriage effects cause a cycle of occurrences and are vastly perpetuated by socio-economic effects. Ultimately, the single effort of the law cannot curb early child marriage. The study thus made significant recommendations to the Government, child protection urgencies, Dora community leaders, members, and policy makers. KEY WORDS: Early child marriage, effects, well-being, children