"Block the Circumstances" Leading To Teenage Marriage Conceptual Framework

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Abstract: Despite international hullabaloos, female teenage marriages continue to happen throughout the world. Marriage is regarded as a celebration moment in adult life but not with female teenagers because it cuts short their childhood fundamental rights, bundles their academic pursuit to an implausible dream and future life hinged on the socio-economic ground becomes blurred. These marriages rob the teenagers of being important socio-economic figures and short-change them of the contributions they could have made as women in their future lifetime. The situation of teenage marriages create high illiteracy or semi-illiteracy as girls are snatched into marriage at primary or secondary educational levels before they have firmly mastered the numerical, reading, and other academic-related information. The female teenagers ought to be given chances to enjoy childhood and explore their natural given capabilities and stretch their wide potentials (socio-economic and political) powers beyond housewives level. At teenage ages, the girls are incapable and unprepared to handle adulthood responsibilities that come with marriage. The researcher carried out a study in 2020 entitled; "Rethinking the Early Marriage of Female Teenagers and its Implications to Human Rights in the Mt Darwin District of Zimbabwe". The researcher hoped that the results of the study were going to contribute towards the understanding of the circumstances leading to teenage marriages, current patterns of marriages, the psychological impacts and the implications of these marriages on human rights and ultimately develop a conceptual framework to guide all stakeholders in curbing female teenage marriages in Mashonaland Central Province and beyond. The findings of the study showed that female teenage marriages emanated from self-centeredness/personal factors, social factors, lack of parental care and value of education, religion, culture, values, peer pressures, and economic circumstances of parents and female teenagers. This implied that if the circumstances leading to early marriages were blocked, early sexual activities, early marriages, some patterns of marriages, negative psychological impacts, burdens of marriages, and violation of human rights could be gridlocked too. Therefore, a conceptual framework was developed to give a clear, logical picture of female teenage marriages, its effects, and specific guidance in developing interventions to curb future early marriage. In addition, the conceptual framework was developed to assist all stakeholders to deal with specific aspects and root causes of early marriages with the ultimate aim of preventing them. Preventing female teenage marriages mean reducing pregnancy-related complications and mortalities, reducing psychological related distress, enjoyment of human rights, and increasing productive years amongst the teenagers.
Keywords: "Female teenage marriages", "Circumstances", "Conceptual framework", "Primary" and "Secondary Factors"
Research Area: Child Protection
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I. INTRODUCTION

Female teenage marriage is a global issue but the rate varies both by country and region (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2013 and Santhya and Jejeebhoy, 2015) and globally the incidence of female teenage marriage is at 40.3 percent (Nguyen and Wodon, 2015).An estimated 88% of these female teenagers live in developing countries (Montazeri, Gharacheh, Mohammadi, Rad and Ardabili, 2016). High prevalence rates of female teenage marriages persist throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa despite legislative efforts to prevent the practice (African Union, 2015). UNICEF (2014) argues that marrying these female teenagers challenges the basic right of these children to education, health, protection, and development. Ahmed et al. (2014:84) and UNFPA (2016) concurred that early marriages come with burdens that include; insults, belittling or humiliation in private or in front of others, threats of abandonment, being ignored or treated indifferently intimidation, and acts aimed at scaring, threats of using weapons and being hurt. Sekine and Hodgkin (2017) arguedthatearly marriage outcomes have an enormous impact on adolescent girls, curtailing full realisation of their rights,

limiting their livelihood options, and harming their health and wellbeing as well as that of their children. The female teenagers in marriage are affected emotionally, economically, physically, psychologically, and socially (Ahmed, 2013; Girls Not Brides, 2015; Goli et al., 2015; Santhya, 2011; Tahir, 2013).According to the Girls Not Brides (2016), female teenagers should live a non-discriminatory life, free from violence and exploitation. The rights are enshrined in international human rights instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Also, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and the regional human rights instruments such as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

Zimbabwe is a signatory to these global conventions and continental charters. According to Mwambene (2018:531), Plan International's 18+ Programme estimates that, in Zimbabwe, on average, one in every three girls is married before the age of 18 years. Overall, Zimbabwe is ranked 41 in the number of countries where children marry before the age of 18 years (Mwambene, 2018:531).The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) (2017) argued that religion is a driver of child marriage in Zimbabwe. The female teenage marriage is common in indigenous Apostolic churches, charismatic evangelical groupings that mix Christian beliefs with traditional cultures and have approximately 1.2 million followers across the country.

Female teenagers get into marriage because of different circumstances, of which some are internal whilst others are external and beyond the expectations of these female teenagers. Singh and Vennam (2016:24) found that the arranged marriages were three times as common as love marriages in India. The circumstances of being out of school increases the risk of marriage for girls, and pressures to marry for cultural and economic reasons also increase rates of school dropout (Jones, et al, 2014).Normally, the teenagers should be in schools or other academic institutions. The beginning of secondary school usually coincides with the onset of adolescence/puberty, a time when girls become more vulnerable to sexual coercion, violence, pregnancy, and forced/child marriage ICRW (as cited in UNICEF 2015:21). The teenage stage is critical for human development, as it is the last time and moment for adulthood entry preparation. It is normally expected that one should enter the adulthood armed with life skills and a positive mind to face the future. Unfortunately, some female teenagers find themselves in marriage instead of schools or colleges.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The development of the "Block the Circumstances" conceptual framework was guided by the Social Ecological Model Framework and informed by the patterns, circumstances, psychological impacts, and human rights violations in early marriages. The environment influences the female teenage marriages and the reversal is possible to prevent such marriages. In the 2020 study conducted by the researcher in Mashonaland Central Province of Zimbabwe, it was noted that the Social Ecological Model Framework of Theory influenced the circumstances and patterns of female marriages that usually results in negative psychological impacts and violation of female teenagers' human rights.

Figure 2.1: Social Ecological Model Framework
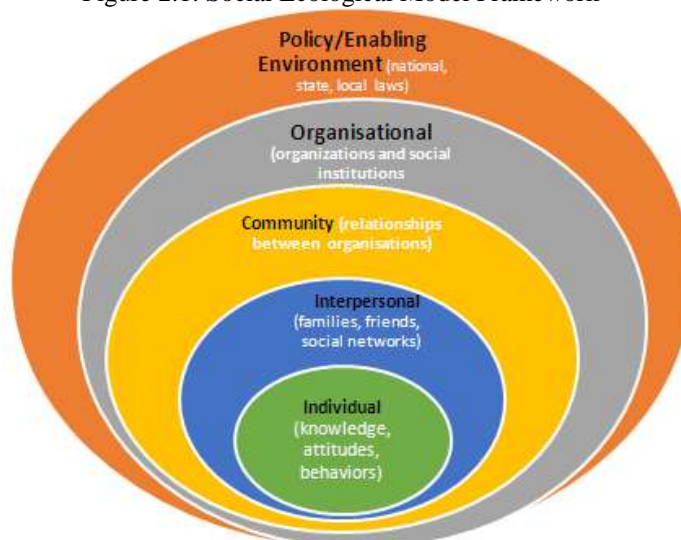
Source: Adapted from the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2014), The Social-Ecological Model: A Framework for Prevention, http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/overview/social-ecologicalmodel.html (Accessed: 21/06/18).

The Social Ecological Model Framework was first introduced as a conceptual model for understanding human development by Urie Bronfenbrenner in the1970s, later it was formalised as a theory in the 1980s. The initial theory by Bronfenbrenner was illustrated by nesting circles that place the individual in the centre surrounded by various systems (Kilanowski, 2017:295).

There are five nested, hierarchical levels of the Social Ecological Model Framework of Theory: Individual, interpersonal, community, organisational, and policy/enabling environment (Figure 2.1). These levels form the female teenager's circles of influence, through socialisation levels as the teenager develops and eventually finds her marriage path. The levels of influence informed the patterns and circumstances (in the Block the Circumstances conceptual framework as shown figure 3.1) around female teenage marriages. In 2016, the Ministry of Health and Child Care in Zimbabwe used the Social Ecological Framework of Theory to assess and understand the causes of pregnancies amongst adolescents.

Personal factors

Some scholars have argued that as society becomes more developed, its culture also gears toward individualism (Hofstede, 2001). Individualism might be one of the push factors in female teenage marriage. Rural communities with families where early marriage is a norm lead the children to believe and aspire to get married early (Amin et al., 2013). Raimi and Alam (2018) study in Malaysia found that the female teenagers made abruptly their own decision to get involved in a marriage because they believe that once they get married, everything will be picture perfect. Chenge and Maunganidze (2017), found that a third (32%) of the respondents in the study had initiated their marriages and eloped without pregnancy in Mt Darwin district. O'Donoghue and Rabin (2001) explored extensions to the traditional approach that can help in modelling the decisions of adolescents. They argued that teens might not accurately compare short-run benefits versus long-run costs because teens discount the future too heavily. Two closely related explanations are that teens have time-inconsistent preferences or projection bias. These models explain why teenagers engage in risky behaviour, such as drinking, smoking, drug use, unprotected sex, and criminal activity, even though these behaviours can have substantial negative consequences in the long run (Gruber 2001). The adolescents have the natural tendency of making myopic decisions that they will later regret. The female teenagers can determine their own marriages and patterns of marriage. Despite the female teenagers making their own decision to marry, if parents and communities are capacitated, they will guide and prevent them from engaging in early marriages.

Interpersonal factors

A female teenager's closest social circle-peers, partners, and family members-influence her behaviour and contribute to her circumstances leading to teenage marriage. Bi-directional interactions are at the strongest and they have a most powerful influence on the child (Harkonen, 2007). Britwum et al (2017) study in Kenya found that girls liked to imitate their friends and have the things their friends had and their parents could not afford.Ochen, Chi and Lawoko (2019) in their study in Uganda amongst 13-19 female teenagers found that a higher prevalence of teenage pregnancy was reported among girls who had intense peer pressure and 56.2% of female teenagers had fallen pregnant due to peer pressure. Barry's (2010) study in Freetown, Sierra Leone found that peer behaviours had a significant and negative impact on teenage sexual behaviour. Interpersonal is the second level of the SEM that examines close relationships that may increase the likelihood of female teenage marriages. As such, the risk (particularly the violation of human rights) which comes with female teenage marriage is determined by the teenager's agency, aspiration, life skills, knowledge, and access to services. The family's support, friends, and peers' influence may determine the female teenager's likelihood of early marriage or not and the pattern of marriage.

Community factors

The community shapes the future of their adolescents. The community that values its female teenagers will prevent them from circumstances leading to early marriages, human rights violation, psychological impacts and other challenges. A supportive community can promote human rights endeavour by discouraging female teenage marriages. Save the Children (2005) indicates that cultural norms and beliefs constrain teenage females' education rights especially in many developing parts of the world.The community has the power to change norms that promote teenage marriages. The community has also the influence to promote and perpetuate teenage marriage practices as well. Bantebya et al., (2014) studies in Uganda, have shown that some communities regard pre-marital pregnancy as shameful and stigmatised, associated with disrespect, bad omens, embarrassment, a disgrace to the family, and curses; and the teenage mother is seen as a bad influence in the community. In the same study, however, Bantebya et al., (2014) found that other communities no longer value virginity, this

appears to be bending (except among Muslims, who continue to uphold premarital virginity as a strong social/religious norm to be guarded at all costs, including through female teenagers) implying tacit acceptance since premarital pregnancy/sexual relations have become so common. It is the community, which makes or pulls down the future women of dignity for tomorrow, through its values. The unlearning of bad social norms (especially those that promote early marriages) by the community, is all that is needed to take a female teenager from one level to another.

Organisational factors

It should be noted that societal factors either create a level of acceptance or intolerance for female teenage marriages. The institutions are guardians of justice in any society. If the institutions become corrupt or align themselves with unjust practices, objectivity will never prevail, particularly when it comes to the prevention of female teenage marriages. In the Zimbabwean culture, traditionally, it was the role of parents/guardians to educate adolescents as they grew into puberty, however, this practice has been eroded by modern practices and urbanizationKamuzora (as cited in Ministry of Health, 2016). However, contrary to this finding, in a study conducted in Tanzania, 83% of the students got reproductive health education from parents/guardians and health centres (Nyakubega, 2009). According to the traditional Zimbabwean culture, aunts and uncles have the responsibility to educate adolescents of puberty and sexuality. Religion also influences contraceptive use and marriage. Marrying off girls to older men in the Apostolic church is acceptable, and it is part of the religious norms and practices (JIMAT Development Consultants, 2015). Female teenagers' rights to education, to be protected, and to be empowered to influence decisions that affect their lives are denied (Save the Children, 2016). Some churches and other higher-level institutions contribute to the patterns of marriage and the circumstances leading to female teenage marriages. The higher socialisation institutions can assist in preventing circumstances leading to female teenage marriages, thereby preventing the patterns, psychological impacts and resultantly promote the enjoyment of human rights by female teenagers.

Policy/Enabling Environment factors

This fifth level includes local, state, national, and global laws and policies. At the national level, several policies and legislations have been put in place to address the plight of adolescent girls, some of which may indirectly address adolescent pregnancy. Such legislations include the Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy, Education policy, the schools' re-entry policy, national constitutions, policies that promote girls' education, age at marriage, age of consent, and age of majority amongst many of them (Ministry of Health, 2016). Lack of implementation of policies and laws that seek to protect children has been noted to fuel child marriages. ICRW (2011) notes that despite the prevalence of child marriages, the practice continues to flourish due to poor implementation of child marriage legislation. Zimbabwe is one of the countries that lag in terms of effectively implementing marriage laws. In the Mayuge study by Bantebya et al., (2014) found that Uganda constitution specifies the legal age of sexual consent and marriage as 18 years and strived to enforce the law on 'defilement' prohibiting relations between under-age children, and evidence that suggests these measures have merely driven early marriage underground. In Zimbabwe, there are inconsistencies in some of the laws, for example, the age of consent, which is 16 years versus the age of marriage, which was revised to 18 years in 2016. The country completed the Child Marriages Draft Bill that seeks to align policies with the Constitution, but the Bill is taking a long time to pass in Parliament. There are gaps in marriage laws that continue to promote child marriage and the perpetrators are taking advantage of the gaps. If Zimbabwe would effectively and vigorously implement these marriage laws, most of the circumstances leading to teenage marriages will be blocked and female teenagers would be enjoying most of the rights that come with adolescence group. The policymakers and legislators as part of their duties need to "re-think early marriages" and come up with the laws and policies that inhibit uncalled for patterns of marriages and circumstances that contribute towards female teenage marriages. By enacting such laws and policies, psychological impacts that come with marriages can be prevented and human rights promoted.

The psychological theories

To understand the dynamics of the female teenage marriages, the researcher incorporated three psychological theories above the main adopted Social Ecological model Framework of Theory. The psychological theories namely; Bandura's Social Learning, Freud's psychoanalytic and Erikson'spsychosocial acted as complimentary in understanding teenage behaviours that could lead to early marriages. These theories explained comprehensively the individual and interpersonal factors of the Social Ecological Framework of Theory in line with the teenage marriages. The researcher considered the main relevant stages; latency stage & genital stage and industry versus inferiority & identity versus confusion according to Freud and Erikson's theories respectively. The first two; latency stage from Freud and Industry's versus Inferiority from Erikson, directly feed into the female teenager stage, which is so critical in this in this framework model. Most teenage

marriages happen between 13-19 years of age, that is, during the puberty stage. According to Phares (2010), the Genital stage (puberty) is the final stage of psychosexual development. The genitals become the primary focus of pleasure while the child seeks to satisfy feelings in a heterosexual relationship. At this stage, the teenagers begin to show sexual interests and sexual urges are awakened. This stage leads to adult affection and love. Some teenagers become uncontrollable, watch pornography, arrogant and self-directed; they usually find desire in mixing with opposite-sex peers/partners. If all has gone well in the previous stages, Freud theorized, interest during adolescence is on heterosexual (their sexual urges into opposite-sex peers) relationships. This is a time of exploring pleasure through more mature love and affection. Wade and Tavris (1996) echo that sexual energy is now located in the genitals and eventually is directed towards sexual intercourse. This is the stage where most teenagers experiment and indulge in sexual relationships, pregnancies and marriages become inevitable. This stage is mostly self (individual) or peers (interpersonal) spearheaded; these are elements of the Social Ecological Framework of Theory that leads to early marriages. This developmental stage (according to Freud) is critical and requires constant guidance and counselling concerning aspects of growing up, teenage challenges, peer influences, and career development.

On the other hand, Erikson theory emphasised the influence of society on human development, which can enrich or destroy personality through the experiences encountered during growth from birth to death. Erikson's theory is important because of its emphasis on social and cultural influences in development particularly at adolescence and beyond stages. Many adolescents face the responsibility of establishing who they are, and the roles they are to play in their societies. Failure to find answers leads to conflict, indecisiveness, anxiety, and loneliness. If adolescents are unable to establish a sense of stability in various aspects of their lives, role confusion results (in Mashonaland Central Province study, most female teenagers who got married were not in schools and some were influenced by friends, that is they had failed to establish who they were). It is during this stage where adolescents experiment for example, female teenagers end up with unwanted pregnancies, they also get involved in substance and drug abuse. According to this theory, the female teenager will be still immature and experimenting, hence not fit for adult household chores. As such, the need to have positive-minded family members with "education first" moto, role models, and supportive community friends is very critical (Social Ecological Framework of Theory established interpersonal element as a key element in early or late marriage). Guidance and counselling are of paramount importance at this stage. The goal of guidance and counselling at this stage is development of roles and skills thatprepare adolescents so that they take meaningful places in adult society.

The basic assumptions of Bandura are that human beings interact among themselves and influence each other. Through peering, the female teenager can copy good or bad things from others. This implies that the female teenager can learn, copy, and get into marriage because of her peers who are already into it. She can as well adopt the patterns of marriage that are practiced in that community. It is, therefore, very critical for the female teenagers, in particular, to be surrounded by agencies, peers, families, and close community members who are supportive in terms of career development rather than those who focus on marriage issues. The element of interpersonal influence is part of the Social Ecological Framework of Theory. Parents and relatives can indeed prevent the unceremonious circumstances leading to marriages. If parents and relatives play a part in some of the female teenage marriages, they can also critically play a reverse role and prevent psychological impacts caused by these early marriages hence promote teenagers' human rights.

III.   THE "BLOCK THE CIRCUMSTANCES" CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This conceptual framework comes in to close the gap of blanket responses in curbing the early/teenage marriages, without targeting the primary sources. If the interventions target patterns of marriages, relieving female teenagers from the burdens of marriages and preventing theviolation of human rights, without targeting the source, these palliative approaches will not last. There is a need for sustainable approaches, which target the sources, which are the circumstances, not the outcomes. The strategies to deal with specific circumstances can be tailor-made. The stakeholders, which include the Civil Societies, Human Rights and Gender Advocates, Development agencies including NGOs and Government Ministries, can adopt the conceptual framework in endeavours to prevent early marriages in Mashonaland Central Province and beyond.The motivation and development of the conceptual framework was informed by the following findings from a 2020 study conducted in Mashonaland Central Province by the researcher as previously mentioned. Somehow the findings are similar across several countries with the early marriage problems.

Circumstances: The study found that out of school, poverty, religion, culture, lack of parental support and valuing of school, personal factors, peering and close associates were the circumstances leading to teenage marriages. Contradicting marriages laws exacerbated the situation. The majority of the female teenagers were staying with their parents when they married.

Patterns: Mainly the married female teenagers were in monogamous and polygamous marriages. They were married to both old men and their peers (young men) and they eloped with or without pregnancy. Some parents (30.2%) had charged and accepted bride prices from their sons-in-law.

Psychological impacts: The study found that teenage marriages had negative psychological impacts on female teenagers. The majority of the female teenagers (FTs)in marriage were in full bitterness, regretting and

could not recall any good things from their marriages. The MFTs cited ill-treatments by their husbands and in-laws, beatings from their husbands and provision of cheap labour to the family, feeling of deceit, frequent quarrels, husbands who were always away, long history of not enjoying conjugal rights and assumptions from their husbands that they were a disgust to them and thus were looking for other women as main sources of their negative psychological impacts.

Human rights: The researcher found that the teenage marriages violated human rights, married female teenagers were denied the rights to go to school, rights to socialise, rights of movement, economic rights, belonging rights, rights to stay in peace without verbal and physical abuse and rights to make own decision about their sexual life.

It was also concluded that the Girl's immaturity to deal with the burdens of marriage was both a human right issue and a core source of most of the negative psychology.

The "Block the Circumstances" conceptual framework is presented in figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1

PF=Primary Factors
SF=Secondary factor
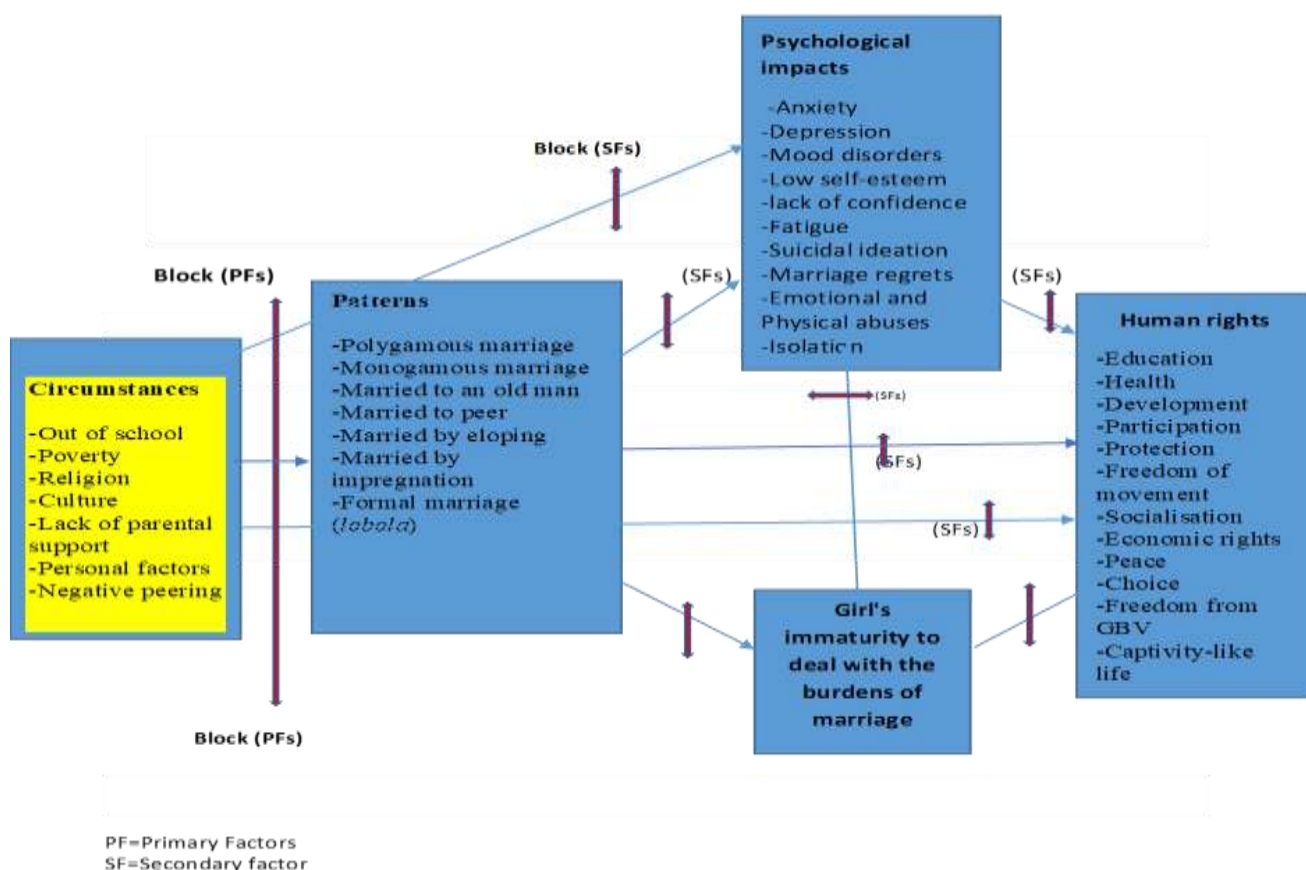
Source: Researcher's initiatives

The conceptual frameworkexplains how the circumstances influence the patterns of marriage and how these patterns affect the psychological wellbeing at the same time violating the human rights of married female teenagers. It shows the interactions of circumstances leading to early marriages, the patterns of marriage taken by female teenagers, factors affecting female teenagers' inability to deal with marriage burdens, negative psychological triggers and psychological impacts amongst female teenagers, and all these factors leadto violation of human rights. The literature review and the study results revealed that there is a linkage between the

components of the conceptual frameworkand the female teenage marriages. The circumstances such as out of school, poverty, religion, parenting styles and lack of parental support, personal factors, peering and close associates, negative culture, lack of adolescence health reproductive health, lack of guidance and counselling, and lack of valuing school were the major causes of early marriages amongst the female teenagers. If these circumstances hereby considered as the primary factors (PFs) could be dealt with, the cases of early marriage amongst female teenagers could be as wellbe, significantly reduced. Blocking the circumstances imply blocking early marriages that led to 83.9% of female teenagers in the study to marry before attaining 18 years of age, blocking early sexual activities and early pregnancies that contributed to 50% of all marriages in the above-mentioned study in Mashonaland Central Province, blocking the self-centredness of female teenagers that led to 47.4% female teenagers to initiate their own marriages and over 50% of them to elope without pregnancies, and enlightening parents of the effects of early marriages.

If the circumstances leading to early marriages are blocked, it means that the major patterns of marriages that are monogamous and polygamous identified in this study would have been blocked as well. This implies relieving the female teenager of the burden that comes with marriage until a time when she physically, economically, socially, and psychologically fit or grown up to marry and deal with the challenges. The second phase will be to deal with the second factors(SFs), which are the psychological impacts and human rights that might arise outside early marriage such as in orphanage situations. The SFs can also be employed to support the female teenagers psychosocially and block them from vulnerabilitiesof early marriages. Once the circumstances and psychological impacts have been dealt with, the female teenagers could enjoy human rights, which are their human entitlements. When the circumstances have been blocked, female teenagers can enjoy their rights to education, uninterrupted profession careers, develop fully and choose husbands from adulthood point of view, voice their rights in marriage and contribute to the economy of the country amongst many of things. Their natural given talents can be fully utilised and realised. More related literature is revealed in each thematic area in the following passages.

Circumstances leading to Female Teenage Marriages

The circumstances can shape the way parents' ambitions and aspirations for their children evolve and parents may in many instances take hard decisions, which may or may not prove not be in the best interest of children in the long run (Singh and Vennam (2016:23). A study by Erulkar (2013:40) revealed that girls who do not attend school are socially and emotionally isolated from their peers; this has an impact on their social lives and exposure to information about sexual and reproductive health, as well as taking a toll on their emotional wellbeing. The removal from school does not just represent the loss of educational opportunities but moreover, the ability to interact with peers of the same age and socialize outside of the family unit (UNICEF 2014). Guday's (2005) study in North-Western Ethiopia found that girls who marry young are more likely to be illiterate and to have no experience of formal education. Being out of school increases the risk of marriage for girls, and pressures to marry for cultural and economic reasons also increases rates of school dropout. The circumstance of being out of school suggests great opportunities for female teenagers to mingle with young and old male adults, who can influence them into either monogamous or polygamous marriage. The situation of being out of school directly and indirectly exposes female teenagers immaturely into adult life, as they will be socializing with adults because their peers will be in schools.Mutanana and Mutara's (2015:31) study in Hurungwe Zimbabwe found that peer influence was another circumstance that was promoting teenage pregnancies eventually leading to early marriages so wereBritwum, Akorsu, Agbesinyale and Aikins (2017) study in Kenya which indicated that girls liked to imitate their friends. ICRW (2007) noted that the holy prophet practiced 73% of early marriage in Pakistan. Female teenage marriages are widespread among the Apostolic churches in Zimbabwe, particularly in the Johane Marange Sect who are estimated to constitute 1.2 million members (Jabson, 2015).A study by UNFPA (2016) in Ghana, found that poverty/hardship, the pursuit of luxury, cultural practices, cultural norms such as betrothal marriage, teenage pregnancy, lack of education, poor parental guidance, and pressure from significant others were circumstances that led to female teenage marriages. Sekiwungu and Whyte (2009) in Eastern Uganda concurred that adolescents attributed early pregnancy and child marriage due to lack of parental care and concern, especially inadequate provision of necessities, lack of control over female teenagers' mobility, and inadequate parental guidance and mistreatment of female teenagers at home. Blocking the circumstances leading to teenage marriages spontaneously blocks circumstantial patterns of marriage. For example, teenagers getting into polygamous marriages because of circumstances is an uncalled-for endeavour. Going into polygamous marriage should be a choice of a girl when she has matured enough to steadily choose a partner and pattern of marriage. A study conducted the researcher in 2020 in Mashonaland Central Province found that poverty, religion, culture, lack of parental support, educational level of parents, peers and personal factors had positive influenced towards female teenage marriages. Some circumstances have a high degree of exposing female teenagers to early marriages, for example being out of school, poverty,

religion and parenting styles. Interventions aimed at blocking these circumstances could prevent female teenage marriages.

The Patterns of Female Teenage Marriages

The female teenagers get into marriage patterns through various means, for instance, arranged marriages by parents and self-selected marriages Nanda et al., (as cited in Yadav, Singh and Vishwakarma, 2017).The parents are likely to suggest a marriage pattern for the female girls that benefits them (Jones et al., 2014). A study by Chenge and Maunganidze (2017) in Mt Darwin district, found that the majority (65%) of girls were in non-polygamous marriages while 35% of them were in polygamous marriages. The majority (40%) of girls eloped into marriage after being impregnated while a third (32%) of them initiated their marriages and eloped without pregnancy.Ahmed, et al. (2013) study revealed that early marriages have a negative implication on the female teenagers because they cannot deal with responsibilities that are associated with marriages. Blocking the circumstances leading to teenage marriages will not only save the girl child from the burden of patterns of marriage but will delay the marriages, progressively prepare her for future socio-economic positions.

Girl's Immaturity to Deal with Burdens of Marriage

Married female teenagers fail to cope with the demands of marriage because of immaturity and lack of considerable sense of responsibilities (Ahmed et al., 2014:84). After being married the female teenagers have to look after their husbands, children and give birth although they do not have the complete knowledge of being a wife and even do not have sufficient information about sex and childbirth (Somerset (as cited in Ahmed, et al., 2014:84). Early marriages are likely to cause a married female teenager psychological problem such as anxiety, which in worst cases can lead to suicide (Soylu, Ayaz and Yüksel (as cited in Kurebwa and Kurebwa, 2018). The female teenagers in marriage cannot handle marriage demands due to their immaturity, which is a human right issue and psychological wellbeing aspects. Therefore, blocking the circumstances mean blocking early marriages thereby relieving a girl child from the burdens of marriage. Most of the negative psychological impacts emanate from the female teenagers' immaturity to handle the marriage burdens. As such, if all circumstances are blocked, the girl child will delay getting into marriage, physically and psychologically grow, get educated and empowered, occupy socio-economic positions and act independently and maturely.

The Psychological Impacts of Early Marriages

The negative psychological wellbeing of teenagers in marriage automatically points out to the violation of human rights. While early marriage exposes girls to numerous harmful physical health conditions, their mental health likewise, is affected. Chenge, Maunganidze and Mupindu (2020) study, revealed that, the married female teenagers were more likely to develop psychological distress than their unmarried female teenager counterparts. Ahmed et al. (2013) noticed that female teenagers in marriage are at higher risk of psychological disorders, as these girls will be denied the right to freely express their views and the right to be defended against devastating traditional practices that in turn will increases risk of a lifetime and recurrent psychiatric disorders. Married female teenagers suffer from social isolation, they are often confined to the groom's household and prevented from visiting former family and friends (Nour 2009and Parsons et al., 2015). The physical and mental health consequences of female teenagers in marriage highlighted in the foregone passages indicate that child marriages compromise the development and well-being of the female teenage brides (Ramnarine, 2017). According to Ahmed et al. (2013:86), in marriage, there will be increased stresses and pressures and early-married girls are more prone to marriage problems as their individuality has been interrupted. Britwum et al., (2017) study in Kenya found that the female teenagers in marriage had in intense trauma that some even contemplated suicide. Kuehn (2011) found that marriage before the age of 18 years, often increases a woman's chance of developing a psychiatric condition in her lifetime and also increases the likelihood of receiving care for disorders. Neetu et al., (2019:1), in their research on the female teenager and Psychological Well-being in Niger and Ethiopia, found that early marriage had detrimental effects on psychological well-being. The researcher in his study in Mashonaland Central Province, found that teenage marriages had negative psychological impacts on female teenagers, the majority of the female teenagers (FTs)in marriage were in full bitterness, regretting and could not recall any good things from their marriages. Most of the negative psychological impacts in teenage marriages can be prevented if the circumstances leading to early marriages were blocked.

Human Rights and Early Marriages

Female teenage marriage is one of the global problems that undermine personal development and the rights of women. It is one of the ways of violating human and women's rights (Mengistu, 2015). Human Rights Watch (2011 and Mwambene and Mawodza (2016) concurred that teenage marriage violates the rights to psychological wellbeing, non-discrimination, protection of the best interest of the child, life, survival, and

development, protected from all forms of violence and sexual abuse, health, life, education, dignity and personal integrity. The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) (2005) revealed that early marriage violates the right to educational and vocational information and guidance as well as the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas. In concurrence with the aforesaid studies, UNFPA, (2012) revealed that female teenage marriage is a human rights violation that denies a girl of her childhood, disrupts her education, limits her opportunities, increases her risk of violence and abuse, and jeopardises her health. Teenage marriages eliminate the child's freedom to choose when and whom to marry. Teenage marriage renders the female teenager redundant in terms of profession, skills development, and economic growth. These marriages violate human rights and incapacitate female teenagers in all aspects of life. Therefore, blocking the circumstances to teenage marriages, mean promoting female teenagers' human rights, giving them a recognition and wide choice in life, raising their esteems and enjoying life in all its fullness.

Possible interventions that can block the circumstances leading to female teenage marriages

1. **Promotion of education.** The Government, NGOs, Developmental agencies, Human rights groups, Activists and Stakeholders of the female child's welfare should look at interventions that promotes education both in parents and female teenagers. Dialoguing with church leaders including Apostolic sects, school heads and teachers, men and men groups, community leaders, parents, female and male teenagers on the importance of education could be one of the critical activities. Supporting orphans and other vulnerable children with school fees and other requirement, guidance and counselling, involvement of talk-shows with role models from the same communities, road shows on education, adult education, mainstreaming early marriage campaigns in all projects and media, establishment of satellite schools in remote areas, identifying and championing (through peer-to-peer) role model parents of education could be some of the activities to be undertaken to block the out of school circumstance.
2. **Tackling poverty.** Income generating activities including ISALs, household linkages to financial institutions, rural financing, financial literacy training, contract farming, value chain development, market development, smart subsidies, crisis modifier activities and smart agriculture could be some of the most critical activities to block poverty.
3. **Religion.** Involvement of all religious groups in dialogues, capacitation of religious leaders in child protection and safe guarding, creation of church child protection champions, advocacy and child sensitive social policy reviews could some of the important activitiesin blocking the religion circumstances
4. **Tackling negative culture.** Dialoguing with community leaders on culture, norms and values, marriage, promotion of positive culture and capacitation of community leaders on child protection and safe guarding could be some of most critical activities to block negative culture.
5. **Parental Support.** Parental and female teenagers' dialogues, formation, capacitation and support of parental champions, parental counselling and parenting style training and training of parents and female teenagers in adolescent reproductive health could be some of the activities that cab be considered. Integration of agricultural production and social safety could improve support and care for the girl child. These activities could be critical in blocking the parental factors
6. **Tackling personal factors in female teenagers.** Training female teenagers in life skills, adolescent reproductive health, peer pressure, personalities, effects of early marriages and importance of education. Formation and support of female teenager champions, formation and support of female teenager groups, supporting young women role models who excelled in life andfemale teenager seminars could be some of the key activities to block personal factors.
7. **Tacking vulnerability in child headed families.** Training community leaders on OVC care and support, formation, training and support of OVC Community-led Care Coalitions, support Dura raMambo/IsiphalaseNkosi (Chief's granary) concept, support OVC and other vulnerable children with income generating projects could be other critical activities to consider in blocking circumstances leading to teenage marriages.

IV. CONCLUSION

The outcomes of teenage marriages manifest in negative psychological impacts and human rights violations. The Block the Circumstances conceptual framework allows us to understand the range of factors that put the female teenagers at risk of early marriages and pinpoints the sources thereby giving programmers the leeway to act and prevent the perpetuation of such marriages. It guides the programmers to block the negative circumstances that lead to early marriages.

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