

**CULTURAL NORMS AND CHILD MARRIAGE: A CASE STUDY OF GILLA
CELL, NYARACU WARD, AYIVU WEST DIVISION**

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DECLARATION

I, Aseru Joy, hereby declare that the research report entitled "**Cultural Norms and Child Marriage: A Case Study of Gilla Cell, Nyaracu Ward Ayivu West Division**" is my original work. I affirm that this work represents my own ideas, insights, and findings. I further declare that all sources used in the preparation of this research report have been duly acknowledged and referenced.


Signature  Date: 09/05/2025

APPROVAL

This is to certify that this research report “Cultural Norms and Child Marriage, A Case Study of Gilla Cell, Nyaracu Ward Ayivu West Division” has been done and completed by the student under my supervision and is now ready for submission for the award of Bachelor of Social Work and Social Administration of Uganda Christian University.

Ndaru Proscovia (Supervisor)





Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family (my son Mark Ryan Mundua and my lovely husband Mundua Jude) for the love and support shown towards me throughout my academic journey and for loving and caring for me, and I as well dedicate this research to all the staff of Uganda Christian University for their continuous support to impart knowledge for my holistic development.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank Almighty God for his enabling grace, love, blessings, strength and protection throughout my life and in the course of the work.

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And finally, I appreciate my dear husband Mr. Jude Mundua for the financial support he has rendered to me throughout my tertiary academic journey. May God bless you Mr. Mundua.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

UDHS	Uganda Democratic Health Survey
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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ABSRTACT

This study investigated the prevalence and determinants of child marriage in Gilla Cell, Nyaracu Ward, Ayivu West Division, utilizing a mixed-methods approach that incorporated both quantitative and qualitative data. Through a cross-sectional descriptive design, the research quantified the prevalence of child marriage and explored community attitudes, cultural norms, and socioeconomic influences shaping this practice. Primary data was collected from young brides, parents, and community leaders through structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

Key findings reveal that 54.8% of respondents were married before the age of 18, highlighting the entrenched acceptance of early marriage driven by cultural norms, economic factors, and gender roles. Interestingly, a significant portion of the community, with 45.6% dissenting against child marriage, suggests a potential for transformative change. The study underscores the critical link between education and empowerment, as 79.5% of respondents prioritized education over early marriage.

To address the persistent occurrence of child marriage, the study offers several targeted recommendations, including the implementation of community education programs, involvement of local leaders in advocacy efforts, the establishment of support systems for young brides, and strengthening legal frameworks against child marriage.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the background of the study, statement of the problem, study objectives, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study and the conceptual framework.

1.1 Background of the study

Child marriage continues to be a major issue affecting millions of children worldwide, particularly girls in low- and middle-income countries. Defined as a formal marriage or informal union before the age of 18, child marriage has profound implications for the physical, emotional, and economic well-being of children (Girls, 2018). The prevalence of this practice is often deeply rooted in cultural norms and societal attitudes, which vary significantly across different regions.

Globally, an estimated 12 million girls are married before they reach adulthood each year (Unicef, 2020). This practice is especially acute in parts of Africa and South Asia, where socio-economic, cultural, and religious factors converge to sustain child marriage. In Uganda, child marriage significantly impacts girls' education, health, and social wellbeing. The Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (UDHS) 2016 reported that 40% of women aged 20-24 were married before the age of 18 (Sserwanja et al., 2020). Such statistics underscore the urgency of addressing child marriage within the context of national and local interventions.

Despite legal frameworks prohibiting child marriage, the realities on the ground often reflect deep-seated cultural beliefs that perpetuate the practice (Yakub, 2020). For instance, marrying girls early is often viewed as a way to preserve family honor, ensure economic security, and conform to societal expectations. Cultural norms encompass the shared values, beliefs, and practices that dictate accepted behaviors within a community (Jovchelovitch, 2019). Gender norms significantly shape perceptions of marriage, particularly the roles expected of girls and women. In many communities, including Gilla Cell, prevailing gender norms dictate that women should prioritize

marriage and motherhood over education and personal development. Such norms foster a belief that a girl's primary value lies in her ability to marry and bear children, relegating education and professional aspirations to secondary status.

Economic factors play a crucial role in the perpetuation of child marriage. In many families facing economic hardship, marrying off a daughter is often seen as a viable solution to mitigate financial pressures (Elder et al., 2020). In Gilla Cell, where poverty levels are considerable, families may resort to child marriage as a coping mechanism to alleviate economic burdens. Cultural practices, such as dowry arrangements, can also incentivize early marriages, as families hope to secure financial benefits through marital alliances (Munshi, 2017). This pragmatic approach to child marriage primarily driven by economic necessity underscores its normalization within the local culture.

In Gilla Cell, as in many parts of Uganda, traditional and religious beliefs significantly influence the acceptance of child marriage. Some communities hold the belief that early marriage protects a girl's virtue and ensures her safety, aligning with religious ideals about marriage being a sacred institution. Given that many individuals in Ayivu West Division adhere to customary practices, the interplay between tradition and religious doctrine complicates efforts to disrupt entrenched norms around marriage. Challenging these practices is often perceived as a challenge to community identity itself, fostering resistance against external efforts aimed at eradicating child marriage. This study focuses on Gilla Cell in Nyaracu Ward, Ayivu West Division, aiming to explore the cultural norms influencing child marriage in this specific context and their effects on the affected individuals and the community at large.

1.2 Statement of the Problem.

Child marriage remains a significant issue in Gilla Cell, Nyaracu Ward, Ayivu West Division, where cultural norms strongly influence the practice. Many families view marrying daughters at a young age as a solution to economic challenges and a means to uphold social traditions. This results in girls facing serious consequences, including disrupted education, poor health outcomes, and limited opportunities for personal development. Despite legal efforts to raise the minimum marriage age, deeply rooted cultural beliefs continue to perpetuate child marriage. This study aimed to investigate

how these cultural norms contribute to the prevalence of child marriage in this community and what strategies could be implemented to protect the rights and well-being of young girls.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 Main objective

The main aim of the study was to examine the cultural norms and their effects on child marriage, a case study of Gilla cell, Nyaracu ward Ayivu west division.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the study were;

- i. To identify the cultural norms prevalent in Gilla cell, Nyaracu ward, Ayivu West Division, that influence child marriage
- ii. To assess how these cultural norms lead to child marriage in Gila Cell, Ayivu Division.
- iii. To explore strategies that can be implemented to challenge cultural norms in order to reduce child marriage in Gila Cell, Nyaracu Ward, Ayivu West Division.

1.4 Research questions

The research questions were;

- i. What cultural norms are prevalent in Gilla Cell, Nyaracu Ward, Ayivu West Division that influence child marriage?
- ii. How have the cultural norms led to child marriage in Gila Cell, Ayivu Division?
- iii. What strategies can be implemented to challenge cultural norms in order to reduce child marriage in Gila Cell, Nyaracu Ward, Ayivu West Division?

1.5 Significance of the Study

If implemented well, the study findings could be significant for several reasons:

The findings may inform local and national policymakers about the cultural factors contributing to child marriage, guiding the development of targeted interventions and policies aimed at reducing its prevalence.

By highlighting the detrimental effects of child marriage, the research may raise awareness within the community about the importance of protecting children's rights and promoting gender equality.

The study may contribute to the design of educational programs that address cultural beliefs and practices, empowering young girls and their families to make informed decisions regarding marriage.

The insights gained from this research may support advocacy efforts by local NGOs and community groups working to combat child marriage and promote the well-being of girls.

This research adds to the existing body of literature on child marriage, particularly in the context of Gilla Cell, providing a case study that can be referenced in future studies.

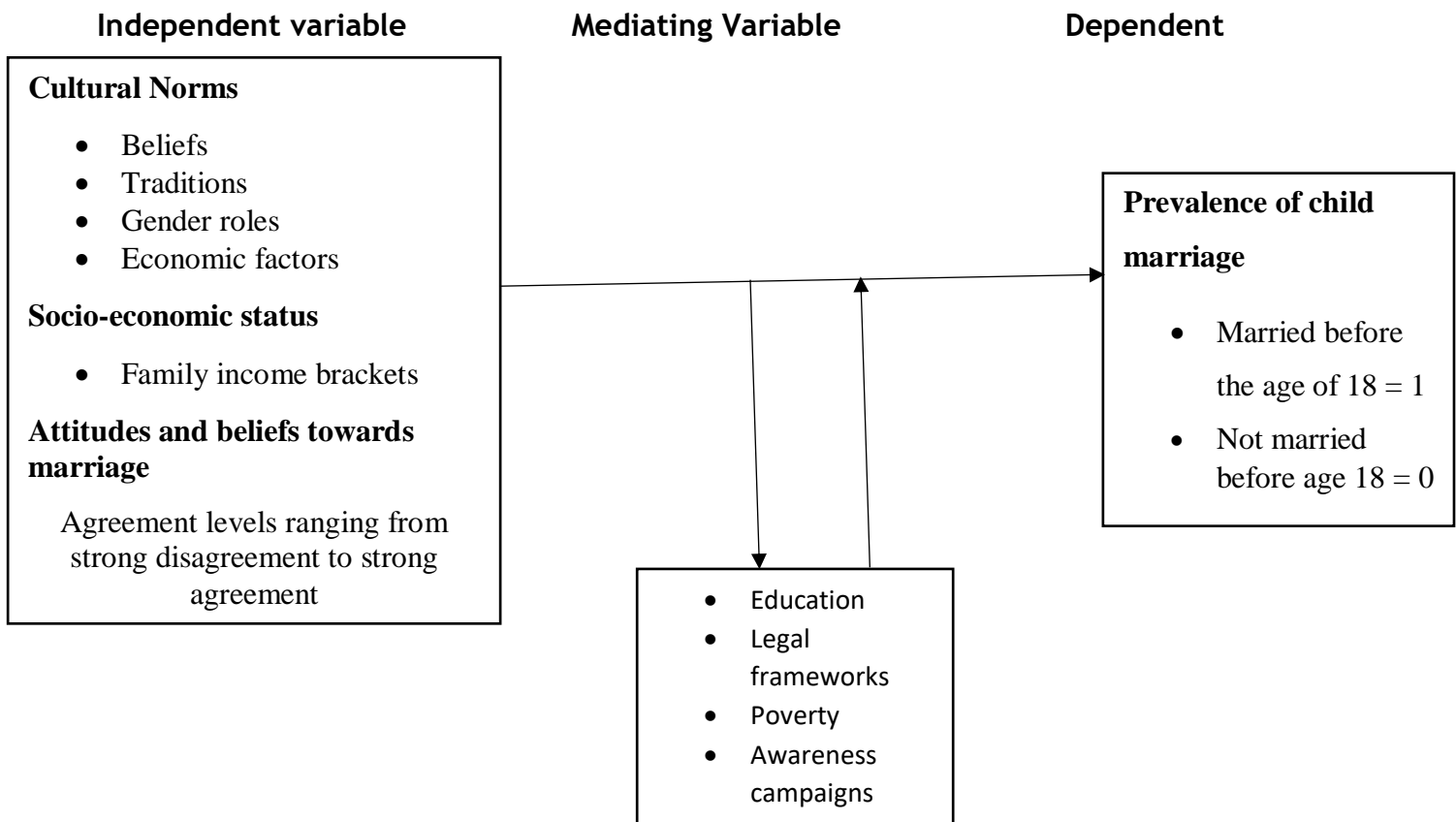
1.6 Scope of the Study

Geographical Scope: The study focused on Gilla Cell in Nyaracu Ward, Ayivu West Division. This area was identified as having a significant prevalence of child marriage influenced by local cultural norms.

Time Scope: The research examined current cultural norms and practices related to child marriage, and the study was conducted for a period of 3 months.

Contextual Scope: The study explored the intersection of cultural norms, socio-economic factors, and educational opportunities that contribute to child marriage. It considered the historical context of marriage practices in the region and how they have evolved over time.

1.7 Conceptual framework



Source: Primary source

The conceptual framework outlined the dynamics influencing the prevalence of child marriage. The independent variable comprises cultural norms including beliefs, traditions, gender roles, and economic factors alongside socio-economic status defined by family income brackets and attitudes toward marriage, measured through agreement levels. Intervening variables, such as education, legal frameworks, poverty, and awareness campaigns, act as mediators that can either mitigate or exacerbate the impact of cultural norms and socio-economic status on child marriage. The dependent variable, prevalence of child marriage, is operationalized as a binary outcome where being married before age 18 is recorded as 1, and not being married before this age is recorded as 0. This framework emphasizes how cultural and socio-economic factors interplay with educational and legal influences to affect child marriage rates.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Child marriage, defined as a formal marriage or informal union before the age of 18, remains a prevalent issue affecting millions worldwide, particularly in low and middle-income countries. According to Kabir et al., (2019), an estimated 12 million girls are married before they reach adulthood each year, leading to profound consequences for their health, education, and economic opportunities. Cultural norms play a vital role in perpetuating this practice, influencing societal attitudes towards marriage and gender roles. These norms often dictate the acceptability of child marriage, framing it as a tradition or a necessary step in a girl's life. This literature review examines the existing research on cultural norms, societal attitudes towards child marriage, and potential strategies for challenging these entrenched behaviors, aiming to shed light on the complexities of this issue and the pathways to its resolution.

2.1 Cultural Norms Influencing Child Marriage

Cultural norms encompass the values, beliefs, and practices that dominate a community's way of life. They shape individuals' perceptions and behaviors, often dictating what is considered acceptable or taboo within a society. In many cultures, child marriage is deeply embedded in cultural traditions and is often justified through various beliefs about gender roles, economic factors, and social cohesion. These norms can be resistant to change, making it challenging to address the issue of child marriage effectively. Understanding these cultural underpinnings is crucial for developing targeted interventions.

2.1.1 Gender Norms

Research indicates that prevailing gender norms significantly contribute to the continuation of child marriage. According to Hudson & Matfess, (2017), social expectations regarding female subservience and familial honor often dictate that girls marry young to secure economic stability and maintain family honor. In many societies, girls are viewed primarily as future wives and mothers, and their value is often assessed

in relation to their domestic roles. This perspective is reinforced by cultural narratives that emphasize the importance of virginity and chastity, leading families to marry off daughters early to prevent premarital sexual activity (Hawkey et al., 2018). In societies where girls are expected to fulfill domestic roles, marrying at a young age is seen as a means to ensure their compliance with these norms, further entrenching the cycle of child marriage.

2.1.2 Socioeconomic Factors

Economic instability is intricately linked to child marriage. Bessa, (2019) argue that families in poverty often see child marriage as a pragmatic solution to financial burdens, as marrying daughters off can reduce household expenses. In many cases, families believe that marrying off a daughter can alleviate the financial strain on the household, especially in contexts where resources are scarce. Moreover, in cultures where dowries are customary, marrying daughters young can provide immediate financial support, as families may receive a dowry that can be utilized for other pressing needs (Dar & Lone, 2020). This perpetuates a cycle where economic necessity drives the normalization of child marriage, as families prioritize short-term financial relief over the long-term well-being of their daughters.

2.1.3 Tradition and Religion

Cultural traditions and religious beliefs also play pivotal roles in endorsing child marriage. In numerous cultures, religious doctrines may support early marriage as a means of securing safety and virtue for young girls (Karam, 2015). For example, certain interpretations of religious texts may advocate for early marriage as a way to protect girls from societal dangers or to ensure that they fulfill their roles as wives and mothers. Arguably, the intersectionality of culture and religion complicates efforts to address child marriage, as challenging these norms can sometimes be perceived as an affront to community identity. This intertwining of cultural and religious beliefs creates a formidable barrier to change, as interventions must navigate sensitive cultural contexts without alienating communities.

2.2 How cultural norms lead to child marriage

Child marriage is not an isolated occurrence but rather a practice deeply embedded within cultural norms the often unspoken rules and expectations that dictate behavior within a community (Lackovich-Van Gorp, 2014). These norms, interwoven with financial considerations, family honor, religious interpretations, and traditional gender roles, significantly influence the prevalence of child marriage. Specific cultural practices that contribute to this issue include the exchange of bride price or dowry, where girls may be viewed as economic burdens or sources of wealth, and the desire to elevate social standing or protect family honor, especially concerning a girl's reputation (Sarah, 2019). Furthermore, misinterpretations of religious texts or adherence to traditions that promote early marriage, coupled with the emphasis on female virginity, drive families to marry off daughters at a young age.

Patriarchal structures, which grant men disproportionate power, often result in girls having limited agency over their lives, leading families to make marriage decisions without considering the girl's aspirations (Van Eerdewijk et al., 2017). Communal expectations, where child marriage is simply "the way things have always been," further perpetuate the practice, placing immense pressure on individuals to conform. These cultural norms do not exist passively; they actively propel girls toward early marriage through various mechanisms. Social pressure from family and community members can override a girl's personal desires, while limited access to education, economic opportunities, and other alternatives restricts her choices, making marriage appear as the only viable path (Bantebya et al., 2014).

The transmission of these norms across generations, reinforced by societal institutions, further entrenches child marriage within communities, making it challenging to challenge or dismantle these harmful traditions. Child marriage is far from a harmless tradition; it brings severe negative consequences for girls, their families, and their communities (Boyden et al., 2014). These consequences include heightened risks of health complications during pregnancy and childbirth, increased susceptibility to sexually transmitted infections, and curtailed educational opportunities that limit future prospects and perpetuate cycles of poverty. Moreover, child brides face a

greater likelihood of experiencing domestic violence and abuse, exacerbated by power imbalances stemming from significant age disparities with their spouses, hindering their ability to make independent decisions.

Child marriage is a complex issue rooted in a confluence of factors, including poverty, which leads families to view it as a means of alleviating financial strain, and lack of education, which restricts girls' opportunities and reinforces the perception that they are ready for marriage (Wodon et al., 2017). Harmful societal norms and significant age gaps between child brides and their older spouses further exacerbate the vulnerabilities of young girls. Addressing this complex issue requires a comprehensive approach that challenges harmful cultural norms, empowers girls through education and economic opportunities, and ensures the enforcement of laws that protect their rights and well-being.

2.3 Strategies to Challenge Cultural Norms

Addressing child marriage requires multifaceted strategies that engage communities in rethinking their cultural norms. Effective interventions must consider the cultural context and work collaboratively with community members to create sustainable change.

2.3.1 Community Education and Awareness

One effective strategy involves raising awareness about the negative impacts of child marriage through community education programs. Programs that focus on the benefits of education for girls and the long-term economic impacts of delaying marriage have shown promise (McCleary-Sills et al., 2015). These educational initiatives can empower communities to reevaluate their beliefs about marriage and gender roles, fostering a shift towards valuing girls' education and autonomy. Engaging local leaders to advocate against child marriage can also shift community perspectives (Psaki et al., 2021). By leveraging the influence of respected community figures, these programs can create a supportive environment for change, encouraging families to prioritize their daughters' education and well-being over traditional practices.

2.3.2 Legal Framework and Enforcement

Strengthening legal frameworks is essential in combating child marriage. Implementing and enforcing laws that prohibit child marriages is crucial, as evidenced by the success of initiatives in countries like Bangladesh, where legal interventions have resulted in a decline in the practice (Amin et al., 2016). However, laws must be supported by community engagement to be effective. Legal measures alone are insufficient if they are not accompanied by efforts to change societal attitudes and beliefs. Therefore, integrating legal advocacy with community education and outreach can enhance the effectiveness of interventions, ensuring that laws are not only enacted but also respected and upheld within communities.

2.3.3 Involvement of Youth and Women's Groups

Promoting the involvement of youth and women's groups in advocacy and awareness campaigns can create grassroots movements challenging traditional norms. When girls and women take leadership roles, they can effectively influence their peers and families (Ochangco, 2023). Empowering young women to become advocates for change can inspire others in their communities to reconsider the practice of child marriage. Furthermore, these groups can serve as platforms for sharing experiences, fostering solidarity, and mobilizing collective action. By amplifying the voices of those most affected by child marriage, these movements can challenge prevailing norms and promote a culture that values education and gender equality.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section outlined the methodology employed in this research study on cultural norms and child marriage, detailing the methods, tools, techniques, and procedures utilized. Each subsection discussed aspects critical for ensuring the study's reliability and validity, while also allowing for replication by other investigators.

3.1 Research Design/ Approach

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to enrich the findings. The quantitative component utilized a cross-sectional descriptive design to quantify the prevalence and determinants of child marriage within the community. This design facilitated the collection of data at a single point in time, offering a snapshot of community attitudes and practices regarding child marriage.

The qualitative component focused on the lived experiences of young brides and their families, allowing for an in-depth exploration of personal narratives and cultural context. This dual approach enabled the study to capture statistical trends while also understanding the underlying motivations and cultural factors influencing child marriage.

3.2 Area of Study

The study was conducted in Gilla Cell, Nyaracu Ward, Ayivu West Division, an area characterized by high rates of child marriage. Cultural norms in this area significantly influenced the prevalence of child marriage, often prioritizing traditional practices over the rights of children. Factors such as socio-economic pressures, entrenched gender roles, and the perceived value of early marriage contribute to this issue. By focusing on Gilla Cell, Nyaracy Ward, Ayivy West Division, the study aimed to uncover the unique cultural dynamics at play.

3.3 Sources of Information

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was collected through surveys and interviews targeting individuals directly affected by child marriage, including young brides, parents, and community leaders. Secondary data included existing literature, reports from NGOs, and demographic statistics relevant to child marriage in the region.

3.4 Population and Sampling Techniques

The target population comprised young brides aged 15-24 years, their parents, and community leaders within Gilla Cell, Nyaracu Ward. To ensure diverse representation across different socio-economic strata, a stratified random sampling technique was employed. This approach facilitated the selection of participants from various backgrounds, enabling a clearer understanding of community attitudes towards child marriage.

For qualitative interviews, purposive sampling was used to identify individuals with specific experiences related to child marriage, such as women who were married as children or community leaders actively engaged in advocacy against the practice. This strategic selection aimed to gather rich, detailed insights into the phenomenon.

3.5 Variable Definitions and Measurement Levels

Key variables in this study included:

Dependent Variable:

Prevalence of child marriage (measured as nominal: married before the age of 18 = 1; not married before 18 = 0).

Independent Variables:

Cultural norms: Measured as ordinal (beliefs, traditions, gender roles, economic factors).

Socio-economic Status: Measured as interval based on family income brackets.

Attitudes and beliefs towards Child Marriage: Measured using a Likert scale (ranging from strong disagreement to strong agreement with statements about child marriage).

3.6 Procedure for Data Collection

The data collection process followed these steps:

Preparation Stage: Develop survey instruments and interview guides, including a pilot test to refine questions.

Recruitment of Participants: Utilize the outlined sampling techniques to strategically select participants.

Data Collection: Administer surveys through face-to-face interviews, ensuring that participants understand the questions. Qualitative interviews will be conducted using semi-structured formats to allow for flexibility in responses.

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected using the following instruments:

Structured Questionnaires: These were administered to a broader demographic group, including young people aged 15-24, parents, and community leaders. The questionnaires gathered quantitative data on demographic information, attitudes toward child marriage, and educational experiences. This enabled us to identify trends and correlations within the population regarding child marriage and its influences.

Semi-Structured Interview Guides: These interviews targeted individuals such as former child brides, educators, and local activists. The semi-structured format allowed for a more detailed exploration of personal narratives and community perceptions about child marriage. This qualitative data enriched an understanding of the individual and societal factors affecting child marriage and provided deeper insights into the themes identified in the questionnaire responses.

Focus Group Discussions: These were organized with diverse groups of community members, including parents, youth, and local leaders, to facilitate a collective dialogue about child marriage. By encouraging interaction and discussion, I captured a broader view of societal norms, beliefs, and attitudes that shape the community's perspective

on child marriage. This method highlighted common themes and divergent views within the community, contributing to a more comprehensive analysis of the issue.

3.8 Quality/Error Control

To ensure the reliability and validity of research instruments:

A pilot study was conducted with a small group of participants to test the clarity and effectiveness of the questionnaires and interview guides, followed by necessary revisions based on feedback. Reliability was assessed through test-retest methods, and validity was ensured via content validity, involving expert review of the instruments. During data collection, oversight was implemented to minimize errors. I conducted frequent checks and balances, ensuring adherence to the data collection protocols established. .

3.10 Data Processing and Analysis

Data processing and analysis was conducted according to the following methods:

Quantitative Data Analysis: Collected quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This analysis included descriptive statistics to summarize demographic characteristics and the prevalence of child marriage. Inferential statistics, including frequency distributions, cross-tabulations, and regression analyses, were employed to test hypotheses related to the correlation between socio-economic factors and child marriage prevalence.

Qualitative Data Analysis: Qualitative data gathered from interviews and focus groups did undergo thematic analysis. This method involved systematic coding to identify key themes, patterns, and insights related to the experiences of young brides and community attitudes towards child marriage. Thematic analysis allowed for an organized interpretation of qualitative data, drawing meaningful conclusions that contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex relationships among the variables being studied.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

This research adhered to ethical principles throughout the study's lifecycle to protect the rights and welfare of participants:

Informed Consent: All participants provided informed consent, ensuring they understand the nature of the study and their involvement.

Confidentiality: Identifiable data was anonymized to protect participants' identities. All collected information was stored securely to ensure confidentiality.

Assent from Minors: For participants under 18, parental consent was obtained prior to the study to ensure ethical compliance.

Research Integrity: The research was conducted with honesty and transparency, accurately reporting findings and avoiding biases that could distort results.

Addressing ethical challenges, such as potential resistance from community members or reluctance from participants to discuss sensitive topics, will be managed through building trust and rapport with local stakeholders and participants. Providing reassurances about confidentiality and the aim of the study can help mitigate these challenges.

3.12 Methodological Constraints

While the methodological approach is robust, several constraints may influence the study's findings:

Sampling Limitations: The sample didn't completely represent all demographics within the community, possibly leading to biases in the results. Stratified sampling aims to mitigate this, yet the inherent challenges of community representation must be acknowledged.

Data Collection Challenges: Cultural sensitivities surrounding child marriage hindered open discussions during interviews, potentially affecting the depth and richness of qualitative data. To navigate this, the researcher will employ culturally sensitive approaches and allow participants to speak at their comfort level.

Resource Constraints: Limited time and funding restricted the scale and scope of data collection, influencing the number of participants and the breadth of the study.

Self-Reporting Bias: Participants presented socially desirable responses or downplay their circumstances. Interview techniques were employed to encourage honesty and genuine responses, minimizing the effects of this bias.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the study on cultural norms and child marriage in Gilla Cell, Nyaracu Ward, Ayivu West Division. Data was collected through structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions from a diverse sample of 73 respondents. The analysis involves both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive view of the local cultural norms influencing child marriage, attitudes towards it, and socio-economic factors at play.

4.1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

To understand the context of child marriage in Gilla cell, the demographic characteristics of the respondents are summarized as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Characteristic	Frequency (N=73)	Percentage (%)
Age		
15-17 years	24	32.9
18-21 years	28	38.4
22-24 years	21	28.8
Gender		
Male	30	41.1
Female	43	58.9
Educational Attainment		
No formal education	9	12.3
Primary education	25	34.2
Secondary education	30	41.1
Tertiary education or higher	9	12.3
Current Marital Status		
Married	55	75.3

Single	12	16.4
Divorced	5	6.8
Widowed	1	1.4

As presented in Table 1 above, the findings indicate a relatively young population, with 71.3% of respondents aged 21 or younger. The high percentage of respondents aged 15-21 suggests that the study's insights will directly relate to those at risk of early marriage, highlighting the urgency of addressing child marriage within this age group. The gender distribution shows a marked female majority (58.9%) compared to males (41.1%). The voices of young women in this demographic are critical for understanding the social norms that perpetuate child marriage. The educational attainment levels reveal that a significant portion of respondents (41.1%) completed secondary education, suggesting that education is accessible to a portion of the community. However, 46.5% of respondents fall into the categories of having no formal education or only primary education. A substantial majority (75.3%) of respondents are currently married, with many likely having married at a young age. This high prevalence of marriage, particularly among those aged 15 to 24, underscores the urgency of addressing child marriage in Gilla Cell. The low percentage of individuals who are single (16.4%) indicates that marriage is a common expectation for young women in this demographic, reinforcing the entrenched social norms that promote early marriage. The presence of divorced (6.8%) and widowed (1.4%) respondents suggests that marriage does not always lead to stability, and these experiences could deeply impact the life trajectories of young women.

4.2 Identification of cultural norms influencing child marriage

The phenomenon of child marriage in Gilla Cell, Nyaracu Ward, is deeply entrenched in specific cultural norms that shape societal attitudes and practices. Through qualitative data gathered from key informant interviews and focus group discussions, several critical cultural norms emerged that significantly influence the prevalence of child marriage in the community. Participants consistently reported the following key norms:

Patriarchal Values

One of the most pervasive cultural norms identified in the study is the existence of traditional patriarchal values. These values are reflected in a societal framework where men hold primary power and are considered the principal decision-makers within households and communities. Respondents consistently highlighted the belief that marrying daughters at a young age is a way to secure their futures and safeguard family honor. The underlying logic of this viewpoint posits that early marriage protects girls from potential disgrace or immorality and ensures their transition to adulthood within a socially acceptable timeline.

"In our community, it is the men who make the decisions, including when a girl should marry. Parents believe that marrying off their daughters early is the best way to protect their honor." **Local Community Leader**

Communities often equate a daughter's unmarried status with potential dishonor, particularly in cultures that value virginity and modesty before marriage. As a result, families may feel pressured to marry their daughters early to conform to societal expectations and preserve their family's reputation. Some respondents expressed that marrying girls young is seen as a protective measure. Parents may believe that an early marriage prevents their daughters from engaging in pre-marital sexual relationships or becoming a burden on the family. This norm perpetuates a cycle where girls are conditioned to accept early marriage as inevitable, minimizing their autonomy and the pursuit of personal aspirations, such as education and professional careers. The reinforcement of patriarchal values in social institutions such as schools, religious organizations, and familial structures contributes to the normalization of child marriage within the community.

We were told that a girl's worth is measured by her marriage, and it's better to marry her early to keep her from shame or disgrace." **FGD Mothers' Group**

Gender Roles

Closely tied to patriarchal values are the entrenched gender roles that define expectations for boys and girls in society. These roles dictate not only personal behavior but also life trajectories, especially regarding education and marriage. Cultural expectations hold that girls are primarily responsible for domestic roles, while boys are encouraged to pursue education and career development. This gender disparity cultivates a norm that devalues the education of girls and positions early marriage as a more desirable outcome.

*"Girls are expected to focus on cooking and child-rearing, not school. Most families see education for girls as unnecessary since their future is to become wives." **Teacher***

Girls are often pulled out of school prematurely under the belief that their primary role is to become wives and mothers. In many interviews, parents expressed that investing in a daughter's education is less valuable than investing in a son's future, which reinforces the notion that girls' potential is primarily realized through marriage. From a young age, girls are socialized to prioritize family and domestic responsibilities over personal or academic ambitions. This socialization means that many young girls view early marriage as their societal duty. They may internalize messages that portray education as unnecessary for their future roles as wives and mothers. Boys, on the other hand, are often encouraged to attain higher education and establish careers, creating a significant imbalance. This discrepancy contributes to a culture where the aspirations and capabilities of girls are systematically undermined, making them more vulnerable to early marriage.

*"Our sons are encouraged to finish school and get good jobs, but girls are told to learn skills at home. Early marriage is seen as the natural path for girls." **FGD Youth Group***

Economic Incentives

Economic considerations also play a crucial role in perpetuating child marriage, particularly in communities where poverty is prevalent. Families often view early marriage as a strategic decision to alleviate immediate financial burdens. In economically disadvantaged settings, families may consider the dowry or bride price as an immediate source of income, thus incentivizing the early marriage of daughters. This economic incentive can lead families to prioritize short-term financial relief over the long-term well-being of their daughters.

"Many families marry off their daughters young because they need the dowry to survive. It's a quick way to get some money and reduce their hardship." Elder

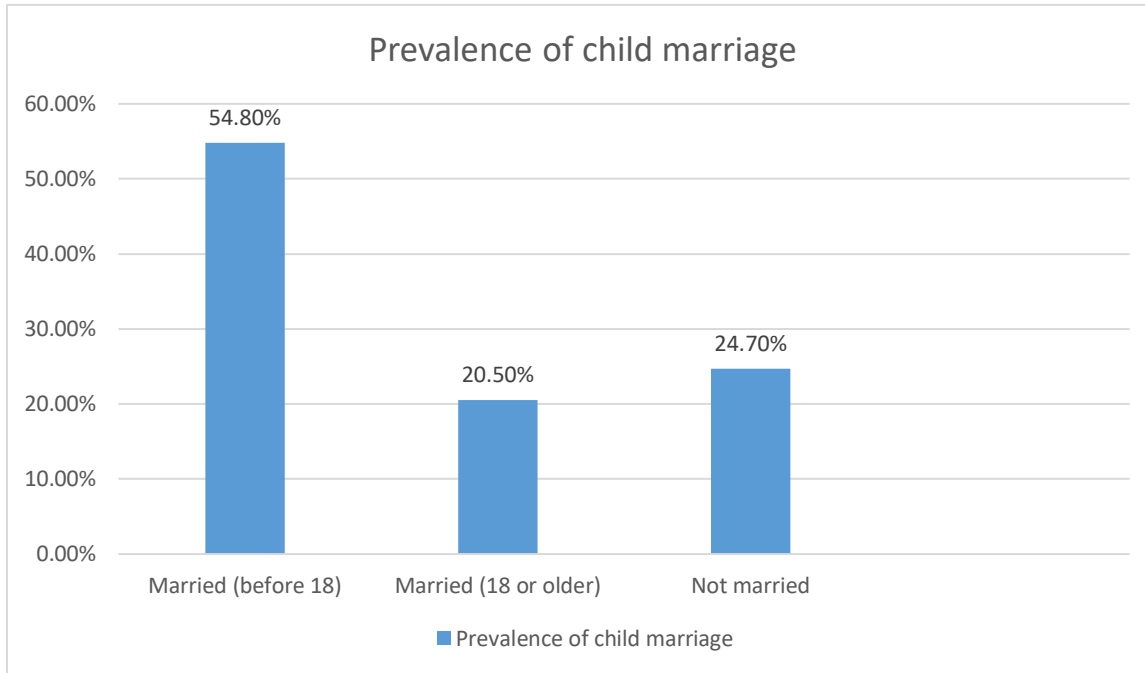
In many cultures where dowries are customary, marrying daughters can provide financial benefits to families. Respondents indicated that receiving a dowry can significantly improve a family's economic situation, motivating them to marry off daughters at a young age. For families struggling with poverty, marrying off daughters early can be perceived as a responsible decision. It can reduce the number of dependents within the household and can shift the economic responsibility away from the parents, thereby providing immediate stability. When education for girls is not prioritized, young women often lack the skills to secure sustainable employment. This vulnerability makes early marriage appear to be a viable solution, as it provides a family with financial assistance through dowry while simultaneously alleviating some of the economic pressures faced by their parents.

"When there is no food or money, giving a daughter in marriage is the best solution; the bride price helps us pay school fees or buy food." FGD Mothers' Group

4.3 Assessment of how cultural norms lead to child marriage

To quantify the prevalence of child marriage and its correlation to cultural norms, we analyzed responses from the structured questionnaires.

Figure 1: Assessment of how cultural norms lead to child marriage



The analysis of the prevalence of child marriage among respondents reveals significant insights into the impact of cultural norms on marital practices in Gilla Cell. According to the data presented in Figure 1, out of the total 73 respondents, 40 individuals (54.8%) reported being married before the age of 18. This statistic highlights that a majority of respondents entered into marriage as minors, underscoring the strong cultural inclination towards early marriage within the community. In contrast, only 15 respondents (20.5%) were married at the age of 18 or older, while 18 respondents (24.7%) identified as not married. The high percentage of early marriages indicates a widespread acceptance of cultural norms that prioritize marrying off girls at a young age, often rooted in the community's patriarchal values and traditional beliefs regarding the roles of women. This prevailing trend suggests that many families and individuals view early marriage as a standard practice, potentially due to the beliefs surrounding honor, protection, and economic considerations, which often accompany such decisions. The significant prevalence of child marriage not only reflects societal

acceptance but also points to an urgent need for more in-depth research to explore the specific cultural mechanisms and socio-economic factors that sustain these norms.

"Most parents believe that marrying girls early keeps them safe and upright. Even if they know the risks, poverty and social pressure push them to proceed." **Local Activist**

"We see many girls married before they turn 18, because everyone around us thinks it's normal. Nobody questions it." **Community Youth Group**

4.4 Exploration of Strategies to Challenge Cultural Norms

In order to address the entrenched cultural norms contributing to child marriage in Gilla Cell, participants in the study were prompted to propose actionable strategies that could effectively challenge and change these norms. The qualitative data gathered shed light on several recurring themes reflecting the community's perspectives on potential interventions.

Community Education Programs

A significant number of respondents advocated for the implementation of community education programs aimed at informing families about the adverse effects of early marriage and the substantial benefits of delaying marriage in favor of education. Key strategies identified by the respondents include;

Workshops and Seminars: Participants suggested organizing workshops and seminars that focus on educating families about the long-term consequences of child marriage on young girls' health and educational prospects. Such events could encourage families to engage in discussions that debunk myths surrounding early marriage and highlight the importance of education for girls.

Holistic Approach: Participants identified the adoption of educational programs on topics like on reproductive health, legal rights, and economic empowerment, providing a comprehensive understanding of the various factors associated with early marriage.

This approach would not only address cultural beliefs but also equip families with knowledge that supports better decision-making for their daughters.

Targeted Messaging: The content of these educational initiatives should be tailored to resonate with community values, using relatable narratives and local examples to emphasize the advantages of investing in girls' education over early marriage. By connecting the message to the community's reality, these programs could facilitate a shift in perceptions over time.

Engagement of Community Leaders

Key informants in the study emphasized the crucial role that community leaders can play in advocating for change and transforming cultural norms surrounding child marriage. Key strategies identified included;

Leadership training: Local leaders, including elders, religious figures, and influential community members, should undergo training to understand the negative implications of child marriage. Equipping them with this knowledge will enable them to serve as effective advocates within their communities.

Promoting positive role models: Engaging respected figures to publicly endorse the importance of education and the disadvantages of child marriage can lead to a significant shift in community perspectives. When leaders consistently communicate progressive views and set positive examples, community members may be more likely to adopt these new beliefs.

Collaborative initiatives: Establishing a coalition of community leaders committed to advocating against child marriage could amplify efforts aimed at raising awareness. These leaders can work together to create public campaigns, community discussions, and policy changes aimed at enforcing age limits on marriage and improving educational access for girls.

Support Systems for Young Brides

Participants emphasized the necessity of establishing robust support systems for young brides who wish to continue their education after marriage. These systems can help mitigate the challenges faced by those who marry early and seek to balance their new responsibilities with educational aspirations.

Mentorship programs: Creating mentorship programs pairing young brides with supportive mentors can provide guidance, emotional support, and practical advice on continuing education. Mentors can help young brides navigate the complexities of balancing family responsibilities with academic pursuits.

Peer support groups: Establishing peer support groups allows young brides to connect with others who share similar experiences, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose. Through these groups, participants can share challenges, successes, and resources, encouraging one another to pursue educational opportunities.

Access to educational resources: Support systems could also facilitate access to educational resources such as scholarships, tutoring, and flexible learning options tailored to the needs of young brides. Providing educational opportunities that accommodate their circumstances can significantly improve their chances of continuing their education.

"If we educate our people about the harms of child marriage and promote girls' education, I believe change can happen. Leaders should set the example." **Religious Leader**

"Our community needs workshops and role models - people who show that girls can succeed if given the chance to stay in school longer." **Women's Focus Group**

4.5 Attitudes toward child marriage

The analysis of respondents' attitudes toward child marriage provides insight into community perceptions and potential for change.

Table 2: Attitudes toward child marriage

Opinion on Child Marriage	Frequency (N=73)	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	5	6.8
Agree	18	24.7
Neutral	16	21.9
Disagree	24	32.9
Strongly disagree	10	13.7

The analysis of respondents' attitudes toward child marriage reveals significant insights into community perceptions and the potential for transformative change. According to the data summarized in Table 2, only a small fraction of respondents expressed support for child marriage, with just 6.8% strongly agreeing and 24.7% agreeing with the practice. Conversely, a more substantial 45.6% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with child marriage, indicating a notable readiness within the community to challenge this entrenched norm. This level of dissent suggests that there is a significant opportunity for intervention and the implementation of programs aimed at altering cultural perceptions surrounding marriage. Moreover, the data indicate that 79.5% of respondents view education as more important than early marriage, reflecting a growing awareness of the critical role education plays in empowering young girls and fostering long-term positive outcomes for the community. This awareness can be leveraged in advocacy campaigns to further promote educational initiatives and create an environment conducive to delaying marriage, thus paving the way for meaningful change in societal attitudes and practices regarding child marriage.

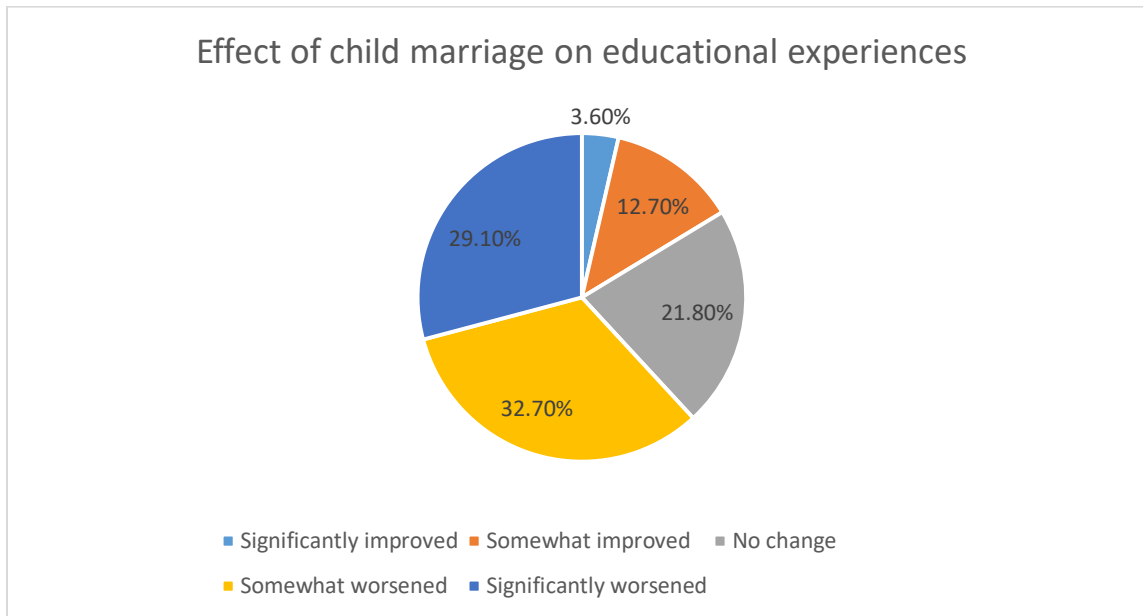
*"Many of us are tired of this practice. We understand the dangers, but social expectations and economic hardship make it difficult to change." **Village Elder***

*"I believe girls should wait until they are old enough, but everyone else says it's just what you do here." **Young Woman***

4.6 Impact of Child Marriage on Educational Experiences

The effects of marriage on the educational prospects of young women were also quantified.

Figure 2: Effect of child marriage on educational experiences



The analysis of the impact of child marriage on the educational experiences of young women reveals significant challenges associated with early marriage. As shown in Table 3, of the 55 respondents who provided feedback on this issue, a total of 61.8% reported that marriage had a negative effect on their educational opportunities. Specifically, 32.7% indicated that marriage somewhat worsened their educational prospects, while an additional 29.1% stated that it significantly worsened them. In contrast, only a small minority 3.6% believed that marriage significantly improved their education, and 12.7% felt it somewhat improved their situation. Additionally, 21.8% of respondents reported no change in their educational opportunities following marriage. This predominance of negative impacts emphasizes the detrimental consequences of child marriage on young girls' future prospects, reinforcing the urgent need for educational initiatives aimed at empowering girls and advocating for the postponement of marriage.

"Getting married at 16 meant I had to drop out of school. I wanted to become a teacher, but now I never will." **Former Child Bride**

"After marriage, I was told to forget school. I wish I had stayed in school longer, but it was not allowed." **Young Married Woman**

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the study discussions in line with the study findings and objectives, the conclusions and recommendations.

5.1 Discussions

5.1.1 Cultural norms influencing child marriage

The study identified several cultural norms that perpetuate child marriage, prominently featuring patriarchal values, gender roles, and economic considerations. These findings resonate with existing literature, which underscores that deeply entrenched gender norms significantly contribute to the continuation of child marriage. According to Hudson & Matfess, (2017), societal expectations regarding female subservience often dictate that girls marry young to secure economic stability and maintain familial honor. In Gilla Cell, respondents echoed this sentiment, articulating the view that early marriage is essential for safeguarding family reputation and preventing social stigma associated with unmarried daughters. This notion of honor is intricately linked to the perceived virtue of girls, creating a societal pressure that compels families to marry off their daughters early to conform to these expectations. This aligns with research by (Hawkey et al., 2018), who noted that the cultural emphasis on virginity and chastity leads families to marry off daughters at an early age as a protective measure against premarital sexual activity, which is considered a potential source of disgrace.

Furthermore, the economic incentives highlighted in my findings align with the work of Bessa, (2019) and Dar & Lone, (2020), who argue that families in impoverished conditions often see child marriage as a pragmatic solution to financial strains. Within the context of Gilla Cell, participants expressed that marrying off daughters not only alleviates household expenses but also provides immediate financial relief through dowries or bride prices, which can be particularly appealing to economically vulnerable families. This reflects a broader trend where economic necessity drives the

normalization of child marriage, making it a readily accepted practice in the face of poverty. The intersection of cultural and economic factors creates a challenging dynamic that often contradicts the long-term well-being of daughters, a point emphasized in the literature by Wodon et al. (2017). The reliance on marriage as a means of economic stability can lead families to prioritize short-term gains over the long-term educational and health outcomes for young girls.

5.1.2 Prevalence of child marriage

Quantitative data revealed that 54.8% of respondents were married before the age of 18, corroborating the cultural norms previously discussed. This finding underscores the societal acceptance of early marriage as an ordinary practice, as outlined by (Lackovich-Van Gorp, 2014). The high incidence of child marriage in Gilla Cell suggests that these cultural norms are not only pervasive but also deeply ingrained within the community's social fabric. The responses collected during interviews further illustrate a normalization of child marriage, with many families viewing it as simply "the way things have always been."

The sentiments expressed in the interviews echo the findings of Van Eerdewijk et al., (2017), who discuss how patriarchal structures limit the agency of girls and enforce marriage as a default path, often disregarding their aspirations and personal choices. This patriarchal framework does not merely influence decisions made by families; it systematically undermines the opportunities available to young women, teaching them to internalize notions of dependency and subservience from an early age. Additionally, the qualitative responses reflecting community members' perspectives regarding honor, protection, and economic necessity highlight the need for further exploration into the mechanisms sustaining these cultural practices.

Boyden et al., (2014) identifies that the adverse consequences of child marriage extend beyond the individual child to impact families and communities, resulting in heightened health risks, such as complications during pregnancy and childbirth, increased susceptibility to sexually transmitted infections, and curtailed educational opportunities. These negative outcomes not only affect the child brides themselves but also hinder broader community development, perpetuating cycles of poverty and

reinforcing societal inequalities. Addressing these deeply embedded cultural norms thus becomes essential not only for the empowerment of young women but also for the overall health and progress of the community as a whole.

5.1.3 Attitudes toward child marriage

Interestingly, the analysis of respondents' attitudes revealed a noteworthy dissent against child marriage, with 45.6% expressing disagreement or strong disagreement with the practice. This significant proportion highlights a critical readiness for change within the community, suggesting that many residents recognize the limitations and adverse effects of child marriage. This alignment with emerging views on gender equality and women's rights reflects broader societal shifts and underscores the potential for transformative change, as suggested by Psaki et al., (2021). Their research posits that when community perceptions begin to shift, they can lead to substantial changes in social norms and practices, laying the groundwork for addressing deeply rooted issues like child marriage.

Additionally, the data indicated that 79.5% of respondents viewed education as more important than early marriage, signaling a growing awareness of the essential role education plays in empowering young women. This awareness aligns with findings reported by McCleary-Sills et al., (2015), which emphasize the link between education and increased opportunities for girls. The high value placed on education points to a transformation in community beliefs, whereby more individuals are beginning to perceive education not just as a pathway to personal development but as a critical component in combating child marriage. This emerging perspective can serve as a powerful foundation for advocacy campaigns aimed at promoting educational initiatives, which in turn can encourage families to prioritize education for their daughters over traditional practices of early marriage. Moreover, this shift in attitudes indicates potential avenues for community mobilization. As more members of the community recognize the importance of education, it may be possible to create networks of influence that advocate for educational access and prioritize the well-being of girls. This collective engagement can cultivate an environment in which delays in

marriage are celebrated, and educational attainment is seen as vital for both individual growth and community advancement. The synergy between changing attitudes and advocacy efforts will be essential in driving long-term changes and dismantling the existing cultural norms that contribute to child marriage.

5.1.4 Strategies to challenge cultural norms

The proposed strategies to challenge cultural norms surrounding child marriage in Gilla Cell align closely with the recommendations emerging from the literature on effective interventions. Among these, community education programs emerged as a key intervention, emphasizing the necessity for initiatives that inform families about the long-term impacts of early marriage and the benefits of delaying marriage in favor of education. This approach is supported by McCleary-Sills et al., (2015), who underscore the efficacy of education in changing perceptions and fostering an understanding of the repercussions of child marriage. The engagement of local leaders and influential figures in the community as advocates for change is crucial. Their involvement not only lends credibility to the message but also capitalizes on their authority and respect within the community. Amin et al., (2016) exemplified the impact of strong community leadership in facilitating shifts in attitudes toward child marriage, illustrating how local champions can cultivate support for educational initiatives and help challenge entrenched beliefs.

Creating support systems for young brides resonates deeply with the literature's call for a comprehensive approach to addressing child marriage. These systems can provide essential emotional and educational support, empowering young women to navigate the challenges that arise after marriage. The involvement of youth and women's groups, as discussed by Ochangco, (2023), can be particularly effective in fostering a sense of agency among girls, transforming them into change agents within their communities. Such groups can mobilize collective action, creating a network of support that can challenge traditional norms and advocate for policy changes. This participatory approach reflects the importance of local engagement, as emphasized in the study by Bantebya et al., (2014), which highlights the significant role of empowered young women in reshaping societal norms. By mobilizing these groups and providing them with

the resources and platforms needed to voice their experiences, communities can nurture a culture that values education and gender equality, ultimately leading to a meaningful decline in child marriage practices. The integration of these strategies not only addresses the immediate concerns regarding child marriage but also seeks to transform the underlying cultural attitudes that sustain it, thus paving the way for long-term societal change.

5.2 Conclusions

Chapter one provides a comprehensive foundation for understanding the detailed nature of child marriage in Gilla Cell, Nyaracu Ward, highlighting the significant roles of cultural norms, socio-economic factors, and traditional beliefs in perpetuating the practice. It establishes the relevance of exploring these cultural influences, aiming to inform targeted interventions that can effectively address the persistence of child marriage. The clear articulation of the study's objectives, questions, and scope sets a focused direction for subsequent inquiry, while the conceptual framework underscores the complex interplay of factors shaping the prevalence of early marriage.

Chapter two contains the literature review which underscores that child marriage is a multifaceted issue deeply rooted in cultural norms, gender expectations, socioeconomic realities, and religious beliefs, which together sustain the practice across communities. The review highlights how patriarchal structures, traditional gender roles, economic hardship, and cultural or religious justifications create formidable barriers to change. It also emphasizes that effective strategies to challenge these norms require comprehensive approaches that combine community education, robust legal frameworks, and the empowerment of youth and women's groups. Understanding the complex interplay of these factors provides a critical foundation for designing culturally sensitive interventions aimed at reducing child marriage and promoting girls' rights and well-being.

Chapter three has comprehensively outlined the mixed-methods research design employed to investigate the cultural norms and prevalence of child marriage in Gilla Cell, Nyaracu Ward. It detailed the strategic selection of data collection techniques including structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions each aligned with specific objectives to ensure triangulation and depth of understanding. The chapter also highlighted rigorous procedures for sampling, instrument validation, ethical considerations, and data analysis, which collectively strengthen the reliability and validity of the findings. Although some methodological constraints were acknowledged, such as resource limitations and cultural sensitivities, the overall approach provides a solid foundation for gathering nuanced data to address the research questions and uncover the complex socio-cultural dynamics influencing child marriage in the community.

Chapter four presents the profound influence of deep-seated cultural norms particularly patriarchal values, gender roles, and economic incentives on the persistence of child marriage in Gilla Cell, Nyaracu Ward. Quantitative data revealed a high prevalence of early marriages, while qualitative insights underscored how societal expectations and community practices perpetuate these norms. Despite some community awareness of the adverse impacts, entrenched traditions and economic dilemmas continue to drive the practice. The findings suggest that addressing child marriage requires multifaceted strategies that challenge cultural beliefs, promote education, and harness community leadership for sustained change.

Chapter five thoroughly discusses the study findings in relation to the research objectives and questions, providing insightful interpretations and connecting empirical data to existing literature. The discussion effectively highlights the salient cultural norms such as patriarchal values, gender roles, and economic considerations that perpetuate child marriage in Gilla Cell, supported by both quantitative and qualitative evidence. By integrating references to established research, the discussion contextualizes the local findings within the broader body of knowledge on child marriage, emphasizing the complex interplay of cultural, economic, and social factors. The chapter concludes with well-founded recommendations aimed at tackling these deep-rooted norms through

community-based education, engagement of local leaders, enforcement of laws, and empowerment of youth and women's groups. These strategies align with best practices identified in the literature, and their inclusion demonstrates a comprehensive approach to addressing the problem.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations were proposed to effectively address the issue of child marriage in Gilla Cell:

- i. Develop and implement community education initiatives focused on raising awareness about the negative impacts of child marriage and emphasizing the importance of girls' education. Workshops and seminars should cover topics such as reproductive health, legal rights, and economic empowerment.
- ii. Actively involve respected community leaders and influencers in advocacy efforts against child marriage. Training programs should be established to equip them with the knowledge and tools to speak out against early marriage and promote girls' education as a community value.
- iii. Create robust support systems that assist young brides in continuing their education after marriage. This may include mentorship programs, peer support groups, and access to flexible and accommodating educational resources tailored to the needs of young brides.
- iv. Encourage the formation and active involvement of youth and women's groups focused on advocating against child marriage and promoting girls' education. These groups should serve as platforms for sharing experiences, mobilizing collective action, and empowering young women to take leadership roles.
- v. Work with policymakers to strengthen and enforce laws that prohibit child marriage. Legal frameworks must be coupled with community engagement strategies to ensure that laws are respected and adhered to within the societal context.

APPENDICES

QUESTIONNAIRE

Greetings! My name is Aseru Joy, a student of Uganda Christian University, and am writing this academic research on Cultural Norms and Child Marriage, a case study of Gilla Cell, Nyaracu ward Ayivu west division. You have been selected randomly to provide information. This interview will take about 15 minutes. The information provided will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared with any other third person. If there are any questions concerning the study, please feel free to ask them, otherwise may I ask?

SECTION A: RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

1. Age:

15-17 years

18-21 years

22-24 years

2. Gender:

Male

Female

3. Educational Attainment:

No formal education

Primary education

Secondary education

Tertiary education or higher

4. Current Marital Status:

Married

Single

Divorced

Widowed

5. If married, at what age did you get married?

..... years

SECTION B: ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHILD MARRIAGE

6. What is your opinion on child marriage? (Circle one)

Strongly agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly disagree

7. Do you believe that education is more important than early marriage for girls?

Yes

No

Not sure

8. In your opinion, who benefits the most from child marriage?

a) The girl

b) The family

c) The community

d) No one

SECTION C: EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

9. What was your highest level of education completed before marriage?

No formal education

Primary education

Secondary education

Tertiary education or higher

10. Did you continue your education after getting married?

Yes

No

If yes, please specify: _____

11. How do you think marriage affected your educational opportunities? (Circle one)

Significantly improved

Somewhat improved

No change

Somewhat worsened

Significantly worsened

SECTION D: SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

12. How does your community view girls' education?

a) Very positively

b) Positively

c) Neutral

d) Negatively

e) Very negatively

13. What do you think are the economic impacts of child marriage on girls and their families?

a) Increased family income

b) Decreased opportunities for employment

c) Increased household responsibilities

d) Other:

SECTION E: PERSONAL EXPERIENCES RELATED TO CHILD MARRIAGE

14. Can you describe your feelings towards your marriage?

.....

15. What challenges have you faced since getting married?

.....

16. Have you encountered any form of support in your community regarding child marriage?

a) Yes (please specify):

b) No

Key Informant Interview Guide

Study Topic: Cultural Norms and Child Marriage: A Case Study of Gilla Cell, Nyaracu Ward, Ayivu West Division

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and your role in the community?
2. How long have you lived in Gilla Cell, Nyaracu Ward?
3. What cultural norms do you think are most influential in your community regarding child marriage?
4. How do these norms manifest in daily life, especially related to marriage?
5. In your opinion, how do these cultural norms contribute to the practice of child marriage in Gilla Cell?
6. Can you share any specific examples or stories that illustrate this influence?
7. What strategies have you seen or believe could effectively challenge these cultural norms to reduce child marriage?
8. Are there any existing initiatives or campaigns in the community aimed at addressing this issue? If so, how effective do you think they have been?
9. What role do you think community leaders and members should play in changing these norms?

Focus Group Discussion Guide

Study Topic: Cultural Norms and Child Marriage: A Case Study of Gilla Cell, Nyaracu Ward, Ayivu West Division

1. Can each of you briefly introduce yourself and your relationship to this community?
2. What cultural norms do you believe are prevalent in Gilla Cell regarding marriage, especially concerning child marriage?
3. How do these norms affect individuals and families in your community?
4. In what ways do you think these cultural norms lead to child marriage in the community?
5. Can anyone share personal experiences or observations related to child marriage and its ties to cultural beliefs?
6. What strategies do you think could be effective in challenging these cultural norms to reduce child marriage?
7. How can community members, including youth and leaders, take part in these strategies?
8. Are there successful examples from other communities that you think we could learn from?

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Letter of permission to collect data



UGANDA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY
A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa
ARUA CAMPUS
Office of Head of Department, Social Sciences

April 10th, 2025

To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA

This is to introduce to you Aseru Joy, Registration number No: 523/ASC/BSW/031, a student of Uganda Christian University, Arua Campus, who is pursuing a course in Bachelor of Social Work and Social Administration as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree mentioned above, she is to carry out a research study. The purpose of the letter is to respectfully request your office to allow the above student so that she has access to your organization and collects some information required for her study.

The study is on the topic: *Cultural Norms and child marriage: A case study of Gilia Cell, Nyaracu Ward, Ayivu West Division.*

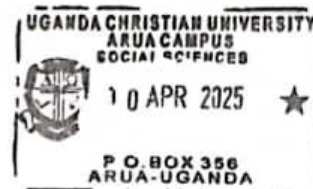
The information obtained will be strictly used for the study purposes.

Any assistance rendered to this cause will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Eyotaru Loyce

Ag Head of Department of Social Sciences



Appendix II: Letter of permission from office of the town clerk



OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK

Plot 47 – 55, Arua Avenue
www.aruacity.go.ug
+256 772 890929

P. O. Box 27, Arua
info@aruacity.go.ug
+256 782 744758

OUR REF: CR/ACC/220/1

25th April 2025

Ms. Aseru Joy
Uganda Christian University
P O Box 356
ARUA - UGANDA

PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH FIELD STUDY

Reference is made to your letter dated 10th April 2025 requesting for permission to carry out a research field study in Gilia Cell, Nyaracu Ward, Ayivu Division, Arua City on the topic **"Cultural Norms and Child marriage in Gilia Cell, Nyaracu Ward, Ayivu Division, Arua City"**

Permission is granted on the following conditions;

1. This should strictly be for academic Purpose.
2. You are expected to report to the LC 1 Chairman, Gilia Cell for any information on the data collection.

I therefore request the people concerned to assist you in giving the information and you are requested to deposit a copy of your findings to Central Registry, Arua City.

Yours,

Kabiri Charles

For: TOWN CLERK

- CC Ag. HOD Social Sciences/ Uganda Christian University
- CC Division Town Clerk/Ayivu
- CC LC 1 Chairperson/Gilia Cell

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