



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**

**COLLEGE OF DEVELOPMENT, CENTER FOR GENDER STUDIES**

**INVESTIGATING EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN LEADERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS  
CHILD MARRIAGE PRACTICE. THE CASE STUDY OF WONSHO WOREDA,  
SIDAMA REGION, ETHIOPIA.**

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**BY**

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**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

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## TABLE OF CONTENT

CONTENTS	
1.1.ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	3
1.2.LIST OF TABLES.....	6
1.3.ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	7
1.4.ABSTRACT.....	8
1.5.CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.....	9
1.6.INTRODUCTION.....	9
1.7.BACKGROUND.....	9
1.8.PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	10
1.9.RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	14
1.4. OBJECTIVES.....	15
1.4.1.GENERAL OBJECTIVES.....	15
1.4.2.SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES.....	15
1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	15
1.6.DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY.....	16
1.7.LIMITATION OF THE STUDY.....	16
1.8.STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY.....	16
INTRODUCTION.....	17
2-1. DEFINITION OF CHILD MARRIAGE IN THE WORLD AND IN ETHIOPIA.....	17
2-2. THE CAUSES OF THE CHILD MARRIAGE PRACTICE.....	18
2.1.1. SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS.....	18
2.1.3. ECONOMIC FACTORS.....	20
2.1.4. CAUSES OF CHILD MARRIAGE IN ETHIOPIA.....	22
2.2. IMPACT OF CHILD MARRIAGE PRACTICE.....	23
2.2.1. POSITIVE IMPACT ON SOCIETY.....	23
2.2.2. NEGATIVE IMPACT OF CHILD MARRIAGE ON GIRLS.....	25
2.2.3. ECONOMIC IMPACT ON FAMILY.....	26
2.2.4. NEGATIVE IMPACT ON GIRLS' INDIVIDUAL LIFE.....	28
2.2.5. NEGATIVE IMPACT ON GIRLS' EDUCATION.....	29

2.2.6. EFFORTS FOR PROTECTING GIRLS FROM THE CHILD MARRIAGE PRACTICE	30
2.2.6.1 GLOBAL EFFORTS .....	30
2.2.6.2 PREVENTION EFFORTS IN ETHIOPIA.....	33
2.2.7. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	36
1.EQUALITARIAN LIBERAL FEMINISM .....	37
2.CLASSICAL LIBERAL FEMINISM .....	39
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	40
INTRODUCTION .....	40
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	40
RESEARCH METHODS .....	41
3.4 DATA COLLECTION .....	42
3.4.1 BACKGROUND OF THE POPULATION .....	42
3.4.2 POPULATION OF STUDY .....	43
3.4.3. PROCESS OF DATA COLLECTION.....	45
3.4.4.DATA ANALYSIS.....	45
3.4.5.DATA QUALITY ASSURANCE.....	45
3.4.6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION .....	46
CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS .....	47
INTRODUCTION .....	47
4.1. RESEARCH FINDINGS .....	47
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	57
5.1 DISCUSSION.....	57
5.2 CONCLUSION.....	60
5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	62
ANNEX- QUESTIONNAIRE .....	68

## LIST OF TABLES

Table one- Profile of informant-----	44
Table two-Profile of focused group discussants-----	44

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ARIRC	Amhara Regional Inter-Religious Council
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CM	Child Marriage
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
ECFE	Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia
EDHS	Ethiopian Demography and Health Survey
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HTTP	Harmful Traditional Practice
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
KII	Key Informant Interview
MA	Master of Art
MOWSA	Ministry of Women and Social Affairs
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNWOMEN	United Nations Women
UN	United Nations

## ABSTRACT

*Child marriage practice is one of major gender inequalities in the world. Evidence shows that in the world 250 million children were married before 15 years. Negative consequence of the practice costs countries to loss 2% of their gross domestic product. According to various studies religion is one of the social factors that drive child marriage in Ethiopia. As a consequence, the child brides from various forms of gender-based violence in the places where the practice is rampant. Thus, this study was conducted to investigate Evangelical Christian leaders' attitudes toward child marriage practice in Wonisho woreda, Sidama region, Ethiopia. The study employed qualitative research to assess the perspectives and opinion of church leaders. To collect data, focused group discussion and key informant interview methods were employed to triangulate data. A Thematic analysis approach was employed to analyze the data. The major themes identified were church leaders' attitude, economic factors, cultural factors, and religious factors, causes of child marriage, positive impacts, and negative impacts. The arguments of the study are based on classical liberal feminism and equalitarian liberal feminism. The attitudes of evangelical church leaders stem both from religious values and traditional rituals. As a consequence, some church elders agree that child marriage perpetuates social cohesion and social capital. However, results indicated that child brides encounter multidimensional forms gender-based violence. Sexual, economic, psychological, and physical are the major forms of gender-based violence. Based on the equalitarian liberal feminism argument the evangelical churches instill patriarchal and moralistic laws nuclear families to perpetuate gender system. Family counseling guideline which reiterates submission of wives to their husbands and advocacy of leadership role for husbands. Moreover, results of the study indicate that sermons of the churches could give attention to neither internal and domestic laws nor international conventions. This restricted the congregations specially women from appealing for their rights and body autonomy. Despite strict moralist laws that limits women access to options and increase risk of gender-based violence, the availability of different structures like youth, women, family, elders, and Sunday session are the major opportunities to child marriage response and prevention. Child marriage practice stems from a multifaceted factor. Thus, evidence-based responses and prevention strategies are imperative. Joint planning and advocacy initiatives among evangelical church leaders is advisable.*

**Key words:** *Evangelical church leaders' attitude, causes of child marriage, consequences.*

## CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, background of the study, statement of research problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitations of the study, study area description and research questions of the study were described.

#### 1.1. BACKGROUND

Child marriage includes any legal or customary union involving a boy or girl under the age of 18. This definition is based on Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which defines a child as “any human being below the age of 18 years”. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that men and women of “full age” have the right to marry (Article 16.1) and that marriage shall be entered into only with the “...free and full consent of the intending spouses” (Article 16.2,1948). The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) further provides that the betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect (CRC,1989) & (CEDAW,1979).

All definitions of child marriage intersect at the age below 18 years and if the marriage occurs below this age is considered as violation of human rights and conventions.

African Union (2020), and United Nations Children Fund (2017) have indicated that in the world among five girls, one girl (20%) is married or in partnership before the age of 18. In Sub-Saharan African countries percentage of marriage accounts for 39 % whereas in Ethiopia it is 40%.

World Bank report (2020) has indicated that globally,700 million girls were married as children of which 250million were married before the age of 15. As the consequence, UN WOMEN reports (2016,20) show that “countries loss around 2% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) due to direct cost of negative health sequels of the problem.

According to African Union approximately, each year 1.7 billion children are affected by some sort of violence among which child marriage is taking the greatest share of a serious forms of child

abuse. It is estimated that 15 million girls are married before the age of 18, of which 39% are in Sub-Saharan Africa(2017).

Global Synthesis report indicated that in these countries<sup>1</sup> child marriage has a devastating long-term effect: health, education, psychological, emotional, and mental health on the children (2017).

Hoko Horii has argued that girls who marry early face a multiple long -term social consequences which endangers their future potential and quality of life. According to Horri, limited opportunity of education for child brides results in growing without confidence, sense of self-assertiveness, and life skill which contribute low human development index(2020). De Groot also added that the issues lead to teenage pregnancy which mostly associated with obstetrical risks and social problems like premature labor, perinatal death, intergenerational poverty ( 2018).

United Nations Children Fund writes that Ethiopia is the home to 15 million child brides, of which 6 million were married before the age of 15. This made Ethiopia rank 3<sup>rd</sup> among the countries with high prevalence of child marriage in Eastern and Southern Africa( 2018).

Central Statistical Agency<sup>2</sup> (CSA) of Ethiopia reports that child brides' quality of life in Ethiopia is affected by poor reproductive health outcomes, unemployment, illiteracy, gender-based violence, lack of autonomy, and disempowerment(2017).

## 1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The child marriage practice is a global phenomenon that roots in culture, religion, and ethnicity. A Global network has explained that there is a marriage of 12 million girls before the of age 18 every year. Furthermore, it indicated that marriage of 1 in 5 girls before 18 years of age and over 650 million women alive Today were married as children<sup>3</sup>.

Save the Children international explains that statistics indicate that 40 million girls whose ages ranged between 15-19 are estimated in marriage or in a union worldwide. It also mentions 12 million or more girls will marry before reaching the age of 18 years and of those 4 million are

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**NOTE: The foot note in this document is to provide additional information the readers about the citation.**

<sup>1</sup> Economic impacts of child marriage Global synthesis report,2017, P.12

<sup>2</sup> The Central Statistical Agency is an agency of the government of Ethiopia designated to provide all surveys and censuses for that country used to monitor economic and social growth, as well as to act as an official training center in that field.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org>. Girls Not Brides is a global network of more than 1,600 civil society organizations from over 100 countries committed to ending child marriage.

under the age of 15. According to it, by 2030, it is estimated that 150 million girls will lose their childhoods due to child marriage (2022). This demonstrates the prevalence of the practice is alarming which needs fast measures to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)<sup>4</sup> five (gender equality) and goal target: eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation.

Child marriage practice happens in many African countries. Research of UNICEF (2018) indicated that today in Africa 125 million girls and women alive were married before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. It added that 1 in 10 married before their 15<sup>th</sup> birthday and more than 1 in 3 young women in Africa were married.

National costed roadmap puts an effort to end child marriage in Ethiopia by 2024. According to the initiative, Ethiopia ranks 5<sup>th</sup> globally in terms of an absolute number of girls married as children. It indicates that young adults aged 20-24 years, 40.3% of women were married before 18 years of age (2019,20). According to the document, child marriage practice assumes different magnitudes in Ethiopia. It has described that the practice is associated with social norms with which society has lived for decades. The rooting of the practice in social norm complicates the initiative of ending the practice.

Regarding the problems of the practice, United Nations<sup>5</sup> points out that the practice is itself a form of modern slavery that violates the rights of child girl. It strongly advocates making states to come up with national conventions and agreements that restrict the practice and improve the girl's life.

According to Save the Children, in Ethiopia the practice leads to negative impact on girls' lives such as physical, social, and economic. It writes that young girls who marry older men cannot participate in household decision-making and cannot control their reproductive health. It also adds that the physical immaturity of the girls increases: risk of obstetric fistula, rupture of uterus, and vaginal tear. According to the report early pregnancy also contributes to nutritional deficiency of mother and fetus which leads to maternal depletion syndrome. Furthermore, it mentions that

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4 The Sustainable Development Goals or Global Goals are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future".

5 An intergovernmental organization whose stated purposes are to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations, achieve international cooperation, and be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations.

teenage pregnancy leads to prolonged labor<sup>6</sup>, obstructed labor<sup>7</sup>, abortion, bleeding, infection, nutritional anemia, maternal death, low birth weight (less than 2500grams), premature labor<sup>8</sup> and death neonate from respiratory complications (2017).

African Network reported that in Ethiopia the practice results in social consequences like school dropout which hampers the ability of girls to make choices of their life. It also adds there is a possibility of dissolution of family which leads to migration of rural-to-urban. According to the report, Rural to urban migration to search for better life contributes to multifaceted problems: initiation of commercial sex, street children, human trafficking, contract of sexually transmitted infections. Obstetric fistula is among the most common social consequences that imposes social stigma and low self-esteem (2016).

Save the Children<sup>9</sup> Denmark and EGLDAM<sup>10</sup> have described that psychological trauma and its effects like depression, suicidal attempts, excessive alcohol consumption, and homicide are among the consequences of the practice (2018). According to the report too many children are born without contraceptive utilization, and economic dependence are among the prevalent negative effects of child marriage practice.

Many scholars discuss the causes of the practice. Kashmira Khanom writes that it is a resultant of multiple socio-cultural factors. Illiteracy, family size, and technology such as face book, and phone are the pushing factors of practice. He also argues that social norm of marriage arrangements by family before 18 years of age, social security reasons and families limited awareness are among the associated contributing factors. Santosh Kumar Mahato agrees that social connection and protection of virginity of the bride significantly contribute to child marriage (2016). He also mentioned that as the consequence of poverty the practice reinforces ties because it offers economic relief.

Plan International<sup>11</sup> report indicated that the practice stems from structural factors. According to the report lack of access to education, economic opportunity, weak legal and enforcement

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<sup>6</sup> Labor that goes on for about 18 to 24 hours after regular contractions begin.

<sup>7</sup> Is a failure to progress due to mechanical problems—a mismatch between fetal size?

<sup>8</sup> Regular contractions result in the opening of your cervix after week 20 and before week 37 of pregnancy.

<sup>9</sup> An international non-governmental organization established in the United Kingdom in 1919 to improve the lives of children.

<sup>10</sup> Harmful Traditional Practices and Child Protection union in Ethiopia.

<sup>11</sup> Plan International is a development and humanitarian organization which works in over 75 countries across Africa, the Americas, and Asia to advance children's rights and equality for girls.

mechanism are major structural factors that favor the practice (2015). Ellen Stiefvaten argues that religious recommendations also promote child marriage to preserve virginity. Stiefvaten has written that religious narrations to preserve the norm of the religion are among the reasons for marriage (2019). According to him, religious prescriptions reinforce the practice in different contexts which primarily originates from power imbalance and gender inequality. These power imbalance and gender inequality basically affects power within adolescent girls to decide on their own private life destiny.

Anju Malhotra describes poor families using child marriage as a strategy for economic stress survival. He explains that families believe “one less person to feed, clothe and educate”. According to him, high bride price for daughters also contributes to push families to marry off their daughters (2010). Mohammad Hakimi agrees that families with poor economic status provide their daughters for marriage early. He also explains that drought, displacement, and conflict are also among the driving forces. He said, during these harsh times parents use child marriage as the copying mechanism and means of protection.

Julie Rialet identifies that the reasons for the practices are significantly associated with ethical principles of the community. He mentioned, religious leaders are among the key players to maintain ethics to preserve human dignity in religious community (2019).

United Nations Children Fund argues that although many international conventions and agreements restrict the practice the problem has continued in many societies. It defines the practice as the form of modern slavery that violates the right of a child (2021).

According to Katherine Marshall, the practice is deeply interwoven with attitudes of religious leaders that resulted in low gender roles of women in the society. Expectation of women in subordinate position within the family is a focus of different religious traditions (2018).

Aychiluhm Birara explains, the practice in Ethiopia is also related to maintaining of social values and norms. He writes, this contributed to the choice of husband and wife to made by families (2021). He added that it is more common in rural areas than urban areas where it causes women to have a poor life without empowerment.

Bogalech Alemu also has argued that the practice leads to the early drop out of education, which contributes to high fecundity rate, inadequate care of children and economic dependence. She

mentions that this resulted in social pathology on the ground of unskilled status of spouses to manage their households or poor interest in the marriage due to economic or other various problems where either of the party abandon the unpleasant marriage in both rural and urban communities (2007).

Regarding the reasons of the practice, many reasons, religious factors are also pointed out as the cause of the child marriage practice. UNICEF also reported that the practice in Ethiopia is consequential of socio-cultural and religious orders to preserve virginity, to control premarital sex, to secure female's respect in the society and to increase kinship (2020). This strengthens the social norms that control women in the society.

Wodon Quentin indicates that religious beliefs and traditions play a central role in the perpetuation of the practice. He also added many families consider religious obligations guide for the marriage of their children. According to him this contributed to the facilitation of betrothal and marriage rituals through religious leaders. He has described that the linkage of family honor with religious attitudes fortified trust in religious leaders among communities (2015). Religious actors have a dominant power which can change norms and practices.

According to Katherine Marshall, the practice is deeply interwoven with attitudes of religious leaders that resulted in low gender roles of women in the society. Expectation of women in subordination position within the family is a focus of different religious traditions (2018).

However, the previous studies had limitations of addressing the attitudes of religious leaders towards the practice. Moreover, religious leaders do not deal with the challenges impacted on the girls' life caused by child marriage. Therefore, this study attempted to investigate the religious leaders' attitudes toward the child marriage practice in Sidama region, Ethiopia. Although major religions in Ethiopia are categorized as Orthodox, Evangelicals, Catholic and Muslim, for this research, Evangelical church leaders' attitudes toward the child marriage were investigated.

### 1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To find out Evangelical Christians leaders' attitudes toward child marriage practice, the following questions were explored.

- ❖ What are evangelical Christian leaders' attitudes towards child marriage practice?

- ❖ What do evangelical Christian leaders think about the causes of the child marriage practice?
- ❖ What do evangelical Christian leaders think are the consequences of child marriage?
- ❖ What do evangelical Christian leaders suggest for preventing girls from the child marriage practice?

## 1. 4. OBJECTIVES

### 1.4.1. GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The general objective of this study was to explore what Evangelicals Christian leaders think about child marriage practice.

### 1.4.2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To find out the attitude of evangelicals' leaders towards child marriage practice.
- ❖ To explore the causes of child marriage among evangelical Christians.
- ❖ To assess the evangelical church leaders' knowledge on challenges of child marriage.
- ❖ To investigate the role of evangelical church leaders to prevent child marriage practice.

## 1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Firstly, the findings of this study will contribute to academic area of the feminist studies especially, in the theme of gender roles, and advocacy for women and girls' human rights issues in social structures. Moreover, the findings will support one of the arguments of postmodern feminism which believes in contextualization of social realities and heterogenicity of women and girls where their issues cannot be approached by a uniform strategies and initiatives. The practice of child marriage is context specific social reality that can be deconstructed and constructed based on local knowledge.

Secondly, this research will enrich Ethiopian government as well as local organizations to build up domestic solutions regarding local gender issues like child marriage based on indigenous knowledge and wisdom. This aligns with bottom-up development approach that encourages active participation of community through participatory rural appraisal tool from gender study perspective considering gender issues in Ethiopia.

For the researcher, the investigation will discover key religious perspectives on child marriage practice.

Finally, the findings of this study will greatly contribute to making policies and strategies in the matters of child marriage practice among Ethiopian society to empower girls to advocate for their human rights, and to promote initiatives of Ethiopian government to end child marriage by 2024.

Essentially, the findings will suggest context-based approaches to child marriage practice that sustainably address the root causes and contributing factors of the problem based on their lived experience of local community.

#### 1.6. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This qualitative study considered Evangelical Christian leaders as a study population based on their roles and responsibilities. The study population of this study were priests, pastors, and evangelists for key informant interview. The Focused Group Discussion (FGD) adults, youths and church elders were discussants. An interview was held with 10 (pastors, priest, and evangelists) regional level whereas first FGD was held with 10 church elders at woreda level and second FGD with 12 adults and youths kebele level.

#### 1.7. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The shortage of financial resources limited the study area. As a consequence, the study was conducted with 32 participants.

#### 1.8. STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The report of this study was organized into five chapters. Chapter one describes background of the study, problem statement, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and delimitations of the study, Chapter two writes the literature review that describes consequences of child marriage, and prevention strategies so far made, Chapter three displays the research methodology, Chapter four includes the research findings, Chapter five discusses the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on available literatures that discuss child marriage practice including definition of child marriage in the world and in Ethiopia, the causes of the child marriage practice, impact of child marriage practice, the efforts in prevention of child marriage practice, and gender issues in child marriage practice.

#### 2-1. DEFINITION OF CHILD MARRIAGE IN THE WORLD AND IN ETHIOPIA

The definition of child marriage varies. Child marriage is defined in various ways. World Atlas defines it as a marriage or union, formal or informal, between a child under a certain age typically age 18 and an adult or another child (2017) whereas United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) defines it as “a union whether official or not of two persons at least one of whom is under 18 years of age” (2018). Inter-African Committee (IAC) also defines the practice as “any marriage carried out below the age of 18 years, before the girl is physically, physiologically, and psychologically ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage and childbearing (1993). Moreover, the Office of High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) defines child marriage as “any marriage where at least one of the parties is under 18 years of age” (2014).

In addition, Ethiopian revised family law defines as “marriage before the age of 18 years”. It also sets the legal age of marriage at 18 years for girls and boys. Moreover, the Criminal code of Ethiopia criminalizes child marriage with punishment (2000). United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) also defines “Child marriage refers to any formal marriage or informal union between a child under the age of 18 and an adult or another child”<sup>12</sup>.

Likewise Save the Children defines child marriage as “a formal or informal union before age 18”. It also describes the practice as “it is a violation of children’s human rights and a form of gender-based violence that robs children of childhood”<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> (<https://www.unicef.org/protection/child-marriage>).

<sup>13</sup> (<https://www.savethechildren.org>).

In summary, child marriage is a practice that is defined in different forms. All definitions intersect at common point which is the practice is under 18 years of age. Marriage is considered as child marriage when either of the parties is under 18 years of age or both parties are under 18 years of age. The practice breaches human rights and affects the physiological, physical, and psychological development of child bride.

Scholars such as Patricia Crone, and Brown Jonathan discuss the child marriage is originated since 19th Century in many parts of the world like India, China, and Eastern Europe where women tended to marry immediately after reaching puberty. Thus, it shows that girls got married when reaching puberty. In that period men remained unmarried until they had enough livelihood to support a new home and were married in their mature age to adolescent girls (2015).

Mordechai Akiva also writes that it was common for girls to be betrothed at or before the age of puberty in ancient and medieval societies. According to him, “arranging and contracting the marriage of a young girl were acknowledged entitlements of her father in ancient Israel. “At the start of their puberty most girls were married before the age of 15” (2017).

In contrast to Crone and Jonathan, Ruth Lamdan argues that child marriage in 16th century was very common, it was a norm in this context ‘minor’ refers to a girl under 12 years. A girl aged 12 was considered as an adult in all respects (2000). In addition, Nancy Demand also discuss that in Ancient Greece early marriage and teenage motherhood for girls existed, boys were also expected marry in their teens (2010). Girls could marry from age of 12 and boys aged 14.

## 2-2. THE CAUSES OF THE CHILD MARRIAGE PRACTICE

### 2.1.1. SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS

Studies conducted in different areas point out that socio-cultural factors contribute to the practice. Nawal Nour, has indicated “social factors can drive child marriages: the need to reinforce social ties, and the belief that it offers protection” (2009). The community perceives these factors as cohesive devices that can be ensured by marriage.

Human trafficking research report has written that social pressure sees child marriage as “a business agreement between families arranged by the elder males and in many countries, marriages

for love are frowned upon” (2017). Moreover, the report has indicated that the parents marry off their daughters to prevent premarital sex that results in unwanted pregnancy and disgrace of parents.

The community’s effort in keeping girls’ virginity is very important in the patriarchal society. According to Godfrey Kangaude, “The power dynamics in the patriarchal environment greatly values girls’ virginity. This also results in the construction of difference in sexual desire between boys and girls. As the consequence, parents marry off their girl-child as soon as she reaches puberty to preserve chastity and virginity.” (2017).

Mat Lowe and Mamsamba Joof also write about the community’s effort in keeping girl’s virginity saying that “fear of girls’ engagement in premarital sex, and lack of practical options to marriage including economic empowerment is also another cause of child marriage practice in the rural areas” (2020).

Cultural tradition is also practiced in some societies to keep girls’ virginity. Alexandra Oprea points out that cultural traditional rituals are practiced testing virginity which leads to keeping the child marriage practice (2005).

Minale Bezie & Dagne Addisu explain -that child marriage practice is caused by keeping girl’s virginity. They write that “the major cause behind the practice is the protection of chastity and virginity of the bride” (2019). Different communities believe that delaying marriage endangers pride of family due to potential loss of chastity and virginity from the girl.

In addition, Maja Gavrilovic & et al argue that child marriage is practiced due to keeping girl’s virginity. according to them, the marriage of girls under 18 years of age is viewed as a means of their protection (and that of their virginity and family honor) and parents often must consider the trade-off between child marriage and other risks such as social stigma and alienation, as well as the potential loss of family honor (in the event of premarital pregnancy). Girls who remain unmarried are believed to face greater risk of abduction and rape (2020).

Some international organizations discuss that climate change can increase child marriage practice. UNICEF writes that child marriage practice is induced by climate change. It indicated that one of the consequences of climate change, drought, has increased the practice in the Horn of Africa. As the consequence of drought, the practice significantly increased in Ethiopia and Somalia. In these

countries the communities use child marriage as the coping mechanism of shock. Moreover, conflict in these areas highly contributed to increased Internal Displaced Peoples (IDPs). This has a possibility to substantially surge the practice when families use child marriage as the means of protection (2022).

Climate change is another cause of child marriage which is shown in many reports. UNICEF, Christie Mcleod & et al report provides, child marriage practice is increased during the drought which can lead to the high risk of conflict between the people in the affected regions. According to them, the conflict contributes different forms of gender-based violence such as child marriage and rape (2019).

Research conducted by UNFPA explains that child marriage has significantly increased in the areas where climate change effects are pronounced. According to it, environmental crises due to climate change drives child marriage as the effect of damage of livelihoods, disruption of education and displacement of community (2021).

United National general assembly also recognizes how climate change effect: drought, conflicts related humanitarian emergencies and forced displacement have a great negative impact on women and girls. According to UN, these external shocks in the extension contribute to significant addition of child, early and forced marriage in the drought prone and conflict hot geographical areas (2022).

### 2.1.3. ECONOMIC FACTORS

Economic factors are among pushing factors of child marriage practice in developing countries like Africa. Cynthia Dzimiri and et al study provides reduced economic opportunities of girls increase their vulnerability to early marriage (2017). According to them, in addition to poverty the loopholes in the family law enforcement and lack of commitment from political leaders fuel the prevalence of the practice.

Center of Human Rights (CHR) report also indicated that family poverty underlines child marriage practice in many African countries (2018). Its discussion demonstrates that parents in poor countries use child marriage as the means to ensure economic prospects of the whole family including the education of their brothers.

Moreover, African health organization reports “In Africa, girls from the poorest households are twice as likely to marry before age 18, as girls from the richest households. Similarly, girls in rural areas are twice as likely to become child brides as girls from urban areas” (2020).

Likewise, Manjur Hossain adds, economic and social status of the family increase the liability for child marriage. Some families who are not economically strong enough treat their daughters as a burden and think of getting rid of them by marrying them off early. To mitigate expense of the family; poor parents arrange child marriage as it ensures one person less for feeding, clothing, health, and education. Dowry is a common phenomenon among the poor and lower sections of society. Sometimes parents of the bridegroom who do not have financial capacity arrange early marriage of their girl to take dowry (2020).

#### 2.1.4. RELIGIOUS FACTOR

There are some scholars who discuss that the cause of child marriage comes from religious beliefs. Katherine Marshall writes that; religious beliefs are an essential factor in child marriage practice. Religious leaders commonly play a central role in betrothal and marriage rituals. In different communities’ family honor anchors in attitudes towards religion. Because religious leaders are trusted above all groups of leaders. Religious attitudes towards marriage are truly linked with attitudes towards gender roles. The attention of various religion on family comes with expectations of subordination of women within the family (2018).

African Union (AU) reports that in most African countries the child marriage practice continues due to strong religious beliefs. According to its report, religion is one of the strongest major causes of child marriage although African countries have legal frameworks to rule out child marriage practice (2015).

Sisters in Islam (SIS) also identifies child marriage is most prevalent in Muslim community, Muslim voice resistance against advocacy of reform of age of marriage is growing strong. It argues that in Islam a girl is allowed to marry once she reaches puberty period. The puberty period is confirmed by physical and physiological changes of girls. The enlargement of breast, shedding of menstrual blood are among the major confirmation signs for girls to marry. Thus, no law that sets

a minimum age of marriage can apply to Muslims. In Muslim community there is combination of religious dogmatism and moral shaming of sexual relations outside marriage drives the failure of law reform on the minimum age of marriage (2018).

In addition, Regina Gemignani points out that religious leaders are the central problem in perpetuating the child marriage practice. According to him, religion prescribes women's role in the home and prescribes the preservation of virginity which contributes to child marriage practice. Religion teaches parents to prepare their girls for marriage, instilling values that help girls to become good wives and mothers who obey men and care their children (2015).

Ashley Belanger also argues that Muslim, Jewish and Christians communities promote child marriage to prevent premarital sex. Families use religious guilty feelings to pressure their girls to marry earlier rather than later. God will condemn you or congregations if you don't marry. Girls and boys accept the orders of their families and engage in marriage. Respecting father and mother is one of the ten commandments of Holy Bible which prescribed in the Old Testament. This may greatly contribute to the obeying of children to their families' orders and concerns. Mostly children from Christian community fear curses as the consequence of disobeying families' orders (2017).

#### 2.1.4. CAUSES OF CHILD MARRIAGE IN ETHIOPIA

Regarding the causes of child marriage practice, many factors are inter-related in Ethiopia. Bogalech Alemu discusses that in Ethiopian society child marriage is practiced for strengthening relationships, to protect virginity and to prevent premarital sex (2007).

Similarly, Bosen Tebeje writes that conformity to the local traditional (ቆጣ ቀረኝ, ፈሳሽ ያለቀባት) material benefit, competition to find in-laws, security for future, considering of grandchildren as security (2004). Diverse ethnic groups in Ethiopia justify child marriage practice based on their multifaceted reasons.

Anju Malhotra argues that child marriage in developing countries continues to be a reality for many of the world's girls because of a variety of factors. According to him, poverty, lack of education, job opportunities, insecurity in the face of war, conflict, the force of custom and tradition are among the significant contributing factors of child marriage" (2016).

In addition, the initiative of National Costed Roadmap provides that child marriage is significantly perpetuated by social norms, power imbalance, gender inequalities, and religious beliefs. It says, Social norms are historically formed by economic realisms and textured by religious outlooks. It strongly agrees that religion and religious beliefs highly tend to encourage child marriage where Muslim communities believe girls over 9 years of age are old enough for marriage and Orthodox priests and deacons prefer to marry prepubescent girls to ensure purity (2019).

Historical book is also important factor causing the child marriage practice in Ethiopia. Zuzanna Augustynik writes that, the historical background of child marriage practice in Ethiopia possibly associated with the book of 'Fitha Negest' which dealt with criminal and civil laws of Ethiopian society during emperor. According to him, the 24th chapter of 'Fitha Negest' was about the institution of marriage which consists of all commands and rules that concerned with family (2009).

He mentions '*Sirat*' marriage is the most common type of ceremony that preceded by a long time of betrothal. He indicates that mostly in rural areas of Ethiopia marriages are arranged by parents of both sides despite the spouses are children. "This long time of betrothal enables future brides to reach the age of capable. This long-term betrothal might have been breached and resulted in child marriage" (2009).

Ullendorff also mentions that '*Semanya*' is a popular kind of marriage among residents of '*Menz*' in the Amhara region. He describes this kind of marriage is usually arranged by both families where there was a tendency to marry off 11- or 13-years old girls (2009).

## 2.2. IMPACT OF CHILD MARRIAGE PRACTICE

### 2. 2.1. POSITIVE IMPACT ON SOCIETY

It is discussed that child marriage has more positive benefit to the society. One of the Genet Church leaders argues that child marriage practice has the potential to prevent illegal migration to other countries. He explains that if a girl marries, she will be saved from peer pressure from rural to urban migration and other forms of negative social effects. According to Orthodox church, girls may take a risk of death during migration. "During migration, girls suffer from gross human right

violations. Many are dying from lack of water, food, forced organ donation and servitude” (2021). Thus, child marriage can save girl’s life.

Amhara interreligious council members argue that ending child marriage practice has the tendency to increase unholy sexual relationship among adolescent girls. They say that “this contributes to unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion, and risk of contracting sexually transmitted infection” (2021).

Jamal Abdul writes that early marriage practice in developing countries has more benefit in producing many young children who can contribute to the resources for the future labor forces. According to him, the developed nations promote almost old age marriage and childbirth where the society cannot give birth more than one or two children due to the delay of marriage. The rampancy of child marriage practice in developing countries enabled them to have more young and adolescent people. This has the potential to make countries have abundant labor force, military personals, and resistance to epidemics due to presence of significant number of young peoples (2011).

In addition, Melake Demena discusses that young marriage or child marriage significantly contributes to fast population growth. According to him, fast population growth comes with blessings of economic bonus. He explains young people contribute to large scale agricultural investment, industries, military and exporting of skilled human resources to other countries. He argues that exporting skilled human resources boosts remittance and acquiring of technology that scales up the development of countries of origin. He also describes those countries with fast population growth that can easily acquire military personnel to defend their nation during external aggression (2005).

In summary, child marriage practice has positive roles in society including protection from illegal migration, and reproductive health problems. Furthermore, it contributes to economic bonus, availability of cheap young people labor, and building strong military with young personnel.

## 2.2.2. NEGATIVE IMPACT OF CHILD MARRIAGE ON GIRLS

In discussing the negative impacts of child marriage practice, various harmful effects are identified: physical, educational, psychological, domestic violence and economic violence.

One of the harmful effects of child marriage is identified as negative impact on girls' education and the population growth. According to International Center for Research on Women (IRCW), the practice hinders girls from getting the opportunity of education. According to it, low education status of girls contributes to fast global population growth due to high fertility rate. It describes that high fertility rate contributes to environmental degradation and global warming. It also mentions that population growth has a direct relationship with economic growth of countries. "Lowering fast population growth through ending child marriage will enable Ethiopia to reap \$ 4.9 billion per year in 2030" (2018).

Gender based violence is another harmful effect resulting from child marriage practice. Nicole Kidman argues that, there are different forms of gender-based violence resulting from child marriage that inflicted harmful impact on girls. He says that sexual, physical, and psychological violence are the most common forms which early married girls encounter in their lifetime either from their intimate partner or partner's families (2017).

Physical violence is the most prevalent form of domestic violence caused by child marriage practice. According to Kidman Nicole "domestic violence reinforces subordinate position of girls in the society through its various forms. This also maintains hierarchical patriarchal system" (2020, 1). In addition to physical violence, Mohiuddin Ahsanul points out sexual violence results from child marriage practice. He discusses that sexual violence predisposes girls to acquire human papilloma virus which causes cervical cancer and other sexually transmitted infections. According to him these cripple girls' productivity and quality of life and initiatives of gender justice (2018).

Ahanul continues to argue that the physical immaturity of girls affects their reproductive health. He says, "Physical immaturity of girls causes competition between child and mother for nutrition. This competition results in low birth weight of child, premature labor, hypertension during pregnancy and its health complications" (2018).

Berkeley Alice, World Bank (WB) and Elizabeth Presler point out economic violence as the negative impact on girls.

Berkeley Alice says economic violence perpetuates oppression of girls in society. She mentions that economic dependence of child brides on their husbands because of poor economic empowerment affects their decision-making power in the household. This fuels private and public arena disempowerment. She also indicates that it contributes to low decision of family planning utilization and delay of economic divided due to high fertility (2021).

According to the report of the World Bank, economic violence increases the rate of mortality and malnutrition among under five children. It also emphasizes that “neonatal death and morbidity are common among children born to child mothers”. Moreover, it reports that countries will “gain economic benefits close to US\$ 98 billion by 2030 if they end child marriage” (2017).

In agreeing with Berkeley and the report of World Bank, Elizabeth Presler argues that economic violence results in rural to urban migration wedlock. She says migration of wedlock exposes to human trafficking and sexual exploitation. According to her, the migration of wedlock prefers prostitution as the alternative of economic options. Mostly, wedlock’s educational status is very poor. The low educational status and unskilled profile increase preference of prostitution as an income generation scheme among them. This tremendously inflict multidimensional social consequences: sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancy, street children and gender-based violence (2016).

Anthony Idowu discusses that research conducted in Eastern Africa including Ethiopia shows intimate partner violence was significantly increased among women married before 18 years of age (2021).

### 2.2.3. ECONOMIC IMPACT ON FAMILY

Economic issues can cause negative impact on the family of the girl with child marriage. Campaign for Female Education International writes that the child marriage practice poses a substantial effect on families. According to the campaign, “the child marriage practice increases the family size due to high fertility rate. As a result, the family suffers from poor health outcomes, low quality of life, migration to urban areas, and risk of prostitution” (2017).

Ayodele Joseph writes that when girls abscond from their education and engage into marriage, the investment that families made on girls during their education became futile when they quit their study. He argues that “Child girls’ marriage can also cause the problem to their family because they must take care of the girls’ pregnancy. According to him, sometimes child girls may become pregnant and dissociate their marriage. Joseph mentioned, this further puts economic pressure on families while caring for both mother and child. He also explains, girls who absconded their education and engage into marriage greatly depends on their partners or families to sustain their livelihood” (2014). This highly disempowers women both in private and public arenas. This contributes to chronic poverty.

David Lawson and Klasen Stephan discuss that “the practice causes high total fertility as women marrying earlier tend to have more children over their lifetime than a girl marrying latter” (2007). Therefore, early marriage practice leads to difficult families’ life and quality of children care due to increased family size.

Global synthesis report writes that child marriage practice contributes economic impact. It writes, the practice increases poor school performance of children due to stunting, increased medical costs and increased household consumptions. This bearing, caring, and rearing of children deprive women of economic opportunity. Moreover, the participation of women in economic development substantially hindered. This also augments blooming of disproportionate poverty of women and declining of household income (2017).

Jennifer Parsons explains that the practice causes household poverty which originates from multiple pregnancies. According to her, “poor decision making, loss of productivity and earnings due to unpaid works increase household poverty (2015).

In addition, Amartya Sen writes that women are vibrant agents of social transformation in the virtue of education, employment, and ownership of holistic economic development. Sen mentions, however, girls who absconded their education are powerless to influence and control their environment. He also adds, powerlessness makes them voiceless to play active role in economic development. According to Sen, economic disempowerment is manifested income inequality, unemployment, and poor capital accumulation mechanism greatly hamper economic wellbeing of family members” (2015).

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) argues that child marriage has a significant advantage. It cites the practice strengthens social cohesion during clan conflict and uses it as a coping mechanism at the time of drought (2020, 24). This argument fortifies the positive economic impact of child marriage. Families with daughters have a better opportunity to escape economic difficulties that originate from drought. During extensive drought communities' loss all forms of livelihood. This loss of livelihood highly contributes to an increase in child marriage in the areas where drought is extensive.

In addition, some of Amhara Regional Inter-Religious Council (ARIRC) members agrees that child marriage protects girls from migration, unwanted pregnancy, human trafficking, and prostitution. According to the council, married girls have a low tendency to migrate and face gender-based violence (2021). The married girls engage in different forms of locally available livelihood alternatives. This contributes to economic generation at the local level and avoids economic loss due to reduced possibility of migration and reproductive health problems.

Moreover, marriage will fortify social cohesion where there is a high possibility of coaching and mentoring from the girls' families. This happens to establish a strong family. This also contributes to the positive economic impact of child marriage.

Thus, UN Woman and ARIRC indicate that child marriage practice has protective impact during conflict, drought and it also prevents migration, unwanted pregnancy, and human trafficking.

#### 2.2.4. NEGATIVE IMPACT ON GIRLS' INDIVIDUAL LIFE

Save the Children reports that the child marriage practice violates the right of a girl. The practice alienates their rights of education, protection, and empowerment to make their own decisions for their life destiny. According to its brief report, child brides' low decision making and lack of body autonomy in the private arena ends in early pregnancy and its obstetric complications. It describes complications from early pregnancy are the most common direct cause of maternal mortality among girls 15 to 19 years in developing countries. It also mentions a neonate born to a girl married as a child is more likely to suffer from malnutrition and underdevelopment which perpetuates the cycle of poverty and intergenerational malnutrition (2018).

The Institution of Child Brides agrees that girls who survived pregnancy problems may remain with long term obstetric complications. It mentions that obstetric fistula is a preventable injury that results from obstructed labor or prolonged labor in the rural areas of Ethiopia. According to it, the Cases of obstetric fistula mostly occur among girls under the age of 18 at the rate of 65% (2020).Obstetric fistula has a multidimensional consequences like family dissolution, social discrimination, psychological depression, bladder stone and other reproductive health problems. More importantly, the survivors of fistula suffer from grave economic consequences due to inability to participate in income generation activities. This happens consequently of incontinence that overshadow participation in petty trading and gainful employment.

#### 2.2.5. NEGATIVE IMPACT ON GIRLS' EDUCATION

Child marriage also results in a negative impact on girls' future education. Girls who get married have low possibility of continuing their education.

Jennifer McCleary writes that social norm about gender roles barred millions of girls from entering and completing their education. According to him, men believe that" it is morally wrong for a girl to delay getting marry to further her education". He also describes that this attitude and practice devalue girls' education and advancement (2015). This outlook emanates from gender roles which promotes male dominance. In different communities' girls' education is considered as ineffective as the consequence of their trapping in marriage faster than boys. It is also believed that girls should be nurtured in areas of how to care for children and home care instead of schooling them. This consolidates women subordination and male dominance.

According to the research of Human Rights Watch, married girls encounter various forms of practical barriers to education: household responsibilities, stigma, forced exclusion from school and gender norms that keep them at home (2018). It also indicates that child marriage practice results in adolescent pregnancy and this causes girls to drop out or barring from school. Pregnancy during adolescence contributes to various forms of obstetrical and gynecological problems: hypertension during pregnancy, puerperal endometritis and systemic infections, prolonged labor, uterine rupture, and premature labor. In most cases the end outcome of the pregnancy will be low birthweight baby, preterm baby, and neonatal infections.

Nicholas Mathers identifies that child marriage contributes to inter-generational transmission of poverty with considerable negative impacts on economic growth. According to him, child brides are likely to be at lower levels of education which greatly impacts their economic productivity negatively and future earnings (2021). Girls born from poor families have the greater tendency to end up in poverty due to limited investment in their education due to poverty. This perpetuates the transmission of poverty as the result of limited investment in human capital.

In addition to Nicholas, Jennifer and Human Rights Watch, World Bank finds out that child marriage has a significant economic implication. According to it, there is a high tendency to lower labor force earnings when the educational attainment of women is lower.

Thus, Nicholas, Jennifer, Human Rights Watch, and World Bank argue that child marriage has a significant economic impact on family's due to the low educational attainment of girls.

## 2.2.6. EFFORTS FOR PROTECTING GIRLS FROM THE CHILD MARRIAGE PRACTICE

### 2.2.6.1 GLOBAL EFFORTS

Around the world different efforts were made to prevent and end child marriage practice. Several evidence shows that various initiatives were in place to restrain the prevalence and incidence of the practice. The efforts mainly focused on prevention of physical, emotional, cultural, educational, and economic impacts on girls.

Sophia Chae writes that, to end the problem, globally different approaches were used to address structural, socio-cultural, and economic factors that contribute to power imbalance and gender inequality: empowerment, community, education, and economic approaches were among the approaches (2017).

Gender power relationship is rooted in different factors like preference of male to female, and poor awareness of human right. This power relation determines women access and control over resources, opportunity to economic participation, power of decision-making in both private and public arena, activity profile and access to microfinance. Thus, initiatives so far made at global level focused on power relation equality, strengthening education, health, leadership, and community-based structures to end and prevent child marriage practice.

Joar Svanemyr mentions that international advocacy events: March 8, Activism of 16 days, Girls Day played great role in reform and enforcement of legal frameworks, increasing of education opportunities for girls, and influencing of social norms (2012).

These platforms contribute to awareness creation of multiple stakeholders. Utilization of both print media and electronic media during the celebration of these events enhance the dissemination of key messages of gender-based violence prevention. Child marriage prevention is among the key messages of observance of events around the globe. The dissemination of key messages in media mix resulted in legal reform and increased education opportunity of girls.

United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner summarizes global initiatives of child marriage prevention. According to it, reform of legislative measures, adoption of conventions, increasing of coordination mechanisms, engagement with community leaders and professional categories, education and employment of girls, protection and accountability, awareness-raising and change of social norms that support child marriage and gender equality have been improved (2012).

Multisectoral engagement plays a substantial role in the protection of women's rights. This approach attracted attention of community-based structures like faith-based organizations, schools, and government structures. Furthermore, this multifaceted coordination contributed to legal reform and increased breaking of taboos of discussing child marriage issues among faith-based organizations. But much more is needed to achieve women's rights in all dimensions. The initiatives take the form of campaign that could not institutionalize system. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action advocates for addressing critical obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life. It describes that economic, social, cultural, and political decision-making are barriers to women empowerment. According to it, governments signed the declaration to make part of their national commitments to remove the barriers of gender equality (1995).

Different countries who accepted the platform initiative moved forward in adapting the initiatives into national frameworks barriers of gender equality. For example, Ethiopia has developed national roadmap to end child marriage and female genital mutilation practice by 2024.

International human rights framework prescribes protection for women and girls by prohibiting Harmful Traditional Practice (HTPs) through directly prohibiting child marriage practice. It describes the practice as one of the fundamental barriers that is driven by social norms (1948). As a result, it cripples quality lives of millions of girls around the world. To improve the quality of lives of girls curbing HTP is imperative despite the practice is pervasive. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) calls for modification of laws, regulations, customs, and practices. It also prescribes gender equality particularly banning child marriage practice and urging state parties to set a minimum age. This convention laid a fundamental framework for inclusion of gender equality concepts into legal frameworks and public policies of states. States that accepted the initiative of CEDAW and have been designed strategic objectives to address discriminations against women. This gave birth to gender and development concept with the prongs of economic opportunities, and empowerment in education, politics, economic, health wellbeing (1979).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child also, fortifies best interests of the child standard in addressing the rights of children. It recognizes child marriage as a violation of best interest standards and violation of children's rights. Marriage stifles girls' fate and hope of leading their lives in their own interest (1989).

Their power of self-leadership, and cooperation with others to advocate for themselves is massively depleted. They have poor life skills due to lack of education.

African Charter prescribes provision against child marriage. It orders prohibition of child marriage and betrothal of girls and boys through legislation of minimum age of marriage as 18 years of age (1990). According to the charter, most countries' constitutions and legal bills set age limit of marriage to prevent negative consequences of the practice. The minimum age of marriage varies among countries due to cultural differences particularly religious outlooks. In African countries, the minimum age of marriage is above ten years of age, where Ethiopian legal frameworks set 18 years of age. This age limit is controversial among Muslim communities particularly Afar and Somali regions due to religious perspectives (1990).

Ethiopian Muslims argue that age limit is not Quranic prescription where the breast enlargement, and menses shedding are considered as the qualifications for marriage.

In addition, Maputo Protocol prescribes prohibition and condemnation of all forms of practices that negatively affects human rights of women. It recognizes child marriage practice as contrary to the international standards (2003). Despite international laws recognizes the practice against standards, it persisted in different contexts as the consequence of deep-rooted poverty, social norms, conflict, drought, humanitarian crisis and forced displacements vehemently blooming the practice. These factors are associated with variable prevalence and incidence of the practice. This further made the investment of ending child marriage practice difficult.

African Youth Charter orders states to eliminate harmful social and cultural practices. According to it, states legislations should protect girls and young women from all forms of violence including child marriage (2006). States legislations bear articles of child protection but due to resistance related to social norms and values the legislations became weak.

Moreover, the practice is a highly valued social value and proud in different contexts regardless of economic status.

#### 2.2.6.2 PREVENTION EFFORTS IN ETHIOPIA

Various intervention and prevention efforts against child marriage were implemented by many organizations in Ethiopia. To prevent emotional impacts of child marriage, there have been efforts to improve awareness level of community and decision-making capacity of stakeholders to protect young girls from child marriage practice. Various actors-initiated community-based approaches to buy in community-based structures. Norwegian Church Aid four years report review indicate that behavioral change and communication both print and electronic medias, advocacy initiatives with religious and government sectors are among the major initiatives. These continuous approaches resulted in improvement of enforcement of laws and public polices to protect child girls from marriage (2016-2019).

Likewise, systems were instituted to provide psychosocial support, legal and medical services to survivors of child marriage practice addressed emotional impacts (2012). These initiatives improved knowledge of communities and government sectors about the importance of dealing with child marriage. More importantly, revision of legal frameworks and public policies were made to protect girls from marriage due to improved uptake of initiatives by policy makers and decision-making bodies.

Prevention effort in education was promoted by the Ministry of education. Its five years strategic plan shows that efforts were made in reducing gender disparity in primary and secondary education in Ethiopia. It indicates that educated women are less likely to enter child marriage or motherhood or contract sexually transmitted diseases. According to the program, literate mothers better understand health education and child development that directly impacts lives of their children (2016). Educated mothers better care for their children and invest in their children's education. This has the potential to break the intergenerational poverty cycle when human capital improves through education.

Another effort of child marriage prevention through breaking of cultural factors was also promoted by social security minister. Its National Social Protection Strategy shows that, efforts of adolescent girls' maximization impact on educational outcomes to reduce child marriage. It also indicates measures of communication and awareness raising for prevention of child marriage is imperative. This encouraged girls' education enrollment and attitude of sending only boys to schools was declined. The culture of undermining of girls' education is improving but still much is needed to break cultural prescriptions related to girls' education (2016).

Moreover, the Health Sector Transformation Plan (HSTP) manuscript describes different initiatives of child marriage practice prevention: contraceptive provision to delay early pregnancy and its effects, revision of curriculum to include child marriage topic. According to it, the ministry of health designed different strategies to prevent child marriage practice: adolescent and youth reproductive health implementation strategy, maternal health strategies, family planning utilization methods, and revision of policy (2017).

These efforts contributed to reduction of maternal death from unwanted early pregnancies, improved contraceptive uptake among adolescent girls and improved life skill. The negative health consequences that affect physical integrity of girls related to pregnancy and delivery are prevented.

Similarly, Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) writes that, girls' agency around marriage decisions is highly associated with level of education and access to information. It also describes that girl's education advocacy, transmission of key messages of child marriage prevention contributed to improved marriage decision making among adolescent and youth girls (2016). Access to information basically determines knowledge of girls to decide on their own life.

It also empowers girls to advocate for their rights in their contexts. Information takes the greatest share to empower women to claim their rights.

According to report of Ethiopian Women's Development and Change package, ending child marriage in Ethiopia is mainstreamed into several sectoral policies and strategies. Health, education, water, and Agriculture are among the Ministerial sectors that mainstreamed ending the child marriage practice (2015). Mainstreaming gender into multisectoral development plans help to address to multifaceted root causes and contributing factors of gender issues. Mainstreaming gender at different levels of development initiatives: programs, project, policies, and strategies is mandatory in improving women economic empowerment, economic opportunity, and decision-making power of women (2015).

The Constitution of Ethiopia enshrines reaffirming of "harmonization of domestic laws with international human rights relevant to the protection of rights and welfare of women" (1995). The constitution adapted international conventions and laws that advocate for women rights and equality. It recognizes that women shall entitled to equal right as men. This has laid a basic principle to integrate gender equality into all public policies and legal frameworks.

Revised Ethiopian Family code "sets a minimum age of marriage to 18 years of age. According to it, any marriage below this set age is unacceptable" (2000). The setting of minimum age of marriage is not uniformly welcomed by all regions due to religious reasons. The family code promotes that regions can adapt based on their contexts, but so far Muslim dominated regions have not adapted it. The reluctance of adaptation has been continuing to persistence of child marriage practice.

Revised Criminal Code of Ethiopia also "prescribes punishment of marriage below the age of 18 years. It also orders dissolution of marriage" (2005,). Limited reporting mechanism of child marriage cases contributed to underground practice. Moreover, deep rooted poverty, conflict and drought resulted in paradigm shift of considering child marriage as a protective factor. Some regions where drought and conflict are common child marriage cases are high despite criminal code punishment is in place. Poor commitment of local leadership also contributes to the increment of the practice.

## 2.2.7. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### INTRODUCTION

In dealing with child marriage practice in Ethiopia, there are several gender issues that needed to be discussed from the feminist perspectives. These are gender equality, gender empowerment, family planning, and climate change and cultural issues are among the pressing ones of gender issues in Ethiopia.

In different countries around the world gender equality is compromised due to multifaceted socially constructed reasons. This contributes to gender inequality which manifested in unequal power relation between women and men, unequal opportunity for access to resource and control, education opportunity, and personal development. Different feminist perspectives describe gender equality from various dimensions. Social structure, gender roles, and power inequality are among the major dimensions to explain the fundamental causes of gender inequality in different contexts.

More importantly, postmodern theory<sup>14</sup> argues that women and girls are not homogenous. To address heterogeneity of women and girls' contextualization of gender issues is imperative. As the point of argument, it says "realities can be constructed and deconstructed based on local realities". According to the theory, grand theories cannot address heterogenous gender issues. It says realities are subjected relatively to local knowledge and subjectivism<sup>15</sup>

Liberal feminism argues that social structure like legal framework and political ideology are the major causes of gender equality issues. It believes reform of legal framework and political ideology within the existing social structures to bring gender equality is imperative. Therefore, in this study liberal feminism was used to describe the findings of the study. Moreover, the study used both classical and equalitarian liberal feminism to explain the results of the study.

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<sup>14</sup> Postmodernism is a late 20<sup>th</sup> century movement in philosophy and literary theory that generally questions the basic assumptions of Western philosophy

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/postmodernism-philosophy#ref282558>

## 1. EQUALITARIAN LIBERAL FEMINISM

Egalitarian is sort of liberal feminism which promotes personal procedural accounts of autonomy and political autonomy. The central tenant of equalitarian liberal feminism is living a life of one's own and choosing and determining one's life. The personal and political autonomy of women depends on social and institutional reform. According to it, autonomy deficiency is inherited from patriarchal traditions and institutions which uphold the gender system.

Liberal egalitarian liberal feminism argue that gender equality is ensured if there is restructuring of social system: familial, and gender roles to promote women autonomous. According to equalitarian liberal feminism: having of access to options, being free of the limits set by patriarchal paternalistic and moralistic laws and policies, being free of violence and the threat of violence are the enabling conditions of gender system reform. Their premises originate from social construction. They believe that sex difference between men and women is socially constructed which resulted in male dominance and subordination of women. According to them "fully informed and mentally competent adult women are assumed to be the final decision makers of their own best interest.

Baehr Amy (1996) writes that the necessity for rational reforms of laws and policies to realize equality between men and women. This underscores the power of an individual person to change inequitable practices against women. He agrees that social restructuring addresses the root causes of gender inequality issues. According to him to empower women to make their decisions without force or threat legal frameworks and public policies reform is imperative.

Similarly, Ann Cudd describes that individuals should use their own capabilities and independent course to be more equal in the eyes of the law and society (2004). Power within recognizes sense of own capacity and self-worth. This allows women to realize and release their power to and power with. Women can make difference and advocate for their equality when they collaborate with others and generate their potential to make their own best interest.

Women should be able to judge on their own lives to their best interest. Child marriage and other gender equality issues emanate from sex difference and dominance of one sex by the other.

Pagac Christine, Alstott Linda, Smith Andrew, McClain Linda, and Rhode Deborah discuss that egalitarians embrace the workout of personal autonomy with varying enabling situations. According to them social and institutional structures are inadequately respecting women's personal autonomy and gender equality. They believe that women are entitled to access to options of economic opportunity and various empowerment schemes: political, social, education, health, and economic.

Alstott Linda (2004) writes that economic deprivation significantly restricts women's access to options. This increases power inequality between women and men which adds fuel to feminization of poverty. He also adds sex discrimination in education following social labeling unfairly reduces options for women. Economic deprivation of women critically determines women power relations both in private and public arena. Power imbalances give birth to various forms of gender-based violence that total to gender inequality.

Smith Andrew (2004) identifies patriarchal laws and policies as the limiting factors of women's options and interest. According to him patriarchal laws and polices limit women's options on the base of predetermined morality issues that prohibit women's interest. Women's options and interests are determined by laws set by gender system. This male dominated social structure become a barrier to gender equality issue. Women economic opportunity and other interest can be realized if there is restructuring of social system.

Rhode Deborah (1994) describes the state as a significant role in promoting enabling conditions to ensure women's autonomy. He agrees that social institutions perpetuate gender inequality due to favor of male dominance. According to him, inherited patriarchal traditions and institutions play a significant role in the continuation of deficits in personal autonomy of women's lives. Women oppression is continued due to male skewed social institutions. Male favoring institutions block decisions of women for their own interest.

McClain Linda (2006) also believe that the family institutions greatly contribute to social institutions that skewed to male dominance. He suggests that families affect the development of girl's sense of self value, preferences, and capacities to live lives of their own. Families play a significant role in gender equality issues. Families in various contexts rear their children based on their sex differences. This sex preference disproportionality affects girls do not live their own lives and confines them to domestic care.

## 2. CLASSICAL LIBERAL FEMINISM

A brand of liberal feminism that believes equalitarian feminism treats women differently from men. They argue that freedom is freedom from forcible intrusion. They underscore that women and men have the right to freedom from forcible intrusion. More importantly, equity it also argues that states are the significant source of women's oppression. They believe in ending of laws that limit women's freedom as well as laws grants special privilege to women. Socially conservative equity feminists argue that cultural values obstruct state power and create an autonomous and self-protecting society.

The classical liberal feminism argues that culture, patriarchal system, and state repress women complementarily. Classical liberal feminism advocates that women and men have the right to freedom of conscious and expression, freedom of contract, freedom on one's body, freedom to acquire and transfer property. It underscores women and men have the right to freedom from coercive interference like intimate, sexual, and reproductive matters.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes research design, population, methods of data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations.

### QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative study is a type of study which is used to discover, explore, and explain lived experiences and opinions of societies in a natural setting. It has a nature of starting from data to theory which contributes to the development of a new theory based on specific context. Patrik Aspers & Ugo Corte define qualitative study as "Qualitative research is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live. A few different approaches exist within the wider framework of this type of research, but most of these have the same aim: to understand the social reality of individuals, groups, and cultures".

Researchers use qualitative research design to explore the behavior, perspectives, and experiences of the people they study. This research methodology employs various forms of methods to collect data. Interview, and focus group discussion are used to collect the data. There are also various types of design approaches: historical study, grounded theory, case study, phenomenology, and ethnography to explore social behavior in each context. These design approaches can be employed based on the type of topic and objective of the study. The basis of qualitative research lies in the interpretive approach to social reality (Immy Holloway, 1997). This study employed case study to explore the attitude of Evangelical Christians towards child marriage practice.

Moreover, other scholars describe qualitative research methods in different ways among which (Flick & Uwe, n.d.) described qualitative methods as "Qualitative research is a multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative research interprets phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical,

interactional and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives."

Consequently, interpretive science tries to capture reality as it is, namely as seen and experienced by the respondents. Child marriage is a deep-rooted social practice that different communities give variable reasons why they practice in their contexts. Their reasons stem from their contexts' social life. Therefore, this study employed qualitative research methodology to explore the attitude of Evangelical Christian leaders towards child marriage practice in their social life context.

## RESEARCH METHODS

Qualitative research employs various types of research methods in order to collect data such as interviews, focus group discussion, secondary data review, and observations.

For this study key informant interview, and focused group discussion were employed. There are various types of interview methods: unstructured, structured, and semi-structured.

Yan Zhang & Barbara Wildemut characterizes the unstructured interview methods "the researcher comes to the interview with no predefined theoretical framework, and thus no hypotheses and questions about the social realities under investigation. The researcher has conversations with interviewees and generates questions in response to the interviewees' narration. Each unstructured interview might generate data with different structures and patterns" (1988).

Robert Cornell defines structured interview method as "A structured or standardized interview, also known as a researcher-administered survey, is a fixed design interview whose context is prepared before it is administered. It aims to ask all respondents the same questions in the same order. The interviewees usually get a limited range of answers; that is why the interview is also known as a directive interview. The questions used in the structured interview are closed-ended, pre-coded, or fixed choice questions (2013)".

Coryn Barclay also defines semi-structured interview methods as "A semi-structured interview is qualitative research method that combines a pre-determined set of open questions (questions that

prompt discussion) with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular themes or responses further (2018)”

For this study, semi-structured interviewing was more appropriate, because semi-structured interviews enabled the Evangelical Christian leaders to express their views about child marriage practice. It was also effective in collecting qualitative data that collected from priests, Pastors, Evangelists, church elders, youths, and adults.

In addition to semi-structured interviews, two Focused Group Discussion (FGD) were used as a data collection tool. People of similar backgrounds or experiences discuss child marriage practice in the study area. The participants of FGD were asked about their attitudes towards child marriage practice at Wonsho woreda. Focused group discussion allows participants to freely talk with one another which encourages discussions about the practice. The first FGD composed of 10 church elders selected conveniently in a semi-structured discussion whereas the second FGD composed of 12 adults and youths. FGD is very effective in gaining information about the group’s views and experiences on the same topic.

### 3.4 DATA COLLECTION

#### 3.4.1 BACKGROUND OF THE POPULATION

The data were collected both from Hawassa and woreda level-based evangelicals’ leaders to understand different views about the child marriage practice.

In the woreda the child marriage practice is rampant which accounted for 40.1% and ranked first in the Sidama region (UNICEF,2017). The woreda is located at 100KMs from Hawassa city. The area is also known for a high influx of youths to urban areas including to the town of woreda.

The proximity of woreda to Hawassa made youths to highly influx to it for different reasons like searching for job opportunity which exposes girls for teenage pregnancies, out casting of newborns into diches according to report of woreda authorities.

The area is mountainous which densely covered by different types of vegetations such as coffee, eucalyptus, and false banana. The areas receive annual rainfall of more than 1000ml.

The community dwelling in the Woreda wear traditional clothes which are made by craftspeople. They also feed traditional food which is locally prepared from false bananas. Child marriage and female genital mutilations are among the common harmful traditional practices in the area. This contributed to the low school attendance of girls.

Moreover, the community has a traditional leadership structure where elders take a high leadership position to lead all community affairs. These clan leaders have a role to resolve conflict cases. In the community there is a practice of spiritual possession. Mostly, the spiritual possession is practiced by women and sometimes by men. This spiritual possession also serves as a means of disagreement solving. Some community members prefer to use spiritual possession as a true judge.

Wonsho woreda is one of the woredas of newly constituted Sidama regional state. In the woreda 'chat' is a common cash crop whereas 'Enset' is a major staple crop. The area has high rainfall and ambient temperature which is favorable for 'Enset' and 'Chat' in the area. In the area different ethnic groups are dwelling together of which Sidama takes high proportion. In the area basic social services are provided by institutions like 38 primary and secondary schools, 18 health posts and 4 health centers, 70 churches, and 6 mosques are some of the institutions in the area. With regards to religion, Evangelicals Christians take the greatest proportion of followers.

### 3.4.2 POPULATION OF STUDY

To collect the data the participants were selected from different denominations. For interviews, church leaders were selected purposively from four denominations: Ethiopian Kale Hiwot Church (EKHC), Ethiopian Evangelical Church of Mekane Yesus (EECMY), Ethiopian Full Gospel Believers Church (EFGBC), and Ethiopian Hiwot Birhan Church (EHBC). The selection of church leaders from different denominations ensured diversity of perspectives on child marriage practice. Semi-structured interview was held with church leaders, church elders, adults, and youths.

To understand group views on child marriage practice two focused group discussions were held with Evangelical<sup>16</sup> Christian leaders. The first FGD was conducted at woreda level with 10 church elders whereas the second FGD was conducted at kebele with 12 youths and adults' participants.

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<sup>16</sup> Evangelicals take the Bible seriously and believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The term "evangelical" comes from the Greek word evangelion, meaning "the good news" or the "gospel." Thus, the evangelical faith focuses on the "good news" of salvation brought to sinners by Jesus Christ.

**Table 1: Profile of interviewees**

Respondents	Age	Sex	Title	Education	Church membership
R# 1	40	M	Pastor	MA in theology	EECMY
R# 2	36	F	Evangelist	MA in theology	EECMY
R# 3	49	M	Pastor	MA in theology	EFGBC
R# 4	50	M	Evangelist	BA in theology	EFGBC
R# 5	28	F	Evangelist	BA in theology	EKHC
R# 6	57	M	Pastor	MA in theology	EKHC
R# 7	39	F	Evangelist	Diploma in theology	EFGBC
R# 8	57	F	Pastor	MA in theology	EHBC
R#9	50	M	Pastor	BA in theology	EHBC
R# 10	55	M	Priest	BA theology	EECMY

**Table 2: Profile of focused group discussants**

FGD	Respondent	Age	Sex	Position	Education level	Church
FGD1	P#11	45	M	Church elder	None	EECMY
	P#12	43	M	Church elder	None	EECMY
	P#13	34	M	Church elder	None	EECMY
	P#14	40	M	Church elder	None	EECMY
	P#15	38	M	Church elder	None	EECMY
	P#16	39	M	Church elder	None	EKHC
	P#17	40	F	Church elder	None	EKHC
	P#18	50	F	Church elder	None	EKHC
	P#19	41	F	Church elder	None	EKHC
	P#20	39	F	Church elder	None	EFGBC
FGD2	P#21	23	M	Youth leader	Grade Six	EFGBC
	P#22	24	M	Choir leaders	Grade Seven	EFGBC
	P#23	23	M	Choir leaders	Grade Five	EHBC
	P#24	24	M	Choir leaders	Grade Eight	EHBC
	P#25	23	M	Youth leader	Grade Nine	EHBC
	P#26	30	M	Sunday school teacher	Grade Eight	EHBC
	P#27	32	F	Women leader	None	EKHC
	P#28	31	F	Women leader	None	EKHC
	P#29	34	F	Family leader	None	EKHC
	P#30	35	F	Development leader	None	EKHC
	P#31	31	F	Youth leader	None	EECMY
	P#32	36	F	Youth leader	None	EECMY

### 3.4.3. PROCESS OF DATA COLLECTION

The data collection procedure was carried out with the respondents who were purposively selected based on their roles in the churches and lived experiences in order to gather proper information. To collect the data two research methods were used: interviews and two focused group discussions.

Interview questions were used to explore views and perspectives of participants regarding child marriage practice. Each interview was conducted in the offices of the interviewees in Hawassa city. It was conducted in their offices according to the interest of the leaders. The FGDs were conducted based on the convenient time and date suggested by the respondents in the nearby community gathering places. The discussants were debriefed about the purpose of the discussion, the importance of their participation in the discussion, rights, and ground rules of the discussion. The interview and focused group discussion were held in Amharic and the contents of each interview and FGDs were translated into English. The interview was held over half an hour to one hour. The interview contents were recorded by audio recorder device in addition to note. At the end of data collection, transcription of interview content was made.

### 3.4.4. DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected from the interviewees and FGDs were transcribed into English from Amharic language. After that, coding, categorizing, themes and sub-themes processes were carried out. The data were analyzed manually. To code, categorize, theme and sub-theme spreadsheet was used. To explore patterns of views, experience, and opinion of respondents about child marriage practice thematic analysis approach was employed. During the thematic analysis series of steps were followed like familiarization with data, coding the content, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining, and naming themes and finally written up.

### 3.4.5. DATA QUALITY ASSURANCE

To ensure quality of data triangulation methods were employed to collect data from different study populations to explore different perspectives, views, opinions, and experiences related to child

marriage practice in the contexts study participants. As the consequence of this priests, evangelicals, pastors, adults, youths, church elders were the participants of the study. The study participants were both males and females. Moreover, FGD guideline and interview questionnaire were used to ask uniform questions to the respondents.

#### 3.4.6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

To collect data consent was obtained from all participants prior to interview and focused group discussions. The study participants were informed about the confidentiality, purpose, and anonymity of data. Moreover, they were informed of the benefit of the study and rights of participants during data collection.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter research findings were interpreted. The interpretation of the findings was made in light of liberal feminism and postmodern theories. To arrive at the findings thematic analysis was employed based on the steps of qualitative research methods such as data familiarization, Coding, categorizing, theming, and sub-theming and write up. To code, categorize, theme and sub-theme the findings spreadsheet was used manually. The results of the study were in presented in seven themes of categories: attitude of evangelical leaders, economic factors, cultural influence, religious influence, physical change, positive impact of child marriage, negative impact of child marriage.

### 4.1. RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### 4.1.1 EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN LEADERS' ATTITUDES

Evangelical church leaders have the information about the problems child marriage inflicts on child brides. They believe that negative consequences of child marriage stem from immaturity of physical and physiological of child brides. These consequences are contrary to major argument of egalitarian liberal feminism which holds personal procedural accounts autonomy of women. Their point of argument is women are supposed to live lives of their own. As a consequence, they promote lives free of violence and threats that reduces women's sphere of activity. The quoted responses of key informant interview and focused group discussion respondents reaffirms that child marriage practice opposes one of the central tenants of egalitarian liberal feminism. According to the respondents, child brides are at risk of domestic violence that compromises their personal autonomy.

*I think it is harmful because early married girls suffer from different problems. These problems happen as the consequence of physical and psychological immaturity. These immaturities contribute to poor childcare and poor household resource management. Consequently, these lead to conflict and dissolution of the family (R#7, R#8).  
Young girls result in marriage develop obstetric fistula due to poor physical growth that cannot resist birth of a child. After, fistula husbands abandon their wives (R#5, FGD 1).*

These responses of key informant interview and focused group discussions also oppose classical liberal feminism argument of women's right of freedom from intimate, sexual, and reproductive health matters.

Evangelical Christian girls are not free from limits set by patriarchal paternalistic and moralistic laws and policies. These laws and policies restrict women's options and interests on the basis that some opportunities should not be available to women owing to morality forbidding of women's selecting them. Sexual expression is forbidden among evangelical Christian girls. This limit set by moralistic laws promotes child marriage on the ground that if marriage is delayed girls have the tendency to engage into premarital sexual relationships. As the result, the church leaders maneuver women into socially preferred ways of life. Moreover, this shows women in evangelical Christians have limited freedom to make their sense self-interest based on their own values. The response of the key informant and focused group discussions ensure limited options to women. *"At the late age it is difficult to believe whether the girl has no experience of premarital sex or not. But if she marries early the confidence of being free from premarital sex is high. Girls without history of premarital sex are believed to be loyal to their husbands (R#10, FGD1).*

Equalitarian liberal feminism also argues that social arrangements of personal life should be also based on fairness and justice. The evangelical church leaders agree with heterosexuality relationship among their congregations. However, they believe in male leadership of household. As the consequence, they promote the greatness of age males than females as he is the leader of the household. This attitude opposes the argument of egalitarian liberal feminism that advocates for restructuring of systems that upholds gender system that promotes hierarchy of gender roles in private arena. The responses of key informant interview and focused group discussions implies male dominance and women subordination in household and public decision making. *"It is good if the age of boy is older than girl. This helps the boy to better lead his household. Caring for household is the responsibility of the husband"* (FGD1, P#15).

The evangelical church leaders use counseling service centers as a means of instilling gender role division into nuclear families. The service positions male as a leader to take overall management of household and confines women to domestic care and submission to their husbands to live life in abundance. *"The service mainly focuses on childcare, financial management, submission to husbands, conflict management and caring for one another"* (R#1).

Although evangelical churches are gender system institutions, there are opportunities of restructuring and reform that aligns with egalitarian liberal feminism. From the key informant interview and focused group discussion it understood that structures of youths, adolescents, women, family, Sunday schools, marriage counseling, choir are among the other things through which child marriage prevention, response and other gender issues can be institutionalized.

*Designing parents' discussion reference manual can increase parents' awareness on child marriage. This will improve parents' knowledge on human rights, legal frameworks that ban child marriage practice. This also shifts the attention of parents towards prevention of the practice. They can make their daughters know about the harmfulness of the practice (R#6).*

*In the church we have different structures of teaching adolescents: Sunday school, and family group. These structures can help to teach adolescents and families about the child marriage problem (FGD2, P#25).*

The key informant interview and focused group discussion responses also indicate initiatives of child marriage prevention and response are stemming from government. This approach has the potential to overshadow update of the initiative among church leaders. *“If it harms our children, why don't we prevent it. Certainly, sometimes politicians come from the region and tell us about child marriage prevention as if they have no idea about why the community is practicing child marriage. Local government leaders are telling us about child marriage prevention, but they are not working with local churches on the ways forward to handle poverty of the community” (FGD2, P#24).*

The opportunity to of child marriage response, prevention and other gender issues are overshadowed with leadership system commitment to address child marriage cases. The churches have no procedures to address church marriage cases. *“The local authorities poorly respond to the practice. This poor response increases the possibility of practice. If the local authorities strengthen legal age stipulated in the family law, the practice can be reduced” (R#7).* Furthermore, from the FGD and KII responses it can be understood that lack of knowledge among church leaders about fundamental human rights, legal frameworks, international conventions, and declarations concealed common understanding of child marriage practice multidimensional consequences. *“In*

*our church child marriage goes underground and where some of the church elders take part (FGD1, P#17).*

Some of the responses of church leaders are against the essential conditions marriage that stipulated in Ethiopian revised family Code. The law prescribes “*Neither a man nor a woman who has not attained the full age of eighteen years shall conclude marriage*”. Moreover, the responses violate women’s right which enshrined in the constitution of Ethiopia article 35. Although the practice violates national laws of the land, the local legal enforcing bodies could not fully enforce the provisions of laws of land against the church leaders. This implies that the local government judicial system interwoven with local customs and social fabric. As a consequence, church leaders view social issues like child marriage within their local contexts lens to preserve their social cohesion. “*Child marriage should be prevented among church members. Unfortunately, in the Bible the age of marriage was not written. Possibly, this made church leaders not to have a uniform attitude towards disseminating key messages of prevention and response (R#9, FGD1)*”.

#### 4.1.2 ECONOMIC FACTORS

Equalitarian liberal feminism contend that cultural homogeneity restricts women’s economic options due to assignment of roles-based sex. Moreover, equalitarian liberal feminism debates that women’s access to options are unjustly limited as the consequence of feminization poverty. The deprivation of opportunity and gender biases positions girls in a lower position disproportionality. This contributes to child marriage among poor evangelical Christian families. Families are marrying off their daughters to relief from household level economic tensions. The key informant interview and focused group discussion responses indicate that poverty pushing child marriage among evangelical Christians. “*Families with many female children prefer marrying off their children to reduce the burden of many children*” R#8).

The local churches have no institutionalized system to support poor families. The evangelical church members also marry off their child girls to copy to get economic relief. This implies that child marriage initiatives need multiple approaches in addition to awareness creation messages like livelihood approaches. Local churches pay attention to economic support to poor members of the church. “*Speaking only child marriage prevention to poor community and poor girls does not make any sense. How can girls attend their education if they do not have sanitary napkins and exercise book? If families cannot afford school uniform cloth, can she go to school? If a girl does*

*not have even plastic shoes, do you think she can go to school bare foot? Soap to wash her face, do you think girls' education is effective? The problem of our community is more than talk. (FGD2. P#26)''.*

#### 4.1.3 CULTURAL FACTORS

Liberal feminists argue that culture is a significant source of women's oppression. According to them, patriarchal culture augments women's oppression. The responses of KII and FGD show that some evangelical church leaders play both traditional cultural and church roles. When they play traditional cultural roles, they actively participate in traditional mediation. As the consequence, some evangelical church followers who allow their child girls to marry early engage those church leaders act as the traditional mediators. The long-lived experience of child marriage practice also influenced church leaders' perspectives about the practice. This diminished the attention of leaders to prevention and response of the practice. Some church leaders agree that the practice is one sort of our social fabrics. As a consequence, the local community discriminates and stigmatizes girls who delay marriage.

*Counting child marriage as harmful is a recent agenda. Practice is one of our customs (FGD1, P#13). Marriage is an old practice which does not have any problem. Marriage of adolescents has long years history in our community.*

*We hear problems of child marriage from local government, but we have not encountered any problem (FGD1, P#18).*

Church members engage both in local cultural traditions and church teachings. Families agree with the importance of social cohesion through preferring social norms. Being a member of church does not avoid engagement into local social norms and beliefs. *“Regardless of being protestant members, some families prefer a local culture that promotes child marriage. Families' belief in deep rooted cultural practice that promotes early marriage of girls. As a consequence, they pressurize their daughters to marry early” (R#3).*

The KII and FGD responses implies that families also highly accept local sayings and proverbs that come from local community when girls delay their marriage. The families fear of local traditions contributes to perpetuation of child marriage practice. By the same token, the church elders also engage in both church leadership and local traditions events like ‘Chambala’ and its norms.

*When girls delay their marriage, they are labeled with stigmatizing marks. In our community they are labelled as ‘ፈሳሽ ያለቀጥታ’ (dry skin). Girls prefer to marry when they see physical and physiological changes on their body (R#4).*

*Church leaders should separate culture from Christianity teaching. Some church leaders practice both cultural and Christianity leadership. Church leaders should devote themselves as Jesus redeemed us. If church leaders are committed to teaching congregations, the practice can be easily prevented (R#5, FGD1).*

#### 4.1.4 RELIGIOUS FACTORS

Liberal feminism argues that the gender system is strengthened by religious rituals. According to it, religious rituals, dogmatisms, doctrines contribute to the rigidity of the religion institutions. The followers are expected to observe the prescribed guiding principles of their churches. The principle of the church bears moral ethics which is expected of the members of the church. To live life in abundance, the members lead their children and whole families to instill the moral principles and orders of the church. The response of KII and FGD underlines that new nuclear families are obliged to be guided to fit into the prescriptions and teachings. The responses also indicated that the churches have a system to deal with child marriage cases. The available systems of churches highly focus on what congregations follow to maintain Christianity values.

*The church has no experience of dealing with child marriage cases. It usually advises the couples. Except that the church does not provide any support to the cases (FGD1, P#19).*

*We conduct rituals of marriage after providing counseling on management, resource management, and childcare and conflict management before marriage. The churches believes that the age of a male should be greater than the age of a girl to properly lead his family. Our churches use full age as the guiding principle to conduct marriage ceremonies as prescribed in the Holy Bible in both old and new testaments (R#2, FGD1).*

Furthermore, the rigidity of the religious teachings and local social norms made the local church leaders deny the realities related to child marriage consequences. The church elders believe that considering child marriage as the issue of society is a recent phenomenon. They underline that the local community has been practicing it for decades. This rigidity of dogmatism opposes the one of the central arguments of liberal feminism which focuses on freedom of being free from violence and threat at domestic arena.

According to the dogmatism of the churches once the women entered marriage, she should endure what happens to her marriage. This limits women's self-advocacy to decide freely on their own lives including appealing for divorce if the marriage disempowers their private and public decision-making power. The system considers women in different contexts as homogenies groups. This dogmatism homogeneity limits women's capability to live their own aspirations and realities. The response of FGD 1 and all KII underscores the homogenies treatment of women in different contexts and realities. *“Church counsels the married girl and boys how they establish their family in the fear of Lord. For Christians marriage is holey and highly respected that needs care to establish. Once marriage is established, interfering, and dissolving it is sin. So far, we have not experienced serious problems related to marriage. (FGD2, P#27, R#1 to R#10).*

The theologians also agree that in the dogmatism of churches gender issues like child marriage practice was not indicated. This made the theologians have different perspectives about the response and prevention of the practice. The response of KII indicates that churches have no experience of integrating key messages into sermons due to lack of institutionalized system in the churches. *“In our church there is no experience of integrating child marriage messages into sermons. The church focuses on sermons. We teach our congregations about the redemption and Christianity values. This made us not have a common agreement about key messages of child marriage prevention and response integration into sermons” (R#10).*

#### 4.1.5 PHYSICAL CHANGE

The church elders use physical change on the bodies of boys and girls to conduct the marriage rituals. This shows that local church leaders construct their own context-based realities to deal with their issues despite church dogmatism are in place. According to the responses from KII marriage ritual is expected to be carried out based on marriage counseling manual. The manual focuses on leadership, resource management, domestic care, and other fundamentals of church dogmatism to reshape the outlook of couples. However, the FGD 1 discussants constructed their own reality of conducting marriage rituals in their contexts. This deconstruction of marriage counseling manual fundamentals shows that church leaders are prone to be influenced by local social norms.

*The proper age of marriage is when there is physical change in children, we use physical change for marriage decision. We do not count the age of children in years, but we observe changes on the bodies of boys and girls (FGD1, P#20).*

*Girls in our area marry when there is a change in their bodies. We use growth of mustache/ beard and change of voice. Whereas, for girl's enlargement of breast, shedding of menstrual blood are used (FGD2, P#32).*

#### 4.1.6 POSITIVE IMPACT OF CHILD MARRIAGE

The positive attitudes towards child marriage are in contrary liberal feminism arguments. The tenants of liberal feminism focus restructuring of cultural, religious, social norms, patriarchal paternalistic, moralistic laws and policies that perpetuates gender system. These positive attitudes towards to child marriage disempowers women and girls not to advocate for themselves and position themselves into the existing oppressive gender system. The disempowerment of women and girls consolidates toxic masculinity which upholds hegemonic perspectives of the men in the society. The hegemonic position of male in the society positions women subordinate position. This subordinate position of women in the society made women disproportionately suffer from gender-based violence. This positive outlook towards the practice poses a significant effect on the restructuring of the existing gender system to accommodate diversity of gender interests in different realities.

Furthermore, these positive attitudes towards to child marriage believes women are homogenous who similar gender issues. However, in real situation women are heterogenous who have a multidimensional interest. These diversified interests and aspirations demand contextualization of gender issues. This also fits into post- modern theory that argues that realities can be deconstructed and constructed according to the existing context. The FGD and KII responses augments gender system that underscores women oppression.

*I think delaying girls' marriage outweighs negatively. As the girls get older, their opportunity to fall into unnecessary life is high. So, if they marry early, family is great which fastens social tie (FGD 1, P#16).*

*Child marriage practice has a protective effect against human trafficking. If the girls marry early, they will not migrate to urban areas and trapped by illegal human traffickers. Girls who have fallen in the hands of human traffickers are exposed to sexual exploitation (R#4).*

*Early marriage of a child girl consolidates social ties between bride girl and bridegroom. Because they get marry at the right time. Families pride is great because they get son in law early (R#6).*

#### 4.1.7 NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF CHILD MARRIAGE

The negative impacts of child marriage practice are the consequence of gender system. The patriarchal system limits women's access to different options that disempower women do not live their own realities and author their destiny. Liberal feminism argues that personal life should be reflected by fairness. However, the gender system perpetuates gender inequality and power imbalance. These root causes are further augmented by contributing factors like social norms, institutions, and systems at societal levels. The contributing factors appear at different levels of society which are illustrated by the socio-ecological model. This model consists of factors that perpetuate gender systems in different levels of society. The levels are individual, family, community, and system or societal. The contributing factors take different forms at every level. These variabilities resulted in various forms of gender issues in different realities. Economic, physical, sexual, and psychological violences are the major sequels of the factors at different levels of the model.

More importantly, these different levels of the model are also the sources of power. Power in each reality can be stem from age, sex, religion, culture, tradition, institution, economy, norm, politics, laws, polices, producers, education. All these sources of power are in favor of male dominance and subordination of women in different realities. When women disempowered, they lose the power to cooperate with others to advocate for themselves, power to generate a unique potential to shape their lives, they lose sense of self- knowledge and self-worth. The aggregate of these enhances multidimensional gender-based violence and its consequences. From the responses of KII and FGD child marriage contributes to different forms of gender-based violence as the disempowerment.

*Married girls are at risk of having psychological problems like depression, anxiety, and suicidal attempts. This is because mostly they do not have livelihood options to sustain their lives(R#2).*

*When girls stop their education due to marriage, they depend on their husbands for all means of livelihoods. They request everything from their husbands. This request makes*

*them voiceless in deciding on their domestic issues. All issues will be on the will of husbands and child brides keep silent (R#1).*

*Some child girls who enter marriage and end in divorce encounter poor social acceptance. This poor social acceptance makes girls migrate to urban areas and practice more horrible live experiences like contracting sexually transmitted infections, prostitution to earn money, and exercising substance abuse and alcohol consumption (R#7, FGD2).*

*Child brides are prone to fistula due to undergrowth of reproductive areas. When they face obstetric fistula, their husbands neglect them and look for another girl. Girls with fistula are discriminated against from all social intercourse. Discrimination and stigma contribute to psychological problems like anxiety and depression (R#10, FGD1).*

*Married girls suffer from livelihood problems. They face serious economic problems to the extent they could not even buy garments and hygiene materials like soap, and sanitary napkins. This makes them run into urban areas. In the urban areas they mostly engage in commercial sex, sexual exploitation, unwanted pregnancy and contracting sexually infectious diseases (R#2).*

*Child girls have a poor capability to manage their newly established family. After marriage expectation of both young's' (boy and girl) is not meet. This unmeet expectation causes disagreement that leads to family dissolution (R#6).*

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 DISCUSSION

Findings of the study indicated that poverty of is one of the contributing factors of child marriage practice among Christian families. Families marry off their children to adapt themselves to economic shock. Cynthia Dzimiri and et al (2017) report that reduced economic opportunity for girls drives girls to engage into child marriage to relief their economic problems. Center of human rights (2018) also indicated that family level poverty drives child marriage practice in many African countries. The study also demonstrates that families of poor countries use child marriage as the mechanism to secure the economic prospects of the entire family including the education fees of students' boys. The magnitude of child marriage prevalence in Sub-Saharan countries for 39% which shows the practice is rampant in the region.

In addition, the African health organization (2020) study show that girls from rural areas are twice more likely to become child brides than girls from urban areas due to limited options of women to economic opportunities. In the rural areas there is a wide gap of economic options between women and male that perpetuates the practice.

Furthermore, Manjur Hossain (2020) says that families who are not economically strong enough to afford their daughters demand marry off their children to those who are economically stable. According to Hossain, girls also use marriage as economic relief due to their basic needs that they do not get from their families (2020,15). Mohiuddin Ahsanul (2013) & Ruhul Kabi (2018) also agree that families with economic problems encourage their daughters to marry early. The families use the practice to ease the interest of girls.

Evidence shows that deep rooted cultural norms perpetuate child marriage practice. Different societies associate the practice with local traditions. The structure in every society believes in child marriage ritual as a means of proving social cohesion. The cultural beliefs in different contexts influence the ritual of marriage. The rituals take various forms according to the norms of the community. The writer Godfrey Kangude (2017) agrees that patriarchal environment significantly values girls' virginity. As a consequence, families prefer to marry their girls when they reach puberty stage to preserve chastity and virginity. Alexandra Oprea (2005) also points out that

cultural traditional rituals of child marriage testify the value of chastity. By the same token, the findings of this study show that delay of marriage has the potential to contribute unholy sexual relationship and losing of chastity. According to the respondents, losing of Chasity and unholy sex transgress Christianity values and breaches life in abundance teaching. Moreover, the delay of marriage inflicts social stigma on girls for fear of this girls prefer to marry early. The study conducted in Ethiopia (Bogalech Alemu 2010), showed similar result. According to her, prevention of premarital sex and virginity protection are among the common pushing factors of child marriage practice in Ethiopia (2010,13).

The result of the study identifies religious dogmatism and teachings which promote holiness of marriage sustains child marriage practice. According to the church leaders, to preserve saintliness of marriage child marriage brings solution to protection of adulteration among Christian community. They also believe that marriage below 18 years of age prevents unholy sexual practice. Katherine Marshall (2018) study findings show that religious beliefs are an essential factor in child marriage practice. Religious leaders commonly play a central role in betrothal and marriage rituals. In different communities' family honor is rooted in attitudes towards religion. Because religious leaders are trusted above all groups of leaders. Religious attitudes towards marriage are truly linked with attitudes towards gender roles. The attention of various religion on family comes with expectations of subordination of women within the family.

Additionally, Mat Lowe and Mamsamba Joof (2020) also describe that fear of premarital sex in the community encourages child marriage. According to him, sexually active girls can be easily trapped in premarital sex which defames and disgraces the family. The findings of this study also show that evangelical Christian community also shares the concern non-Christian families about the preservation of chastity and virginity. The findings also indicate that evangelical Christian's practice both religious teachings and local traditional believes.

The local church elders use physical and physiological changes in both girls' and boys' bodies as the sign of maturity to conduct marriage rituals. The results of the study also matches with a study conducted by Sister in Islam (2018). According to her, in Islam a girl is allowed to marry once she reaches puberty period. It is confirmed by physical and physiological changes of both boys and girls. The ceremonial practice of evangelical Christian church elders goes with the

prescriptions of Islam dogmatism and teachings of Quran. Moreover, the finding indicates that local church elders construct their own realities to conduct marriage ceremonies.

The study results revealed that at the local community church elders play a significant role both in traditional leadership and church leadership. The dual engagement of church leaders into church roles and traditional roles make the practice of child marriage complicated. Mostly, the church elders take the role of traditional and spiritual mediations during marriage according to custom and religious marriage. These dual roles of church leaders are among other barriers to child marriage practice response and prevention. The national costed road map (2019) document indicates that traditional mediation is one of the contributing factors of child marriage practice. According to the report, deep rooted traditional mediation affects legal enforcement when child marriage is under investigation. The local leaders intervene in the cases and end in withdrawal of legal process due to their high acceptance.

The results of this study related to child marriage practice consequences match other similar studies conducted in different places including Ethiopia. The results of this study others indicated the child marriage practice inflicts tremendous effects on the child brides. The effects of the practice take the forms of sexual, physical, economic, social, and psychological consequences. Many scholars discuss the consequences of child marriage practice. Among the scholars, Nicole Kidman (2017) and Nicole Kidman (2017) write those different forms of gender-based violence result from child marriage practice that inflict harmful impacts on girls. They say that sexual, physical, economic deprivation, and psychological violences are the most common forms which early married girls encounter in their lifetime either from their intimate partner or partner's families.

Elizabeth Presler (2016) adds that child brides encounter economic violence. She says child brides prefer prostitution as the alternative of economic options when they migrated to urban areas. Mostly, child brides have poor status which does not allow them to be professionally employed. The low educational status and unskilled profile increase preference of prostitution as an income generation among the child brides. This tremendously inflicts multidimensional social consequences: sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancy, street children and gender-based violence.

Scholars also write that social factors make the prevention of child marriage very difficult. Nawal Nour (2009) indicated that social factors can drive child marriages. According to the writer the practice reinforces social ties, and societal belief that it offers protection. The community perceives these factors as cohesive devices that can be ensured by child marriage.

However, some scholars write about the positive contribution of child marriage. Melake Demena (2005) discusses that child marriage significantly contributes to fast population growth. According to him, fast population growth comes with blessings of economic bonus. But the results of this do not show child marriage contribution to the fast population growth that contribute economic bonus.

In addition to this, UN general assembly (2022), UNFPA (2021) and UNCEF (2022) identify drought as one of the causes of child marriage practice in different places where drought is pronounced. But in this study drought was not identified as the cause of child marriage practice. Similarly, Christie Mcleod & et al (2019) report that conflict contributes to different forms of gender-based violence of which child marriage is the major one. However, in this study conflict is not identified as the cause of child marriage practice.

## 5.2 CONCLUSION

Church leaders construct their own realities due to dual roles in their contexts. Particularly, church elders give special attention to both spiritual and custom ceremonials. In every context there is a possibility to find church leaders who play spiritual and custom rites. This could be associated with the intention to preserve local indigenous knowledge to deal with local gender issues. Although churches have marriage counseling guidelines, the local church leaders use physical and physiological changes on the bodies of both boys and girls to confirm their maturity. The action of local churches leaders fits into the postmodern theory argument. Post modern theory argues that due to heterogenicity of women needs contextualization of the needs is imperative. The central point of the argument is to deconstruct and construct the existing realities based on the contexts. The churches leaders' approach to conduct marriage rituals and role in the local traditional beliefs and ceremonies confirms the deconstruction and construction of church dogmatism. Dogmatism prescribes that church leaders spiritual leaders are expected to refrain from local traditional events. The traditional events are like '*Fichee-Chambalaala*' in case Sidama are believed to be against holiness of churches.

Women and girls regardless of being the members of evangelical churches, they are disempowered like any other women and girls in the area. Marriage counseling guidelines instill gender system into nuclear family. The guideline prescribes gender roles where wives are expected to submit to their husbands. It also orders husbands to assume household leadership and household economic support roles to husbands. These gender roles in the churches limit women's access to options including economic options, personal body autonomy, and vulnerability gender-based violence at both domestic and public arenas are the major indicative consequences of gender system. This implies that the guidelines bear moralistic laws that restrict women's capacity to decide on their own life philosophy. The instilling of moralistic laws and views into nuclear families perpetuates rigidity of the institutions to child marriage response and prevention and other gender issues. In addition to this law, the churches have no procedures of dealing with child marriage cases. As a consequence, the child marriage cases could not get medical and legal services from the churches.

Child marriage practice is very common among evangelical Christians. Furthermore, the church leaders define child marriage as the marriage below which takes place below the age. This definition is against national legal frameworks which set an age of 18 years of age more for both boys and girls.

The lack of livelihood supports to poor congregations, believing child marriage as the social tying instrument, dual roles of church leaders and religious moralistic laws which suppress sexual interests of girls before marriage are among the major factors that perpetuate child marriage practice in the evangelical churches. As a consequence, the child brides suffer from various forms of gender-based violence: economic, sexual, psychological, and physical.

The church leaders give special attention to Christianity values through their sermons. This made them not aware their congregations about the orders of family code, constitution, criminal code, child right convention, The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, Universal Declaration of Human Rights which prohibits child marriage practice.

However, in the evangelical churches the opportunities through which marriage practice can be addressed. In the churches there are different structures like women, youth, Sunday school, family and development wings have the potential to integrate child marriage prevention, response, and other gender issues.

In my opinion the causes of child marriage are context specific which need evidence-based approaches and strategies to address the root causes and contributing factors rightly. Different social capitals like norms, traditional values, faith-based organizations dogmatism and rituals greatly affect the child marriage responses and preventions. Local rituals have a great effect on churches in the local communities. In my view the high influence of strong local traditions and rituals might be the reasons for church leaders to play dual purpose as the spiritual father and traditional father. The researcher also believes that deconstruction and construction of child marriage practice response and prevention based on the existing realities is imperative. I also advise that the church leaders and traditional leaders should bring on board what works in their contexts.

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Causes of child marriage practice are context based which should be approached with evidence-based approaches and strategies. In the places where church leaders intertwined their roles with local traditions context realities should be part of the approaches of child marriage response and prevention.

Religious context needs a tailored approach to deal with child marriage practice. Evangelical Christian churches should have a joint memorandum of understanding to create a common platform to address child marriage practice. To create enabling environment of gender system reform in the churches working with young people, adolescents, families, and women groups is imperative through existing structures of churches. Moreover, to institutionalize the initiatives that create access to options for women and enhance freedom of women to decide on their own lives regular panel discussions among evangelical Christian leaders to reach on consensus is recommended.

By the same token, periodic review sessions, development of a common stand against child marriage practice, joint planning with church leaders to design a workable strategy about child marriage cases support and revision of counseling centers guidelines are helpful. Advocacy on fundamental human rights, and integration of positive parenting into churches programs are imperative to institutionalize child marriage prevention and response in the churches. The initiatives should also include livelihood options for poor Christian families, life skill trainings for adolescents, advocacy for designing of a common gender equality guideline to sustainably deal

with the practice. Furthermore, networking and coordination with traditional leaders is imperative to create an adaptive environment of response and prevention. Likewise, to sustainably institutionalize the response and prevention of the practice local vital registration offices is mandatory to get right age of girls to hold marriage ceremony.

Reproductive health problems and other child marriage pregnancy related consequences can be prevented if the adolescents get access to information of contraceptive utilization and options. This will delay pregnancy until the child brides become physically mature and able to decide on their lives. Churches should also integrate key messages into the sermon hours to increase the awareness of congregations on contraceptives. Adolescents who are most likely enter marriage can get information about methods to delay pregnancy. Moreover, Evangelical churches should use their different media outlets like TVs, radio, and other platforms to disseminate prevention and response messages of child marriage and gender equality to address large followers of the religion. The policy makers should work with community based evangelical church members and traditional leaders to gather input on gender policy that addresses various child marriage practice in various contexts.

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## ANNEX- QUESTIONNAIRE

Hello,

I am Turufat tukura.

In the first place, thank you for accepting to participate in this conversation/interview. I am a graduate student at the center of gender study, Addis Ababa university.

Currently, I am conducting research on the title of “investigating Evangelical Christian leaders’ attitude towards child marriage practice”. The information you are providing is important for designing a child marriage practice prevention program. For this reason, I am interested in what you could tell me about practicing in your community. Your free will participation is very valuable and important to better understand this topic. The conversation will take 60 minutes. The information you are providing is confidential and remains anonymous.

Do you have any questions?

Thank you!

### **A. Key informant interview questions**

RQ.1. What are Evangelical Christian leaders’ attitudes towards child marriage practice?

SQ.1.1 How do you understand child marriage?

SQ.1.2 What are your perspectives on child marriage?

SQ.1.3 How do you describe child marriage?

RQ. 2. What do Evangelical Christian leaders think about the causes of the child marriage practice?

SQ. 2.1. Is there any practice of child marriage in your church?

RQ. 3. What do Evangelical Christian leaders think are the consequences of child marriage?

SQ.1. How do you explain the challenges of child marriage prevention?

RQ. 4.what do church leaders suggest for protecting girls from child marriage practice?

SQ. 4.1 How do religious leaders respond to the practice of child marriage?

RQ.5. What do you think are the church leaders’ roles in preventing child marriage practice?

SQ 5.1 Does Evangelical churches uphold legal frameworks of women equality?

SQ 5.2 How do you ensure the maturity of boys and girls to hold a marriage ceremony?

SQ.5.3 what is the contribution of your church to prevent child marriage?

SQ. 5.3 How church can contribute to prevention of child marriage?

## B. Focused Group Discussion (FGD) guidelines

Date:-----

Location:-----

Number of participants (at beginning):----- (at the end):-----

Category:-----

Age of participants

Sex of the participants (males):----- (females):-----

Starting time:-----

Ending time:-----

Focus group facilitator:-----

Note-taker:-----

### Main questions (MQ)

1. (MQ) What do you say about child marriage practice in general?

Prompt questions

1.1 What does it mean to you?

1.2 What is your role in marriage?

1.3 Is there any role difference for male and female?

1.4 In your understanding, what is the right age for marriage?

1.5 Is there age difference for boys and girls during marriage?

2. (MQ) How do you deal with child marriage cases?

Prompt questions

2.1 Does your church have experience of dealing with child marriage cases?

2.2 What problems may occur if daughters marry early?

2.3 What is the legal age of marriage in your church?

2.4 Are there attitudes that promote child marriage in your churches?

2.5 Do families feel pressure to marry off their children?

3. (MQ) How can you contribute to prevention of child marriage practice?

4. Prompt questions

4.1 Do you integrate human rights into your sermons?

4.2 Does your church support child marriage prevention?

4.3 What structures do you use to teach your adolescents about Bible?

4.4 What types of services does your church provide to the community?

4.5 Can integrate child marriage prevention messages into your sermons?

**Thank you for your time!**

## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original work and not been presented for a degree in any other university. All references used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: **Turufat Tukura Gemechu**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Confirmed by the advisor

Name: **DR EUNHYE CHANG**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_