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Addis Ababa University
College of Development Studies
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Understanding the Consequence of Early Marriage on Girls' Education: The Case of South Sudanese Refugee Girls in Nguenyiel Refugee Camp, Gambella Peoples' National Regional State, Ethiopia

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Rebecca Dawit entitled: “*Understanding the Consequence of Early Marriage on Girls’ Education: The Case of South Sudanese Refugee Girls in Nguenyiel Refugee Camp, Gambella Peoples’ National Regional State, Ethiopia*” and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Gender Studies compiles with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standard with respect to originality and quality.

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, has not been presented or submitted partially or in full by any other person for degree in any other university and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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List of Acronyms

ARRA	Administration for Refugee & Returnee Affairs
DICAC	Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GPNRS	Gambella People's National Regional State
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
RRS	Refugee and Returnees Service
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations Higher Commission for Refugee

ABSTRACT

The primary focus of this study was to examine the impact of early marriage on girls' education within the context of the Nguenyiel refugee camp in Gambella. Early marriage, deeply ingrained in socio-cultural customs, forces young girls to abandon their schooling. To explore the consequences of early marriage on girl's education, data was collected from married girls aged between 12 and 17 years, husbands and parents of the girls, schoolteachers(educators), camp coordinators and representatives from child protection-focused international non-governmental organizations through Key informant interview, In-depth interview. Focus group discussion and observation. The findings revealed that poverty was a major factor leading to early marriages, while some girls reported getting married to fulfill family expectations. This pervasive cultural norm not only deprives young girls of valuable time with their families and peers but also infringes upon their rights to education and autonomy in choosing their life partners. The results also demonstrated that all the participants discontinued their education after marriage, with each of them expressing the negative consequences they experienced as a result. Adverse health outcomes such as fistula and depression were found to be prevalent among these girls. Moreover, domestic violence, poverty, and illiteracy emerged as significant short-term and long-term consequences affecting the lives of these young girls, with potential long-lasting impacts on their future well-being. Despite the acknowledgment of the practice of early marriage within the refugee camp, limited attention has been given to effectively address this harmful cultural norm. Funding allocated to combat child and forced marriages remains insufficient, and there is a prevailing perception that challenging early marriage is a complex task due to its deep-rooted nature in socio-cultural beliefs. It is crucial to highlight the urgent need for comprehensive interventions that prioritize combating early marriage and safeguarding girls' education and rights. Efforts should include raising awareness about the detrimental consequences of early marriage, engaging community leaders and stakeholders to challenge harmful norms, and allocating adequate resources to support initiatives aimed at preventing and addressing early marriage within the refugee camp. By addressing these issues, we can empower young girls, promote gender equality, and ensure their access to education, health, and a brighter future.

Key words: *Refugee, Early marriage, Girls education, South Sudanese refugee girls, Cultural and social norms.*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

South Sudan remains Africa's largest humanitarian and refugee crisis with 2.2 million South Sudanese refugees, and over 1.6 million internally displaced persons (UNHCR, 2021). When looking at the South Sudanese refugee crisis, it is imperative to understand the root causes that brought the massive refugee influx into Ethiopia; particularly in Gambella People's National Regional State (GPNRS). The two civil wars which the first Civil War (1955–1972) and the Second Civil War (1983–2005) of the Sudan are primarily indicated as causing the refugee movement into neighboring countries including Ethiopia (Basha, 2016). Ethiopia has been a host to a large number of South Sudanese refugees, with the current number standing at 360,460 individuals in Gambella (UNHCR, 2022; P1). About 83 per cent of the refugees in Gambella are women and children, who are prone to multiple protection risks, including gender-based violence due to harmful traditional practices, loss of income and livelihood opportunities, school closures, overcrowded shelters, lack of domestic energy supply and reduced humanitarian assistance (UNHCR, 2022). Of the 360,460 South Sudanese refugees in Gambella, 101,602 refugees are in Nguenyiel refugee camp. Of the 101,602 refugees in Nguenyiel refugee camp 63 per cent are under the age of 18. The high number of children among the refugee population also highlights the need for adequate educational and recreational facilities to support their growth and development (UNHCR, 2022; P1).

The 2022 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees report (UNHCR, 2022) indicated that there are seven refugee camps (Pugnido I, Pugnido II, Kule, Tierkidi, Jewi, Nguenyiel and Dimma/Okugo) located in Gambella region. Within the seven camps more than 23 primary schools were constructed by international NGO's. The total number of school-aged children in the Gambella refugee camps is 208,318. Out of this number, around 56% (116,307) of the children are out of school, whereas 53,911 male

and 38,100 female students are currently enrolled, making a total of 92,011 enrolled students. In Nguenyiel refugee camp, there are 11,582 male and 6,571 female children enrolled in primary school. The gross enrollment ratio for the Nguenyiel refugee camp stands at 55.5%. The report indicates a significant gap between the number of school-aged children in refugee camps and the number of students currently enrolled (UNHCR, 2021).

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), under Article 26 pin points the right to free and compulsory education at the elementary level. The declaration indicates all children have an absolute right to basic education, the right to free and compulsory primary education without discrimination is now the base of international law. The declaration also specifically addresses the provision of education for refugees and children affected by armed conflict (UDHR, 1948).

Education is not a privilege but a human right, meaning the right to education is legally guaranteed for all without any discrimination. States have the obligation to protect, respect, and fulfil the right to education. States are supposed to be held accountable for violation or deprivations of the right to education. Girls also have the same right to education as boys. Educated girls can make informed choices and from a far better range of options. Educating girls saves lives and builds stronger families, communities and economies (Right to Education Initiative, 2011). Investing in girls' education transforms communities, countries and the entire world. Girls who receive an education are less likely to marry young and more likely to lead healthy, productive lives. They earn higher incomes, participate in the decisions that most affect them, and build better futures for themselves and their families (World Bank, 2012).

South Sudan has the world's fifth-highest prevalence of child marriage, In South Sudan, 52 percent of all girls are married before 18 years of age, depriving them of their basic rights and for some, even their lives (UNICEF, 2022; P1). According to the UNICEF (2020), the practice is a violation of human rights, a serious impediment to literacy and a major cause of persistent poverty. About one third of girls in the country are pregnant before turning 15 years of age (UNICEF, 2020). Early marriage is

universally recognized as a violation of girls' rights, as it hinders their school attainment, learning, and future salaries, as well as having negative health repercussions for them and their children (Minh & Quentin, 2014). In 2019 20.2 percent of women between the ages of 20 and 34 were married before the age of 18 around the world. Globally, more than half a billion girls and women alive today were married in childhood. The highest rates of child marriage are found in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where 34 per cent and 28 per cent of young women, respectively, were married in childhood (UN, 2020).

Child marriage is also seen in many South Sudanese communities as being in the best interests of girls and their families, as well as an important way for families to gain access to much-needed assets such as cattle, money, and other gifts through the traditional practice of transferring wealth through the payment of dowries. It's also seen as a measure to safeguard females from pre-marital sex and unintended pregnancies, which can damage family honor and reduce the amount of dowry a family receives.

Girls' education strengthens economies and reduces inequality. It contributes to more stable, resilient societies that give all individuals including boys and men the opportunity to fulfil their potential (UNICEF, 2019). Worldwide, 129 million girls are out of school. Only 49 per cent of countries globally have achieved gender parity in primary education. At the secondary education, the gap widens, 42 per cent of countries have achieved gender parity in lower secondary education, and 24 per cent in upper secondary education. Even though the reasons are many, the major barriers to girl's education are poverty, child marriage and gender-based violence varying among countries and communities (UNICEF, 2019).

Early marriage has been linked to poor health outcomes, and is predicted that it may have a large negative influence on education (Brown, 2012). Responses to queries in household surveys on why people don't complete their education have shown that child marriage is a significant influence in girls' decision to stop going to school, even if it isn't the biggest cause of dropouts (Nguyen & Wodon, 2014).

While previous research's has shed light on early marriage and education globally and in Ethiopia too, there remains limited understanding of the localized factors and dynamics specific to girls in Nguenyiel refugee camp. This study aims to explore these distinct

factors, including cultural norms, economic conditions, and vulnerabilities stemming from displacement, which contribute to early marriage and its educational implications. By delving into these aspects, this research seeks to provide valuable insights and a deeper understanding on the consequences of early marriage on girl's education in Nguenyiel refugee camp.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Globally, child marriage remains a pressing issue, with over 650 million women having been married as children and approximately 12 million girls under 18 getting married each year. Shockingly, every minute, 28 new girl children enter into marriage. One in five girls is married or in a union before the age of 18, with even higher rates in the least developed countries, where 40% of girls marry before 18 and 12% before 15 (UNICEF, 2019). Conflict-affected countries and humanitarian settings are particularly susceptible to child marriage. Women and girls in these contexts face increased vulnerability to sexual violence, exacerbated by poverty, violence, and the collapse of services and community infrastructure due to displacement. Studies conducted by World Vision highlight child marriage as a common response to conflict and natural disasters in countries such as Bangladesh, Somaliland, and Niger (Muhwezi, 2011). Within conflict-affected regions, child marriage rates can surpass national averages. For instance, in South Sudan, research found that 71% of girls in the conflict-affected region of Nyal were married before the age of 18, compared to the national rate of 45% before the conflict (Buchanan, 2019). Similarly, a 2016 study in Lebanon discovered that the percentage of Syrian refugee girls under the age of 18 who were married was nearly three times higher than pre-conflict Syria, reaching 8.5% (Sawsan, 2017).

Almost 58% of Ethiopian girls marry before the age of 18. In Gambella, 12 percent of young girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are already months or expecting their first child (Kavli, 2018). Early marriage has a disastrous effect on girls in Jikawo, Gambella, who rarely attend even second cycle elementary school and are frequently pregnant before their 15th birthdays (Elizabeth, Minna, & Nicola, 2016). Despite the seriousness and scope of the problem, research to better understand child marriage in humanitarian

situations has only recently begun to acquire traction and the critical attention it requires. The majority of findings currently available focuses on drivers or risk factors of early marriage, for example, (Kok, 2023) research states that child marriage is influenced by a combination of various drivers that intersect and vary in intensity across different country contexts. One prominent factor is the manifestation of social norms, particularly those pertaining to girls' sexuality. These norms intersect with other elements at individual, social, material, and institutional levels. Among these intersecting factors, poverty or economic constraints stand out as significant contributors.

Although early marriage and its effects has on a girl's life is researched internationally such as (de Janvry, 2015) research reveals that early marriage's impact on girls' education is influenced by a complex web of factors. These include the role of social networks in perpetuating the practice, economic insecurity driving families to marry off their daughters, the desire to safeguard girls' honor, limited educational and economic opportunities for girls, the need for social and emotional support. Together, these drivers significantly hinder girls' access to education. Early marriage is also studied predominantly in Ethiopia centering on the Amhara region, for example Aychiluhm's (2021) research found that, in the Amhara regional state, the prevalence of early marriage among married women of reproductive age remains significantly higher compared to the national average. After accounting for various influencing factors such as socio-economic status, educational background, cultural norms, access to healthcare services, and geographic location, it was observed that residing in rural areas, lacking formal education, belonging to the poorest or poorer household wealth category, and not participating in decision-making regarding the timing of marriage were significant predictors of early marriage in the Amhara regional state (Aychiluhm, 2021). Similarly, in Oromia region, early marriage is primarily influenced by deeply ingrained gendered social norms. These norms perpetuate stigma against unmarried girls, particularly these who remain unmarried shortly after reaching puberty. Local society labels them as "haftuu," which refers to unmarried girls until the age of 17 and is associated with being considered a burden or curse for the family (Getu, 2021). In Gambella and other regions and communities as mentioned above, none of these studies documented the consequence of early marriage on girl's education in Nguenyiel refugee camp, Gambella. In addition

to this, South Sudanese are the majority refugees that live in Nguenyiel refugee camp and because South Sudan is one of the countries with deeply entrenched cultural practices and social norms linked to gender, early marriage is further fueled by poverty. Girls are married off early for the family to collect dowry. Low levels of education and lack of knowledge about the harm caused by early marriage further exacerbates the situation (UNICEF, 2020). Given this situation, the researcher became interested to see how early marriage affects girls' academic advancement in Nguenyiel Refugee Camp, Gambella Region.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the understandings of the girls, the girl's parents and husbands towards the influence of early marriage on girls' education?
2. What are the consequences of early marriage on girls' education in Nguenyiel Refugee Camp?
3. Are there any strategies to combat early marriage in Nguenyiel Refugee camp?

1.4 Objective of the study

1.4.1 General objective

- Understanding the consequences of early marriage on girl's education in Nguenyiel refugee camp, Gambella Peoples' National Regional State.

1.4.2 Specific objective

1. To understand the short-term consequence of early marriages among the female Sudanese in school and out of school students in Nguenyiel Refugee Camp.
2. To understand the long-term consequence of early marriages among the female Sudanese in school and out of school students in Nguenyiel Refugee Camp.
3. To find out the attitude of the girl's parents, husband in-laws, and the community towards the educational advancement.

4.To explore possible alternatives to address early marriage and its educational consequence.

1.5 Scope of the Study

Kindergarten, elementary, and secondary education, as well as vocational and technical training, are available for refugees. As a result, the study's scope will be limited to the state of primary education provision (grade 1 to 8) for school-aged refugee children in Nguenyiel Refugee Camp Gambella Region, for the academic years 2019/2020-2021/2022. The study will also include girls who are out of school because of early marriage and parents and husbands staying at the camp.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study aims to provide useful insights that can aid in the development of effective strategies to prevent early marriage among young girls in Refugee communities and mitigate their negative impacts on the education sector. It is crucial for refugee girls and program designers in the camp to have a clear understanding of the risks of early marriage and its educational implications, protective measures and societal norms to minimize harm and enhance protection. The study will also offer educators valuable information on the risk analysis to reduce the dangers associated with the practice, which mostly involves arranged marriage without the willingness and consent of the girls. The study's findings may prompt the appropriate authorities to act to address the challenges that girls face, and help Ethiopian education officials formulate innovative strategies to advance girls education by recognizing the effects of early marriage. The study's outcomes are expected to serve as a basis for individual and institutional actions and a benchmark for the legal and social framework that safeguards children's rights. The study will also contribute to shaping and assessing future government and stakeholder activities, particularly in Gambellaregion, Nguenyiel camp, in understanding the consequence of early marriage on girl's educational attainment.

The findings of this research will contribute to the existing literature by generating context-specific knowledge on the implications of early marriage for girls' education in the NguenyielRefugee camp. By filling this gap in understanding, the study will

enhance our comprehension of the unique challenges faced by girls in this particular setting and shed light on the factors that hinder their educational opportunities and aspirations.

1.5. Delimitation of the Study

Nguenyiel is the newest refugee camp established on October 20, 2016 and has five primary schools in each zone, and two primary schools in the same zone. The study focused on the two primary schools. The study site was selected for the following reasons, First Nguenyiel refugee camp is new and has not been well-studied or documented, and is an area where little information about child marriage and its education implication exists, the researcher is interested in filling this knowledge gap and contributing to a better understanding of the situation in the camp. Additionally, the researcher had previously worked in the education sector in the camp, which sparked an interest in the studying the consequence of early marriage on girl's education. Lastly, the researcher prior experience in the camp facilitated the research process. Furthermore, the study was delimited to the consequence of early marriage on girl's education. Thus, the participants were primary school students, teachers, the girl's husbands, the girl's parents, camp coordinators, child protection specialist, NGO's that work on schools (Plan international and Mercy corps).

1.6. Limitation of the Study

The researcher faced several limitations during the research process, including a limited availability of directly related literature specifically to the camp being studied, the absence of many teachers during the data collection process due to delayed salary payment, and the fact that most South Sudanese refugees spoke the Nuer language. To address these challenges, the researcher made use of other relevant literature sources, extended my stay in Gambella to try and reach the teachers, and relied on translators to communicate with the Nuer-speaking refugees.

1.7. Operational Definition of Terms

- **Refugee:** An individual who has been forced to leave their country of origin due to war, persecution, or other serious reasons and seeks refuge in another country. A person is officially recognized as a refugee by the United Nations High Commissioner for refugee (UNHCR) or the country of asylum.
- **Early marriage:** A marriage in which at least one of the partners is below the age of 18.
- **Primary education:** A level of education that provides the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for further education and lifelong learning.

1.8. Organization of the Study

This thesis has five chapters. Chapter one contains introduction of the study. It comprises background of the study, statement of the problems, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and delimitation of the study, limitation of the study, operational definition of key terms and organization of the study. Chapter two deal with review of the related literature. It contains theoretical frame work, school dropout and absenteeism and its implication on girl's education. Chapter three deal with the research design and methodology, sources of data and data collection techniques, and data analysis techniques. Chapter four discusses the analysis and interpretation of data and chapter five presents summary of major findings, conclusions and recommendations. Finally, references and appendices are included at the end.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this chapter is to delve into the significant issues and concepts surrounding early marriage and its profound impact on girls' education. By examining the driving factors that contribute to girls being married off at a young age, we can better understand the subsequent consequences for their educational opportunities. This chapter aims to provide conceptual insights into the complex interplay between early marriage and girls' education, shedding light on the underlying factors that perpetuate this harmful practice. By drawing upon these real-life examples, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding the impact of early marriage on girls' education.

2.2 The concept of early marriage

Marriage is a societal institution that brings individuals together in a unique form of interdependence with the aim of establishing and sustaining a family. It is a social custom that is typically formalized through public ceremonies, religious rituals, or traditional practices, and it reflects the values, traditions, and norms of the particular society in which it occurs. While many societies have established age restrictions for young girls to enter into marriage, these restrictions sometimes fail to consider the girls' physical readiness for the responsibilities of childbearing (A, 2016). Early marriage is a violation of both human and women's rights(USAID, 2012). The age at which early marriage occurs can vary across different regions and communities. However, it typically takes place during adolescence, between the ages of 10 and 17(Lundgren, 2020). It is important

to note that child marriage affects both boys and girls, but girls are disproportionately affected. Girls are more likely to be married off at younger ages and often to much older partners, creating significant power imbalances within the marital relationship(Clark, 2017).

Globally, girls who don't receive any formal education have a threefold higher probability of getting married before turning 18, in contrast to those who successfully complete secondary school((Harper, 2014). This implies that there is a direct correlation between a girl's level of education and her likelihood of entering child marriage. The relationship between education and child marriage is consistently and significantly strong, particularly at the secondary education level (Gorden , 2012).

In recent years, early marriage has merged as a pressing global social issue, primarily due to its detrimental health implications. These include heightened vulnerability to sexually transmitted disease, indicate child nutrition, adolescent pregnancy, limited access to formal education, school dropout rates, and increased risks of maternal and child health complications and morality for young women who marry at early age (Hotchkiss, 2016).

The issue of early marriage is of critical importance due to its detrimental effects on girls' educational opportunities and long-term prospects. Early marriage disrupts the educational pathways of girls, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and limiting their ability to participate fully in social, economic, and political spheres(Santhiya, 2020). In the specific context of Nguenyiel Refugee Camp, where South Sudanese girls seek refuge from conflict and displacement, understanding the consequences of early marriage on their education is crucial for informing interventions and policies that can mitigate these challenges. Existing research's mentioned above highlights several interconnected factors contributing to early marriage, such as cultural norms, limited economic opportunities, and displacement-induced vulnerabilities(UNFPA, 2017). These factors intersect and shape the educational landscape of South Sudanese girls, often leading to restricted access to quality education, high dropout rates, and limited skills development(Pherali, 2018). By delving into the available literature on this topic, I aim to identify the

multifaceted consequences of early marriage on girls' education and shed light on potential strategies for addressing this issue.

Understanding early marriage and its educational implication is not only essential for the well-being and empowerment of individual girls but also for broader societal development. By investing in girls' education and addressing the barriers posed by early marriage, societies can unlock the potential of girls and promote gender (Anju & Ann, 2011).

Early marriage practices were a significant social concern globally in recent years due to dangerous health consequences such as increased risk of acquiring sexually transmitted diseases, child malnutrition, teenage pregnancy, missed opportunity for formal education, dropping out of school and maternal and child morbidity and mortality on young women who marry at early ages (Brunner, 2017).

Furthermore, child marriage frequently ends a girls' education. Little or no schooling is associated with extreme poverty and hunger, gender inequality, increased child mortality, increased teenage pregnancy rates, and early sexual debut. Married adolescent girls tend to have limited or no social networks, restricted social mobility, little autonomy, and little or no access to media and health messages (Beattie, 2015).

2.3 Cause of early marriage

Early marriage is a complex social issue with significant implications for the lives of young girls. Globally, it is estimated that approximately 12 million girls are married before the age of 18 each year, which translates to 23 girls every minute (UNICEF, 2020 P1).

2.3.1 Cultural Factors

Cultural factors play a significant role in perpetuating early marriage practices. Norms, traditions, and customs rooted in patriarchal societies contribute to the persistence of child marriage. In many cultures, marriage is considered a way to preserve family honor, protect girls from perceived sexual transgressions, or ensure economic security (Hodgkinson, 2020). These cultural norms often prioritize girls' roles as wives and mothers over their educational aspirations and personal development.

In South Sudan, cultural factors heavily influence early marriage. The country's diverse ethnic groups, such as the Dinka, Nuer, and Shilluk, have distinct customs and traditions. Some communities practice marriage as a means of strengthening alliances between families or tribes, resolving conflicts, or securing social status (Tyldum, 2011). These cultural norms often prioritize early marriage for girls, hindering their educational opportunities and reinforcing traditional gender roles. The convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which is ratified by South Sudan clearly states that children have the right to protection from harm, including child marriage. Child marriage is deeply rooted in gender inequality and harmful social norms. South Sudan is one of the countries with deeply entrenched cultural practices and social norms linked to gender. Child marriage is further fueled by poverty. Girls are married off early for the family to collect dowry. Low levels of education and lack of knowledge about the harm caused by early marriage further exacerbates the situation.(UNICEF, 2020)

Within the specific context of South Sudan and Nguennyiel Refugee Camp, cultural factors related to early marriage are influenced by tribal customs and traditions. South Sudan has diverse ethnic groups, each with its own practices and beliefs. For instance, in some communities, the dowry system may incentivize early marriage, as families receive economic benefits in exchange for marrying off their daughters (Macherera, 2013). Similarly, within Nguennyiel Refugee Camp, South Sudanese families may hold onto traditional values and customs, perpetuating early marriage as a means of preserving cultural identity and social cohesion.

2.3.2 Social Factors

Social factors, such as gender norms and expectations, also contribute to early marriage. Gender inequality, discrimination, and the devaluation of girls' education and autonomy contribute to the persistence of child marriage (Chae, 2019). Limited educational opportunities, lack of awareness about the negative consequences of early marriage, and social pressures from families and communities can further reinforce the practice.(Chae, 2019)

The complex relationship between wealth and child marriage implies that, while marriage is an economic transaction, it is highly contextualized and must be evaluated in light of

broader societal norms that regard girls as property rather than actors(Vogelstein, 2013). Parents in Tigray, for example, considered early marriage and motherhood as a way for their girls to become "enlightened"(Camfield, 2015) . Females' sexuality and virginity are rigorously guarded from rape, which is sufficiently stigmatizing to render girls almost useless, since they are seen as prospective brides and mothers from an early age. Instead, they marry early and have their virginity basically guaranteed. And, while their marriage families have more authority over them(Camfield, 2015). To avoid reputational damage, unwanted pregnancy, social stigmatization, and banishment from the family or clan, arrange a timely marriage in the eyes of a larger society(Alula , Yisak, & Boyden, 2013).

As previously stated in relation to economic realities, it is crucial to remember that because girls are as sensitive to social conventions as their parents, many marry freely. For example, (Nicola & Elisabeth , Rethinking girls on the move: The case of Ethiopian adolescent domestic workers in the Middle East, 2014) found that in Amhara Region some girls considered it “sinful” to remain unmarried past menstruation. Others said they were fatigued by the widespread community speculation over their virginity.

In the South Sudanese and Nguenyiel Refugee Camp context, social factors influencing early marriage include gender norms that prioritize early marriage as the primary role for girls. Socioeconomic instability, displacement, and limited resources in the refugee camp can exacerbate the vulnerability of girls, increasing the likelihood of early marriage as families seek security and survival(Porter, 2019).

2.3.3 Economic Factors

Economic factors are intertwined with early marriage, as poverty and limited economic opportunities can contribute to the perpetuation of this practice. Economic considerations, such as dowry practices and the need for financial support, can drive families to marry off their daughters at an early age(Biswas, 2021)

Marriage, in the eyes of parents, is a strategy to maximize the futures of their daughters, future grandkids, and themselves (Pankhurst, 2014). However, child marriage's economic patterning is more nuanced than poverty narratives alone can explain(Alula , Yisak, & Boyden, 2013). It's easy to see why child marriage would be seen favorably by poor

families, especially in locations where girls have limited educational and economic options (Nicola, Bekele, & Gudaye, 2014). Girls in the research by the Young Lives Ethiopia sample are aware that their futures are frequently dependent on male bread winners (Boyden J. , 2012). Because capturing the “best” breadwinner may entail marrying young, the economics of early marriage may involve complicated trade-offs that girls are willing to make (Vogelstein, 2013). Child marriage is also a technique to introduce labor into labor-short, generally female-headed homes, which is important given the high divorce rate (Boyden, 2012).

Child marriage is influenced by poverty in different ways across the country. Dowry fosters the practice in some areas because the youngest females often require the smallest dowries(Vogelstein, 2013). In other regions, such as Oromia, where bride wealth is common, poverty may incentivize parents to effectively exchange their daughters for cash(Boyden J. , 2012). In some situations, Arsi Oromo pastoralists marry their daughters offwhen they are very young to bring in bride wealth, which can then be used to arrange higher status marriages for their elder brothers. However, poverty is not the only economic factor that leads to child marriage (Gurmu, 2011).In other circumstances, particularly in Amhara's Gojjam zone, girls from "relatively better-off households" are more likely to "marry at a young age," often to allow families to keep or grow their land holdings. Girls from a better household are most likely to marry a man from a wealthy family so that her parents expand their land holdings (Alula , Yisak, & Boyden, 2013). Other study in the North Gondar zone of Amhara Region found that the average age at first marriage for girls remains related to family wealth. With the wealthiest girls married well before adolescence and the poorest girls marrying as adults (UNICEF, 2010).The wealthiest girls married at an average age of 10.4 years, while girls in the middle group married at an average age of 11.3 years; girls in the low and lowest groups, on the other hand, married at 15.2 and 18.7 years, respectively. According to studies, this is because better-off families recognize that they may not be better-off in the future and want to ensure that their daughters are matched with suitable partners while they still have the chance (UNICEF, 2010)

2.4 Early marriage and education

In recent decades, millions of girls have been coerced into early marriages, and their fundamental rights to life, freedom of choice, and access to education and other essential necessities have been severely restricted. Despite the fact that the previous decade was the millennium development goals penultimate decade, it was marked by substantial violations of women's and girls' rights, with an estimated 58 million girls being married as children(Hervish, 2011).

The harmful effects of early marriage on young girls and their future families don't stop there. The schooling of child brides is delayed, their economic opportunities are limited, and they are less likely to display personal "empowerment" on a variety of levels. Because vulnerability and risk are passed down through generations, child marriage is a cornerstone of intergenerational poverty, with women's decision-making directly tied to investments in children's human capital (Alhassan, 2013).

Few Ethiopian child brides are taken out of school to marry for multiple reason and few are still enrolled at the time of their marriage. Families who marry their daughters while they are young are rarely supportive of their education beyond a few grades. Early married girls are regularly dragged out of school and denied the chance to continue their education. Their offspring are also more likely to be illiterate. According to human rights research, several significant obstacles hinder girls' education, including early marriage, adolescent pregnancy, and domestic abuse. These challenges have been extensively documented in government reports submitted to human rights monitoring organizations. Notably, early marriage has a detrimental impact on women's education, further exacerbating the difficulties they face in pursuing schooling(Watch, 2015).

Studies indicate thatschool attendance rates among South Sudanese girls in refugee camps are affected by various factors, including cultural norms, economic constraints, and the prevalence of early marriage (Chimbari, 2013). Girls who are married early are particularly vulnerable to dropping out of school due to the responsibilities and expectations placed upon them as wives and mothers (UNHCR, 2020).

The impact of early marriage on girls' education is profound. It disrupts their educational trajectory, as they are often forced to abandon school to fulfill marital obligations (UNICEF, 2020). Early marriage leads to a higher likelihood of school dropout, limiting girls' opportunities for personal development, skill acquisition, and empowerment (Save the children, 2019). Moreover, the cycle of early marriage can perpetuate intergenerational poverty and further marginalize girls within the refugee camp (UNFPA, 2020).

In the educational context of Nguenyiel Refugee Camp, South Sudanese girls face significant challenges in accessing and maintaining their education. Limited access to education is a prominent issue, with barriers that hinder girls from enrolling and attending school (UNHCR, 2020). The school enrollment rates for girls in the camp remain low, reflecting the obstacles they encounter (Save the children, 2019).

2.5 Interventions and policies on early marriage

Interventions and policies aimed at addressing early marriage and its impact on girls' education span across global, regional, and national levels. Globally, organizations like Girls Not Brides advocate for ending child marriage and promoting girls' education, contributing to international frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which target the elimination of child marriage and the promotion of universal access to quality education (GirlsNotBrides, 2021)

At the regional level in Africa, initiatives such as the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage mobilize governments, civil society, and communities to combat early marriage. This campaign complements national efforts, as seen in countries like Ethiopia. Ethiopia has developed comprehensive policies and programs, including the Ethiopian National Strategy and Action Plan on Harmful Traditional Practices Against Women and Children (2013-2015). This strategy focuses on raising awareness, strengthening child protection systems, and providing educational opportunities for girls (Ethiopia G. o., 2015).

Within Ethiopia, specific regions like Gambella have implemented targeted interventions to address the consequences of early marriage on girls' education. These interventions include the Gambella Girls' Education Program, led by organizations like Save the Children, which aims to increase girls' enrollment, retention, and completion rates through community engagement, school-based support, and life skills training (Savethechildren, 2018). Moreover, Ethiopia's legal framework, including the Family Code and Crime Code, plays a crucial role in addressing early marriage. The Family Code outlines legal provisions related to marriage, age of consent, and consent requirements, aiming to protect girls from early and forced marriage. Similarly, the Crime Code penalizes perpetrators of child marriage, providing a legal deterrent and recourse for victims (Brief, n.d.).

Additionally, Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) includes strategies to promote girls' education and empower women, recognizing the pivotal role of education in achieving sustainable development. These strategies encompass initiatives to improve access to education, eliminate gender disparities, and enhance the quality of education for girls, thereby addressing the root causes of early marriage and advancing gender equality (Ethiopia., 2011). In Gambella refugee camp, collaboration between organizations like UNHCR and UNICEF further enhances educational support for girls at risk of early marriage. These efforts include providing access to safe learning spaces, implementing targeted interventions, and fostering partnerships with local communities to promote girls' education and prevent early marriage (UNICEF., n.d.).

Overall, a comprehensive approach involving legal frameworks, policy initiatives, community engagement, and international cooperation is essential to effectively address early marriage and promote girls' education, both in Ethiopia and globally.

2.6 Factors influencing the consequences of early marriage

Families facing poverty often view early marriage as a strategy to alleviate their financial burden, seeing it as a way to secure the future of their daughters. However, this often perpetuates a cycle of poverty, as early marriage disrupts education and limits

employment opportunities, thereby trapping young women in low-income situations and reducing their chances of economic independence(Erulkar, 2009).

Cultural and social norms are also crucial in shaping the consequences of early marriage. In many communities, traditional practices and societal expectations prioritize early marriage to uphold family honor or secure social status. Gender roles that emphasize a girl's responsibilities as a wife and mother over her personal development and education reinforce the practice. These cultural pressures can limit young women's opportunities for personal growth and perpetuate gender inequality(Gebreselassie, 2020).

Access to education and information significantly influences the outcomes of early marriage. When girls have limited access to education, their opportunities for personal and professional development are severely restricted. Education not only delays marriage but also provides young women with the knowledge and skills necessary for their future. Additionally, access to information and services related to sexual and reproductive health can help young women make informed decisions about their lives, thereby mitigating some of the adverse effects of early marriage(Bongaarts, 2017).

2.7 Theoretical framework

Radical Feminist theory

The Radical Feminist theory offers valuable insights into the adverse effects of child marriage and the subordination of women in society. This theory focuses on understanding the root causes of women's exploitation and dominance, particularly within the familial context. It emphasizes the significance of housework, domestic violence, and male dominance as contributing factors to gender inequality. Patriarchy, driven by cultural and social norms, plays a pivotal role in disadvantaging women and girls. It grants men primary power in areas such as political leadership, moral authority, partner selection, social privileges, and property control. Unfortunately, men often use these powers to dominate, discriminate against, exploit, and oppress women within society. The denial of property ownership and decision-making authority within families contributes to the feminization of poverty, creating conditions conducive to child

marriage. Cultural norms that prioritize male preference have marginalized women, relegating them to second-class status. As (Leonard, 1992) argued, men's influence extends to material factors, reinforcing women's oppression. They assert that the family, as a social group, perpetuates society's patriarchal nature and reinforces male dominance over women. The powerlessness of mothers within the family structure forces them to accept decisions, including the early marriage of their daughters. The inferior and subordinate position assigned to girls further denies them their rights to education and the freedom to choose their marital partners. Feminists are actively challenging these traditional societal norms and gender roles that perpetuate the subordinate status of women.

2.8 Research Gaps

According to studies discussed above on previous sections of the paper, a number of interconnected variables interact to put a girl child at risk of early marriage. These variables are largely the same worldwide with little differences between countries. The need for economic survival, the protection of young females, peer pressure, and familial pressure are among these causes. Early marriages in Ethiopia have a number of negative consequences, both for young women and for the culture in which they live. It's a violation of human rights in general, and of girls' rights in particular. Both girls and boys suffer severe economic, psychological, emotional, and social costs as a result of early marriages. However, at the Nguenyiel refugee camp, there isn't much recent documented research being done to understand the consequence of early marriage on girls' schooling. As a result, by focusing on the effects of early marriages on girls' education in Nguenyiel Camp, the current study will address the gap.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the thesis's research design and methodology. The present study aims to investigate the consequences of early marriage on the education of girls in the case of South Sudanese refugees living in *Nguenyyiel* Refugee Camp, Gambella Region. This section will outline the research methodology employed in this study. The methodology will encompass the research design, Research approach, data collection methods, data analysis technique and ethical considerations. The research design for this study is a qualitative approach. The data is collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and observations.

3.2 Research Paradigm

Constructivism is a research paradigm that assumes that individuals create their own subjective understanding of reality based on their experiences and interactions with the world (Creswell, 2014). The experiences of South Sudanese refugee girls with early marriage and its impact on their education are deeply personal and influenced by individual backgrounds, cultural norms, and socio-economic conditions. Constructivism allows for an exploration of these subjective experiences, providing rich, detailed insights into how these girls perceive and are affected by early marriage. Constructivism emphasizes understanding phenomena within the context. For refugee girls in the Gambella region, their experiences are shaped by the unique socio-political environment of refugee camps, cultural traditions from their homeland, and the educational

opportunities available in their current setting. A constructivist approach enables a nuanced understanding of how these contextual factors interact to influence educational outcomes. In a case study approach, researchers examine a particular phenomenon in depth within its real-life context, with a focus on understanding the complexities and unique features of the case site (Roberet, 2018). The case study approach is particularly well-suited for constructivist research because it allows for the exploration of the intricacies and nuances of a particular case, rather than seeking to generalize findings to a larger population. This approach allows for a deep understanding of the context and the social, cultural, and historical factors that shape it (Creswell, 2014). The case study approach allows for a thorough investigation of the specific experiences of South Sudanese refugee girls regarding early marriage and education. It facilitates an in-depth exploration of the intricate and multifaceted nature of these experiences, capturing the voices and perspectives of the girls themselves. The Gambella region, with its refugee camps, presents a complex environment where various factors like cultural, social, economic, and political interact. The case study approach is ideal for unpacking these complexities, providing a holistic understanding of how early marriage affects education within this specific context. Additionally, each refugee camp and community has unique features that shape the experiences of its inhabitants. By focusing on a specific case, the study can highlight the particular challenges and opportunities faced by South Sudanese refugee girls in the Gambella region.

3.3 Research Approach

The research focused on Nguenyiel Refugee Camp in Gambella Region as a case site, with the aim of understanding the experiences and perspectives of girls, their parents, and their husbands regarding the impact of early marriage on girls' educational advancement. Given the complexity of social, political, and economic factors that influence the impact of early marriage on girls' education, the case study research method was considered the most appropriate method for this study. It entails gathering extensive and detailed data from various sources of information, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the case(s) under investigation. The findings are then presented through a case description and the identification of key themes that emerge from the data analysis (Creswell, 2013).

3.4 Research Design

For the study on the consequences of early marriage on girls' education in Nguenyiel Refugee Camp, an exploratory qualitative research design was employed. Research methods involve the forms of data collection, analysis, and interpretation that researchers propose for their studies (Creswell, 2014). This section describes the methods used, the design and approach; subjects included in the study; the instruments and procedures used for data collection and the techniques employed for data analysis. Qualitative research is conducted in real-life settings, which is relevant to the current study as it focuses on a specific refugee camp. (Matt & Mark, 2016). Given the nature of the research questions, a qualitative approach was deemed appropriate as it aims to address the "what, how, or why" of a phenomenon (Gunaydin, 2015).

Overall, the exploratory qualitative research design allows for a deep understanding of the experiences and perspectives of girls, parents, and husbands regarding early marriage and its impact on girls' education in the specific context of Nguenyiel Refugee Camp. This type of research focuses on words rather than statistics, and it studies the world in its natural environment, interpreting daily events to understand the meanings that people make in their daily lives (Walia, 2015).

3.5 Description of the Study area

The research was conducted in Nguenyiel Refugee Camp, which is located in the Gambella Peoples' National Regional State, of Ethiopia. The camp is approximately 30.5 kilometers away from Gambella. Nguenyiel refugee camp plays a significant role in addressing the pressing refugee crisis in the Gambella region. The camp was established in 2016 to host South Sudanese refugees fleeing the ongoing conflict in their country. It is one of the largest refugee camps in Gambella. The camp is administered by the Ethiopian government in collaboration with UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations. The camp is home to a large population of South Sudanese refugees. According to recent reports by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2021), the education situation in Nguenyiel Refugee Camp is critical, with many girls dropping out of school due to early marriage, lack of resources, and cultural beliefs.

As one approaches the camp, it becomes evident through the prominent display of logos belonging to local and international NGOs that a collective effort is underway to provide

aid and resources to those in need. The camp's organizational structure consists of 5 zones, 32 blocks, 864 communities, and around 13,300 households (UNHCR, 2020). Each zone encompasses a school and is conveniently equipped with playgrounds located a few miles away, where children, predominantly boys, actively engage in soccer games, fostering social interaction and physical activity. Emergency housing has been established to accommodate new arrivals, ensuring they receive the necessary care and support before being assimilated into the regular refugee population. For refugees expected to have a more prolonged stay, transitional housing is provided, offering a more stable living environment. However, within this context, it is important to acknowledge the prevailing gender dynamics influenced by patriarchal norms. These norms dictate that men, traditionally considered the protectors of the family, are exempted from participating in menial tasks such as the construction of households. As a result, the responsibility primarily falls on women, who can be observed tirelessly building houses and undertaking other labor-intensive chores. This gendered division of labor perpetuates the perception that women are responsible for the practical aspects of daily life, while men and boys have more leisure time.

While conducting observations within the camp, a disheartening reality emerged. Despite the existence of 32 schools, I observed that only a small number of girls, totaling nine, were attending classes out of the overall student population in the selected school that is 6. This significant gender disparity raises serious concerns regarding girls' access to education and highlights the urgent need for interventions that promote gender equality and enhance educational opportunities for girls within the Nguenyiel Refugee Camp.

3.6. Sampling Design

3.6.1. Study population

The target population for this study are adolescent girls between the ages of 16-19 residing in Nguenyiel Refugee Camp in the Gambella region, Ethiopia, who have experienced early marriage.

3.6.2. Sampling technique

The study followed the purposive sampling technique of the qualitative research approach. Purposive sampling is an appropriate method for selecting participants in

qualitative research, particularly when targeting a specific population. According to Charles & Fen (2017), purposive sampling allows the researcher to handpick participants who have the information that is most relevant to the research question. For this study, the researcher chose participants who met the following criteria: (a) female refugees who had experienced early marriage or had knowledge about the effects of early marriage on education, (b) Parents of girls whose daughters are married early (c) Husbands of girls who married early (d) teachers (Educators) (e) camp coordinators and (f) representatives from child protection-focused international non-governmental organizations. The sample was chosen based on the research questions and the purpose of the study, which aimed to understand the impact of early marriage on girls' education in Nguenyiel Refugee Camp (Charles & Fen, 2017).

3.7 Data collection tools

Qualitative research involves the collection of data through various methods, such as interviews, observations, and examination of documents (Creswell, 2014). The research questions guided the data collection, which involved in-depth and key informant interviews with a purposive sample of participants, including girls who are married, their parents, girls' husbands, educators and camp coordinators (Clarke & Vironica, 2013). Triangulation, or the use of multiple data sources, is a common strategy in case study research that enhances data credibility (Yin, 2014). In recent research, multiple data sources have been used to capture a broader range of perspectives, behaviors, and attitudes (Michael, Inge & Anna, 2020). The sources of information for case studies can include qualitative for example interviews, Focus group discussions, field notes, photographs (Roberet, 2018). Using both primary and secondary data sources can improve the accuracy and depth of the analysis in a case study (Creswell, 2014).

3.7.1 Primary data

The researcher gathered primary data from various sources, encompassing in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and observations.

1. In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews remain a widely used and effective data collection method in qualitative research. According to a recent study by (Nicola & O'Reilly, 2013). In-depth

interviews provide a rich source of information that can help researchers gain a deeper understanding of people's experiences and perspectives. In-depth interviews allow participants to share their experiences, emotions, attitudes, and beliefs in detail, which can be valuable in exploring complex issues.

Furthermore, in-depth interviews have been found to be useful in cross-cultural research, as they allow researchers to explore cultural nuances and differences in-depth (Virginia & Vironica, 2019). In a recent study conducted by Gifford (2021), in-depth interviews were used to explore the experiences of African immigrant women in the United States in relation to their healthcare access and utilization. The authors found that in-depth interviews were crucial in capturing the complexities of the participants' experiences and providing insights into their healthcare decision-making processes. In-depth interviews are also flexible and adaptable, as they can be tailored to suit the research question and the participants' characteristics (E.J. Gifford, 2021).

To collect comprehensive data, four semi-structured interview guides were developed for specific participant groups. The first guide involved 15 girls who had experienced early marriage and discontinued their education, aiming to explore factors leading to early marriage, marital dynamics, educational impact, post-marriage challenges, and prevailing social norms. The second guide targeted 5 husbands of these girls, while the third was for 6 parents. The fourth guide addressed 9 key informants, including educators, camp coordinators, and 3 representatives from child protection-focused international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). It focused on challenges faced by girls aged 11-17 regarding early marriage and school dropout, cultural norms contributing to this issue, ongoing interventions, and reintegration strategies. These guides facilitated an in-depth examination of challenges, experiences, and opportunities for educational reengagement among girls affected by early marriage.

The data collection with the young girls who were married early, the husbands of the girls and the parents of the girls was conducted by use of a translator from Nuer to English then the researcher transcribed the interviews. The other interviews with educators, camp coordinators, and representatives from international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) were conducted in English, which was later transcribed. The interviews took place from May up to the beginning of June 2022. It was held at a convenient time and

place with each participant like safe spaces in the school. The interview took from 45 minutes to an hour per person, depending on each person's level of comfort, to discuss the interview questions; all of the interviews were taped by the willingnesseach informant (participants).

II Observation

Observation is a key method for collecting data in qualitative research, particularly when studying social settings and behaviors. Observation can provide rich, descriptive data that may not be captured through other data collection methods (Creswell, 2014). There are several advantages to using observation as a data collection method. First, it allows researchers to collect data on behaviors and events that may not be easily captured through other methods, such as interviews or surveys. For example, researchers may want to observe how people interact with each other in a particular setting, or how they respond in some specific topics. Second, observation can provide researchers with a more holistic view of the research subject or phenomenon. By observing people in their natural setting, researchers can get a better understanding of how they behave and interact with their environment. Third, observation can be used to collect data on a large number of people or events. This is because observers can collect data on multiple people or events at the same time (Babbie, 2013). During the interview, the researcher made observations of the girls who married early and how they responded to specific interview questions. These observations were recorded using an observation checklist. (Annex V)

III. Focus group discussion

Focus group discussions (FGDs) are a valuable data collection method that can provide a well-rounded view of a topic and gather information about groups of people rather than individuals. According toRichard & Mary (2014), FGDs are particularly useful for exploring complex social phenomena and understanding the perspectives and experiences of diverse groups. In addition, FGDs can elicit opinions and attitudes that may be difficult to capture through other methods, such as surveys or interviews(Richard & Mary, 2014). To ensure a comprehensive data collection process, two separate focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted. The first FGD involved 7 husbands who married girls between the ages of 11 and 17. The discussions revolved around targeted questions that explored

the motivations behind marrying young girls, the perceived value of girls' educational advancement to the husbands, and their overall perceptions regarding girls' education. On the other hand, the second FGD involved 10 parents who had given their daughters away for marriage at an early age. The discussions in this group focused on understanding how cultural norms influenced their decision to marry off their daughters early, the reasons behind their preference for early marriage, and their perceptions regarding girls' educational advancement.

3.7.2 Secondary Data

In addition to collecting primary data, this study also utilized secondary data sources such as books, journal articles, theses, dissertations, reports, and other relevant documents that were both published and unpublished. These sources were reviewed by the researcher as part of my data collection process.

3.8 Data analysis

Qualitative research involves concurrent data collection and analysis, with data analysis being an ongoing process that occurs throughout the data collection process (Creswell, 2014). The type of analysis used in qualitative case studies depends on the specific case study. (Yin, 2014) describes five techniques for analysis, including pattern matching, linking data to propositions, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis. This approach is supported by other researchers as well. For instance, Miles & Huberman (1994) advocate for concurrent data collection and analysis, with data analysis occurring through coding, categorizing, and interpreting the data. Similarly, Guba and Lincoln (1994)(Lincoln, 1994) recommend that qualitative researchers constantly analyze and interpret their data throughout the data collection process. Triangulation of data sources is a well-established method for ensuring the validity of qualitative research findings, and it continues to be used in recent years(Poth, 2018). Data analysis was guided by thematic analysis, which involves identifying patterns and themes in the data(Clarke & Victoria, 2016).

Following the completion of data collection, the next step was to transcribe the interviews while preserving their original meaning. The transcribed data was thematically organized and interpreted, with the transcription being organized according to the research

questions and propositions. The data was analyzed by identifying ideas related to each research question and reassessing the transcription.

3. 9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were upheld in this study by obtaining informed consent from participants, and by maintaining their confidentiality and anonymity throughout the study. Prior to conducting interviews, the researcher obtained official authorization from the relevant administrative bodies, namely Refugees and Returnee Service and UNHCR. The researcher then explained the purpose of the study and the types of questions to be asked to all participants. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time. The respondents were also guaranteed anonymity by the researcher, who explicitly stated that the study was being conducted exclusively for academic purposes.

The respondents were asked to provide information about the practice of early marriage and the consequences it has on young girls' educational advancement. They were assured that the information they provided would be confidential. The respondents were also given the right not to answer any question, to withdraw from the interview at any time, or to postpone the interview. These rights were assured via a written consent form, which all participants signed. The data collected will only be used for academic purposes and will not be accessible for any other purposes. However, the study will be accessible to AAU and other university students and the research community for educational and further study purposes. The researcher made every effort to ensure the privacy of each interviewee by choosing the most appropriate time and place for the interview and by explaining the confidentiality of the interview and the resulting information.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings of the study, focusing on the consequences of early marriage on the education of South Sudanese girls in Nguenyiel refugee camp, Gambella region. The primary objective of the study was to examine these consequences and develop a conceptual framework that integrates relevant themes and sub-themes. The findings, organized into themes and sub-themes, are summarized in Table 4.1. This framework illustrates the long and short-term consequences experienced by South Sudanese girls who are married early, as well as the attitudes of their parents and husbands towards early marriage and girls' educational advancement. Furthermore, it highlights the strategies implemented within refugee and school structures to address this issue. Nguenyiel refugee camp, located in the Gambella region of Ethiopia, is one of the largest refugee camps hosting South Sudanese refugees. Established in response to the South Sudanese civil war, the camp provides shelter to thousands of refugees fleeing conflict and seeking safety. The camp is managed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in collaboration with the Ethiopian government and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In the South Sudanese community residing in Nguenyiel refugee camp, traditional gender roles are deeply entrenched. Men are typically viewed as the primary breadwinners and heads of households, responsible for making key decisions and providing for the family. Women, on the other hand, are often expected to manage domestic responsibilities, including child-rearing, cooking, and maintaining the household. These roles significantly influence the social dynamics and opportunities available to women and girls. Early marriage is a prevalent practice within the South Sudanese refugee community, often driven by cultural norms and economic pressures. Families may view early marriage as a strategy to alleviate financial burdens or to ensure the security and future of their daughters in an uncertain environment. This

social setting provides critical context for understanding the educational challenges and outcomes faced by young girls in the camp.

The detailed findings are presented in this section, with a summary provided in Table 4.1

4.1.1 Framework of themes and sub-themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Short term consequence	School Absenteeism
	Early pregnancy
	School dropout
Long term consequence	Poverty and Illiteracy
	Emotional challenge
	Extended Domestic violence
Attitude	The understanding parents have regarding early marriage
	The understanding husbands have regarding early marriage
Strategies	Existing strategies with in the refugee to combat early marriage
	Existing strategies with in the school structure to combat early marriage

Source: Researchers' data, 2022 (May-June)

4.2. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

This section discusses the respondents' demographics. A total of 38 people was involved in all the interviews. Participant's ages ranged from 16 to 60. Participants' educational backgrounds range from Illiterate to MA degree holders. In addition, the researcher used different participants for in-depth interview and FGD .

Table 4.2.1 Demographic information of study participant in in-depth interview

No	Sex	Current Age	Educational Level	Number of children
MG ₁	F	17	First cycle elementary education (1- 4)	1 child
MG ₂	F	19	First cycle elementary education (1- 4)	1 child
MG ₃	F	18	Second cycle elementary education (5-8)	1 child
MG ₄	F	17	First cycle elementary education (1- 4)	1 child
MG ₅	F	16	First cycle elementary education (1- 4)	1 child
MG ₆	F	17	First cycle elementary education (1- 4)	1 child
MG ₇	F	16	Second cycle elementary education (5-8)	1 child

MG ₈	F	18	Second cycle elementary education (5-8)	1 child
MG ₉	F	19	Second cycle elementary education (5-8)	1 child
MG ₁₀	F	19	Second cycle elementary education (5-8)	2 children
MG ₁₁	F	17	First cycle elementary education (1- 4)	1 child
MG ₁₂	F	18	Second cycle elementary education (5-8)	2 children
MG ₁₃	F	19	Second cycle elementary education (5-8)	1 child
MG ₁₄	F	16	First cycle elementary education (1- 4)	1 child
MG ₁₅	F	19	Second cycle elementary education (5-8)	2 children

Source: Researchers' data, 2022 (May-June)

As shown in table 4.2.1, the majority of participants on the indepth-interview in this study fall within the age range of 11 to 17 years at marriage, and their educational backgrounds do not extend beyond the 8th grade. These findings shed light on the average age at which these girls are typically married off. During the interviews, all participants, except one, affirmed that they are not currently enrolled in schools. However, it's noteworthy that all of the girls who entered into early marriages expressed a strong desire to continue their education in the future. Regarding childbirth, it was found that all participants gave birth shortly after their marriages. This highlights the prevalent trend of early pregnancies and the associated health complications, which have far-reaching implications for their education, well-being, and broader social circumstances.

Table 4.2.2 Demographic information of study participant key informant interview of parents

No	Sex	Age	Educational Level	Economic status
PA ₁	M	64	First cycle elementary education (1- 4)	More than 30 cattle
PA ₂	M	58	Illiterate	No cattle
PA ₃	M	50	First cycle elementary education (1- 4)	75 cattle
PA ₄	F	40	Illiterate	No cattle
PA ₅	F	38	Illiterate	No cattle
PA ₆	F	48	Illiterate	No cattle

Source: Researchers' data, 2022 (May-June)

As shown in table 4.2.2, The key informant interview participants predominantly have limited educational attainment, with the majority being either illiterate or having

completed only primary education. Participants in the sample comprised an equal number of male and female. Notably, female participants had children aged beyond 20, suggesting they were married at a young age, presumably before turning 18. During the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) where both male and female participants were present, the researcher observed that female parents appeared hesitant and uncomfortable discussing issues related to girls' education. This observation highlights the gender disparity, indicating a reluctance to speak freely in the presence of their spouses

Table 4.2.3 Demographic information of study participant key informant interview of Husbands

No	Sex	Age when married	Educational Level	Economic status
HU ₁	M	34	Illiterate	More than 15 cattle
HU ₂	M	43	Illiterate	No cattle
HU ₃	M	58	Second cycle elementary education (5-8)	75 cattle
HU ₄	M	40	First cycle elementary education (1-4)	More than 30 cattle
HU ₅	M	38	Illiterate	No cattle

Source: Researchers' data, 2022 (May-June)

As shown in table 4.2.3, the demographic information for the key informant interview participants, who are husbands of early-married girls. The table includes participant numbers, gender, age at the time of marriage, educational level, and economic status. Notably, the majority of male participants were either illiterate or had completed only elementary education, with diverse economic statuses indicated by cattle ownership. This information offers insights into the background characteristics of husbands involved in early marriages within the study context.

Table 4.2.4 Demographic information of study participant key informant interview of Educators and child protection specialist

No	Sex	Age when married	Educational Level	Work experience
ED ₁	M	38	Diploma	4 years
ED ₂	M	33	Degree	2 years

ED ₃	M	49	Diploma	7 years
Cc ₄	M	49	Masters	9 years
Cc ₅	M	43	2 degrees	12 years
CP ₆	F	31	Degree	4 years
CP ₇	M	29	Degree	1 year
CP ₈	M	38	Degree	7 years

Source: Researchers' data, 2022 (May-June)

Table 4.2.5 Demographic information of study participants of FGD

No	Sex	Age when married	Educational Level	Economic status
FGP ₃	F	44	Second cycle elementary education (5-8)	11 cattle
FGP ₄	F	48	Illiterate	No cattle
FGP ₅	M	49	Illiterate	No cattle
FGP ₆	M	57	Second cycle elementary education (5-8)	35 cattle
FGH ₁	F	42	Illiterate	No cattle
FGH ₂	F	39	Illiterate	No cattle

Source: Researchers' data, 2022 (May-June)

As shown in table 4.2.4, the demographic information for key informant interview participants, comprising educators and child protection specialists within the refugee camp. The table includes participant numbers, gender, age at marriage, educational level, and work experience. The participants exhibit diverse educational backgrounds, ranging from diplomas to master's degrees, reflecting a variety of qualifications within the educational and child protection fields. The participants also bring significant work experience, with expertise spanning from 1 to 12 years. This information provides a snapshot of the educational and professional profiles of educators and child protection specialists engaged in the study within the refugee camp context.

In order to protect their confidentiality participants' names will not be stated, the researcher used identifiers for the Married girls as MG1, MG2.....MG15, for husbands

HU1,HU2..HU5, for parents PA1,PA2...PA6, for educators ED1,ED2 and ED3, for child protection person'sCP1,CP2 and CP3, and camp coordinators Cc1 and Cc2.....for FGD for parents FGP1,FGP2.... and for FGD for husbands FGH1, FGH2.

4.3 Prevalence and effect of early marriage on girl's education

The prevalence and profound impact of child marriage on girls' education and future prospects in the Nguenyiel refugee camp, located in the Gambella region, cannot be overstated. Early marriage imposes immediate and enduring consequences on the lives of these girls. It serves as a significant impediment to their educational, social, and economic development. The early marriage of adolescent girls results in a disruption of their schooling and isolates them from peers within their community. Consequently, they are deprived of educational opportunities and the supportive network of their families. Moreover, their autonomy and financial independence are curtailed, as they become reliant on their husbands for their livelihoods. Tragically, one of the most distressing outcomes of early marriage is the heightened risk of maternal mortality during childbirth. Due to their insufficient physical development, these young mothers face increased dangers during pregnancy and labor. The absence of adequate healthcare facilities, such as hospitals and clinics, further exacerbates the risks they face. Complications, such as obstructed labor, can result in the development of vesical-vaginal fistulas. The inadequate nourishment and prenatal care provided to these young mothers by their families contribute to the high incidence of low birth weight and related health issues among their offspring. The researcher's objective was to ascertain the short- and long-term consequences of early marriage on girls' education. The subsequent findings, as reported by the participants, are presented and discussed in the following sections.

4.4 Short-term consequences of early marriage in girl's education

4.4.1 School Absenteeism

Regular attendance at school is essential for the students' academic achievements, language development and social development. Students who attend school regularly can be successful in their future professional lives through achieving work-related skills such as persistence, problem-solving, and the ability to work with others to accomplish a goal (Kearney, 2014). It is seen that students who attend school regularly have higher

academic success, standardized test scores, graduation averages, entrance rates and job opportunities (Balfanz, 2012). Compared to their peers, students who don't attend school regularly have lower academic performance, limited future employment opportunities and will experience social and emotional problems in adulthood (Askeland, 2015). Early marriage inevitably denies children of school age their right to the education they need for their personal development, their preparation for adulthood, and their effective contribution to the future well-being of their family and society. Indeed, married girls who would like to continue schooling may be both practically and legally excluded from doing so (Spouses., 2011)

Girls who already have experienced early marriage claim they miss school because of the pain they feel after sexual experiences. They also miss school because of the frequent and painful menstruation cycle that occurs in the first few days or months after marriage. Most participants explained that after getting married and experiencing the pain, they found it difficult to make any movement because it was a new experience and they had received no prior information about the pain and coping mechanisms. Here is what MG9, a participant, shared from her own experience:

After I got married and had a sexual intercourse with my husband, I experienced the worst pain that I cannot even explain. The next day I was not even able to make a move from where I slept. After few days I felt better and better and walked to school and came back. but soon after my period kept coming every 7 and 10 days which forced me to miss school. (MG9 interviewed on May 23, 2022)

One of the primary physical risks associated with early marriage is the increased likelihood of experiencing physical pain during sexual intercourse. Young girls who are married off early may not be physically ready for sexual activity, as their bodies are still developing and may not have fully matured. This lack of physical readiness can lead to discomfort, pain, and even injury during sexual encounters (Alemu, 2018). The majority of the participants returned to school a few days after their marriages. Despite the pain and discomfort, they were able to attend school on few days a week. And, while the responses of the participants on missing school days differ slightly from one another, it is the researchers finding that they all share the physical pain as a major cause for absenteeism.

Early marriages can be seen as direct consequences of learner absenteeism. When girls are absent from school for extended periods, they are more vulnerable to school dropout (Changala, 2018)

4.4.2 School dropout

School dropout and child marriage are interrelated outcomes that have an enormous impact on adolescent girls, curtailing full realization of their rights, limiting their livelihood options, and harming their health and wellbeing as well as that of their children (UN, 1989). Early or coerced marriage is a significant factor leading to the discontinuation of girls' education.

A large number of girls drop out of school after a few months of marriage. The majority of respondents in the in-depth interview stated that it is difficult for them to return to school and continue their education after getting married. MG2 and MG5 explained the experience (situation) as follows:

I was grade 5 when I got married and I thought I would be able to go back to school but it was impossible because of the pain and house chores I was expected to do. (MG2 interviewed on May 22, 2022)

Likewise, MG5 articulated her perspective on resuming her education after marriage, drawing from her previous observations within her community.

I was grade 3 when my father gave me off to marriage. I never went back to school after that. I already knew that I won't be able to continue my education because my sister and other neighbors stopped going to school after they got married. (MG5 interviewed on May 22, 2022)

Marriage often marks the end of a girl's formal education, as the young girl is typically expected to drop out of school. This transition commonly occurs during the period leading up to her marriage or shortly thereafter. Once married, her responsibilities shift towards taking care of the household, children, and extended family, leaving little room or opportunity to pursue education. The prospect of returning to school becomes exceedingly difficult for a married girl, with numerous practical barriers hindering her progress. These barriers include the burden of household duties, societal stigma, forced

exclusion from educational institutions, and entrenched gender norms that confine her to the confines of home. Collectively, these factors pose significant challenges for married girls seeking to access education(López, 2023).

Drawing from radical feminist theory, it is important to acknowledge the broader structural and systemic issues that perpetuate the cycle of school dropout and child marriage. These issues include unequal power dynamics, patriarchal norms, and the commodification of girls' bodies within a male-dominated society. Moreover, the multi-faceted nature of school dropout is intricately linked to cultural factors, with time constraints imposed by domestic work and health challenges associated with early marriage and pregnancy significantly contributing to girls leaving school prematurely. This intersectional understanding underscores the need for comprehensive interventions that address the root causes of these interconnected issues, empowering girls to exercise their agency, challenging oppressive norms, and fostering inclusive educational environments that support their continued education and well-being.

School dropout is attributed to several factors. Based on the responses of the participants, the researcher understood that there are numerous interconnected factors that contribute to dropping out of school. Even though all aspects of the girl's live's are associated with culture, school dropout is heavily influenced by time constraints caused by domestic work, as well as health issues associated with marriage in general and early pregnancy.

4.4.3 Time poverty

When a girl is forced into early marriage, it disrupts her educational journey and imposes new roles and responsibilities upon her. As a child bride, she is often expected to leave school and prioritize domestic duties and family obligations. This drastic shift in her life trajectory deprives her of the education necessary for personal growth and development. By being denied access to education, child brides face a form of time poverty, as they are robbed of the time they would have spent in school, expanding their knowledge, acquiring skills, and exploring their potential (Childs not Brides, 2014). Females are obliged to participate in all of their house chores once they get married. A girl is expected to fulfill every house chore such as cow feeding and cleaning their feces, growing crops, building houses, collecting wood from the bush, collecting food from the food

distribution center, and a variety of other duties. With all of these responsibilities at home it is obvious that newly-wed girls do not have the time to go to school and this is also the first time they discover that being a wife is no simple matter in their communities. These dreadful experiences are not limited to a handful of married girls but it is something that prevailed in their community for maybe hundreds if not thousands of years. Participants MG8 and MG1, for example, described their experience as follows:

I use to help my mother in the house chores after and before going to school. But once I got married all the responsibilities fell on my shoulder, my husband expected me to do all the work by myself since it is a shame in our culture for a man to do work except protecting his family and cattle. I work all day. (MG8 interviewed on May 23, 2022)

Child brides are trapped in a cycle of limited opportunities and diminished agency. The lack of education restricts their ability to participate fully in society, hinders their economic independence, and perpetuates gender inequality (UNICEF, 2020).

Radical feminist theory helps shed light on this issue by emphasizing the power dynamics and structural inequalities that perpetuate child marriage. It highlights how patriarchal norms and social structures reinforce the subordination of girls and women, ultimately leading to their marginalization and limited choices. According to radical feminist theory, child marriage is not merely an individual issue but a systemic problem rooted in unequal power relations. It highlights the intersecting forms of oppression that shape the experiences of child brides, such as gender, age, class, and culture. The theory underscores the need for structural change, challenging patriarchal norms and dismantling the systems that perpetuate child marriage.

MG1 also shared her perspective on the constraints of limited time after marriage as follows:

sometimes don't know how the time flies while am working in my house. I sometimes don't finish the domestic work in a day and I plan for the coming day to finish the rest of the work. I sometimes wake up very early in the morning to collect woods in the bushes so I will have time to do other works afterwards. (MG1 interviewed on May 22, 2022)

I have also observed that the young girls had very limited time to spare for the interview and often arrived with their children in tow. For instance, MG1, upon arriving at the interview location, was carrying a bundle of sticks she had collected earlier in the day, all while balancing her baby on her head in a basket.

By examining child marriage through a radical feminist lens, we can understand how it intersects with broader gender dynamics and social hierarchies. Child brides not only confront a myriad of challenges such as limited decision-making power, heightened vulnerability to violence and abuse, restricted access to healthcare, and diminished opportunities for personal and economic development, but they also grapple with a fundamental aspect of life: time poverty. The concept of time poverty encompasses the deprivation of precious time that child brides would have otherwise spent pursuing education, developing skills, and shaping their own futures. This critical dimension of their lives is stripped away, further exacerbating the already complex web of disadvantages they face.

4.4.4 Early pregnancy

Early marriage is responsible for early pregnancy. Many challenges have to face by the girls who got pregnant at a very early age. As early pregnancy suppresses the immune system, the young girls possess a high risk of acquiring diseases like malaria. In addition to being most vulnerable to malaria during their first pregnancy (Ruhul, Susmita , & Asma, 2014). There are a variety of reasons why newly-wed girls drop out of schools. The primary explanation given by the research participants was that once they became pregnant, they themselves would lack the courage to return to school. In addition to the household chores, children to look after and the expectations of the society in communal activities, pregnancy would certainly be another weight to carry. One participant shared her story as follows:

I got pregnant when I was 15 years old immediately after I got married and I could not think of my education anymore because I was not physically able to go to school and my husband and mother were expecting me to take care of my husband while waiting for the child to arrive.(MG9 interviewed on May 23, 2022)

Pregnant girls commonly drop out of school during their pregnancy. early pregnancy in young refugee girls is one of the main causes for leaving schools either during primary or elementary studies or at the completion of elementary education (Okanlawon, 2010). Early marriage is a sign of gender inequality and major hindrances to personal achievement. Child marriage denotes the marginalization of women, as most female child marriages are with older males and accompanied by poverty(Mace, 2016).

Early pregnancy is intricately linked to the phenomenon of girls quitting school prematurely. In the context of child marriage, where girls are married off at a young age, the risk of early pregnancy becomes significantly higher. When girls become pregnant at a young age, they often face multiple challenges that hinder their ability to continue their education. Child marriage is a prevalent practice that significantly impacts adolescent girls, with around 90% of births to adolescents occurring within the context of marriage. Unfortunately, this practice exposes young girls to various health risks, as complications arising from pregnancy and childbirth become leading causes of death among girls aged 15-19. The consequences of child marriage extend beyond the physical realm and encompass the girls' emotional well-being and knowledge about their sexual and reproductive health and rights (UNFPA, 2015).

Child marriage becomes a driving factor behind adolescent pregnancy, which carries serious health implications. Adolescent mothers are more susceptible to health complications during pregnancy and childbirth due to their bodies being not fully developed. Additionally, they are at a higher risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections, Fistula and experiencing gender-based violence(Childs not Brides, 2014). another participant shares her experiences as follows:

After my marriage, there was a time when I was able to attend school because my husband had returned to South Sudan. However, was unable to continue going to school as I soon became pregnant, and the physical strain of walking from home to school became too difficult for me to bear.(MG2 interviewed on May 22, 2022)

The physical demands of pregnancy and motherhood can take a toll on a girl's health and well-being. Pregnancy at a young age can lead to complications due to the immaturity of the girl's body, increasing the risks associated with childbirth. These health concerns may

necessitate the girl to prioritize her own well-being and that of her child, leading to her decision to leave school. Moreover, the responsibilities of motherhood often clash with the demands of education. Taking care of a child requires time, attention, and resources, which can become overwhelming for a young girl who is also expected to attend school. The lack of support systems and resources further exacerbate the challenge, making it difficult for girls to balance their maternal duties and academic pursuits.

Pregnancy poses many challenges for young girls. Because pregnancy suppresses the immune system, pregnant girls are at increased risk of acquiring diseases like malaria. Malaria kills 1 million people each year, 90% of them in Africa. Approximately 25 million pregnant women are exposed to malaria per year, and pregnant women are among the most severely affected by malaria. About 10.5 million become infected during their second or third trimester, and among these, the mortality rate is 50% (WHO, 2016).

Girls who marry young are also at risk of acquiring a variety of health issues, the most common of which is fistula. Fistula is a disorder that causes urine to leak, making the girls feel embarrassed and humiliated to the point where they no longer want to socialize or go to school. Unbalanced menstruation is another health issue that females suffer after marriage, and it is a hindrance to their education. MG14 stated her experience as follows:

After frequent sex experience with my husband, I started peeing on myself, and I couldn't control my urine. I was so embarrassed and didn't tell anyone about it. After that I lost my interest in going to school and socializing with my friends.
(MG14 interviewed on May 23, 2022)

Similarly, a recent study made in Ethiopia by Gedefaw(2021) highlights that obstetric fistula stands as the most prevalent and devastating obstetric issue in Ethiopia. It's closely associated with factors like early marriage, initiation of sexual activity at a young age, residing far from healthcare facilities, lack of prior contraceptive use, and rural living conditions, all of which significantly increase the risk of developing obstetric fistula(Gedefaw, 2021)

4.5 Long term consequence of early marriage on girl's education

The impact of early marriage on a girl's education is not limited to dropping out of school; rather, it has a long-term and far-reaching impact(Saglova, 2021). It cannot be ignored that the lack of education after dropping out of school has a long-lasting effect in their future lives. When a female has already dropped out of school, she is less likely to return. which leads to poverty and Illiteracy, psychological impact and extended domestic violence.

4.5.1. Poverty and Illiteracy

The interconnection between school dropout, child marriage, and early pregnancy significantly affects the lives of adolescent girls. These outcomes lead to heightened illiteracy rates, increased likelihood of becoming single mothers, higher unemployment rates, limited access to healthcare services, elevated rates of teenage pregnancies, and greater child mortality risks. For instance, interviews with local educators and community leaders revealed that girls who drop out of school are more prone to early marriage and pregnancy, which further exacerbates their socio-economic challenges (Musonda, 2018).Girls and women benefit immensely from education since it expands their prospects and improves their living standards. The study discovered a direct link between a woman's level of education and her socioeconomic status. The researcher observed that girls with limited education reported fewer opportunities and poorer life outcomes. One participant described her situation as follows:

I have been married forthe past four years now and I have not once got the chance to be able to go back to school or be able to make my own income. It has always been the refugee camp and my husband who supports me financially.
(MG8 interviewed on May 23, 2022)

Additionally, the study highlighted the disproportionate burden of household labor on girls. After marriage, girls typically take on extensive unpaid duties such as firewood collection, house chores, water and fodder collection, livestock care, and subsistence agriculture. This heavy workload contributes to their "time poverty," severely limiting their opportunities for more productive income-earning prospects as they mature into women. Interviews with married women and observations within households confirmed

that these responsibilities consume most of their time, leaving little room for further education or economic advancement.

Early marriage also has significant social, economic, and health consequences. The researchers observed that girls who marry early are often excluded from formal education, have limited prospects for paid employment, and are typically confined to informal jobs or household chores and childcare responsibilities. This contributes to social power disparities, including unequal income opportunities, experiences of sexual violence, and limited financial resources for daily needs (Mutgan, 2014).

4.5.2 Psychological Impact

Due to forced and premature sexual relations, educational discontinuation, child bearing, lack of freedom, and domestic violence, a child bride suffers profound emotional and psychological consequences. Most girls who are unhappy in an imposed marriage become very isolated because they are unable to share their misery to anyone because it only falls on deaf ears. Some girls who run to their parents for help may be beaten and returned back to their husband by family members. The child bride's life patterns are regarded as "an avoidable part of life." All of this adds up to a high level of distress that is mostly forgotten in the shadow of silence. The majority of those interviewed are experiencing loneliness and distress.

I am hopeless, I don't want to live the kind of life I am living now. I have tried killing myself in the bushes before.(MG6 interviewed on May 22nd, 2022)

Similarly, study made in the Amhara region showed that child marriage is associated with increased odds of suicidal thought who were ever married, were promised in marriage, or had received marriage requests when compared to unmarried girls (Gage A. , 2013). MG4 share her experience as follows:

It is very difficult to handle all the responsibilities every day without making no mistake. I want to play with my friends and be able to talk and walk around freely like before. I feel very lonely now and scared most of the time. I feel lonely because I don't have any one around me to talk to and can understand my situation. It is very normal to do all the things I do as a wife so no one will understand. And I feel helpless because of that. I am also mostly scared about many things. am scared when it gets dark because my husband will come and ask

me to sleep with him or find a reason to bit me or insult me. I am also scared of life if my husband dies because his brother will. (MG4 interviewed on May 22nd 2022)

In the course of the interview, I have observed that a significant proportion of the interviewed young girls exhibited unmistakable signs of emotional distress. Their countenances often bore expressions of unhappiness and preoccupation, reflecting a deep emotional turmoil. During our discussions, it became apparent that many of them struggled to contain their emotions, occasionally breaking into tears and sharing their innermost thoughts spontaneously, regardless of whether the conversation strayed from the original line of inquiry. This poignant observation underscores the critical psychological toll that early marriage inflicts upon these girls.

Furthermore, a research done in Ethiopia revealed that young women who entered into marriage at an early age were at a higher risk of suffering from conditions like depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder compared to those who married later. Furthermore, the study indicated that women who had experienced intimate partner violence were more prone to encountering depression, anxiety, and Post traumatic stress disorder compared to women who had not faced intimate partner violence. These results underscore the substantial adverse effects of child marriage and intimate partner violence on the mental well-being of young Ethiopian women (Gage, Mekonnen, & Kassa, 2019).

4.5.3 Extended Domestic violence

Long-term domestic violence is common among child brides. As the girls grow older and become women, they face a *slew* of psychological, physical, and sexual issues. This is caused by the hopelessness and distresses the girls experience in their marital lives. The majority of the girls interviewed by the researcher have already begun to experience psychological distress. two participants stated that:

I used to like going out around with my friends to talk and play. we even used to go to the bushes not only to collect woods but to talk and enjoy being together. After sometime I got married, not only because am busy with house work but because it makes me sick to see my friends go to school and I don't like being with any one any more. I like being alone and sitting in the dark. (MG12 interviewed on May 23, 2022)

Similarly, MG13 shared her experience regarding the violence she faces often as follows:

My husband finds all kinds of reasons to bit me and threaten me that he will kill me one day. I know there is no onewho can make this stop. I am helpless. I hope all my suffering will stop one day when I die. (MG13 interviewed on May 23, 2022)

Domestic Violence is a significant consequence of early marriages, reflecting a broader issue of violence against women. This form of violence, imposed by one person on the body, mind, ethics, and culture of another, is a pressing public health concern. It commonly occurs during adolescence and early adulthood, affecting both married and unmarried couples. Intimate partner violence encompasses various forms of abuse, including physical and sexual violence, emotional manipulation, and controlling behaviors(Azizeh, 2019).Radical feminist approach highlights the systemic power imbalances and oppressive gender norms that perpetuate violence against women within intimate relationships. Radical feminism emphasizes the need to challenge patriarchal structures and dismantle oppressive systems that perpetuate gender-based violence.

Observing a young girl who has encountered domestic violence reveals a stark reality that resonates profoundly with radical feminist perspectives. This encounter outlines the intersection of gender-based violence, early marriage, and the oppressive structures that perpetuate such injustices within patriarchal societies.

The South Sudanese girls' courage in this horrific setting epitomizes the embodiment of radical feminist discourse. Theysit, visibly dispirited, emblematic of the broader subjugation of women within societies where patriarchal norms prevail. There constant fidgeting and guarded posture mirror the systemic constraints that restrict her agency and autonomy.Emotionally, their anguish is certain, echoing the feminist critique of oppressive power structures that maintain gender-based violence. As the young girls recount their experiences, their tears and shaking voice deepen the emotional toll exacted by early marriage and domestic abuse. Their discouraged eyes reflect the dominationthey face not only as an individual but as a symbol of the larger struggle against patriarchal oppression.Physically, the marks on the young girl's body is a witness of a violent

manifestations of gender-based conquest. These marks, though faint, are stark reminders of the physical and psychological trauma these girls have endured. They serve as a manifestation of radical feminist arguments regarding the physical consequences of patriarchal dominance.

In the refuge of a camp meant to provide safety, these experiences show the urgent need for radical feminist advocacy. The girl's story is a symbol of the larger struggle against entrenched power structures that perpetuate gender-based violence and early marriage. This observation underscores the vital role of radical feminism in dismantling these oppressive systems and advocating for the rights and well-being of marginalized individuals like the young girls who were part of this thesis.

4.6 Attitudes of parents towards early marriage and girl's education

Poverty plays a central role in perpetuating child marriage. Parents want to ensure their daughters' financial security; however, daughters are considered an economic burden. Feeding, clothing, and educating girls is costly, and girls will eventually leave the household. A family's only way to recover its investment in a daughter may be to have her married in exchange for a dowry (Nour, 2016). The researcher has found out that the attitude of parents regarding early marriage and girls' education differs. Mothers generally showed a positive attitude towards girls' education before and even after marriage. On the other hand, fathers showed less interest and negative attitude to early marriage and girls' education before and after marriage.

During the interview mothers expressed their attitude toward early marriage in two different ways. Most participant mothers believe that early marriage is good to protect the girls from impurity and discrimination by the society. The norm of the society dictates that girls unmarried at young age are considered unwanted and are consequently estranged from the community.

I know my daughter needs education to be a better person in the future. I don't want her to end up like me being uneducated, dependent on my husband and poor. But if she stayed long unmarried she wouldn't handle the social isolation. (PA4 interviewed on May 25, 2022)

In terms of the girl's mother's expressed fears about her daughter's education and future, it appears that social isolation and early marriage are interrelated. The mother believes that her daughter's future chances and personal growth depend on her education. She also understands that social isolation may occur for her daughter if she waits too long to be married.

Unmarried girls may experience social isolation in many societies as a result of cultural expectations and customs. As they age, girls who choose to stay single may experience social embarrassment marginalization, or a lack of social relation due to societal expectations surrounding marriage. Their mental and emotional health may be impacted, and they may experience loneliness and exclusion as a result of this isolation. In this context, the mother highlights the difficult decisions that girls in her society frequently face. They must balance their goals for learning and self- growth with the social pressure to get married young in order to avoid social isolation. The issue highlights the complex relationship among factors that lead to early marriage, such as social norms and the perceived need to conform to the norms.

My daughters were very good at school and they performed well until they got married. I would really be happy if they could be able to finish their education because they are very brilliant and I know they could have succeeded. But their husbands won't allow it. And since they are in the hands of their husbands neither I nor my daughters have a say on the decision. (PA6 interviewed on May 25, 2022)

The statement from PA4 highlights a common challenge that females who are coerced into early marriages struggle with. It underscores the grave consequences that early marriage can have on a girl's education and aspirations for the future. The mothers, regret the fact that their girls, who were doing well in school, had to give up their education because of an early marriage. They think that if their girls had been let to continue their schooling, they might have achieved academic excellence and had successful futures.

The key issue indicated in this statement, however, is the lack of agency and autonomy that these girls have after getting married. The parents state that their daughters' husbands

forbid them from pursuing further education. This reflects the control and power dynamics that husbands commonly exercise over their young wives in many early marriage situations. In the context of early marriage, the statement highlights how crucial it is to address the agency and decision-making power of girls. It also emphasizes the need for policies and programs that safeguard girls' right to an education while offering them the freedom to make decisions about their own lives and futures without fear of coercion or restriction.

I am glad my daughter is married because she brought us cattle's and because she didn't bring disgrace to the family but I wish her father and her husband allowed her to finish her education. because I know if she gets education she won't end up like me or other married women in our society. (PA5 interviewed on May 26, 2022)

In addition to deeply entrenched cultural factors, the economic vulnerability of families is another significant driver of child marriage. This phenomenon is more prevalent in less economically developed countries compared to their more prosperous counterparts. Ethiopia, like many other nations, witnesses the harmful practice of early marriage, often driven by the desire to receive dowries or cattle as the bride's price from the groom's family. Furthermore, early marriages are sometimes entered into to initiate mutual support for the family's future, establish connections with financially more stable or socially esteemed families, and reduce the financial reliance on children. This practice finds significant support within the rural communities of Ethiopia (Mengistu, 2017)

Parents worry about ensuring their daughters' virginity and chastity. Child marriage is also seen as a protective mechanism against premarital sexual activity, unintended pregnancies, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). The latter concern is even greater in this era of HIV/AIDS (Nour, 2016).

The power imbalance is shown clearly by this other's opinion. Even though the mothers really wanted their children to finish their education, they couldn't have the say in decision making. This is again the ignorance of most mothers that resulted from lack of education and their economic dependence of their male partners. This is of course the reason why decision making is left only for the father. The decision making of the fathers is not limited to the daughters but the whole family at large including sons and brothers.

The interviewed fathers exhibited a shared perspective regarding early marriage and girls' education, reflecting their belief that the primary purpose of having a daughter is to secure wealth and assets for the family through dowry practices. These fathers perceive investing in the education of sons as beneficial, as sons are expected to assume the responsibility of caring for their aging parents. In contrast, they consider the education of daughters as a financial burden, reasoning that daughters will eventually leave their natal home to live with their husband's family, resulting in limited direct benefits for the parents. This sentiment was echoed by three of the respondents in the following manner:

I don't think a girl should be in school after she is married because she will be responsible for all the house hold chores and for her husband and children as well. (PA1 interviewed on May 25, 2022)

This statement highlights a complex and economically driven perspective on education and early marriage. The parent allowed their daughter to attend school because they believed that her education would increase her future dowry, which is traditionally paid in cattle. In this case, the daughter's education became an investment for the family's economic prosperity, and she was indeed married off with a substantial dowry after completing eighth grade. However, the parent expresses reluctance to let their daughter return to school after marriage due to concerns that her husband might demand the return of the cattle paid for her. This illustrates how economic factors can significantly influence decisions related to education and marriage within the context of dowry traditions.

This scenario, where a young girl's education is seen as an economic asset primarily for her family's benefit through the dowry system, underscores the intersection of gender dynamics, economic interests, and educational opportunities. From a feminist perspective, this situation highlights the entrenched gender inequalities present in many societies, including Ethiopia. Women and girls are often subjected to roles that prioritize economic gains for their families or husbands, perpetuating a cycle of dependence and unequal power dynamics. In this context, education becomes a tool not for personal empowerment but for the economic benefit of others. Radical Feminist approach would argue that true gender equality can only be achieved when girls and women are given the agency to make choices about their education and lives free from economic coercion or traditional norms that limit their opportunities. It calls for a transformation of these deeply ingrained gender norms and economic systems to empower girls to pursue

education as a means of personal growth and empowerment, rather than primarily as a means of economic exchange.

The only reason I let my daughter to school was because the more she is educated the more cattle she brings for the family. after my daughter went to grade 8 I gave her for 40 cattle's, which I wouldn't be able to get if she was not in school or educated well. I wouldn't allow for her to go back to school since she is once married because I don't want to hear any discomfort from her husband because her will end up asking me the cattle's back.(PA2 interviewed on May 25, 2022)

Families trade their daughters for cows. The bride price is typically 20 to 40 cows, each worth up to 500 dollars. A girl who is seen as beautiful, fertile and of high social rank can bring as many as 200 cows (Dixon, 2016). Their attitudes towards early marriage and girls' education were shaped by their family's economic insecurities, particularly the fear of losing their cattle, which are considered valuable assets in their communities. Additionally, their perspectives were influenced by cultural beliefs that associate a girl's education with a potential challenge to her future role as a submissive wife. The majority of the participants expressed the following sentiment:

Who will do all the work if she goes to school, who will hold her child ha? Education is over when she got married, now she has a live ahead of her.no school anymore, instead she has to make us proud being a responsible wife.(PM3 interviewed on May 25, 2022)

This statement reflects a common societal perspective in some regions, where a girl's role is often defined by traditional gender norms. The participant emphasizes the belief that once a girl gets married, her primary responsibilities should shift towards being a dutiful wife and mother, fulfilling traditional domestic roles. Education is portrayed as incompatible with these roles, suggesting that a married girl should prioritize her household duties and family obligations over her own personal development through schooling. This perspective reinforces gender stereotypes and societal expectations that limit girls' choices and opportunities, emphasizing the need for transformative change to challenge these deeply ingrained norms and provide girls with equal access to education and the freedom to pursue their own life paths.

During a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) conducted on May 27th, 2022, with Fourmothers (two from the key informant and two new) and two fathers (new participants), a stark divergence in perspectives emerged, reflecting deep-rooted gender roles and societal expectations. The fathers echoed traditional sentiments that downplayed the importance of girls' education, implying that there was no compelling need for it. On the contrary, the mothers expressed a more nuanced and forward-thinking stance, emphasizing their desire for their daughters to return to school and attain a better future. This discrepancy in viewpoints underscores the gender disparities prevalent in many societies, where fathers often hold conservative views regarding girls' education while mothers advocate for their daughters' empowerment through learning. Furthermore, one mother's acknowledgment that marrying off her daughters was seen as a means of economic survival amidst the challenges of refugee life highlights the harsh realities faced by displaced communities. This observation aligns with a radical feminist approach, which seeks to challenge and change these deeply ingrained patriarchal norms and economic inequalities that perpetuate gender-based disparities, ultimately hindering girls' access to education and personal agency.

4.7 Attitudes of husbands towards early marriage and girl's education

During the individual interviews with all five participants, a common and noteworthy finding emerged regarding their positive attitudes towards girls' education and their support for girls continuing their education even after marriage. However, the participants predominantly focused on the issue of domestic responsibilities and gender roles within their cultural context. They expressed a cultural norm and belief that men should not engage in any form of domestic work as it is considered shameful or humiliating for them to do so. Three of the participants expressed the following sentiment:

I don't mind if my wife goes to school as long as she takes care of all her responsibility and take care of my child. (HG2 interviewed on May 26, 2022)

Similarly, HG4 shared his thoughts regarding his wife's education after marriage as follows:

I don't want to get involved in any domestic work. If she can handle all works and if she can be able to take my child with her than let her learn. I don't mind.(HG4 interviewed on May 26, 2022)

The participants' views regarding girls' education in the context of marriage and domestic responsibilities reflect a deeply entrenched cultural belief that men should not engage in domestic work. This belief contributes to the challenges faced by girls in continuing their education after marriage or childbirth. These challenges are further compounded by the time poverty experienced by girls, as they struggle to manage their domestic responsibilities alongside the demands of attending school.

While the husbands acknowledged the importance of education for girls during the key-informant interview, their focus was predominantly on the role of education in preparing girls to fulfill traditional gender roles as wives and mothers. The emphasis was on acquiring skills and knowledge related to domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing, rather than on broader personal and professional development.

It is crucial to note that the participants' views are specific to their cultural norms and beliefs, and may not be representative of all individuals or communities. However, these views highlight the significant influence of deeply ingrained gender roles and the societal expectation that men should not engage in domestic work. This cultural perspective shapes their understanding of girls' education.

The focus group discussion (FGD) took place on the following day, involving two additional male participants (husbands) and the original five key informant interview participants. The FGD was conducted in a setting typically used by men for recreational activities, such as playing the traditional board game *GEBETA*. The atmosphere of the discussion was informal, allowing for a relaxed and open exchange of ideas.

During the FGD, the attitudes expressed by the male participants differed significantly from those observed in the individual interviews. The majority of men shared a common belief that educating girls is futile, as they perceive girls' future roles solely as wives with

responsibilities that do not require formal education. Furthermore, two respondents raised concerns about mistrust and infidelity, suggesting that providing education to girls might lead them to seek relationships with more educated men, thus undermining their commitment to their husbands. Consequently, the participants argued that restricting girls' education and confining them to their homes would protect them from engaging in such behaviors. The participants views are stated as follows:

I am not allowing my wife to go to school because she has a lot of responsibilities at home to fulfil which I am not part of. I also don't want her to go to school because I don't want a rebellious wife. (FGH1 interviewed on May 28, 2022)

A recent research finding reveals that relatively low husband's involvement in household chores and childcare among South Sudanese refugees in Uganda can be attributed to several factors. These include entrenched traditional gender roles that assign such responsibilities to women, reinforced by cultural norms, religious beliefs, and societal expectations. Additionally, prevailing attitudes often dictate that men should primarily focus on breadwinning roles, further diminishing their participation in domestic tasks. Household labor divisions aligned with traditional gender roles and resource constraints, particularly for men working long hours to support their families, pose additional barriers. Moreover, some men may lack the necessary knowledge or skills for household chores and childcare due to inadequate upbringing. This underscores the importance of promoting husband's engagement in these activities, given its positive impact on child health, reduced domestic violence, and improved women's mental health, highlighting the need for further research to comprehensively explore these dynamics(Mekonnen, 2022).

I know for sure if my wife goes to school she will not value and respect me the way she does now because she will see have an educated man around her to make me less valued. (FGH4 interviewed on May 28, 2022)

The statement reflects a perspective rooted in concerns over shifts in power dynamics within the household. The husband, FGH4, expresses apprehension that if his wife pursues education, she may gain independence and potentially challenge traditional gender roles. This apprehension seems to stem from the fear that an educated woman may no longer conform to societal expectations of subservience, leading to a perceived erosion of his authority and respect within the marriage. Such sentiments, deeply

ingrained in patriarchal norms, underscore the complex interplay of gender, education, and power dynamics in the context of early marriage. In a similar vein, FGH4 articulated his anxieties regarding the potential economic independence of his wife. He expressed concerns that her pursuit of education might lead to her securing a better financial standing than him. This fear of economic disparity underscores his unease about the shifting power dynamics within the marriage, reflecting broader gender-related issues tied to education and autonomy.

If my wife continued her education after we got married she may finish her education which will make her gain better money than me which will make me feel like empty trousers. (FGH4 interviewed on May 28, 2022)

A unanimous consensus among the participants was the belief that girls should maintain a submissive attitude toward their husbands and their husbands' families. This perspective was seen as a means to ensure marital harmony and uphold traditional gender roles. Denying girls access to education was considered a method of guaranteeing their compliance with these societal expectations.

It is important to acknowledge that these attitudes expressed by the male participants in the FGD are specific to their cultural and social context, and may not be representative of broader perspectives. However, these views shed light on the entrenched gender norms and power dynamics within the community, which prioritize submissiveness and control over girls' education. This underscores the need for deeper discussions and interventions aimed at challenging and transforming these traditional gender norms, in order to foster gender equality and empower girls to fully participate in educational opportunities and broader aspects of life.

The findings from this FGD highlight the complexities and contradictions within the community's perceptions of girls' education. Addressing these issues necessitates comprehensive efforts to promote gender equity, challenge gender stereotypes, and advocate for girls' rights to education and personal agency.

4.8 Strategies set by the Refugee and Returnees to combat early marriage

Ethiopia's government has only acknowledged that gender-based violence against women is a fundamental violation of human rights and a barrier to development, and it has issued relevant policy and legal frameworks to address the issue. The 2017 Human Rights Council resolution on child, early and forced marriage in humanitarian settings (A/HRC/RES/35/16) recognizes child marriage as a serious violation of human rights and calls for all parties to prioritize and strengthen their efforts to prevent and eliminate this harmful practice, and provide support to married girls in humanitarian contexts (UNHCR, 2017). The Refugee and Returnee Service (RRS) has established a structure called the Central Committee, which comprises selected leaders from each zone within the refugee camp. This committee is responsible for addressing issues such as abduction, rape, and early marriage within the refugee community. However, since the committee members share the same cultural background, they often view early marriage as a cultural norm and consequently tend to overlook these cases. As a result, they typically do not follow up on or report such incidents to the RRS. In addition to perceiving early marriage as part of their cultural tradition, the committee members are also concerned about the potential for inter-communal conflict between different clans, particularly the Nuer and Anuak. They believe that intervening in cases of early marriage could exacerbate tensions and lead to further discord between these groups.

Even though child marriage and the effect it brings on young Refugee girls is well known, it is rarely considered as a priority in a humanitarian response. In Humanitarian response projects gender is a usually cross cutting and does not have a standalone budget. One of the many reasons given by the child protection coordinators during the interview is a funding issue. They explained it as follows:

Numerous child marriage interventions fall within GBV and child protection programs, which frequently hardly get any funding. (CP8 interviewed on June 1, 2022)

The child protection worker (CP8) highlighted a significant issue regarding funding for interventions addressing child marriage. They pointed out that many initiatives targeting child marriage often fall under the umbrella of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and child protection programs. Unfortunately, these critical programs often struggle to secure sufficient funding. In essence, the child protection worker is emphasizing the financial

challenges faced by organizations and projects that aim to combat child marriage, despite its severe consequences, as they are often grouped with broader initiatives and do not receive the funding they desperately require. This underscores the need for increased support and resources to effectively tackle child marriage issues.

Child marriage poses a significant challenge in refugee settings, necessitating urgent and sustained interventions. Regrettably, these efforts frequently grapple with insufficient funding and short-term support, which hinders the attainment of lasting solutions. Several factors contribute to the underfunding of interventions addressing child marriage in refugee contexts. Firstly, child marriage is sometimes regarded as a cultural matter, leading donors to hesitate in engaging with deeply ingrained practices. Additionally, within refugee settings, child marriage may not always be perceived as a top-tier priority, given the multitude of pressing needs that demand attention and resources (Miller, 2021). Additionally, another participant emphasizes that child marriage is not a new phenomenon brought about by the refugee situation but rather a deeply rooted practice influenced by pre-existing cultural norms. While child marriage might become more pronounced during humanitarian crises due to various stressors and vulnerabilities, addressing it effectively in these contexts is seen as a formidable challenge. This difficulty arises from the fact that changing entrenched social and cultural norms is a complex, long-term process that requires significant effort and resources. In humanitarian settings, where immediate life-saving needs often take precedence, addressing issues like child marriage can be sidelined or considered too intricate to tackle. The statement essentially underscores the need for a more concerted effort to address child marriage within humanitarian responses despite these challenges.

It is known that child marriage didn't start after the refugees came here but it is a pre-existing social and cultural norm, but of course some aggravated during humanitarian crises; However, there is a common perception among humanitarian actors that it is very difficult to address social and cultural norms in humanitarian setting. (Cc5 interviewed on June 2, 2022)

Another desk review of existing literature done by Kaur and Sharma (2022) revealed that Child marriage poses a significant threat in refugee settings, especially for vulnerable girls. While interventions to combat this issue are crucial, they frequently encounter

challenges related to insufficient funding. This study delves into the complexities of funding child marriage prevention and mitigation efforts in refugee contexts. It reveals several obstacles, including the overall scarcity of funds allocated to child protection initiatives, including those targeting child marriage. Funding sources tend to be fragmented, with contributions from various donors, lacking a dedicated mechanism for streamlined support. Additionally, funding often takes the form of short-term, project-based allocations, which can impede the achievement of sustainable and lasting impact in the fight against child marriage in refugee settings (Kaur & Sharma, 2022).

4.9 Strategies with in the school structure

Child marriage remains a persistent issue in refugee settlements, mirroring its prevalence in other refugee communities globally. However, there is a significant dearth of research that can provide valuable insights to shape effective prevention interventions and strategies (Taylor, 2021). Child marriage and the limited access to quality education for girls are deeply ingrained in the pervasive gender inequality and the devaluation of girls and women compared to boys and men. These interrelated issues demonstrate a two-way relationship, where child marriage impacts girls' education and vice versa. The decisions regarding child marriage and girls' education are complex and influenced by a range of factors, including social norms, cultural beliefs, economic conditions, and individual choices. (GirlsNotBrides, Child marriage and education, 2021).

One of the most effective approaches to delay child marriage is to prioritize and support girls' education. Studies have shown that for every additional year a girl stays in secondary education, the likelihood of her marrying as a child decreases by approximately six percentage points. Education equips girls with knowledge, skills, and opportunities, enabling them to make informed choices about their lives and empowering them to challenge societal norms that perpetuate child marriage (Wodon Q et al, 2018). Two educators shared experience is stated as follows:

While we effectively encourage girls to enroll in school through campaigns and raising awareness about the value of girls' education, we lack specific strategies

to reintegrate those who have dropped out, aside from conducting biannual campaigns.(ED2 interviewed on June 5, 2022)

The statement by ED2 highlights a critical gap in the approach to girls' education in the refugee context. While efforts are made to promote girls' enrollment through awareness campaigns, the challenge of reintegrating those who have dropped out, particularly due to factors like early marriage, remains largely unaddressed. This gap in strategies for reintegration underscores the need for a more comprehensive and targeted approach to support the educational journey of these girls. Another participant also discusses the gap of teachers not monitoring girls school attendance once they have enrolled as follows:

We typically do not actively monitor the attendance and progress of young girls once they are enrolled in school, except for the time they spend in the classroom receiving instruction.(ED3 interviewed on June 5, 2022)

The refugee school teachers are composed of two groups, national teachers and refugee teachers. The researcher has observed that refugee teachers outnumber national teachers. Since the refugee teachers share the same cultural background as the community, they hold similar views regarding early marriage. Consequently, they often fail to follow up on girls' school dropouts and issues related to early marriage. In the effort to end child marriage, teachers play a crucial role as agents of change. They serve as mentors, role models, and advocates for girls' education and empowerment. Teachers can promote awareness about the negative impacts of child marriage, challenge gender stereotypes, and provide supportive environments for girls to thrive academically and personally. By fostering a safe and inclusive educational atmosphere, teachers contribute to creating a generation of empowered girls who are less vulnerable to child marriage and more likely to pursue their aspirations and contribute to their communities (Marcus, 2018).

To effectively address child marriage and improve girls' access to quality education, comprehensive approaches are needed. These include addressing deep-rooted gender inequalities, advocating for policy reforms, providing targeted support and resources for girls' education, engaging communities, and promoting gender-responsive teaching practices. By tackling the underlying causes and empowering girls through education, we can work towards ending child marriage, promoting gender equality, and fostering a brighter and more equitable future for all.

CHAPER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. SUMMARY

This study provides a comprehensive examination of the consequences of early marriage on girls' education, highlighting the challenges faced by young girls in pursuing their education after puberty. The findings reveal that cultural norms and practices, such as the exchange of dowry in the form of cattle, often lead to early marriages, making it difficult for girls to continue their education. Domestic responsibilities further hinder their ability to attend school, as they become burdened with household chores and later, the additional demands of childbearing. Consequently, these young girls face time poverty and are unable to prioritize their education.

The prevalent cultural norms prevalent in South Sudanese society, particularly within the Nguenyiel refugee camp, contribute to the vulnerability of these young girls, depriving them of their rights to education, choice of spouse, and fair labor practices. Limited familial support and educational opportunities leave them solely responsible for fulfilling the roles of a wife, mother, and provider for their parents. Illiteracy has long-term implications for their economic independence, trapping them in a cycle of poverty and hindering their access to better livelihoods. Moreover, the health of these girls is significantly affected by their illiteracy.

Societal expectations regarding gender roles further perpetuate the obstacles faced by married girls in pursuing education. The societal norm that assigns women as primary caregivers and limits men's involvement in child-rearing reinforces the time constraints that prevent girls from attending school. This patriarchal system oppresses women and girls in various aspects of life, including education, marriage, and bodily autonomy.

In conclusion, the vulnerability of young girls in the refugee camp, compounded by the prevailing cultural norms, restricts their access to education and future opportunities.

Early marriage significantly impacts their education, health, and overall lifestyle in the long run. Many South Sudanese refugee girls are forced into marriage to alleviate their families' financial burdens, resulting in the abandonment of their education and exposure to domestic violence and health complications. Recognizing early marriage as a child protection issue, efforts should be directed towards creating an environment where girls can continue and complete their education, thereby reducing their vulnerability.

Gender norms that confine women's roles to the household and men's roles to productive activities outside the home perpetuate gender inequality and impede girls' access to education and a productive life. This research confirms the gender discrimination present in the allocation of responsibilities and resources, particularly in primary education. Therefore, policies and programs aimed at combating child marriage must address gender inequality and consider the unique needs and constraints faced by young girls in the Nguenyiel refugee camp. Additionally, the study emphasizes the link between child marriage and limited schooling, highlighting the adverse consequences such as extreme poverty, gender inequality, increased child mortality, teenage pregnancies, and early sexual debut. Married adolescent girls often experience restricted social networks, limited autonomy, and restricted access to media and health information.

5.2. CONCLUSION

The research delves into the intricate dynamics surrounding early marriage among girls in the Nguenyiel refugee camp, shedding light on the profound impact it has on their education and well-being. One significant finding is the prevalence of school absenteeism among girls who have experienced early marriage, attributed to physical pain during sexual intercourse, menstruation-related issues, and domestic responsibilities. This absenteeism often leads to dropout rates, with many girls finding it challenging to return to school after marriage. Moreover, the study reveals the profound emotional and psychological consequences of early marriage, including loneliness, distress, and long-term domestic violence. The finding underscores the influence of deeply entrenched cultural norms and gender inequalities in perpetuating early marriage and restricting girls' access to education. Patriarchal norms, economic factors, and societal expectations contribute to the prioritization of domestic roles over girls' education, as evidenced by

fathers' perspectives and traditional beliefs regarding gender roles. Furthermore, the study highlights the complexity of addressing early marriage within the refugee context, where cultural traditions intersect with humanitarian challenges and funding constraints. Despite efforts by the government and humanitarian organizations to address child marriage, significant gaps persist in effectively supporting girls' education and reintegration into the school system. This includes a lack of targeted interventions for girls who have dropped out due to early marriage, as well as limited monitoring of school attendance once enrolled. To address these challenges, comprehensive approaches are needed, encompassing policy reforms, community engagement, and gender-responsive teaching practices.

Overall, the finding underscores the urgent need for holistic interventions to end child marriage and promote girls' access to quality education. By addressing the root causes of early marriage, challenging gender inequalities, and empowering girls through education, we can work towards creating a more equitable future for all girls in the Nguenyiel refugee camp.

5.3. RECOMMENDATION

- Humanitarian settings should launch a continuous awareness campaign on the negative effects of Early marriage and the benefits of girl education.
- Humanitarian settings in collaboration with refugee and returnees (RRS) should introduce warnings and if needed strict penalties and punishments on parents who resort early marriage to generate income.
- Special corner meetings with parents and/or care givers should be arranged in the refugee camp to equip them with better knowledge about early marriage and its impact on girls.
- Refugee central committee should receive continuous awareness and follow up to enhance their understanding about early marriage and its overall impact on girls' lives.
- Schools should establish a school-based mentorship program pairing older girls with younger girls at risk of early marriage. Utilize female teachers, community

leaders, or older students as mentors, providing guidance and support alongside academic assistance.

- Schools should offer flexible learning models, including evening classes, remote learning options, and accelerated catch-up programs for girls already married or pregnant. Partner with community learning centers or local NGOs to extend educational opportunities beyond the school walls.
- Teachers should create a classroom environment where students feel comfortable discussing sensitive topics like gender roles, relationships, and early marriage. Actively listen to girls' concerns and provide unbiased information and support.
- Teachers(educators) should be alert to signs of potential early marriage, such as a sudden drop in school attendance, changes in behavior, or withdrawal and/or restrictions from social activities.
- Teachers(educators) should maintain strong connection with child protection agencies to ensure quick and discreet referral and support for at-risk girls.
- Teachers should collaborate with parents and care givers, community leaders, and local and INGO's to raise awareness about the negative consequences of early marriage. Participate in community campaigns and advocate for policies that protect girls' rights and raise awareness about the minimum marriage age.

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Appendices

Introduction

Annex 1 Consent Form

Request for participation in research project

My Name is Rebecca Dawit Melaku and I am a student in College of Development Studies in Addis Ababa University, I am currently doing my research in order to fulfill the requirement for Degree of Master of Arts in Gender Studies. The title of the thesis is “Understanding the consequence of early marriage n girl’s education in Nguenyiel Refugee Camp, Gambella.” The objective of the study is to understand the consequence of early marriage on girl’s education and to finally explore any possible alternatives/strategy to combat the situation. Given the sensitivity of the issue neither your names nor number of your zone and block will be mentioned. Participation in this research is on voluntary basis so that there will be no payment at the end of your interview. Once volunteered to be in this study, individuals have the right to withdraw at any time and refuse to answer questions they don’t feel comfortable with.

Participation in the research requires at least 30-minute interviews. The questions will be about your day-to-day life in your community. Participants will not be asked to share any personal information or anything else that may make them feel uncomfortable. The interviews will be Recorded with your permission and guiding notes will be taken.

What will happen to the information taken?

The information is used purely for academic purpose. All personal information will be kept confidential. Personal information from all interviews will be kept separate from the interview notes and recordings/transcription. No one, not even the researcher and advisor, will have access to your personal information or be able to identify you. That implies no one will recognize you based on the information gathered in your thesis.

To be signed by participants

I have received and understood information about the research “Understanding the consequence of early marriage on girl’s education” and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my consent to;

- Participate in a semi-structured-in-depth interview
- For my personal data to be recorded and processed in the study.

I also give my consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the study.

Date; -----

Signature; -----

Annex 2 Interview guide for in-depth interview For girls who are in/out of school

Introduction

First, I would like to thank you for your commitment to get involved in this study, which will be used for the partial fulfillment master's degree in Gender studies. The general objective of the study is to understand the consequence of early marriage on girl's education. The data collected from this interview is purely for academic purpose and will be kept only in the hands of the researcher as described on the consent form. Therefore, I kindly request you to be open and genuine while responding to the questions as it has a big contribution for the attainment of the goal of the research. This interview will take about half an hour. I would like to thank you again for your cooperation.

Part One: Background Information

General-Tell me about yourself?

- 1.1. How old are you?
- 1.2. when did you come to this camp?
- 1.3. Where did you live before coming to this(nguenyyiel) camp?
- 1.4. Have you been in school? what grade are you in?
- 1.5. With whom were you living before you were married?

Part Two; Personal

- 1.1 How did you meet your husband?
- 1.2. How long have you been married?
- 1.3. How old were you when you got married?
- 1.4. Tell me how your marriage life is? Probe: your relationship with your husband, the responsibilities you have as a wife, anything you consider is a challenge in your current life. (challenge in your r/ship with your husband, child bearing...)

1.5. Do you have a child? If yes, how many?

1.6. Was getting married your plan and interest? if yes/no why? If no, then whose interest was it?

1.7. Do you believe it is possible to manage the responsibility of being a wife and maintaining education? Probe: help the respondent remember the house hold chores, taking care of children and gathering food materials from the camp.

1.8. Who supports you in continuing of your education after getting married? Probe: How about your husband and parents?

1.9. What do you think is your husbands and parents understanding in regard to your education? probe: do they think girls need to be educated or has to continue her education no matter what?

1.10. Why did you stop your education after getting married? (this question is going to be asked for girls we are out of school after getting married)

1.11. Do you think you would ever be able to go back to school again? (for girls who are out of school). Probe: If yes how do you think that will be possible? If no why?

Final question-Is there anything you want to add/tell me before we finish the interview?

Interview guide for parents

Part one: personal background

1.Sex: _____

2.Age: _____

3.Have you attended school (educational background): _____

4.what did you do for living before coming to the camp? _____

Part two:

- 1.How did you meet with your Husband/wife?
 2. How old were you when you got married?
 - 3.How many children do you have? and how many are girls?
 - 4.Have you heard about early marriage in your camp? Probe: How about you,how old was your daughter when she got married?
 - 5.what is your understanding about early marriage?
 - 6.what is the main reason you let your daughter get married at this age?
 - 7.Do you believe early marriage affects girl's education?
 - 8.what do you think about girl's education? Guide: up to which level do you think girls need to be educated? How about after marriage? (do you think a girl still needs to continue her education)
 9. What kind of Impact do you think educating girls has? Why?
 10. Do you think you did the right decision in letting your daughter marry early?
- Final Question-** Is there anything you want to add/tell me before we finish the interview?

Interview guide for husbands

Part one: personal background

- 1.Sex: _____
- 2.Age: _____
- 3.Have you attended school (educational background): _____

Part two:

- 1.How did you meet you wife?

2. How old were you when you got married?
 3. Was marrying your wife your interest or her parents or our parents?
 4. What is your understanding regarding early marriage? Probe: your personal understanding and community understanding.
 5. Do you believe in girls' education?
 6. Do you believe your wife can be successful in her studies?
 6. Do you believe a girl or a wife can still be able to go to school after getting married?
Probe: How do you support your wife? Guide: (House chores, with your children if any, in her studies)
 7. Why did your wife stop going to school after she got married? (for girls who are out of school)
 8. Do you think this (early marriage and dropouts) culture has to continue or should it be stopped?
 9. How did you maintain the house hold commitments and send you wife to school? (for girls who are in school after getting married)
- Final Question-** Is there anything you want to add/tell me before we finish the interview?

**Annex 3 Interview guide for Key informants
camp Administrations, Teachers and child protection focal persons**

First, I would like to thank you for your commitment to get involved in this study, which will be used for the partial fulfillment master's degree in Gender studies. The general objective of the study is to understand the consequence of early marriage on girl's education. The data collected from this interview is purely for academic purpose and will be kept only in the hands of the researcher as described on the consent form. Therefore, I kindly request you to be open and genuine while responding to the questions as it has a big contribution for the attainment of the goal of the research. This interview will take about half or one hour. I would like to thank you again for your cooperation.

Part One: Background information

1. Age:
2. Sex:
3. Name of organization you work for:
4. Position in the organization:
5. Educational background:

Part two

1. What is your understanding regarding early marriage?
2. Have you come across or heard on the cases of early marriage in this camp?
3. Do you believe early marriage that is being practiced in this specific camp is affecting girl's educational advancement? If yes/no how?
4. What do you think is the main reason that girls quit school after marriage? Guide: How about because of early pregnancy, husband unwillingness or house responsibilities?
5. As an educator/camp administration what do you think is your personal contribution to combat early marriage and school drop out?
6. What is the communities understanding in regards to educating girls?
7. What is the communities understanding in girls marriage after 18 years of age?
8. What does the humanitarian law say about child marriage in emergency sitting?

9. Is there any strategy set to combat early marriage? (how do we bring lasting change to the problem)

10. Is there any strategy to help girls who are out of school to get back to school?

11. What is your personal view on the consequence of early marriage on girl's education?

Final question-Is there anything you want to add/tell me before we finish the interview

Annex 4 Guiding questions for Focus group discussion

This question will be applicable for the two focus group discussions (FGD's)

1. Is there early marriage practice in your camp?
2. Who arranges the marriage?
3. What do you think is the cause of early marriage?
4. Is there any policy in the refugee camp that combats early marriage?
5. What do you think is your responsibility in addressing early marriage and its negative implications?
6. What can be done in order to bring back girls in school?

Annex 5: Direct observation Checklist

No.	Points	Remarks
1	Evaluate the respondent's level of confidence while answering questions raised by the researcher.	
2	Observe the facial expressions and attitude of the respondents towards the questions raised by the researcher.	
3	Carefully examine if the respondents have any visible bruises or signs of physical harm on their bodies	
4	Note any instances where certain questions are particularly discomforting to the respondents and consider adjusting the approach accordingly.	
5	Assess whether the translator demonstrates empathy and understanding towards the experiences and emotions expressed by the young girls.	
6	Observe non-verbal cues such as body language, posture, and gestures to gauge the respondents' comfort levels and overall engagement during the interview	
7	Take note of any interruptions or external factors that may have influenced the respondents' responses, such as distractions, presence of others, or time constraints	
8	Record any instances where the respondents display signs of emotional distress, such as tears, sighs, or visible discomfort, and ensure appropriate support is provided.	