Kodzero dzavanhukadzi netsika dzavashona dzokuroorana

Chigidi William L.

Summary

This narrative focuses on the rights of women in the context of Shona marriage customs, family life, and the HIV/AIDS scourge. It discusses these customs and practices showing where and how they violate human rights, especially the rights of women and the girl child. The narrative shows that although the social life of the Shona people has been affected by modernity, old traditional customs pertaining to marriage and family life have persisted. The customs and practices discussed include polygamous marriages, the inheriting of a dead relative's wife or husband, kidnapping a girl and marrying her without her expressed consent, a girl imposing herself on a man and his family leading to a kind of forced marriage, and marriage resulting from using a girl to appease an avenging spirit. Women are being warned to be on the alert because while some of these customs appear to be dying they are returning in different but more subtle forms, and they are even more dangerous now because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.