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**Religion and child marriages in the Johane Marange Apostolic
Sect: The case study of Chihota communal areas,1917-2015.**

BY

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ARTS HONOURS DEGREE IN HISTORY**

DECLARATION

I Sally Gamuchirai Kasinamunda certify that this dissertation is my original work, it is an honest and true effort of my personal research. I certify that the work has not been presented anywhere else before for any other thesis.

Signed.....

Date.....

This dissertation was submitted for examination with my approval as the university Supervisor

Signed.....

Date.....

DEDICATION

To my late Sister Mercy Tinashe Kasinamunda

APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certified that they have read and recommended to the Midlands State

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Religion and child marriages in the Johane Marange Apostolic Sect: The case study of Chihota Communal Areas,1917-2015.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACRWC African charter on the rights and welfare of children

CEDAW Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women

CRC Convention on the rights of children

HIV Human immune virus

JMAS Johane Marange apostolic sect

NMOA Native marriage ordinance act

UDHR Universal declaration of human rights

UNICEF United nations children's fund

ABSTRACT

The study focuses on religion and child marriages from 1917-2015. Case of Johane Marange Apostolic Sect of Chihota communal areas. The study reveals the background to the history of child marriages in Zimbabwe from the pre-colonial period which reveals that child marriages has got an African traditional-cultural origin. There are a lot of consequences of the Johane Marange Sect's marriage practices which includes illiteracy, abuse of women and poor health outcomes as a result of the sect's belief in spiritual healing which prohibits the members to receive modern medication. The study also examines the teaching or doctrines of the JMAS and how it promotes child marriages. The study made use of oral interviews, questionnaires, observation as well as secondary data in collecting information.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

INTRODUCTION

Early Child marriages in Zimbabwe had been predominant over the years. The marriages have been taking place mostly due to religion. For a long time now, it has been prevalent among the Johane Marange apostolic sect¹. In the case of Chihota in Mashonaland East, there are cases of children being married off to elderly men in the JMAS. At the Easter conference which they refer to as 'pasika'(Passover), people from different Marange provinces all over Zimbabwe celebrate Easter and waiting for 'mutumwa'(the Marange leader), their leader to come with 'chidywo'(holy communion) for Easter. At the occasion a lot of young girls will be taken by the elder men as their wives. Research has it that the fathers of these young brides negotiate marriage with their fellow male counter parts in the absence of the mother or the girl in question. After the camping is over, the girl will just be told that she is now married and is supposed to prepare for marriage even if she had not reached their puberty. To them, school is nothing and marriage is everything. Teachers at Rupere primary school also testified against these marriages. They expressed their deep sadness and frustration as every year children especially in the 7th grade, after Passover, 'about 5 girls drop out from school due to marriage' said Mrs Zimunya². In an interview with some of the young brides, this girl said she was married off to a 79year old man when she was barely 12. She explained her experience as a woman which she referred to as very hard as death itself. The worst nightmare she ever had was the night when her sister, her aunt and the co-wife held her legs, poured okra inside her vagina and watched the old man forcing himself inside her.... she was helpless, she cried and shouted but to no avail as three women held her legs very tightly, the old man succeeded in taking her pride with the help of other women³. This study therefore seeks to explore the early child marriages and religion. There are a lot of consequences surrounding early child marriages. Fact sheet defines child marriage as 'any marriage carried

out below the age of 18 years, before the girls is physically, physiologically and psychologically ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage and bearing⁴. Since 1917, the Zimbabwean government has pass, enacted and amended laws to protect children against all forms of exploitation. Domestic violence act (criminalises child marriage as well as criminal codification which make it illegal to have sexual intercourse with a minor). Despite all these efforts to try and stop child marriages, there are still cases of children taken into marriage.

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Considering the view that girls and women are falling victims of being forced into arranged marriages by their elders at church as well as their parents. The study seeks to explore the early child marriages and religion.

OBJECTIVES

1. To analyse the historical background and origins of the child marriages in apostolic sects.
2. To discuss the teachings or doctrines of the JohaneMarange sect and how they promote child marriages.
3. To reveal the consequences of child marriages in Chihota.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the historical background of the child marriages in Zimbabwe ?
2. In what way does the church's doctrine promote early child marriages?;
3. What are the impacts of child marriages?

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Child marriages are prevalent in Zimbabwe and 21% of children throughout the country are married before the age of 18⁵, they occur almost every day in different parts and communities all over the country. The communities do not see anything wrong in these early child marriages due to cultural, religious and most probably traditional reasons. But as Graca Machel, widow Mandela says, traditions are made by people, we can change them...⁶. Religion has proved to be one of the leading causes of child marriages in Chihota. These happen especially in the Johane Marange apostolic sect and it is very difficult to end the evil. The doctrines which they received from their elders and prophets in church make them see no problem in early child marriages. It has been revealed from research that there are a lot of problems affecting married girls and it is a Human Right violation. These girls are prone to domestic and sexual violence. They cannot defend themselves from abuse and torture, injustices and even ill treatment from their husbands because they are young and they do not know how best to handle themselves under marriage circumstances. The age difference between the girls and their husbands paved way for abuse, in most cases the husbands will be twice or thrice their age. Hence, the young women are overpowered. The girls are just voiceless, they are caged victims of religion and they are entrenched by the customs and laws of the religion of their fathers. There are many apostolic sects in Zimbabwe

and they constitute a larger population. The Johane Marange church is quoted as one of the largest growing spiritual groups at the moment and therefore it may be speculated that its growth in child marriages will also increase⁷. In Zimbabwe, the Johane Marange apostolic sect in Chihota had been practising early child marriages over the years and it is very natural and common in their church. The girls in the Johane Marange church are taught about the goodness of marriage even before they reach puberty. They are taught that rejecting a marriage proposal or disobeying the choice of husband made by the parents is a taboo which calls for banishment of the entire family from the church. They are also taught to be submissive to their husbands, to love and respect them, to forsake jealous of co wives despite the abuses. Cases have revealed that girls in marriages are at the high risk of complications during labour. Some of them are reported to have died during labour and some have lost the pregnancy or losing the baby in the process. Fathers negotiate marriage in the absence of the wife nor the girl in question. The fathers give away their daughters to their fellow mates in exchange for money or other things. The girl will just be told that she has been married and is supposed to go to her husband's house just like that. This has been very difficult on the part of the girl who is forced to become a mother, a woman and a wife to a husband who is as old as his father and is supposed to deliver everything right as a married woman would. In some cases the prophets or other senior members of the church when they lust for any girl in church, they hide behind prophecy and lie that God said he should marry this girl. The laws of the apostolic church suppresses the girl child as she cannot reject the proposal, if she tries to run away from home as others have done, her parents will receive punishment from the church for instance they can be sucked away or having their status reduced. From 1917, there had been a number of laws prohibiting early child marriages. Unfortunately, there are still cases of children taken into marriage. Laws have been set, revised and amended but there still cases of early child marriage. It seems as if there are challenges in Zimbabwe in terms of

customary and roman Dutch law as the terms of the laws are parallel to each other. The Zimbabwean constitution has passed laws which prohibits child marriages and protect children from child abuse. The laws despite being there it seems as if it only exists on paper only. It is not active to the societies and the JMAS practising it as they continue to engage in child marriages considering the view that it is a religious issue which is based on religious connections so it is hard to end.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Child marriages in Zimbabwe have been in existence in the pre-colonial societies. Machingura is of the view that early child marriages in Zimbabwe has got a traditional Shona culture and it was practised through polygamy⁸. Through polygamy a man would acquire many wives and children, the same belief that existed in the pre- colonial societies was inherited by the JMAS. According to Machingura, ‘polygamy which is practised in the JMAS encourages child marriages and we cannot run away from the fact that African culture also permits it and was also common amongst the Shona people⁹. Machingura pointed out that child marriages had been practised in the pre- colonial societies under polygamy which brings the researcher to the point that since child marriages had been in existence before the formation of the JMAS in 1930, the sect just followed a culture that already existed and took it as part of their religion.

Machingura in his article ‘A Diet Of Wives’, pointed out that a widely practise that resulted in polygamy in the pre- colonial period was ‘kuzvarira’(pledging)¹⁰. Jeater noted that the practise of ‘kuzvarira’(pledging), whereby young girls were pledged to big ‘men’ who were

rich in exchange of grain during food shortages¹¹. Therefore child pledging encouraged early child marriages in the pre-colonial era. Supporting the view that child marriages has got a cultural tradition, Machingura and Jeater's articles were of great importance to the study of the researcher as the researcher was able to trace the origins of early child marriages in Zimbabwe and being able to assess why there were child marriages in the pre- colonial period and the transition to the post- colonial period. The transition showed the difference in factors which promoted child marriages in the pre and colonial period, and the factors in the post-colonial period. In the pre-colonial era and colonial era it was practised as a part of culture and tradition and in the post colonial era it is practised in the JMAS, as part of the church's religion.

Elizabeth Schmidt interrogated the debate of customary marriage law and its formation by looking at child marriages, child pledging and forced marriages¹². Through the writings of Schmidt, the researcher was able to trace the history of child marriages, its consequences and being able to assess the marriages as far as the customary laws were concerned. According to Schimdt, child pledging and forced marriages were outlawed through the NMOA of 1901¹³. The Author pointed out that a deal was made between the male patriarchs and the European males since the black males were not used the new law.

Chakawa revealed that some methods used by the JMAS were derived from the Old Testament. The men in the JMAS are polygamous like King David and Solomon and the position of women in marriage and church¹⁴, these methods were derived from the old testament. According to Bourdillion, women can only aspire to be hakiros whose duty is to lead in the singing¹⁵. The position of women in the JMAS makes them vulnerable, powerless

and voiceless. Chakawa also assesses the sitting setup in the church where girls from 9 years sit in front facing the older married men and the married women sit behind girls while young unmarried men sit behind married man, as being a set up which is meant to make older men take note of bossing girls and apportioning among themselves¹⁶. The researcher was able to understand the church's sitting setup and its significance to the study. In the same article the researcher observes that from the two case studies there are differences as in the case of JMAS in Marange communal lands, the women eventually visit the hospital as being evidenced by the statistics recorded by Chakawa that 11 pregnant minors sought help at Marange clinic, of these 9 were 13 year olds and 2 were 15 year olds.¹⁷ However, in the case of JMAS in Chihota communal areas, the women do not visit hospitals at all. The women would die at home than sought help at hospitals, Hence, there are no statistics in Chihota.

SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

Different methods were used to acquire information, interviews being a primary method were of great importance in doing a research as you engage with respondent. The researcher also made use of secondary sources such as textbooks, journals, newspapers as well as material drawn from the internet.

According to Meyer and Eccles, an interview is a conversation in which the interviewer questions the interviewee in order to gain information. Interviews can be formal or informal, structured or unstructured and can be conducted one to one, in groups or face to face¹⁸. The researcher had interviews with the villagers of Chihota communal areas especially in the Rupere village and Mhowa village. The researcher also interviewed the police at Mahusekwa

police station, nurses at Chihota District rural hospital and the Headmaster at Rupere Primary school. No translation was needed as the Researcher was familiar with the language spoken in Chihota that is Shona. Through or oral interviews the researcher was able to gather first hand information which was based on real experiences and clarification on the events that were myths prior to the study. The major hindrance was resistance to disclose the secrets of the church to outsiders. There was also lack of cooperation from the Marange male followers as they were too conservative.

The researcher used questionnaires, where the researcher structured a set of questions which were distributed to the designated people in the Chihota communal areas. According Dudovskiy, questionnaires can be classified as both, qualitative and quantitative method depending on the nature of question, the answers obtained to open-ended questionnaire questions are analysed using qualitative methods and they involve discussions and critical analysis without the use of numbers and calculations¹⁹. The methods was effective as it covered more areas and faster than interviews. However, the method was challenging especially to the women in the JMAS as they were illiterate yet they had more information, Some men in the Sect even though they are literate , they refused to cooperate as they regarded the process as wasting of time to read through the questions and answer them.

The researcher resorted to direct observation method to collect data in order to pick up on the untold or unspoken response of a respondent. The researcher watched through followers in the Chihota communal areas without notifying them. Observation is an instance of noticing or perceiving, remark or a statement based on what one has noticed or based²⁰. The method had

an advantage that the researcher was able to see the impact of Child marriages on the ground with tangible evidence.

The researcher made use of secondary source which refers to the data that already existed, secondary source is any source about an event, period, or issue in history that was produced after that event, period or issue has passed²¹. The researcher used secondary sources to supplement the information required in the primary sources so as to come up with sufficient information for the research study. This was highly appreciated as a lot of information were helpful to the study of child marriages.

RESEARCH STRUCTURE

Introductory chapter

Chapter1

The historical background and the Origins Of The Early Child Marriages In Zimbabwe

Chapter2

The Johane Marange's Teachings/ Doctrines And How they Promote child marriages

Chapter 3

Consequences of the church's marriage practices

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CHAPTER1

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUN OF THE CHILD MARRIAGES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to give the definitions of ‘child’ and ‘child marriage’, to explore the historical background of the early child marriages in Zimbabwe in the pre-colonial period, colonial and post colonial and to analyse the role of theJohane Marange Apostolic sect in promoting early child marriages.

THE BACKGROUND OF CHILD MARRIAGES IN ZIMBABWE

The Zimbabwean constitution defines a “child” as anyone below the age of 18 years¹. The children act chapter 5:06 defines a “child’ as anyone below the age of 16². It deals with the rights and protection of children in Zimbabwe. In the same act, a minor is defined as anyone below 18 years of age³. Child marriage according to the Zimbabwean constitution is any marriage carried out below the age of 18years. The definitions capture the most important aspects to be discussed in this dissertation. Child marriages had been practised in Zimbabwe over the years and they originated from the African traditions and customs. It should also be noted that polygamy caused child marriages in the pre- colonial, colonial and post colonial period.

Polygamy and early child marriage have got a cultural and traditional origin before religion became the centre of polygamy. According to Machingura, polygamy was practised in the traditional Shona culture⁴, hence through the history of the early child marriages, it was

practised as a cultural or traditional norm. There was what was called “kuzvarirwa” child pledging especially during famine where a parent chooses to exchange her daughter with food or money for survival to a man as old as him. Jeater argued that in the pre-colonial era, the practice that resulted in polygamy was ‘kuzvarira’ pledging, he noted that the practice of kuzvarira pledging, whereby young girls were pledged to big men who were rich in exchange of grain during food shortages⁵. The men were usually the greatest farmers or businessmen in the community. It was during this pre-colonial era that women were voiceless and were caged victims. Mothers would not have a say over their children, children belonged to the husband and hence, women were just sex and child bearing machines only. Feminists wrote books fighting against the injustices of man as well as the rights of women and children. Women were enlightened by these writings and there was transition in the family affairs as well as in the marriages. Every person in Zimbabwe had rights which protected them for instance children had also rights as well as children they were no longer subjected to abuse and torture. The Johane Marange therefore, are not the pioneers of early child marriage, but rather it was a thing that was practised before by the fore fathers due to ignorance and when they became aware of the atrocities surrounding the union, they gradually began to change their ways. Therefore, it is clear that the abuse of women and child marriage has got a cultural-traditional origin.

There was also ‘musengabere’ (abduction), abduction a traditional culture practised in the colonial Zimbabwe which promoted early child marriages. According to Becker, The man is believed to have studied the girl’s daily activities including when she would go to the river..., the man would reappear with her after a while and present her to her family since the girl’s family would be worried on the disappearance of their daughter⁶. This traditional culture saw young girls getting married in this manner to the men they did not want but they were forced

by tradition to stay with the men who in most cases were way older than them. The parents were not in a position to take back their children because culturally, once a girl leaves the house, she will not be allowed to reintegrate into the family. According to head man Gondo, 'musengabere'(abduction) was a way of forcing a girl into marriage against her will but due to the change of time the tradition was abandoned due to the fact that it promoted early child marriages that is why it is now referred to as child kidnapping⁷. Therefore, child marriages originated from the pre-colonial Zimbabwe.

The Johane Marange sect is named after its founder Johane Marange and it was formed in 1930. Machingura stresses that the sect continued to grow after the death of its founder. He also asserts that the Johane Marange and the Johane Masowe sects command sizeable following in Zimbabwe⁸. The Johane Marange followers had been practising child marriages in their sect for a long time as being evidenced by the number of wives their leader had, Machingura revealed that some of the wives Johane Marange were younger than his first born Abel upon his death⁹. Therefore, early child marriages in the sect is a long term practised norm that had been taking place in the sect for many decades.

In addition, the Johane Marange apostolic sect has played a bigger role in promoting early child marriages. Through the sect, there had been a number of cases of children taken into marriage by elder men. The sect had taken it from the Shona traditional culture of polygamy and they had become the custodians of it. Nevertheless, Machingura noted that even though the sect had strict rules based on their religious beliefs of purity, polygamy has never been regarded as defiling to the body making critics argue that the apostolic marital lifestyle is all

about the diet of wives¹⁰, considering the view that the sect derived their marital norm from the Shona traditional culture which they desist in the present day.

LAWS AND CONSTITUTION OF ZIMBABWE

The Zimbabwean constitution clarifies that children are not supposed to be taken into marriage whether willingly or forcefully. The government of Rhodesia then had to enact laws to protect children from the harmful traditional practices. The first native marriage ordinance act, Southern Rhodesian Legislative council of July 1901 governed all non Christian marriages and banned pledging¹¹. The African marriages then required that a girl or a woman should be of full age for her to be married. During this time, age had nothing to do with marriage only physical features matters. In 1912 the native marriage act was revised and it criminalised the pledging and imposing a fine or imprisonment on any person who breach the law¹². Also, a much more detailed registration law, the 1917 Native ordinance act again had criminal penalties for pledging¹³. All these efforts were made to put an end to child marriages having been practised traditionally. Therefore, Child marriages were practised in the pre-colonial and when apostolic sects were formed in 1930, they just followed a system that already existed prior to their formation. According to Machingura, at independence in 1980, the Zimbabwean government adopted the same legislation but under a name, the Native marriage act it allowed only one man, one woman policy, but the Zimbabwean government later included the customary or traditional marriage act which recognises polygamy¹⁴. Hence, the sect abuses the traditional marriage to their benefit.

The criminal law act¹⁵, find guilty of any person man or woman who decides to marry or have sexual intercourse with a “child” or a “minor”. Despite these laws and the efforts from the constitution advocating against child marriages, the apostolic sect have turned a deaf ear and are not afraid of the implications of marrying an underage as the law never applied to them. The Johane Marange sect being is the most practitioner of child marriage in Chihota and it is as if they are above the constitution they do not care about the criminal code at all as the Marange leader had up to 13 wives. The men are following the roots of their leader who was ordained by the almighty God and with the help of his power, he was able to build up such a large church with many followers in Zimbabwe and across the African continent.

Section 26 and 78 of the constitution reveals that the constitution is doing everything possible to end child marriages and making sure that the girls are not falling victims of rape. The men in the sects refer a union whereby a man abuses a child and getting her pregnant which is not a marriage according to the Zimbabwean constitution. Marriage is supposed to occur between consent adults.

Therefore there is need for an assessment of the child marriages in relation to religion. It should be clearly understood that there are no marriages in Marange apostolic sect, they are just abusive union meant to sexually abuse children of their innocence. It could have been better if children marry each other and not having an older man thrice the age of the child manipulating her. Young men and youths in the Marange apostolic church are forbidden to choose girls on their own, girls belongs to ‘men’ not boys. This is even evidenced even in assessing their sitting allocation in church where girls sits on the front roll facing men and the boys sits behind men as well as women, they sits behind girls at the back. However, children

too cannot marry each other as the constitution defies that kind of marriage as it against the law and code of marriage.

Furthermore, Zimbabwe has ratified a number of conventions dealing with the dealing with the abuse and rights of women and children. These include the convention on the Rights of the child (CRC), The African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child(ACRWC) and the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women(CEDAW). These legislative frameworks are domestic, regional as well as international legislative frameworks

Article 16(1) of the ACRWA obligates the state parties to take specific legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment and especially physical or mental injury or abuse, while in the care of a parent, legal guardian or school authority or any person has care of a child¹⁶.The ACRWA prohibits child marriages, the abuse and torture of children and women. The regional framework does not give a clear definition of a “child”. According to ACRWA, any person has care for the children¹⁷. Hence the teachers, police and the Chihota community must take responsibility of the children who are being abused by their fathers and so called husbands. Even though the Marange apostolic followers are practising child marriages under the guise of religion, any person must report these cases to the police for the welfare of the child. On the aspect of marriage on who is supposed to enter into marriage. The UDHR clearly states that marriage should take place between two consent adults freely¹⁷. However this concept of free and consent adults does not apply to the apostolic sects as having been mentioned earlier. The apostolic sect men marry girls who are as young as 12 hence, they are

going against the article 6 of marriage. Therefore the unions cannot be referred to as marriages but forced and abusive unions where men are dominant and dictates everything and takes advantage of the age difference between them.

Thirdly the universal declaration of human rights (UDHR), the CRC and the CEDAW being the international frameworks all directly and indirectly forbid the degrading and mistreatment of girls inherent in child marriages. The international framework legislation just like the domestic and regional legislations suggests the same in terms of marriage. The most central aspects to be noted being of 'free and full consent' and the rights of the children to protection from the abusers and law breakers. However, Despite the domestic, regional and international frameworks that had been ratified by Zimbabwe, child or illegal marriages continue to take place especially in the Johane Marange sect as part and parcel of the religion as if the government laws and policies does not affect them.

In an interview with one of the girls who had fallen victim of early child marriages, the young mother explained her experience as a woman. She said that she feared to share the same bed with her husband whom she refers to as "madzibaba", she would pretend to be playing with other children of her husband who were of her age and she would sleep with them in their hut. She also said that sometimes so got beaten or scolded by fellow women for having burnt food whilst playing 'pada or hwishu' with other children. The woman also said that in trying to run away from the chores and responsibilities of a wife, she lied to her husband that she was pregnant and sick and was sent to 'mhowa' were pregnant women stay waiting to deliver. However, it was later discovered that she lied because of that she received the beating punishment from her husband¹⁸. Therefore, the interview clearly showed that the union is not a "marriage" as it had been entered without 'full and free consent', but it is rather

a stolen childhood and abuse due to the lack of 'free and full consent' since the girl still feels that she is a child who needs to play and cannot stand the presence of man in bed but rather chooses to sleep with other girls of her age in their hut. The husband on the other hand is nothing less than an abuser who sees a woman in a young girl, a child who is as young as his own daughters.

In conclusion it is therefore clear that every effort is being made to end child marriages in Zimbabwe. It is the duty of the society, the teachers as well as the police, not the policy makers only to ensure that the child marriages which are practised on a day to day basis are stopped. The law breakers must also be put behind bars and get their punishment. This would ensure that others will not take part in child marriages in the future because if they turn a deaf ear on the laws of marriage, the same laws will judge them accordingly. The ignorant society and the religious sects must be conscience of the fact there is nothing like child marriage or early marriage, it is just a matter of abuse, exploitation, victimisation and oppression of a girl child. This study however focuses on religion and child marriage, case of Johane Marange in Chihota communal areas.

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CHAPTER 2

DOCTRINES OF THE JOHANE MARANGE SECT AND HOW IT PROMOTES CHILD MARRIAGES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the teachings or of the Johane Marange apostolic sect and how it promotes early child marriages. The teachings drive young girls into marriage, young girls are taught about the goodness of marriage and marriage itself at a tender age. They are also taught how to take care of their husbands when they got married. Through these teachings young girls only think that they are destined to be married and therefore the teachings promotes early child marriages.

The young men and women in the Johane Marange sect receive the teachings from the selected elderly men or women in the sect. The young men are taught that for one to be called a man amongst men he should have many children and wives and one can only accomplish that by marrying young girls who have the potential to bear as many children as they grow. According to Chikwature, in the JMAS, the more wives they have, the more power and success they are believed to have¹. On the other hand the young girls in the church are taught not to refuse marriage anytime the Holy Spirit sees it in her. Therefore, the doctrines and the teachings of the JMAS promote child marriages.

Razaro revealed that he engaged in child marriages because he grew up in a polygamous society, he envies his father for having been cuddled by his women and treated with so much care and fearsome respect. Razaro also said that the fact that his father was a polygamist, had a lot of children, hence he also wanted to have such a big family and the only way he could have many children was to marry young girls who would not have their eggs dried up few years after marriage². The elder men in church and the advisors taught them as young boys that for one to be respected and called a man amongst men, he should be like Solomon, David, Abraham, Moses in the bible who had many wives, hundreds, thousands of them³. Age of marriage was not stated in the bible, the men just married any women they desired. Therefore, the men in the apostolic sects desire young girls because who are innocent, full of life and virtuous. Virginity is of outmost importance to men and that is the other reason why the men opt to go for young girls is because they know that they are young, innocent and have not experienced much in life or exposed to sexual issues⁴. Dominance is what men in Johane Marange crave for, according to the bible, Solomon had 1000 wives and 300 concubines⁵, and these men dominated during their times, they were great kings. The young men and the young women in the church are taught to marry as early as possible and these teachings had promoted early child marriages in the JMAS.

Razaro said that marrying many wives is the best thing a man can do to acquire respect and dignity in the society and church⁶. The man bragged about his achievement of having acquired many wives and children in his compound, it makes a man complete he says and not becoming irresponsible like Baba Jimmy who had only one wife and less than five children. Irresponsible and indignity man like Baba Jimmy are those men in the church who have chosen not to marry more than one wife. Those men were overlooked by other men and women in church, they were not respected or handed over positions in church because they

are regarded to weak and incapable. In hearing that other men Marange church actually had only one wife, the researcher decided to interview Baba Jimmy and hear what he had to say and how he had managed against all odds to stick to his principles. Baba Jimmy said that he decided to remain with only one wife and few children because he did not like the polygamy environment where he was brought up in. His father as a polygamist never paid attention of him as a child, according to him he thought that his attitude towards him was due to the fact that he had many, because of that he did not want to have many. He wanted to have a sizeable family which he can pay attention to, cater and care for. The sight of children's' graveyards all over his father's garden makes him hate many wives, he thought marrying one wife will reduce the chances of children dying. Baba jimmy proved to be different from other men in the church. He has got his own principles, he thinks differently and he cannot be brainwashed by the elders or anyone, he does not care about title in church or respect, he only cares about his family and nothing else. His response was that he cannot leave the church because his parents and the whole family will be punished also for his rebellion and his family will disown him⁷. Therefore, the teachings of the sect promotes early child marriages considering the view that for others who fear intimidation, they will end up marrying young girls in order to keep up a good respected name in the church.

Virginity in the marriage of Johane Marange sect is of paramount importance. Traditionally virginity is important also when bride price is paid, a girl is asked through her aunt whether or not she is still a virgin. According to Murphree, virginity is associated with purity and it is common that all the girls in the JMS are expected to pass a ceremonial virginity examination⁸. This is because the aunties do not want to be shamed and blamed for not having done their part in counselling their nieces, they made sure that they do everything possible to protect them from losing the virginity before marriage. Unmarried girls visit their

aunties and grandmothers homesteads from time to time to have their virginity checked. If the auntie finds out that her niece has lost her virginity, she is forced marry the person who had broken her virginity. Again after the bride price is paid when the girl starts visiting his husbands hut, the aunties will be waiting to wash the sheets which gives everyone evidence that they had done their job well, their niece was full and intact. Therefore the husband will have to buy a cow called *chimanda* and metres of clothe material for his mother in law in appreciation and gratitude for their daughters virginity. Hence virginity was very important and crucial in the African traditional societies also. In the apostolic sects, girls also have their virginity checked every Saturday morning before church begins. There they would be taught and reminded they must not let any man touch their bodies before marriage. Rhoda the last wife of Razaro clearly explained that a girl must remain a virgin until married so that she will not bring shame to their parents and have their bride price paid accordingly⁹.

Marrying a virgin girl is the dream of every man in the Johane Marange apostolic sect and that is the reason why they prefer to marry young girls before they get exposed to a lot of things. If the parents of the girl marry off their daughter whilst she is still a virgin it means more bride price to the father, honour and to the mother and daughter. A man who marries a virgin also is a dignified and pure man as being said by Razaro that he could never sleep with a woman who is not a virgin. According to him, such a woman is unclean and promiscuous, he would never be sure whether or not the children will be his¹⁰. As Warner reveals, the entire volumes could be written why men devote to so much effort to controlling and suppressing female sexuality, but the root cause must surely be the desire to establish paternity¹¹. Therefore, virginity is of great value as far as marriage is concerned in the Marange apostolic sect. This is a cause of early child marriage as men then decided to marry the girl whilst still very young in order to make sure that they marry them virgins.

Mothers are held responsible for the behaviour of their children and the preservation of the daughter's virginity. It is their task to do everything possible to make sure that her daughter keeps her virginity until the day she got married. Johane Marange followers deny the fact that they take part in child marriages, they say that it is just a marriage between two people willingly¹². The women in the church do not clearly accept that the marriages are forced marriages they are somehow affected by masculinity. Just like men, they hide behind religion that it is their religion to be married early. Also they said that their daughters should marry as early as possible and protect them from influences and peer pressures in school. So they should at least marry at grade 7 because in primary school there are no peer pressures but if they continue with education they will be exposed to a lot of bad things and influences from different children from different religion and different backgrounds, they say so because of their marriages.

Therefore, mothers also want their daughters to get married as young as possible so that they will be married whilst still virgins as having been discussed earlier, Razaro's first wife said,

Inivangu vana ndakavaendesa ini mugwaro rechitanhatu chairo kunze kwemudiki uyu aenda avakuda kutonyora gwaro rechinome. Chikonzero andidi kunyadziswa muchechi kana kurohwa nababa ndichinzi handigoni kuraira mwana wandakabereka. Ndinonyarira kupi ini kana pasuru yemwana wangu yavhurwa baba vasati vapiwa mari yavo. Saka vana ngavaende vasati vasvinukisa¹³. (i married off my daughters in the 6th grade expect the youngest who got married in grade 7. The reason is that i do not want to be shamed in the church or having myself beaten up by my husband for failing to raise my daughters well. Where will i go to if my daughter loses her virginity before marriage, before my husband's gets his bride price. So in order to avoid any problem, children should be married off early before they get exposed to a lot of things)

Through what the woman said above, it is clear that there are benefits which both the father and the mother gains upon their daughter's marriage¹⁴. The mother expects respect and

honour from the church and the husband, she also protects herself from the husband's beating by securing the virginity of her daughter. The father on the other hand expects bride price. Therefore, according to them in order to acquire all these things and benefits from the son in law, a child must be married as early as possible so that the "parcel" will not be opened before the 'buyer' come fourth. In the Marange sect, virginity is the key to a prosperous marriage. It is the pride of the girl and the mother also for having raised her daughter well. The church and the co wives praise her while others will be envying her.

Fact sheet postulates that the principal reasons for child marriage are the girl's virginity and the bride price. Young girls are less likely to have had sexual contact and thus are believed to be virgins upon marriage, these conditions raises the family status as well as the dowry to be paid by the husband, in some cases, virginity is verified by female relatives before the marriage. The reason that it is done by relatives is because they want to avoid bias¹⁵. The aunties from both the husband and the girl verifies the examination.

In terms of marriage in the Johane Marange apostolic sect the parents benefits mostly from the union. They are the ones who understands what it means to be married, and they know what they tends to benefit from that marriage. The father in giving away his daughter in marriage, will be allowed to marry the daughters of others too. The mother will acquire honour and respect for having raised a virtuous virgin girl and for that, church will recognise the mother as a good and responsible woman amongst other women who can be appointed as an advisor of other girls and women in the church. The father will be happy having few children to feed and clothe. The parents will be receiving aid from the son in law whenever they face any problem. All these mentioned benefits of the marriage favour the parents to a

larger extent and not the girl in question. The marriage is only, meant to serve the selfish interests of the parents, the girls get to benefit nothing other than the praises for having been chaste till marriage. Therefore, the girl is just a commodity, a treasure used to quench the desires of the father-like husband as well as her parents.

There is no certain fixed age form marriage in Marange apostolic church. Once the 'holy spirit' sees a marriage in a girl even as young 10, it speaks and make sure that marriage takes place. The followers are deep rooted in the ways of their church as the church is at the centre of their livelihoods. The Holy Spirit can not be questioned, it can transform a school in a married woman over the night. Therefore according to the Marange apostolic church, a child is only a person under the age of not more or less than 8 most probably because mostly girl's breasts will not be promising as yet. The researcher came up with the view that physical features define whether a person is a child or an adults not age. The Zimbabwe republic police also has got a department called the victim friendly unit which deals also with the protection of children and women's rights. They handle cases like *chiramu*(indecent, assault or rape), forced virginity testing, child pledging as well as child marriages in traditional and religious groups. The department has been finding challenges in investigating with these cases especially with the apostolic religious groups as the victims do not cooperate because of brainwashing as well as socialising.

ABUSE OF WOMEN RIGHTS IN THE CHURCH

Young girls in marriage though they receive inhuman treatment from their husbands, they fail to run away and free them from abuse. They also can not even refuse to be married to the old

men who have many wives. Why do they not leave these old abusive men and stay somewhere else with relatives or alone. In my research i was able to ask all these questions as to why they cannot runaway. One woman said that almost everyone in their family are from the Johane Marange Apostolic church. Other relatives who do not go to the Marange church are no longer their relatives because *vakan'ora*(unclean)and hence they have cut contact and ties with long before she was even born. She does not know where they stay nor had she ever seen them, she only heard about them. The women in the sects cannot and does not leave their marriages because it is against the church's law to leave her husband's house for any reason. No man in his right senses will ever marry her after she had left her husband's place meaning she will not have male protection her whole life. The women are just vulnerable, traditional feminine qualities are undervalued in the overly individualistic and masculine Apostolic sect culture¹⁶. The children you bear might also die or became naughty raising them out of their father's home. The woman went on to say that even if you decide to leave the children behind, your mind will not be at rest at all knowing that no woman would ever take proper care of another woman's children. For all these mentioned reasons, the women decides to stay.

There are many women who feel that it is shameful to leave ones husband. Rhoda said that she does not wish to be like Machivei who ran away from her father's house when she was supposed to get married to his friend. She said that Machivei is suffering, she is very old and no man wants to marry her, she maybe cursed¹⁷. Machivei confirmed this and said that she was married off to her father's best friend who was very old and had eight wives who were also old enough to be her mothers. She could not stand becoming a wife to that old man and she ran away with the help of a woman whom she told her story¹⁸. The woman helped her find a house help job. Machivei is currently working as a house help since she left her

father's home almost 10years ago. She is doing perfectly well and does not have any regrets at all but the only worry she is having is that her father does not wish to ever see her again anywhere near his house. They are disowned if they refuse marriage. When Machivei visited her home years after she had run away her father practically threw her out of the house and refused to let her spend the night at the house. The reason being that the parents are still angry with her, they were shamed and sent thrown out of the church following her departure.

Furthermore, the women are ignorant of laws and policies which protect them, because they are brainwashed. They do not know that getting married to a man when you have not attained 18 years is a crime. A lot of elder women at the time of research who were in their 40's and 50's revealed that they did not know anything, they were blinded religion and brainwashed by the elders in church. When they were young, they thought that marriage is a woman's best achievement in life. When they realised that there was nothing special about these marriages, it was too late to do anything. They had already given birth to a lot of children, they were now second hand clothes they said. These are the reason why women in apostolic sects fail to leave their marriages despite of the abuses and the ill treatments. To them it is their destiny and fate so they have to live with for the rest of their lives. The fear of the unknown future after having left their husband homestead... what will become of them and their children make them stay in these forced unions. They do not have rights in the church or over themselves.

Also, there is lack of formal education amongst these women. They blame the lack of education for failing to run away. They said that if they were educated about forced marriages they would have acted against and have the government to protect them. Also because they were married off without even completing primary level, they have nowhere to start, who will

employ an under educated person even the lowest paid person in Zimbabwe must have at least ordinary level so they cannot go anywhere. Their marital homes are the best places they can be as they can survive there without any qualifications asked because they survive from farming.

Religion has been used as a tool of manipulating these women and imposing fears on them and making it very difficult for them to leave their marriage. According to the bible in first Corinthians 7 verse 10-11, now to the married i command yet not i but the lord a wife is not to depart from her husband, but even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconcile to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife¹⁹.therefore, as being alluded by the bible women are not supposed to divorce their husbands at all, if they marry then their fate is sealed to those men. This makes women unable to leave or run away from the abusive marriages because even the women needs man's protection and security, they cannot stay "unmarried".

END NOTES

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CHAPTER3

CONSEQUENCES OF THE CHURCH'S MARRIAGE PRACTICES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to discuss the consequences church marriages in the Johane Marange apostolic sect in Chihota. Early child marriages are associated with a lot of consequences which affects mostly the girl child, as the young girls endure misery. They are denied childhood and adolescence, The young girls lose personal freedom and lack the opportunity to develop a full sense of selfhood as well as the denial of psychosocial and emotional wellbeing of families and for the society as a whole. The girls are forced to abandon education and they are ill prepared for their roles as wives, mothers and as contributors to society as a whole. Mostly they have no access to medication which exposes them to even worse situations like death especially when pregnant.

The Johane Marange sect does not value modern education and most of the children of the church members drop from school early to become married. The child in marriage will not be able to continue with her education as she will be tasked with house chores as a wife. The girl child then suffers illiteracy, in most cases they drop out at grade 6 -7 without even acquiring the primary level certificate. Due to the lack of education, the married girls are not empowered socially and economically, they lack decision making with partners and family healthy behaviours¹.Therefore, the girls who married off early faces consequences as they lack education, they lack decision making which make them voiceless in their marriage the men dictates everything which leave them vulnerable to all forms of abuse and they cannot talk where injustice is being made, they are ignorant due to the lack of education. It should

also be pointed out that the young brides because of the lack of education are tied up in their first marriages. They cannot think differently about themselves, all the decisions are made by the husband as the husbands are older than them so they just assume they are entitled to everything.

In addition, the Johane Marange apostolic sect followers do not see the importance of formal education, rather they are more inclined to their sect's norm and teachings which have got nothing to do with formal education. Education is often seen as a key to preventing child marriage as children will be held in school thereby delaying marriage². To the Marange apostolic sect the issue is different as they force the children out of school in order to prepare them for marriage, according to Mai Mateu, once the Holy Spirit sees marriage in a girl then she should stop with the education so as to be getting prepared to take care of the family³. However, UNICEF postulates that early child marriage leaves many women illiterate⁴. Which proves to be fine by the Marange apostolic sect as they do not support the women to be educated because of the fear that they might become rebellious or promiscuous once they became more educated or when they start going to work⁵. Therefore, it should be noted that early marriages in the Marange apostolic sect affects the girl child due to the lack of education as she suffers illiteracy which also reinforces poverty.

The Johane Marange apostolic sect is well known for its belief in spiritual healing, Chakawa noted that they do not support biomedical treatment which includes immunization and HIV testing⁶. The Johane Marange followers resist any form of medical treatment as they are deep rooted in their religion and they have faith in the prophets who are responsible for their health when they fall sick. Instead of laboratories and modern medication, they receive spiritual

healing, 'munamoto'(prayer) stones and water for medication. This method of treatment has led to a lot of deaths of young women and children in the Johane Marange apostolic sect especially during birth. According to Gogo Mhowa the midwife at the Johane Marange sect, there are a lot of young girls who die during child birth⁷. During 'chitsidzo'(birth camps), in mhowa or boarder church, where women in the sect visit for their antenatal services, young women are reported to have been losing their lives over time and that of the unborn or born babies due to complications beyond the midwife who is just an untrained woman in the sect who only possesses experience and knowledge of midwifery. There are complications which requires medical assistance, the sect cannot perform any form of operation because of the lack of education and resources, most importantly they do not have laboratories and theatres. Due to the absence of these facilities, young women have been dying because the midwives only are able to help those women who are able to deliver normally, those who requires birth through operation die. Therefore, Johane Marange's doctrine of resisting biomedical treatment has led to a lot of deaths of young pregnant women, Rhoda said that when she gave birth to her own first child, about three women died at the camp because their babies were not coming⁸. The young girls are the high risk of complications which leads to death, girls of 12 to 15 of age are 5-7 times more likely to die from child birth, and girls 15-19 years of age are twice as likely⁹. Hence, early child marriages in the Marange apostolic sect has got critical health consequences.

There are no specific statistics of the deaths of young women at the birth camps because the sect do not allow its followers to visit hospitals and hence, there were no records at the Chihota district hospital. Mai Masenda the sister in charge confirmed that the Marange followers do not have medical records at the hospital¹⁰. Villagers in the Chihota communal areas only know that there are a lot of deaths at the birth camps. They are aware of the fact

that whenever they do see a young woman pregnant and suddenly she disappears, they know that she had died. The headman of the Rupere Village Headman also confirmed about the deaths of young women in the church. He said that sometime in 2014 there was an incident where a young pregnant woman died while trying to give birth, she died with the baby inside and the midwives could not remove the baby from the tummy so they buried wanted to bury the woman with the baby inside¹¹. The matter was heard by the headman and he instructed that they should go to the hospital to have the foetus removed but they refused and they decided to do the operation on their own. The women used knives to open the belly of the young women and removed the baby¹². The case was later reported to the police. The case shows that young women die as a result of the lack of facilities.

In addition, not only young women suffer consequences during and after labour, but also the new and unborn babies suffer a lot too. Babies born by adolescent mothers have 35-55% higher risk preterm and low birth weight¹³. The young mothers in Johane Marange do not receive antenatal care from clinic and or hospitals which helps them to be strong and being able to deliver well. Their pregnancies are taken care of by the 'holy spirit' through the midwife and it is through the 'holy spirit' that the midwife is able to withstand any complication. Unfortunately, despite the 'spiritual' guidance, young mothers and their babies have been dying as having been confirmed by Gogo Mhowa the midwife¹⁴. There is high risk of immature uterine muscles and mucous membranes that pose serious danger and high risk of ruptured uterus in case of prolonged labor¹⁵. Therefore, early marriage has got detrimental effects on the health of the young girls and their babies as they are prone to ill health consequences.

Mawunganidze revealed that there are concurrent sexual patterning which is sanctioned through polygamous marriages within the sect¹⁶. The men in the sect believe that there is no way that they can contract HIV or any sexually transmitted diseases as they marry virgin girls. Kleming and Wasserhelf has it that a young girl may be physiologically more prone to HIV infection because her vagina is not yet well lined with protective cells and her cervix may be more easily eroded. Risk for HIV transmission is also heightened because hymeneal, vaginal or cervical lacerations increase the rate¹⁷. This reveals that girls are at the high risk of getting infected considering their age, even though the men are quite sure that they marry them whilst still virgins, but one can never know that they are all faithful to themselves considering that those girls who would have been found dis-virgined will be pushed to marry even older man and also taking into account the rumours that young women look for sexual satisfaction elsewhere because in most cases their 'old' husbands fail to satisfy them.

Furthermore, early child marriages in Johane Marange apostolic sect exposes the young to high risk of cervical cancer. It has been revealed the early child marriage and polygamy play an important role in another deadly disease, cervical HPV infection has become endemic to Sub-Saharan africa¹⁸. Cervical cancer is facilitated by multiple sex partners and poor health care and these reasons which the sect refused to come to terms with. In a qualitative study carried towards the male circumcision within the Marange apostolic sect in Zimbabwe, Mahusekwa in Chihota, the researchers found out that the Marange resisted male circumcision as they do not accept anything to do with the hospital and they revealed that there can never be contraction of diseases like HIV and STI in their sect . yet there is high risk due to the church's practices that encourage multiple sexual partners, and the sect's non utilisation of biomedical services including the usage of condoms and hiv testing¹⁹. Therefore, the young women in Marange are at the high risk of cervical cancer due to these

polygamous relationships due to concurrent sexual partners which causes cervical cancer, but it should be noted that they do not go to the hospital.

CHURCH AND WOMEN ABUSE

The age difference between the young girls in the Marange sect and their husbands is that of a grandfather and granddaughter. The women do not have a say in the marriage, they are ruled over by their 'grand-father' or 'father-like' husbands. The young women succumb to beating as a form of punishment for failure to cook or for any misunderstanding. Rhoda revealed that 'madzibabavanorova' (the husband beats), when he is frustrated²⁰. To her receiving beating punishment from 'madzibaba' whenever he feels he had been wronged. The truth of the matter however, is that the women are ignorant of their position and their value as women because they are dominated by men. UNICEF postulates that the young girls are actually victims of gender based violence, they are just more likely to believe violence is justified²¹. In this case, Rhodha believe that violence is justified considering the reasons she puts across in explaining why 'madzibaba' disciplines his women when his angered. Machingura notes that women in the JMS endure domination and control, and gender equality is not recognised²². Therefore, young women in apostolic sects are blinded by the sect's norm that the husband is on top and women and that women submits to their husbands. This gospel has been misinterpreted by men and applied as a means to abuse these young women in the sense that men are using the gospel to ill treat their wives because the bible says that women should submit to their husbands²³.

Early child marriages leave young women vulnerable, Levine et al has indicated that child marriage makes young wives extremely vulnerable to physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse²⁴. The young women cannot defend themselves on anything, they cannot talk back on their husbands due their age difference and the church's doctrine. The husband 'madzibaba' dictates everything and has got a role in the decision making process concerning the family. Even when women have been physically or psychologically abused, they cannot report the matter to anyone as it calls for more beating. According to Rhoda, one can not report her husband anywhere as she will be discussing her marriage issues which is a shame²⁵. There are cases of women who had died as a result of the beating. One Baba Albet a man from the Johane Marange sect flogged his wife badly over the garden that was grazed by a herd of cattle yet she was assigned to take of it by 'madzibaba'. The pregnant woman was seriously beaten, she became sick was taken to Mhowa the following morning for 'chitsidzo'(birth camp), unfortunately she passed on later on that very same day. If there was medical intervention and a post mortem present, the cause of death probably could have been severe beating which she received from the husband. Therefore, early marriages have got consequences of gender based violence.

Marital rape is also a common feature in the Johane Marange sect. the young women are just voiceless, they do not have power over their bodies and personal needs. The girl who had been forced into marriage is not heard, not because she cannot talk or does not care about matters of her body or her feelings as a woman. She does not speak up because of the socialisation, rather she chooses to remain quiet and succumb to marital rape²⁶. The woman's position in the family as in most cases the young women are the ones who had been victimized mostly than the first and second wife. As she continued to be victimized more often in the kitchen and mostly in the bedroom, she became weak and not being able to act

against anything that affects her, she loses self esteem. Most of the women in the Johane Marange sect had been victims of sexual abuse the first time they had sex with their husbands and even as they became mothers, they still victims of marital rape. The researcher was able to statistically calculate that 9 in 10 women in the sect had been victims of rape for the time in marriage and at least 8 in 10 women are still experiencing marital rape. They had not reported the cases to the police or to the church as it unheard of to report your 'husbands' sexual advances. Maria, a Johane Marange church member who at the time of the interview had 5 children and expecting another and was the 3rd wife of her husband. She said that she was raped the first time 'madzibaba visited her hut. Due to the rape she experienced the first time in marriage, she was traumatized even up to the time of the interview when she had her 5 children, she still does not find pleasure in sex with her husband. She still experience rape as madzibaba forces himself into him every time out of her wish²⁷. Therefore, early child marriage in the Johane Marange apostolic sect affects the physiological make up of the women as are raped over and over again in their matrimonial homes. Young women are at the disadvantage of not being able to negotiate sex with their husbands as the men do not give them that priority to express their feelings, they are just dominated. Hence the women are weakened and suffer trauma.

Furthermore, when a mother has been traumatised, so does the children also as the children spend most the time with their, it affects them also when she is traumatized. The early child marriage therefore, affects the children in that marriage. The mother having been a victim of stolen childhood does not know the proper way of bringing up her own children which a great challenge. Elbedour et al postulates that marital conflict and distress can cause emotional harm to these learners (children) through conflict, tension, unequal treatment, by the polygamous father and jealousy²⁸. Therefore, early child marriages in the Johane

Marangesect affects also the children who are born by a young immature mother. The young mother is affected even physically as she is young but burdened with responsibilities of taking care of children and a husband. Also, as she is young, other co-wives will take advantage of her and the opportunity to molest her by giving her more work to do. Physically, it impacts their lives also since marriages are not in their best interest, Haralambos and Halbon asserts that early child marriages deprive effective social interaction and personal achievement for sustainable social, economic, spiritual and psychological development²⁹. The girl child therefore, is entrenched and tied up in a slave-like kind of marriage, she suffers especially in the society where she is expected to deliver as mother and wife.

JOHANE MARANGE AS A HINDERANCE TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The early child marriages in the Johane Marange apostolic church had negatively affected the development of the Chihota rural community. The researcher interviewed the head master at Rupere government primary school, Mr Ruvanda explained that the sect's doctrine has been affecting them as a school in the community especially considering the fact the pupils from the JMS constitutes the majority population in the school. A lot of pupils enrol in grade 1 but only a few of them sits for the grade 7 examinations. The majority of the girls start dropping out of school in grade 6 and 7. 'It is a very sad lose that we encounter and bear every year, there is nothing that we can do to avert the situation. If we try to make a follow up and ask around other children concerning the whereabouts of our pupil we will only hear different stories that she has transferred to Buhera to be with the elder sister or she is married and so on, said the headmaster'.³⁰ The headmaster expressed that the Johane Marange doctrine has affected the education of the girl child and those of the pupils in the community as the church occupies the large population in the community, yet they do not allow the girl child to

continue with her education. This shuttered her future and that of her children also the same way her parents had shuttered hers as the doctrine is expanding and passed from generation to generation, from grandmother to mother, mother to daughter, daughter to her child respectively.

In addition, the community has been affected also due to the doctrines of the sect. The children from the Johane Marange sect have been as corrupting the minds of fellow children in school. While children will be playing, they tend to discuss issues that they come across in their church which includes the virginity examination they encounter and also the teachings young girls receive about marriage at that very tender age. The children from the sect just discuss these issues with fellow pupils which spoils the mind of other children who have not been exposed to issues like virginity test. Other children start envying them as they are not aware of the validity of marriage. The children will not value the importance of education taking into consideration the fact that children are easily lured by trivial things. An important issue was brought to the researchers attention that two pupils in Grade 7 one from the Johane Marange sect were discussing and the girl from the Marange church bragged about her development that was to take place after Passover celebration. She was going to be married to her husband who lived in Buhera and had a nice camping tents and a car, his wives were also good looking which according to her revealed that they were well taken care of. Her friend now envied her and she decided to follow her friend to the Passover without the knowledge of her grandmother, she just left home. Her grandmother looked for her everywhere and finally was led to where she was. In an interview with the grandmother, she expressed her hatred to the sect as she explained that its doctrines affected other children³¹. In the case of her granddaughter who wanted to follow her friend to her husband's place which is a

challenge to the community development if girls decides to marry early leaving behind education.

Furthermore, as being stated above, villagers have been affected by the coerced marriages in the sect. The villagers reveal that they do not wish that their children interact with children from the sect following the case where a pupil eloped home to join her friend who was to be married. The villagers also fear that their children also want to marry early so as to be on the same page with friends. Mai Sango revealed that her children might decide to marry also because they see young pregnant women of their age. Some of had been their friends in school, 'i wonder what kind of stories they will be talking when they meet, if they all marry early, who will become our doctors councillors and teachers in this community?',³² she rhetorically asked the question. Therefore, the early child marriage in the Johane Marange sect has affected the development of the community. The villagers does not wish to unite with them for the fear of the future of their children which a drawback to the development of the community at large.

Therefore, the Johane Marange marriages are a hindrance to the community development, young girls have been corrupted in school by other pupils from the JMS. There is peer pressure from other pupils which hinders community development if young girls are married early before they finish their education.

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CONCLUSION

The research has explored the background of the early child marriages in Zimbabwe from the pre-colonial period up until the post-colonial period, the consequences of the JMAS's marriage practises and the Sect's teachings or doctrines and how they promote early child marriages in Chihota communal areas from 1917- 2015. The study had revealed that early child in Zimbabwe has got a cultural-traditional origin as being evidenced by the 1901 MOA which was amended in 1917 before the formation of the JMAS in 1930 which is now practising child marriages as part of its religion

The government of Zimbabwe had to enact laws from 1917 up to 2015 in an effort to end child marriages which had been predominant over the years. The government of Zimbabwe through the MOA of 1917 outlawed child pledging and forced marriages in a bid to end early child marriages. Zimbabwean constitution kept amending laws from the 1917 law which was amended through act number 6 of 1964 then 1997. These laws were passed in order to protect the rights of the children who were caged victims of child pledging and forced marriages. The criminal law act criminalises any person man or woman who decides to settle or engage in sexual activities with a person under the age of 16. Marriages according to the marriages act is supposed to be entered with person with 18years and above and is supposed to be entered out of free and full consent. In the case of the JMAS in Chihota, the sect had been going against the terms of the constitution of Zimbabwe since its inception in 1930. The sect practises child marriage as part of its religion.

The JMAS's teachings and doctrines promotes child marriages as the young girls and boys are taught about marriage from 9 years of age. Due to the teachings, the girls and boys in the sect only values marriage over education because that is what they are taught in their sect and hence the teachings or doctrines of the JMAS promotes early child marriages.

There are a lot of consequences of the church's marriage practises. The JMAS do not value modern education, most of the members drop out from school early to become married. Due to the lack of education, there is high rate of illiteracy especially amongst the women in the sect. As a result they lack in decision making, the women are just voiceless and they cannot negotiate sex with their partners. The men in the sect do not support the idea of having women advancing in their education for the fear if they receive modern education they can be rebellious and leave church or them. Therefore, the church's marriage practises has got consequences of the lack of education to women. Also, the sect is well-known for its belief in spiritual healing, they do not receive from the hospitals because it is against the laws of the sect. This has led to serious birth complications to young women which had resulted in even worse situations like death.

The young women suffer male dominance, they succumb to domestic violence and marital rape. The women are voiceless, they cannot defend themselves from the abuses of their father-like husbands due to the age difference between them, the women are just over powered. Also the religion had been used to abuse these women, that women should be submissive to their husbands. Due to that gospel men in the sect abuse women, the women do not occupy any church besides becoming a hakirosi who only leads in the singing in church. Research also has it that the church's marriage practices hinders community development.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE CHIHOTA COMMUNAL AREAS

I am a student at Midlands State University undertaking a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History. I am carrying out a research on Johane Marange Apostolic Religion and child marriages.

All responses will be treated with great confidentiality and used for the purposes of this research only.

Respondents are not required to write down their names on the questionnaire

Instructions

Put a tick to indicate your choice of answer.

1. Sex Male Female

2. Age

15 - 20 years 21- 25 years

29 – 30 years 31 + years

3. Your professional qualification

Employed unemployed

4. Does living with the members of the Johane Marange sect affects the wellbeing of other people.

Yes No

5. Do you agree that child marriages are practised by the Johane Marange sect?

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral

Agree strongly agree

6. Do you support the view that the church's marriage practices has hinders community development?

Strongly do not support do not support neutral support