



# ASSESSING THE IMPACTS OF COVID 19 ON A GIRL CHILD EDUCATION IN MANGOCHI: A CASE STUDY OF T/A CHIMWALA AREA

**Name: Sharon Cynthia Fologonya**

Designation: Student

Department: Social Work

Organization: DMI St Eugene University, Zambia

Author City: Blantyre

Country: Malawi

## Abstract

Despite various efforts that both the government of Malawi and Non-governmental organizations are putting forward to curb the spread of COVID-19 that had a huge impacts on the educational system to both institutional and learners, but there is evidence on impacts. This paper provides the analysis of impacts of the pandemic on a girl child education in T/A Chimwala area in Mangochi. A sample size of 500 respondents was achieved through adopting the simple random technique, convenience method in order to collect primary data. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used during the data collections. Relevant secondary data were collected from books, articles and the internet. The primary data were collected through questionnaires and interview to assess the impacts of covid 19 on a girl child education. The collected data were analyzed with the help of a statistical application, namely SPSS. The study find out that covid 19 has negative impact on girl child education this includes;

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This paper ought to find out the impact of covid 19 on a girl child education. The study has the evidence from Traditional Authority Chimwala in Mangochi District. The study also comprises several sections which includes; background of the study, overall and specific objectives, research design and methodology.

## 1.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The information will also to enable government and private schools on the best way possible how to deal with disasters. The research may also assist the Government of Malawi (GoM) policy makers specifically in the ministry of education and Department of Disaster Management Affairs to consider amending some of the policies concerned. On the other hand, the researcher has gained knowledge and solutions to the impact of the pandemic through the gathered data. Lastly, the population under study, has benefited from this study since they were able to identify some problems and challenges that are facing and devise mechanisms to deal with the pandemic during school closure.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of literature about the impacts of covid 19 on a girl child education and also this chapter also reviews the empirical literature review, theoretical framework and conceptual framework.

#### 2.1 The Impacts of COVID-19 on Adolescent Girls and Young Women

Evidence continues to emerge on the diverse consequences Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) are experiencing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Though effective biomedical solutions to COVID-19 are on the horizon, extended seclusion and decreased learning and economic opportunities are poised to have a lasting impact on the lives of AGYW (Briggs, Desai, Haberland, Hoop and Ngo, 2020). This is most worrying for AGYW who are living in poverty and those who are often invisible, including migrants, refugees and internally displaced people, domestic and sex workers, and girls with disabilities. Briggs et al. (2020) projected those disruptions to schooling, livelihoods, and health will have lasting effects on girls' social and economic opportunities and well-being if they are not addressed. The loss of human capital among AGYW resulting from these interruptions to education and life-skill development will be an additional barrier to girls' success in the 21st century economy (Obama and Gates, 2020), persisting long after the pandemic has passed and undermining future efforts to achieve gender equity and equality. Briggs, Desai, Haberland, Hoop and Ngo, (2020) of the American Institute of Research established the following impacts of COVID 19 on AGYW:

#### 2.2 The impact of Covid 19 on learning

According to Zancajo (2021) substantial body of evidence shows how the pandemic has impacted or could impact on students' learning outcomes in the short-term, and how this impact can increase educational inequalities or the attainment gap between social groups. The evidence available on the impact on learning of school closures in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic shows that the aggregate effect is not particularly significant, but it is distributed very unequally among social groups. In the case of the Netherlands, Engzell, Frey and Verhagen (2020) found that students from homes with low levels of education suffered learning losses 40% higher than the average student. Nevertheless, the same study also demonstrates that other students' characteristics such as sex, grade or prior performance did not affect the impact on learning during school closures. In the case of the Flemish Community of Belgium, Maldonado and De Witte (2020) show that not only has the level of academic performance decreased as a consequence of the school closures, but also the learning inequalities have increased significantly within and across schools. Using different indicators of inequality, the study shows that learning inequalities grew in the context of the pandemic, and this is mainly explained by a significant performance decrease by those students at the bottom of the performance distribution.

#### 2.3 Teachers working conditions and wellbeing during Covid 19

A particular area of concern regarding the effects of Covid-19 on education is teachers' working conditions and wellbeing. Indeed, UNESCO identified confusion and stress for teachers as one of the main adverse consequences of school closures during the pandemic. A number of studies have analyzed the impact on teachers' experiences during school closures during the first phases of the pandemic. The first approach to studying teachers' working

conditions during the pandemic are studies that analyze educators' personal experiences. Based on teacher interviews, Reich et al. (2020) found that maintaining students' motivation in an online learning environment has been one of the main challenges for US teachers during school closures. This concern was combined with a significant loss of self-perceived efficacy and professional identity, as well as the perception of burnout.

## **2.4 Impact of Covid 19 on the education of children with disabilities in Malawi**

### **Teacher contact and time spent on formal learning**

According to Singal, Ngwira, Johansson, Lynch, Chatha and Umar (2021) a significant number of parents (86%) reported they had had no contact with the school or the teachers during school closures. Of the 14 families who reported having some contact with the school, the teacher had either walked over to the home or used the telephone. In one case the child went to the teacher's house for tutoring purposes. No parent mentioned teachers using social media What Sapp or Facebook, to communicate with the families. In all but three cases, the contact with teachers was rather irregular and infrequent in nature. Signal et al (2021) Children with disabilities spent very little time on formal learning activities of any kind, with 31% reported to not be studying at all, and 45% spending less than an hour studying. Only a quarter of the children were reported to have spent more than an hour studying at home. In instances where children were engaging in various tasks from the formal curriculum, they were supported by parents or older siblings, or by extended family or friends. Overall, the research established that parents were overwhelmingly dissatisfied with the educational experiences of their children with disabilities during school closures. Ninety-nine per cent of parents noted they were not satisfied with their child's education during school closures.

### **2.5 Theoretical framework**

The study will be guided by the social learning theory. The founder of this theory is Albert Bandura (1977) he was of the view that people could learn new behaviors and information from watching others (also known as observational learning). The Social Learning Theory revolves around three concepts. The first concept is that behaviors and information can be learnt through watching others. The second concept is that internal mental, sub-conscious states are an essential part of this process. Lastly this theory recognizes that just because something has been learned, it does not mean that there will be a change in the persons' behavior.

### **2.6 Conceptual Framework**

The Conceptual Framework below is a framework within which concepts from which ideas about the exploration of the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on girl child's education are conceived and realised. It shows or predicts why and how the girl child's education was affected. The conceptual framework has the independent variables, variables that predicts or explains why something is happening. In this study the independent variables are COVID-19 pandemic, peoples knowledge, type of assistance and the availability of the assistance these are the variables predicting and explaining why the girl child's education is being affected this variable always remain

constant, hence the girl child education is a dependent variable as girl child education is affected by other factors in this case COVID-19 pandemic. The last Variable in the framework is moderating variable, this is a variable that can strengthen, diminish, negate, or otherwise alter the association between independent and dependent variables, in this study are government policies on fighting COVID-19 pandemic is the moderating variable. Below is the conceptual framework.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This section covers research methodology. This chapter describes the methods and procedures of data collection, the choosing of sites, selection of the respondents, and methods of data analysis and presentation of the resulting information. The methodology is systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to the field of the study. This research methodology consists of research design, target population, sample and sampling, procedure of data collection, research instruments and data analysis techniques.

### **3.1 Research Design**

According to Creswell (2005), research design is a detailed plan of the work to be done to achieve the research objectives. Research design is planning the whole research process which explains the arrangements of plans on how the whole project will be done Monette, (2008). This study used descriptive research design because it helped the researcher to gather accurate, valid and relevant information based on how the participants performed.

### **3.2 Sampling procedure**

As the name suggests is a completely random method of selecting the sample. This sampling technique usually works around large population (Mugenda, 1999). This is sampling method involves assigning numbers to individuals (sample) and then randomly choosing from those numbers through an automated process. Finally, the numbers that are chosen are the members that are included in the sample.

### **3.3 Study area**

The study was conducted in Mangochi Rural District T/A Chimwala, with sub T/A Chimwala of Jiya village as a specific area. The area has 13 Group village headman which are Somba, Kantukule, Maulidi, Kuloya, Pemba, Danken, Mabala and Mkwapatila. However each of these Group village Headman has a number of village chiefs that fall under them. Five Villages were selected from the 13 Group Village Headman which has represented the sample of the total villages in the area.

### **3.4 Population of the study/ universe**

A universe is also known as population and it can be small or large, population represents the entire group of units which is focus of the study. Population is the entire group of individual, firms, plants or things that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the study (Best and Khan, 1998). On the other hand Adam and Kamuzora (2008) argue that the population is the totality of object under investigation. The key stakeholders

will be girls. In this study the target population were both pupils, parents and teachers women and the total universe was assumed as 2000.

### **3.5 Sample size**

The sample size of the research mostly typically refers to the number of units that will be chosen from data which will be gathered (Berg, 2009). A total sample size of 500 respondents which is the maximum desired sample size for qualitative and quantitative research will be chosen to complete the survey. The respondents will be from different primary schools, secondary school, one institution of higher learning and parents.

### **3.6 Methods and tools for data collection**

Data collection tools are instruments that are used to collect data from the respondents. Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on targeted variables in a systematic fashion Satyasai, (2016). Data is obtained from primary and secondary sources. Primary data is the information that a researcher collects directly from the subjects or respondents which the researcher is interested in. Secondary data is information that has already been gathered by others. In this study, data was collected using both methods. Primary data collection tools included questionnaires and focus group discussions while secondary data was collected from literature reviews based on availability and accessibility of the data.

### **3.7 Data tools analysis**

Stattrekcom (2016), noted that analysis of data is the process of interpreting the survey data. The data collected from both primary and secondary sources will analyzed using the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS). The developers of statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) made every effort to ensure that the software is easy and effective to use. This ensures that the researcher (user) does not make mistakes or forget something. The research will begin with defining a set of variables and then enter data for the variables to create a number of cases. In this case the researcher will carry out analysis on the impact of covid 19 pandemic on girl child education. After entering the data into SPSS the cases will all be defined by values stored in the variable. The researcher will then run the analysis. The SPSS will be instructed to draw graphs, charts and tables the same way you instruct it to do analysis. The research will use tables for the analysis of the data.

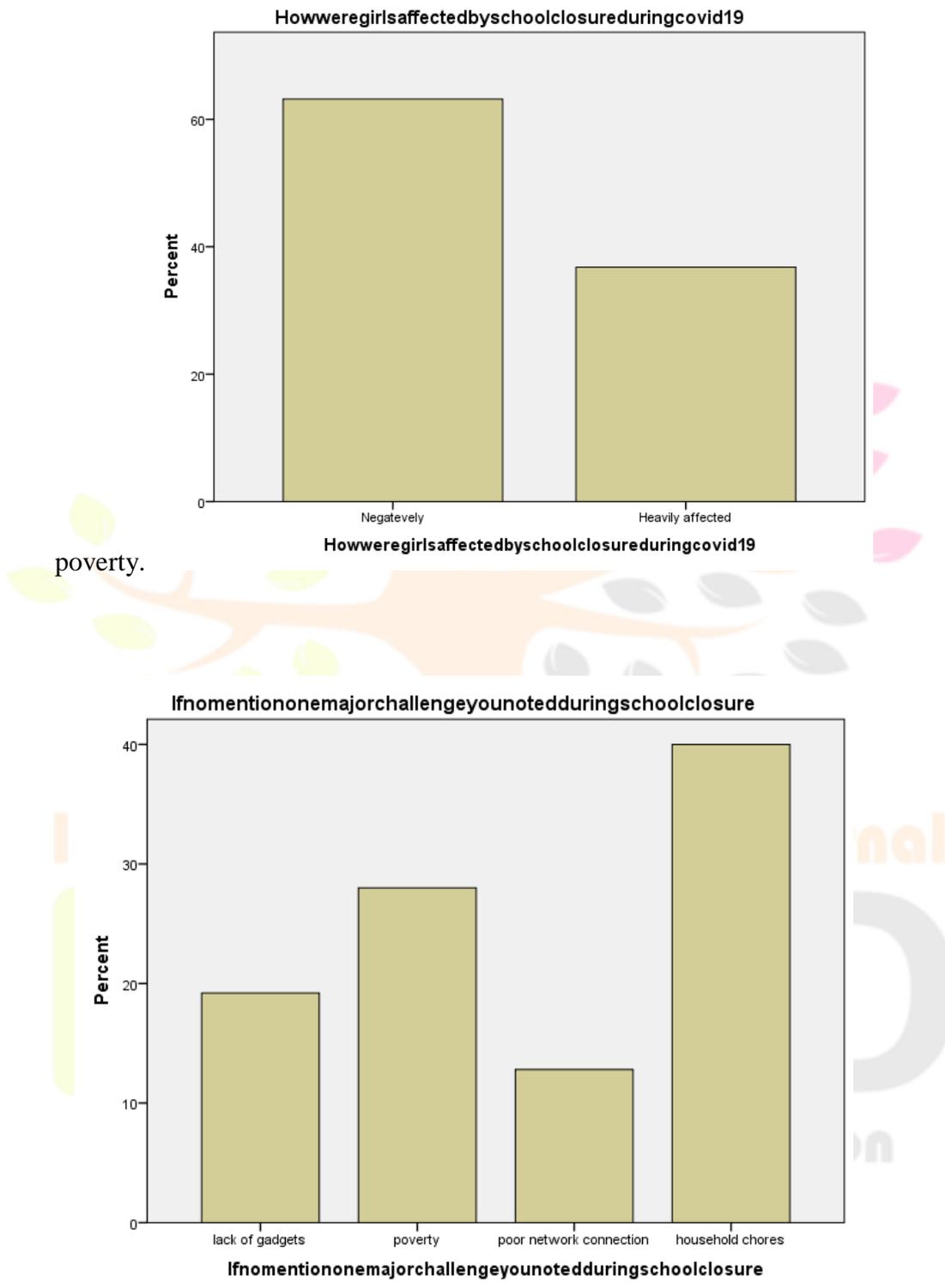
## **DATA ANAALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter exposes what the research managed to capture as it tried to answer the question: How was the girl child affected by COVID-19 during school closure? The chapter has been organised into themes, and there are three of them; within these themes, there are sub-themes. Each theme was identified based on a particular objective to the study. These are, education challenges that girls face due to the pandemic, the immediate solutions that were put in place to help the girl's education during COVID-19 and lastly, people's perceptions towards the impact of COVID-19 on girl child's education. After that, the section gives a conclusion with regard to the general observations in the findings.

**Figure 1.** Bar graph below showing how girl child’s education was affected by COVID-19.

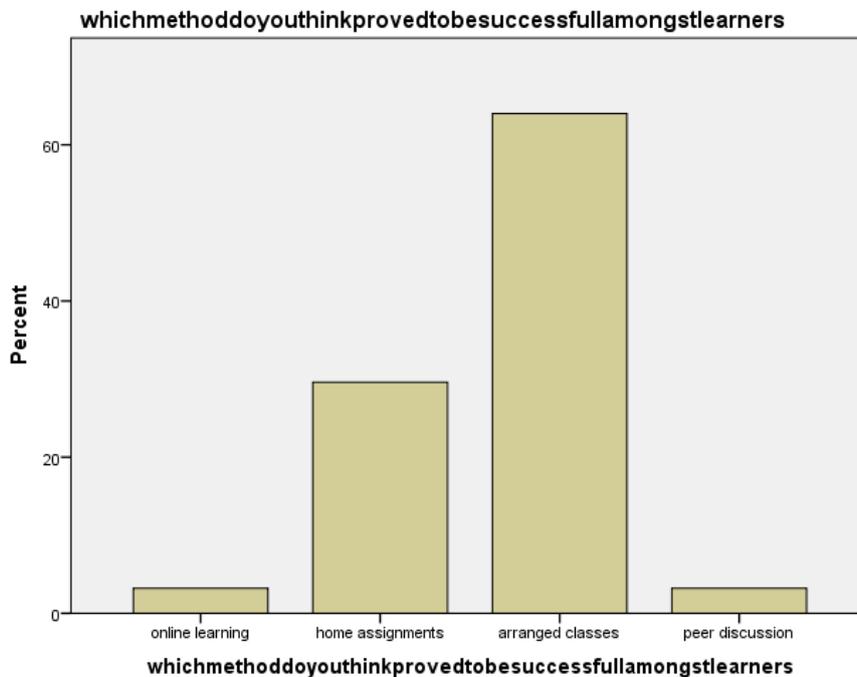
The study established that over 63% of the respondents agreed that girl child educated was affected due to COVID-19 pandemic and 37% made emphasis that girl child was heavily affected by the pandemic. All respondents cited early and forced marriages, difficulties in learning from home, high rate of school dropout and



**Figure 2.** Bar graph below educational challenges that girl child faced due to the pandemic in Mangochi.

Research found that there were a number of educational challenges that a girl child faced due to the spread of the pandemic.19% of the population in the area cited lack of education gadgets, 28% mentioned poverty as a major

challenge, 13% said poor network connectivity in Mangochi made it difficult for a girl child to continue with her education and lastly house hold chores was mentioned as a major challenge faced by a girl child by 40% of the population



**Figure 3.** Bar graph below shows the immediate solutions that were put in place to help girl's education during COVID-19 Pandemic

It was established that 3% of the respondents mentioned online learning as a solution in helping a girl child to continue with her education, 30% of the population cited that assignments to do at home as one of making sure they continue and complete their studies whilst the majority of the respondents (64%) indicated that arranged classes were established in order to support a girl child education and lastly 3% of the respondents mentioned peer discussions in form of radio programmes as one of the solutions that was put in place in Mangochi.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter brings forth the configuration of the meanings attached to the data just presented above. In its endeavor, it shall show if there have been any achievements met on the objectives of the research.

### 4.1 Discussions and findings

This part addresses the first objective of the research project. Here, the main aim of the study is to assess the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on girl child education in T/A Chimwala in Mangochi district. The study established that over 63% of the respondents agreed that girl child education was affected due to COVID-19 pandemic and 37% made emphasis that girl child was heavily affected by the pandemic. There were a number of issues identified in this category, this chapter will discuss the impacts of COVID-19 ON girl child education. These were, early and forced marriages, too much household chores, difficulties in learning from home and high rate of school dropouts.

The research established the education of the girl child was impacted and that one of the impacts was mentioned during focus group discussion that of early and forced marriages. Respondents cited the long break spell that was imposed on education due to COVID-19 led to a rise in early and childhood marriages amongst girls, most girls were convinced by their peers to get married while some due to early pregnancies led the get married, there were some who said some children were forced to get married as a way of reliving responsibilities. This impact resulted from difficulties for girls to keep up learning while at home especially in rural areas. Parents and guardians had problems in supporting their children for them to be using methods that schools and government had put in place for learners to learning at home. For example, a majority of poor families could not afford gadgets and other supporting devices to be learning through online methods. In addition to that, without knowing when schools would resume back to normal learning, a good number of leaners lost hope hence resorting to marriage. All these factors led to most girls being forced into marriages

Furthermore, the research established that student had difficulties in learning from home. In Mangochi it noted that the girl child education was affected particular due both internal and external factors based on responses from the respondents. Some respondents mentioned that some lacked support from parents and guardians while at home was one of the internal factors that made it difficult for learners in particular girls to keep learning. During school closure, learners especially girls expected parents to take the role of teachers in supporting their school work. Contrary to that, most girls indicated that they did not get the full support from their parents and guardians. Network problems and illiteracy in the use of electronic gadgets were other factors that contributed to the difficulties in learning while at home.

## **5.2 Suggestions and Recommendations**

The study recommends that the government and all stakeholders should join hands in supporting girl child education to enable them properly recover from the negative impacts that the pandemic has brought. This support should be directed towards bring back young girls that were impregnated or married to school. Further, those that are economically struggling and have the potential to excel should also be supported, hence the government and non-governmental sectors should work in hand to improve the policies on how they can deal with immediate emergency.

## **5.3 Areas for further research**

Similar study should be conducted across the country or in other areas especially those that had very high cases of Covid 19 to allow for generalization of findings on the impacts the pandemic had on learners in general and the entire education system. Also, further studies should be done specifically to develop a deeper insight of the impacts of Covid 19 on people's everyday lives and how the developing nations like Malawi are recovering from its effects. Since not much research has been conducted on this kind of topic, this can be the preamble for more information to be dug out on this particular concept.

## 5.4 Conclusion

The study established that 39% strongly agree that it had an impact on the education of the girl child and perceived the pandemic negatively. Since the emergence of COVID-19 had a negative impact on girl child education, the findings viewed that most girls were forced into early marriages, high rate of school dropout, difficulties in learning etc.

## 5.5 REFERENCES

1. C. Chakwama, G. Malera, P. Mkwamba, A. Malunga and B. Molosoni, (2020), Ministry of Gender, Child Development and Community Development, Malawi Covid 19 Rapid Gender analysis, May.
2. CARE. (2020). COVID-19 could condemn women to decades of poverty: Implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's and girls' economic justice and rights. Relief Web. [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CARE\\_Implications\\_of\\_COVID19\\_on\\_WEE\\_300420.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CARE_Implications_of_COVID19_on_WEE_300420.pdf)
3. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and International Rescue Committee (IRC). (2020). COVID-19 – GBV risks to adolescent girls and interventions to protect and empower them.
4. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). (2020). Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on family planning and ending gender-based violence, female genital mutilation and child marriage (Interim Technical Note). unpaid care work than men in Asia and the Pacific [Press release].
5. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2021. New Global survey reveals impact of Covid 19 on higher Education, March, 15.

