

## **Exploring Factors That Influence Child Migration in Zimbabwe: A Descriptive Cross Sectional Study**

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**Abstract:** *The study aimed at determining the factors that influence child migration in Zimbabwe focusing on Chipinge district. The study also aimed at making recommendations to influence policy in dealing with children on the move and offer appropriate guidance in dealing and handling child migrants. The functionalist theory was used as the conceptual framework for the study since the exploration of the factors that influence migration was done in the context of child protection structures, assessing also their functionality in relation to children on the move in Zimbabwe. Chipinge district was selected as the study setting owing to its proximity to Mozambique and South Africa and the massive movement of children to these countries. The study employed a descriptive cross sectional design and child returnee's ages ranging from 12 to 18 years and Child Protection Committee members constituted the target population for this study. These were drawn from the thirty-eight (38) wards of Chipinge district. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. Thirty-eight (38) Child Protection Committee members and thirty-eight (38) Child returnees were selected to participate in the study. Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used for data collection. Structured interview schedules were considered in conducting the study. The study revealed that the main socio-demographic factors that influence child migration are gender, educational level, employment status, income levels and geographical location. Additional causes and reasons for child migration were hunger, poverty, running away from abuse and following relatives in the neighboring countries. The current economic hardships coupled with the effects of HIV/AIDS have ignited the movement of people into Mozambique and subsequently South Africa. The study concluded that there is need to strengthen the child protection mechanisms and structures at all levels especially at community level. Skills training and capacity enhancement of various stakeholders through an integrated collaborative approach will result in better outcomes for the most vulnerable children especially the poorest of the poor.*

**Keywords:** *Child migration, Children on the move, Child returnees*

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### **I. Introduction**

The issue of child migration is increasing at an alarming rate globally, regionally, nationally and its impact is being negatively felt in Chipinge as a district. Globally, there has been an outcry on the movement of people across borders. This has negatively impacted on children since they face a lot of child rights violations while in transit and during their stay in the host country. According to Amarfi and Kwankye (2009) about 3% of the world's population in 2009 were residing in a country other than they were born. This shows that migration is a worldwide phenomenon and children are also involved. The reasons for migration differ from individual as Bryant (2007) states that people migrate in response to their individual needs.

Africa as a region has also experienced a lot of migration. Meade and Emch (2010) claim that migration is one of the most important demographic features in explaining spatial distribution. Ghana has a long history of migration since almost all ethnic groups in Ghana trace their history as having migrated from different places to their present day location according to Owosso, (2000), Anarfi and Kwankye, (2009).

Zimbabwe has not been spared of this rising outcry. Since the late nineties, there has been increased instability in Zimbabwe and an overall collapse of the economy. The situation continued unaddressed with a very bleak commitment by the government to resolve some challenges that the country was facing. Many of the country's people currently suffer from food insecurity, which is largely attributable to a drastic decrease in local agricultural production, high cost of living and natural disasters such as recurrent droughts.

According to a research conducted by UNICEF (2011), South Africa is home to thousands of unaccompanied child migrants, from neighboring countries, especially Zimbabwe. IOM & UNICEF (2009) report estimates that 25,000 children participate in border movements from Zimbabwe annually. Chipinge as a district has recorded the highest number of unaccompanied children to South Africa. According to Laver, S, Wazara, B and Kusemwa, T (2009), Chipinge, Chiredzi and Bulawayo are traditionally regarded as child migrant sending areas. They further state that Chipinge is the district where most child migrants originate from. Of the five districts studied, Chipinge alone accounted for 12% of the total population of child migrants,

Masvingo and Mberengwa followed as they both contributed a combined total of 20%, Bulawayo and Chiredzi contributed 8% and 7% respectively.

There are a number of reasons for these considerable movements of children across borders. Coltart, (2008) states that the current unemployment rate is estimated to be between 70% and 80% whilst there has not been an improvement in the attraction of investment by foreign companies who may bring in the much needed foreign currency. Political and economic institutions have weakened and collapsed. This has led to migration of people to neighboring countries including children.

It is in the same vein that this study also sought to explore the roles of Child Protection Committees in addressing this violation of children's basic rights. Several questions that need to be asked are: where are the Child Protection Committees when this is happening? What are their competencies in trying to curb these child migrations? What capacities need to be enhanced in order to close this anomaly? Are there any specific cultural, religious or sociological issues that directly impact on the roles of Child Protection Committees in Chipinge to curb these movements?

The study aimed to explore the factors that influence child migration. The study findings will assist in the formulation of recommendations that promote formulation of efficient and effective child protection mechanisms that deal with issues affecting children on the move.

## **II. Materials And Methods**

This study used descriptive cross sectional design. The design enabled the researchers to use mixed method to gather data from a number of individuals and get a better understanding of child movement as the returnees narrate their experiences. A sample size of 77 participants (38 child returnees, 38 members of the CPCs from the 38 district wards and 1 key informant) was selected using purposive sampling to attain equal representation of study participants from each ward that meet the study inclusion criteria and hence could provide the specific information needed for this study. Child returnees (12- 18 years) from South Africa and Mozambique and members of the Child Protection Committees constituted the study population. Child protection committee members were included to assess their contribution in relation to issues associated with this phenomenon (child migration).

Two structured interview schedules were used for data collection (one for the child returnees and the other one for the CPCs and the key informant). Open ended questions were used to solicit information from the child returnees and CPC members on the roles of CPCs so as to arrive to a conclusion. These were very flexible and accommodative and gave room for the interviewer to get more information without restrictions and include such information within the scope of the questions. Interviews and direct observation were also used for the purposes of triangulation. The study also used secondary data to supplement the information provided by participants especially that which was not covered by the questionnaire and the interview guide. To ensure validity and reliability, study instruments were pre-tested in 2 other districts namely Masvingo and Chiredzi which share a lot of similarities with Chipinge on child migration. Quantitative data were obtained primarily from the secondary sources, as well as direct field observations. Qualitative data such as participants' perceptions, child migration patterns and problems were obtained mainly from interviews and field questionnaires. Triangulation was employed in order to reduce bias and increase the reliability of the information. It took the researcher a period of two weeks to collect the data.

Data analysis techniques consisting of coding frameworks, thematic and content analysis were used to give a deeper understanding of the issues under consideration. The categorisation, coding and content analysis further enabled the analysis of interconnection between the child returnees and the child protection committees' accounts. The data was analysed to identify emerging themes and to provide depth of the experiences of child returnees and child protection committee members. The themes developed from the interviews and compared and similar patterns identified, in order to link some of the accounts from the child returnees and Child Protection Committee members. The descriptive research statistics were used to give a detailed description of the situation under study.

### **2.1 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval was sought and granted an approval by the Africa University Research Ethics Committee. Local authorities such as the District Administrator were appraised of the study, the objectives and the benefits of the study to the district. The same was done at community level to ensure that the authority and autonomy of the communities in the district were duly respected and that they were made aware of proceedings in their communities. Permission was sought and granted by the Department of Child Welfare and Probation Services to interview children by virtue of their being minors. Child Protection Committees also fall under this Department. All the informed consent was obtained from all participants before interviews. A consent statement explaining the aims, use and intentions of the study was read and explained to each respondent before the interview or discussion. Names of interviewees and other identities were not to be included on the questionnaire

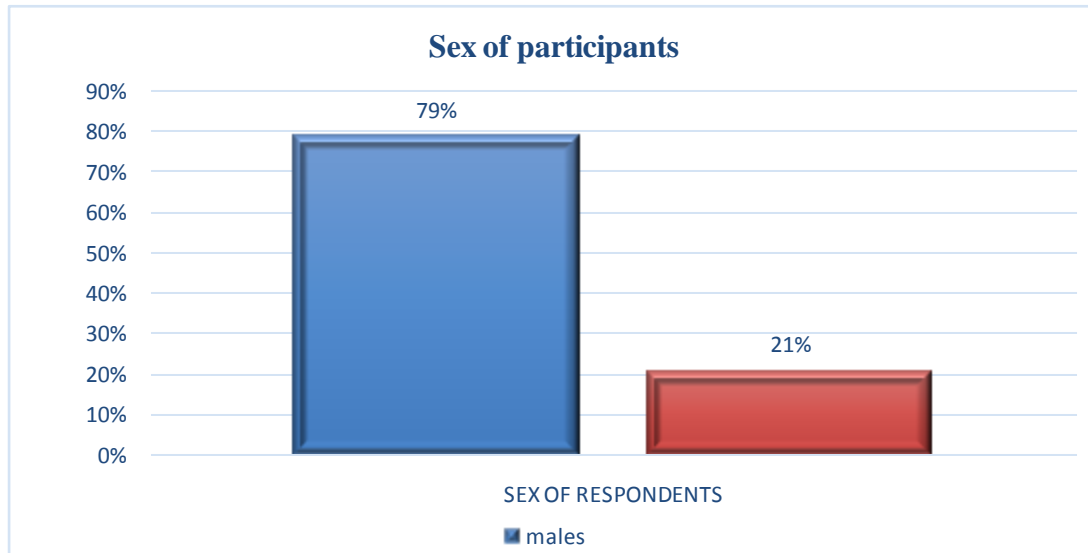
to ensure confidentiality. Briefing was done to the participants regarding the questionnaire. Confidentiality was considered greatly throughout the study proceedings and participants' data was kept under lock and key.

### III. Results

The study participants comprised of 77 participants (38 Child returnees, 38 CPC members and 1 key informant). The response rate was 100% for the 3 categories of participants interviewed hence there was no loss to follow up.

#### 3.1 Demographic Profile of Participants

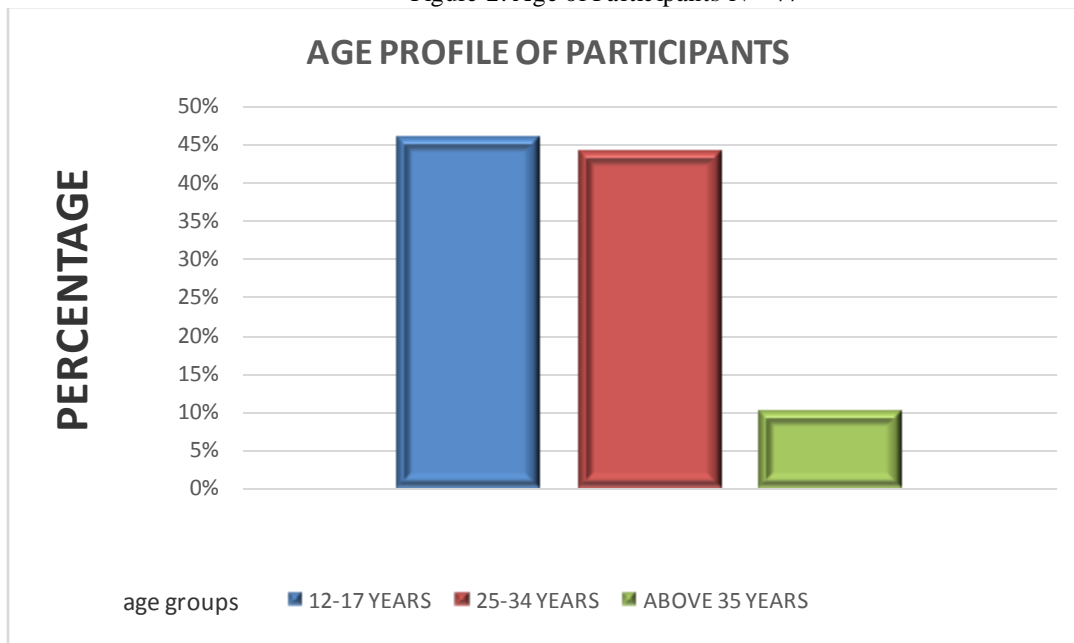
Figure 1: Sex of participants N = 77



The bar graphs show that 79% (60 participants) were men and 21% (17 participants) were women. It was observed that most of the families were female headed, most of the men had already migrated and were not permanently staying at their homes. This also explains why boys migrate more as compared to girls.

#### 3.2 Age Of Participants

Figure 2: Age of Participants N = 77



The percentage of participants within the age range of 12-17 years was 46% (36 child returnees) and the other 2 were now 18 years. Of the 77 participants, 44% were adults between 25-34 years old and 10% of the participants were older than 35 years.

### 3.3 Marital Status Of Participants

Table 1: Marital status of Participants N = 77

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Single	34	44.0
Married	36	46.0
Widowed	3	4.0
Living together with partner	2	3.0
Separated	2	3.0
Total	77	100.0

Table 1 indicates that 34 (44%) of the participants were single. Close to half of the participants who took part in the study were married giving 46%. A total of 4% of the participants were widowed after the death of their husband or wife. Three percent of the participants stated that they were living together with a partner and 3% of the participants have separated from their partner.

### 3.4 Residential Area Of Participants

Table 2: Residential area of participants N = 77

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Rural Communal	28	36.8
Chipinge town	18	24.0
Rural resettlement	12	14.8
Rural commercial	19	24.4
Total	77	100.0

It is also important to note that the largest number of participants came from rural areas and they reside in rural communal areas, rural commercial, farming communities, and rural resettlement. A few participants were from Chipinge town. Rural areas have the highest numbers of child migrants as there are fewer facilities to get children occupied. This leads to children opting for greener pastures thereby resulting in migration.

### 3.5 Level Of Education Of Child Returnees

Table 3: Level of Education of Child Returnees

Response	Frequency	Percentage
School dropouts(primary level)	27	70
Post high school education	11	30
Total	38	100.0

Out of 77 participants 54 participants (70%) went to primary school, and failed to go for secondary school. Seventy percent of the children returnees were dropouts who left school for work in Mozambique and South Africa. The major reason was failure to raise enough financial resources to fund their education. Most of them were orphans who never went to school. Some highlighted that they were now working and are enjoying better living standards compared to those who went to school. Thirty percent of the participants went to high school with a few completing a diploma or an apprenticeship. One child returnee cited the level of education of the CPC members as a contributing factor for their dropping out of school and migrating. He stated that the members are not role models and there is little they can offer for the children's protection. Another member of the CPC also highlighted that their capacity levels to curb child migration are low as evidenced by number of members who proceeded far than high school.

### 3.6 Religion Of Participants

Table 4: Religion of participants N = 77

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Catholic	15	20.0
Protestant	20	25.7
Pentecostal	22	27.8
Traditional	3	3.2
None	11	15.3
Apostolic sect	6	8.2
TOTAL	77	100

The table 4 indicates that the majority of the participants about 85% reported that they were Christians, and a few reported not going to church.

**3.7 Source Of Income**

Table 5: What other sources of income or assistance does the household have? N = 77

Response	Frequency	Percentage
None	52	68.0
NGOs	19	26.2
Government	1	2.0
Churches	1	1.0
Neighbors	4	.5
Other	1	2.3
Total	77	100.0

It was observed that most of the participants were not employed, above 60% had no employment.

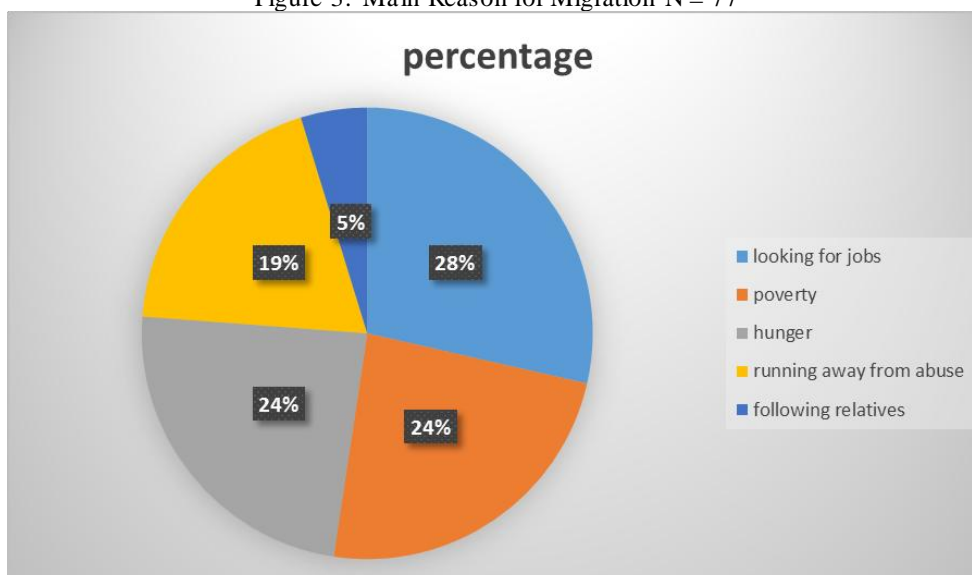
**3.8 Causes Of Child Migration**

One key informant interviewed showed that migration is one of the most important sources of livelihood activities in the district and it was noted that it is a daily game and is very high. It peaks up mainly due to economic problems that are being faced by the incumbent households, and it has now become a normal way of life in Chipinge district. It largely involves mainly young males who are mostly school leavers, while the young females turn to decide getting married because they have nothing to do. It has however been noted from the research that previously only males crossed but now also females cross too.

In most cases children would be following their brothers, sisters and or relatives who would have crossed borders and become successful economically. It is also largely important to note that the study revealed that the main reason for migration is socio economic poverty. It was noted during the survey that child headed and one parent headed families do send illegal migrants.

**3.9 The Main Reasons For Child Migration**

Figure 3: Main Reason for Migration N = 77



Of the 77 participants, 21 participants (28%) cited looking for jobs as the main reason for migration in neighboring countries, whilst just a handful (5%) would be visiting relatives. It is however of concern that 19% of the children were running from child abuse over economic reasons. They had to look for their own jobs and support their own livelihoods.

**3.9.1 Rupture Of Family Relationships**

It was observed that parents had the strain of caring for numerous offspring, and so neglect some or all of their children, leading them to leave their homes. The mass exodus of children from rural areas to the nearby South Africa and Mozambique is strongly linked to the breakdown of the nuclear family. Most parents are often unable or unwilling to pay the costs associated with schooling, with children’s aspirations for education thwarted and children are therefore pushed into employment. It is also worth to note that most CPC members

cited that parents are faced with a harsh reality, arguing that the opportunities available for their children are far greater in the nearby foreign land than in their home country, and so encouraged their children to migrate. The key informant noted that some parents even perform religious rituals so that their children travel safely.

### **3.9.2 Illegal Migration**

It was observed that most male children indicated that they actually get pressured by both their friends and mainly their parents to migrate in search for better fortunes in mostly neighboring South Africa and Mozambique. This is despite the fact that it will be well known that they do not have travelling documents. The young males and young females unfortunately get assistance from the notorious groups known as either “magumaguma (bribe solicitors) in order to cross borders without proper documentation.

Most of the children are illegal immigrants because they never obtained the proper documentation to enter a country. Few of the children that had legal documents become illegal immigrants because they obtain the necessary documentation but continue to stay in a country once that documentation expired. In this particular research, it is of great concern that for those children that travelled to neighboring countries 70 % did not have travelling documents or migrated illegally. These children suddenly have fallen prey to these notorious gangs either by being abused among other things sexually and physically as well as being exploited financially as they are paid on monthly basis by those who succeed in crossing and finding jobs. From the research, there is no known destination for these out-migrants; therefore they either have to be quickly assimilated into the less fashionable occupations such as farm jobs, street vending, house maids, gardening or any other informal job.

### **3.9.3 Responses By Child Returnees**

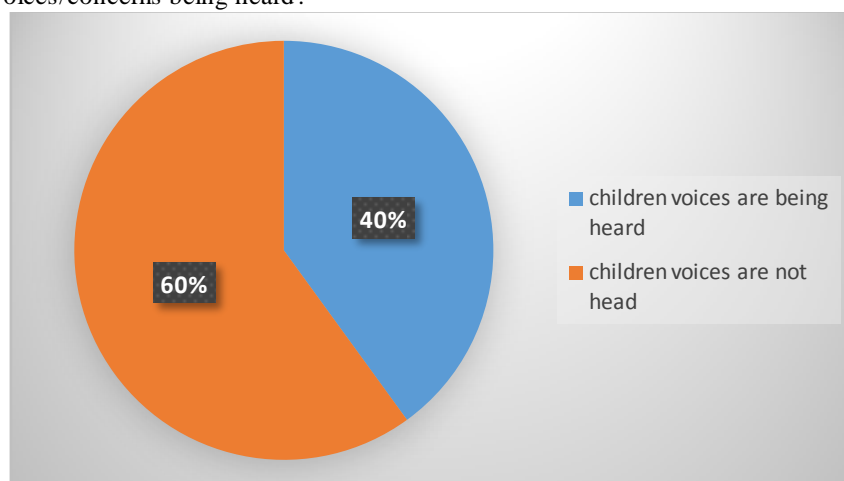
Children cited moving away from homes as a devastating experience .They stated that in as much as there are challenges at home child migration is as good as jumping from a frying pan into the fire .However, they acknowledged that it is due to the painful living standards at home that forces them to migrate. The only survival option they are faced with is migration. Child returnees deplored the living conditions in the host countries. People who live in Mozambique and South Africa and some from the district view these children as criminals and assume have bad morals. Xenophobic attacks are targeted towards them and most of them are killed during these attacks. They lack basic necessities like toiletries and medicines when they are sick. Most of the children do not have money for rentals; others have to sleep in unsafe places.

Given an option, 78% of the child returnees pointed out that had it not been the economic realities challenging the country they would opt to stay in Zimbabwe than migrate. They are in dire need of continuing with education. They felt that there is need to support education initiatives for them to attend school. The children cited that the CPCs lacked the necessary capabilities to curb child migration. Child returnees highlighted that people who should be parenting them are on the forefront in abusing them. They also noted that there are officials including police, home affairs, border officials, church officials, social workers, staff at shelters and family members who were abusing children. They pointed out that there is need for people to listen to their stories and feelings and then help them feel better about their lives and have hope for future.

From the discussions it strongly appeared that there is a need to inform community leadership which includes chiefs, headman and ward councillors on the importance of child protection. It however emerged that for full realisation of child rights CPCs should have buy in from the community leadership. CPCs members unanimously agreed that the community leadership felt that whilst they are not clamouring for positions in the CPCs they should be included and involved in the CPC activities. This was also cited by the key informant who felt that involving the community leadership in child protection initiatives would help curb the cultural practices which in some cases are perpetrated by these leaderships mainly because of ignorance that it borders around violation of child rights.

### 3.10 Platforms For Children's Concerns

Are children's voices/concerns being heard?



About 30 (40%) of the participants acknowledged that voices of children are heard, which they identified as rights to; food, education, freely express their views, shelter, parental care, protection from any form of abuse. Sixty percent of the participants said that children's voices were not being heard since most were leaving their homes for greener pastures outside.

## IV. Discussion

### 4.1 Socio-Demographic Data

The study revealed that there is a gender disparity with regards to child migration with more boys 26(68%) compared to girls 12(32%) being child migrants. Adult migration to the same destinations (Mozambique and South Africa) determined the trends of child migration. The study revealed that most families were female headed as most men had already migrated and were not permanently at home. Duvell (2011) states that irregular migration is reported to be a global phenomenon where in 2002 it was estimated that there were 22–44 million irregular migrants globally. The report also indicates that South Africa ranks high in the number of irregular migrants with an estimated 1 to 5 million irregular migrants although it was noted that there had been a decrease due to the regularization of Zimbabweans in 2010.

The majority of the child migrants (95%) are children 12- 17years clearly indicating the high levels of vulnerability. This concurs with the study findings by Save the Children Norway –Zimbabwe (2006-2010) on the analysis of irregular child migration patterns that showed that over 96% of children supported by the Beitbridge child reception centre were between the ages of 12 and 17.

The study revealed that 34 (44%) of the study participants were single with 11% of the child returnees already married. This is clear evidence that child migration strongly influence one's susceptibility to early and child marriages. Of the 77 participants, 77% were from rural areas. This implies that geographical location of a child has a bearing on the likelihood of them becoming a child migrant or not.

Seventy percent of the child returnees were school drop outs and 54 out of the 77 participants only went to primary school. An evaluation of the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) programme in 2008 revealed that 28% of primary school pupils (784.000 children) required BEAM, yet only 16.3% (456.400 children) received BEAM (UNICEF, 2010). The low levels of education amongst the child returnees could be one of the reasons they took this great risks and for CPC members this could be one of the reasons why most of them failed to articulate child protection issues and conduct awareness campaigns.

Sixty eight percent of the participants had no sources of income. This could have served as one of the strongest push factors for both child and adult migration especially men who are culturally expected to be breadwinners in an extended family.

### 4.2 Causes And Reasons For Child Migration

The study revealed that the main causes and reasons of child migration were pursuit for employment, hunger, poverty, running away from abuse and following relatives in the neighboring countries. This concurs with findings from a study by Coltart in 2008 which estimated unemployment rate to be between 70% and 80% whilst there has not been an improvement in the attraction of investment by foreign companies who may bring in the much needed foreign currency, (Coltart 2008). There is an already legendary debate on the linkages between migration and poverty. It is argued that poverty is not necessarily the main cause of migration, and that poverty-migration links are complex and context-specific Lindley (2006). Chiromo (2006) argued that the

unprecedented unemployment and under employment especially among youths give rise to the movement of children, boys and girls into neighboring countries. Various scholars have argued that the contributions of migration to reducing poverty are equally complicated. There is a debate that purports that migration helps to reduce poverty, even though in many cases it does not radically improve living conditions.

The mass exodus of children from rural areas to the nearby South Africa and Mozambique is strongly linked to the breakdown of the nuclear family. It was observed that most male children indicated that they actually get pressured by both their friends and mainly their parents to migrate in search for better fortunes in mostly neighboring South Africa and Mozambique. Coe (2012) claims that migration is part of human life and where people move to depends on resource distribution and the opportunities some areas in the world present over others. According to Save the Children Zimbabwe, 2010 report, migration to South Africa is perceived as a sign of bravery and shows masculinity.

In 2009, the HIV and AIDS infection rate was estimated at 13% among the adult population - still on the high side in Sub-Saharan Africa, (Coltart 2008). The current economic hardships coupled with the effects of HIV/AIDS have ignited the movement of people into Mozambique and subsequently South Africa. It is also important to note that although economic hardships and effects of HIV/AIDS are the key factors there are other hosts of push factors which include (but not limited to) peer pressure, the emergence of child headed households (Coe, 2000), the abundant opportunities for unskilled labour in South Africa, the proximity to the South Africa and Mozambique, generational links between the people in the two districts and those across the border in South Africa and Mozambique.

Coltart (2008) argues that as much as there are several legislative and policy frameworks in place, these are failing to ameliorate the plight of the Zimbabwean child. Interventions such as Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) are needful interventions but are not sound and funded enough to take care of the needy children. This has resulted in many children leaving their homes for perceived green pastures.

#### **4.3 Children On The Move**

It is noteworthy that most of the participants indicated that there had been rapid movement from Zimbabwe to another country in the past two years. It is however very interesting that nearly all of the participants who migrated were moving to South Africa and Mozambique. The years 2010 – 2015 indicate a steady decline in the numbers of illegal out-migrants from the district. This can be directly linked to the general improvements in the economy of the country at large. The formation of the transitional government mostly referred to as the GNU (Government of National Unity) on the 11th February 2009 saw a general improvement in the economic political spheres. A great sense of hope was created and this reversed the normal rising migration trend before.

The study revealed that migration is not necessarily a negative phenomenon as seen by most people. Great concern is with children who are made vulnerable by migration. Some children move either accompanied or unaccompanied. These children are exposed to a number of child rights violations since even if they may be accompanied they are mostly not accompanied by their relatives or guardians.

Due to nature of the migration pattern, more often children migrate through undesignated entry points and as such these movements are not documented. As a result of different push and pull factors children move voluntarily or involuntarily and in most cases these children end up being accommodated at different areas where they face a lot of abuse. The research also recognised that these categories are not mutually exclusive and that a child on the move may fall into one of several of these groups.

#### **4.4 Implications Of Findings On Child Protection**

The study noted that migration and child protection laws have a role to play in child protection and reducing movements. Further, the study noted that the CPCs were not conscious and aware of migration laws pertaining to the migration of children; they were only offering socio economic support to the disadvantaged groups.

#### **4.5 Recommendations**

There is need to prioritize issues of child migration through availing of financial resources to fund child protection initiatives. More resources need to be availed by governments to enhance the technical capacity by CPCs to help address issues of child migration and strengthen the CPCs and local communities' abilities to protect children. Children should take a leading role in their own protection processes. Child led Child Protection Committees can be effective ways of information dissemination amongst peers. Child participants can contribute in terms of adding creativity and resourcefulness to interventions, thereby further enhancing the effectiveness of the community-based child protection groups and reduce their movement. This can be efficient and effective in bridging the gap amongst children on knowledge levels on where to access services aimed at curbing child migration.



Traditional leadership as the gatekeepers of the communities is very instrumental in the protection and passing of bylaws that assist in minimizing child migration hence the need to build their skills and capacity. Passing of deterrent measures to parents and guardians can be useful in ensuring that parents, guardians and child protection structures carry out their mandate in the protection of children. As noted during the study resistance from local chiefs and traditional leaders can be a fuelling agent for child migration. It is high time the traditional cultural beliefs of encouraging child migration are strongly discouraged. Local community has a greater part to play in ensuring reduction of child migration to nearby countries and other regions.

Efforts by all stakeholders need to be integrated through a collaborative approach to reduce the vulnerability of children to move or be moved from their place of origin. This includes looking at supporting community level social protection programmes in the place of origin that reduce the child, the family's and the community's vulnerability and need to migrate. States should implement effective measures to prevent child abandonment, relinquishment and separation of the child from his/her family. Social policies and programmes should, inter alia, empower families with attitudes, skills, capacities and tools to enable them to provide adequately for the protection, care and development of their children.

Harmonisation of monitoring and evaluation systems which can be used to track and measure changes for children on the move brought about by CPC activities to assess their functionality and effectiveness. Constant follow up on children particularly on school leavers who should be targeted with skills training should be done by the CPCs with the full support of government and local community. This is critical in ensuring that there will be no bad influences that may lead children to opt to move across borders.

Skills training can also be done in schools and in communities and this can help in increasing the number of youths who are able to do self-jobs for economic and social support. The out of school youths can be trained in computer lessons, metal work, cookery, fashion and fabrics, and building which are offered at the local schools. Training should be done in all wards to enhance effective utilization of resources. There is need for continued awareness campaigns on the dangers of child migration. This is because the returnees already know that the risks for physical and sexual abuse and non-paid labor particularly in South Africa are high. They can be thus trained as peer educators, who inform their other peers on these dangers. This can be done through restructuring of school curricula by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary education and community dialogues.

#### **4.6 Delimitations**

The study covered Chipinge district only because of its proximity to the Mozambique and South Africa which are the hosts for child migrants. It focused on child returnees since they could give empirical evidence due to their experiences in cross border movements. Non child returnees were excluded because they did not have lived experiences of the challenges of child migration. Due to this fact they could not be the ideal category to give evidence of what the CPCs should do to curb child migration.

#### **4.7 Limitations**

The instruments designed for this study were used for the first time by the researcher. This could have led to inaccurate information gathered for validity purposes. To overcome this limitation pretesting of the tools to ensure that the researcher gets the clear meaning of the questions and how they are interpreted by the participants was done. Pretesting was done in Chiredzi district. This was for validation and familiarisation of the tools to collect the desired data. This ensured that quality and consistent data was collected.

The purposive sampling of child returnees and child protection committee members had its own share of limitations. A very small number (38 Child returnees) purposively chosen participants gave generalised results for a larger population. This was further compounded by the fact that this study was done in one district of Zimbabwe and this could not be a full representation of the situation in the country. This was inadequate coverage to influence policy changes. However, this limitation was catered for by the use of secondary data which fed up the collected data by additional information from previous researches.

### **V. Conclusions**

In line with the regional experience and case studies, district and Ward CPCs in Zimbabwe have a clear added and important value in programming for vulnerable children particularly as "champions for children" in rural communities they operate. For effective implementation, roles of CPCs should be clearly defined, funding availed for carrying out activities. Once these measures are put in place the CPCs become visible and play a major role in curbing child migration. There will then be need for monitoring of CPC activities for sustainability and covering emerging gaps.

Financial resource constraints are limiting the local capacity to act quickly and effectively in responding to child protection incidents. For CPCs that reported to have been trained there was considerable discourse on what was trained in terms of scope. This shows that there were no standardised trainings done. There is need to ensure that standardised core functions are agreed and understood by the members, and clearly

articulated to local government authorities, to ensure that quality child protection systems are available to respond across the whole district.

The levels of involvement of young children were seen to be erratic and the value of children's involvement is unknown. NGOs can contribute to the work of the Committee by delivering first-hand information and advice which provide invaluable insights into the situation of children and a good basis for engaging government on relevant needs and practices.

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