

**RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN'S POSITIONING ON CHILDREN'S  
HUMAN RIGHTS: A CASE STUDY OF GONAWAPOTERA SECONDARY SCHOOL.**

BY

FUTURE TSHUMA

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**RELEASE FORM**

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APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommend to the Midlands State University for acceptance, a research project entitled:

**RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN’S POSITIONING ON CHILDREN’S HUMAN RIGHTS: A CASE STUDY OF GONAWAPOTERA SECONDARY SCHOOL.**

SUBMITTED BY

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R14120B

In partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Post Graduate Diploma in Education.

Supervisor.....	Date.....
Chairperson.....	Date.....
External Examiner.....	Date.....

## ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate rural secondary school children's positioning on children's human rights: a case study of Gonawapotera Secondary School. Questionnaires and interviews were used as data collecting instruments in the process of gathering data. Eight teachers at Gonawapotera Secondary School, thirty pupils and twenty parents were randomly selected as participants for the study. Data was then presented and analysed thematically. The major findings showed that children's rights are causing more problems than benefits in rural secondary schools as evidenced by lack of discipline and poor pass rate. The researcher however found out that the major problem is on lack of knowledge on children's rights as witnessed by pupils, parents and teachers themselves. The researcher therefore recommends that in-service training should be done to educate teachers. Workshops should be carried out for parents to be aware of children's rights and human rights education should be included in the curriculum to address the problems at hand.

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## **DEDICATION**

This research project is dedicated to my husband and parents for supporting me in my endeavour to attain my educational goal. They all have helped me throughout the difficult circumstances as I pursued my studies. I also dedicate to my daughter Nicole Tshuma.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Rural secondary school children's positioning on children's human rights: A case of Gonawapotera Secondary School.

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter looked into the background of the study, objectives and significance of the study. It also addressed the limitations that the researcher encountered during the research and how they were reduced.

#### **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Children's rights were first recognised after World War 1 in 1924 with the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child. The United Nations continued with the adoption of children's rights in 1959 and the recognition became real on 20 November 1989 with the adoption of the International Convention on the rights of the child. According to the Amnesty International (1999), this was the first internationally legally binding text recognising all the fundamental rights of the child.

Zimbabwe also took some steps towards the adoption of the children's rights. According to the Defence for Our Children's International Organisation (2005), Zimbabwe ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 11 November 1991. The Zimbabwean Constitution Amendment (No. 20) Act of 2013 adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child and various laws to protect the child have been passed in recent years. Section 81 of the Constitution stipulates that "every child, that is every boy and girl under the age of eighteen years has the right to education, health-care services, nutrition and shelter"

According to the Zimbabwe Catholics Bishops Conference (2015), the Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as any human being below the age of eighteen years, unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. In this definition, the child is a human being just like the adults and generally below the age of eighteen years. This however can vary with the law of the country that can define a different age for the child. In Zimbabwe, according to Legal Resources Foundation (2014), the legal majority age is the same as that stipulated by the Convention.

In relation to the above definition of the child, children's rights according to the Amnesty International (2007) are the human rights of children with particular attention to the rights of special protection and care afforded to minors. In this case, children's rights imply the vulnerability of the child and the necessity to protect them. As human beings, children must be treated with equality, respect and dignity, just like any other human beings. The interpretation of children's rights according to Bandman (1999) implies that children should be physically, mentally and emotionally free from abuse. In summary, the child is entitled the right to life, non-discrimination principle and the right to dignity through protection of mental and physical integrity.

Although the issue of children's rights is critical in Zimbabwe, currently it has been reported that child abuse is still on the rise as Nyamanhindi, a UNICEF Communications Officer reported in the Herald of 4 February 2015 that in Zimbabwe child abuse is on the rise. He added that the law enforcement authorities reported that more than hundred girls are sexually abused every day. According to him, this is more than what has been happening at any other time in the history of the country. Leach and Machakanja (2000) in their study that involved Ghana, Malawi and Zimbabwe also found out that the abuse of girls in these three countries is part of a wider problem.

They revealed that there is excessive punishment in schools, bullying and reluctance to take action against teachers who engages in sexual relations with pupils.

In the above report, it is clear that sexual abuse, especially on the girls is the most dominant form of abuse inside and outside schools. This was already established by Makoni (2006) who said that local literature shows that secondary school pupils are vulnerable to sexual abuse as they are more likely to be more sexually active. This has been outlined before by Shumba (2001) also revealed that 212 students in Zimbabwean Secondary schools have encountered sexual abuse, 33 physical abuse and 1 emotional abuse, with the perpetrators being largely males. Evidence continues to show that the girl child is mostly prone to sexual abuse and according to Mwamwenda (2004) this is a result of the fact that most girls that are vulnerable to sexual abuse between the age of 12 and 18 as their needs are more than those of boys during this stage.

It is therefore against this background that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education has a zero tolerance policy on gender based violence and abuse in order to uphold the children's rights. The Director's circular of 2007/74 clearly gives specific details of what constitutes child labour and other forms of child abuse in schools. In this circular, the school heads are tasked to protect the best interests of the child. To ensure effective protection of the child, the Secretary's Circular of 2000/5 gives details on how to prevent and manage cases of child abuse. According to the circular, child abuse is any form of cruelty to a child's physical, moral or mental well-being.

The above policy is meant to make the school environments safe and secure for all learners as several cases of abuse of children in schools have been reported. Gwirayi (2013) reported that sexual and none-sexual abuse is rife in Zimbabwean schools. In his study that he carried out in Gweru secondary schools, he found out that 56, 3% of the pupils have experienced abuse in their schools. The percentage however can be above the given one as research according to Zindi and

Shumba (1999) has shown that most child abuse victims rarely report their perpetrators to the law enforcing agents. It is due to these cases that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education is also emphasising on the implementation of children's rights in schools.

The researcher was stimulated to research into this area as children's rights implementation in schools has become such a critical and important issue and quite a number of changes are being made by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in schools. As a teacher, the researcher found it necessary to learn more about the children's rights so as to equip herself with adequate knowledge of children's rights and how they can affect the educational set up in secondary schools.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Children's rights is a broad term that has been defined as human rights that protect the child as a human being. According to the Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989), these involve civil, political, social and economic rights. Many cases have been reported on child abuse in schools which had led to the implementation of children's rights in schools by the ministry. The biggest problem however is that teachers, parents and children do not understand these children's rights. According to Shumba (2002), physical and emotional abuse is mostly perpetrated by teachers as a way of instilling discipline and a control measure in the form of corporal punishment and scolding respectively. According to him, parents also support corporal punishment as they believe it is the best way to discipline the child. However, corporal punishment is now a crime in Zimbabwe as the constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act of 2013 section 53 guarantees children the right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman degrading treatment or punishment. The researcher however was stimulated to look into the rural secondary schools positioning on children's rights.

## **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The major research questions guiding the study was as follows:

- Rural secondary school children's positioning on children's human rights: A case of Gonawapotera Secondary School.

### SUB QUESTIONS

The following sub- research questions were used to answer the above major research question:

1. What are the learners' and teachers' experiences and understandings of children' human rights?
2. What are the possible reasons for the violation of children's human rights in rural secondary schools?
3. How are the various forms of violations of children's human rights manifested?
4. What measures are being taken by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to ensure the protection of children's human rights in schools?

## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study focussed on the implementation of children's rights in primary and secondary schools which seems to be an area of concern currently. The researcher gained and also added more knowledge about the challenges that are being encountered in the implementation of the children's rights. The research may also benefit other school teachers and children. The teachers will be able

to exercise non-discrimination, act in loco-parentis and protect the children from abuse and violence. Pupils will also be able to know their rights in education and to respect other pupils' rights. This will benefit the school at large in matters of discipline and co-operation between teachers and students to achieve the targeted goals. The researcher also benefited academically as a thorough research on the children's rights was conducted. Professionally, the researcher will be able to offer human rights education to pupils and create a child friendly environment within the school with the assistance of other teachers.

## **1.6 LIMITATIONS**

It is true that the implementation of children's rights in primary and secondary schools is very sensitive and critical currently. Naturally respondents were afraid to open up their minds and empty their hearts to me especially pupils who were afraid that they will be labelled by the researcher, who is their teacher. However, the researcher assured them that the information was not going to be used against them and was able to benefit a lot from questionnaires administered to them. For the teachers they were quite open since the researcher is also a teacher at the school and well known to the respondents. Most of the respondents were also aware of the researcher's current studies and they co-operated.

The research was conducted within a limited time frame since the researcher is full-time employed. This tended to limit the capacity of the researcher to move around and interview the parents. The researcher reduced this problem by conducting focus groups interviews with parents where only two groups, one for males and the other one for females were used.

## **1.7 DELIMITATIONS**

The research was carried out at Gonawapotera secondary school in Chirumanzu District. It targeted the head, who is in charge of the school, teachers, parents and students who are directly involved in the implementation process. The study was restricted to 8 teachers, 20 parents and 30 pupils. Since the parents are far away from each other, the researcher conducted group focus interviews.

## **1.8 ASSUMPTIONS**

The implementation of children's rights is very crucial especially on the major form of abuse that is being encountered, sexual abuse. This is very critical on the part of the girl child. However, the researcher also assumed that the implementation of some of the children's rights is having both negative and positive effects in primary and secondary schools.

## **1.9 SUMMARY**

Background of the study, statement of the problem and significance of the study were the main aspects looked at in this chapter. It also highlighted some areas that created an interest for the researcher to look into grey areas that were not clear to the researcher before. Major sections of the study were outlined and clearly spelt out. Critical issues to be addressed were given as well which the researcher is going to address using the evidence from other scholarly researches in the literature review which will look at other relevant scholarly articles related to children's human rights?



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provided an overview of related literature that was read by the researcher prior to investigation of the problem at hand. The focus is on the positioning of children's human rights in rural secondary schools.

##### **2.1.1 Definition of children's rights**

The Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment No. 20 Act of 2013 defines a child as every boy and girl under the age of eighteen years. Children's rights according to The Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1924) are the human rights of children with particular attention to the rights of special protection and care afforded to minors. A combination of the two definitions shows that children's rights are the human rights of every boy and girl child below the age of eighteen years.

According to the Legal Resources Foundations (2014), it has been established that by reason of their physical and mental immaturity, children have insufficient control over their lives as they are in a weak position and open to abuse because of age. It was therefore seen necessary that the rights of the child be protected in order for children to be safe and to develop to their full potential. According to Save the Children (2006), Children's rights thus are a set of universal entitlements for every child and young person below the age of eighteen.

##### **2.1.2 Evidence of violation of children's rights in schools**

The violation of children's rights in schools is caused by either school officials or other children as well. According to De Wet (2009), children's experiences at school are very important to ensure

a smooth transition to adulthood as it is in schools that children negotiate relationships on which they build their self-image. Even though this is true, children face abuse in schools such as physical, emotional and sexual as postulated by Corby et al (2012).

According to the Directors' Circular No. 74 of 2007, child abuse may be viewed as any form of cruelty to child's physical, moral or mental well-being. Rusby et al (2005), said that there is evidence of verbal harassment in schools as evidenced by name calling, making threatening remarks as well, as cruel criticism. This can lead to emotional abuse as Krugman and Krugman (1984), said that it can be in form of degradation and public humiliation.

Aluede (2011), also talks of bullying in Nigerian schools amongst pupils. The definition of bullying is given as repeated negative actions of one or more pupils against another. This can be in the form of teasing, taunting, verbal abuse, physical violence and other harmful actions. In addition to this, Craig and Pepler (2007) say that bullying involves a power differential between the bully and victim. However, most cases of bullying usually takes place in boarding schools as witnessed by Zindi (1994), who said that there was extensive bullying in boarding schools around Harare.

The United Nations (2006)'s report also said that there is overwhelming evidence of sexual abuse of pupils, both boys and girls by students, teachers and school administrators with the males being the perpetrators in most cases. The World Health Organisation in Plowman (2004) says that child sexual abuse is evidenced by activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility and trust of power whereby that activity has been intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person.

According to Mwamwenda (2004), girls are mostly at risk of sexual abuse in secondary schools as compared to boys because most girls that are prone to sexual abuse are between the age of twelve and eighteen as their needs are far more than those of boys during this stage. In addition, Leach and Machakanja (2000) in their study that involved Ghana, Zimbabwe and Malawi revealed that violence against girls included sexual propositions by older male students and teachers. However, Jerop (2009) in her study that involved Kenyan schools found out that boys are victims of sexual abuse in as much as girls are involved as the research findings showed that 60% of the girls and 55% of the boys had experienced sexual abuse in their schools.

In the same findings of the United Nations (2006), there was also a stress on the existence of corporal punishment in secondary schools. According to their findings, this is usually in the form of beatings, canings, whippings and other forms of physical punishment used by teachers. Finley (2011) also added that corporal punishment is not a new phenomenon in Africa as it has been a method of imparting punishment in schools since the colonial period. She further went on to say that it is a method of discipline in which an adult deliberately inflicts pain upon a child in response to his or her unaccepted behaviour.

In Botswana, the evidence provided by the Secretary of Education (2007) revealed that 92% of the students had been beaten by a teacher. In Swaziland, statistics from Save the Children (2005), show that 28% of the students were hit by a hand and 59% by an object. In South Africa, Population Communication Africa (2004) revealed that corporal punishment had resulted in hospitalisation or death. An example was driven from Kwazulu Natal where a female teacher knocked together the heads of two boys, resulting in the death of one of them. Due to the given evidence, Finley (2011) thus concluded that more than 60% of children were physically abused in Africa.

Another common form of the violation of children's rights is through child labour. According to the Director's Circular No. 74 of 2007, it has been noted that child labour is prevalent in Zimbabwean schools and communities. In this circular, child labour is viewed as remunerated or unremunerated work when that work is not related to the curriculum. Shumba (2001), talks of the hidden curriculum where child labour is practised by teachers in Zimbabwe when they send pupils to do their household chores during school hours and to sell teachers' items.

Emotional abuse is also another form of violation of children's rights in schools. Okoza et al ( in their study of emotional abuse in Edo secondary schools found out that male students experienced emotional abuse in the forms of terrorising, isolating, ignoring and verbal assaulting more than female students. They also established that junior secondary school students experience isolation as a form of emotional abuse more than senior students. As a solution, Okoza et al in Finley (2011) suggested that teachers should mete equal treatment on students irrespective of their sex and class. They also suggested that professional development programmes should be organised for pre-service and in-service teachers to avoid emotionally abusive behaviour in the classroom.

### **2.1.3 Violation of Children's rights within the school system**

Teachers play an important part as role models and moral educators within their schools because they act in loco-parentis to their pupils. However, some teachers tend to use their manipulative powers and abuse their pupils sexually, physically or emotionally. According to Gudyanga (2014), observations have been made that some of the teachers betray societies by abusing school pupils who may not even be aware that they are being abused.

The abuse of pupils by teachers in schools has become a social problem locally and globally as outlined by Amunga et al (2009). Gwirayi (2009), in his study of child abuse in Zimbabwean urban

secondary schools said that student teachers conceptualise child abuse as the ill-treatment of pupils by teachers in form of sexuality, physical nature, emotional form and making pupils do domestic activities for teachers that are not the core business of the school curriculum during school times.

According to Shumba (2002), the majority of teacher trainees in parts of Zimbabwe (84.7%) and teachers (80.7%) believe that shouting, scolding, use of vulgar language, humiliation and negatively labelling pupils, mainly perpetrated by female teachers is for control. Gudyanga (2014), however says that 52.7% of teacher trainees indicated that it is the male teachers who mostly employ vulgar language in the classroom. However, Krugman and Krugman (1984) argue that verbal abuse in the classroom leads to change in performance, belittlement, negative perception and headaches.

Khan (1995)'s study in Zimbabwean schools established that it was very difficult to estimate the population of young women who were sexually abused by teachers in Zimbabwean schools because there was no database available when she carried out her study. In addition to this, Shumba (2001), in his study of child abuse in Zimbabwean secondary schools also said that only anecdotal information was found concerning issues of sexual abuse. According to Zindi and Shumba (1999), research showed that most child abuse victims rarely reported their perpetrators to the law enforcing agents. This was also aided by the school heads who connive with the perpetrators who are their relatives to hide cases of child abuse in schools as outlined by Shumba (2001). However, current evidence from the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education reported in the Standard of September 2014 shows that child sexual abuse is on the rise in Zimbabwean schools as two hundred and thirty seven of reported cases of child abuse in schools indicated that one hundred and twenty three were cases of sexual abuse. This was also supported by Magwa (2014) who said that child sexual abuse is rampant in Zimbabwean secondary schools.

In some cases, the biggest problem especially in rural schools however is that teachers, parents and pupils do not understand children's rights especially on issues of emotional and physical abuse. According to Shumba (2002), physical and emotional abuse are mostly perpetrated by teachers as a form of punishment and as a way of instilling discipline or as a control measure. According to him, parents also support corporal punishment as they believe that it is the most effective way disciplining the child.

#### **2.1.4 Measures to protect children's rights in schools**

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education has been and is still doing a lot in trying to curb the violation of children's rights in schools and communities. A lot of circulars have been sent to schools on how to make schools child friendly environment and these were discussed in the following section.

The Circular Minute P.35 of October 1999 gives directives on suspension, exclusion and corporal punishment in schools. In this circular, the head may suspend a pupil suspected of misconduct for a period of not more than fourteen days. If the pupil is not guilty, he or she should be allowed back into the school without punishment. This circular therefore serves to reduce unjustified suspension and exclusion of pupils. For corporal punishment, it should only be used as a last resort and the head should administer it or ask someone to administer the punishment in his or her presence. However the circular clearly stated that corporal punishment should never be administered on a girl child.

In addition to the above circular, the ministry also established the Secretary's Circular No. 5 of 2000 which gives procedural guidelines on how to prevent and manage cases of child physical, emotional and sexual abuse in schools. Through the circular, the Ministry of Primary and

Secondary Education indicated that it has not ceased the prevalence of physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect nationally and internationally which has direct implications on the educational system. As a result of that, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education decided to give standard procedures for the competent handling of affected pupils in schools. The circular give guidelines on how to process reports of child sexual abuse, ethical considerations and documentary requirements for suspected cases of abuse or neglect.

The other move taken by the ministry of education was the Director's Circular Minute No. 41 of 2006 which gives guideline on how to make school centres of care support for children for the promotion of quality education. The circular gives indicators of a child friendly school such as one that demonstrates, promotes and helps monitor the rights and well-being of all children and all young pupils irrespective of gender, geographical location, ability or disability. The school should also strive to promote quality, effective teaching and learning in a structured but flexible learning centre and child centred curriculum that promotes meaningful child participation, appropriate gender responsive and equality based interactive methodologies for the child.

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in the Director's Circular No. 74 of 2007, clarifies on what constitutes child labour and child abuse in schools. According to the circular child labour is defined as remunerated or unremunerated work when that work is not related to the curriculum. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) child abuse is defined as any form of cruelty to a child's physical, moral or mental well-being. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education therefore through the circular advised the school officials to observe high ethical standards in handling cases of child abuse in an endeavour to protect the child from further harm as the best interests of the child should always be the ultimate goal.

Lastly, the Principal Director's Circular No. 46 of 2010 also advises school officials on policy guidelines on how to handle child abuse cases using victim friendly system. The circular noted that it had been observed that a large number of misconduct cases involving child abuse are lost due to the unfriendly manner in which the victims are handled from the investigation to the hearing stage of the case. The circular therefore gives guidelines of a victim friendly investigation where the investigation team should take all the necessary precautions so that the investigations will be thorough, original and friendly to the child.

### **2.1.5 Effects of children's rights in schools**

It has been established that if children's rights are well implemented, positive results can be yielded. Tibbits (1997) said that the implementation of children's rights in schools affects learners in three ways. The first effect is that children can have a more accurate and deeper understanding of rights. Secondly, there will be change in attitudes, values and behaviours consistent with the understanding of rights such as greater respect for the rights of others as shown in their attitude and behaviour. Thirdly, children will be empowered to take action in support of the rights of others.

According to Covell and Howe (1999), early programmes of child rights implementation in countries such as Belgium, Canada, England and New Zealand provided that teaching of children about their rights has the benefits of improving their awareness of rights in general, making them more respectful of other people's rights and empowering them to take action in support of other people's rights.

According to Covell (2001)'s study in Canadian schools, children's rights education in schools promotes an awareness of children's rights and makes children respectful of other people's rights. This can be witnessed through non-discrimination in the classroom protection from abuse and



freedom of thought and expression which results in an increase in self-esteem and acceptance of minority children. In this case, if children are aware of their rights, they can protect those children that they see being abused at school, thus helping to create a safe learning environment for each other.

In addition to the above, an implementation of children's rights in schools also results in improved classroom climate and engagement where children can express themselves without fear as outlined by Covell et al (2011). Increase in children's participation and engagement in school also promotes achievement. This will be facilitated by the change in teachers' democratic teaching and positive classroom management and less confrontational in dealing with students. Teachers begin to listen to children and take their views into account which results in greater level of student engagement and participation in the classroom.

Children's rights implementation also results in reduced incidents of bullying and makes teaching easier as children begin to respect each other and accept minority children in their classroom or at their school. Covell and Howe (2010) added that due to children's rights, teachers are feeling less stressed and enjoying classes as participation and engagement in school have increased. They also said that as classroom rules were replaced with rights, less adult control was needed as children's behaviour towards each other improved. The teachers also began to evaluate themselves on how they manage their classes and their behaviour towards children.

In their study carried out in Hampshire, Covell et al (2008) thus concluded that children who learn about their rights in a rights-consistent classroom show increased levels of self-esteem and increased perceived peer and teacher support. They added that they also show adult like understanding of rights and responsibilities, more supportive attitude towards children of minority status and show more rights-respecting behaviours.

### **2.1.6 Summary**

The researcher deliberated on the definition of children's rights, evidence of the violation of children's rights in schools, involvement of teachers and school heads in the violation of children's rights and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's effort to curb child abuse in schools.

The next chapter looked at the research methodologies used in looking at the position on children's human rights at Gonawapotera Secondary School.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The researcher used the descriptive survey design to carry out the research. The focus of this chapter is to discuss the research methods used by the researcher and justification of its use. The chapter also focussed on population, sample, research instruments, data collection and analysis procedures which were used by the researcher to gather data.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to De Vaus (2001), research design refers to the overall strategy that the researcher chooses to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby ensuring that the researcher will effectively address the research problem. He also added that the function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables the researcher to effectively address the research problem logically and as unambiguously as possible. Basing on this definition of research design, the researcher decided to use the descriptive survey approach to allow a detailed description of the phenomenon user study. According to Glass and Hopkins (1984), a descriptive research design involves gathering data that describe an event and then organising and describing the data collection. The word survey for Chiromo (2009) means to see over and beyond. This study therefore considered a single school in Chirumanzu district but the results were inferred to a larger population.

### **3.3 POPULATION**

According to Chiromo (2009) population refers to all the individual, units, objects or events that will be considered in a research project. For Singleton and Straits (2010) population is defined as a group of people that the researcher wants to draw a conclusion about once the research study is finished. He also added that it requires the specification of the criteria that determines which individuals are included and which individual are not included basing on the characteristics that an individual should have to be included in the targeted population. Basing on this, the researcher considered population of personnel directly involved with secondary school pupils at Gonawapotera Secondary School that is the school head, the teachers, the parents and the pupils themselves.

### **3.4 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

A sample is a subset of the population and it arises from the inability of the researcher to test all individuals in a given population. The researcher considered an accessible sample and used the information gained to infer to the whole population. Participants included thirty pupils, twenty parents and eight teachers. This was due to the time involved in conduction the research and also due to Public Service Inspections in schools that limited the mobility of the researcher.

The researcher decided to use stratified random sampling procedure where pupils were grouped according to their academic level (ZJC, 'O' Level and 'A' Level). Selection of participants was done randomly by assigning pupils numbers. The researcher then selected every tenth number from the three strata until thirty participants were picked up. Parents were then selected from the thirty pupils by simple random sampling. Their names were written and placed in a hat separately for

males and females, thoroughly mixed and then the researcher randomly picked up twenty participants. For the teachers, the same hat system was again used to select eight participants (four females and four males).

### **3.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

#### **3.4.1 Interviews**

Interviews according to Danks (2006) can be defined as a two way exchange of information of information and ideas to allow the candidate and interviewer to find out about each other. The researcher administered individual interviews to teachers and then conducted focus group interviews to acquire information from the parents, one with the female parents and the other one with the male parents. Another focus group interview was administered to the pupils as a way of summarizing the findings from their questionnaires.

According to Morgan (1997), group interviews involves interviewing a number of people at the same time, the emphasis being on questions and responses between the researcher and participants. Group interviews have the advantage of providing results quickly within a minimum amount of time as outlined by Kroll et al (2007).the two groups of participants were interviewed on their understanding of children's human rights, cases of child abuse at the school and the changes that were brought by children's human rights at the school.

The researcher made use of the study time to carry out the interviews with pupils to avoid disturbing other activities within the school. Interviews with the parents were carried out over the weekend. The interviews were also made flexible and participants were allowed enough time to respond to the questions without being interjected. The researcher also assured participants that

the information obtained was going to be used for the academic research only and not for any other purposes.

### **3.4.2 Questionnaire**

The researcher administered the questionnaire personally to ensure a high response rate as supported by Sarantos (2007). Jewel (2006) defines a questionnaire as a set of laid down questions deliberated by a researcher to subjects. Despite a number of weaknesses, questionnaires can still be regarded as the best way to reach people who are in large numbers as Milne indicated that questionnaires are fast, cheaper and could carry large volumes of data. The researcher also designed questionnaires of a reasonable length to avoid frustration on the part of respondents. Simple language and easy to follow questions were also used by the researcher in order to avoid causing confusion on the part of the respondents. Since questionnaires according to Taylor (2004) are argued to be inadequate to understand some forms of information-such as changes of emotions, behavior and feelings among other things, the researcher also carried out a focus group interview with the pupils in order to be able to triangulate evidence that was obtained from questionnaires administered to them. Simple language was also used in the questionnaires to enhance understanding.

## **3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

Data collection procedures can be defined as the steps that the researcher need to follow when conducting a research as Borg and Gall (1969) refer to data collection plan as a confirmation letter from the faculty of education which confirmed that the researcher is a midlands state

university student seeking permission to carry out a research project in education. Due to limited time, the researcher after receiving the letter just took the letter to the head of the school to seek permission to carry out the research study at the school. After being granted the permission, the researcher then administered interviews and questionnaires as the research instruments. Self administered interviews and questionnaires were done to reduce inconveniences. Pupils were given one hour thirty minutes to respond to the questionnaires and then the researcher personally collected them. Interviews were done face to face so that the researcher could observe non-verbal communication also from participants such as facial expressions as well as to probe for further information where clarification was needed.

### **3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

According to the Australian Law Reform Commission and Australian Health Ethics Committee (2001), ethics is considered as an accumulation of values and principles that address questions of what is good or bad in human affairs. Ethics searches for reasons for acting or refraining from action; for approving or not approving; for believing or denying something about virtuous or vicious conduct or good or evil rules. Blaxter et al (2001) indicated that a common cause of ethical challenge when conducting a research is the conflict of interest between the researcher and the researched. To reduce the possibility of this conflict, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to participants first and they were allowed to ask questions concerning the research. The researcher also openly told the participants that participation was voluntarily based and one could withdraw at any time without being threatened or forced to continue.

### **3.7 DATA PRESENTATION**

The collected data through the use of interview and questionnaires was recorded and processed to derive meaning from it. Since qualitative data was obtained, the researcher used themes and categorised data to derive meaning and to present the data. According to Pope et al (1999), qualitative research involves the collection, analysis and interpretation of data that cannot be easily reduced to numbers. The researcher therefore also used direct quotes from interviews and questionnaires to demonstrate and support research findings.

Thematic content analysis according to Stuart et al (2006) involves reporting key findings under each main theme or category using appropriate verbatim quotes to illustrate those findings. This process when done properly is systematic and rigorous. Issues were therefore examined in detail and in-depth using thematic presentation of data as postulated by Rubin and Rubin (1995).

### **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

According to De Vours (1998), data analysis in a qualitative research is a challenging and highly creative process. The researcher however developed answers to questions through the examination and interpretation of collected data. Gathered facts were placed into classes so that meaning can be deduced from it.

### **3.9 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

Validity according to Mesick (1995) refers to the degree for which empirical evidence and theoretical rationale support the adequacy and appropriateness of interpretations and actions. In



addition to this, Silverman (2006), says that validity relates to the honesty and genuines of the research data. The researcher therefore considered both internal and external validity, where internal validity takes into account the carefulness and strictness if the steps taken to conduct a study and external validity refers to the extent to the results of the study are generalizable. Reliability on the other hand, is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results as outlined by Golafshani (003). When carrying out a research the researcher therefore need to use reliable and consistent instruments but reliability does not guarantee the validity of the research as outlined by Gilbert (2008). The researcher therefore pilot tested the research instruments using ten pupils and four teachers that were not part of the final research to find out the suitability and accuracy of data collecting instrument.

### **3.10 SUMMARY**

This chapter was focussed on the research design of the study. It also specified the subjects to be used in the study as well as the sampling procedures that were used. Interviews and questionnaires were also included as the research instruments used and justification was given why they were chosen. These explanations were presented in full in the next chapter where the collected data was presented, analysed and discussed.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter analysed and interpreted all the findings as established by the major instruments used by the researcher, which were questionnaires and focus group interviews. Data derived from these instruments was used and percentages were used to quantify responses.

#### **4.2 UNDERSTANDING OF CHILDREN'S HUMAN RIGHTS**

The respondents' definition of children's rights varied depending on whether it was obtained from pupils, teachers or parents. For the pupils, only sixteen point seven percent were able to give a meaningful definition of their rights. Of these children, thirteen point three percent defined children's rights as non-discrimination and an end to child abuse by the elders such as teachers and parents. There were however other pupils who showed a misconception of their rights as they see them as their opportunity to do what they want as shown by their definitions of children's rights as "freedom of children to do what they want" and as "the child's right to either listen or not to listen to elders commands". According to the African Charter on Children's Rights, Children's rights should go hand in hand with responsibilities and the above definitions shows that children have no idea of what their rights means to them.

Of the eight teachers interviewed, the majority of them eighty percent , defined children's rights as the basic requirements for the protection of children's rights. However, ten percent of the teachers believed that children's rights are privileges that are justly entitled to children. For the senior master of the school, children's rights however are "...a mere Western attempt and antics to destroy and disintegrate the African culture and way of life". For him children's rights have no relevance to the African culture. It should however be noted that there are some African cultures that lead to the violation of children's rights as postulated by

The focus group interviews with the parents produced a similar definition of children's rights as they said they refer to the protection of children from any form of harm. However their perceptions differed on what they called "harm". According to their cultural and religious beliefs, disciplining a child does not cause harm but uprightness of the child. One of the male parents argued that "only those parents who do not love their children will not punish them severely as they will be destroyed for the rest of their lives." They argued that the extent should be judged by the nature of the child's misconduct. There were however a few female parents amounting to 20% who argued that corporal punishment is harmful to the child no matter the nature of the problem.

## **4.3 VIOLATION OF CHILDREN'S HUMAN RIGHTS**

From the data that was collected through interviews from both parents and teachers, several reasons were identified by the researcher. These were categorised as ignorance, culture-related, religion, poverty and peer pressure. These are presented and analysed in the following sections.

### **4.3.1 Ignorance**

The major reason that was identified by the researcher is that of ignorance. This is major because ignorance was the highest form it had the highest percentage out of all the other findings. The pupils, teachers and parents do not even understand the reasons why children's rights were introduced and the benefits that they can offer to the pupils. From the data collected all the three groups do not have knowledge of what is constituted in children's rights and as such they sometimes violate the rights without knowing. Eighty percent of the teachers showed that they did not know that belittling, scolding and labelling a child causes emotional abuse as they believe that it can motivate the child to do good in the future. This was also the same case with ninety percent of the parents who showed that giving a child more and hard work to do is to train the child for the unknown future not children. It is important to point out at this juncture that the (respondents) teachers did not know that they were violating pupils rights as children and also equally important to note that the pupils were unaware that their rights were being violated.

#### **4.3.2 School Culture**

**According to Zimmermann (2015), culture refers to shared patterns of behaviours and interactions, cognitive constructs and understanding that are learned by socialisation.** Of all the teachers interviewed, sixty percent of them showed that there are certain things that are deemed as the culture of the school and as such for the school to be functional, they must be followed. The teachers and the majority of the parents (eighty percent) believe that pupils must be beaten so that they behave well and understand what should be done both inside and outside the classroom "as that same culture made them to be successful since they were thoroughly beaten by their teachers at school". For them, without corporal punishment children become wild and very difficult to control. It is upon this basis that they argued for the return of corporal punishment as it is "the best traditional way of disciplining children in schools". Most parents, (seventy percent), also showed

that there are certain traditions and cultures that they must follow in order to produce future citizens that will fit into their society, e.g. the fact that boys should learn to do hard work as they will be the bread winners.

Other responses that were obtained in the questionnaires administered to the children shows that there are pupils who are taught that the elders are always right as sixteen percent defined their rights as “being able to listen and respect the elders”. However, evidence shows that most children face abuse from their elders such as relatives, parents and teachers, these children therefore can be abused in the belief that they must always obey and respect their elders whereas they can be wrong sometimes.

#### **4.3.3 Religion**

Interviews that were conducted with both parents and teachers also indicated that sometimes children are abused due to religious beliefs and principles. On the case of beating the children the parents quoted a bible verse, “Proverbs 13 verse 24”, (that says if parents spare the rod, the outcome is the spoiling of their children). Most parents, sixty five percent therefore used this verse to argue that children must be disciplined using a stick even in schools. There are also certain pupils at the school from apostolic churches who deny their children access to education and health facilities due to their religious beliefs and doctrines. From the statics obtained from the senior lady, the researcher discovered that there are seventeen percent of the school pupils who are not allowed to be attended at the clinic even if they are sick. Even in the mass prevention of diseases, these children are not vaccinated as their church doctrines do not allow them.

#### **4.3.4 Poverty**

The other contributing factor to child abuse according to the research findings is that of poverty. The researcher realized that thirty percent of the teachers talked of “situational rights” where children’s rights should be applied in relation to the situation at hand. One of the male respondents argued that one cannot talk of negligence when a child is under the care of a guardian because that person will be assisting to make the child’s life better without being the actual parent. Due to poverty, there are also parents who make pupils to work for their fees and other necessities which in turn lead to child labour as sometimes the work is harmful to the child or violates the child’s right to play.

Due to poverty, the researcher also found out that there are children who are sexually abused by the teachers but the parents will just decide to be paid lobola and let their child be legally married. A case of an upper six student was revealed where the girl was impregnated by a teacher in the nearby school during her form four and got married to the teacher. The student is however still continuing with her education. There are also various pupils who were impregnated by the outsiders as they buy them foodstuffs at the nearby shops during lunch time. From the interview done with the Senior Lady it was discovered that “since 2012, there are ten “O” level pupils who were recorded as dropouts due to pregnancies from elderly people outside the school environment.”

#### **4.3.5 Peer pressure**

Peer pressure is defined by Sandrock (2007) as the adopting of attitudes or behaviour of others because of real or imagined pressure from them. Although peer pressure can be positive, the researcher found out that pupils, especially ‘A’ levels and form fours influenced each other and violated other pupils’ rights through activities such as bullying. This happens amongst the pupils as eleven percent of the junior pupils pointed out that pupils in “A” level usually violate the rights

of the lower class pupils by making them do things they do not want to do, such as carrying their bags on their way home and threaten them so that they will not report the matter to the teachers.. Thirteen point five percent of the students pointed out that in most cases this happens to new comers.

#### **4.4 THE MANIFESTATION OF CHILDREN'S HUMAN RIGHTS**

Basing on the information from questionnaires administered to children, the researcher found out that the most common form of abuse caused by teachers according to 40% of the pupils is that of physical abuse in form of punishment. There was evidence of corporal punishment where two male pupils reported that they were forced to dig toilet pits for the school as punishment. Pupils also indicated that they are punished for late coming during lessons and others benefit in their absence. From the interviews with teachers, 70% agreed that punishment is still being administered at the school as a way of maintaining discipline but they said its lighter punishment such as picking up litter around the school but not during lessons as outlined by the pupils. Evidence from the pupils however indicated that there are still some teachers who are administering punishment during lessons which in turn would violate the child's right to learn.

Verbal abuse was also reported by pupils as being done mainly by female teachers where they said that some of the teachers bring out their frustrations in the classroom. According to the research findings, this usually results in emotional abuse. The ten "A" level respondents also pointed out the problem of neglect of pupils by teachers. The major reason that was pointed out is that of consecutive meetings that will force teachers to abandon or not to attend their lessons. The other reason that was given occurs in the classroom where teachers fail to pay attention to pupils' ideas

and complains. It was also established from thirty percent of the teachers that some teachers neglect some of the pupils in their classrooms, especially those that they regard as naughty.

A few pupils seventeen point nine percent, also talked of emotional abuse by teachers in the classroom due to verbal abuse and negligence. Pupils indicated that sometimes they are scolded for no genuine reason. There was also another pupil who talked of emotional abuse as a result of the teachers' discrimination as they refuse to give other pupils reading and revision material such as question papers. Evidence from pupils' focus group interview showed that the head usually perpetuate the violation of children's rights by encouraging teachers to punish pupils.

Overally, twenty percent of the pupils indicated that male teachers are more abusive than female teachers this is because "male teachers are more physically abusive i.e. they beat us more than female teachers" whilst ten percent indicated that female teachers are more abusive since "some of them come from abusive households where they are also physically abused by their husbands" as indicated by an 'A' Level male student. The majority however did not indicate the sex of teachers.

#### **4.5 WHAT ARE THE MEASURES BEING TAKEN BY THE MINISTRY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION TO ENSURE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN SCHOOLS?**

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education wrote a number of circulars that promotes the enforcement of children's rights. From the circulars that were obtained from the head's office, there was the Director's Circular No. 74 of 2007 that gives the definition of child abuse as any form of cruelty to a child's physical, moral or mental well-being. The Director's Circular No. 41



of 2006 gives guidelines on how to make schools centres of care and support for children for the promotion of quality education. The Secretary's Circular No.5 of 2000 and the Principal Director's Circular No.46 of 2010 gives procedural and policy guidelines on how to handle cases of child abuse in schools. The Circular Minute p.35 of 1999 gives directives on suspension, exclusion and corporal punishment. Corporal punishment was however banned in schools as outlined in the students' questionnaires.

Besides circulars, interviews with the senior teachers indicated that the ministry had also established child protection officers in schools who are the two senior teachers of the school. A three days' workshop was held in Shurugwi in July this year to empower the Child Protection Officers with knowledge of children's rights and how to protect them in schools. From the interviews carried out with other teachers, it was however established that the two Child Protection Officers have not yet conducted a workshop at the school to educate other teachers.

The Ministry has also made Guidance and Counselling a compulsory subject for all pupils in secondary schools. The topic of children's rights is also incorporated in the subject. Findings from both pupils and teachers however showed that the teachers who teach the subject have not yet touched the topic of children's rights because they lack the knowledge of what should be taught at different levels.

#### **4.6 BENEFITS OF UPHOLDING CHILDREN'S HUMAN RIGHTS**

Free learning environment, removal of corporal punishment, improved standards of learning was seen as positive outcomes of the implementation of children's human rights.

##### **4.6.1 Free learning environment**

Only a few parents, (twenty percent) and sixty percent of the pupils indicated that children's rights have some positive impact in rural secondary schools. The most common change that was talked about is that of a free learning environment where pupils are free to express their ideas in the classroom and free to ask what they don't understand without fear. However, there were other pupils who took the free learning environment as the freedom to do whatever they want such as choosing not to write the assigned work or to do their corrections. According to one of the teachers, there was a case of a form three pupil who refused to write corrections and told the teacher that he has the right to have his book marked even without writing the corrections.

#### **4.6.2 Removal of corporal punishment**

Pupils also indicated that another positive change that was brought by the implementation of children's rights in schools is the corporal punishment in the form of beating, canning and whipping. Other forms of physical punishment such as cleaning the toilets and picking up litter around the school yard are still being used by the teachers.

#### **4.6.3 Improved standards of learning**

Pupils also indicated that there are improved standards of learning due to the teachers changed behaviour in the classroom. Teachers are no longer threatening pupils with a stick in the classroom. Some teachers are now so attentive to individual problems of pupils in the classroom instead of just judging them as a group. This was outlined by Covell and Howe (1999) who said that as teachers become aware of children's rights, they begin to listen to children and take their views into account.

## **4.7 NEGATIVE RESULTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHILDREN'S HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **4.7.1 Confusion**

The majority of the effects of children's rights according to most teachers and parents are however negative. All the eight teachers that were interviewed indicated that the issue of children rights has created a lot of confusion amongst pupils as most of them misinterpret them and regard them as their opportunity to do whatever they want which had resulted in a high rate of indiscipline among the pupils. Their major concern was that pupils should receive proper education on children's rights. Unfortunately the researcher through the interviews realized that the teachers are incapable of teaching human rights education as they do not have enough knowledge on children's human rights.

### **4.7.2 Exclusion of pupils**

About twenty eight percent of the children also indicated that children's rights have brought more harm than good as pupils are now facing exclusion more often even for minor offences as it is the only way that is seen to be effective in instilling discipline by the school head since the ministry has put an end to corporal punishment in schools. According to the Circular Minute p.35 of 1999, pupils however should not be excluded for first offences unless they are major cases such as sexual conduct. According to this circular, children have to be excluded after following some procedures and permission to exclude a child should be granted by the Provincial Education Director.

### **4.7.3 Lack of respect for teachers**

Both parents and teachers also indicated that pupils now have little or no respect for teachers due to their misconception of their rights. For most of them, it is more of their chance to revenge. The researcher however was able to deduce from the focus group interviews that the problem is that children have not been properly taught about their rights and as such misinterpret them leading to that kind of behaviour. This has also been outlined by Save the Children (1998) who said that the discussion of children's rights is often clouded by misconceptions about what it means to have rights. According to them, it is mostly believed that children having an awareness of their rights undermines adult authority and encourage young people to behave selfishly and irresponsibly.

#### **4.7.4 Poor pass rate**

Another problem that was outlined by all the teachers that were interviewed is that of low pass rate. Sixty percent of the interviewed parents also seemed worried by the same problem which they believe has been caused by the implementation of children's rights. Ten percent of the pupils also identified the same problem which they said is being caused by pupils' failure to listen to teachers. For most teachers, this has been a result of both deviant behaviour and students' failure to do their school work as they believe that nothing can be done to them.

### **4.8 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Children's Human Rights according to the Geneva Declaration of the rights of the Child (1924) are the human rights of children with particular attention to the rights of special protection and care afforded to minors. According to Save the Children (2006) Children's rights are a set of universal entitlements for every child and young person below the age of eighteen. With the above definition in mind the researcher found that the participants (the pupils, the teachers and parents)

were all unable to properly define their understanding the human rights. This was largely due to ignorance, culture, religion, poverty, peer pressure. This is because eighty percent of the teachers did not know that scolding a child or belittling them is a form of emotional abuse and therefore an abuse of the children's human rights.

School culture also played a role in the abuse of children's rights. The beliefs that for children to understand and behave well they need to be beaten. The teachers specifically thought that the only way the children could understand was to be beaten which is an abuse of the children's human rights. The respondents accepted this as they were unaware that it is an abuse of their rights to be beaten or to be given tasks that incorporate child labour as punishment. The pupils did not however support this culture of corporal punishment as they found it to be abusive.

Sixty nine percent of the parents used religion as a means to argue that children needed to be beaten in order for them to understand. The parents quoted bible verses like "spare the rod and spoil the child" to support the view that children need to be beaten. At the school seventeen percent of the (pupils) respondents were not allowed to attend the clinic when sick due to religious beliefs which is a violation of the children's right to proper health care.

In the findings the researcher also found that the most common forms of abuse of children's human rights were physical abuse which constituted forty percent. This physical was in the form of punishments like "digging toilet holes", verbal abuse was most common in female teachers i.e. 'zibenzi, zidofo' while the male teachers mostly meted out physical abuse. From the 'A' Level respondents, negligence was also a form of children's rights abuse. Thirty percent of the teachers admitted to neglecting those pupils whom they found to be naughty.

There was no evidence of harmful cultural practises that were a violation of the children's human rights. There were also no cases of sexual exploitation of children at the school, but there were ten O' Level dropouts due to pregnancies from outside the school and not the school teachers.

There were also benefits of upholding children's rights which were a free learning environment, improved standards of learning and removal of corporal punishment. The majority of the pupils which was sixty five percent indicated that there was positive impact in upholding children's human rights. This meant that the pupils would express their ideas and thoughts without fear of reproach or punishment. However, the teachers and eighty percent of the parents indicated that the implementation of children's human rights would make their work much more difficult due to lack of respect for teachers and poor pass rate as the pupils no longer do their work properly and hide under the guise of children's rights.

#### **4.9 SUMMARY**

This chapter looked at the data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings. The chapter looked at the various violations of children's human rights, benefits of upholding these human rights and the negative impact of these children's rights on the pupils. Data was analysed from the questionnaires, focus group interviews and interviews and then presented in percentage form. The next chapter will look at the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 SUMMARY**

The purpose of the study was to look into the effects of children's rights in rural secondary schools. The research was also aimed at determining teachers, pupils and parents perceptions of children's rights. In addition, it was also aimed at establishing the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's attempt to ensure the implementation of children's rights in schools.

A descriptive survey design method was used in this study. The researcher considered Chirumanzu District but selected only a single rural secondary school as a case study. Simple random sampling was used to select the participants who were teachers, pupils and parents. The researcher used individual interviews for the teachers which she personally administered and group focus interviews for the parents and pupils. Questionnaires were also self-administered to pupils. The data collected was mostly presented in percentages.

Chapter one looked into the background of the study, objectives and significance of the study. It also addressed the limitations that the researcher encountered during the research and how they were reduced.

In chapter two there was an overview of related literature that was read by the researcher prior to investigation of the problem at hand. The focus was on the positioning on children's human rights by rural secondary schools with a focus on Gonawapotera Secondary school. The chapter also

looked at the violation of children's human rights within the school systems and the measures to protect children's human rights in schools.

Chapter three discussed the research design and also justified its use. The chapter focused on research design, population, sample, research instruments, data collection and analysis procedures which were used to gather data.

Chapter four analysed and interpreted all the findings as established by the major instruments used by the researcher, which were questionnaires and focus group interviews. Data derived from these instruments was used and percentages were used to quantify responses.

## **5. 2 CONCLUSIONS**

The following conclusions were made basing on the findings. The researcher established that children's rights are causing more problems than benefits in rural schools due to a number of factors including:

- Lack of knowledge on children's rights
- Misconception of the meaning of children's rights by pupils, parents and teachers
- Teachers' lack of knowledge of children's human rights
- Improper implementation of children's human rights by the teachers
- Negative Perceptions by the teachers and parents

According to the research conducted, no single definition was given as pupils, teachers and parents differed in their definitions. Pupils defined them as non-discrimination against children whilst



teachers regarded them as basic requirements for the protection of children's needs. On the other hand, parents defined them as protection of children from harm.

The information from interviews and questionnaires showed that several factors contribute to the abuse of children in rural secondary schools. Such factors include cultural beliefs religious beliefs and church doctrines, poverty, ignorance and peer pressure.

Research findings showed that teachers and heads are involved in the abuse of children both inside and outside the classroom. This was evidenced by pupils who are being punished during lessons, verbal abuse in the classroom, and negligence due to teachers unending meetings that hinder them from attend lessons. Another form of abuse established was emotional where teachers discriminate against other children and refuse to give them reading material.

From the research findings, the researcher established that the ministry has provided a number of circulars that explains what constitutes child abuse in schools and how such cases should be handled. It had also managed to carry out some awareness campaigns through the public service commission. Workshops have also been carried out by the D.E.O where they educated teachers on children's rights especially in schools where there was high rate of child abuse. The ministry also established child protection officers in schools who are the senior teachers of the school. The teaching of guidance and counselling in schools had also been made mandatory.

The research findings showed that children's rights have caused a lot of problems in schools such as indiscipline, lack of respect for teachers, exclusion of pupils for minor offences and poor pass rate. From the interviews and questionnaires administered, it was however established that both teachers and pupils lack adequate knowledge of children's rights. There were however some

positive changes from pupils such as a free learning environment, improved standards of learning and removal of corporal punishment.

#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations were made based on the study:

The ministry should assist by carrying out awareness campaigns for the teachers who are already in the field as a way of staff developing them. This will assist them to understand children's human rights and how to implement them in their schools. This will also assist teachers to have adequate knowledge so that they will be able to teach human rights education to pupils.

Workshops, seminars and debates should also be conducted for pupils with specialists so that pupils become aware of what is meant by children's rights and learn about the benefits of having their rights being implemented in schools. This will also assist them to respect other people's rights.

Peer educators and youth councillors in schools should be knowledgeable of the children's human rights so that they will be able to carry out their duties effectively. This can be done through workshops by specialized personnel.

Human rights education should be incorporated into the school curriculum as an independent subject, not as part of other subjects such as guidance and counselling as teachers can choose to leave out the topic. This will help to lessen a lot of misconceptions about children's rights by pupils.

Junior school Development Committees and Girl Empowerment Clubs can be introduced in schools to focus on children's human rights among other issues. This will assist to empower the children and be able to stand up against abuse.

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6. Does your school offer human rights education?      Yes       No

7. a) Have you ever faced any form of abuse at school?      Yes       No

b) If Yes give the form of abuse

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.....  
.....  
.....

8. a) Do you know of any other pupils who have been abused?      Yes       No

b) If yes give the forms of abuse

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

9. a) Are you aware of any cases of bullying amongst the pupils?      Yes       No

b) If yes which gender is more susceptible to bullying?

.....  
.....  
.....

10) Who do you think is more abusive between male and female teachers? Explain your

answer.....  
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11. What advantages and disadvantages of the children's rights in schools have you observed so far?

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## **APPENDIX B**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

The interview to be done seeks to find out the positive and negative effects of children's rights in rural secondary schools. The school head, teachers and community i.e. village heads, parents and business people are going to be interviewed. The findings are confidential and will not be disclosed to any other person except the researcher, respondent and supervisor.

1. How can you define children's rights?
2. What position do you have at the school or in your community?
3. What forms of abuse were being faced by the school pupils before the introduction of children's rights in schools.
4. Are the same problems still faced by pupils at the school?
5. What do you think are the major causes for these problems?
6. Do you think children have adequate understanding of their rights?
7. As the teacher or parent, do you have adequate knowledge of children's rights in schools?
8. What children's rights do you think should be implemented in schools?
9. As a school or community what is being done to protect the children's rights?
10. What changes have been brought forward by these children's rights in schools?
11. What comments or suggestions do you have on the issue of children's rights in schools?