

To investigate girls drop out of schools. The case of Mombasa County

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ABSTRACT

Education is a tool to enable citizens to make all rounded participation in development process. The participation of females in social- economic programs especially depends on their education background. Educating girls is critical to achieve the benefits as well as they improvement in the areas of health, fertility and nutrition. Girls should be treated equally with boys to attain education access, which is necessity to increase their participation in different development programs. International treaty, conventions, law and policies set a legal commitment on the right of education and gender quality, gross and net enrolment difference in schooling of girls prevail. Kenya is one of the developing countries with low girl participation in education. statistics reveals that the number of girls in primary schools is not equal to that of male students. This low participation is one of the causes for females to be under privileged and under presented in development programs. If low female participation in education continues, the country would probably have a problem in achieving MDG goal 3 targets 4. The role of education and female participation should be analyzed and studied. The aim of this research was to identify factors influencing girls drop-out of schools. The case of Mombasa district. To attain this objective, information on school age, population was gathered from documents of the ministry of education and head teachers. Formal questionnaires were distributed to 260 girls, school heads and teachers. Focused group discussion was held with 56 girl's parents and with six education officials to gather information on factors that have contributed to girls drop out from schools. Percentages were predominantly used to indicate the magnitude of respondent's opinion and assumption against each statement. The results of the study showed that social economic factors that affected girls drop out in schools are qualification of girl child labor, cost of rent, food supply cost, long distance to school, parents poverty, fear of male harassments, lack of role models, dropout, parents religion, early marriage, parents illiteracy, worry of unwanted pregnancy, current trends, cultural practices, social practices, peer influence, absenteeism , parents death, repetition of classes, drugs, bullying, diseases, divorce of parents. These are the major reasons for girls drop out in schools in Mombasa district. The following have been recommended to stop girls drop out in Mombasa district. Recruiting qualified teachers, conducting work shops and seminars with parents and religion leaders and to make society and parents aware on the benefits of girls' education. NGO and organization should help girls. A K.C.P.E record, class registers and an admission record were used to supplement the data collected by use of the questionnaire, intensified guidance and counseling. School feeding programs should cover all schools. government grants for F P E should be increased and reimbursed on time. The TV, radio, internet, call in radio shows should articulate benefits of girls education, improving home technologies to minimize the incidence of child labor. More female teachers to be recruited as role models, headmistress and concerned government bodies offering special support to girls participation in education.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Drop out in education still remain a major problem in Kenya's education system especially among girls. Eshiwani (1993) points out that the retention rate in Primary Schools is still a big problem in Kenya. He established that only 10% of female students who enrolled in standard five in 2000 reached class 8 in 2007, though this situation may have improved, the Coast Provincial Education Office admits that one of the challenges facing the education sector in the province is low participation and performance of girls at all levels. Data from the Mombasa District Education Office support the view that enrolment for girls is low compared to that of boys. Once enrolled, the retention rate for girls is still lower than that of boys.

The study established that there is low enrolment for girls and not boys and that the retention rates for the girl-child is low. The study will investigate the vices that bedevil the development and provision of education to girls in Primary school sector in Mombasa District.

The female literacy rate worldwide is 18% whereas that of males is 52% (Tim & Allan, 1992). Using the 1993 cohort it is documented that between class 7 and 8, 14% of the girls dropped out of school compared to 11% of boys (Republic of Kenya, 1998). Many girls who have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS have become very vulnerable and they are falling prey to men. Many are becoming pregnant and despite the Ministry of Education policy of retaining such girls in schools, many are opting out due to harassment from teachers and fellow students. It is therefore important to establish the reasons for the non-enrolment and drop out among girls in Mombasa District and seek ways of modifying this trend, thus the need for the present study.

World learning has rarely conducted cross-country or cross project comparisons to draw lessons from and reflect upon their approach to community participation and local decision making. As such, this analysis seeks to view World Learning's approach through the lens of two project case studies: the community Action for Girls' Education (CAGE) project in Benin; and the Access to Intercultural Bilingual Education (AIBE) project in Guatemala. The paper will compare and contrasts the two and seeks to understand whether there are lessons from each project that may be applied (a) to other World Learning Projects; (b) towards other development models; and (c) To World Learning's overall understanding of the differences between its approach in theory and in practice.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine the drop out rates of girls in primary schools in Mombasa county, coast province.

This study provided an in-depth and analysis on school drop outs taken from academic and development agency literature. It looked at the issues involved in dropping out from school in different situational contexts, and develops shared understandings of dropping out across the contexts. The study asked questions about what we know about drop outs and identifies where there might be gaps in research knowledge.

Dropping out from school occurs after children have previously achieved access to school. A major problem in many developing countries, dropping out is often obscured within statistical data and the emphasis on initial access. This study was concerned with children who have not completed a cycle of basic education, which depending on the compulsory age of enrolment, should generally encompass children from the ages of five or six to fifteen years.

The researcher found out that parent's financial inability contributed to girls primary school dropouts and if there was correlation between dropping out and peer group influence, whether early

marriages and pregnancy could have contributed as breeding grounds for drop-outs. The factors affecting girls primary school drop-outs can differ from school to another and from urban and rural girls primary schools. The ultimate objective of the researcher was to find out possible factors affecting drop-outs in Mombasa district and suggest specify and appropriate measures to control the problem. The study researched on the impact of the efforts the local leaders on development of formal education. This therefore provided a feedback showing areas to be improved as far as gender sensitive education is concerned. Prior preparation is an important objective of formal education. The current education system is aimed at providing students with minimum goals for survival. The 8.4.4 system of education is aimed at making students self-reliant through providing at least the required minimum rational skills.

Enrollment of girls in the girls school visa-a visa subject choice was considered. This attempted to explain whether enrollment of girls in primary schools is influenced by pregnancies, truancy, parent relationships, modern technology prior knowledge of elective / optional acts offered in particular schools body changes, environment, economic, social and cultural practices and parental ability.

With EFA and MDGs targeting access to education, knowledge around drop outs and studies such as this, can help illuminate some of the complexities around dropping out and bring new insights to policy makers and educational practitioners. By understanding drop outs further, there was greater potential to move towards a more meaningful notion of access.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study was as follows:

1. To determine the trends of enrolment of girls in primary schools.
2. To determine cultural practices affecting enrolment of girls in primary schools.
3. To investigate in which classes drop out is more pronounced.
4. To determine social practices affecting enrolment of girls in primary schools.

5. To determine family background on enrolment of girls in primary school

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will enable education policy makers to come up with interventions that will enhance the retention of girls in schools. (Considering the success rate of the retention of the girl child in primary schools, the government was able to come up with ways of improving the same). The teachers will also be able to assist the parents and the pupils to ensure that they complete primary school level and proceed onto the primary school level in larger numbers. It will also facilitate the removal of barriers to girl child education stakeholders to own and support the actualization of realistic girl child education interventions. The research finding is useful with the help of the research findings, the researcher will suggest possible solutions to the problem of primary school drop-outs. The research findings will create awareness to the parents as to why students drop-out of school. The result was used by head teachers and other teachers in finding solution to the problem. The research findings was useful to the professionals, social workers and the Kenyan Government in educational planning policy so as to formulate policies which can benefit poor students or apply stiff penalties against those who marry or impregnate school girls.

The research results was useful to other researchers who will like to conduct research on the same problem in future.

It is hoped that the findings of the present study will contribute to better understanding of the causes

of dropouts in Primary Schools. The knowledge of these causes will provide a framework upon which solutions was sought to the problem of dropping out. The search for solutions to the problems of student's dropping out of Primary school requires concerted efforts from stakeholders. Without the knowledge of what causes dropping out, their efforts to improve student's attendance, hence performance was in vain.

The findings from the study will enable policy makers to find ways and means of promoting high enrolment of students and sustaining the numbers until they complete the primary school cycle, by minimizing factors that encourage students' drop out of primary schools. It would also be useful for policy makers in the planning of resource allocation for dissemination of information.

The findings would also be useful to parents, students and community at large since they contribute to educational resources hence they would work, hand in hand, in promoting internal efficiency of educational system by eradicating those factors that would lead to dropping out of school of their children. The information on the causes of students dropping out of school will be used to minimize if not prevent them from occurring this and improving the quality of education. It is also hoped that the findings of the study will provide valuable information to fellow researchers who may be interested in the same field.

There are all in consonance with the national strategic objectives of EFA goals 5 and 6 which aim at (1) creating a conducive learning environment for both boys and girls, (2) promoting higher achievements levels especially for girls, (3) improving the availability of teaching and learning materials and (4) promoting effective monitoring and evaluation of education quality.

3. METHODOLOGY

According to Dalen (1979) a sample of between 10-30% of the total population is appropriate for the study. Therefore, the researcher will calculate 30% of the total population of schools, this means that 12 primary schools participated in the study. From these 12 headteachers of the selected schools automatically will participate in the study, 12 class teachers, 12 guidance and counseling and 200 primary students of the selected schools.

The following sampling techniques was used:-

1. Purposive selection technique was used to identify class seven and eight pupils, this form was utilized because they had stayed in school long enough. They were also able to give reliable information.
2. Stratified random sampling to stratify the schools into the two categories. The researcher employed proportionate sampling to obtain the 2 types of schools. Private and public primary schools participated in the study.

On selection of student respondents, they were chosen proportionately, that is out of 34 schools in Mombasa, a sample of 200 students using the 12 schools as clusters and selecting within the clusters proportionately according to the number of students in each

Results

Data were analyzed using percentages analysis of the responses of the subject on reasons for dropping out of school.

Table 1 : Reasons for dropout of schools by girls

RESPONSES	%
Poverty	50%
Unfriendly school environment	8%
Current trends	4%
Culture practices	1%
Peer influence	4%
Unfriendly school environment	7%
Bullying by the opposite sex	7%
Distance of school from home	5%
Pregnancy/early marriage	4%
Ill health or diseases	01%
Inadequate teaching	01%
Death of parents	0%1
Illiteracy	01%
Repetition of classes	01%
Fear of male harassment	01%
Absenteeism	01%
Drugs or alcohol	01%
Social practices	01%
Divorce of parents	01%
	100%

Figure 1: chart showing the responses of the responses of the subjects on reasons for dropout of school in Mombasa district

Table 1 and the pie chart reveal that poverty ranked highest with 50% of the respondents indicating that poverty was responsible for their dropping out of school, followed by poor academic performance with 16%. 7% indicated that bullying by the opposite sex was responsible for their dropping out of school 8% 7% 4% 4% 4% while ill healthy inadequate teaching 1% death of parents, illiteracy, repetition of classes had each 1%

Discussion of results

Data analysis showed that poverty ranked highest 50% amongst the reasons for dropout of school among girls. The reasons 34 of school among girls. The reasons could be as a result of unemployment, lack sufficient education, retrenchment of workers, poor remuneration. Stringent measures or policies attached to obtaining loans in to banks for the purpose of starting a small scale business maybe a contributory factor to the high level of poverty in the society. This finding is in agreement with that of

UNICEF (2004) which states that some 65 million girls are out of school for various reasons including poverty. The analysis also should that poor academic performance ranked second (10%) in accounting for dropout of school among girls. This could be as a result of inadequate learning facilities, genetic makeup of the individual and lack of motivation. Ogletree (1992) found that the main reason for first year students dropping out of school centred on dissatisfaction and frustration

with a academic programme.this finding is also supported by that of sigworth (1995) who opined that one predictive factor that accounts for high incidence of dropout was failure in examinatio.sbullying by the opposite sex was third in ranking (9%).this finding is in line with that of Azikiwe (2000) who found that bullying and sexual harassment of adolescent girls n ranking (9%). This finding is in line with that of AZIKIWE (2000) who found that bullying and sexual harrament of adolescent girls by males are some factors responsible for dropout of school by girls. Unfriendly school environment and distance of school from home both ranked fourth and fifth. This could be as a result of biased curriculum; teachers unfriendly relationship to the girls, some parents may withdraw their girls from school for these reasons.Rosenzweig (1998) reported that children perception of school affects academic performance.

Pregnancy and early marriage was sixth in ranking (1%).this may be as a result of culture, peer influence lack of sex education, and poverty. This finding of Mohamed (2000) who opined that a girl may be withdrawn from school if a good marriage prospects arises.ill healthy and death of parents ranked next with 1% respectively; some girls dropout of school as a result of the death of parents; this more so if such parent is the bread winner of the family, his/her demise would signal the end of educational pursuit for the children especially the girl child.

5.6 Conclusions

1. The research findings established that, apart from school and home based factors that caused dropouts in primary in disadvantaged districts, there are also those factors that are neither school-based nor home based. These are in - between factors that have been noted to cause dropouts in primary schools in Mombasa district.

2. From the above findings ,the research concludes that school characteristics and its environment play a vital role in causing primary school students in Mombasa district with limited economic opportunities to dropout or school. This was worsened by the removal" of grants in the 1990's , which made parents to carry a heavier load in educating their children .Further due to parents' high expectations for their children to excel in their academic examinations, students feel frustrated when they fail hence .they prefer to opt out of school

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3 The research concludes that low level of education among parents and lack of guidance and counseling contribute to girl's dropout of school.

4 The findings established that teenage pregnancies and marriages are the most influencing in-between factors that caused primary school students in Mombasa districts to drop out.

5.7: Recommendations

The findings of the study revealed that the government's objectives of retaining all students in school have not been met in the study area. This is despite the government's efforts of providing bursaries to needy students in Kenyan primary schools. Lack of money for school expenses, such as uniforms and stationary, low level of education among parents, and teenage pregnancies and early marriages has ensured this is not achieved. With such a trend, the government might not realize the global commitment of attaining education for all (EFA) as agreed in the Jomtien conference in 1990. These factors were ranked as most influencing in making students to dropout of primary schools.

From findings of the present research study the following recommendations were made:

1. There is need to efficiently run the bursary schemes operated by the Ministry of Education (M.O.E) and Constituency Development Fund (C-D.F). The government should ensure able parents do not corrupt their way to get these bursaries. Further, there is need to educate parents on the existence of the bursaries due to the limited publicity that is currently there. The criteria for awarding of bursaries should be made clear so that all parents apply. These measures would have a net effect of reducing dropouts among students in primary schools.
2. There is need for the government of Kenya and Non-Governmental Organizations

in collaboration with N.G.O's can assist parents to start up small businesses through micro financing. Through this endeavor, parents will enable the students to attend most of their lessons in school which will eventually lead to good performance motivating them to continue schooling

3. There is need that girls who become pregnant while still in school should be encouraged to rejoin school once the weaning period is over- Parents of such children should be sensitized of their daughter's future education. They should be encouraged to continue educating their children after weaning rather than marrying them off. The government of Kenya particularly needs to spell out clearly the guidelines on how teenage mothers who dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancy can be readmitted back to school. The 1994 policy allowing their readmission did not provide for this. There is also need to strengthen sex education in schools. Teachers should be given refresher courses so as to be able to play a bigger role in the teaching of sex education. The current curriculum, which does not make adequate provision of sex information should be improved. Such education would enlighten the girls on the dangers of engaging themselves in pre-marital sex at this stage of adolescence

There is need for the government of Kenya and NGO to assist parents to start up small business through micro financing. The findings would be useful to policy makers, parents, students and community at large. 20 schools from a pool of 120 schools in the district were randomly selected

for the study. Data was analyzed using percentages. Poverty had the highest at percentage [53%] while death of parents, pregnancy, ill healthy, current trends, bullying, illiteracy, and cultural practices.

Repetition had the least percentage of 1% .it is recommended that counselors should identify indigent students, who are likely to drop out of school as a result of poverty and help negotiate some form of scholarship or financial assistance for them.