



## IMPACT OF PARENTAL LEVEL OF LITERACY ON EDUCATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL GIRLS AMONG THE MAASAI OF KAJIADO COUNTY: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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### ABSTRACT

UNESCO report of 2013/2014 indicates that 57 million school girls' children were out of school globally of which 55 percent were girls. According to the report Kenya is among the Countries in the World with the highest number of children out of primary school. This paper analyses the impact of parental level of literacy on education of girls in primary schools in Kajiado County of Kenya, by making detailed review of the available literature the past review on the primary school dropout phenomenon have been carried out without proper analysis of illiteracy as a factor that contribute to girls dropout in primary school girls among the Maasai. This paper indicates that parental illiteracy occasioned dropout rate for girls. The conceptual framework provided in this study illustrates how parental illiteracy affect girls educational outcome which consequently lead to dropout. The study recommend that the government should develop appropriate policies to enhance adult education especially women in order to promote girls education in primary schools.

**Key words:** illiteracy, dropout, primary school.

### INTRODUCTION

Education is universally recognized as a form of investment in human capital and yields economic benefits and contributes to a Country's future wealth by increasing the productive capacity of its people (Temba, Warioba and Msabil, 2013). According to Brent (2005) World Bank economist have recognized girls education as a single development intervention with the greatest individual and social returns. According to World Bank (2002) girl's education is not only important as a social indicator for economic development but also yield higher rate of return than any other investment in the developing World. INICEF (2004 & 2012) reports indicate that girls education leads to more equitable development strong families and better governance Despite the benefit of girls education to national development, research findings indicate that girls dropout rate from school is higher than that of boys (UNICEF, 2012)

According to Economic Survey (2011) more than 400,000 pupils who enrolled in school under the free primary education (FPE) program did not complete standard eight. They9 were either forced to dropout or repeat and only 59 percent of the pupils completed primary education. A greater percentage of the dropouts were girls. According to Muganda and Omondi (2010) though enrolment rates in primary schools are higher for girls fewer girls completed primary schools compared to boys. The situation is worst among pastoral

communities in Kenya. The main objective for this study therefore is to analyse the impact of parental level of literacy on the education of girls in Kajiado County of Kenya which is not clear in the past review. Conceptual framework to illustrate the dropout rate among the Maasai girls is also provided.

### **Parental level of literacy and high dropout rate among primary school girls.**

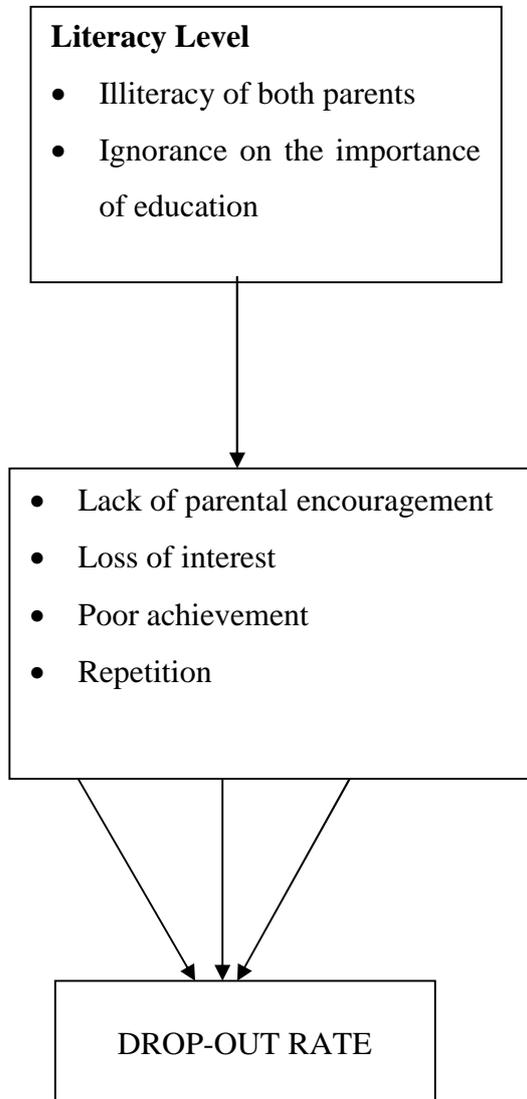
Sociological studies have established a direct relationship between parental education level and children's enrollment and retention in school. Chege (1983) asserts that parental level of education is a major factor influencing participation of girls in schools. The author noted that over 60% of the girls came from families where the father had achieved formal education 45% of them came from families that had fathers who had obtained formal education upto primary school level. Girls from the most educated family background constitute 16.7% of the CPE candidates with 69% of the girls coming from homes whose mothers had some education Korir(2001) in reference to Napal also established that literacy is the single most important determinant of whether children participate in formal school. It is observed that a child father education is substantially more productive on educational participation. Development research has shown that the more educated parent are especially the mother, the better for the education of their children and especially girls (Rotich & Koros, 2015). UNICEF (2012) supported this argument by asserting that pastoralist bias against their girls is contributed by their limited understanding of global issues and exposure to better services that make up life better.

Further studies have established that countries which have the highest rate of women illiteracy have very low enrolment rates for girls in primary schools. On the other hand Countries which have recently succeeded in reducing the female illiteracy rate significantly are those which have often succeeded in achieving universal primary education (Korir, 2001). In a study carried out in Napal it indicated that the literacy level has a positive impact on school enrollment and pupil retention (Kasayo & Namandher, 1985). The report is consistent with the study conducted by Kakonge (2001). The author indicated that the high parental illiteracy rate existing constitute negatively towards girls education. According to gender data sheet (2006) North Eastern Kenya as 10 percent literacy rate. According to the report parents acted negatively against their daughter due to universal view that women are home makers which make their parents and community to restrict girl's intellectual development. Illiteracy compounded with stereotype therefore has helped to perpetuate gender inequality among girls in pastoral communities like the Maasai.

Research indicated that there is low percentage of dropout of girls from homes where parents and other members have high level of education. According to Korir (2001) educated parents are able to provide differential advantage to their daughters. The author asserts that educated parents are able to create conducive environment to successful school performance. According to Oloo(2003) children whose parents are of high educational status have a better statistical chance of participating in secondary education. Wary (1996) asserts that parents education and encouragement are strongly related to improved pupils enrolment and retention in primary schools. This situation is not different among the Maasai of Kajiado County of Kenya where illiteracy is still very high.

According to the studies cited above illiteracy among parents is a stumbling block to development of women especially educational development which play an important role in promoting economic and social development. It is therefore important to analyse the impact of parental education on girl's education among the Maasai of Kajiado County.

Conceptual Framework of Parental level of literacy and high dropout rate among school girls



Source: Author

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Impact of Parental Education on Girls Dropout in Primary School**

The conceptual framework indicates that parental level of illiteracy contributes to dropout rate in primary schools. The educational level of the family is the variable that has the most consistent relationship with the aspect of learning. The illiterate parent may not understand the importance of girl child education hence failed to encourage their daughters to enroll and continue with their education.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study reveals that parental level of education among the Maasai affects girl's enrolment and participation in primary school. The illiteracy rate among the Maasai is very high. They are therefore ignorant on the importance of female education and have low level of gender awareness. The study indicates that the more educated parents are especially the mother the better for the education of their children and especially the girls.

The study further indicates that the high parental illiteracy rate existing among the Maasai contributed negatively towards girl's education and contribution to community and national development. According to the study illiteracy have subjugated women and girls in this community. There is still male dominance in Maasai community which in turn has led to marginalization of Maasai women for many years. Women are not given greater access to education most Maasai women are not able to participate in decision making processes and they lack the capacity to take various positions in the development a gender.

## RECOMMENDATION

The government should increase efforts to ensure that the Maasai and other pastoralist are educated in the importance of girl's education in their societies. This should go hand in hand with formulating strict policies on girl child education. Adult education especially for women should be enhance in order to promote girl's education strategies to increase women's literacy and education especially in rural areas should also be established.

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