

KIRABO FLORENCE (2008-M092-30020)

The Role of Rural Women in Primary Child Education in Uganda: A Case Study of Lwengo Sub-County in Masaka District

In Africa and Uganda in particular, it is a common practice for women both rural and urban to be engaged in quite a number of household roles. Their counterparts, the men, tend to get much more involved in „out of“ household roles. Primary school children have a constitutional right to quality education but to fulfil this right a number of stakeholders have to actively get involved in children’s education. The major objective of this study was to assess the role of rural women in primary child education. The study employed a case study design in which Lwengo sub-county was taken to be representative of the rest of the subcounties in Uganda. Both quantitative and descriptive statistics were used to generate and authenticate the study and to allow for the collection of the complete data through structured and unstructured interviews, focus group discussions, observation and questionnaires. The study revealed that women who earn from agriculture related activities in Lwengo sub-county constitute the biggest portion. According the research findings, women have got a lot of responsibilities right from domestic work to other development projects wherever they are. The research findings also revealed that the key roles women play in their communities towards child primary education included: production of children, disciplining/guiding children, payment of school fees, negotiating with school administration, advisers to where children go either to private or universal primary education, and providing food to the family. The study revealed that among other partners in educating primary children are Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), government, men/fathers; Faith based organizations (FBOs), and relatives. The findings also indicate that most women who take full responsibilities are the ones who are single mothers, widows, grandmothers and those from polygamous families. Also the research indicates that, despite the efforts and roles played by women in the education of children in rural areas, they (rural women) face a number of limitations such as inadequate access to credit and agricultural inputs and other services; lack of marketing facilities and opportunities; traditional, religious, social and cultural obstacles; less participation in decision-making – even within the household. There is need for human rights education within the universal primary education curriculum so that pupils are aware of their rights. The researcher also recommends that awareness raising about the roles of rural women should be intensified; efforts aimed at making education accessible by all children in rural areas should be made; special attention should be given to building schools at every village so as to reduce dropout of children due to travelling long distances; primary child education should be adequately financed out of general taxation; women should be empowered so as to increase their income levels to enable them participate in community development programmes including educating their children and men should come out to support their wives in educating children in rural primary schools. In conclusion, the role of women is quite very important and their participation in the education of children in primary schools is really of paramount necessity in development initiatives.

Keywords: Rural Women, primary child education, Masaka district