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Assessing the Factors Influencing High Dropout Rate of the Girl Child in Universal Primary Education Schools in Sembabule District: A Case Study of Mijwala Sub-county.

This study aimed at assessing "The factors influencing high dropout rate of the girl child in Universal Primary Education (UPE) schools in Mijwala Sub County Sembabule District". The specific objectives of the study were; to examine the socio–economic factors influencing high dropout rate of the girl child in UPE schools of Mijwala sub county, to analyse the institutional factors that have contributed to the high dropout rate of the girl child in UPE schools of Mijwala sub county Sembabule District as well as to examine the impact of high the dropout rate of the girl child in relation to community development in Mijwala sub county Sembabule district. The study adopted a descriptive case study research design and both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used. The study consisted of 83 respondents who included 36 school pupils, 20 parents/guardians, 20 teachers, 6 Head teachers and the District Education officer. A number of data collection methods and instruments were used and these included; interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaires and observations as well as documentary review. The data collected were tabulated, frequencies generated and converted into percentages and analysed basing on study themes. The findings revealed that a number of socio-economic factors have influenced the high rate of girl child drop out from UPE schools in Mijwala sub county and these include among others; lack of financial support, forced early marriages and pregnancies, death of parents, negative attitude of parents towards education, long distances travelled to go to school, age of the child. In addition to these, were the institutional factors which were also highlighted by the study to include; corporal punishment, sexual harassment by teachers, bullying and teasing, absenteeism of teachers, failure of school to provide lunch, crowded classes, poor quality teachers and poor teacher/pupil relationship to mention but a few. The study also examined the impact of the high dropout rate of the girl child in relation to community development as poor standards of living, high illiteracy level, increased early marriages and pregnancies, poor health, increased spread of HIV infections, dependence burden, lack of employment, high crime rate, under development among others. The study concluded that there is no single factor that leads to drop out of the girl child from school. All factors are interrelated to accelerate the dropout of a child from school. The major recommendations of the study include: the government should improve on the well-being of teachers, build more schools to reduce on the distances pupil have to walk to access school, provide on-job capacity building to improve the teacher-pupil relationship, government should improve on the monitoring of rural schools, empower the communities with ventures that will improve the incomes as well as work on the household food security. Sensitise the community on the role education plays in the lives of the girl child and sensitise the community on the UPE policy to give a clear picture of the parents" roles.

Key Words: **High Dropout Rate, Girl Child, Universal Primary Education, Schools, Sembabule District.**