

TUMWIJUKYE JOSEPH (2007-MO93-10133)

The Causes and Consequences of Girl Child Drop Out in Acquiring Basic Education: A Case Study of Primary Schools in Nyakyera Sub-County, Ntungamo District.

Girl child education has been a major concern in the development discourse. This study was carried out to assess the causes and consequences of girl child drop out in acquiring basic education. The study was carried out in selected primary schools in Nyakyera sub-county in Ntungamo district. It was carried out with three major objectives namely; to establish factors that influence the retention of the girl child in School, to find out the packages put in place to ensure retention of girl children in school and to assess the challenges resulting from girl child drop out of school at an early age in Nyakyera sub-county.

A case study research design was used. The study was largely qualitative in nature. Various categories of respondents including pupils both girls and boys, parents, head teachers, members of Parents and Teachers Associations (PTA), children who dropped out of school and Local Council officials were studied to get a range of views regarding girl child drop out in primary schools. The study was analysed qualitatively and presented in themes according to the study objectives. The study found out that the rate of girl child drop out in primary schools was higher than boys in all selected schools. Study findings indicate that girl child drop out in primary schools is still a menace most especially in rural areas. The causes of girl child dropout are multifaceted. Household poverty is the major cause of girl child drop in primary schools at the household level. At the community level, girl drop out is largely as a result of engagement in community work while at the school level, the school costs are the leading cause of girl child drop out. This shows that girls are still denied their right to education which is a fundamental right as described in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

Therefore, the study recommends that interventions to address the challenge have to tackle the problem from the three angles of the household, the school and the community. The school environment must be safe for both girls and boys and allow the student to attend school free of the fear of mental, physical, emotional or sexual abuse. It should address both the physical and psycho-social wellbeing of the child both girls and boys. There is need for community partnerships. Primary schools should develop strong ties to the community and use those links to ensure that all school aged children in the community are reached and enrolled in school. This partnership can as well help to protect girls from risks like defilement and child labour. Development agencies should integrate concerns about children's rights, protection of the girl child from gender specific discrimination, child labour and other forms of gender specific exploitation of children into the design and implementation of projects and programmes, and empower households to improve on their income to meet educational needs of their children both girls and boys.

Key Words: Girl Child Drop Out, Basic Education, Primary Schools, Ntungamo District.