



## CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF PASTORALISM PRACTICE ON THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS SCHOOLING IN PRIMARY SCHOOL IN KENYA

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### Abstract:

Socio-cultural practice such as early marriage, female genital mutilation, circumcision, and pastoralism has hindered education in primary school in Kiliwehiru division of Banisa sub-county Mandera county of Kenya. Education is a right for all children in Kenya. Education make children to be meaningful people of the society and therefore all school going age children regardless of their physical, social, emotional and intellectual and others facing cultural problem like those from pastoral communities should be accommodated in the schools. Many interventions have been put in place to attain education for all. In order to achieve universal education millennium development goal, The Children Act 2002 states that every child has a fundamental right to education which is free and compulsory primary education to all to ensure that every child in Kenya has an opportunity to achieve an acceptable level of learning. The researcher felt that school going children from all levels in pastoral community's moves together with their parents from one place to another following rainfall distribution patterns and security reasons. The pastoral ways of life subjected to school children affects the children attitudes towards school and hence force them to drop out of school. The pastoral ways promote cultural practice which have slow down results in absenteeism of learners from the school and hence broadens to hate for the school since they are forced to shift with parents and animals. The research will be meant to investigate the impact of pastoralism practice on the attitude towards schooling in

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primary school in Kenya. the objective of the study will be; to investigate the impact of socio-cultural practice in primary school education in Kihirehins division, aspects of early marriage on the child's learning especially girl child, effects of FGM/circumcision on the pupils attitudes towards schooling; impacts of pastoral on the learners schooling, effects of religious/cultural beliefs of the learners altitude towards school; effects of parents' attitude towards schooling their children especially girl-child and effects of poverty on the learners attitudes on schooling.

**Keywords:** pastoralism, schooling, primary school, Kenya

## 1. Background to the Study

Kenya is a nation which is metropolis and which is made of different people with their own diverse cultural values and practices. Some cultural practices have negative impact on education programmes thus leading to low achievement in education. The universal declaration of human right (1948) article 26 states that everyone has the right to education, which shall be free and compulsory. All children are entitled to all right without discrimination of any kind such as race, colour, sex, both or any other status this forms an important basis for education for all children in the world. The right of every child to education that considers the child's unique abilities and learning needs, the heart of public law 94-142 according to Roselyn Rosen (1979) is that a free, appropriate and individual education be made available for each handicapped child at no cost to the parents. Some cultural practices affect education negatively not accommodating education as a right.

Gurreh community is one of the Somali clan and has a set of culture that determines education level in the specify. They mostly depend on traditional nomadic life. They move from one place to another in search of green pasture and water for their animals like camel, goat, sheep and cattles.

These people depend on their animals in order to get their basic needs like food, shelter and clothing. They can also sell their animal and animal product in order to supplement animal product to food stuff like maize, posho beans and millet. On top of this, there are also humanitarian organizations who offer them support like relief food and medical assistance in time of drought. These organisazation includes Oxfam-Gb, Redcross, Cocop and UNICEF.

The Gurreh community also have a belief that girl child is a source of wealth and boy-child provide protection and security to the family and society and this practice

has greatly demit the enrolment of children in primary schools since pastoral life has been greatly intensified in them.

Many schools have low enrolment in primary school due to the movement of parents and their children then animal from one place to another and as the result children have no time to attend school to seek knowledge.

Somali community's boy child is favoured over girl children in aspect like inheritance, education and giving wealth especially educating girls is seen as unnecessary cost and a liability. Belief about gender disparities determines the distribution of power and roles in the societies and hence encourages male dominant and women are taken to be subject and a servant to men as most women are not educated. The researcher proposed to investigate the effect of cultural practice to children schooling.

## **2. Statement of Problem**

Most of the children in the area being researched have no time to attend school due to the culture. Parents move from one place to another in search of pasture and water and more so they are subjected to domestic chores like looking after the animals, taking the animals to water points and searching for lost animals.

The Gurreh community lives in Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia and they tend to migrate from one country to another across the boarders following the patterns of rainfall and as a result children are alienated from school and those attending schools become truants and ignore what they are taught at school.

Parent's attitudes towards girls child education is poor and they belief that educating girls is wastage of time and money since they will get married and her education will benefit those they get married to and because of that girls are involved in domestic chores than boys.

Children with special needs are not considered part of the family and more so any family born an SNE child is considered to be unfortunate and the child is related to a bad omen. The child is hidden from any visitor(s) who comes to the family and people avoid talking about the child. The SNE child is not educated, given wealth and do not even put any value on their lives.

## **3. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study will be to critically analyze the impact of pastoralism practice on the attitude towards schooling in primary school in Kenya.

#### **4. Objectives of the Study**

1. To investigate the impact of cultural practices and beliefs affecting schools going children;
2. To find out how cultural of pastoralism affect enrolment;
3. To find out the effect of the poverty on school children;
4. To examine parents attitudes towards girl-child education.

#### **5. Research Questions**

1. What is the impact of cultural practices and beliefs affecting schools going children?
2. How does cultural of pastoralism affect enrolment?
3. What are the effects of the poverty on school children?
4. What are the parent's attitudes towards girl-child education?

#### **6. Literature Review**

##### **6.1 Impact of Cultural Practices and Beliefs**

Culture is a way of life of particular people. Cultural practices in references to Kiliwehiri division both ECDEs centres and primary schools have affected the school enrolments making it very low. Cultural practices have an impact on a local ECDE and school for example Gurreh community cultural norms do not respect the education of special need children as opposed to the UN convention of the right of child which was ratified by the government of Kenya in 1990, which stipulated that "a child with disabilities has the right to special care education and training to help him or her enjoy a full and decent life in dignity and to achieve the greatest degree of self-reliance and social integration. Every child has a fundamental right to education and must be given an opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning. This is emphasized in the Children Act 2002, Gurreh cultural norms see people or children with disabilities has bad omen to the families and society and are termed as misfit and therefore need to be expelled and eliminated in their families, home and society. These children are not given any attention; they are thrown into the flooding rivers. The community in Kiliwehiri division needs to be sensitized on the need of these learners to be taken to the mainstream or regular school to be using all valuable resources to create opportunities to learn in preparing them for life.

The MOEST free primary education support project (2004) highlighted that since the introduction support project for education in 2003 learners with special needs including children in pastoral communities have been admitted in schools in response to the inclusive education approach. But in real sense, not many can be recorded in Kiliwehiri division due to culture obsession.

## **6.2 How Culture of Pastoralism Affects Enrolment**

Kiliwehiri division is a nomadic pastoralism zone, where the main economic activity is traditional livestock keeping which makes people practice nomadic pastoralism, health of their livestock depends on migratory pattern influences in most cases influenced by rainfall distribution. As the people migrate the number of ECDE children in ECDE centres and Primary Schools goes down Galaty (1990) and Bruce Due (1999) stated that the levels of nomadic pastoralists enrollment is usually low. In the case study of Kiliwehiri division, most ECDE centres are situated in areas of nomadic pastoralism where people move with their children from one place to another as a result of migration, enrolment of children goes down in ECDE centres and primary school causing decrease in enrolment.

Ministry of Education strategic plan (2006-2011) indicates that the provision of ECDE in Kenya is a joint effort between the household's communities and the government. Over the last seven years, the ECDE sub-sector has witnessed significant growth with ECDE centres having increased.

## **6.3 Effects of Poverty on Children**

Kiliwehiri division is found in the arid and semi-arid lands, the people in the areas are predominantly pastoralists and therefore depend on their animal products like meat, milk and blood for boosting their living standards. As a result, during the dry season especially when there is no rain most livestock die of starvation.

In Kenya a place like samburu with similar style had developed a good policy in ECDE sector which is a cornerstone and foundations, among the pastoral communities in East Africa which emphasized the role of ECDE programmes evolving considerable discussion, seeing initial stage ECDE centres are beneficial. However, the evidence arose from the practice indicates that in contexts whose parental and student demand is defined by their limited experience of didactic, teacher led formal schooling, this can become a demand for socialization into norms and behavior of formalized schooling for the young, which is liked to be counterproductive on the contrary where ECDE programmes are culturally and contextuality appropriate parents value this education and examples illustrates that incorporating nomadic and pastoralist people's

knowledge of child development into formal schooling can make education more child-friendly and relevant for example; the samburu of Kenya. The following evidence from Kenya has shown that ECDE can significantly increase pre and primary school enrolment of pastoralist children. Part of the national pre-school teacher training programme was a component that included adopting the project to semi-arid area (Samburu) and in 1987, the Samburu district DICECE was opened in Maralal. Samburu District in Northern Kenya is an area with harsh and arid-semi and arid-semi arid climate with scrub land and erratic rainfall similarly. The Samburu and Turkana community, their main economic activity is traditional livestock keeping and having the most viable ways of life has nomadic pastoralism.

### **7. Attitudes of Parents towards Girl-Child Education in Reference to Culture on Gender Issues in Education**

Traditional beliefs: in most local communities it is culturally believed that educating girls is a waste of time and money as they will eventually get married and that education benefits the families they marry to. Girls spend a lot of time on domestic tasks than boys.

Parents of Kiliwehiri division in the study area have negative attitudes towards taking their daughters to join schools. They would like them to be a sign of acquiring wealth. This was done in order to satisfy their personal interest but not of their daughters. Girls also were subjected to family chores hence sidelining them from joining ECDE centers and primary schools. Hence, as a result that girls may have a negative an attitude which impact on education standards.

According to UNICEF (2003), it indicates that every girl should have a right to education and this was supported by the children Act (2002) where the fundamental rights to education were being ratified so that every child should get access to quality education. The MOEST in collaboration with UNICEF organized seminars and workshops of promoting girl-child education therefore in the workshops. They enhance every girl to be allowed across to education there by promoting African Girl Education Initiative (AGEI) especially girls living in hardship areas like the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands. Olwenya (standard newspapers for September, 9<sup>th</sup> 2008) blamed poverty for school dropout. The standard newspaper page 24, the Member of Parliament for Nyatike Hon. Eric Anyanga indicated that *"basic education was necessary for girls to discharge their matrimonial obligations effectively."* He also noted that parent should encourage girls to go to school and further explained that he had set aside Kenya shillings Five million(5,000,000/=) from the constituency Development Fund Kitty for

girl-child education in his constituency. He also stressed that parents should educate their daughters and assured them their daughters and assured them their support and care.

## **8. Recommendations**

1. Create awareness to the community on the provision of physical facilities to ECDEs centers and to mentor and inculcate their children to get enroll in ECDEs centers to sicoruage pastoral life where culture and beliefs are more-oriented.
2. The local leaders to address problems instructional materials in ECDE centers.
3. The government to re-service KESSP programme which supported payments of ECD teachers and provision of other physical facilities and learning materials.
4. MOE to have proper plans for ECDE centers in pastoral commitments especially in ASALs by providing financial support to boost their lives.
5. Community sensitization and encouragement of importance of sending children to schools, on emphasis of improving enrolment.

## **9. Conclusion**

This Research reveals the impacts of cultural practices and beliefs in primary schools in Kiliwehiri division, examining various factors that affects education in terms of low enrolment schools drop-out children poverty levels, truancy, long absence from school biasness of girl discrimination, negative cultural practices of parents attendance the local community need to be sensitize on importance of educating all children regardless of their gender.

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