

Transition Rate Of Girls From Lower Primary To Upper Primary, Kajiado County

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Abstract

This study is on factors that influence the girls' transition rate from lower primary to upper primary in public primary schools of Kajiado County, Kenya. Four study questions guided the study. Literature review focused on international calls on girl's education among the pastoral communities and the girl's education in Kenya and Africa at large. The study focused on the factors that influence girls' education which include the *socio-cultural factors, socio-economic factors, school based factors and early teenage pregnancies* which include the flight of the girls due to the effects of HIV/AIDS and FGM. The study used the descriptive survey design. The target population for the study was 524 comprising of 14 head teachers and 510 class six girls from all the fourteen public primary schools in Kajiado County. The sample for the study was 14 head teachers, and 16% of the girls (82) in class six from the selected schools. Based on the findings the following conclusions were made: *Early marriage* was found to be the main cause of girls not graduating to the next higher level of education in public primary schools. Female genital mutilation (FGM) was the second contributing factor to low transition rate of girls. Results on physical facilities had mixed reactions. Majority of the girls (72.5%) belief that lack of physical facilities had no influence on them being or not being in school. This meant that whether the physical facilities are available or not the girls will still continue with their education. *Early pregnancies* represented by 88.4% most likely to lead to girls leaving school before completing the entire primary cycle. Only 8.7% of the respondents indicated that early pregnancy had no influence on girls being or not being in school. It was found that there was high percentage of girls out of school due to lack of female teachers in their school to act as role models. The study also established that most of the girls from poor households go through FGM as compared to those from rich

households, in which case FGM will lead to early pregnancies hence the girl leaving school.

Keywords: Girls transition, primary school, Kajiado county

Background of the study

Introduction

Education is a means to achieving other ends. ‘Educate a man and you educate an individual, educate a woman, and you educate a whole nation’ so says an old adage. Girl’s education is not only a fundamental right, but also an important catalyst for economic growth and human development (Oxfam, 2000). There has been widespread campaign by many governments and the international community in recent years to provide access to education to more children in the developing world.

When schools open their doors to girls and women, as well as to boys and men, the benefits multiply. Indeed failing to invest adequately in educating women can reduce the potential benefits of educating men. This failure exacts a high cost in lost opportunities to raise productivity, to income, and to improve the quality of life. Yet, women’s education still lag far behind men’s in Kenya, with far-reaching adverse consequences for both individual and national well-being.

Female education yields a higher rate of return than any other investment available in the developing world. This has however been difficult as education does not operate in a vacuum and is affected by the wide socio-economic and political arena in which it is embedded. World Bank (2003) states that consequently though there has been progress in educational development in many developing countries over the years, this has been slow due to many factors which include inter alia: rapid population growth, unfavorable economic conditions and political violence.

The overall policy goal for the government is to achieve Education for All (EFA) in order to give every Kenyan the right to education and training no matter his or her social-economic status. This is to be achieved through provision of an all inclusive quality education that is accessible and relevant to all Kenyans. Recent policy initiatives have focused on attainment of Education for All (EFA) and in particular Universal Primary Education (UPE). The concerns are access, retention, equity, quality and relevance (ROK, 2005b).

The current state of Education in Kenya is that primary education is free. Parents are only required to take their children to school as the government meets most of the costs including paying teachers’ salaries, buying books, providing stationary, school maintenance and sports equipment. This is done in recognition of the role of education in enhancing

productivity, reducing poverty, increasing individual earnings, the spillover benefits to the society resulting from educating individuals, enhancing democracy and good governance among others.

The aim of this study was to analyze the factors that influence the transition rate of the girls from lower primary school to upper primary schools in Kajiado County. In Kajiado County girls between the ages of 10 to 14 undergo initiation commonly known as FGM. Majority of these girls are mostly in class 5 and 8 on who this study is mainly going to focus on. Once girls undergo FGM they perceive themselves to have matured through initiation rite and therefore ready for marriage at the expense of schooling.

Statement of the problem

Education in Kenya is characterized by serious gender and regional disparities. In primary education there are a large number of children, especially girls not in school, which is alarming and a serious violation of basic human and children rights. This is more significant in arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) where pastoralism and nomadism are predominant.

In Kajiado County according to the statistics from the DEOs office for the period 2008 to 2011, on the average there is a significant drop of girls transiting from lower primary to upper primary. The trend is worrying and against the set Vision 2030 goals by the Kenya government. The EFA goals and targets, as per the Jomtien Conference and reaffirmed at the World Education Forum in Dakar emphasizes the need to eliminate gender disparities, and achieve gender equality in education, with a focus to ensuring girls' full and equal access to, and achievement of basic education of good quality. It was upon this background that the study investigated the factors that had influence on the transition rate of girls from lower primary to upper public primary schools in Kajiado County.

Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To determine the extent to which *socio-cultural factors* influence the transition rate of girls in public primary schools in Kajiado County.
2. To determine the extent to which the *socio-economic factors* influence the transition rate of girls in public primary schools in Kajiado County.
3. To assess how the *school factors* influence the transition rate of the girls in public primary schools in Kajiado County.
4. To establish whether *early teenage pregnancies* influence the transition rate of the girls in public primary schools in Kajiado County.

Key words

Transition rate- this is the percentage of pupils who graduate from one level of education and move on to the next higher level.

Primary school- this refers to an institution in which children receive the first stage of compulsory education known as primary or elementary education.

Lower primary- this refers to the first years of primary schooling from standard one to standard five.

Upper primary- this refers to the last years of primary schooling from standard six to standard eight.

Public Primary Schools- These are schools that belong to the community and are sponsored or ran by the government that offer primary level education.

School factors- refer to identifiable school conditions that influence participation of students in school work and output.

Socio-economic- refers to a combination of social and economic factors, more specifically to income and social position.

Social-cultural- refers to peoples' way of life as expressed through their attitudes, virtual beliefs, values and pedagogy systems that are expressed from generation to generation through the community's systems.

Literature review

Specific Factors Influencing the Transition Rate of Girls.

The study reviewed both theoretical and empirical literature based on the themes of socio-cultural factors, socio-economic factors, school factors, and early teenage pregnancies.

Socio-Cultural Factors

The socio-cultural factors refer to the people's way of life as expressed through their attitudes, virtual beliefs, values, and pedagogy systems that are expressed from generation to generation through the community's socialization systems. Socio-cultural attitudes and practices have a big influence on education, especially for girls. It is the culture and attitudes that mould the society.

However, some cultural beliefs and way of life are so much out-dated in many Sub-Saharan states that they call for drastic change. The only agent for that change is education for all boys and girls alike. African communities largely have a male-preference attitude. Males are expected to be able to do wonders in the world of knowledge and technology while a woman's place is at home, keeping up with the livelihood of the family (World Bank 2003). All family development efforts, including schooling are invested on the boys because they are the makers of clans while the girls are expected to be married off to husbands who will speak for them. As a result few efforts and

resources are spent on girls' development in general. Early marriages have great consequences on young girl's education as it cuts short the educational opportunities that would increase their life skills "(Shariff, 2008).

This attitude is held by both men and women in communities and highly contributes to the low enrolment, low participation poor performance of girls in schools and hence low transition rate of girls. Drop outs due to early marriage and teenage pregnancies are a common feature. This is because girls undergo through FGM which is undertaken at the ages of 8- 16 years, which is the apparent age that in the Kenyan education system the girls are beginning or completing their primary cycle or are in the first two classes of the second level of secondary school education. The effect of this rite of passage is that the girls are given a license to get married and the men are ready to take them away for marriage. Lack of vision and prospects for future life reduces girls' interest to participate, perform and achieve in education. Special efforts, therefore, need to be employed to cultivate girls' interest to education and provide an environment that will ensure their full participation and achievement in education (World Bank, 2003).

Socio-economic factors

According to (Akunga, 2006) in her study 'Girls, Women and Children and HIV/AIDS in Eastern Africa' she observes that poverty is one of the socio-economic factors affecting girls in education, she points out that the access and completion rate are lowest for children from poor households, with girls within such households registering very low levels of completion. In situations of lack of adequate resources at household levels, experiences from the East African countries indicate that parents favour boys' education to the girls', who are often withdrawn from school to give the boys the opportunity for schooling. This is based on a strong belief that sons should be educated because they will need to support aging parents and establish a household, while a daughter on the other hand, will eventually marry and serve another family.

While focus on accessing primary education has been on removal of direct tuition fees, there are other costs that constrain access and retention hence low transition rate. These include costs like parent teacher association (PTA) fees, activity fees and buying school uniforms and books. These have locked children out of school, particularly the girl child. Again, in most cases, when these fees are not affordable, it is the girl child who is withdrawn from school in favour of the boy. As observed by Birdsall, Levine and Ibrahim (2005), eliminating fees alone may not help poor families unless more equitable and efficient sources of financing are provided.

Economically, Maasai largely depend on land, livestock (mainly cows) and traditional occupations such as bead work, dairy (making ghee,

selling milk) and traditional herbal medicines (Flintan, 2008). The land occupied by Maasai is divided into ranches and usually owned by the community to provide a wide area for livestock grazing. However, this has changed over time following environmental degradation, and altered socio-economic and political conditions. These constraints have made the Maasai adapt to crop farming as an activity that will provide household income. Hughes (2006) not only confirms Maasai loss of land as being a consequence of socioeconomic poverty but also takes us back to the land alienation process which was begun in 1904 by the British.

Overwhelming number of girls is not in school because of poverty. Poverty also leaves families with little choices. Even when girls go to school, they continue to take care of the home and siblings, collect water and firewood. This leaves them with little or no time to do school work and attend classes regularly. Low socio-economic status and culture are the motivating factors behind the practice of early marriage. From an economic point of view, some households view girls as ‘gold mines’ that increase family wealth through combined cattle and cash dowries. On the other hand, parents are relieved of the economic constraints that come along with raising children (“Barriers to girls’ education” 2007).

Poverty on the other hand contributes to low transition rate of girls, child labour and low performance due to irregular attendance. In conformity with this situation, Mingat (2003) reports his findings that “of the richest (20%) households, 76% of their children attend school compared to 40% of the poorest (20%) households. This means children from poor households have much lower attendance than those from richer households. It is in those poor families that girls have a higher risk of not attending school. Mingat argues further that countries with low attendance rate overall tend to have high gender, regional and wealth disparities. (Mingat, 2003). .

A study done in Zambia confirms that “girls in Africa, and in fact, almost in every region, work at home more than boys, regardless of whether they are school going or not...”(World bank 2003). It was reported in Zambia that girls spend four times more time on direct ‘productive work’ as compared to boys Blackden and Bhanu, in (World Bank, 2003). The outcome of this productive work is not necessary spent on the girls’ development. This state of affairs is aggravated by the socio-cultural attitudes of parents towards girls’ education which is discussed in the previous section.

School-based factors

Issues considered under the school portfolio are such as physical environmental factors, teachers and teaching/learning materials. The school environment is a factor that causes gender inequity in learning. Poor

environmental factors affect all learners. However, girls have special needs, especially during puberty period, which if not provided for, the girls' attendance will be poor. Such facilities such as toilets/latrines and sanitary pads should be provided with enough privacy. Also water and proper desks/benches are essential for girls' comfortable stay in school and for learning.

Lack of adequate female teachers in some schools also affects girls' enrolment, retention and completion of schooling. As pointed out by Birdsall, Levine and Ibrahim (2005), there is a positive relationship between gender parity in retention and the proportion of female teachers. This is because female teachers are role models to the young girls while at the same time; the parents feel secure sending their girls to schools with at least a female teacher. They trust that their girls will be protected and counseled accordingly by a female teacher. Most schools, particularly those located in remote and insecure areas, lack female teachers. Studies in Kenya have shown that some schools do not have a female teacher at all and in such schools, girls' enrolment rate is very low. Qualified female teachers are in short supply and sometimes due to security concerns and poor infrastructure, they may not be willing to work in remote parts.

According to a report by Alba de Souza, (2006), he observed that in Kenya, the proportion of pastoralist girls going to school is about half that of the already low attendance of boys. Like many other parents, pastoralist parents strongly prefer to send their daughters to girls' only schools, including having women teachers. The lack of women teachers is a problem here. Alba gave an example of a particularly successful girl's boarding school where the head teacher herself visited the communities and invited the parents of pupils to visit the school at any time while passing not just during official visiting hours. Teacher education was an important issue. Alba described how the Kenyan Permanent Secretary for Education appealed to the Kenyan pastoralists and nomadic communities to nominate candidates for teacher training. He said that they were prepared to accept those at lower than normal grades who would then be given special training. The Education Ministry needed the help of pastoralists so that they could then help other pastoralists.

Most curriculum materials on the other hand might not be gender sensitive and portray girls as passive learners while boys are portrayed as active and holding high positions in society. Girls and their families, therefore, find little reason to attend school if they are taught that girls are of less value than boys, or if they are tracked into fields of study of low paid occupations considered traditional for women. Analysis of textbooks in Africa consistently finds stereotyped material with women portrayed as subordinate and passive, while men are shown as displaying intelligence,

leadership and dominance. Monly (2003) reiterate that even where girls achieve the same level as boys they are underrepresented in those non-traditional subjects such as physics. In Kenyan schools, girls drop out of school earlier and obtain lower test scores as compared to boys due to gender inequality.

Substantial challenges such as the availability of schools with safe walking distances and the quality of infrastructure, from toilets for girls, to proper buildings within which to learn and adequate teaching and learning materials are still elusive in pastoralist communities. The presence of female teachers does not only act as role models but also acts as security for the girl child. For many girls throughout the world, there is a shortage of schools within safe walking distances from their homes. Many schools still operate in despair, with crumbling toilets that is if any for girls, and overcrowded classrooms.

Early Teenage Pregnancies

Besides early marriages, the transition rate of girls in schools in Maasai land has been propelled by percentages of teenage pregnancies. Some experts have cited careless relationships between male and school girls to be the major cause of unwanted pregnancies especially after the girls have undergone through FGM. However, a general permissiveness that has pervaded the society and lack of relevant family counseling would constitute a strong argument on this issue.

Cultural determinants such as gender, age sets, religious and spiritual beliefs, Maasai ethnicity sexual practices, socio-economic class, sex and education influence women's negotiating ability in matters concerning reproductive health. Negotiation applies in situations where Maasai women are not able to fully express themselves within the areas of gender and cultural affiliations. Consequently, reproductive health rights and the freedom to make decisions on how to manage their own sexuality are withdrawn (Parisimei, 2009).

In Kenya, the then Gender Minister, Esther Murugi ("Fight against FGM continues in Kenya", 2009) gives an account of 37 tribes in the country out of a possible 53 tribes who continue to practice FGM; particularly in the rural areas, despite the illegalization of the practice ten years ago. Although 38 percent of Kenyan women from these 37 tribes have been circumcised a baseline survey conducted in Kajiado district by the Ministry of Health and GTZ (Evelia, Sheikh, & Askew, 2008) indicated that 93.9 percent of Maasai women and girls in the area had undergone FGM and that in some parts of the district, a prevalence rate of 100 percent was recorded. The Government has adopted a plan of action to stop FGM through program activities that sensitize the communities on the dangers relating to FGM such as HIV/AIDS

due to the sharing of the cutting instrument, and has established services to provide healthcare and counseling for physically and psychologically traumatized girls and women (Evelia, Sheikh, & Askew, 2008).

FGM has been found to result in traumatic physical consequences, often lasting throughout the women's life time. Use of the same instrument during multiple surgeries increases chances of infections. Similarly, when wounds do not heal well this creates a high chance of HIV transmission through vaginal or penile fluids during sex. Cut women have 1.94 times higher odds than uncut women of initiating sexual intercourse before they are 20, and women who experience their sexual debut before age 20 have 1.73 times higher odds than those whose sexual debut comes later of testing positive for HIV (Young, & Abraham, 2007).

When seeking to understand the reason as to why Maasai performs FGM on girls and women a UNICEF (2005) survey indicates that women cite custom and tradition or that it is a 'good tradition' as the main reason for carrying on with the practice. Some Maasai will continue to carry out FGM as propaganda continues to perpetuate the practice (IRIN news, 2010): A senior FGM 'surgeon' is convinced that FGM is the only way to stop a girl or woman from sleeping around with any man she meets, be faithful and not bring the disease to the community. Maasai believe that the practice marks the entry of a girl (child) into womanhood and this is when a woman can begin to engage in sexual relations including marriage (IRIN news, 2010).

Methodology

Study Design

This study employed descriptive survey design. This design was ideal because the study did not have any direct control of independent variables because their manifestations had already occurred (Kothari 2004). The study used different sources to get information, list of school was received from Kajiado County department of Education, the DEOs office in Kajiado County and the schools also offered the necessary information for the success of this study. For this study the variables included socio-cultural factors, socio-economic factors, school factors and early teenage pregnancies.

Target Population

The target population for this study was 524 comprising of 510 girls in standard six in the fourteen schools and 14 head teachers in public primary schools in Kajiado County.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

For this study the study adopted 16% of the target population resulting to 82 girls and all the 14 head teachers in public primary schools of Kajiado County.

Instruments Validity

To enhance the validity of the questionnaires first, a pre-test (pilot study) was conducted on class six girls in Kajiado Central division because it had the same characteristics as the target population. Secondly, it involved consultations with experts in the department in the course of constructing the instruments to ensure their validity besides this pre-test. This was necessitated by the need to assess the clarity of the instrument items so that those that failed to measure the variables they were intended to were modified or discarded completely and new items added. The questionnaires were administered in two schools which were not in the main study.

Reliability of the Instrument

This refers to the accuracy and precision of a measurement procedure. A measure is reliable to the degree that it produces consistent results. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) define reliability as a measure to which instruments yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. To enhance reliability of the instruments a pilot study was conducted in two schools. The aim was to assess the clarity of the questionnaire items. In order to improve the reliability of the instruments, the study employed the test retest technique where by the questionnaires were administered twice to the respondents in the pilot sample. The study critically assessed the consistency of the response to make judgment on their reliability. This was done to test understanding, difficulty of questions and willingness to respond. The study used Karl Pearson's Coefficient to ascertain reliability of the questionnaire.

Data Collection Procedure

The administration of study data collection instruments was done by the study both at the pilot and main study. A letter of introduction from the University of Nairobi was issued. A study permit was obtained from the office of the president through MOEST, a copy of which was presented to the district education officer, Kajiado district.

Head teachers of the participating schools were contacted, after which the schools were visited for the administration of the questionnaires. During the data-gathering exercise, respondents were assured that strict confidentiality would be maintained in dealing with their responses. This demanded the study to create a rapport with the respondents, so as to gain their acceptance and trust. To ensure full co-operation, from the respondents

the study explained the significance of the study and their participation. Where numbers were required, the respondents were allowed to consult school files. Due to distances between the schools, the study collected the questionnaires the same day from each school visited. This was to ensure that respondents do not discuss or modify their responses. Arrangements were made for a second visit to collect questionnaires that were not collected the same day.

Data analysis, presentation and interpretation

Of the 14 head teachers interviewed, majority of them 78.6% agreed that pregnancy was a major factor in influencing the girls' transition rate in public primary schools of Kajiado County. 78.6% also indicated that girls from poor households were likely to stop schooling most probably because they can't afford to pay school fees and buy the necessary school essentials. Lack of parental encouragement or motivation represented by 71.4% of the respondents was another factor likely to keep girls at home instead of them being in school. 71.4% of the head teachers also agreed that early marriage is another factor that contributed to girls being at home instead of school. This could be so because it at this age that most girls undergo FGM as indicated by 85.2% of the respondents that is 28.6% most likely and 57.1% likely. After this rite many girls are perceived to be adults hence engage in sex and thus end up being pregnant and eventually leave school.

However, most of the respondents 71.4%, believe that lack of physical facilities is not a variable of girls leaving school. Only 28.5% believe that lack of physical facilities may have an influence on the girls' transition rate. Lack of female teachers 71.4% that is 35.7% most likely and 35.7% likely, could be another factor contributing to low transition rate of girls from lower primary to upper primary in public primary schools of Kajiado County. However, majority of the respondents 64.9% that is 57.1% rarely and 7.1% not at all, indicated that distance from school had no influence on the girls being or not being in school and only a small percentage 35.7% think that distance from school to home may have influence on the girls transition rate.

Correlational analysis of the responses

A correlation of factors that influence the transition rate for girls in public primary schools was run on an SPSS to establish their strength and direction.

Table 4.1: Table of correlational analysis of the responses

	Poverty	FGM	Parental encouragement	Early marriages	Female teachers	Physical facilities	Distance
Poverty	1	0.884**	0.461	0.577			
FGM	0.884**		0.884**				-0.113
Parental encouragement	0.461	0.884**		0.577	0.790*		
Cultural beliefs	0.461	0.548					
Early marriages	0.577	0.904**	0.577		0.263		-0.354
Pregnancy	0.655	0.884**	0.655	0.945**	0.404		-0.267
Female teachers	0.617	0.801*	0.790*				
Distance		-0.113			0.420		

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation coefficient for pregnancy and early marriage was the strongest and was found to be 0.945 (0.01sig) followed by that of marriage and FGM which were found to be 0.904 (0.01 sig). This means that there are high chances of girls who undergo FGM to get pregnant and hence drop out of school to get married. The relationship between poverty and FGM was found to be 0.884 (0.01 sig). This means that household that had a high poverty index had greater chance of practicing FGM. The correlation between FGM and lack of female teachers was found to be high and positive at 0.801 (0.05 sig), which means the chances of the lack of female teachers in public primary schools of Kajiado County, contributes to girls choosing to undergo FGM, properly due to lack of advice or guidance and counseling from the teachers. There was a negative correlation between the distance from school and the practice of FGM 0.113, which means that the distance from school has no influence on the practice of FGM, and that the girls will undergo the practice whether the school is near or far. There was also a negative correlation between the distance from school and the issue of early pregnancy, that is -0.267 meaning that there is no relationship between girls getting pregnant and the distance of the school.

Most of the head teachers observed that parents who did not encourage their girls to go to school had a greater tendency of encouraging the practice of FGM. The correlation for this was very strong at .884 (sig 0.01). The strength of relationship between cultural beliefs and poverty was weak at 0.461 (0.01 sig). Distance from school had a negative relationship with FGM at -.113, this means that distance from school does not affect the girls transition rate. Lack of female teachers and lack of parental encouragement are highly correlated 0.790 (0.05 sig).

Summary of findings and conclusion

Majority of the class 6 girls surveyed were ranked to be of ages 13 and above and only a small percentage was below 10 years. According to the findings the highest percentage of the girls surveyed indicated that the provider of their school essentials was the father as compared to a smaller percentage having the mother providing the essentials.

Kajiado County is among the many pastoralists areas with low transition rate in education especially for girls. The district has continually recorded a low transition rate for girls with the highest percentage of girls dwindling up the levels each year. The apparent inadequacy of common explanations of the low transition rate of girls was the motivation of this study. The study sought to establish the factors that influence the transition rate of girls from lower primary to upper primary.

The study sought to investigate the factors that influence the transition rate from lower primary to upper primary schools in Kajiado County. Various factors were to be investigated in order to find whether they have a positive or a negative influence on the girls' transition rates in public primary schools of Kajiado County.

The findings were that FGM is still commonly practiced in this community and that most of the girls who undergo through this cultural practice end up getting pregnant because the girls are perceived to have entered maturity hence the parents have no control of what they do since they are already adults through the rite hence, they get married at the expense of school. This therefore means that early pregnancies, FGM and early marriages are the major causes of low girls' transition rate in public primary schools of Kajiado County as per the findings of this study. Of the 14 schools surveyed it was found out that most of the girls who had not moved on to the next class that standard 6 had left school due to early pregnancies after undergoing FGM.

According to this study findings there was likelihood of girls from poor household to go through FGM as compared to those from rich households, in which case FGM will lead to early pregnancies hence the girl leaving school. It was also found out that there was high percentage of girls out of school due to lack of female teachers in their school to act as role models. Both the head teachers and the majority of the girls surveyed agreed that lack of female teachers was a major cause of low girls' transition rate.

Lack of parental encouragement and motivation for the girls to continue with schooling was also found to influence many girls to opt for FGM at the expense of their schooling. This also combined with the lack of female teachers in contributing to low transition rate of girls from lower primary to upper in public primary school of Kajiado County. This is may be

so because both female teachers and parents are supposed to be role models to the girls and give them guidance and counseling.

However the distance from school did not have any influence on the girls' education according to the findings of the study. Both the head teachers and the girls believed that whether the school was far or near it didn't influence the girls being or not being in school.

It was noted that most girls stop going to school in upper primary which is from classes six when the girls attain the age when FGM is practiced hence they undergo this rite and feel mature enough to get married. This was according to the responses from the head teachers and the girls respectively.

The findings indicate that majority of the girls are satisfied with the availability of the resources and the physical facilities in the schools. However some feel that there is need for more sources of water, library, special rooms and boarding facilities as they were inadequate in order for them to remain in school.

The study sought to establish how the various factors influenced the girls' transition rate. The study established that most schools had fewer female teachers which had a negative influence on the girls schooling. It was further noted that most of the girls had undergone FGM hence leaving school to get married because the parents felt that they were mature enough and therefore find no value for education of the girl child. They were instead married off in exchange for livestock making their parents wealth.

In determining how the socio-economic factors influence the girls' transition rates in public primary schools of Kajiado County the study found out that girls from poor families are likely to drop out of school at an early age and undergo FGM that's making them good candidates for marriage.

Assessment of the influence of the school based factors found that in most schools facilities and resources were adequate and therefore had a less influence on the low girls' transition rate. It was also established from the study that in schools that had introduced the boarding facilities girls were more than the boys because they felt secure in these schools and they were eager to learn.

The study concludes that *early marriage* was the main cause of girls not graduating to the next higher level of education in public primary schools. Female genital mutilation (FGM) was the second contributing factor to low transition rate of girls. *Early pregnancies* represented by 88.4% most likely to lead to girls leaving school before completing the entire primary cycle. It was found that there was high percentage of girls out of school due to lack of female teachers in their school to act as role models.

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