

**SOCIOECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF GIRL-CHILD DROPOUT IN PUBLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KALOLENI DIVISION, NAIROBI COUNTY**

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DECLARATION

This is project paper my original work and has not been presented to any other university for a degree.



Esther Wahito Wahome

Date ~ V Z / / / / Z o / v

This project paper has been presented for examination with my approval as the University supervisor.



Professor Simiyu Wandibba

Date 2 1 d

DEDICATION

To my unsung champion and husband, Maina wa Gathuku, you have always been an inspiration; to my children Ron, Debbie and Natanya, you are the best gifts Gods has given to me, thanks for making me see God's faithfulness in your lives. My prayer is that you will grow up to be what God has called you to be.

To champions of girl-child education, the work has just begun, let us summon our inner spirit and energy for the better cause before us.

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ABSTRACT

This was a cross sectional exploratory study on socio-economic factors leading to girl child drop-out from public primary schools in Kaloleni Division of Nairobi County. Specifically, the study sought to determine the social and economic factors leading to drop out. The study was guided by the school drop-out conceptual framework developed by Okumu et al. (2008). Snowball sampling was used to select 30 drop-outs from public primary schools in Kaloleni Division. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and key informant interviews, and analyzed thematically. The findings are presented in verbatim quotes and selected anecdotes.

The study findings indicate that the socioeconomic factors that determine girl-child drop-out include marriage, lack of mentorship by teachers and parents, teenage pregnancies and poor performance. Economically, poverty was established as the major cause of the girl-child drop-out. The study concludes that socioeconomic factors have a ripple and a mutually reinforcing relationship and contribute greatly to high drop-outs if not checked in time.

The study recommends that the City Education Department initiates a mentorship programme for girls in primary schools in collaboration with institutions like Girl Child Network for the purposes of mentoring the girl child. In addition, the local administration, the Children's Department, the Ministry of Education and some development partners

should mobilize and rally the community in protecting the girl child from harmful practices such as early marriage and child labour. Finally, the study proposes a need for further study on school-based factors that lead to girl-child drop-out in similar set-ups in order to illuminate on the issues that have received less coverage in previous studies.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANPPCAN	African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect
CCE	The Centre for Commonwealth Education:
CREATE	Consortium of Research on Education Access
CSA	Centre for Study of Adolescents
DEO	District Education Officer
DSO	District Social Officer
ERNIKE	Educational Research Network in Kenya
FAWE	Federation of Women in Education
FPE	Free Primary Education
GCN	Girl Child Network
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IZA	Institute for the Study of Labour
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
MoHEST	Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology
NARC	National Alliance Rainbow Coalition
PCR	Primary Completion Rate
ROK	Republic of Kenya
SMERU	Social Monitoring and Early Response Unit
TIQET	Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training

	Teachers' Service Commission
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Emergency Children's Fund
UNICEF-ESARO	United Nations International Emergency Children's Fund- Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right as well as a catalyst for economic growth and human development (World Bank, 1993). An educated and skilled workforce contributes to economic growth, which in turn brings more investment in education, creating a positive trend towards sustainable and innovative development. Furthermore, there is significant evidence that provision of a quality primary school education, particularly for girls, drastically and consistently improves maternal and infant health.

Educated girls have higher self-esteem, and an educated mother is more likely to send her children to school. The economic costs of not providing quality education have grave consequences for development. It is estimated that the failure of 65 low and middle income transition countries to educate girls to the same standard as boys has an economic cost of \$92 billion each year. The introduction of universal, free primary education in Kenya, witnessed an increase of 2 billion additional children enrolled in 2003 (ROK, 2008:19). However, not all students who enroll complete primary education. Student drop-out from school is a great concern for any government or society. Despite many policies and strategies developed to enhance a smooth transition rate in school, there are still some students who withdraw from school prematurely with girls more affected than boys (UNESCO, 1998:22). Article 26 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for instance, states categorically that everyone has the right to education (UNESCO, 1998). To achieve this, the Kenya

government laid down policies and allocated money in the national budget for provision of **education** to her people (ROK, 2005:5).

Several factors influence girl-child participation in education. These include proximity to schools, the degree of motivation within schools, aspiration of the pupils themselves, their employment prospects and their level of achievement. In Zimbabwe, for example, the enrolment figures in primary school for girls have continued to decline in relation to those of boys (Graham, 2002:82). Thus, in 1987 Matabeleland South had 45.5% girls in form one compared to the national average of 43.6%, but by form four, they were 36.6% against the national mean of 38.9%.

In Kenya, the primary school average net enrolment rate between 2000 and 2006 was 82.36% against a completion rate of 68.33% for girls in comparison with net enrolment rate of 82.26% for boys, and completion of 76.06% over the same period. The fact that in primary schools the national gross enrolment rate was 29.9% for girls and 34.6% for boys indicates lower transition rates for girls than for boys at primary level and eventually low participation rates.

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The mean enrolment rate in Nyanza Province in Kenya was at 28.7% for girls and 35.7% boys while Kisumu Municipality had a rate of 32.3% for boys and 22.7% for girls, much lower than both the national and provincial average rates (ROK, 2006).

Wrigley (1995) argues that there is a simple relation between education and gender equality. Countless students have endured schooling designed to fit them for domestic roles but countless others have demanded more. Njau and Wamahiu (1994) point out that gender

discrimination among girls in favour of boys' education, pregnancies among girls and family financial status are the major factors affecting student drop-outs from primary schools. These factors affect girls more than boys. A case study on gender stereotyping in schools in London by Burchell and Millman (1989) indicates that girls are mostly disadvantaged within the society. Thus, a recommendation was made to develop an educational policy on gender through establishment of the existence of gender inequalities and initiating changes. Reports by the Ministry of Education revealed that despite enormous gains on access to education, there are dropouts of female students in primary school and a decline in completion rates (ROK, 2005).

Abagi (1992) points out that girls' enrolment at the primary school levels has been more dramatic since the early 1960s. The enrolment of girls by the 1980s, for example, increased from 30,120 in 1963 to 658,253 in 1996. The girls' share of total enrolment at independence was 31.8 per cent. This improved to 41.8 per cent in 1996. The increase in the male to female student ratio at primary school level reflects a higher dropout rate for girls (Fatuma and Sifuna, 2006).

Drop-out is often a process rather than the result of one single event and, therefore, has more than one proximate cause (Hunt, 2008). Poverty appears to influence the demand for schooling, not only because it affects the ability of households to pay school fees and other costs associated with education, but also because it is associated with a high opportunity cost of schooling for children. As children grow older, the opportunity cost of education is even

larger hence increasing the pressure for children to work and earn income for the household as opposed to spending time in education. Distance to school, poor quality of education, inadequate facilities, overcrowded classrooms, inappropriate language of instruction, teacher absenteeism and, in the case of girls, school safety, are common causes for school dropout (Colclough *et al*, 2000). These are seen as supply side causes of drop-out, mainly driven at the school level.

Poverty also interacts with other points of social disadvantage, with the interaction of factors putting further pressure on vulnerable and marginalised children to drop-out (Hunt, 2008:52). For example, orphans, migrants, lower caste/scheduled tribe children and children from minority language groups in many, but not all, contexts have disrupted access, and are more prone to drop-out. For instance, around 15 to 20 per cent of Roma children in Bulgaria and 30 per cent in Romania do not continue in school past Grade 4 in primary school (UNESCO, 2010). Poor indigenous girls in Guatemala are far more likely to drop-out than non-poor, non-indigenous girls (UNESCO, 2010).

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Gendered social practices within households, communities and schools influence differing patterns of access for girls and boys. In most contexts girls have less access and are more prone to dropping out but, increasingly, often in poor and urban environments, the pressure seems to be on boys to withdraw. Within gendered social practices, school safety seems to be an important factor for retaining girls at school, whereas availability of income generating opportunities and flexible seasonal schooling could promote school retention for boys (Colclough *et al*, 2000; Leach *et al*, 2003).

Additional factors affecting motivations and decision-making relating to educational access are also key to understandings of dropping out. Perceptions of how education will influence lifestyle, career possibilities/probabilities and life chances in the labour market are shown to be factors in both early withdrawal and sustained access in different contexts. The availability of options to access primary school and beyond, shape decision-making of parents regarding the continuation of children in primary level. It is also evident that children whose parents have received some sort of schooling are more likely themselves to attend school for longer. **In** particular, a mother's education level often influences length of access for girls. For example, in rural Pakistan, girls whose mothers have some sort of formal schooling are less likely to drop-out from school (Skoufias *et al.*, 1999:1). Therefore, this study aimed at exploring factors contributing to girl-child drop-out in public primary schools in Kaloleni Division of Nairobi County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Girls' education is considered to be one of the best investments across the globe. Association exists between improvements in national development indicators and an increase in the number of girls receiving formal schooling, independent of improvements in academic quality (Rugh, 2000). Women who complete their education are more likely to lead productive lives, support their families, take good care of their children, and practise healthy behaviours than women with little or no education.

While there is a range of literature which covers the subject of drop-outs, only a little has peri-urban drop-out as a central theme. More frequently, drop-out is embedded within studies, with

messages around drop-outs set alongside others on access more generally. Few studies account for the complexities of access and the interactive, dynamic nature of factors which may contribute to dropping out. Rather, much of the available literature identifies one factor (or possibly more) leading to drop-out, which is identified as the final push in or pull out of school. What is less often seen in the literature are the processes around dropping out, the personal stories of the children, household members and teachers, their social contexts and the competing demands on them. These processes happen over a period of time, with factors interacting in different ways to influence both drop-out and retention.

This study thus undertook to assess factors leading to girl child dropout in public primary schools in Kaloleni division of Nairobi County. To answer to the objective, the study was guided by the following question:

- i. What social factors contribute to girl child dropout in public primary schools in Kaloleni Division of Nairobi County?
- ii. What economic factors contribute to girl child dropout in public primary schools in Kaloleni division of Nairobi County?

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1.3 Study Objectives

1.3.1 Overall Objective

To explore the socio-economic factors contributing to the girl-child drop-out in Kaloleni Division of Nairobi County.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- ^L To determine the social factors contributing to the girl-child dropout in Kaloleni Division

of Nairobi County.

To examine the economic factors contributing to the girl child dropout in public primary schools in the study area.

1.4 Assumption of the Study

Socio-economic factors are the major cause of the of girl-child drop-out form public primary **schools** in Kaloleni Division.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study should help policy makers in the Ministry of Education in designing strategic intervention policies aimed at reducing the drop-out of girls enrolled in public primary schools situated within the low-income areas of Nairobi County. The findings have flagged out the socio-economic contributors to the girl-child drop-out and the mitigation strategies that can be used be used by civil societies such as the Girl Child Network (GCN), Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) and FAWE-K in designing interventions at the grassroots level to increase the retention of girls in primary schools.

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The findings of this study have also added to the literature on multiple causes of poor retention of the girl-child in public primary schools and specifically within the urban environment that has received little attention in recent studies.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focused on socio-economic factors contributing to the girl-child dropout in Kaloleni division of Nairobi County. In specific terms, it isolated early marriage, low education status of the family, influence by peers, poor performance and lack of role modelling as the social factors contributing to the drop-out; In economic terms the study focused on poverty, income shocks, poverty and child labour as economic factors drawing children from primary schools in Kaloleni Division. However, being qualitative in nature, the study has not flagged out the quantitative trends and patterns on causes of girl-child dropouts in Kaloleni Division. However, data collection was triangulated to ensure rich data was collected to answer to the objectives of the study.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

Girl-child: Refers to females enrolled in primary school at class five and above.

Dropout: Discontinued schooling as a result of socio-economic factors.

Public school: Schools owned by the City Council and those built through government funding and are directly under the control of the Ministry of Education.

Primary school: Learning institution providing the government approved eight-year elementary learning course.

Upper primary: Refers to the last three classes of primary schooling from class five to class eight.

Socio-Economic factors: These refer to social and economic factors that pull out girls out of upper primary schools.

Retention: Staying in schools the whole primary education cycle (eight years) in primary schools.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to the research problem. The review is done using socio and economic causes of dropout from schools. The section finally discusses the theoretical framework and assumptions that guided the study.

2.2 Social Factors Contributing to Girl-child Dropout

2.2.1 Personal Factors

The student's personal attributes can lead to dropout from school. These have different effects on various students. Once students are enrolled in school they interact and form peer groups. Wrigley (1995) observes that there is a simple relation between education and gender equality. School acts as a site of pervasive gender socialization. This sometimes spurs students to think beyond the ideological limits laid on them. Wanyoike (2003:15) concurs with Wrigley and points out that the students' peer groups, if not guided, can lead to devastating results like engaging in drug and substance abuse, early sex and early pregnancy, as well as contracting diseases like HIV and AIDS and early pregnancies.

The problem of school pregnancies is related to rape and sexual harassment. There many cases of girls aged 14 to 18 years dropping out of school every year due to pregnancy and this sometimes leads to early marriages. According to a Ministry of Health (1988:18) report, the incidence of school drop-out among females was slightly higher in rural than urban areas. The Nairobi study listed pregnancy as the third most common reason cited by respondents for

girls dropping out of school. The present study sought to establish whether pregnancy was a factor leading to female students dropping out of school.

In a majority of African cultures child bearing is associated with adults. This means pregnant girls are viewed as 'adults' and, therefore, have no business being in school. Because of this, pregnant girls are expelled from school (Okumu, 1995:33). Fatuma and Sifuna (2006:14) attribute high drop-out among girls to pre-marital pregnancies characterized by frequent sexual harassment.

In Kenya, teachers were reported to reward female students who "co-operate" with grades and tuition fee waivers (Abagi, 1992). Such students ended up being frustrated if they did not comply or, if they did, they might be victims of early pregnancy and tended to withdraw from school prematurely. This is also supported by Wanyoike (2003) and Wrigley (1995). In study by Ngwe'no (1994), it was observed that early withdrawal from school by girls due to pregnancy is a sexist societal attitude manifested in gender insensitive pregnancy policies, which this study intends to highlight.

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2.2.2 Household Contexts

Who makes up the household seems to have an influence on educational access and retention, particularly in poorer communities. Grant and Hallman's (2006) research on education access in South Africa shows that children living with mothers were significantly less likely to have dropped out of school relative to those whose mothers were living elsewhere or whose mothers were dead. In another work on South Africa, Hunter and May (2003) describe a particularly notable relationship between family background and dropping out. Here, youths

from poor families, from single-parent families, the children of poorly educated parents and children with fewer role models in higher education, were more likely to drop-out. This same interlocking of household-related factors appeared in research on female drop-outs in Ethiopia.

In research by Al Samarrai and Peasgood (1998) female-headed households in Tanzania appeared to put a higher priority on their children's education. How many children are within the household is important in many cases and can be a 'significant determinant' of access (Boyle et al., 2002: 4), but research differs on the impact of household size on access and drop-out. Some studies indicate that with larger household sizes (and in particular numbers of children) the financial burden/potential workload is greater; children are less likely to attend school, and often drop-out. However, with more children in the household, jobs can be spread between them and siblings more likely to attend, e.g., in Ethiopia (Colclough *et al.*, 2000).

Research in Pakistan indicates that while an increase in family size reduces a girl child's

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household work, the presence of younger children appears to increase their workload (Hakzira and Bedi, 2003). As in other studies, the number of siblings under 5 years of age has a strongly negative impact on older girls' schooling and leads to drop-out, while the number of sisters aged 13-20 have a positive impact on girls' grade attainment (Glick and Sahn, 2000).

Household size and composition interact with other factors to influence drop-out, for example, late enrolments, large families, low educational levels, gender and birth order (Leka and Dessie, 1994, cited in Nekatibeb, 2002; Odaga and Heneveld, 1995, cited in Nekatibeb, 2002).

Al Samarrai and Peasgood (1998) used multivariate regression techniques to analyze household survey data collected in rural Tanzania in 1992, focusing on how household and individual characteristics affect whether or not a child goes to primary school, completes primary and attends primary. In terms of household contexts, a number of factors affect educational access and the potential to drop-out. Where a child is born in relation to other siblings may affect schooling decisions: on the one hand, children born into the family early, when resources are stretched over fewer members of the household, may be more likely to go to school. On the other hand, a child born into the family later may have lower opportunity costs than an older sibling because the need to look after other siblings would be reduced (Al Samarrai and Peasgood, 1998:4).

While more children in a household increases the financial burden, an increased number of children potentially reduces the work burden on individual children (although this is possibly less the case for older children who might more readily be pushed to work or help more with household chores). Birth order slightly reduced the probability of boys completing (0.8 %) and raised the probability of girls completing (3.4 %), with younger girls standing more of a chance than older girls of completing (Al Samarrai and Peasgood, 1998).

Al Samarrai and Peasgood (1998) contend that education may be treated as an investment for some children, but not for others, and that the educational experiences of one child can affect the probability of younger siblings attending school, either positively or negatively. Yet, they also conclude that 'it remains unclear exactly how siblings influence education decisions'

Their research also indicates that the working contexts of families (and their income up) can influence the probability of access, with children from households involved in trade more likely to be in school than farming households, but this does not have a significant effect on the probability of completion.

In many societies, in Africa in particular, a large number of children are fostered, estimated to be 25% of children by Zimmerman (2003). There can be both positive and negative effects of fostering on educational access. In many cases children are fostered in order to allow them greater educational opportunities. At other times the focus is on foster children providing forms of child labour in households', e.g., domestic duties, with less focus on education. Based on an analysis of 8,627 'black' South African children, Zimmerman (2003:10.) avers that foster children were no less likely than non-orphans to attend school. In fact, they tended to move from schools that had difficulty in enrolling them to homes nearer to schools that were more able to do so. School attendance is highest for fostered children in Burundi (Guarcello *et al.*, 2004), compared to children living with their immediate family. This suggests that children are often being fostered in order to get better educational opportunities.

Anderson (2005) carried out a multivariate analysis on a random sample of children from 11,211 'black' households in South Africa, looking at the genetic relatedness of one child from each household with other household members. Results suggested that households "invested more in children who were more closely related. Glick and Sahn (2000) look at the complexities of households where there are polygamous relationships, with a male household

head having several wives, and households often including individuals from the extended family. Thus, children might be related to each other in multiple ways in the household. Unlike siblings, the presence of other children in such households has few effects on **educational** attainment, even for girls.

Konate et al. (2003:49) looked at which children's households in Mali chose to send to school using data from a nationwide survey of migration and urbanization in 1992-3 and a survey of family patterns and children's education in Mali (1999-2000). Children of the head of the household were usually favoured over others in the household (i.e., those fostered, entrusted to the family and those living in it with parents other than the heads of household). Taking place of residence into account, the percentage of children without parents present was much higher in towns than in the countryside, with rural children migrating into towns for work and/or education.

2.2.3 School Environment

Fatuma and Sifuna (2006) and Obura (1991) point out that in the African society, there was the general misplaced perception that girls have to be socialized to be wives, homemakers, dependants and secretaries while boys are to be husbands, breadwinners, defenders and pilots. This is also emphasized in the school set-up, being very subjective and interfering with the potential of the students.

Brigeon (2005), in his survey on making school safe for girls in the Rift Valley, found that girls and their families may find little reason to attend school if they are tracked to low paid

ations considered traditional for women. He observes that many developing countries **ractise gender** discrimination in primary school, directing girls away from mathematics and **the sciences**. Teaching practices like giving boys more opportunities than girls to ask and **answer** questions, use learning materials and lead groups may further discourage girls in **actively** participating in educational activities. A study conducted by Mwandosya (2001) in **Kenya and** Tanzania on girls' education revealed that over 2000 teachers who participated **maintained** separate rows for boys in class and asked them male questions compared to girls.

Abidha (1998) raised great concern on unsatisfactory performance and achievement of girls across the education system. The survey carried out on KCPE results in Kenya revealed that girls perform poorly in almost all subjects compared to boys. This becomes even worse as they move up in the education ladder. This is also supported by Fatuma and Sifuna (2006). The fact that the curriculum fails to address the needs of the girls who act the role of mothers and are mostly absent from school is a great concern. This makes them also suffer from chronic fatigue, lack of concentration in school and forced repetition in classes. Their academic performance is, therefore, impaired and self-image lowered and eventually these girls drop-out of school (UNESCO, 2002).

2.2.4 Sexual Harassment

There have been a number of reported cases about teachers harassing female or male students sexually. It is disturbing to realize that the teachers entrusted with the care of children are responsible for impregnating girls. A survey carried out in Turkana by Brigeon (2005) indicated that girls were subjected to harassment from male peers and predation by male teachers. He compares this with the survey carried out in Cameroon which revealed that 27

cent of girls who were interviewed reported having had sex with teachers. **In conclusion, Brigeon recommends** the need to change behaviour pattern which involves significant cultural **changes.**

Sexual harassment was noted as a factor leading to female student drop-outs in school in **coeducational** schools. This was by both the boys' counterparts and teachers (UNESCO, 2002). Fatuma and Sifuna (2006) note that there was high drop-out among girls compared to boys (5.1 % and 4.6 %, respectively) nationally. This was attributed to pre-marital **pregnancies** involving teachers.

According to RoK (2007) gender insensitive school environments include attitudes of the key stakeholders in the school, which leads to many reported incidents of sexual harassment and gender based biases. An educational brief of 2006 indicated that an investigation was being done **in** a primary school in Nyanza after eight girls dropped out of school due to pregnancy in one year (Daily Nation, September 11, 2006).

2.2.5 Family Setup and Beliefs

The World Bank (1996) acknowledges that in developing countries, including Africa, there are socio norms which permeate the school's functioning. Wanjiru (2007) states that girls are socialized to know that their brothers education is much more important than theirs and they are ready to drop-out of school for the sake of their brothers. Wanyoike (2003) observes that the way the family foundations are laid down, it is difficult to erase the attitudes and behaviour patterns that are formed about girls and boys. He further observes that boys and girls are received differently at birth, thus attaching diverse value to them. Boys are

considered to be superior to girls and hence even in education they are given priority in some societies

A study carried out by Wanjiru (2007) in Mombasa on factors contributing to school drop-out in public primary schools revealed that 52.4% of the respondents valued boys' education more than that of girls. Families which cannot easily afford to send both sons and daughters to school reckon that financial returns on the expenditure for girls' education are a good deal smaller than those of boys. The argument is that girls will eventually leave their parents on getting married, and so their education is seen as a financial asset to the in-laws rather than to blood relatives (UNESCO, 2002).

Brown (1980) indicates that some children are withdrawn by parents in rural areas to assist in household chores like baby-sitting younger children, accompanying parents to hospital or public gatherings, collecting firewood and water, and caring for sick relatives. The girl-child does most of this work but where there are no girl siblings, the boys are used to perform these tasks. This clearly shows gender disparity in that boys assist at home only when there are no girls, which affects girls' education to the extent of dropping from school due to constant absenteeism (Wanjiru, 2007). The different roles performed by boys and girls at home affect girls' performance in school. Girls have less time to do supplementary reading for school compared to the boys (Wamahiu *et al.*, 1992).

2.2.6 Social Stigma

Social stigma attached to teenage pregnancy plays a major role in forcing them to get married **and** also the inability of girls to resume classes after giving birth, CSA (2008:46). Also, there is usually no one to look after the baby is born, the girl usually cannot return to school even if she wants to and the family can afford it. Care for the baby may not always be available all the time and the girls have to miss school on certain days. Other students do not interact with them freely, partly at the instigation of teachers, who view the returning student as a bad influence, CSA (2008:47). Poverty is a major factor in whether a girl returns to school or not. Where a family's resources are limited a girl who has become pregnant may be passed over in favor of other siblings. Some parents may also be skeptical of returning a girl to school for fear of losing more resources.

2.3 Economic Factors Leading to Students Drop-out from School

2.3.1 Education of Household Members

Research indicates that the educational level of household members is particularly influential in determining whether and for how long children access schooling. Ersado (2005: 115) talks of 'the widely accepted notion that parental education is the most consistent determinant of child education (and employment decisions)'. Higher parental/household head's level of education is associated with increased access to education, higher attendance rates and lower drop-out rates (Ainsworth et al., 2005; Al Samarrai and Peasgood, 1998; Ersado, 2005).

number of reasons have been put forward for the link between parental education and attention in school. Some researchers indicate that non-educated parents cannot provide the support or often do not appreciate the benefits of schooling (Juneja, 2001; Pryor and Ampiah, 2003). There is evidence that the gender and educational level of the parent can influence which child is more likely to access and remain in school for long. Often it is the mother's educational level in particular which is seen to have an effect on access (for example, Ainsworth et al., 2005). But this varies in certain contexts. Brown and Park's (2002: 523).

Research in China indicates that for each additional year of a father's education, the probability of his child dropping out of school falls by 12-14%. And Cardoso and Verner's (2007: 15) research in Brazil claims that the 'schooling level of the mother does not have a significant impact on the probability that the teenager will drop-out of school'.

Al Samarrai and Peasgood's (1998) research in Tanzania suggests that the father's education has a greater influence on boys' primary schooling, and the mother's on girls'. While a married mother's primary education can increase the probability of girls enrolling in primary school by 9.7% and primary by 17.6%, respectively, it has no significant effect on the enrolment of boys. The two scholars claim that educated mothers giving preference to girls' schooling implies that 'mothers have a relatively stronger preference for their daughters' education and that their education affords them either increased household decision-making power or increased economic status' (Al Samarrai and Peasgood, 1998: 395). Glick and Sahn's (2000) results (taken from research in an urban poor environment in West Africa) offer some similar outcomes to Al Samarrai and Peasgood's (1998). The two found that

movement in fathers' education raises the schooling of both sons and daughters (favouring latter) but mothers' education has significant impact only on daughters' schooling.

Ersado (2005:115) suggests that provision of adult education programmes to counter the educational deficit facing many households would be useful in bolstering sustained access to education for many children. Yet, this might not be enough. Al Samarrai and Peasgood (1998) also contend that while education of the household head increases the probability of completion, the basic literacy of the household head does not improve completion chance; rather it is the heads having attended primary school that does.

2.3.2 Family's Economic Status

Okumu (1995:33) points out that both in Kwale and Nairobi, respondents in a situation analysis survey, gave poverty as the most important factor for students dropping out of school (33 per cent and 64 per cent, respectively). In Nairobi 42 per cent of the respondents indicated that they would send their son to school in case of an economic crunch in contrast to only 8 per cent who stated that they would prefer to send their daughters. A report by ROK (2007)^m indicates that 58% of the Kenyan population is living below the poverty line. This makes it very difficult for the poor to meet education costs for their children.

Wamahiu (1997) observed that over one million children were out of school in Kenya due to poor backgrounds. Some had been forced to drop-out of school to earn a living for their families due to rising poverty. This was worsened by the post-election violence. From the Koech report, it is evident that child labour keeps children out of school (Republic of Kenya,

1989) The labour engaged in by the children depends on the geographical region, for example, touting, fish mongering, playing and beach boys, caring for younger siblings and picking tea or coffee (Reche, 1982).

psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1997) state that some young children from poor families are kept out of school because their families need the additional income that they may generate. Some families are so poor that they cannot afford to hire labour. Such families may decide to use their children as labourers. However, this affects both boys and girls depending on the family status. Adu (2007) observed that child labour was rampant in miraa, tea and coffee growing areas in Meru and Embu. Lack of economic alternatives in the labour market is a factor that influences girls to drop-out of school prematurely. Many girls perceive marriage as an escape from family poverty (Wamahiu *et al.*, 1992).

Girls sometimes offer to go and work as house helps so as to raise money for their brothers' education. Furthermore, the education in Kenya fails to address the special circumstances of working children. It should also be noted that with the subsidized primary education, parents
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still have a responsibility of providing the students with learning materials and other resources (ROK, 2008). Depending on the family financial level, the education of both boys and girls from poor households are disadvantaged. In those cultures where they believe it is wiser to invest in education for boys than girls, the latter drop out of school (Wamahiu *et al.*, 1992).

Household income is found to be an important factor in determining access to education as schooling potentially incurs a range of costs, despite public primary education being free.

Hidden costs include uniforms, travel, equipment and the opportunity costs of sending a child **o school**. Household income is linked to a range of factors: when children start school, how often they attend, whether they have to temporarily withdraw and also when and if they drop-out Croft (2002:87. There are some research studies which look at how household income **interacts** with dropping out of school in particular.

A number of studies highlight the link between poverty and dropping out of school (Birdsall et al., 2005; Brown and Park, 2002). Porteus et al. (2000: 10), whilst describing exclusions rather than drop-out per se, paint poverty as 'the most common primary and contributory reason for students to be out of school', while Hunter and May (2003: 5) call poverty, 'a plausible explanation of school disruption'. Both statistical data and empirical research suggest that children from better off households are more likely to remain in school, whilst those who are poorer are more likely never to have attended, or to drop-out once they have enrolled. For example. Brown and Park's (2002) research in rural China saw 'poor and credit constrained children' three times more likely than other children to drop-out of primary school. »

Colclough et al. (2000:15) describes the link between wealth and school retention in more detail,.. " amongst those out-of-school, the mean wealth index for school drop-out was generally higher than for those who had never enrolled ... children at school were, on average, from better-off households than those who had dropped out, who were, in turn, from richer backgrounds than school-age children who had never enrolled "(Colclough et al., 2000:

"Poor households tend to have lower demand for schooling than richer households: whatever the benefits of schooling, the costs, for them, are more difficult to meet than is the case for richer households (Colclough et al. 2000).

Work patterns of household members influences whether income (2004: 86) is coming in or not, and the possible expenditures available. Seetharamu's (1984, cited in Chugh, 2004:86) study on patterns of access and non-access in slums in Bangalore, India, indicated that the income of the father was linked to the continuity or discontinuity of the child in school, with the fathers of most drop-outs not employed. If income levels are low, children may be called on to supplement the household's income, either through wage-earning employment themselves or taking on additional tasks to free up other household members for work.

How people regard schooling and the importance placed on it at times might shape interactions between schooling, household income and dropping out. For example, Ampiah's et al. (2010) research on schooling in a Ghanaian village, talks about education being regarded as a 'relative luxury', with many villagers considering education not worthwhile. Chi and Rao's (2003) research in rural China sees things slightly differently, with children's education as one of the main household priorities. Yet, even in this context if rural parents are short of money, expenses on ancestral halls and gift giving are prioritised over educational spending. Another body of work indicates that withdrawal from school is a last resort for many families (Sogaula *et al*, 2002, cited in Hunter and May, 2003: 10). And there is

search that shows households often do not want to remove children from school as they see **it as an** investment for the future.

2 3.3 Indirect Costs of Schooling

Research indicates that direct and indirect schooling costs are important factors in whether children enroll in and attend school or not (Rose and Al Samarrai, 2001). While research on this often relates to access per se, there is also some research which indicates that the costs of schooling, including fees, are a central reason for dropping out (Brock and Cammish, 1997: 27; Brown and Park, 2002; Colclough et al., 2000; Hunter and May, 2003; Liu, 2004; May et al., 1998 cited in Hunter and May, 2003; Mukudi, 2004; Rose and Al Samarrai, 2001). School fees had been a major barrier to education. In 2000, prior to FPE, the gross enrollment rate in primary school was 57%. However, the introduction of FPE led to a surge in enrollment, pushing the gross enrollment rate to just over 100% (World Bank, 2004:18). Yet, despite the FPE related enrollment and access gains, other important barriers to access remain. In particular, while enrollment is now high on average, there are still groups among whom enrollment remains an issue. Rachel et al. (2011:11). Colclough et al. (2000) carried out quantitative survey research and qualitative interview-based research with educational stakeholders (community members, parents, teachers, pupils, etc.) in sampled communities in Ethiopia and Guinea in order to identify information about the constraints affecting the participation and performance of girls and boys in school, both in urban and in rural areas.

While Kenya has adopted a fee-free system, indirect costs associated with education have contributed to drop-out. The cost of school uniforms continues to impede education access.

In 2003, school uniforms cost about KES 480 (approximately 2% of per capita GDP), which was excessive for many families. The official policy says that no child can be turned away for not having the school uniform. But uniforms are such an entrenched part of schooling in Kenya that either the schools continue to turn children away or the parents keep the children away because they do not have uniforms. School uniforms and other input expenses incurred by households may be reducing access to schooling. The girl child, especially, in upper primary is sensitive to how she looks and what her peers think about her. While she may have uniform, it may be old and tattered, merely contributing to drop-out (Rachel et al., 2011:11).

Attending school also has the opportunity cost of education which is even larger, hence increasing the pressure for children to work and earn income for the household as opposed to spending time in education (Ricardo et al., 2010:12). Access to education being nominally free, a policy of cost-sharing between government, parents and communities means that the indirect costs of schooling demand a considerable output from parents, for example, for school construction and maintenance, (as much as the government provides a minimal allowance for construction and maintenance parents must provide more). Parents also provide for salaries the teachers not employed by the TSC, cleaners, watchmen, purchase of other school materials other than textbooks, as well as uniforms (Molly el at., 2011:5). Kenya's population currently stands at 35.5 million, 75-80 per cent of whom live in the rural areas. Some 10 million people live in urban areas, with over three million residing in the capital city Nairobi. With over 50 per cent of the population below 15 years of age, Kenya faces a high dependency burden, which places pressing demands on social services including education and health care. Despite the steady growth of the economy, more than a half of the country's

population lives below the poverty line, on less than one US dollar a day (UNICEF 2012 and gU AID 2012). With over half of Kenyans living in poverty, household income is a significant correlate of school enrolment and retention in Africa (Kattan and Burnett, 2004).

2.3.4 Early Marriage

Poverty is one of the major factors underpinning early marriage. Where poverty is acute, a young girl may be regarded as an economic burden where one less daughter is one less mouth to feed (UNICEF, 2001; Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls, 2011; Mathur 2003). Parents encourage the marriage of their daughters while they are still children in hope that the marriage will benefit them both financially and socially, while also relieving financial burdens on the family.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The study was guided by the socio-economic model for drop-out developed by Okumu et al. (2008). The dropout of pupils from school over a given period of time reflects the impact of various socioeconomic factors, originating from the community and homes/families of the pupils. The socioeconomic variables can broadly be categorized into pre-primary learning of the pupil, the pupil's family background, pupil's personality and community based factors **(See Figure 2.1 below)**.

Socio-economic variables influence the dropout of pupils directly by influencing the pupil's decision to drop from school, or that of the parent to withdraw the pupil from schooling. The variables also indirectly influence the drop out of pupils by negatively affecting their education achievements in school (attendance, learning and academic performance in examinations) which, in turn, influences dropout of pupils.

This conceptualization highlights the complexity of factors influencing dropout of pupils; most variables are interrelated and influence each other. Some of the variables influence the **dropout** directly and indirectly through their impact on the school achievement of the pupils.

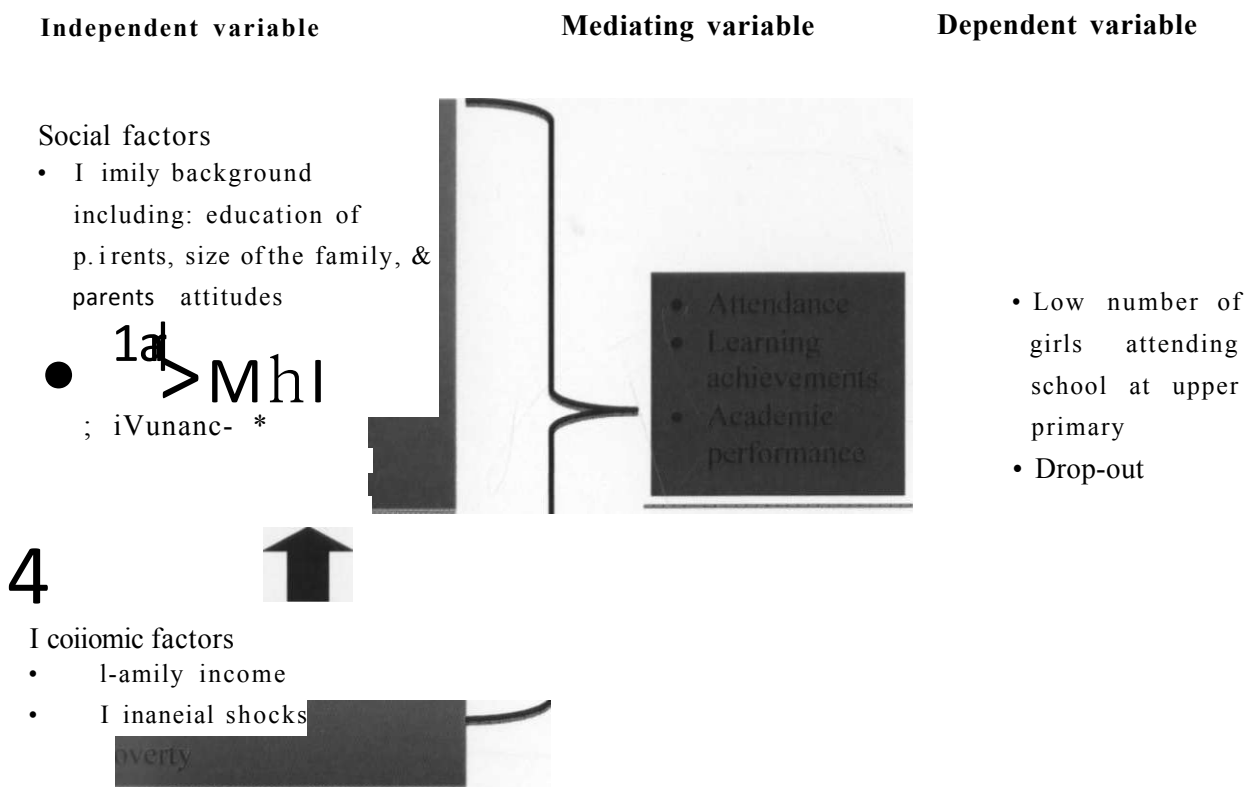


Figure 2.1
Conceptual Framework: Source: Okumu et al. (2008)

The framework identifies a number of social factors such as family background, domestic work, early marriage, pregnancies and peer influence as social factors. Economically, the framework identifies family income, financial shocks within the community and poverty as major drivers of girl-child drop-out. These factors affect attendance, learning achievements and academic performance and retention of girls enrolled in public primary schools. The cumulative effect is the low number of girls attending upper primary schools and high drop-

out recorded. In essence, the framework addresses both the social and economic factors that may contribute to girl child dropouts from schools.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the context in which the study was conducted. It presents information on the study site, study design, study population, sample size and sampling procedure, data collection methods, and data analysis and presentation. The chapter finally describes ethical issues that had to be taken into consideration during the study.

3.2 Study Site

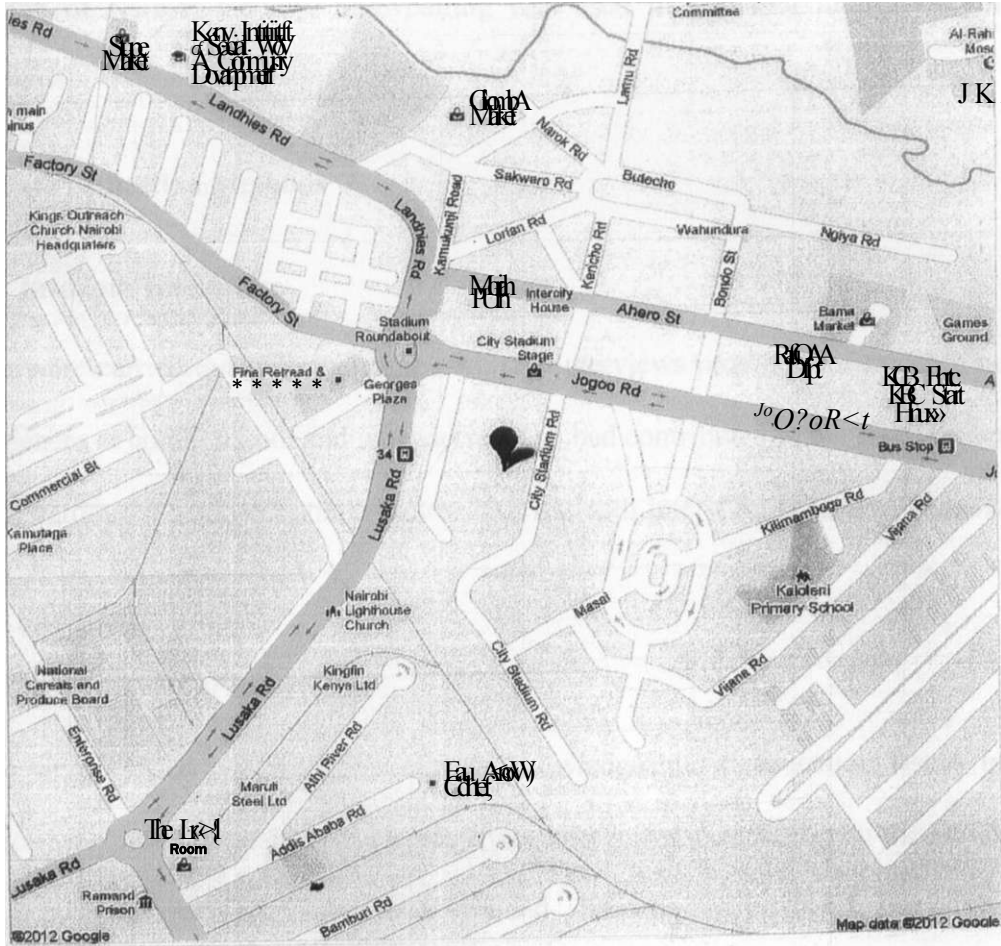
This study was carried out in two public schools in Kaloleni division of Nairobi County (Map 3.1) Kaloleni Division is located on the Eastern side of Nairobi. The area is densely populated with a high number of informal settlements. There are ten public primary schools in the division with a pupil population estimated at 47, 000. Most of the residents work in the nearby industrial area as casuals while others have small 'jua kali' businesses.

3.3 Study Design

This was a cross-sectional and exploratory study using qualitative methods of data collection. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and key informant interviews. The collected data were analyzed thematically and findings presented using verbatim quotes. Findings on socio-demographics are presented in graphs.

3.4 Study Population

The study targeted girls who had dropped out of primary schools and residing in Kaloleni division of Nairobi County. The unit of analysis was the individual drop-out girl.



3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

This study sampled 30 girls who had dropped out of public primary schools in Kaloleni Division of Nairobi County. Snowballing was used in selecting informants for in-depth interviews.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

3.6.1 In-depth Interviews

These were carried out with the sampled. The interviews provided information on personal experiences at home, school and in society which had contributed to the girls' dropping out of school across the socio-economic factors. An in-depth interview schedule (Appendix 1) was used to collect the data.

3.6.2 Key Informant Interviews

These were carried out with five experts knowledgeable in education issues in Kaloleni division who were purposively selected. These interviews were held with the DSO, DEO and *m* two head teachers. The interviews yielded data on home-based, school-based, and community-based factors cutting across socio-economic factors contributing to girl-child drop-outs in upper primary classes in the division. A key informant interview guide (Appendix, 2) was used to collect the data.

3.7 Data Processing and Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed thematically and according to emerging issues. Direct quotes and selected comments have been used to amplify the voices of the informants in the study. The demographic data were analyzed using excel spread sheets, and findings presented in graphs.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was sought from the Ministry of Higher Education before fieldwork was undertaken. All the study subjects were taken through the purpose, objectives and potential use of the study findings in order to receive their informed consent. Given that most of the study informants were below the consenting age of 18 years, further clearance was sought from their parents and guardians.

Confidentiality of the study subjects was maintained through the use of pseudonyms and coding of the schools. At publication level, study subjects will be asked for permission if they wish their identities to be revealed. The study subjects were also informed of their right to disqualify themselves at any point during study.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIOECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF GIRL-CHILD DROPOUT IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KALOLENI DIVISION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents study findings on determinants of girl-child drop-out from public primary schools in Kaloleni Division. The chapter begins by presenting the demographic characteristics and then discusses the rest of the findings along the study objectives.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

4.2.1 Age

Findings present that 45% of the respondents were aged 11-12 years, 35% were aged 13-14 years while those aged 15-16 years comprised 20% as summarized in figure 4.1 below. The findings therefore indicate a range of 4 years between the youngest and the oldest drop out with a higher concentration in the ages of 11-12 years which translates to a high drop out at standard 6 which is the second phase of upper primary schooling.

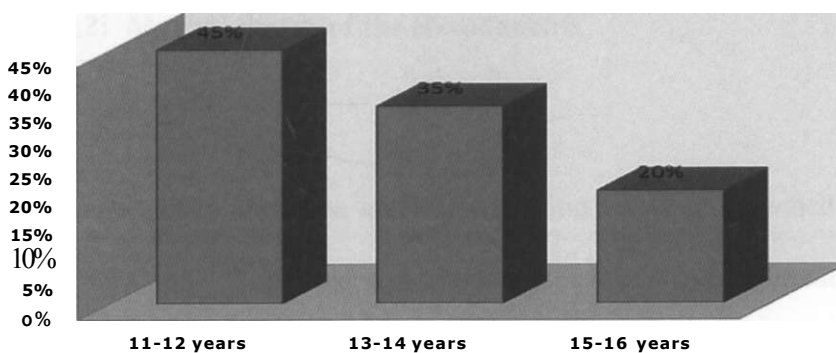


Figure 4.1: Age of the Respondents

4.2.2 Marital Status

The study sought to know the marital status of the respondents who had dropped out of school. This was important in assessing the correlation between school drop-out and early marriage in Kaloleni division. The findings indicate that 65% were single girls, while 35% were married (Figure 4.2). From the findings, it can be deduced that school drop-out amongst girls in Kaloleni division pushes the underage girls into early marriage with a potential risk of suffering childhood birth complications as well as missing out on the goals of free compulsory universal education that remains an eight-year phased programme in Kenya.

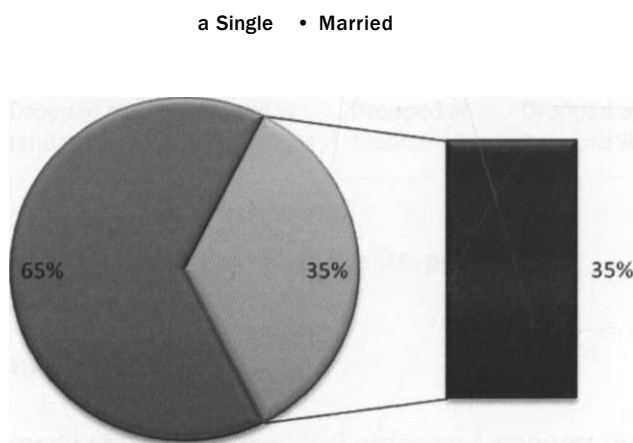


Figure 4.2: Marital Status of the Respondents

4.3 Education Level

The study sought to know the level of schooling where girls tended to drop out most within Kaloleni Division. This was important in assessing and understanding the most affected phase of upper primary schooling. The findings indicate that most (76%) of the respondents had dropped out at standard six, 12% had dropped out at standard seven, another 8% had dropped out at standard eight while 4% had dropped out at standard five as summarized in

Figure 4.3. From the findings, it can be concluded that most girls dropped out of school at standard six with minimal drop out experienced at standard five. The drop-out in standard seven and eight were almost on average with negligible statistical differences.

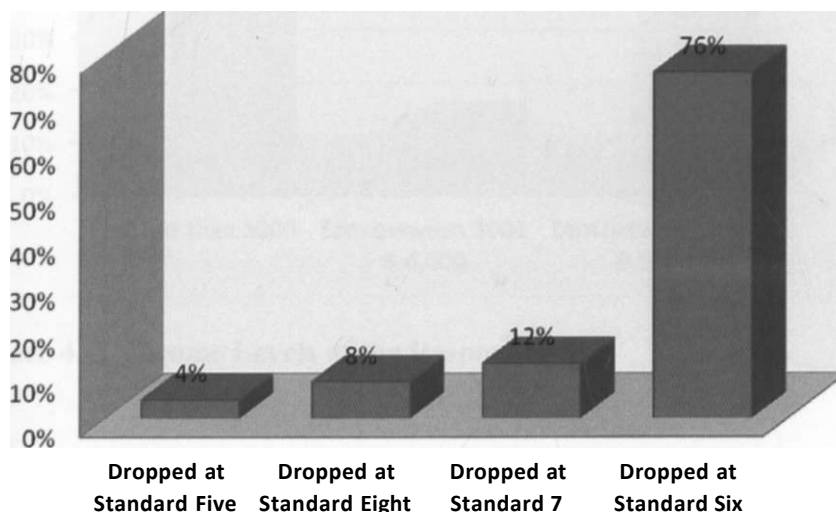


Figure 4.3: Educational Levels of the Respondents

4.2.4 Income Levels

The study sought to establish the level of income amongst the girls who had dropped out. This was deemed important in analyzing the ability of the school drop-outs to fundraise and regain admission in schools in case the drop-out was occasioned by lack of finances. The findings indicate that 62% of the respondents earned below KES 3, 000 a month, 10% earned between 3,001 and 4, 000 while the remaining 28% earned between 4,000 and 5,000 shillings. It should be understood that these figures were derived from three months' cumulative earnings as at the time of the study.

marriage. This is especially the case for men who are economically strong. Girls in upper primary who are in their puberty stage have a lot of monetary demands, such as clean uniforms that are not worn out or torn, plaited, chemically treated hair, lotions and perfumes to smell and look good, and sanitary pads. These demands push them into sexual relations in order to get the required funds. Others get into marital unions where their economic needs are satisfied irrespective of their age and level of schooling. The trend is further perpetuated by the presence of young men in the Jua Kali industries around Kaloleni Division who target primary girls as peers and potential partners for marriage. The practice enjoys parental sanctioning which in, most cases, it is seen as a relief and reduced economic burden to family expenditures as in the interview below.

Despite being aware of the children's rights, most parents from these poor neighbourhoods would allow any means of socio-economic transaction to take place in order to be relieved of the childrearing burden...this is done irrespective of the notable consequences of early marriage on the child's education cycle **(An interview with the school head teacher).**

4.3.2 Puberty and Parental Tolerance of Drop-out

The study findings further point to emerging tolerance of the independence of girls at the puberty stage within Kaloleni Division. The parents are reported to grant the girls a free reign and opportunity to associate with male peers at will. The results have been continual pressure from the males to experiment with sex which predominantly results in pregnancies. Once the girls conceive, they are forced by the school authorities to stay at home and give birth before they can be considered back. This length of time tends to discourage the girls' quest for education and the stigma of being re-united with former classmates discourages the girls further, as can be seen in the interview below.

I was merely in standard six when I got a boyfriend who had cleared class eight and used to come home in the form of coaching me...we developed interest in each other and my parents trusted our relationship thinking it was just mutual...one day we visited a clinic and I was confirmed pregnant. The head teacher insisted I had to stay at home and deliver before I could be considered back...upon delivery, every former classmate used to ridicule me since they were a year ahead...I could not tolerate the stigma so I opted out **(An interview with 16 year old drop out).**

4.3.3 Peer Influence

The study established that peer influence was another driving factor for girl child drop out in Kaloleni Division. The informants observed that a lot of the age mates who had dropped out of school either enjoyed free life, good economic earnings in the small scale businesses to help their families and purchase good clothing, were well maintained if married and had a lot of time to tend to salons and different recreations around the Nairobi. The notion that was passed to the in-school girls by peers was that there was more meaningful and enjoyable life outside the regular schooling without any fruits. The congestion of the poor neighbourhoods in terms of housing ensured regular contacts were exploited to drive the message till it became more of a reality to the girls. Even more surprising was the fact that informants reported that their relatives had approved of such messages. The net impact was continual trend in the girl-child drop-out from primary schools in Kaloleni as one respondent put it:

My former classmates had dropped out two years before, they got married to young men and were staying in the neighbourhood...they kept telling me the benefits of getting my own space out of school and at times could share their gifts or treat me at the salon...I thought it was a good idea and my aunt had no issues with me dropping from class seven, indeed, she told me that I was mature enough...**(An interview with a 15 year old drop out).**

4.3.4 Household Members' Educational Level

Education of the household members have a direct bearing on the extent to which education is perceived as a means to an end rather than as a norm and a government order in the community . In the study, the key informants observed that most families who reside in the low income areas of Kaloleni have low education level, thus, by extension, find little meaning in long term investment in the process. Even more worrying is that investment in girl-child's education is still observed from the traditional gender microscope that girls are meant for home making rather than white collar jobs demanding high education level. With this kind of prevalent scenario, most families in the division with low education level tend to pull their girls out of school or prefer the uptake of technical skills such as tailoring. As one key informant put it:

The girls are encouraged to pursue fast lane activities such as small businesses or tailoring skills which some of their relatives have subsisted on...these people see no value in education and would rather use their experiences to convince these girls to pull out of school (**An interview with DSO Kaloleni**).

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4.3.5 Lack of Role Models

The study established that most girls within Kaloleni Division dropped out of school due to lack of role models either within the community or at school, low appreciation of the girls' efforts, lack of personalized conversation around social issues affecting the girls and the general lack of exposure to successful ladies in the community through education. The key informants had noted in the interviews that girls need to be mentored and informed on the basics of education, its returns and benefits at large. The study concluded that the inability of

the primary schooling girls to personally identify with people who have succeeded through education was a major determinant to drop-out. According to one respondent:

I have never had someone to talk to me about my education...my parents have never done it and even when I dropped out, it was normal for them...I stayed at home trying out small businesses which they approved of the more...I know of no lady who has ever come to share any benefits of education with me...the concept appears to be working just for the rich but I honestly do not think education has any benefits for people in such set ups as Kaloleni **(interview with 16 year old drop-out).**

4.3.6 Discouragement due to Persistent Poor Performance

The study informants reported being subjected to a lot of household chores, lack of mentorship at school on the subjects where they performed so weak, being dissuaded by members of the family from schooling and pick alternative livelihoods that are considered to be stress free. Teachers within the public primary schools are seen not to be keen on keeping intimate touch with weak girls which in turn dissuades girls from pursuing some subjects or stopping schooling all together. Key informants were of the opinion that poor performance is a school-based push factor in drop-out and so must be addressed for girls to be effectively retained at school. According to one of them:

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Teachers need to closely identify the weak areas where these girls cannot perform and help them rather than ignore their plight and concentrate on the boys who more often have adequate reading time both at home and school...there must be a mechanism of re-assuring the girls that they have a potential in education so as to encourage their participation in school. **(An interview with DEO Kaloleni)**

4.3.7 Extreme Poverty

The study established that poverty prevalent in an urban area such as Kaloleni Division, is a major cause of girl-child drop out. This variable was found to have a spill-over effect in terms

of its consequences. For example, girls from poor households were found to drop out of school due to lack of money to cater for the indirect costs of schooling, inability to purchase personal effects necessary to facilitate smooth learning at school. On the other hand, poverty drives a lot of girls into extreme situations where they are forced to partner with men from well-off families in return for economic gains. In certain cases, the study established that girls dropped out of school to get married to men who are economically better off than the girls' families. Similarly, the experts in the study argued that due to poverty the parents or guardians are completely unable to provide for the numerous needs of the adolescent girl child. This is normally a very critical stage in the development of children when they go through identity crisis and hence want to do whatever it takes to belong or fit in properly amongst their peers from well off families. According to one of the girls, "In our place getting meal was a problem. I had to drop out and join the rest of the family members in fending for our upkeep...I was only in class five by then...."(An interview with 16 year old drop out).

4.3.8 Indirect Costs of Schooling

Informants reported that lack of sponsorship to the girls in urban areas and the families' inability to contribute effectively to costs associated with schooling, to contributes to girls' drop-out of school. Indirect costs are mostly associated with the sanitary maintenance for the teenage girls in school as well as the school meal feeding costs, pens and clothing. The informants lamented that they had been forced out of school due to multiple material demands besides the regular fee paid. According to one of them:

As a lady I could not continue going to school when I had no one to buy for me pads, I would always feel embarrassed with my monthly periods coming uncontrolled, I bowed out of school to engage in economic activities that

would see me afford sanitary towels rather depend on my parents who are economically deprived. **(An interview with 15 year old drop-out).**

4.3.9 Income Shocks

How households deal with income shocks is also an important factor in maintaining schooling access. The study findings indicate that vulnerable households can withdraw children from school as part of their coping strategy to deal with shocks to income, often in order to work, save on costs or to free other household members from to work . The key informants observed that shocks to a household do not seem to be a strong predictor to school disruption, with poor households attempting to defend the education of their children in the face of a range of shocks. However, with relative pressure from the overall high poverty index in the division, some parents have been forced to withdraw their children from school. As one key informant put it:

Uncertainty in employment and income at given times lead parents to pull children from school...either they are expected to help in taking care of their siblings while parents go looking for food or they join in search of food for the family upkeep (**An interview with Head teacher in Kaloleni).**

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4.4.4 Child Labour

The study established that forms of child labour create pressure on a child's time. Household chores and house help duties were found to directly affect the performance of girls in school as well as determine their attendance of school. With much pressure on the children to provide for the families, girls are often drawn out of school and used as cheap labour within Kaloleni Division. According to one key informant:

There are quite a number of children who perform household tasks for minimal pay in the neighbourhood; this has continued to pull girls out of school a trend that must be adequately and urgently addressed. **(An interview with NGO representative in Kaloleni Division).**

Thus, the study findings indicate that socio-economic factors work to reinforce each facet in pulling girls from primary schools within Kaloleni Division. It is quite difficult to dichotomize the social from the economic factors, hence the mutual reinforcement.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings in relation to the study objectives. Following the discussions, conclusions are drawn and recommendations made.

5.2 Discussion

The study established a great influence of the household context on girl child education in Kaloleni Division. The findings suggest that household members have an influence on educational access and retention, particularly in poorer communities. Grant and Hallman's (2006) research on education access in South Africa showed that children living with mothers were significantly less likely to have dropped out of school relative to those whose mothers were living elsewhere or whose mothers were dead. On the other hand, youths from poor families, from single-parent families, the children of poorly educated parents and children with fewer role models in higher education, were more likely to drop-out. Similarly, Al Samarrai and Peasgood (1998) found that female-headed households in Tanzania appeared to put a higher priority on their children's education. The number of children in the household is important in many cases and can be a 'significant determinant' of access (Boyle et al., 2002: 4). Hence, both past and present evidence on the interaction between household context and girl-child education point to a converse relationship especially within poor urban areas such as Kaloleni Division.

The study also established that frequent domestic chores tended to interrupt the girls' study hours and school inputs. In the end, poor performance tends to dissuade girls and force them to stop schooling all together. In a previous study in Pakistan, the findings on related topics indicate that while an increase in family size reduces a girl child's household work, the presence of younger children appears to increase their workload (Hakzira and Bedi, 2003). The findings of this study serve to reinforce the proposition showing that this transcends cultural boundaries.

Respondents in this study expressed being least motivated to continue with school given the pressure from their less knowledgeable siblings who had prowess in business activities. Education is seen as having no value addition to the lives of the girl-child. The study findings indicate that the educational level of household members is particularly influential in determining whether and for how long children access schooling. In a similar study, Ersado (2005: 115) talks of 'the widely accepted notion that parental education is the most consistent determinant of child education (and employment decisions).

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Some researchers indicate that non-educated parents cannot provide the support or often do not appreciate the benefits of schooling (Juneja, 2001; Pryor and Ampiah, 2003). There is evidence that the gender and educational level of the parent can influence which child is more likely to access and remain in school for long. Often it is the mother's educational level in particular which is seen to have an effect on access (e.g. Ainsworth et al., 2005). Ainsworth et al. (2005) claim that educated mothers giving preference to girls' schooling implies that

mothers have a relatively stronger preference for their daughters' education and that their education affords them either increased household decision-making power or increased economic status.

The perceived household educational benefit has been associated with motivation of the school going children. Research indicates that the importance household members place on education is an important factor in whether children gain access to schooling and for how long, but there is less research on how this may attribute to dropping out. This research suggests that the perceived returns from education play an important part in whether and for how long children receive education. In some areas children are seen as household assets whose education could, to varying extents, benefit the household unit. Thus, perceptions of how education affects future prospects appears important to retention.

Household income was found to be an important factor in determining access to education as schooling potentially incurs[^] a range of costs, both upfront and hidden. Indirect costs associated with schooling are; uniforms, travel, equipment and the opportunity costs of sending a child to school, amongst other. Household income is linked to a range of factors: when children start school, how often they attend, whether they have to temporarily withdraw and also when and if they drop-out.

Work patterns of household members influence whether income is coming in or not, and the possible expenditures available. Seetharamu's study on patterns of access and non access in slums in Bangalore, India, indicated that the income of the father was linked to the continuity or discontinuity of the child in school, with the fathers of most drop-outs not employed. If income levels are low, children may be called on to supplement the household's income, either through wage-earning employment themselves or taking on additional tasks to free up other household members for work. Seetharamu's (1984, cited in Chugh, 2004: 86) study indicates that indirect schooling costs are important factors in whether children enroll in and attend school or not. Inability to pay the indirect costs of schooling was found to be one of the 'most important causes' of non-attendance in both countries, with those dropping out most frequently citing lack of money to pay for school expenses as an important reason for dropping out. In previous studies, in interviews, parents in Ethiopia often talked about difficulties in paying school fees, especially prior to harvest (when they became due); the ability to buy exercise books, pens and the necessary clothing for school also influenced whether children could enroll or were withdrawn from the first grade (Rose and Al Samarrai, 2001).

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How households deal with income shocks is also an important factor in maintaining schooling access. A research by Hunter and May (2003: 17) in South Africa indicates that vulnerable households can withdraw children from school as part of their coping strategy to deal with shocks to income, often in order to work, save on costs or to free other household members up to work. It also indicates claims that, shocks to a household do not seem to be a strong

predictor to school disruption, with poor households attempting to defend the education of their children in the face of a range of shocks.

5.3 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the socio-economic determinants contributing of girl-child drop out from public primary schools in Kaloleni division. The study established that community-based, home-based, personal factors and school-based factors such as early marriage, educational background of the family, lack of role models can indeed contribute to drop-out of a student from school. Similarly, there is lack of mentorship both at school and at home and also poor performance in school which tend to dissuade girls from schooling.

Numerous severe consequences result from early marriage. Early marriage is intrinsically linked to low levels of education, high levels of violence and abuse, social isolation, severe health risks and harmful power dynamics and results in increased gender inequality and vulnerability to poverty for girls, young women, families and the society as a whole.

Many girls miss several days of schooling every month during menstruation as they cannot afford sanitary pads and are afraid to attend school. They miss out and are unable to catch up with boys, which affects their performance.

Pregnancy was also noted to be a factor contributing to drop-out, where the girl-child, parents and communities are least aware of the 'return to school policy'. Economically, poverty, income shocks, and inability to cater for the indirect costs for schooling are the major contributors to girl-child drop out. Economic factors are found to feed into social factors; thus, it can be concluded that the two forces have a feed-off system and/or platform under which they affect girl-child drop out from public primary school in Kaloleni Division.

5.4 Recommendations

- Schools in peri-urban should initiate and network on motivational talks where role models are brought on board to sensitize girls on the long term benefits of schooling;
- The City Education Department should ensure that the head teachers' capacities are built on how to implement the 'return to school policy', to ensure that the girl-child does not necessarily have to get married after becoming pregnant.
- The Ministry of Education should improve on its monitoring mechanisms to ensure implementation of the Return to School Policy Guidelines.
- There is a need for further study on school-based factors that lead to girl-child drop out in similar set ups in order to illuminate on the issues that have received least coverage in literature but remain to play a significant role in the education of girls.

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Appendix 1: In-depth Interview Guide

Hello, my name is Esther Wahome, a masters degree student in Gender and Development, University of Nairobi. I am conducting a study on factors contributing to girl-child drop out in Kaloleni division of Nairobi County. You have been purposively chosen to participate in the study. I want to assure you that all of your answers will be kept strictly in secret. I will not keep a record of your name or address. You have the right to stop the interview at any time, or to skip any questions that you do not want to answer. There is no right or wrong answers in this research. Some of the topics may be difficult to discuss, but many survivors have found it useful to have the opportunity to talk. Your participation is completely voluntary but your experiences could be very helpful to other survivors in the country. The interview takes approximately 45 minutes to complete. Do you agree to be interviewed? Thank you for your cooperation.

1. When was the last time you were in school?
2. What made you drop out of school?
3. What are you presently doing at home?
4. Are there any other siblings of yours that are out of school?
5. Would you be interested in going back to school?
6. What are some of challenges that keep you from going back?
7. What would you want changed for you to go back to school?
8. Are there any sources of support around you with respect in schooling?

Appendix 2: Key Informant Interview Guide

1. What has contributed to continued girl-child drop out from primary schools in Kaloleni?
2. Are there any home-based factors that may lead to girl-child drop out?
3. How does the government and partners in education address this incident?
4. Are there community-based initiatives to address girl-child drop out in Kaloleni?
5. What are some of the viable means of ensuring girl-child retention in school?