

**EFFECTS OF EARLY MARRIAGES ON THE EDUCATION OF PRIMARY
SCHOOL GIRLS IN BUNA SUB-COUNTY, WAJIR COUNTY, KENYA.**

By

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**A Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented to any other university for an academic award

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E56/79106/2012

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor

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DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my dear parents; Mr. Robert Wafula Sakwa and Mrs. Gladys Mukoko Sakwa for their tireless support and encouragement which has seen me up to this level of education.

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ABSTRACT

Kenya has performed fairly well in promoting the education of her people especially at the basic level nationally. However, impressive as it is, this picture hides major disparities in the regions especially in the arid and semi-arid areas (ASALs). Gender disparities are quite glaring because of the effects of some of the harmful and retrogressive traditional practices like female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C and early marriages that girls are subjected to at a tender age. This study examined the effects of early marriages on the primary education of girls in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County. Apart from establishing the causes of early marriages, the study also looked at its impact on participation and completion of girls in the sub county as well as establishing some of the possible solutions to the problem of early marriages and the education of girls in Buna Sub County. Descriptive research design was used to execute the study. Simple random sampling method realized a sample size of 159 (114 standard seven and eight pupils, 39 teachers, and 6 headteachers) drawn from six schools. The total respondents for the study were 133 (97 pupils, 30 teachers, and 6 headteachers) which were drawn from the four schools that participated in the study. Data was collected by use of three sets of questionnaires (for pupils, teachers and head teachers), and analyzed by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings of the present project were mainly presented in the descriptive statistical format using tables, pie charts and graphs. The study revealed that early marriages were real in Buna Sub-County and they have negatively affected the education of girls. This resulted from poverty, high levels of illiteracy, regional customs as well as the retrogressive traditional customs. The Somali community generally socializes its girls for domestic duties so that they make good wives once they get married. Girls are generally viewed negatively by members of the community who feel that educating them is like educating someone else's wife and therefore preference will be given to the boys over girls when both cannot be supported in school. The predominant Muslim religious beliefs in the area also subject these girls to retrogressive practices such as FGM/C that is commonly seen as an immediate preparation for early marriages. The completion rates were found to be poor due to early marriages which happen when girls are between the age 14 and 17 years. The girls are kept out of school despite free primary education and terminate their schooling before completing 12 years of compulsory learning. Unfortunately, this works against the high hopes and aspirations that many primary school pupils in Buna Sub-County hold. Some of the key intervention measures to the problem of early marriages are; strengthening guidance and counseling services in schools to offer support to girls, offering conditional cash transfers both to the girls and parents, having more female teachers in schools to incentivize the girls as role models, sensitizing parents and the entire community on the risks that girls get subjected to by engaging in early marriages, and punishing the offenders. The study commended punitive measures be put in place for deterrence purposes. A part from this the community ought to be sensitized, first on the harmful effects of early marriages and secondly on the need to change the negative attitude they hold not just towards the girls but to their education in particular.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASALs	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
E.C.D.E	Early Childhood Development and Education
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Educational Management Information System
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
FPE	Free Primary Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GoK	Government of Kenya
ICRW	International Centre for Research on Women
K.C.P.E	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
K.C.S.E	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KHIBS	Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey
KLR	Kenya Law Report
KNALS	Kenya National Adult Literacy Survey
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NAFGEM	Network against Female Genital Mutilation
NEMIS	National Education Management Information System
NEP	North Eastern Province
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
P1	Primary 1 Certificate (Teacher Qualification)
PA	Parent Association

PCR	Primary Completion Rate
RoK	Republic of Kenya
SCDE	Sub- County Director of Education
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Studies
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UN	United Nations
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNESCO	United Nations of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children Education Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
WCEFA	World Conference on Education for All
WCIDP	Wajir County Integrated Development Plan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	vi
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the study	1
1.2 Early marriages and education.....	2
1.3 Government’s efforts towards education	3
1.4 Importance of educating women.....	5
1.5 Statement of the problem	6
1.6 Purpose of the study.....	6
1.7 Objectives of the study.....	7
1.7.1 Main objective	7
1.7.2 Specific objectives	7
1.8 Research questions.....	7
1.8.1 Main research question	7
1.8.2 Specific research questions	7
1.9 Significance of the study.....	8
1.10 Scope of the study.....	8
1.11 Limitations of the study	9
1.12 Basic assumptions of the study	10
1.13 Operational definition of terms.....	10
1.14 Organization of the study.....	11
CHAPTER TWO	12
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	12
2.1 Introduction.....	12
2.2 The concept of early marriage	12
2.3 Causes of early marriages	13

2.3.1 Poverty	13
2.3.2 Illiteracy	15
2.3.3 Bride price or dowry	16
2.3.4 Cultural traditions/laws	17
2.3.5 Religious and social pressures	19
2.3.6 Regional customs	20
2.3.7 Fear of remaining unmarried	21
2.3.8 Perceived inability of women to work for money	22
2.4 Early marriages and girls' participation in school	23
2.4.1 Ignorance.....	24
2.4.2 Negative attitude of parents towards girls' education.....	25
2.4.3 Gender bias in provision of education and early marriages.....	26
2.4.4 Role models	27
2.4.5 Insecurity.....	28
2.5 Education of girls and completion rates.....	29
2.6 Remedies to early marriages	30
2.7 Conceptual framework.....	33
2.8 Summary of the reviewed literature.....	34
CHAPTER THREE	36
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	36
3.1 Introduction.....	36
3.2 Research design	36
3.3 Study locale.....	36
3.4 Target population	40
3.5 Sampling technique and sample size	40
3.6 Research instruments	42
3.7 Pilot study	42
3.8 Instrument validity	43
3.9 Instrument reliability.....	43
3.10 Data collection procedures.....	43
3.11 Data analysis	44

CHAPTER FOUR.....	45
DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION	45
4.1 Introduction.....	45
4.2 Response rate	45
4.3 Demographic characteristics of respondents	46
4.3.1 Age of respondents (pupils).....	46
4.3.2 Respondents by age (teachers and head teachers)	47
4.3.3 Respondents by gender (pupils).....	48
4.3.4 Respondents by gender (teachers and head teachers).....	48
4.3.5 Distribution of teachers by professional qualifications	49
4.3.6 Head teachers' professional qualifications	50
4.3.7 Distribution of teachers by length in service	51
4.3.8 Distribution of head teachers by length in service.....	52
4.4 The causes of early marriages in Buna Sub-County.....	52
4.4.1 Reasons for early marriages.....	53
4.4.2 High levels of illiteracy of parents and early marriages in Buna Sub-County	56
4.5 The participation of girls in primary school education.....	58
4.5.1 Factors that affect participation of girls in primary schools (pupils, teachers and head teachers).....	58
4.5.2 Socio-Cultural practices and early marriages in Buna Sub-County	61
4.6 The completion rates in Buna Sub-County.....	62
4.6.1 The marriage age for girls in Buna Sub-County.....	62
4.6.2 Brothers and sisters who are not in school.....	63
4.6.3 Gender of out of school children	64
4.6.4 The level at which brothers or sisters terminated schooling.....	64
4.6.5 Reasons for termination of schooling by girls	65
4.6.6 Sisters who have completed different levels of learning	66
4.6.7 Pupils' aspirations after completion of primary schooling.....	67
4.6.8 Pupils' educational ambitions	67
4.7 Remedies to early marriages and the education of girls in Buna Sub-County	68

4.7.1 Existence of guidance and counseling in primary schools in Buna Sub-County	68
4.7.2 Action to enable married girls continue with schooling	70
4.7.3 Action to enable primary school girls continue schooling.....	72
4.7.4 Action against perpetrators of early marriages	73
4.7.5 Female teachers and early marriages	74
4.7.6 Suggestions to minimize early marriages	75
4.7.7 Suggestions for improving girls' participation in primary education in Buna Sub-County	75
4.7.8 Suggestions to improve the completion rates of primary school girls.....	76
CHAPTER FIVE	77
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	77
5.1 Introduction.....	77
5.2 Summary of the study	77
5.3 Conclusions of the study.....	80
5.4 Recommendations of the study.....	81
5.5 Suggestions for further research	82
REFERENCES.....	84
APPENDICES	94
Appendix I: Introduction letter for data collection	94
Appendix II: Consent forms for pupils	95
Appendix III: Questionnaire for pupils.....	96
Appendix IV: Questionnaire for teachers	100
Appendix V: Questionnaire for head teachers	103

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework.....	34
Figure 4. 1: Percentages by age of respondents	46
Figure 4. 2: Distribution of pupils by gender	48
Figure 4. 3 Head teachers' highest professional qualification	50
Figure 4. 4: Teachers' length in service	51
Figure 4. 5: Reasons for Early Marriages among Girls in Buna Sub-County (teachers) ...	55
Figure 4. 6: Reasons for early marriages of girls in Buna Sub-County (Head teachers) ...	55
Figure 4. 7: Illiteracy levels and early marriages	56
Figure 4. 8: Factors affecting participation (head teachers)	59
Figure 4. 9: Factors affecting participation of girls in school (pupils).....	60
Figure 4. 10: The effects of cultural practices on girls' education (Head teachers).....	62
Figure 4. 11: Reasons that made sister stop schooling.....	65
Figure 4. 12: Educational aspirations by pupils in Buna Sub-County	67
Figure 4. 13: Sisters who were returned to school	71
Figure 4. 14 Arrests of perpetrators of early marriages (pupils' responses).....	73
Figure 4. 15: Presence of female teachers and incidences of early marriages	74

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3. 1: Sample and sample size	42
Table 4. 1: Response rate from pupils, teachers, and head teachers	45
Table 4. 2: Age distribution for teachers and head teachers	47
Table 4. 3: Distribution of teachers and head teachers by gender	49
Table 4. 4: Teachers' professional qualifications	50
Table 4. 5: Head teachers' length in service	52
Table 4. 6: Reasons for early marriages among girls in Buna Sub-County (pupils)	53
Table 4. 7: Influence of girls' education on marriage.....	57
Table 4. 8: Factors affecting participation of girls in school (teachers)	60
Table 4. 9: Age of marriage in Buna Sub-County	63
Table 4. 10: Brothers or sisters not schooling.....	63
Table 4. 11: brothers or sisters out of school	64
Table 4. 12: Level at which brothers or sisters stopped schooling	65
Table 4. 13: Number of sisters who have completed different levels of schooling in Buna Sub-County.....	66
Table 4. 14: Existence of guiding and counseling in schools (pupils' responses).....	68
Table 4. 15: Existence of guidance and counseling in schools (teachers' responses)	69
Table 4. 16: Existence of guidance and counseling in schools (Head teachers' responses).....	69
Table 4. 17: Cases of girls initially married but returned to school (teachers).....	71
Table 4. 18: Cases of girls initially married but returned to school (head teachers)	72
Table 4. 19: Teachers' responses on people who took action on cases of early marriage.....	72
Table 4. 20: Head teachers' responses on people who took action on cases of early marriage	72
Table 4. 21: Arrests of perpetrators of early marriages (teachers' responses).....	73
Table 4. 22: Arrests of perpetrators of early marriages (head teachers' responses)	74
Table 4. 23: Suggestions to improve girls' participation in primary education.....	76
Table 4. 24: Teachers' opinions on improving the completion rates of primary school girls in Buna Sub-County.....	76

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Early marriages are a real and a threatening phenomenon that has been practiced by humanity since time immemorial. Although there have been concerted efforts to stop this practice through signing of international and national agreements the decision of marrying girls under coercion and pressure still persists. This is against international conventions for instance, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of 1989 and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979. Despite all this agreements, early marriages have continued to be seen as an infringement of human rights, the United Nations estimates that still the practice affects 700 million people globally with Africa cases totaling to about 125 million. If the trend continues at the current rate, it is estimated that this figure will be about 310 million people by 2050 (United Nations, 2015). It is worthwhile to note that while the practice may have served those traditional communities well, culture is dynamic and subject to change. The coming of Europeans followed by the introduction of western education on the continent saw a number of African communities abandon this retrogressive tradition and embraced modernization. Unfortunately, the tradition is still very much alive in many African communities especially those found in marginal areas that have not been fully touched by western civilization.

The above scenario is not very different from what obtains in Kenya. UNICEF, (2017) revealed 4% of girls are married before they attain 15 years whereas 23% were married before they attained 18 years. A sizeable country's population engages in cultural practices of early marriages and Female genital mutilation or cut (FGM/C). Most communities that engage in FGM also practice early marriages. Although this practice is decreasing nationally, it remains prevalent among the Rendille, Maasai, Pokot, Samburu and Somali. As observed above, it so happens that majority of these cases take place among communities inhabiting arid and semi-arid (ASAL) counties of northern Kenya,

Coast and parts of Rift Valley (UNICEF, 2018). North Eastern followed by Coast region have the highest prevalence of early marriages Plan international, (2011). It should be stated from the outset that apart from the effects of these practices on the physical, psychological and health challenges that these girls are put through, the affected young girls whose population stands in millions have end up being deprived of their basic rights such as education and full participation in other important socio-economic activities (Republic of Kenya, hereafter, RoK, 2001; RoK, 2012; Rok, 2013).

1.2 Early marriages and education

Communities that practice early marriages particularly of girls' have continued to lag behind in education provision which in turn has impacted negatively on their development. According to UNICEF Kenya, almost 1 girl out 4 girls is married before the age of maturity which is 18 years. It is therefore obvious that many girls leave school before completing the primary cycle of learning. Education is viewed as a vital tool for economic and physical mobility since it offers learners with knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is for this reason that many countries across the world continually set considerable funds for education to the population, despite the many social, political and economic challenges that they encounter (UNICEF, 1999; Achola and Pillai, 2000). Kenya for example spends around 6.5% of its GDP on education, or about 25% of its total Budget (RoK, 2015; RoK, 2019) with the primary education sub-sector being the highest consumer of the same.

In most cases, early marriages affect girls that are still in pursuit of primary schooling, the only level of education particularly for many children in most parts of Africa. For instance, primary schooling forms the foundations on which future learning activities are built. The objective of this level of schooling is to impart literacy, numeracy and manipulative skills to the learners, expose them abilities of self-expression, logical and critical thinking in addition to providing a solid foundation for future education, training and work (RoK, 2012). Apart from this, primary education has also been shown to yield higher rates of returns necessary for human survival compared to other levels of schooling (Abagi, 1997; Achola and Pillai, 2000).

With regard to girls, primary education is particularly important since it is the most efficient way for reducing poverty, according people opportunity to improve their living standards, raising their voices, improving their health, productivity as fostering participation in civil societies. It is also a pre-requisite for not only economic growth but for social and individual progress (RoK, 2009). In spite of these benefits, many young girls in Kenya including those of Buna Sub-County, Wajir County fail to participate effectively in primary schooling due to a number of factors. Some of these include redundant cultural practices for instance FGM, early marriages and generally, the negative attitudes that these communities have developed over time towards education particularly that of girls as compared to that of the boys with that of the latter being seen as an important “investment” to the family (Lauglo, 2004; RoK, 2014).

1.3 Government’s efforts towards education

In a bid to enhance primary education, Kenya has in recent years developed important policies to guide the sector. These include; the Children Act (2001), introduction of free primary education (FPE) in 2003, Vision 2030, Basic Education Act 2013, and National Education Sector Plan (NESP), 2013-2018 among others. However, one of the major obstacles towards the realization of such efforts is the problem of early marriages of girls especially in ASALs. As a consequence, attempts to ensure gender equity has not been achieved due to unsatisfactory enrolment levels or non-enrolment of school age children in schools (RoK, 2009). Apart from this, the government of Kenya has over time enjoined herself important international protocols and conventions aimed at expansion of access and gender equity in education such as; the World Conferences on Education for All (WCEFA) held in Jomtien-Thailand in 1990, and Dakar Forum in 2000, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, and recently the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. These commitments have, among other things paid special attention to marginalization of girls and women in education.

Since independence, Kenya has generally made good strides towards closing the gender gap in education. For instance, the country has invested massively in the expansion of educational institutions including primary schools which have realized increased enrolment. The number of primary schools going children has grown from 891,103 pupils

in 1963 to about 10.4 million pupils in 2017 (RoK, or MoE, 2019). Public and private primary schools have increased from 6,058 in 1963 to 35,442 in 2017. This has since 2003 been attributed to the introduction of FPE in the same year (RoK, 2019).

While these figures paint an impressive picture at the national level, they mask serious regional disparities. The marginalization of girls in education is particularly wanting in ASALs. A close analysis of data is a clear testimony of the extent to which girls go to attain education in this country. For example, it has been reported that approximately two million children who ought to be in school (ages 6-13) were out of school (Abagi et al 2014; RoK, 2015). About 80% of these children hail from the nomadic or pastoralist regions in northern parts of Kenya (Sifuna 2005). Wajir County, the area that is of interest to this study records the lowest primary school participation rates in Kenya. Out of the 225,594 children within the primary school age bracket, only 59,065 (26%) are enrolled in schools. Out of a population of 100,323 primary school going age, only 23,137 (23.1% GER) girls are enrolled in school (WCIDP, 2013). The net enrollment rate for the primary education level is 35.6 per cent for boys and 20.4 per cent for girls respectively, with a total NER of 27.2% which compares poorly to the national primary education NER of 88.2% (90 percent boys and 86.4 % girls) (RoK, 2014; MOEST, 2014).

There is enough evidence to show that early marriages of young girls are a constraint to girls' education and are widely practiced in many parts of the world but remain common in countries of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean as well as Southern Asia (UNICEF, 2010). Early marriages has for example affected the provision of education to the Somali girls of North Eastern region of Kenya where participation and completion of primary education is very low. The primary completion rate (PCR) in the North Eastern in 2007 was 42.3, compared to 81% nationally. For example, PCR for boys was 56.4% to only 27.6% for girls (Ruto, Ongwenyi & Mugo, (2009)

Part of the reason why PCR for girls is poor compared to that of the boys is the practice of early marriages which is rampant in the Wajir County. In essence, girls' schooling is sometimes abruptly terminated and often married off to older men while still young. As

can be seen in the table below 1.1 a good number of girls generally enroll at the pre-primary and lower primary levels but their progression to upper primary and secondary levels remains a big challenge.

Table 1.1: Wajir public primary enrolments by class

Class	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Girls	4,984	4,225	3,769	2,899	2,380	1,982	1,596	1,326	23,161
Boys	7,060	6225	5517	4543	3881	3323	2899	2669	36,097

Source: MOEST, 2014 Basic education statistical

In some cases, parents deliberately fail to enroll their daughters in school because after all, they will get married and therefore they do not want to educate somebody else's wife. Apart from this, girls are also perceived by the community as mothers, house wives and home keepers such that families socialize their daughters to master skills that would make them good wives other than go to school (Abdi, 2010).

1.4 Importance of educating women

The education of women or girls has crucial bearing on the development of any society all over the world. This is particularly important with reference to primary education that aims at equipping an individual with survival skills. A situation where a sizeable population goes without education will no doubt lead to negative consequences to the development of such a society. As it has been pointed above, participation and completion rate for primary education by girls is a major challenge in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County that requires urgent intervention to reverse the pathetic situation and have these girls participate fully in education, realize their dreams and take their rightful place in the development of their societies. It is for this reason that this study set out to investigate the effects of early marriages on the education of primary school going girls in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County.

1.5 Statement of the problem

Since independence, Kenya has developed important policy documents to guide the education sector. Recent policy interventions in the country Kenya have been crafted to ensure that every eligible child gets an opportunity to complete basic education. A case in point is the introduction of FPE in 2003 that was aimed at ensuring that Kenya meets her EFA commitments. While the country made commendable strides towards this direction the participation and completion rates for girls in marginalized regions continues to be a big challenge to the realization of this vision. This has come about partly due to the problem of early marriages which are very rampant in ASALs that have in turn ensured that very many young and vulnerable girls miss out on education.

In addition, no in-depth study has been undertaken to investigate the effects of early marriages which affects participation and completion of girls' in schools in Buna. Having few girls completing primary education in Buna Sub-County is a sign that something is wrong and appropriate action needs to be taken to correct the situation so that Kenya may achieve gender parity as advocated in what Kenya dreams to achieve through Education for All (EFA) and MDG's of 2015 and recently the SDGs. Researching on early marriages will shed light on what girls in Buna Sub-County goes through and hence will show the differences experienced in completion rates for boys and girls.

1.6 Purpose of the study

This study examined the effects of early marriages on the education of girls in primary schools in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County. To realize this overall goal, the research objectives and questions were formulated to guide the study. The research will shed light on the challenges that have impacted negatively on the education of girls in Buna Sub-County and suggest practical solutions to the problem. The researcher has no known knowledge of a similar study that has been undertaken on this topic in the said location.

1.7 Objectives of the study

The study was based on the following objectives:

1.7.1 Main objective

The main objective of the study was to investigate the effects of early marriages on the education of primary school girls in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County.

1.7.2 Specific objectives

To achieve the above objective, the following specific objectives were formulated to guide the study:

- i. Establish the causes of early marriages among school girls in Buna Sub-County.
- ii. Establish the extent to which girls are denied the right of participation in primary education as a result of early marriages in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County.
- iii. Establish the completion rates of girls in primary schools in Buna Sub-County.
- iv. Suggest possible solutions for addressing the problem of early marriages in Buna Sub County.

1.8 Research questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1.8.1 Main research question

What were the effects of early marriages on the education of primary school girls in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County?

1.8.2 Specific research questions

In order to answer the main research question posed above, the study sought to answer the following questions:

- i. What are the causes of early marriages among school girls in Buna Sub-County?
- ii. To what extent have girls been denied the right to participate in primary education as a result to early marriages in Buna Sub-County?
- iii. What are the completion rates of girls in primary schools in Buna Sub-County?

- iv. What are the possible solutions for addressing the problem of early marriages in Buna Sub County?

1.9 Significance of the study

This study was important as it sought to establish the causes of early marriages in Buna Sub-County of Wajir County. It is hoped that the findings of the study will form the basis on which concrete interventions to this problem will be developed and work towards arresting this problem.

The findings of this study will no doubt benefit educational policy makers and stakeholders in devising policy options that can enhance the participation and completion of the girl's primary education not only in Buna Sub-County but in ASALs or marginalized areas as well. This will help the government put in place measures to curb the practice of early marriages which has contributed to many girls dropping out of school in different parts of the country.

The findings of the study will provide useful information to add to the literature available on the effects of early marriages on education in ASALs. This will be useful to future researchers on similar topics especially in ASAL regions where girl's education has been neglected because of early marriages.

The findings of the study will provide useful information on challenges facing the provision of primary education to the girl child in Wajir County in relation to the problem of early marriages and made possible suggestions for addressing the problem. It is hoped that information generated from the study will be useful to both researchers and policy makers as we focus on a sustainable world for all through the SDGs.

1.10 Scope of the study

Although the problem of early marriages is a common phenomenon in marginalized areas of Kenya especially in ASALs as discussed elsewhere, this study was only confined to pupils of primary school going age in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County.

The study was also only confined to primary school pupils in as much as other sectors of education have been affected as well. This was based on the wisdom that the primary

level of education is the foundation for any individual's educational activities. In addition, the study only targeted the views of primary school pupils in Standard Seven and Eight, head teachers and teachers of the sampled public primary schools in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County.

1.11 Limitations of the study

In this study only four primary schools were studied instead of the initial six primary schools that proceed up to Standard Eight in the Sub-County which represents 67% of the intended schools and therefore sufficient representation.

This was caused by the inter clan fighting that is very common and was taking place at the time of collecting data a factor that made it impossible for the researcher to travel to all the public primary schools in the sub-county. Apart from this, the region's insecurity problem had been made worse by the terrorist activities of Al-Shabaab from Somalia. Their constant attacks at the time not only delayed but also made the completion of data collection difficult because non-Muslim (non-local) teachers were forced to flee the region.

The questionnaire was the only tool used for data collection due to the expansive nature of the sub-county and the problem of insecurity as explained above. Lack of reliable transport meant that the researcher did not have enough time that would have allowed the administration of other research instruments like interviews which consume a lot of time. Apart from this, scarcity of transportation meant that it was not easy to move around. However, the researcher tried her best to reach the schools that participated in study.

The respondents were mostly boys because of the low percentage of girls in these schools. For example, in one of the schools, we only had one girl in a class.

The study limited itself on the effects of early marriages on participation and completion of girls in primary education and its remedies.

Finally, the views of girls' who were already married and their parents would have been important but in view of the challenges mentioned above, locating these key respondents

would not have been easy. Consequently, the study was only confined to the school children who were in standard seven and eight at the time.

1.12 Basic assumptions of the study

- i) The study assumed that primary school girls were vulnerable and easily got lured into early marriages and therefore failed to complete their education at this level.
- ii) The study also assumed respondents were knowledgeable about the effects of early marriages on girls' primary education in Buna Sub-County and they gave reliable responses.
- iii) Finally, the study also assumed that all categories of respondents were truthful and stated facts concerning early marriages without fear or bias and questionnaires were filled and returned to the researcher for analysis, interpretation and report writing.

1.13 Operational definition of terms

Access: refers to the opportunity availed to all learners by the government to begin their first cycle of education in Kenya which runs from pre-primary up to standard eight.

Attitude - negative tendency by parents and the community towards girl child participation and completion in primary education.

Early marriages: refer to a formal marriage where girls are married to old men probably at the age of 13 years in Buna Sub-County. This is also a union before the attainment of the legal marriageable age which in Kenya is 18 years.

Enrolment: number of girls enrolled in standard seven and eight in Buna Sub-County. Enrolment will be measured by using class register, school admission book and school attendance book.

Gender bias: this referred to parents being unfair to the girls of school going age in terms of access to education by taking boys to school and marrying girls to very old men.

Out of school children: this referred to children between the ages of six to thirteen years of age but were not enrolled in public primary schools or mobile schools in Buna Sub-County

Participation refers to girls who have interest to classroom activities in Buna Sub-County.

Primary school: It referred to an institution where pupils between the ages of six to thirteen years were given instruction by their teachers majorly in public schools and mobile school.

Pupil: these were young person's between the age of twelve and thirteen years of age in primary schools in Kenya, who were in standard seven and eight respectively.

1.14 Organization of the study

The study is organized into five chapters:

Chapter one consists of introduction which covers the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose, objectives, research questions, significance of the study, limitations, scope of the study, basic assumptions of the study, the definition of operational terms and finally, organization of the study.

Chapter two reviewed literature related to the effects of early marriages on the education of primary school girls in Buna sub-county, Wajir County. This chapter also reviewed the conceptual framework and summary of the literature reviewed.

Chapter three describes research methodology and focuses on research design, study locale, target population, sample size and sampling techniques, research instruments, validity of instruments, reliability of instruments, data collection procedure and methods of data analysis.

Chapter four presents data analysis, presentations and interpretation. Finally, chapter five contains a summary of research findings of the study, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we present a review of literature as it relates to the present study. It is organized in themes as per the objectives of the study. These are; causes of early marriages, factors affecting participation of girls in primary education due to early marriages, factors leading to poor completion rate of primary school girls' education and lastly, remedies to early marriages. Lastly, we also present the conceptual framework that guided the study.

2.2 The concept of early marriage

Early marriage which is also called child marriage refers to a union between two people in which one or both parties are younger than 18 years of age. This goes against the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which recognizes marriage to be one that requires "free and full" consent of the parties involved. This cannot be possible where one of the parties involved is a minor and therefore incapable of making informed decision about a life partner. This mostly happens in poor third world countries, especially among those living in poor rural areas where girls likely get lured into arranged marriages without seeking their approval. In some cases, these arrangements are undertaken when the victims are still at infants. Early marriage practices mostly affect girls compared to boys (UNICEF, 2005).

Parents across the world at times encourage early marriages for their daughters hoping to benefit both financially and socially but unfortunately the process ends up placing these girls in real danger. Apart from violating their rights as humans, the practice works against the development of girls, leads to early pregnancies and because in most cases such girls possess little education, there is every possibility that they will be condemned to a life of poverty. Apart from this, women who married at younger ages are vulnerable to domestic violence from their partners based on the misguided believe that it is acceptable for a husband to beat his wife. Lastly, it has been shown that women who

marry early are most likely to give birth to more children compared to those that marry late (UNICEF, 2005).

Over the years, a number of binding instruments have been developed to fight this vice and protect the rights of children as well. For example, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in Article 16 outlaws the betrothal and subsequent marriages involving children, calls for necessary legislation to specify the minimum age for marriages and their registration (CEDAW, 1979). The same was re-emphasized later by the Convention of the Rights of the Child in 1989.

From the foregoing, early marriage is not just a danger to the welfare of the girls that get lured into it but it is also a danger to the welfare of the entire society. In Kenya, the practice mostly takes place in marginalized communities thus marginalizing them further. In Buna Sub-County for example, early marriage occurs to girls who are as young as 13 or less, which correspond to the primary schooling ages. The vice therefore effectively terminates the educational aspirations for such girls who cannot even complete this level of education yet it has been free since 2003.

2.3 Causes of early marriages

The practice of early marriages in communities that still uphold this vice is caused by a number of factors. UNICEF (2005) identifies the following; poverty, illiteracy, bride price, cultural traditions, laws in the community that allow early marriages, religious and social pressures, regional customs, fear of remaining unmarried and perceived inability of women to work for money to be causes that lead to early, marriages.

2.3.1 Poverty

According to (UNICEF, 2001& 2005), poverty is one of the major factors that lead to early marriages across the world. A number of cases where girls are married off to older men to deal with economic problems facing families have been cited among some communities in Middle Eastern and South Asian societies. Many other societies including those of Sub-Saharan Africa view the payment of bride price by the groom's family as a strategy for family survival. In worst case scenario, the practice may easily lure innocent

girls into prostitution as is the case in Bangladesh where families are sometimes are tricked to give away their daughters with promises of marriage only to lead the unsuspecting girls into prostitution in foreign countries.

Studies by United Nations (2003) and Malhorta, (2010) showed that in northern Pakistan, Afghanistan and some parts of the Middle East, ineligible girls are married off to enable families settle disputes, pay debts or have the girl be substituted for her brother's wife's bride price. In such cases, young girls get married off early by parents to enable them handle economic deficits that they may be faced with. Furthermore, marrying their daughters at an early age also enables the families survive economically since there will be one less person to be catered for in terms of basic needs such as feeding, clothing and education.

Poverty as a factor in early marriages is very much perpetuated in some Kenyan communities. Studies by Njuguna, Chageiywo, & Wamukuru (2018) and Muyaka (2018) on the education of girls in Narok and Marsabit found that high levels of poverty in these two communities was a major contributor to early marriages where young girls were forced to drop out of school to be married by rich old men in exchange of bride price so as to enable the families survive economically. Moreover, instances where young girls are 'booked' for marriage by older men or non-enrolled boys means that such girls rarely get opportunities to attend school.

A study by Orodho, Waweru, Getange, & Miriti (2013) in Garissa established that poverty impacted negatively towards the realization of this goal EFA in Kenya. Poor families could not afford the latent costs of education such as; school uniforms, building fund and transport. Affordability was found to be the largest household problem limiting access to education. The challenge was worse in big families which had many school going children. In addition, in situations where children have to compete for the meagre resources, the boy is given preference over the girl.

2.3.2 Illiteracy

Illiteracy among members of the community or family is another factor that has been identified as a cause for early marriages among girls (Raj et al, 2009; Bhandari, 2019). Situations where the parents are illiterate or have little education are known to thrive on fear and superstition that can easily lure girls into early marriage. In Nepal for example, there is a belief to the effect that women who get educated are likely to become witches such that some families due to illiteracy decide to prevent their daughters from attaining a good education. As a consequence, girls who marry at a young age are most likely to have terminated school or to have received no formal education at all (Sekine& Hodgkin, 2017).

Although Kenya has made tremendous steps in expanding educational opportunities for her people, many school age children are unable to participate. Most of them come from the nomadic pastoralist communities in regions such the North Eastern where (Fleshma, 2005), found that only one in four children attend school with one in five girls being enrolled. According to UNESCOs 2010 Report, fewer than 40 per cent of children in the former North Eastern Province were in primary school four years after the Kenya government set the goal of 100 per cent for national enrolment. The report further indicates that, over 60 per cent of Somali girls were not in primary school (UNESCO, 2010).

The above observations have been corroborated by Njeru & Orodho (2003) on secondary education in the Kenya who found that the most poorly performing districts in access were concentrated in the ASAL regions of North Eastern, Eastern and Coast Provinces with girls being the worst-affected. For example, districts with highest gender inequalities as of the year 2000 included Wajir (GER: girls 2.7%, boys 8.8%); Mandera (GER: girls 3%, boys 6.9%) and Garissa (GER: girls 4.7%, boys 13.1%) in North Eastern Province. This data is corroborated by Abagi (2014) and RoK (2015) who established that inhabitants of this region suffer from high levels of illiteracy. For example, only 8% of adults were found to be formally literate in Wajir County compared to 18.5% in Mandera and 19.1 % in Turkana. These findings compare poorly with the national average of 79%. Worse still, for every five literate men in Mandera County there is only one literate

woman. This is no doubt a major hindrance to the educational ambitions of girls in areas such as Wajir as it has been shown elsewhere that illiterate parents will not be able to support their children's education particularly that of the girls by assisting with school assignments or by making meaningful interactions with teachers to learn about educational challenges facing their children (Bunyi, 2008).

2.3.3 Bride price or dowry

The payment of bride price is a common practice in many societies. In African communities, dowry is paid for appreciation or compensation to the family of the bride. This is based on the thinking that since the newly wedded bride has transferred her labour to the family of her husband, there is need for some form of compensation. Though an age-old practice, the payment of bride price is still a very important undertaking by any worthy family or husband.

Cultural studies on the Maasai and the Borana communities respectively have pointed out that women are valued in these two communities because of their labour (Kituyi, 1990; Nyamongo, 2000). They continue to observe that girls are socialized to become good wives and good mothers once they get married. They are then married off to rich old men because of their higher socio-economic status based on ownership of livestock. That practice which also involves young girls effectively denies them the opportunity to continue with education which after all is no longer seen as important since a girl's marriage value (in animals), is fixed whether she is educated or not. This gives community members less or no motivation at all to invest in the education of girls.

Studies by Ombongi (2008) and Muyaka (2018) looked into the influence of cultural and social-economic challenges to education particularly of the girls in Isiolo and Marsabit. The studies established that cultural traditions had a negative effect on the education of those girls. For example, girl's schooling is terminated and forced into early marriages involving rich old men in exchange for bride price. In other instances, girls were booked even by boys who have never attended school which in effect means that such girls rarely got opportunities for schooling. For the girls who opt to remain in class there is constant pressure, to drop out, from the community, peers as well as their parents.

Maina (2011) argues that social beliefs emanating from the values attached to marriage among Muslims, a predominant religion in Buna Sub- County simply makes a girl's stay with her family a stop-gap measure. She is seen as being on transit to the family of her spouse where she belongs. This attitude has a long-lasting negative effect on the education of girls as they are perceived as helpmates in the home and marriageable once they reach maturity. Girls are also valued as objects of exchange in bride wealth.

Studies by (Njeru & Orodho, 2003; Dube & Orodho, 2014) on access and participation in secondary school education in Kenya noted that one major challenge that face the education of girls in ASALs is early marriages since girls in upper primary schools are usually taken out of school and given to marry wealthy men in the community. The wealthy men can easily convince their families by paying a high bride price. Due to this, the girls in upper primary often face constant pressure to drop out. These circumstances eventually increase girls' dropout rates from school compared to that of the boys.

2.3.4 Cultural traditions/laws

A study by Kahise (2013) looked into the effect of culture on girls' access to secondary education in Kisarawe District, Tanzania. The study established that the negative perception of girls by community members forced them to give preference to the education of boys compared to that of the girls apart from being forced into marriages which effectively terminated their schooling activities. The study recommended public awareness campaigns on the importance of girls' education in addition to strengthening of counseling programmes in schools, enforcement of laws, and the deployment of female teachers in rural schools to act as role models.

A number of communities around the world consider the onset of menstruation by girls to be a sign for maturity, ready for marriage because of the capacity to conceive (UNICEF, 2001). In most instances, parents stop girls from schooling to be prepared for marriage because they feel that continued schooling will only reduce the girl's opportunities for marriage (Chege & Sifuna, 2006; UNICEF, 2014; Njuguna, et al., 2018). Some parents fear that educating a girl may be a disadvantageous as the girl will reduce her chances for marriage opportunities. The girls will either be too educated to find compatible husbands

or not sufficiently submissive to be good wives. Hence the practice of early marriages and their attendant consequences. In some Kenyan communities such as Somali, Samburu, Maasai, Rendille, Pokot, Sabaot, Kisii and Kuria, girls have to undergo FGM/C in readiness for marriage and majority drop out of school soon after FGM/C to get married (Oloo, Wanjiru & Katty-Newell, 2011; Ganira, 2015; Mutua, 2016).

Another reason that drives most communities into the practice of early marriage has to do with the need to guard the girls' virginity from the onset of menstruation. This practice is taken seriously in the believe that the younger the girl the greater chances of being a virgin (UNICEF, 2001; Abagi, Sifuna & Oando, 2010)).

Studies have also shown that some of the pastoral communities engage in other harmful practices that finally lead to early marriages. For example, (UNICEF, (2014) and Muyaka (2018) established that in Samburu and Marsabit, community members practice "beading" and "booking" to signify temporary engagement of young girls to men or boys including some that have never attended school at all. In some instances, those concerned can be allowed to have sexual intercourse with these girls, some who maybe as young as six years old.

Three studies by (Plan International 2011; Dube and Orodho, 2014; Njuguna, et al., 2018) examined the challenge that early marriages pose to the education of girls in secondary schools in Rhamu-Mandera County and Narok South respectively and Kenya at large. The studies established that majority of the girls drop out of school soon after FGM/C at the time when most of them will be in upper primary classes while the few who proceeded to secondary schools drop out before completing this level of education. This was mainly caused by retrogressive socio-cultural practices including early marriages and the negative perceptions by members about the education of girls which is seen to be a waste of time and money since they will at some point get married. While Dube & Orodho (2014) did not establish any knowledge of boys who had dropped out of school but on the other hand on average one girl per family dropped out of school with most of the girls dropping out between standard five and standard eight.

A study by Abagi, Sifuna & Oando (2010) among others looked at the relationship between FGM/C and early marriages among the Wardei, a Somali community in Wenje. The study revealed that the two cultural practices were closely related and impacted negatively on the education of girls. After undergoing FGM/C, most girls feel that they have matured and are now ready for marriage. Second, the informal education that is given to the initiates gives them the feeling that they were now 'grown up women' and look forward to early marriages since some would have already been 'given out' (engaged) to rich old men. The study concluded that FGM/C was a major factor for many school drop-outs and early marriages among girls.

A study by Orodho et al. (2013) notes that Somali tradition obligates those girls be trained and protected from early years to be excellent wives and mothers. This has in turn led to the high incidences of early marriages. The young girl is, therefore, considered as useful source of work and income. As a way of protecting the girls, parents could deny them education under the pretext that schools cannot protect the virginity of the girls.

2.3.5 Religious and social pressures

Studies by UNICEF (2001) and Abagi, Sifuna & Oando (2010) established that part of the pressure which contributes to early marriages of girls has to do with the perception that it is more effective in controlling women and preventing premarital sex. Girls' virginity before marriage is highly valued in many societies and a number of practices are designed for purposes of 'protecting' a girl from pre-marital sexual activity such as FGM/C which is purposely designed to make any sexual intercourse a painful activity for the girl. In other societies, girls may be withdrawn from school as soon as they begin menstruating to keep them away from continued exposure to male pupils or teachers. However, while all these practices are intended to shield the girl from male sexual attention, marriage is taken to be a permanent 'protection' hence the practice of early marriages.

A study by Christian Aid, Nigeria (2018) noted that Cultural and religious socializations in Nigeria made girls conformists and therefore easily get lured into early marriages. The practice is taken to be the best way for preventing sexual intercourse and unwanted

pregnancies among adolescent girls which in turn has impacted negatively to their education. Religion in Nigeria is taken seriously, a factor that has made its leaders enjoy a lot of influence on matters such as the timing of marriage of adolescent girls. The study called for the empowerment of girls as the best way of saving them from early marriage.

Another study from Nigeria by Kainuwa, Yusuf, and Saibon (2018), established that illiterate parents were highly suspicious about the western form of education and were afraid that it exposes the young children to strange Christian beliefs. They felt that a Western-styled education was against the Islamic faith and way of life, that their children were being taught Christian ethics; it contradicted the teaching of Islam which made girls lose interest in their roles as mothers and house-wives. This therefore forced some parents to withdraw their girls from school to keep them at home.

A study by Njeru & Orodho (2003) on access and participation of secondary school education in Kenya noted that poorly performing districts with regard to access were concentrated in the ASAL regions including those of the former North Eastern Province. The study established that part of the reasons for this poor show were certain religious values that tend to criticize western education for girls. The girls are taken out of school in the early stages to assist in household chores and sometimes to undergo detrimental initiation rites including FGM/C and thereafter, got forced into early marriages to influential elderly and rich men.

Studies by Abdi, (2010) and Abagi, (2014) on the education of pastoralist communities in Wajir established that members have misplaced attitude about secular western oriented education as being Christian and therefore not relevant to Muslims. These religious perceptions have made parents to doubt the importance of education and tend to value Islamic education which is offered in 'Madrassa' and 'Duksi' which they feel is enough for their children.

2.3.6 Regional customs

Gray (2016) established high disparities in different countries for marriageable age for the boys and girls. For instance, in Bangladesh women got married at 18 whereas men married at 21, in Afghanistan the minimum marriageable age is 15 or 16 years for girls

with the consent of the guardian or parent and the court whereas boys married at 18 years, in Sudan girls marry at 10 whereas boys marry at 15 or puberty, in Tanzania Muslim and Hindu girls were allowed to marry at the age 12 provided they agree to wait until the girl is 15 years to consummate the marriage.

In Kenya early marriages happen to occur among the Somali, Mijikenda, Rendille, Samburu, Pokot, Sabaot, Kuria, and Maasai (Plan International 2011; Oloo, et al 2011). Early marriages are a threat to girls' participation and completion in primary education although parents have a feeling that it is a way of controlling female behavior and sexuality. Among the Luo, cultural beliefs have dictated both boys and girls to get married at a tender age especially where traditional customs are upheld. They also believe that a girl who has reached puberty and dies before she is married will not be deflowered aisions and dreams and the ghost will inquire, why their fathers and brothers allowed their own to go to the grave without tasting the love of man (Ogutu, 2007). This tradition has motivated early marriages.

2.3.7 Fear of remaining unmarried

The patriarchal setup of many societies in the world generally socializes women to be submissive to men. On the other hand, education plays an important role in empowering humanity. According to many men, the less or no education at all that a woman gets, the more submissive she will be as a wife. It is for this reason that there is an apparent male phobia-real or imagined of marrying an educated woman which is rooted in culture that an educated woman will not be submissive to the husband as observed by Turton (1974). Consequently, many girls in Africa, the Somali included think that women who are relatively well educated will most likely fail to get marriage partners.

UNICEF (2001) and Chege & Sifuna, (2006) note that girls stand out clearly as an educationally disadvantaged group. Girls in many societies are withdrawn from school once they reach an age where they are regarded to be mature to enable parents prepare them for early marriages. This is also purposely meant to ensure that these girls are kept away from continued exposure to male pupils or teachers. This view concurs with Juma (1994), who observed that because of the hardships involved in marginalized areas, they

tend to be staffed mostly by male teachers due to the dismal participation by girls in education and the fear by non-local teachers to work in those areas. Accordingly, parents always fear for the safety of their daughters in a school especially knowing that majority of the teachers is male. This forces some parents to withdraw their girls from schools or totally refuse to enroll them because the absence of female teachers who would act as security for their daughters is not guaranteed.

Studies carried out in Wajir and Garissa (Noor, 2003; Orodho, et al., 2013) established that girls suffered from retrogressive cultural practices. These traditions coupled with the patriarchal descent system have made members of the society reduce girls to wealth acquisition tools.

Consequently, girls have to be ‘sold’ in marriage before they learn strange things through education. Highly educated girls are seen as estranged from the community and therefore not good marriage. This explains the biting gender disparity in participation to education.

2.3.8 Perceived inability of women to work for money

Despite the tremendous progress achieved by MDGs in many countries around the world women continue to face challenges to the job market. For instance, World Bank established that many women across the globe are still prevented by law to engage in certain jobs. For instance, in 18 countries across the globe, men forbid their wives from working whereas four countries prohibit women from registering a company (Darrah, 2020). The myth needs to be shattered because it is preventing women to work or even own a business.

In patriarchal society men serve as family heads and provide financial support and provision for their family. On the other hand, women are socialized to be care takers and also responsible for guiding the children and workers at the home. Wives train their children on these issues. Because of more emphasis placed on domestic roles it is unlikely that women will be required to have much education or develop a career (Keysar and Kosmin, 1995).

The review of literature on causes of early marriages has established that the practice has been well researched and the available literature is quite exhaustive. Literature has unearthed a number of causes that make the practice persist to date. Of relevance to the present study is that most of these factors are quite visible in Buna Sub-County. These include; poverty, illiteracy, retrogressive cultural traditions and strong Islamic religious beliefs, hence the prevalence of early marriages hence the justification for the study. However, these studies focused mainly on socio-cultural and economic factors and their effects on the education of girls in ASALs with early marriages emerging as one of the factors. In addition, there is no study among the ones reviewed that looked into the topic in Buna Sub-County. The present studies specifically examined the effects of early marriages on the education of girls.

2.4 Early marriages and girls' participation in school

Girls' participation in the education process in many countries has encountered serious challenges due to redundant socio-cultural practices. This has ensured that the most vulnerable group of the society gets further marginalized by the education systems. For example, (Chege & Sifuna, 2006; Sifuna & Oanda, 2014; Abagi & Oanda, 2014) noted serious gender disparities in the education of girls particularly in the former North Eastern Province. These analyses lay bare the fact that girls in this region are highly discriminated in education in favour of the boys. This not only poses a serious challenge to educational provision but to the socio-economic development of the region as whole.

Studies by Dube & Orodho (2014); Omuse, (2017) and Njuguna, et al. (2018) examined the challenge that early marriages pose to the education of girls in secondary schools in different counties in Kenya. The studies established that majority of the girls drop out of school soon after FGM to get married while still in upper primary classes while the few who proceeded to secondary schools dropped out before completion. This was mainly caused by retrogressive socio-cultural practices that perceive the education of girls to be a waste of time and money because of the widely held believe that girls will at some point get married which makes them prefer to educate boys with the likelihood of marrying off girls so as to generate dowry to the family. This finally interferes with the

participation of girls due to the inability by their parents to cater for some hidden costs of education.

Abagi, et al. (2010) looked into the effects of FGM/C on early marriages and its negative effects on the participation of the Wardei girls, a Somali community in Wenje Division, Tana River District. The study revealed that many girls drop out of school as soon as they undergo FGM/C because they felt they were now mature enough for marriage. The practice of FGM/C makes them divert their attention towards early marriages since by this time; some would have already been ‘given out’ (engaged) to rich old men. It was for example revealed that out of five girls that undergone FGM/C, four terminate their schooling and end up in early marriages thus impacting negatively on their educational participation.

A study by MoE (2017) on challenges facing the education of children among the marginalized groups and included the Ajuuran of Buna Sub-County, Wajir County. It was revealed that one major challenge which affected the participation of girls was early marriage. It was not uncommon to find one girl or none at all in upper primary classes because of the negative attitude by the community towards the education of girls.

2.4.1 Ignorance

A study by Kainuwa, Yusuf, and Saibon (2018) on the relationship between parental cultural and religious beliefs and students’ dropout from government secondary schools in Nigeria established that there are doubts especially among the unschooled Muslim parents that a western education would teach ‘corrupt’ Christian values to their children. Most parents believed that a Western-styled education is incompatible with Islamic religious beliefs, that the education system teaches Christian ethics, some western education theories challenge Islamic teachings and that female children lose interest in their future roles as mothers and house-wives. This kind of statements though based on ignorance are lethal enough when it comes to instilling fear in illiterate parents and young children with disastrous consequences on school attendance.

A study by Migosi, et al., (2012) looked into factors that prevented primary school pupils' access and participation among the Turkana of Northern Kenya. Among others, the study found that parental negligence and ignorance about their responsibilities towards their children's education was a major factor which hindered education access and participation. They recommended that a programme to sensitize the community to help them improve the understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the education of their children be commenced.

Studies by Ombongi (2008) and Abdi (2010) on nomadic communities in Marsabit and Wajir respectively showed that people perceived education of their children to be irrelevant to their pastoralist way of life. Parents value their animals more than the education of their children which they thought distances children from their culture. For example, girls in Marsabit are married off early to rich old men for wealth while boys are expected to marry and start families. After initiation, boys receive cattle to enable them beginning the accumulation of wealth for their future family and education is therefore seen as an interference of labour for their livestock resources. Interestingly, people in Wajir were well aware of the importance of education for their children's future but preferred to focus on their immediate economic survival partly due to the serious unemployment problem facing school leavers.

2.4.2 Negative attitude of parents towards girls' education

The success of the learner in education requires full participation of the parent, a key stakeholder in educational matters. The attitude of the parent towards the child and his/her education is crucial in their future lives. Unfortunately, girls in many communities in Africa are not as highly regarded as the boys, an attitude that has prevented them from realizing their full potential. Girls are valued in terms of earning bride wealth for the family which again is to be used by the brothers for their marriage. Some Kenyan communities have been shown not to be exceptions to this norm. For example, (UNESCO, 2010) notes that the Gabbra of Northern Kenya tend to value their livestock especially the Camel more than the girl child. In one of the proverbs relating to matters of supremacy, they say that, God first, then man, then camel and lastly the girl.

A study by Migosi, et al. (2012) looked into factors that prevent primary school pupils' access and participation among the Turkana of Northern Kenya. The study among others showed that cultural factors played a major role in hindering education access and participation in the area. For example, parents considered a girls' as an asset where one invested and then reap bountifully later. They felt that they would rather keep their girls at home and watch over them there as they wait for their husbands to come and pay dowry for them.

Parental attitude towards the education of children is crucial in the success of such endeavors. A negative attitude towards the education of girls in particular has been shown to carry negative effects on their education. Studies by (Njeru & Orodho, 2003; Noor, 2003) the participation of girls in education showed that boys are favoured in education provision compared to the girls. The negative attitude that communities in ASALs attach to education and especially that of the girls has contributed to poor participation in education

2.4.3 Gender bias in provision of education and early marriages

Gender inequalities in favour of boys as opposed to girls can be cited in many societies around the world. For instance, the laws that govern marriage for men are different from those for women in certain African countries. For instance, Niger and Chad, the law prohibits boys from entering into marriage before they attain the age of 18 years but the same does not apply to girls who are allowed to do so from the age of 15 soon after FGM (UNFPA, 2012). Girls in developing countries are generally at a higher risk of unequal treatment than boys. Furthermore, situations where girls are prevented from their right to education will lead to future disempowerment of this group. If this is allowed to continue, there is the likelihood of transferring the same to future generations which will make the phenomenon of early marriages to persist (UNICEF, 2011).

Studies by Khalif (2008); Abagi (2014) and UNICEF (2015) in Garissa and Wajir respectively on the economic costs to education established that although lack of resources to support children in school affects both boys and girls, parents were however ready to sacrifice their daughters by marrying them off early partly to raise the required

resources for the boys to continue schooling. In instances where families fail to cater for the indirect costs such as; uniform, health, money to pay for the parents' association (PA) teachers, extra books, school feeding, stationery, and exam fees among others the education of girls is likely be affected compared to that of the boys. Accordingly, this socio-cultural tradition ensures the termination of girls' education. The findings reinforced those by Noor (2003) who found out that parents possess the feeling that girls have no equal rights like boys including education.

2.4.4 Role models

The availability of role models can be a very important source of inspiration and encouragement to girls. A study by Juma (1994) established that lack of female teachers to act as role models demoralizes girls' participation in primary schooling. Girls need female teachers to motivate them. Where staffing in schools had more male teachers, the study established the tendency by parents to withdraw their girls from schools or not enroll them at all because of the absence of female teachers who would have otherwise guaranteed the security for their daughters.

A study by Muyaka (2018) on the education of girls in Marsabit County established that the community environment was a major barrier to girls' access to basic education due to cultural and socio-economic challenges. The navigation of girls through these challenges especially by those found in remote areas of the County is hampered by lack of adequate role models. This was found to impact negatively on the aspirations of these girls due to lack of exposure to high achievers and therefore mainly cited teachers as their role models.

Study by Dube & Orodho (2014) observed that the lack of role models by elite girls that had attained higher levels of education was another contributing factor to challenges that girls faced in the course of their education. As a consequence, many girls were forced to abandon schooling. In addition, the few girls who stayed on still suffered from a shortage of female teachers for possible guidance.

2.4.5 Insecurity

Insecurity is a global threat that is meant to cause physical harming of communities and individuals, crime, violence and terrorism. It is unfortunate that the country is impeded with insecurity due to, Shifta groups or bandits. Al-Shabab militia from Somalia who have affected participation in education which makes Kenya to register lowest participation especially in former North Eastern Province, (NEP) and ASAL counties where open gunfire can be witnessed together with implanted grenades.

Migosi et al., (2012) in their study the researchers indicated that Kakuma and Lokichogio divisions encountered insecurity which impacted negatively on participation. Insecurity occurred around the schools from the raids by the bandits. Parents in Lokichogio and Kakuma division discontinued their girls from education with the fear of early and unwanted pregnancies which may occur with the abductions by bandits hence they can't even tell the man responsible for pregnancy hence preference on early marriages.

Study by Mohammed (2018) on factors influencing nomadic pupils' participation in primary education in Wajir North Sub-County. He cited that Wajir County has porous borders which cause a threat to pupils' participation in education. Border disputes results to clan conflicts and eventually leads to violence. The violence might go on for a number of days, at times months or even longer until government intervention brings the violence to control. At this time the learners may not access school facilities and as a result they end up losing on education.

This review on the effects of early marriages on education participation by girls has shown that the practice is a big challenge to the education of girls. This has been due to: ignorance, the negative attitude and gender biases of the community members towards the education of girls and insecurity which has been a major challenge in ASALs. Although the findings of these studies were very informative to the present one, most of them were conducted in other ASAL counties of Kenya. Those that were carried out in Wajir focused on factors that affect the education of nomadic pastoralists, girls included and not specifically on early marriages and its impact on the education of girls (Noor,

2003; Abdi, 2010 and Mohammed, 2018). The present study will focus on the effects of early marriages on girls' education in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County.

2.5 Education of girls and completion rates

Studies by Fairaa (2007) and UNESCO (2010) on challenges facing the education of girls in Pakistan singled out early marriage as one factor that inflicted suffering to the girls in terms of social and human development with only 22 per cent of girls, compared to 47 per cent of boys' complete primary schooling. Despite awareness creation among parents about the importance of girls' education, early marriages contributed a lot to the low female literacy rate in the country. As a cause and consequence for girl's school dropout, the denial of education to girls leads to dependence as a result of lack in life skills and negotiating power.

A study by Bariham, Saviour, and Edmond (2017) in Tamale, Ghana established reasons for girls drop out of schooling hence affecting their completion rates to parental ignorance on value of girls' education, early marriages, and poverty among others. The study among others recommended support to girls to realize their educational dreams through the setting up of girls clubs to monitor and motivate girls, punitive measures to deter those who marry school girls, and parents be sensitized on the value of education for girls to enable them provide the necessary support and have them stay in school and learn.

A study by Ombongi (2008) points out that the practice of early marriages has impacted negatively on the value that pastoralist communities accord education especially that of girls. Since economic empowerment supersedes academic achievement, girls aged between 12 to 14 are given to rich men to marry in exchange for bride price. Remaining in school was also stressful because of the constant pressure they were continually subjected to from their peers as well as their own parents to abandon school.

The reviewed literatures on the effects of early marriages on education completion by primary school girls show that early marriages are an impediment to the education of girls. The few studies are from outside Kenya. The one study by Ombongi (2008) was carried out in Isiolo County while this one was done in Wajir County.

2.6 Remedies to early marriages

Part of efforts to confront the challenges of early marriages and their negative effects on the education of girls ought to include the mounting of serious guidance and counselling programmes in school. According to (Kahise, 2013; Noor, 2003; Abagi, et al, 2010; and Dube & Orodho, 2014), among others girls ought to be enlightened about the importance of education. It is hoped that a concerted effort to equip and empower girls likely to be vulnerable with relevant information, skills and even support networks by meeting them with their peers and mentors can be helpful in helping them to eradicate the social and economic isolation which many girls experience. Such programmes should educate girls about proper moral conduct, sex education in relation to girls' stages of maturity and the need to respect them in order to become responsible future citizens of their society (Noor, 2003; Abagi et al, 2010; UNFPA, 2012; Christian Aid, 2018; ICRW, 2013). For example, appropriate information on alternatives to early marriages if they are rejected by boys in their communities can give them the confidence to seek other opportunities to get other men once they are through with schooling.

A number of studies have suggested the need by communities to be empowered by the government and other local and international stakeholders in education to sensitize parents on the importance of education especially that of the girls (Njeru & Orodho, 2003; Noor, 2003; Abagi, et al, 2010; MoE, 2017; Njuguna, et al., 2018; Bariham, et al, 2017). For example, parents and communities ought to be educated to discard some of the retrogressive socio-cultural practices, traditions and religious values and practices, which have contributed to the prevalence of early marriages. Once communities start taking the education of their girls seriously chances are that perceptions about early marriages will likely begin to change as well. Apart from this, the situation can also be altered if parents, religious leaders and the community are educated about the risks of early marriages since they are traditionally responsible for deciding when and whom their girl marries (UNFPA, 2012; ICRW, 2013; Christian Aid, 2018).

The girls also need to be shielded from some of the harmful practices in society that easily drive them into early marriages. A study by Noor, 2003; Abagi, 2014 recommended the establishment of boarding schools to accommodate children

particularly girls to enable them focus on their studies. These schools will also provide the much-needed accommodation for the girls during times of migration by their parents in search of pastures for their animals.

It has been noted that most girls suffer in school due to lack of female teachers since studies have shown that majority of the teachers are male due to the hardships in such areas. Parents remain in constant fear since they feel the safety and security of their daughters is not guaranteed by the male teachers making some parents to withdraw their girls from such schools. It is for this reason that Juma studies by (1994) Njeru & Orodho (2003) and abagi, (2014); Abagi, et al (2010) called for affirmative action to recruit more female teachers especially from the local community to act as role models to be emulated by these girls. This should also extend to other sectors of employment and the community as a whole. It is hoped that female teachers are better placed to understand the needs of these girls and can therefore offer effective guidance to them.

Other studies by (ICRW, 2013; Njeru & Orodho, 2003; Abagi, et al, 2010; Dube & Orodho, 2014; Njuguna, et al, 2018; Bariham, et al, 2017) are of the view that those involved in perpetuating early marriages should face appropriate action from the law enforcers like the police, and other relevant authorities. It is argued that the continuation of this vice is in part due to inability by the Government through the Ministry of Education to enforce punitive laws as laid down in various legislations such as the children's Act and Basic Education Act, 2013 that expressly outlaws early or forced marriage and parents who fail to take their children to school respectively. Consequently, parents and other people in society who encourage their daughters in to early marriages before the appropriate age ought to be punished for infringing on their girl's health, right to education and social development.

According to UNFPA (2012); Njuguna, et al., (2018) on early marriages involving secondary school girls in Narok South, point out that the government of Kenya as a signatory of major international protocols on education in recent times such as EFA, MDGs and SDGs has already developed important policy guidelines to ensure that once children are enrolled in school, particularly the girls have to be supported up to the time

they complete 12 years of compulsory education. For example, in the event of early marriages or pregnancies, the girls should be given a second chance and be taken back to school for re-enrolment. The government should strengthen this policy to enable girls' benefit from a full primary schooling and transit to secondary education.

Studies by Abagi, et al., (2010) and Muyaka, (2018) in Tana River and Marsabit respectively recommended change tact for those involved in advocacy of girls' education like the government and civil societies to if they have to realize the enrollment of more girls. More importantly, such efforts should also target school going boys to ensure that their booked girls are allowed to access education. Since the studies found that the boys played important roles in these vices, more effort should now be focused on changing their mindset as well. For instance, boys should be taught to change their attitude towards FGM and the 'booking' as a way of easing off the kind of pressure that they bring to bear on their young sisters. The boys ought to understand that it is beneficial to marry well educated girls instead of engaging in early marriages.

Part of changing tact can be seen in recommendations by ICRW (2013) which called for multi-sectoral approaches to help this girl is critical. This can be in form of economic support and incentives for girls and their families in form of conditional cash and non-cash facilities. A good initiative along these lines was reported in a study by Austrian, et al, (2020) on the Adolescent Girls Initiative–Kenya interventions in Wajir which realized positive results. The two-year education component which included cash transfer had a strong impact on primary school enrollment for all girls, as well as literacy and numeracy skills. It led to delayed marriage by 20 and pregnancy by 17 more percentage points respectively. The initiative also realized a sustained school enrollment from 16% to 45% in addition to improved literacy and numeracy. It should be noted that the many of the girls who were brought to school was for the first time and more importantly put off the path to marriage.

This section reviewed literature on the remedies to early marriages. Among the key ones were; starting or strengthening of Guidance and Counseling programmes in schools, sensitizing communities on importance of girls' education, construction of low cost

boarding schools/facilities in schools to shield girls from harmful traditions, availability of role models including female teachers in schools, enforcing relevant laws and government policies by punishing the offenders as well as concrete support to the girls through cash transfers as incentives to attract and keep girls in schools. What is clear for the present study is that comprehensive approach is needed to effectively address challenges facing the education of girls including that of early marriages in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County.

2.7 Conceptual framework

Conceptual framework assists to visualize the relationship between early marriages and the education of girls' in primary education. The figure illustrates a number of effects that were assumed to be the inputs that determine girls' participation and completion in primary education, that is: causes of early marriages, early marriages and girls' participation in education and completion rates in their primary education. The independent variables include: poverty, illiteracy, bride price or dowry, cultural traditions/laws, religious and social pressures, regional customs, fear of remaining unmarried and perceived inability of women to work for money. On the participation of girls, the study conceptualized on these factors: ignorance, gender bias, parent's negative attitude towards the education of girl, role models and insecurity, thirdly conceptualized on completion rates and lastly, suggested remedies to early marriages. The framework also illustrated the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable that is: low cost boarding schools, conditional cash transfer, punishing offenders, government policies, anti-FGM campaign and partnership with stakeholders. The process involves outcome of early marriages include: poor access, poor retention, poor participation, poor completion (meaning no future prospects for these girls), low transition (not moving from one grade/class to another) and gender inequalities in education.

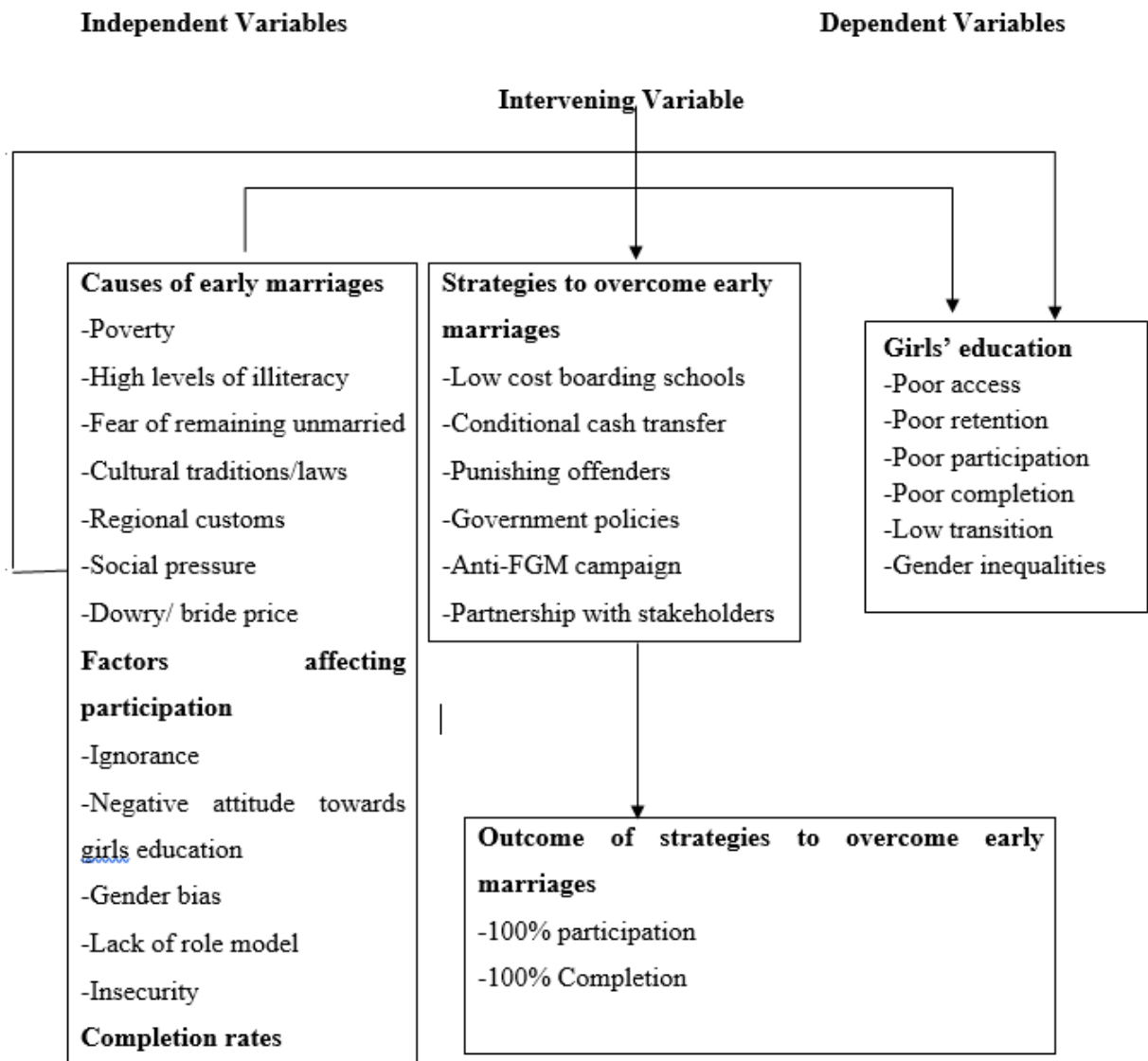


Figure 2.1: Girl child perception on the effects of early marriages on their education in Kenya: The case of Buna Sub-County, Wajir County.

2.8 Summary of the reviewed literature

This chapter on literature review has analyzed a number of studies that relate to the current topic. Most of this literature touch on socio-cultural and economic factors such as; FGM, early marriages, bride price, religion, as well as challenges among the pastoralist communities in general such as; poverty, illiteracy, parents negative attitude on girls

education, ignorance among others and how they impede the education of girls with regard to access, participation, completion and transition. These challenges particularly of girls in the marginalized groups have been analyzed from a global perspective, Kenya and ASAL regions of Kenya in particular. These studies are generally very comprehensive and have provided useful guidance to the present study. It should be noted however that most of these studies are limited with regard to the direction taken by the present study. First, while most of them tackled socio-cultural and economic factors to the education of girls, they did not specifically focus on early marriage as one of the main challenges and therefore did not go deep enough on this topic. Studies by (Nyamongo, 2000; Abagi, et al. 2010) though specific, approached the topic from a cultural and not educational perspective. Second a number of studies like these two cited here are either old or were carried out in other counties and not Wajir. Third, most of the studies in ASALs including Wajir focused on the education of secondary school girls or were general on challenges facing girls in education. Lastly, the researcher is not aware of any study on the topic that has been carried out in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we present the research methods that were used to carry out the study. These include; the research design, study locale, target population, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, pilot study, instrument validity, data collection procedures, data analysis and presentation and lastly, the ethical considerations for the research. First, we describe the research design of this study.

3.2 Research design

A research design is defined as a logical and valuable way of looking at the world (Borg & Gall, 2003). It includes procedures used by the researcher to explore the relationship between the variables, forming subjects into groups, administering measures, and applying treatment to the groups. This study used a descriptive survey design which combined both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. According to Gay (1992), descriptive survey research typically investigates challenges in education and can be a good tool in determining and reporting the way things were or are. These sentiments have been reinforced by Orodho (2004) who is of the view that descriptive survey research can be used to produce statistical information about aspects of education that can be of interest to both policy makers and educators. It was for these reasons that the researcher found the descriptive survey design to be the most appropriate for the present study which investigated the effects of early marriages on the education of primary school girls in Buna Sub-County of Wajir County.

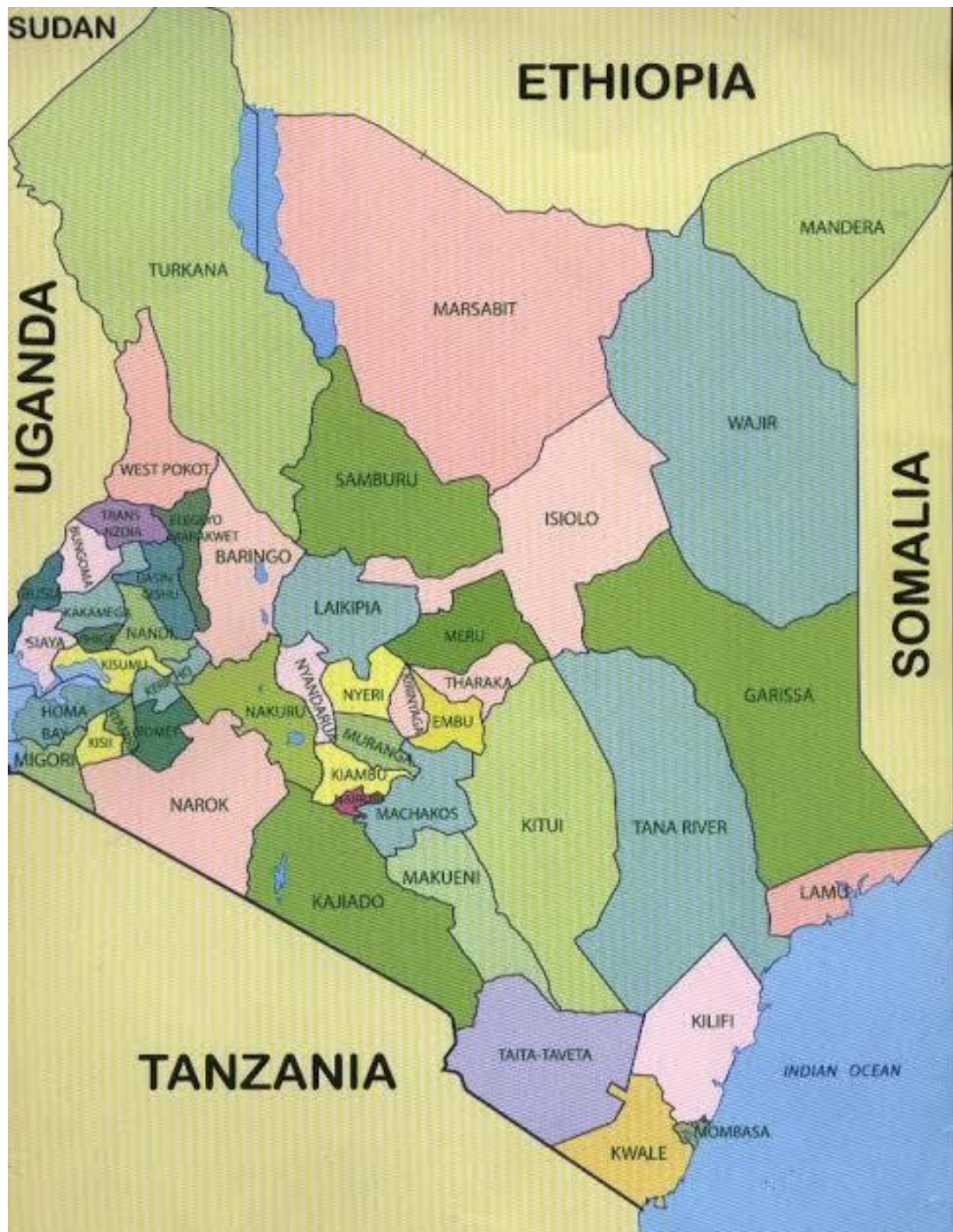
3.3 Study locale

This study on effects of early marriage on the education of primary school girls was carried out in Buna Sub-Country of Wajir County. The County, which is found in the Northern part of Kenya lies on the border with Somalia to the East and Ethiopia to the North. It also borders Mandera County to the North East, Isiolo County to the South West, Marsabit County to the West and Garissa County to the South. (see the Maps of Kenya and Wajir North map for the location of Buna Sub-County below). Wajir County

covers 55,840.6 Square Kilometers has a population of 781,263 (WCIDP, 2013; KNBS, 2019 census) with Buna accounting for 49,886 people. The county's population of about 85 percent lives in rural area and Wajir town is the main urban town and a home to 82,800 people. Majority of the county's population profess Islam religion. The Northern Kenya region in general and Wajir in particular is arid with a harsh climate with the main economic activity being pastoralism which is also the source of livelihood for the inhabitants (WCIDP, 2013). Infrastructural development in the County is generally poor, a factor that has hindered economic development compared to other regions of Kenya.

Buna, the location of the study is one of the eight constituencies in Wajir County. The County is mainly inhabited by the Kenyan Somali ethnic group divided into two major clans; the Hawiya and the Darod. The Hawiya has four sub-clans: Ajuran, Degodia, Murale and Hawadle while the Darod consist of the Ogaden Sub-clan. Buna sub-county is mainly inhabited by the Ajuran who majorly speak Borana and some speak Somali as their first language especially those from areas of Wakhe and Garren. Although the Somali happens to be a homogeneous group, the clan and sub-clan armed conflicts has resulted to conflict and insecurity which eventually leads to loss of lives (WCIDP, 2013; MOE, 2017).

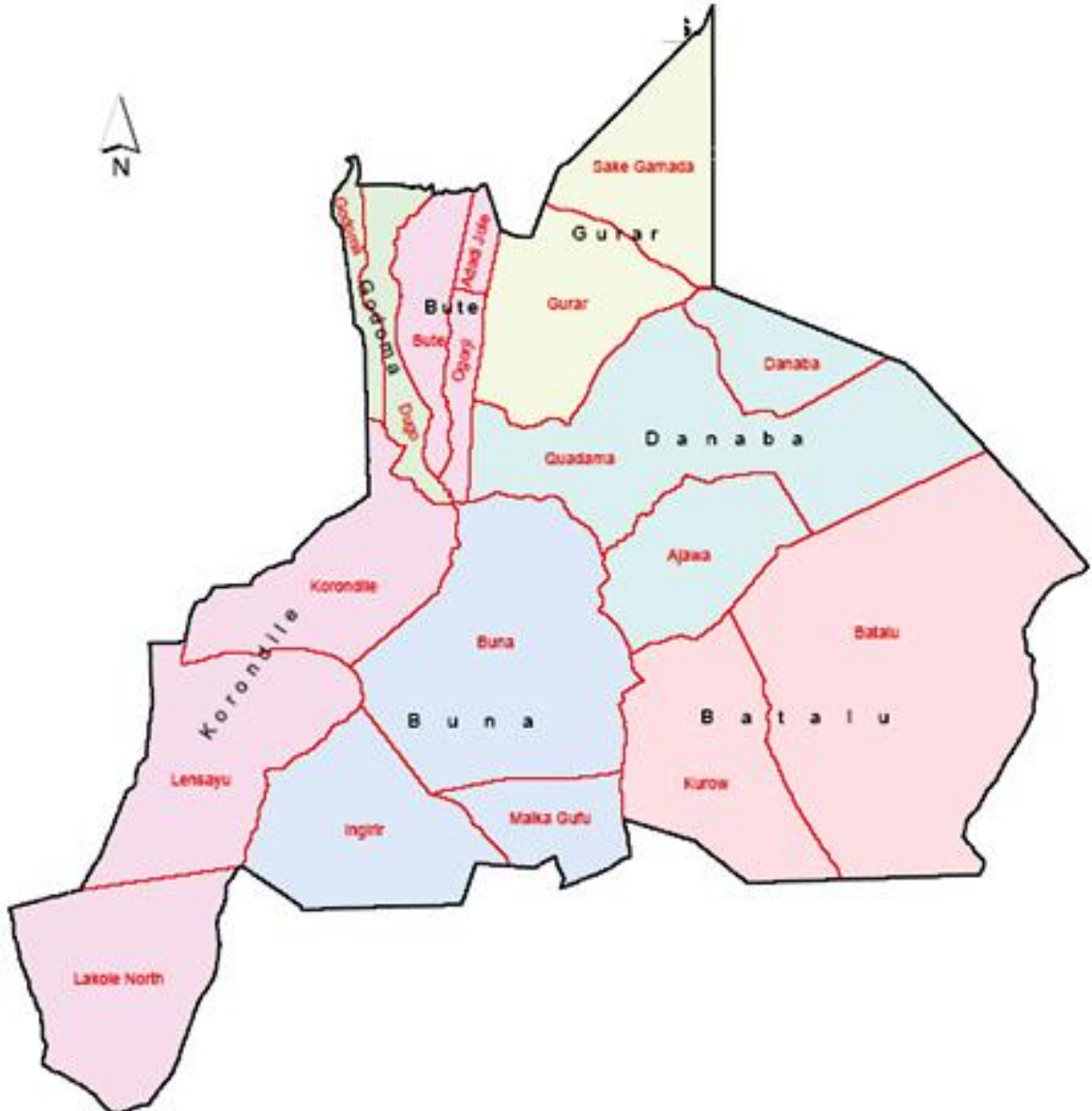
Map 3.1: Kenya-county-map: Location of Wajir County in Kenya



Source: Kenya-county-map: herstorycentre.org

Map 3. 2: Location of Buna and Bute Sub-Counties in Wajir North Map

WAJIR NORTH MAP



Source: Wajir North Digital resource map

3.4 Target population

A population refers to the entire group of individuals or objects that have common observable characteristics (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). In addition, Best & Kahn, (2002) defines population as any group of individuals who have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher. The target population for this study was all primary schools in Buna Sub-County, all school head teachers, teachers and standard seven and eight pupils in the sub-county. As at the time of data collection, there were; 21 schools in total. However, only six (6) primary schools proceeded to Standard Eight. The researcher therefore limited herself to only six primary schools. 6 head teachers, 39 teachers and 150 pupils in standard 7 and 8 respectively (SCDE, Buna, 2015).

3.5 Sampling technique and sample size

Sampling is a process of selecting a small number of cases for analysis for purposes of understanding the entire population (Koul, 1997). The process entails a method of selecting subjects in a way that the individual that is picked will be a representative of the large group from which they are selected.

In this research, simple random sampling method was used to select schools that participated. This form of sampling enables individuals in the total population to have equal and independent chances of being selected to be part of the sample (Orodho, 2004). The same sampling technique was also used to select pupils who participated in the study from standard seven and eight respectively. Pupils in the two classes were chosen because they had stayed in school for the longest period and were also mature enough and therefore able to comprehend the issues that were being investigated. Once this was accomplished, the head teachers as well as teachers of the selected schools were also included in the study sample.

A sample is a small population that is selected from the entire population/group for observation and analysis (Best and Kahn, 2006). The purpose for limiting researches on samples as opposed to studying the whole population is to minimize on the required resources and the time spent on these activities. In most cases therefore, the two

(resources and time) tend to be the major constraints in deciding on the sample to be used since a study like the present one cannot be carried out on the whole population of the school (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

In descriptive studies, ten (10%) of the sample is recommended as a good representation (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Since the number of schools and respondents in the present study were few, ten percent of schools would have been just one school. In view of this, the researcher decided to have all the 6 schools in the sampled for the study. Data was however collected from only four (4) primary schools because the area became very insecure due to the Al-Shabab terrorist attacks. Consequently, the remaining two schools were not accessed for data collection.

3.5.1 Pupils

The total number of pupils in Standard Seven and Eight respectively in the six schools was 150. Out of these, the four primary schools that participated in data collection had a total 114 pupils, however; during the data collection day 97 pupils were present and all of them were included in the sample.

3.5.2 Teachers

There was a total of thirty-nine (39) teachers in the six schools. However, we only managed to get 30 teachers in the four schools to participate in the study.

3.5.3 Head teachers

There was a total of six head teachers for the six schools. All the targeted respondents participated in the study because the researcher was able to access them at the sub-county headquarters while attending a workshop organized by the Ministry of Education. The total number of targeted population and the actual sample size is indicated in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Sample and sample size

Respondents	Target population	Sample size	% of Sample
Pupils	150	97	64%
Teachers	39	30	77%
Head teachers	6	6	100%
Total	195	133	80%

3.6 Research instruments

Research instruments are tools that researchers use to collect data on a given problem. To generate data for this study, the researcher used questionnaires. The use of questionnaire was based on the fact that it is the most suitable instrument for collecting data from a large group in a short time, are easy to analyze, guarantees respondents' anonymity and question items are standard for the entire sample (Orodho, 2009). The most ideal instrument for collecting data from school heads would have been an interview schedule because of the small sample size. However, since the study area is very remote and also vast, it would have been to use the said research tool because it would have involved travel and a lot of time which would have been impossible. Hence the use of questionnaire which proved to be the best option in the circumstances.

The researcher therefore prepared and used three sets of questionnaires to collect data; pupils' questionnaire, teachers' questionnaire and head teachers' questionnaire. The question items were; structured closed ended, structured open ended, and matrix questions or the likert scale type questions. This was the instrument that was used in this study that investigated the effects of early marriages on the education of primary school girls in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County.

3.7 Pilot study

The researcher carried out a pilot study to establish the effectiveness of the instrument elicits the required data. This was carried out in two schools; Ingirir and Malkaguf primary. The instruments were administered to two head teachers, four teachers and ten pupils from standard 7 and 8 in each school. Analysis of the piloted data assisted the

researcher in determining the clarity, accuracy, and suitability of the research instruments to generate data for the study. The results assisted in the modification of some question items and also enabled the researcher to understand the administration of the instruments.

3.8 Instrument validity

Instrument validity according to Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003) refers to the accuracy of the instrument. Moreover, validity is the ability of the instrument to measure what it is intended to measure. The instruments were shared with research experts (the project supervisor and some members of faculty in the Department of Education of Educational Foundations) whose suggestions were very useful in revising the questionnaires. Apart from this, the instruments were pretested; a process which helped to add value to the ability of the instruments to measure what was expected to measure. This enabled the researcher to detect deficiencies such as instructions that were not clear, double questions and wrong phrasing of the questions which was corrected (Orodho, 2004).

3.9 Instrument reliability

Reliability refer to the degree of consistency that the instrument or procedure demonstrates (Best and Kahn, 2006). Apart from this, the reliability of an instrument measures the consistency of the results the instrument produces after several trials (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). This study used the test-retest technique to ascertain reliability of research instruments. The instruments were administered twice to the same group in Ingirir and Malkaguf primary schools after a two weeks interval after which the researcher checked whether the respondents were giving consistent results (Orodho, 2008).

3.10 Data collection procedures

At school level, the researcher first reported to the head teachers as a matter of protocol because she had already sought and got permission from all the six head teachers during a workshop organized at the Sub-County headquarters. They were very welcoming and facilitated the researcher in collecting data from teachers and pupils respectively. Data collection was done by the researcher in person who started by assuring the respondents of confidentiality of the expected responses before administering the questionnaire. The

researcher also ensured that all questionnaires were attended to before collecting them on the same day.

3.11 Data analysis

The data from respondents were checked for completeness and relevance before being coded for analysis. Data was then analyzed using quantitative methods where specific responses were fed into appropriate category of the computer worksheet using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) analysis programme. Descriptive statistics were used in analyzing data which was then presented in frequency distribution tables, pie charts, and graphs.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we present, interpret and discuss the findings of the study on the effects of early marriages on the education of primary school girls in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County. The chapter is organized in four sections as per the study objectives. The chapter is divided into two parts. Part one deal with the characteristics of the respondents while part two focuses on the findings from the study data.

4.2 Response rate

As explained in chapter three, the questionnaire was the only instrument that was used to collect data for the study. Three sets of questionnaires (pupils, teachers, and head teachers) totaling to 150 were administered to the respondents, out of which 133 were duly filled and returned. Accordingly, the response rate was 89% as shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4. 1: Response rate from pupils, teachers, and head teachers

Category of respondents	Expected responses	Actual responses	Return rate %
Pupils	114	97	85
Teachers	30	30	100
Head teachers	6	6	100
Total	150	133	88.7

The return rate of about 89% fall within the recommendation of the experts that an instrument return rate of between 80% and 90% is good for descriptive research studies (Nachmias, 2009). The collected data was therefore sufficient for this study for analysis, interpretation and discussion.

4.3 Demographic characteristics of respondents

This section presents a brief description of the respondents' characteristics. For the pupils, the following are analyzed; age, gender, and class while teachers' and head teachers' characteristics touched on; age, gender, highest professional qualifications and length in service.

4.3.1 Age of respondents (pupils)

Information on age distribution for pupils that participated in the study is presented in figure 4.1 below.

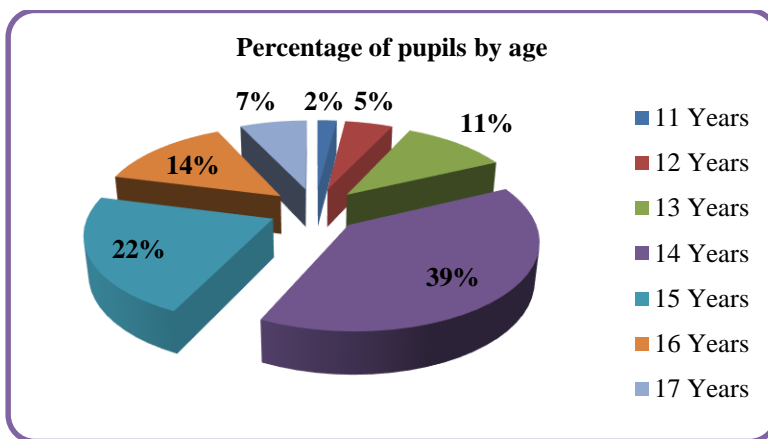


Figure 4. 1: Percentages by age of respondent

The data shows that majority of pupils who participated in the study (75%), were between the age of 14 and 16. It is clear that most of the Standard 7 and Standard 8 pupils in Buna Sub-County are slightly overage going by the official guidelines by the Ministry of Education. In most parts of the country, these children will be expected to have joined the secondary level of schooling. This situation can be attributed to insecurity which has over the years been one of the major problems that the inhabitants of this area face. For instance, Mohammed, (2018) established that border disputes eventually lead to violence that can last for days, months or even longer before government interventions. During such times, learners fail to access school and by the time peace is restored a number are forced to repeat a class classes on the advice of the teachers. The issue of having over age learners seems to be the norm in Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid lands as shown by another

study Wajir and Turkana counties (Scott-Villiers, Wilson, Kabala Kullu, Ndung’u, and Scott-Villiers, 2015).

4.3.2 Respondents by age (teachers and head teachers)

The results of the age distribution of teachers and head teachers who took part in the study are presented in table 4.2 below. Majority of the teachers were aged between 25 and 29 years at (60%). This shows that teachers in the sub-county are relatively young and therefore energetic enough to attend to school activities effectively. The youthful age can be explained by the negative attitude by the inhabitants of this county towards the teaching profession. Two studies on education in Wajir County by Abdi (2010) and Abagi (2014) established that the youth in the County generally do not find the teaching profession appealing due to its little pay. Consequently, the County is dominated by teachers from outside the County who move in to fill the vacuum since they cannot get employed in their home counties because of the limited openings. It is for this reason that majority of the head teachers happen to be above 40 years of age because while the non-local teachers would start seeking for transfers out of the county, the few teachers from the local community will most likely continue teaching in the area after which they get promoted to head schools even if based on the many years in the teaching profession.

Table 4. 2: Age distribution for teachers and head teachers

Teachers			Head Teachers	
Age in years	Frequency (n)	percent	Frequency (n)	Percent
20-24	6	20		
25-29	18	60		
30 -39	6	20		
40-49			4	80
50 and above			2	20
Total	30	100	6	100

4.3.3 Respondents by gender (pupils)

Information on gender distribution for pupils that participated in the study as presented in figure 4.2 below show that majority of pupils were boys, 69% while girls could only account for 31%. The girls are therefore underrepresented at the primary school level in Buna Sub-County where they account for less than half of the total pupils' population for standard 7 and 8. The apparent disparity against girls can be attributed to some of the retrogressive cultural practices that are rampant in the region such as early marriages and FGM, the major factors that push many girls out of school thus interfering with their overall participation.

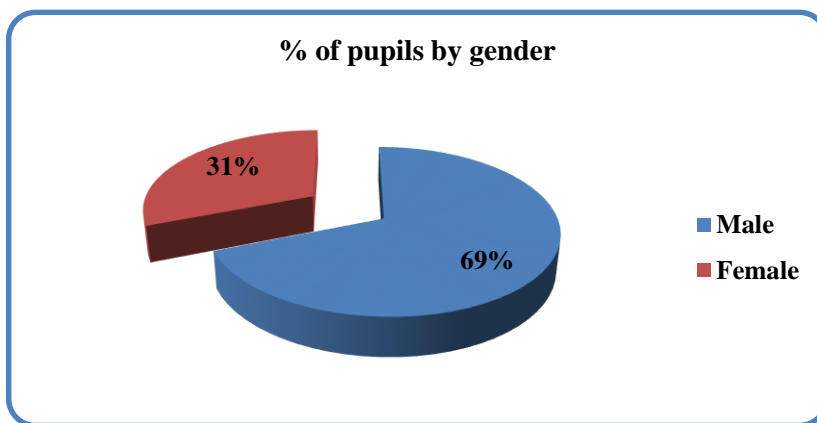


Figure 4. 2: Distribution of pupils by gender

4.3.4 Respondents by gender (teachers and head teachers)

Information on the gender distribution of both teachers and head teachers that were working in Buna Sub-County is presented in table 4.3 below and shows that, male teachers were more (63%) compared to female teachers (37%). The distribution though in favour of male teachers is reasonable bearing in mind that the study location is a hardship area that is also prone to ethnic feuds, insecurity as well as terrorism perpetrated by the Al-Shabab terrorists from Somalia which has been going on since 2011 (Orodho, et al, 2013). Consequently, the few female teachers can still be role models to the girls. On the other hand, all the six head teachers who participated in the study were all male. Although the results were obtained from a small sample of just six schools, it does not reflect well on the profession and society as a whole especially at this time when the women are being encouraged to take up leadership positions.

Table 4. 3: Distribution of teachers and head teachers by gender

Teachers			Headteachers	
Gender	Frequency (n)	Percent	Frequency (n)	Percent
Male	19	63	6	100
Female	11	37	0	0
Total	30	100	6	100

In a nutshell the findings have established that majority of the participants in this study were male: that is 69% boys and 31% girls; male and female teachers were 63% and 31% respectively and all the head teachers at 100% were male.

4.3.5 Distribution of teachers by professional qualifications

The researcher established the highest professional qualifications whose results are presented in table 4.5 below. Majority of the teachers had P1 qualifications (40%), while 20% were holders of Diploma and Bachelor of Education degree qualifications respectively. The other 20% of the teachers were untrained with most of them being Form Four graduates, hurriedly recruited together with others who had volunteered to replace teachers that left the region in 2015 due to the insecurity already alluded to above. This shows that majority of the teachers (80%) were well qualified for the work. It also shows that teachers are also taking good steps in upgrading their skills through the acquisition of higher qualifications (Degrees and Diplomas) possibly through Module II (parallel) university programmes that are carried out during school holidays by various universities in the country and the region as well. This is a positive and laudable move by teachers seeking to equip themselves with more advanced pedagogical skills that can enable them perform their duties well.

Table 4. 4: Teachers’ professional qualifications

Teacher professional qualifications	Frequency	Percent
P1	12	40
Diploma in Education	6	20
Bachelor of Education	6	20
Any Other specify.....	6	20
Total	30	100

4.3.6 Head teachers’ professional qualifications

The head teachers were asked to indicate their highest professional qualifications, whose results are presented in figure 4.3 below.

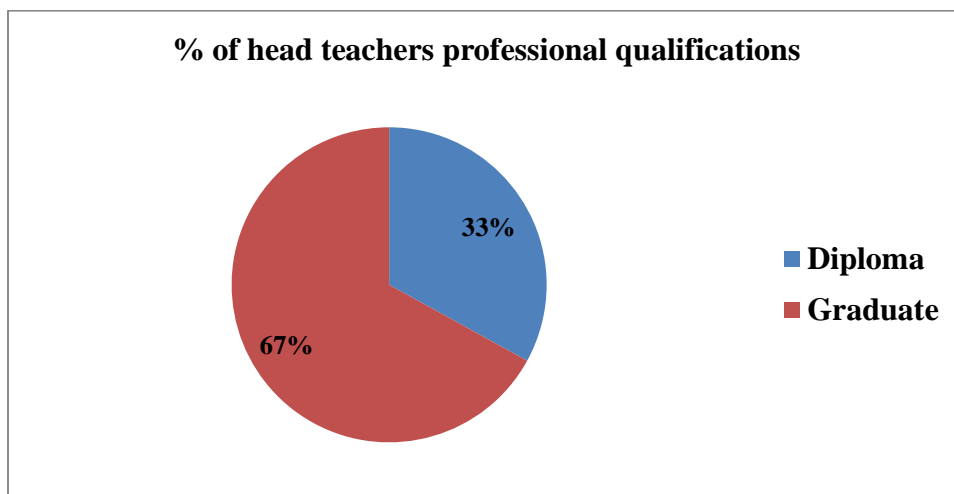


Figure 4. 3: Head teachers’ highest professional qualification

The results from figure 4.3 above show that majority of the head teachers (67%) were holders of Bachelor of Education degree while 33% of the head teachers possessed diploma qualifications respectively. This shows that head teachers in Buna Sub-County were professionally qualified to carry out their daily duties as teachers but more importantly, they were in a good position for commanding the respect of their fellow colleagues which is an important characteristic for leadership positions especially in schools.

4.3.7 Distribution of teachers by length in service

The teachers were asked to indicate the number of years that they had served in the profession. The results for this item as presented in figure 4.4 below show that majority of those teachers were less experienced in the profession with 80% having taught for less than five years. The short duration means that most of the teachers, though professionally qualified, are still learning about their duties and are very much likely to face challenges in classroom activities. The most probable reason for this is that most of the teachers move to the region soon after college in desperate search for employment and once this is secured, they immediately start looking for transfers because of the hostile nature of the environment. If they are successful, their departure paves the way for replacements with another young and inexperienced cohort and the cycle continues (Abagi, 2014). This unfortunately impacts negatively on classroom instruction since most of these teachers lack the requisite experience. It is a known fact that teachers with many years in the profession will have a good mastery of the subject matter as well as delivery skills that will be more beneficial to the learners compared to the new and inexperienced teachers.

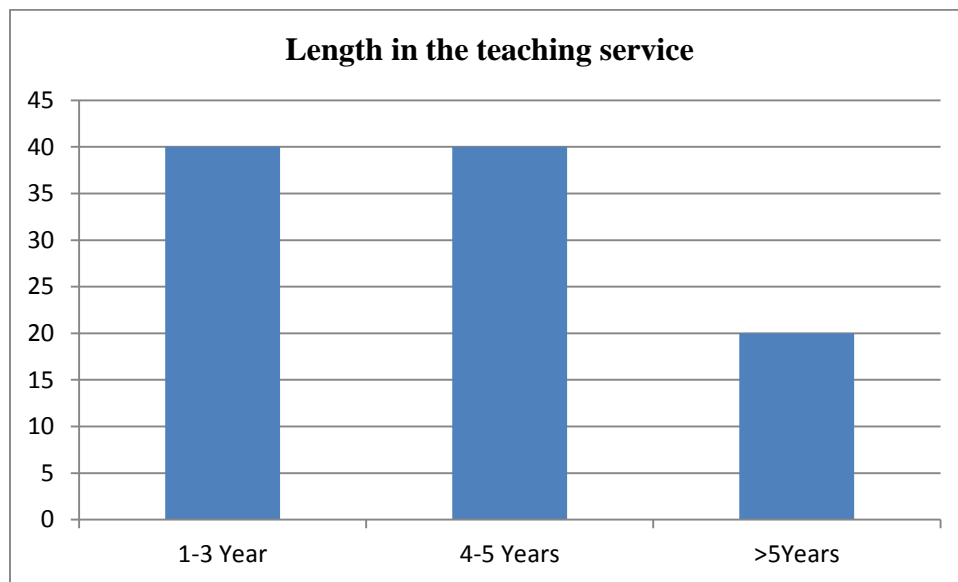


Figure 4. 4: Teachers' length in service

4.3.8 Distribution of head teachers by length in service

The questionnaire required the indicators to note the number of years they had been in the profession. From the results presented in Table 4.5 below, all the six head teachers were found to be experienced having taught for more than twenty years with two having been teachers for more than thirty years. This must have partly contributed to their promotions to headship since they are well versed in educational matters. It is possible that having served for long, the head teachers were well knowledgeable about issues surrounding early marriages in the County and more importantly since they come from the community.

Table 4. 5: Head teachers’ length in service

Age in years	Frequency (n)	Percent
30 and above	2	33
25-29	2	33
21-24	2	33
Below 20	0	0
Total	6	100

The second part of data presentation will focus on data that was generated to respond to the objectives of the study. The researcher started by establishing the causes of early marriages which are presented and discussed below.

4.4 The causes of early marriages in Buna Sub-County

Education is an important factor in the development of any society. It is for this reason that most countries of the world struggle to ensure that adequate opportunities are availed to their citizens. It was for this reason that this study which investigated the effects of early marriages on the education of primary school pupils sought to establish the causes of underage marriages which have either prevented young girls from accessing education or pushed some of those already enrolled out of school. Consequently, such girls end up being denied very valuable opportunities for equipping themselves with the required knowledge, skills and values that are necessary for effective participation in the

development of their respective societies. It was for this reason that the study sought to establish the reasons that make a good number of girls in Buna Sub-County get into early marriages.

4.4.1 Reasons for early marriages

To ascertain the causes of early marriages, the researcher asked pupils to list the reasons that made girls enter into early marriages in Buna Sub-County whose responses are presented in table 4.6 below

Table 4. 6: Reasons for early marriages among girls in Buna Sub-County (pupils)

Reasons for early marriages	Frequency	Percent
Parents believe that girls are sources of wealth	24	25
Poor attitudes of parents towards education	15	15
They don't perform well in class	10	10
They want to become mothers	16	17
They want to have children while still young	13	13
Lack of money	19	20
Total	97	100

From the data above, most pupils (25%) were in agreement that parents allowed their girls to get married while still young because they wanted to acquire wealth in form of bride price. This was followed by 20% of the respondents who said that girls got married due to lack of resources for supporting them in school while 17% were of the view that girls leave school for marriage because they want to give birth to children and become mothers. Pupils also seem to acknowledge that their parents have negative attitude towards the education of girls (15%) with the other reasons advanced being; the need by girls to give birth to children while still young (13%) and lastly poor performance in class (10%). Some of the reasons given above have been cited elsewhere as factors that lead to early marriages (UNICEF, 2005). For example, communities in Isiolo, Kenya value their girls they are future sources of wealth through the payment of bride price once they get married (Ombongi, 2008). Accordingly, in cases where families come under serious

financial stress, they are likely to marry off their young girls for economic gain. It is important to note that such girls can be forced to abandon school for early marriages because of poverty only in cases where indirect costs are involved such as since primary education in Kenya has been free from 2003 (Orodho et al., 2013; Abagi, 2014).

Further the data revealed that, girls in the Somali community just as the case elsewhere in Africa are socialized for domestic duties. The parents know that at one point their daughters will have to get married and become mothers. It is therefore no wonder that pupils think that girls leave school to become mothers. Lastly, the negative attitudes that many communities hold towards girls can easily push them into early marriages. Girls are generally viewed as belonging to other people and not their biological families as such. Educating a girl therefore is viewed as watering somebody else's flower since the girl is an outsider who will leave her parents' home and go to her husband (Nyamongo, 2000; Orodho et al., 2013). Based on such misplaced attitudes, taking girls to school will be seen as a waste of time and resources.

When the same question was put to the teachers and head teachers, the two categories of respondents seemed to agree that; poverty at 30% and 25%, ignorance of the parents 25 and 37% and traditional customs at 20% and 22% for (teachers and head teachers respectively) were found to be the major inhibitors of the education for girls in Buna Sub-county as shown in figures 4.5 and 4.6 below.

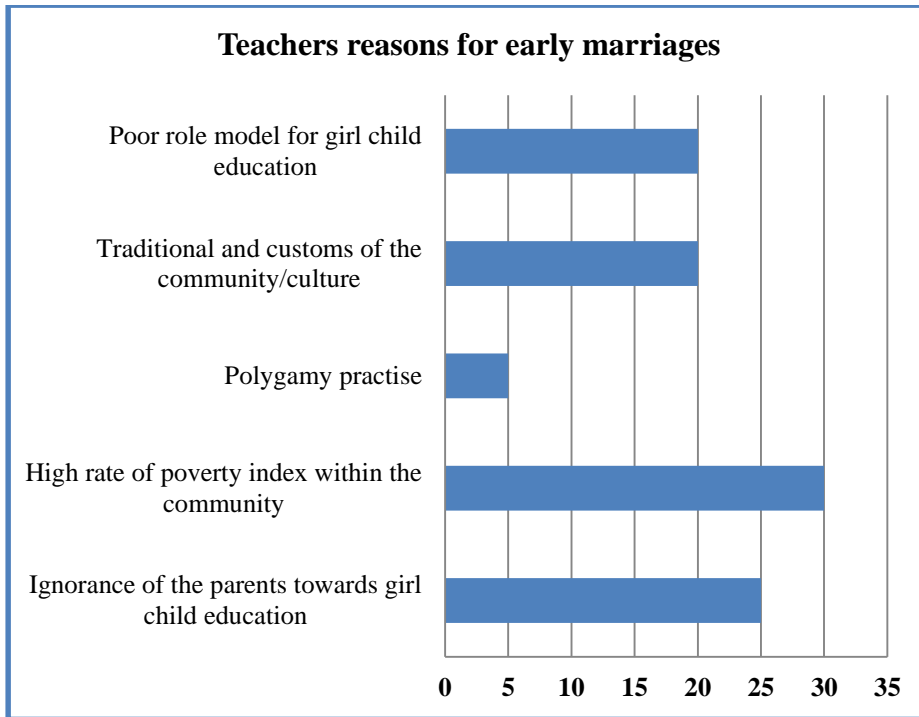


Figure 4. 5: Reasons for early marriages among girls in Buna Sub-County (teachers)

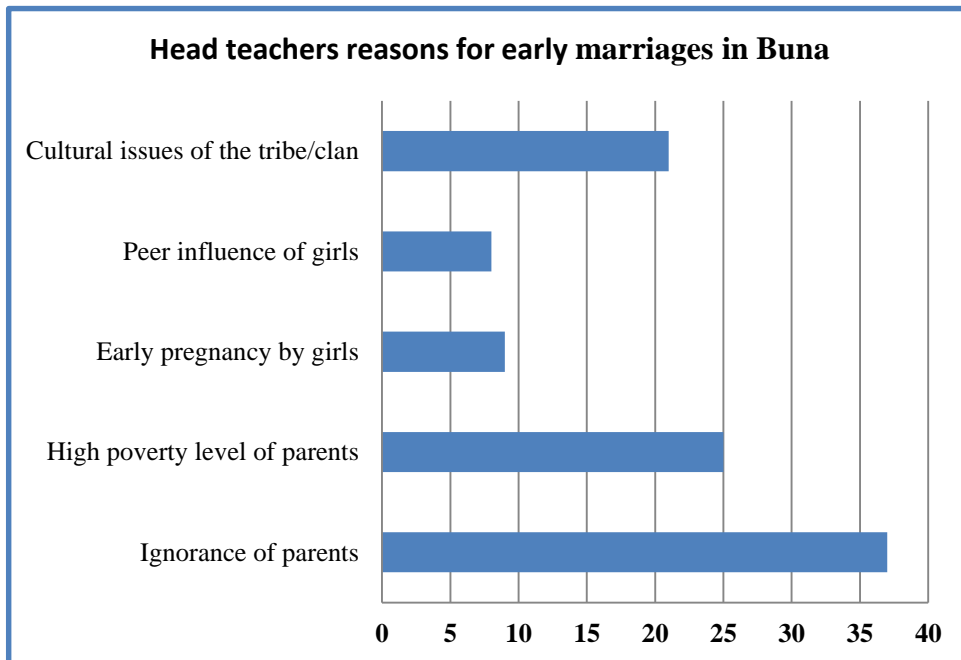


Figure 4. 6: Reasons for early marriages of girls in Buna Sub-County (Head teachers)

From the data presented in figures 4.5 and 4.6 above, there is some difference between pupils' responses and those of teachers and head teachers possibly due to the fact that the latter category, being professionals and mature persons at the same time had a better understanding of the community that they work in compared to pupils. They are much more informed socio-economic, religious practices and the community's culture and are therefore likely to be much more aware of the reasons that make the community in Buna Sub-County allow the practice of early marriage despite the fact that the practice is outlawed by the government.

4.4.2 High levels of illiteracy of parents and early marriages in Buna Sub-County

To probe further on reasons that lead to early marriages among girls in Buna Sub-County, pupils were asked whether the high levels of illiteracy among parents influenced the practice. The results in figure 4.7 above show that 60% of the respondents noted that illiteracy was a cause of early marriages compared to 40% who said it was not. It is clear that illiteracy can impact negatively on the education of girls in terms of participation and completion of primary education. These findings are in agreement with findings from a study in Malawi by UNICEF, (2017) which revealed that almost 2/3 of the young brides in the country did not have formal education compared to just 5% of women who had attained high school education. In addition, Raj et al. (2009) and Bhandari (2019) also established that early marriages were most prevalent in households where parents were either illiterate or had little education.

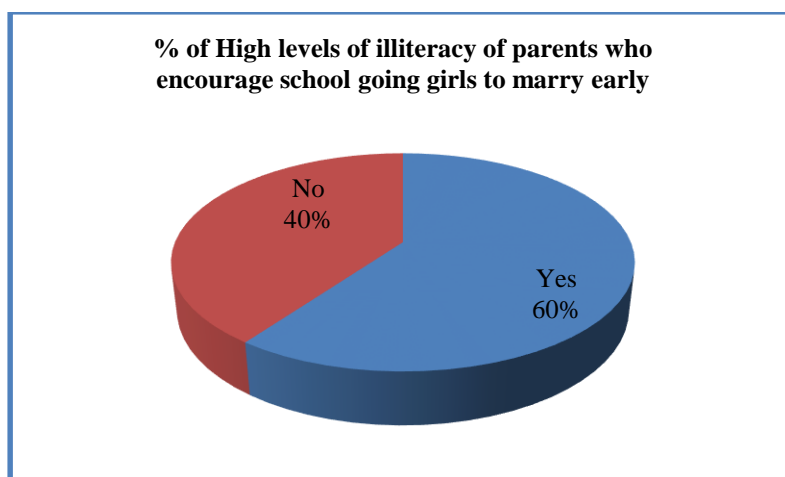


Figure 4. 7: Illiteracy levels and early marriages

4.4.3 The influence of girls' education on marriage

Education attainment by women has been found to carry some influence on their marital status (Chege & Sifuna, 2006). In some African communities, girls who are highly educated are sometimes feared by men who may not be of equal education. This has the likelihood of complicating marriage plans/opportunities for such girls as it becomes difficult to find men who will be willing to marry them. In many cultures, there is the mistaken belief that a woman with low or no education at all will be very submissive to her husband and therefore very easy to control. This misguided view has made a number of young girls become victims of early marriages at the expense of their education simply out of fear. It was for this reason that the researcher wanted to find out how pupils perceived this challenge to the girls.

Table 4. 7: Influence of girls' education on marriage

Do girls in your community fear to be highly educated since they will encounter difficulties in finding a husband or becoming a good wife		
Fear to be highly educated	Frequency	Percent
Yes	83	83
No	17	17
Total	100	100

The data presented in table 4.7 above show that majority of pupils (83%) feel that girls who attain high levels of education are most likely to encounter difficulties in marriage. This attitude which is likely to make some girls fail to achieve their educational dreams agrees with the views expressed by (Chege & Sifuna, 2006; Orodho et al., 2013; Njuguna et al., 2018) who argued that continued schooling reduced the girl's opportunities for marriage and due to this parents do not push their daughters to obtain much education is the fear that possible educated suitors would be scared off and the girls would not be submissive.

Wajir County on the whole performs poorly on all educational indicators for boys and girls, a factor that is likely to carry a negative impact on the educational aspirations of girls out of fear that high attainment will jeopardize their chances of marriage because of the traditional nature of the community.

In a nutshell most of the respondents cited the following reasons to be causes for early marriages; parents wanted to acquire wealth in form of bride price or dowry, high poverty index forced parents to sacrifice girls education and up bringing so that they can be taken care by their husbands, ignorance and illiteracy of parents on their roles of providing education for their children and finally literate girls were feared by men hence fear of high levels of education.

4.5 The participation of girls in primary school education

The second objective of the study sought to establish factors that affect the participation of girls in primary school education in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County. To address this objective, a number of questions were asked and the findings they generated are discussed in the subsections that follow.

4.5.1 Factors that affect participation of girls in primary schools (pupils, teachers and head teachers)

Learners can gain meaningfully from schooling if their school participation is consistent and are meaningfully engaged in the learning processes. It is for this reason that the study sought to establish factors that affect the participation of girls in primary school education in Buna Sub-County. The triangulated responses from head teachers, pupils and teachers are presented in figures 4.8 and 4.9 and table 4.8 below. The findings presented in the figures 4.8 and 4.9 above and table 4.8 below showed that domestic work was a major factor that kept girls away from school attendance. The main domestic activities that children engaged in included; fetching water, fetching firewood, herding animals, and nursing babies. These findings are similar to those of Juma (1994) and Abdi (2010) which revealed that most of the children work as laborers at home in; nursing babies, general cleaning, fetching water, and collecting firewood among others. Children in many African communities are seen by their parents as a valuable source of labour in

the homestead. Among the Somali for example, it is common to find children being forced to take care of the animals instead of attending school. In a recent study, Omuse, (2017) found that in such circumstances, girls end up performing more tasks compared to boys hence the challenge they face in transitioning to secondary schools. However, further data stated that early marriages involving girls and the negative attitude by parents towards the education of their daughters are some of the major reasons that made girls fail to participate effectively in schooling activities. Although pupils' responses did not include early marriages, *miraa* trade and parental attitude as factors that affect the education of girls, it is possible that as children, they do not understand the magnitude of this problem compared to their teachers, who as adults are well informed about these issues because of their professional standing in the society.

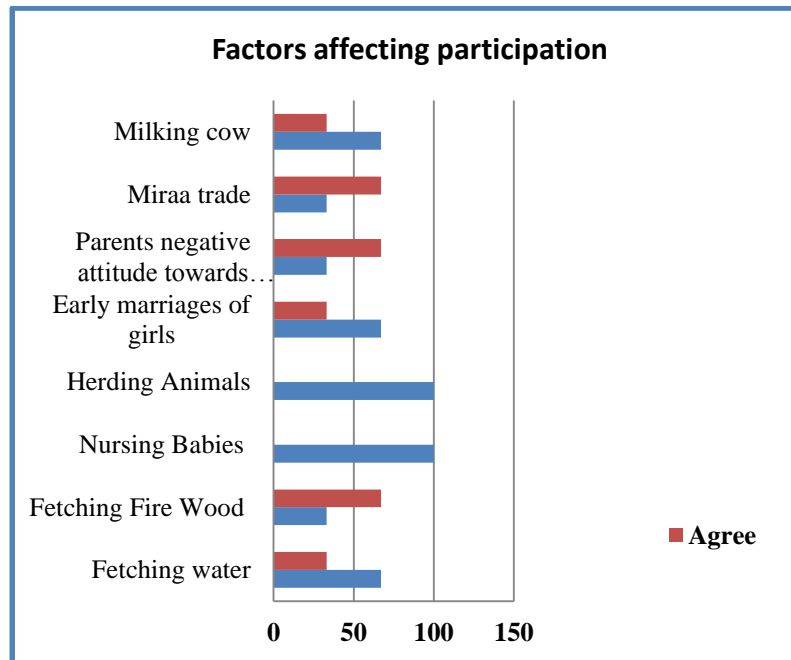


Figure 4. 8: Factors affecting participation (head teachers)

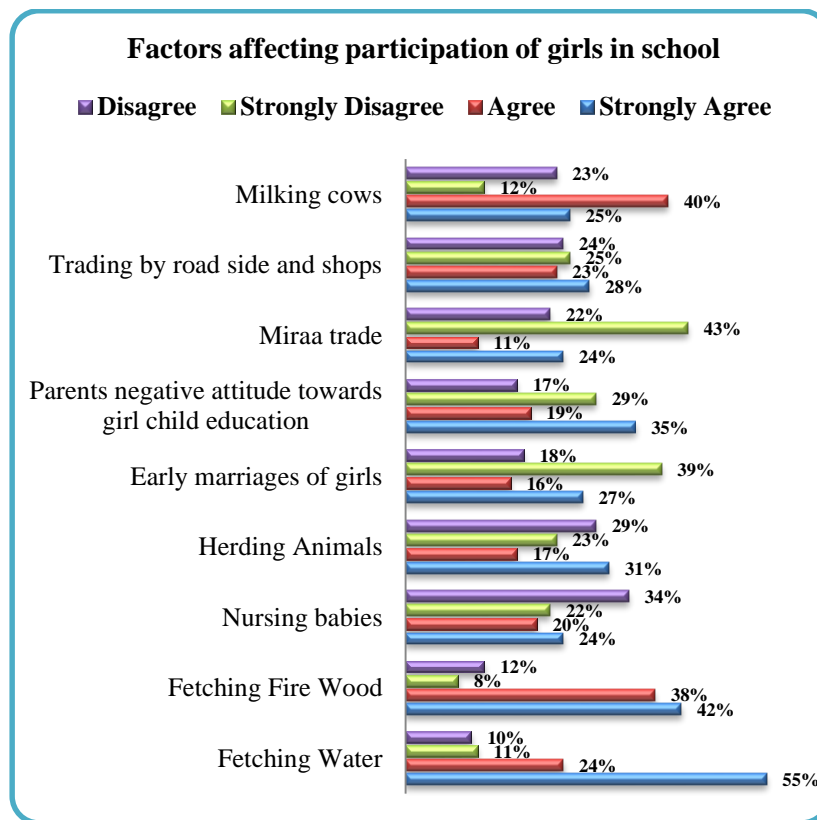


Figure 4. 9: Factors affecting participation of girls in school (pupils)

Table 4. 8: Factors affecting participation of girls in school (teachers)

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Fetching water	18	60	6	20	6	20	0	0	30	100
Fetching firewood	6	20	12	40	12	40	0	0	30	100
Nursing Babies	12	40	12	40	0	0	6	20	30	100
Herding animals	6	20	18	60	6	20	0	0	30	100
Early marriages	12	40	18	60	0	0	0	0	30	100
Parents' negative attitude to education	12	40	18	60	0	0	0	0	30	100
Miraa trade	6	20	6	20	6	20	12	40	30	100
Trading by road side and shops	6	20	18	60	6	20	0	0	30	100

4.5.2 Socio-Cultural practices and early marriages in Buna Sub-County

A number of studies have shown that certain cultural practices can prevent girls from participating fully and effectively in their education. For instance, a study by Abagi, Sifuna & Oando, (2010) revealed that FGM and early marriages are two cultural practices which were closely related and impacted negatively on the education of girls among the Wardei, a Somali community in Wenje. After undergoing FGM, most girls feel that they have matured and are now ready for marriage. Secondly, the informal education that is given to the initiates gives them the feeling that they were now ‘grown up women’ and look forward to early marriages since some would have already been ‘given out’ (engaged) to rich old men. It was along these lines that this study sought to establish whether there were such cultural practices among the Somali of Buna Sub-County which affected the participation of girls in education. The responses presented in figure 4.9 below show that customary believes and religion are the two major sources of cultural factors that prevent girls from effective participation in primary education at 30% and 26% respectively. The Somali generally treat girls as outsiders in their own families insisting that they belong to the family of their future husband (Orodho et al, 2013). Other studies about the Maasai, Borana revealed that the number of animals paid for girls as bride price is fixed regardless of whether they were educated or not (Kituyi, 1990; Nyamongo, 2000). The negative attitude with which communities perceive girls and their education makes it almost impossible for members of such communities, the Ajuran of Buna included, giving full support to the education of their girls.

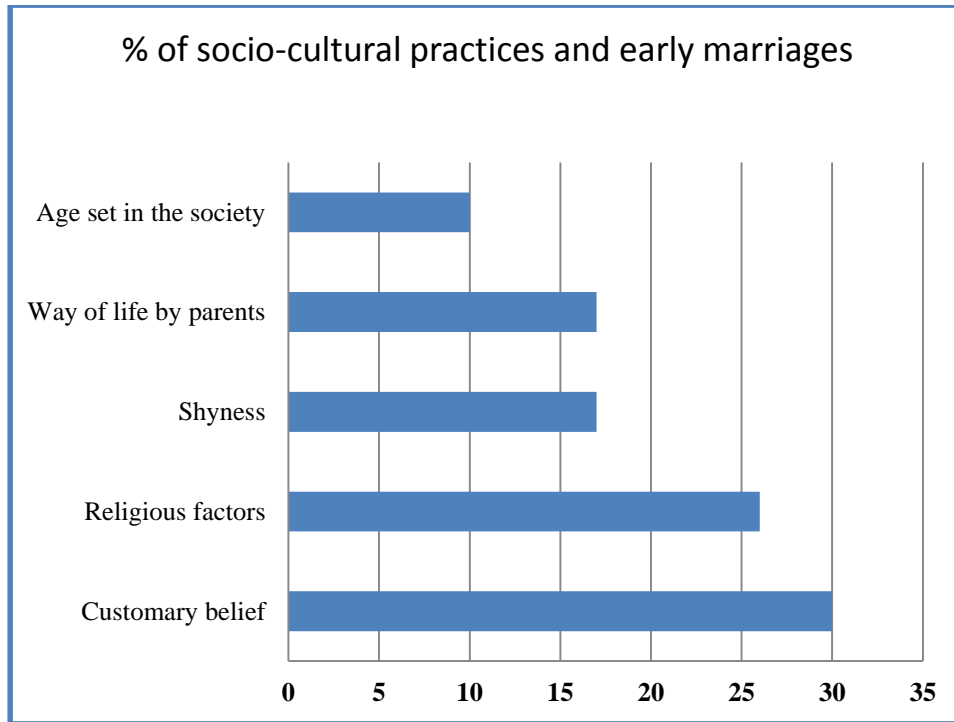


Figure 4. 10: The effects of cultural practices on girls’ education (Head teachers)

4.6 The completion rates in Buna Sub-County

The third objective for this study looked into factors that affect the completion of primary school education by girls in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County. To respond to this objective, a number of questions were asked and the responses generated are discussed in the subsections that follow below.

4.6.1 The marriage age for girls in Buna Sub-County

Early marriages of school going girls’ mean that they have to terminate their education while at a tender age. Accordingly, the study wanted to establish the age at which early marriages take place in Buna Sub-County. From the data presented in table 4.9 below, majority of the pupils at 63% indicated that girls generally get married before the age of 18 years (13-17 years), 27% said 18 years and above and 10% indicated less than 13 years. When examined against the characteristics of our respondents, these results show majority of these girls who marry before 18 years will still be in the primary school pupil bracket. That means if these girls have to get married then they would be forced to drop out before completing their primary schooling even if they may be considered mature. This will negatively affect the completion rates of girls in Buna Sub-County.

Table 4. 9: Age of marriage in Buna Sub-County

Age in (years)	Frequency	%
Less than 13	10	10
14-17	61	63
18 and Above	26	27
Total	97	100

4.6.2 Brothers and sisters who are not in school

The researcher asked pupils to indicate if they had any siblings of school going age who were not in school. This was meant to establish if there were children in Buna who were not attending school despite primary education being free. The findings as presented in table 4.10 below show that 67% of the respondents returned a positive answer while 33% gave a negative response. This is a serious finding especially coming at a time when the government is fully committed in ensuring that all eligible children regardless of their background shave to enroll and stay in school. It has been shown over the years that while the country has been able to report on impressive numbers regarding primary school enrolment, completion, and transition nationally, such figures always mask serious regional disparities particularly in ASALs (Njeru & Orodho, 2003; Chege & Sifuna, 2006; Abagi & Oanda, 2014). This is no doubt a major indictment to Kenya’s education sector that call for serious reflection bearing in mind that Kenya has been a signatory to almost all international protocols aimed at realizing education for all (EFA), beginning with the 1990 Jomtien Conference, the 2000 Dakar Forum and MDGs and recently, the 2015 SDGs.

Table 4. 10: Brothers or sisters not schooling

Brothers and sisters who are not in school	Frequency (n)	Percent
Yes	65	67
No	32	33

4.6.3 Gender of out of school children

The pupils were also asked to indicate the most affected gender of the siblings who were out of school. This was aimed at establishing if there were any biases that tend to disadvantage the education of the girls compared to that of the boys. Although the data as presented in table 4.11 below indicate that the number of girls who were out of school is slightly higher (132) compared to that of the boys (123), the general view is that this is a community that does not take the education of its children seriously. However, studies carried out elsewhere have established that girls are the most affected in terms of being denied opportunities for schooling (Ombongi, 2008; KNBS, 2019; Orodho, et al, 2013). It is possible that these girls get married off when still young as boys are left to continue with school.

Table 4. 11: Brothers or sisters out of school

Number of brothers not schooling			Number of sisters not schooling		
Number	Frequency	Total	Number	Frequency	Total
1	25	25	1	14	14
2	17	34	2	22	44
3	13	39	3	12	36
4	5	20	4	3	12
5	1	5	5	4	20
No response	36	-	6	1	6
			No response	41	-
Total	97	123	Total	97	132

4.6.4 The level at which brothers or sisters terminated schooling

The study sought to establish the level at which either brothers or sisters who were out of school as discussed above stopped schooling. Data from table 4.12 below show that majority of the learners, 44% indicated that their siblings stopped schooling at primary school level. This finding shows that very many girls may enroll in primary school but cannot complete this compulsory level of schooling as prescribed by law.

Table 4. 12: Level at which brothers or sisters stopped schooling

Level at which sibling terminated schooling	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
University	3	3
College	2	2
Secondary School	17	17
Primary school	44	44
No response	31	31
Total	97	100

4.6.5 Reasons for termination of schooling by girls

The study also wanted to establish the possible reasons that made the affected girls drop out of primary school as reported in figure 4.11 below.

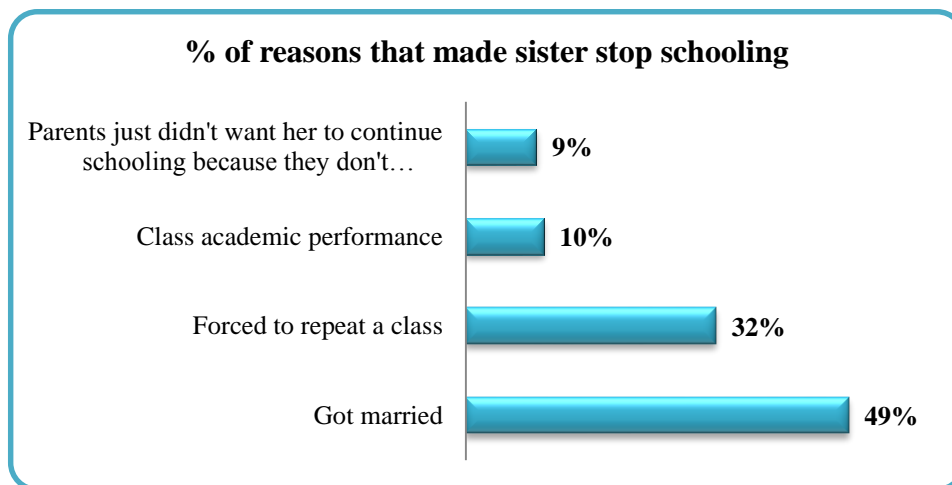


Figure 4. 11: Reasons that made sister stop schooling

The findings show that majority of the girls (49%), dropped out of school because of early marriages. This was followed by decision not to repeat class (32%). Whereas issues surrounding early marriages can only be tackled by other relevant authorities, teachers and parents ought to know that forcing children to repeat classes violates government regulations on education. This is not only wastage of the limited resources for supporting the education sector, but it also demoralizes these children with regard to their

educational pursuits. It is however important to note that repetition of classes is in most cases occasioned by displacement of families due to frequent instances of insecurity in ASALs. For instance, as noted elsewhere already, a study by Mohammed, (2018) on factors influencing nomadic pupils’ participation in primary education in Wajir North Sub-County revealed that learners get forced to repeat classes because of the frequent cases of insecurity, internal feuds and displacements which make children waste a lot of time before enrolling in new schools.

4.6.6 Sisters who have completed different levels of learning

The pupils were asked to indicate different levels of education at which their sisters if any had completed. The learners’ views as presented in table 4.13 below show that primary school completion rate was poor in Buna Sub-County. This has serious effects to the community that will no doubt lag behind in almost all aspects of development since a sizeable number of the population would have been excluded from the most basic level of education that is key in unlocking many opportunities for women like secondary schooling and beyond as well as developing careers that can benefit the society economically, socially and politically.

Table 4. 13: Number of sisters who have completed different levels of schooling in Buna Sub-County

Primary School			Secondary School			College			University		
Number	Freq	Total	Number	Freq	Total	Number	Freq	Total	Number	Freq	Total
1	26	26	1	20	20	1	10	10	1	4	4
2	14	28	2	11	22	2	3	6	2	3	6
3	8	24	3	4	12						
4	2	8	4	1	4						
5	4	20									
6	1	6									
No response	42	-	No response	61	-	No response	84	-	No response	90	-
Total	97	112	Total	97	58	Total	97	16	Total	97	10

4.6.7 Pupils' aspirations after completion of primary schooling

In view of the many challenges that face the education of children in Buna Sub-County, the study wanted to establish the kind of future aspirations that these children have once they completed their primary schooling. All pupil respondents stated that they wanted to proceed with secondary schooling. These responses clearly show that children value education and are not content at terminating their learning at this level but aspire to transit to the secondary level of learning.

4.6.8 Pupils' educational ambitions

The pupils were asked a follow-up question on their educational aspirations in relation to their future academic pursuits. From the findings given in figure 4.12 below, almost all pupils, 98% said they aspired to attain university level of education. This is a clear indicator that these children, although coming from a disadvantaged region, were very much aware that achieving the highest possible level of education is preferred not only for bettering their lives but one that will also enable them contribute positively to society. It is not therefore proper that these children are not given the support they require to realize such lofty dreams since most of those girls get forced into early marriages before completing their primary schooling, the most basic level of education.

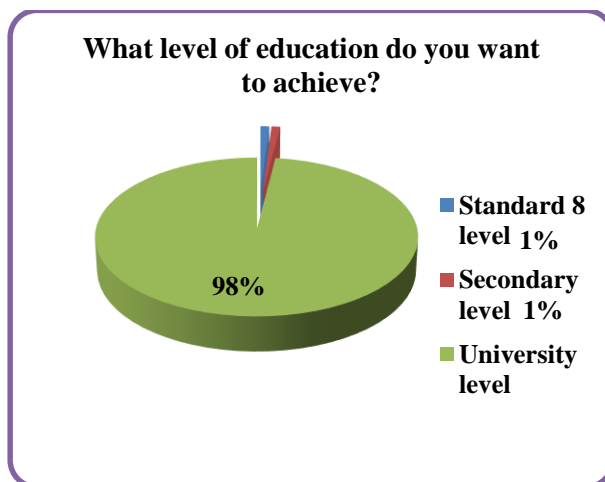


Figure 4. 12: Educational aspirations by pupils in Buna Sub-County

4.7 Remedies to early marriages and the education of girls in Buna Sub-County

The fourth objective of the study sought to establish possible ways for addressing the problem of early marriages which have been shown to seriously affect the primary schooling for girls in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County. A number of question items were developed which generated responses that are presented and discussed in sections that follow below.

4.7.1 Existence of guidance and counseling in primary schools in Buna Sub-County

Guidance and counseling are important school programmes that are aimed at helping school pupils navigate through some of the challenges that they face not only in their educational pursuits but in life as well. As part of the remedies to the problem of early marriages and their effects on the education of girls in Buna Sub-County, the study wanted to establish the existence and status of guidance and counseling services in primary schools. Interestingly, the findings show that majority of pupils (57%) were not aware of the existence of this service while 43% indicated an awareness of the same.

Table 4. 14: Existence of guiding and counseling in schools (pupils' responses)

Existence of guidance and counseling	Frequency (n)	Percentage
Yes	43	44
No	54	56
Total	97	100

When the same question was posed to teachers and head teachers, 80% and 67% respectively as shown in tables 4.15 and 4.16 below indicated that their schools had guidance and counseling services. It is possible that guidance and counseling in schools is not a clearly demarcated activity from other pieces of advice that pupils receive regularly hence their show of ignorance about its existence.

Table 4. 15: Existence of guidance and counseling in schools (teachers' responses)

Existence of guidance and counseling	Frequency	Percent
Yes	24	80
No	6	20
Total	30	100

Table 4. 16: Existence of guidance and counseling in schools (Head teachers' responses)

Existence of guidance and counseling	Frequency	Percent
Yes	4	67
No	2	33
Total	6	100

The study went further to inquire from pupils, teachers and head teachers about the topics/issues that were normally discussed during these sessions. Some of the responses that were elicited included; early marriages, causes of early pregnancies, dealing with adolescence and peer pressure among others. It is quite obvious that the status of guidance and counseling in schools is still a grey area that requires urgent attention. It is possible that even if the service exists in primary schools, it does not have qualified teachers for it. In most cases, teachers are assigned the role without proper guidance apart from minimal exposure in limited number of seminars organized by the Ministry of Education to sensitize teachers on the same. Previous studies on this subject (Noor, 2003; Abagi, et al., 2010 and Dube & Orodho, 2014), have recommended the mounting of guidance and counseling programmes in schools to enlighten the girls about the importance of education, educate girls on proper moral conduct, sex education and stages of maturity among others.

4.7.2 Action to enable married girls continue with schooling

The government of Kenya has in the past developed rules and regulations to facilitate the continuation of education by girls who either get involved in unwanted pregnancies or early marriages such as the Children Act (RoK, 2001). This was intended to improve the participation of girls in schools including the primary schools. Apart from this, primary education has been free from 2003, in addition to being a compulsory level of learning. This is important for girls at this level of education since primary schooling lays the foundation for any future educational activities in addition to imparting critical life skills to the learners for meaningful lives in the future:

The MDG of achieving universal primary education was not achieved. SDG goal number 4 recognizes this gap which must be closed. It aims at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong opportunities for all. It further addresses persistent inequities relating to gender, economic and geographical differences as its key (UN General Assembly, 2015).

It was for this reason that the study wanted to establish whether efforts have been made to have girls initially enticed into early marriages have been allowed to continue with their schooling. The researcher asked pupils to indicate if they were aware of instances in which girls involved in early marriages were taken back to school and their responses are presented in figure 4.13 below.

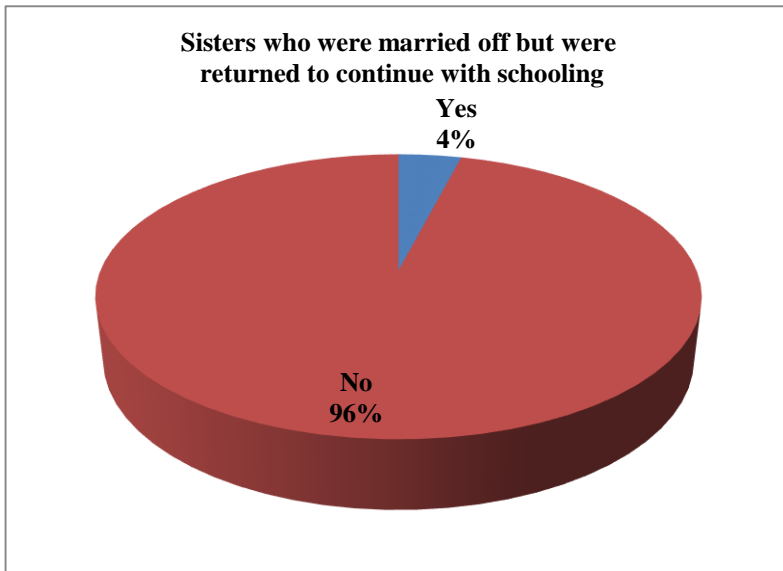


Figure 4. 13: Sisters who were returned to school

From figure 4.13 above, almost all pupils (96%) indicated that they were not aware of any cases where girls initially engaged in early marriages were returned to school to continue with their education. An almost similar concurrence to these views was elicited from teachers' responses (80%) while head teachers' responses were at 67% as presented in tables 4.17 and 4.18 below. These high responses on lack of awareness including teachers and head teachers when cases of early marriages are real most likely point to a high level of laxity by the community to confront this challenge despite having clear laws to guard against the practice. Alternatively, teachers and head teachers were aware of the vice but prefer not to condemn it since it is an acceptable cultural practice by the community.

Table 4. 17: Cases of girls initially married but returned to school (teachers)

Are girls returned to school after early marriages	Frequency	Percent
Yes	6	20
No	24	80
Total	30	100

Table 4. 18: Cases of girls initially married but returned to school (head teachers)

Are girls returned to school after early marriages	Frequency	Percent
Yes	2	33
No	4	67
Total	6	100

4.7.3 Action to enable primary school girls continue schooling

In spite of the low reported cases, the researcher still wanted to establish the persons/officers that acted on the reported cases to help the affected girls continue with schooling. The findings on this item as presented in tables 4.19 and 4.20 below show that the Presidency (Chiefs and their assistants), parents as well as teachers have participated in rescuing girls from early marriages and taken them to continue with schooling.

Table 4. 19: Teachers' responses on people who took action on cases of early marriage

Action Taken	Frequency (n)	Percent
Parents	5	17
Teachers	3	10
Area chief/sub-chief	9	30
Others specify....	13	43
Total	30	100

Table 4. 20: Head teachers' responses on people who took action on cases of early marriage

Action taken	Frequency (n)	Percent
Parents	1	17
Teachers	1	16
Area chief/sub-chief	4	67
Total	6	100

4.7.4 Action against perpetrators of early marriages

Once Children get enrolled in primary schools, they ought to be supported until they complete this compulsory level of education. Consequently, any person who interferes with the schooling of the child at this level particularly those who push girls into early marriages should be punished. The researcher therefore wanted to find out if appropriate action was taken by relevant authorities to arrest perpetrators as a deterrent measure to the practice.

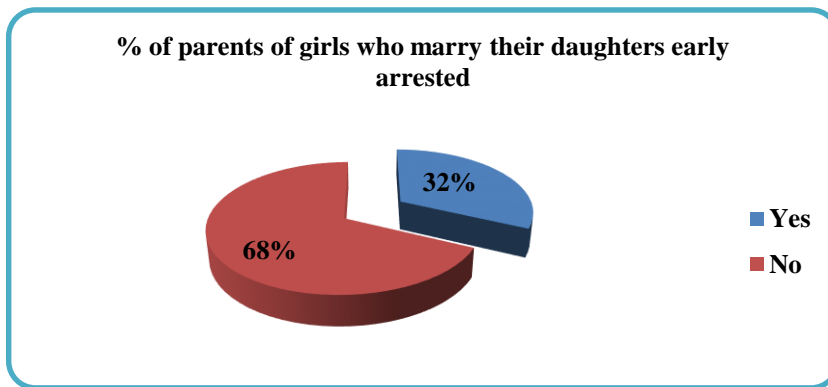


Figure 4. 14: Arrests of perpetrators of early marriages (pupils' responses)

The results show that pupils, teachers and head teachers as presented in figure 4.13 above and tables 4.21 and 4.22 below respectively show that 32% of pupils stated that the culprits were arrested while 68% said culprits were not arrested. Teachers and head teachers reinforced this response at 60% and 100% respectively.

Table 4. 21: Arrests of perpetrators of early marriages (teachers' responses)

Parents arrested	Frequency (n)	Percent
Yes	12	40
No	18	60
Total	30	100

Table 4. 22: Arrests of perpetrators of early marriages (head teachers' responses)

Parents arrested	Frequency (n)	Percent
No	6	100
Total	6	100

4.7.5 Female teachers and early marriages

There sufficient evidence in many African countries on the importance of female teachers in the education of girls in schools. They make effective role models to the girls especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Bunyi, 2008; Abagi, et al., 2010; Orodho, et al., 2013). From the foregoing it is quite clear that the education of girls is not taken seriously in Buna Sub-County and requires urgent attention. One such remedy lies in the work of role models in form of female teachers partly to motivate these girls.

Pupils were therefore asked whether the presence of female teachers in school had assisted in halting early marriages. The responses presented in figure 4.14 below show majority of pupils (66%) compared to 34% answered in the negative. These views can be explained by the general negative attitude that the pupils have towards the teaching profession, a reflection of the low esteem with which the community treats teachers (WCIDP, 2013; Abagi, 2014).

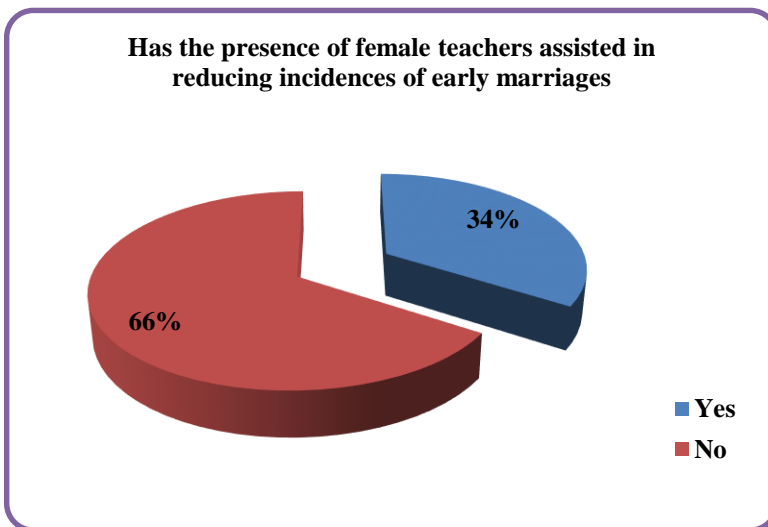


Figure 4. 15: Presence of female teachers and incidences of early marriages

4.7.6 Suggestions to minimize early marriages

Teachers hold important positions in society and in most parts of the country, they are important opinion shapers for their communities and are constantly consulted on many issues including those not related to education. They therefore have an important role to play in eradicating or at least minimizing the problem of early marriages. It was for this reason that an open ended item was put to both head teachers and teachers to suggest ways of combating cases of early marriage in Buna Sub-county. Some of the suggestions were collated and are presented below in no order of preference:

- a) Educate parents on the importance of education for girls in Buna Sub-County.
- b) Construct boarding schools to help girls concentrate on their studies without unnecessary disturbances
- c) Intensify guidance and counseling of girls in schools.
- d) Parents should be sensitized on challenges/problems faced by girls who engage in early marriages.
- e) Sensitize the community on the importance of reporting cases of early marriages to the police for action.

As already discussed in this study, parental ignorance regarding their role in the education of their children was identified to be one of the causes of early marriages in Buna Sub-County. If teachers can play a role in reversing this, they would have contributed immensely to the success of the well-being of the entire community. However, one main challenge that they may face has to do with the lack of respect that is accorded to teachers by community members in Buna Sub-County as explained earlier on. This attitude is likely to impact negatively on the said role.

4.7.7 Suggestions for improving girls' participation in primary education in Buna Sub-County

Teachers were asked to suggest ways in which the participation of girls in primary education in Buna Sub-County could be realized. The findings presented in table 4.23 below show that majority of the teachers (60%) felt that there was need to educate parents on the importance of education, 27% felt that there was the need to punish parents

that allowed their girls to engage in early marriages. This is particularly important because this practice in most cases is carried out with the blessings of the parents. Lastly, 13% of the teachers felt that gender sensitization could help.

Table 4. 23: Suggestions to improve girls’ participation in primary education

Improving girl’s participation	Frequency (n)	Percent
Educate parents on importance of girl education	18	60
Taking action against parents who force girls in early marriages	8	27
Promoting gender sensitization	4	13
Total	30	100

4.7.8 Suggestions to improve the completion rates of primary school girls

Teachers were asked to suggest ways through which the completion rate of primary school girls could be improved. The responses as presented in table 4.24 below show that majority of the teachers (80%) were of the view that parents should be educated on the importance of education and the risks that arise as a result of early marriages. It was also felt by 20% of the teachers that all those concerned should participate in promoting the education of the girl child.

Table 4. 24: Teachers’ opinions on improving the completion rates of primary school girls in Buna Sub-County

Improving the completion rates	Frequency	Percent
Educate parent on importance of education and risk of early marriages.	24	80
All the stakeholders in education should actively participate in promoting the education of the girl child.	6	20
Total	30	100

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This is the final chapter of the study on the effects of early marriage on the education of primary school girls in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County. We present the summary, conclusions that were drawn from the findings of the study and recommendations in the field of Sociology of Education.

5.2 Summary of the study

This study examined the effects of early marriages on the education of primary school girls in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County. Buna Sub-County was chosen because it is a marginalized area and the researcher wanted to establish educational challenges if any that girls face in pursuit of education. In this chapter the study established impressive picture on the participation and completion rates of primary school education at the national level. However, this figures when unmasked at County level they reflect serious gender disparities in provision of the education of girls as a result of early marriages. The researcher was guided by the following four objectives: the causes of early marriage; factors that affect participation of girls in primary education; the status of primary school completion rates for girls; and, lastly, possible solutions to the problem of early marriages in Buna Sub County.

The study was well informed by literature review which was gathered from the following researcher scholars and authors: Abagi, Nyamongo, Kituyi, Maina, Ombongi, Sifuna, Orodho, UNICEF, MOEST, RoK and many others on this topic established useful insights which guided the study. The study was guided by the four objectives above. For instance on causes of early marriages, the review established: poverty, illiteracy of community members who will not realize the importance of educating their girls, retrogressive cultural traditions which make such communities look down upon girls compared to boys and well as the perception of the inability by women to work for money; religious and social pressures where Muslims girls are forced to undergo FGM which in most cases is taken as a clear preparation for marriage and the same has also

influenced early marriages due to fear of remaining unmarried so as to bring disrepute to the family.

On factors affecting the participation of primary school girls in education, the review established that parental ignorance on their role in education of their children especially girls as opposed to boys, families have misplaced attitudes to the education of girls who are seen not to have equal rights as their male counterparts; gender bias where in cases where families fail to cater for the education of all children will favour that of the males; and lack of role models in school especially female teachers that make parents apprehensive in taking their female children to school to be looked after by the male teachers;

Studies show that where early marriages occur, the education of girls gets highly impaired thus affecting their rates of completion rates.

Studies have put forward a number of solutions to the problem of early marriages in relation to the education of girls. Some of the key ones include; empowering girls with relevant information and skills as well as establishing support networks for them; parents and communities to be educated on the risks involved in early marriages of girls.

The descriptive research design was used to guide the study. The simple random sampling method was used to get the sample for the study. The focus was on pupils in Standard Seven and Eight since they were considered mature enough and had also stayed in school longer to comprehend the issues relating to the study. In total, six primary schools with complete primary level at the time were selected for the study. The study subjects comprised of; 6 head teachers, 30 teachers and 97 pupils. The questionnaire was the only instrument that was used for data collection following successful piloting of the same. The return rates were; 100% for teachers and head teachers while 85% was realized for the pupils' questionnaire. In total, the study utilized 133 questionnaires. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data which was later presented using descriptive forms of reporting; tables, graphs and charts.

The study established that the practice of early marriages was real in Buna Sub-County and has negatively affected the education of girls. This is mainly caused by high levels of illiteracy, poverty, and ignorance of the parents as well as the retrogressive traditional customs. The Somali community in general socializes its girls mainly in domestic duties for purposes of making them good wives in future. Girls get married while still young to earn wealth for their families and in cases where families lack enough resources for the education of all children; preference is given to the boys. The community generally viewed negatively and felt that educating them is like educating a wife for another man.

The study established that girls do not participate effectively in education largely due to their involvement in domestic work such as; fetching water, fetching firewood, herding animals, and nursing babies among others. Apart from this, early marriages among girls and the negative attitude by parents towards the education of girls makes the community lack interest in supporting girls in school. Apart from this, the Muslim religious believes also work to prevent the education of girls who are generally seen as outsiders who belong to the family of her future husband.

The completion rates of primary school girls in Buna Sub-County are generally very poor due to early Marriages that occur between the age 14 and 17 years, the period when they are still in school. The aim is to protect the girls' virginity and guard against sexual misconduct like prostitution and unwanted pregnancies which are likely to bring disrespect to the family. The girls are kept out of school despite free primary education (FPE) and terminate their schooling before completing 12 years of compulsory learning. Unfortunately, this works against hopes and aspirations that many primary school pupils in Buna Sub-County have of not only proceeding to secondary school level and attaining university level of education as well.

As part of the solution to the problem of early marriages that negatively affect the education of girls in Buna Sub-County, it was suggested that parents and the entire community need sensitization on the importance of girls' education. They also need to be enlightened on the risks that girls are likely to face by engaging in early marriages. Apart from this, it was also felt that punitive measures are put in place for deterrence purposes.

Apart from this, guidance and counseling services in schools ought to be strengthened to help girls navigate through challenges that are likely to drive them into early marriages.

5.3 Conclusions of the study

Based on the study findings discussed above, the following conclusions were arrived at:

The practice of early marriages has negatively affected the education of girls in Buna due to high levels of illiteracy, poverty, and ignorance of the parents as well as the retrogressive traditional customs. Girls are married off while at a young age for bride price.

The boys are given better preferences in education compared to the girls. Girls are generally seen as potential wives by the community who feel that educating them is like educating a wife for another person. This negative perception has ended up working against the education of girls.

The participation of girls in education in Buna has suffered due to the many domestic activities that they have to undertake such as; fetching water, fetching firewood, herding animals, and nursing babies among others. In addition, early marriages as well as the negative attitude by the community which makes them lack interest in supporting their girls in school has ensured the poor participation rates in school.

The poor completion rates by primary school girls in Buna Sub-County are partly due to the problem of early marriages. The need to protect the girls' virginity and guard against sexual misconduct forces these girls to terminate their schooling before completing the primary education level of learning despite the high educational aspirations by these children.

To guard against the problem of early marriages girls and their negative effects to education in Buna Sub-County, there is need to sensitize the parents and the entire community on the importance of taking the education of their girls seriously.

To deter or minimize the problem of early marriages in Buna Sub-County, the government and other relevant bodies should invoke punitive measures for all those involved in perpetuating this vice. Parents who allow their girls to abandon school for early marriages should be prosecuted.

It has been noted that girls in northern Kenya in general and Buna Sub-County in particular face many challenges both in school and out of school that tend to interfere with their education. Teachers and schools should play a big role in alleviating some of these challenges apart from imparting education to them. Consequently, there is need to establish or strengthen guidance and counseling services in schools where they already exist to assist them deal with some of these challenges as a way of making them become receptive to learning processes

5.4 Recommendations of the study

Based on the study findings and conclusions arrived at, the research made the following recommendations:

- i. There is need to discourage cultural practices such as early marriages that infringe on the educational rights of girls. The role of government administrators, political and religious leaders and NGOs operating in pastoral and Muslim areas is important to create awareness among communities about negative effects of early marriages on girl's education. The leaders should step up an intensive and vigorous campaign in the community on the importance of girls' education including full application of the necessary laws which are meant to discourage this vice. Such concrete efforts by the concerned persons will no doubt help to narrow the gender gap in education with regard to participation and completion which does not favour girls.
- ii. Funding and support by both the government and non-governmental organizations to raise awareness about children's right including the prohibition of early marriages.
- iii. To add on that, the few members of the society who have not recognized the importance of girl's education should be sensitized on that aspect. This is important in order to bring about change of attitude towards education of girls. Religious leaders

- especially Imams need to underscore this aspect during the (Friday) (Sermon) by emphasizing the effects of early marriages on girl's education. Further they should underplay the cultural values that inhibit girls' education.
- iv. The few professional women as well as girls that hail from the Wajir County or the Somali community ought to be incorporated in all activities aimed at boosting the education of girls to act as positive examples to be emulated by their young sisters. There is every possibility that such approaches will motivate primary school going girls to take their studies seriously so that they become achievers like these role models. Accordingly, schools and other organizations including NGOs should organize open days where such elites can address girls on education and its attendant benefits not just to the individuals concerned but to the community as a whole.
 - v. Last but not least, there is need for concerted efforts to tackle the economic challenges that afflict the inhabitants of ASALs in Kenya. One major reason that sustain early marriages in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County is the high levels of poverty that tempts these people to give out their young girls for bride price in return. The provision of enough relief food and water to will go a long way in cushioning the community against recurrent hunger. In addition, provision of conditional cash transfer in return to taking girls in school has also been found to impact positively on their education.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

1. The study has examined the effects of early marriages on the education of primary school girls in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County. It would be important if similar studies were carried out in other counties in northern Kenya and ASALs respectively so that such findings can first, establish the magnitude of this problem and secondly, suggest possible solutions that can then help girls in marginalized regions benefit fully from the government's investments in education.
2. This study has established that early marriage poses a serious challenge to the education of girls in Buna Sub-County, Wajir. It would be important for studies to be carried out in Wajir and other counties in northern Kenya on the transition of these

girls to secondary schools to shed more light on challenges that girls face in education.

3. This study limited itself on responses by primary school pupils to highlight the problem of early marriages in the region. It will therefore be fruitful to design other studies that can include the victims of early marriages themselves to share their personal experiences about this problem.

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Location of Wajir County in Kenya: Available at Kenya-county-map: herstorycentre.org

Location of Wajir North Sub-County (Buna and Bute Sub-Counties) in Kenya: Available at Wajir North Digital resource Map.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR DATA COLLECTION

RE: Request for data collection

Above ref is the matter in subject. I am Hellen Sakwa a post graduate student of Sociology of Education in the Department of Educational Foundations at the University of Nairobi undertaking an academic research on the effects of early marriages on the education of primary school girls in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County.

I kindly request that you feel free to fill the questionnaire and the answers provided will strictly be used for the purpose of this study.

Thanks in advance

Hellen N. Sakwa

March 2015.

APPENDIX II: CONSENT FORMS FOR PUPILS

Respondent/key informant informed consent for participation in the study.

Researcher

Hellen N. Sakwa

Department of Educational Foundations,

University of Nairobi

P.O. Box 30197, Code: 00100, GPO, Nairobi-Kenya.

Project Title: Effects of early marriages on the education of primary school girls in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County

Dear Parent/Guardian

Your daughter/son has been given this consent form which gives you the information that you need in order to decide whether you want him/her to participate in this study. I am carrying out a study on the effects of early marriages on the education of primary school girls in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County.

If you agree, I will allow your son/daughter to complete the questionnaire. Kindly read and voluntarily sign this form. Note that your son/daughter will not be given additional benefits and information collected during this study will be treated with a lot of confidentiality. If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact me on mobile: +254 729 971745.

Signature of

Guardian/Parent..... Date

APPENDIX III: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS

Dear pupil,

I am Hellen Sakwa a master student of Sociology of Education in the Department of Educational Foundations at the University of Nairobi. I am carrying out a study on the effects of early marriages on the education of primary school girls in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County. This questionnaire seeks to gather information to be used in a study on the effects of early marriages on the education of primary school girls in Buna Sub-County. The information given will be treated with a lot of confidentiality and therefore you will not be required to indicate your names anywhere on this questionnaire as a measure of confidentiality. This research will aim at recommending on measures of curb early marriages which brings to an end the education of girls in primary schools, hinders their empowerment and equality in the society.

The information provided will be used for the purpose of the study. I kindly request you to tick (√) option or just fill in the spaces provided. Your responses are highly appreciated.

Part I (background information)

- 1. Name of your school.....
- 2. Please state your genderMale Female
- 3. What is your age?

Part II

- 1. Kindly list reasons that made girls enter into early marriages in this community.
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - v.

2. Do girls in your community fear to be highly educated because in your culture girls who are highly educated have difficulties in finding a husband or becoming a good wife? Yes no
3. Do high levels of illiteracy of parents encourage school going girls to marry early? Yes no
4. The following factors listed below are likely to affect participation of girls in primary schools. Indicate your agreement with the statement. Tick (✓) the appropriate column

Factors that affect participation	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
Fetching Water				
Fetching Firewood				
Nursing Babies				
Herding Animals				
Early marriages of girls				
Parents negative attitude towards girls education				
Miraa trade				
Trading by road side and shops				
Milking cows				

5. a. How many of your brothers and sisters of school going age have never gone to school? Brothers b). Sisters
 b. Please give reasons for this _____
6. At what age bracket do school girls get married off in this society?
7. After class eight what do girls prefer to do?
 Getting married others (specify).....

8. What level of education do you want to achieve
 i). Standard 8 level ii). Secondary level iii). University level
9. (a) Do you have brothers and sisters of school going age who were married early?
 Yes no **if no go to no. 10).** Brothers b). Sisters
 b) If **yes**, how many brothers or sisters were married early
 a). Brothers b). Sisters
10. If any at what level did they stop schooling? University College
 Secondary school primary school
 Other (specify).....
11. What made your sister stop schooling?
 a). Got married b). Become pregnant
 c). Forced to repeat a class d). Class academic performance
 e). Parents just didn't want her to continue schooling
12. How many of your sisters have completed a). Primary school b). Secondary school
 c). College d). University e). None of the above
13. How many children from your family have completed primary education?
 Boys girls
14. Do early marriages lead to low completion rates in primary education?
 Yes No
15. Do you have Guidance and Counseling in this school? Yes no
16. If yes which topics are you guided on?.....

17. Has the presence of female teachers assisted in reducing incidences of early marriages for school girls? **Yes** **no**

18. Do you have sisters of school going age who were married off but were returned to continue with schooling? Yes no

19. If yes who returned them? Parents Teachers Area chief/sub-chief
Others specify.....

20. Are parents of girls who marry their daughters early arrested? Yes no

Thanks for your participation in the study

APPENDIX IV: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

I am Hellen Sakwa a master student of Sociology of Education in the Department of Educational Foundations at the University of Nairobi. I am carrying out a study on the effects of early marriages on the education of primary school girls in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County. This questionnaire seeks to gather information to be used in a study on the effects of early marriages on the education of primary school girls in Buna Sub-County. The information given will be treated with a lot of confidentiality and therefore you will not be required to indicate your names anywhere on this questionnaire as a measure of confidentiality. This research will aim at recommending on measures of curb early marriages which brings to an end the education of girls in primary schools, hinders their empowerment and equality in the society.

The information provided will be used for the purpose of the study. I kindly request you to tick (√) option or just fill in the spaces provided. Your responses are highly appreciated.

PART I

- i. Name of the school.....
- ii. What is your gender? Male female
- iii. Please indicate your age.....
- iv. Tick the highest professional qualification

1	P1	
2	Diploma in Education	
3	Bachelor in Education	
4	Bachelor of Arts with Post Graduate Diploma	
5	Bachelor of Science with Post Graduate Diploma	
6	Master Degree in Education	
7	Any Other_____	

- v. Length in the teaching service.....

PART II

1. Kindly list reasons that made girls enter into early marriages in this community.

- i.
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.
- v.

2. The following factors listed below are likely to affect participation of girls in primary schools. Indicate your agreement with the statement. Tick the appropriate column (✓) Key SA= strongly agree, A=agree, D=disagree SD= strongly disagree.

Factor	SA	A	D	SD
Fetching Water				
Fetching Fire wood				
Nursing Babies				
Herding Animals				
Early marriages of girls				
Parents negative attitude towards education				
Miraa trade				
Trading by road side and shops				
Milking cows				

3. In your opinion how can girl child completion in primary schools be improved?

4. a. Does Guidance and Counseling exist in this school? Yes no

b. If yes which topics are discussed?.....

5. Has the presence of female teachers assisted in reducing incidences of early marriages for school girls? Yes no

6. Do you have any cases where girls were once married off and returned to continue with schooling? Yes no

7. Do you know of any case where parents who forced girls for early marriages were arrested? Yes no

8. Which remedies do you recommend to overcome early marriages in your school if any.....
.....
.....

9. Which role do you think you can play in combating early marriages?
.....
.....
.....

Thanks for your co-operation and participation in this study

APPENDIX V: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEAD TEACHERS

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am Hellen Sakwa a master student of Sociology of Education in the Department of Educational Foundations at the University of Nairobi. I am carrying out a study on the effects of early marriages on the education of primary school girls in Buna Sub-County, Wajir County. This questionnaire seeks to gather information to be used in a study on the effects of early marriages on the education of primary school girls in Buna Sub-County. The information given will be treated with a lot of confidentiality and therefore you will not be required to indicate your names anywhere on this questionnaire as a measure of confidentiality. This research will aim at recommending on measures of curb early marriages which brings to an end the education of girls in primary schools, hinders their empowerment and equality in the society.

The information provided will be used for the purpose of the study. I kindly request you to tick (✓) option or just fill in the spaces provided. Your responses are highly appreciated.

PART I

- i) Name of the school.....
- ii) State your gender? Male female
- iii) Tick (✓) from the list your highest professional qualification

1	Certificate (P1)	
2	Diploma in Education	
3	Bachelor of Education	
4	Bachelor of Arts with Post Graduate Diploma	
5	Bachelor of Science with Post Graduate Diploma	
6	Master Degree in Education	
7	Any Other _____	

- iv) Terms of employment: permanent..... contract/ temporal.....
- v) Length in the teaching service.....

PART II

1. Kindly list reasons that made girls enter into early marriages in this community.

- i.
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.
- v.

3. The following factors listed below are likely to affect participation of girls in primary schools. Indicate your agreement with the statement. Tick the appropriate column (√). Key SA= strongly agree, A=agree, SD= strongly disagree, D=disagree.

Factor	SA	A	SD	D
Fetching Water				
Fetching Fire wood				
Nursing Babies				
Herding Animals				
Early marriages of girls				
Parents negative attitude towards education				
Miraa trade				
Trading by road side and shops				
Milking cows				

4. Does Guidance and Counseling exist in your school? Yes no

5. If yes which topics are discussed?

.....

.....

Do you have any cases where girls of school going age were once married off and returned to continue with schooling? Yes no

6. If yes who returned them? Parents Teachers Area chief/sub-chief
others specify.....

7. Do you know of any case where parents who married their girls early and were arrested? Yes no

8. What can be done to reduce the number of early marriages in your school if any?
.....
.....

9. Which recommendation can you give to minimize early marriages in schools?
.....
.....
.....

10. Which remedies do you recommend to overcome early marriages in this society.....
.....

11. Suggest some of the ways of ensuring girls participate fully in primary education in Buna Sub-County.....
.....

Thank you for your co-operation.