

Effects of Socio-Cultural Practices on Humanitarian Response for Girl-Child Education among South Sudanese Girls in Kakuma Camp, Kenya

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Abstract

Gender disparity pervades global society due to socio-cultural practices that tend to disfavor girls. Despite previous humanitarian responses, girl-child education still has numerous constraints due to socio-cultural practices. This situation exacerbates doubly during humanitarian emergencies. South Sudanese girls are often denied the same educational opportunities as boys in Kakuma Camp due to cultural attitudes and poverty. The general objective of the study was to investigate the socio-cultural practices affecting humanitarian response towards girl-child education among South Sudanese of Kakuma camp, Kenya. The study was underpinned by a conceptual framework anchored on two theories, namely, socio-cultural theory and theory of Change. The study utilized a descriptive survey research design and evaluative research design. The study was conducted in Kakuma refugee camp, located in Northwestern Kenya. The target population included girls in schools within the refugee camp. The study also targeted other education stakeholders including teachers, members of the school board of management (BOM), parents, girls who dropped out of school, Humanitarian agencies implementing education in the camps and Government officials. The total sample size for the study was 451. The study employed several sampling techniques including stratified proportionate sampling, simple random sampling, convenience sampling, snowball sampling and purposive sampling. Analysis of the data was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 24) for descriptive statistics to generate frequencies and percentages. The data was presented in form of tables. The study found out that, child/early marriage, boys being preferred to girls and domestic chores were socio-cultural practices that were highly practiced. Based on the conclusion the study recommends that the government should strengthen child protection services and policies to protect girls from harmful socio-cultural practices that would affect their education.

1.0 Introduction

In complex emergencies crises, sociocultural practices such as early marriages, early childbearing and low status credence that affect girl-child education, are more often than not overlooked (OCHA, 2016a). Many humanitarian organizations prioritize access to clean water, food and shelter at the expense of sexual and reproductive health of girls. Therefore, despite previous humanitarian responses, girl-child education still has numerous constraints due to socio-cultural beliefs. Because of societal norms, women's educational attainment continues to fall behind that of men. During humanitarian crises, this problem is ten times worse. Many impediments prevent females from receiving an education during humanitarian crises, including their lower social position, early marriages, domestic duties, and concerns about their safety and hygiene in the classroom (CARE, 2016a).

It has been reported that Kakuma Camp's diverse refugee population has a low number of female students enrolled in school. Grace (2010), on the other hand, listed religious misinterpretation, cultural practises,

poverty, early marriage, illiteracy, and insufficient school infrastructure as issues impeding girl-child education. The majority of parents don't care about their daughter's education because they wish to see her get married, no matter what degree of education she receives (Komora, 2014). In the eyes of some parents, the Western-style education that their children get is a tool to indoctrinate them into a life of materialism, promiscuity, and Western cultural values (Komora, 2014).

Girls and women occasionally cross into adjacent towns and villages to engage in trading, which is frequently a lucrative occupation. Those who have been successful in this profession have been shown to draw in other schoolgirls, resulting in school dropouts. Despite various interventions by humanitarian agencies, government of Kenya and International Organizations to provide targeted support for girls, socio-cultural practices still stymie girl-child education with girls in Kakuma accounting for less than 40% gross enrolment at Primary level of schooling (UNHCR, 2019). It is against this backdrop that a study by Brown and Watkins, (2011), contend that South Sudanese girls are often denied the same educational opportunities as boys in Kakuma Camp due to cultural attitudes and poverty. These cultural attitudes that keep many South Sudanese girls out of school regardless of the efforts made by humanitarian actors hence the current study.

2.0 Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on socio-cultural theory. The socio-cultural theory is based on sociocultural perspectives and emphasises the critical role of culture, interaction, and collaboration in influencing the quality of learning. Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist, is well-known for establishing the importance of social interactions and culture in the development of higher-order thinking abilities, and his insights into the dynamic "interdependence of individual and social processes in the construction of knowledge" are particularly valuable (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). It is common to think of Vygotsky's theories as largely developmental theories, with an emphasis on qualitative changes in behaviour through time as an attempt to explain invisible processes of mind, language, and higher-order thinking abilities development. There are several implications and practical applications for learners of all ages that may be drawn from Vygotsky's concepts, even if his primary goal was to better understand higher psychological processes in youngsters. Girls at the Kakuma Camp of South Sudan can benefit from this theory. Socio-cultural factors have had an impact on the education of the girl-child.

Vygotsky's views of socio-cultural learning are generally associated with three themes: As a first step in the development of higher mental functions is the use of psychological tools (especially language), and as a second step in the development of higher mental functions is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). However, each of these notions is interconnected and non-hierarchical in nature. It is widely accepted that sociocultural theory provides a number of advantages. First and foremost, it emphasises the importance of considering the larger social and cultural context of one's actions. Rather than viewing humans as autonomous entities, this perspective emphasises the hazy border between the self and the rest of the world. It illustrates the dynamic of a learner acquiring knowledge and skills from society and then exerting influence on their immediate environment (Miller, 2011). Second, sociocultural theory recognises the importance of individual and cross-cultural variation. Sociocultural theory, in contrast to many other Universalist theories, accepts that people within and across cultures have differences. Depending on the specific social or physical circumstances and tools available, "various historical and cultural contexts may support [different] growth approaches to any given developmental endpoint" (Miller, 2011).

As previously stated, one important drawback is the ambiguity around the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD). Depending on the circumstances, individuals may have large or small zones, which can be both beneficial and unpleasant. Learning, ability, style, and current development compared to other children of the same age are not accurately depicted by only measuring the distance between the learner and the centre of the zone (Miller, 2011). As a result, little is known about whether a child's zone is the same across different learning domains, with different people, and if it grows or shrinks over time. This is also true. A new theory was adopted to help explain how humanitarian crises play out when socio-cultural practises impair girl-child education because of these limitations.

3.0 Methodology

The study utilized descriptive survey research design and evaluative research design. The study was conducted in Kakuma refugee camp, located in Northwestern Kenya. The target population included girls in schools within the refugee camp. The study also targeted other education stakeholders including teachers, members of school board of management (BOM), parents, girls who dropped out of school, Humanitarian agencies implementing education in the camps and Government officials. The total sample size for the study was 451. The study employed several sampling techniques including stratified proportionate sampling, simple random sampling, convenience sampling, snowball sampling and purposive sampling. Analysis of the data was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 24) for descriptive statistics to generate frequencies and percentages.

4.0 Findings and Discussions

4.1 The effects of socio-cultural practices on humanitarian response for girl-child Education.

The study sought to assess the effects of socio-cultural practices on humanitarian response for girl-child education among South Sudanese girls. The results are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 4.1 : Effects of socio-cultural practices on humanitarian response towards girl-child education among southern Sudanese in Kakuma Camp, Kenya.

Effects of socio-cultural practices	Yes		No		Total		Ranking Order
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Domestic violence	186	48.40%	198	51.60%	384	100%	12
Low enrolment of girls in school	323	84.10%	61	15.90%	384	100%	1
Poor performance	282	73.40%	102	26.60%	384	100%	6
Low attendance	233	60.80%	151	39.20%	384	100%	8
Gender disparity	310	80.80%	74	19.20%	384	100%	4
Low self-esteem	265	69.00%	119	31.00%	384	100%	7
High drop-out rates	298	77.70%	86	22.30%	384	100%	5
Child labor/domestic chores	229	59.60%	155	40.40%	384	100%	9
Irresponsible parenthood; illiteracy	225	58.70%	159	41.30%	384	100%	10
Lack of female role models e.g. female teachers	221	57.60%	163	42.40%	384	100%	11
Poverty	321	83.50%	63	16.50%	384	100%	2
Marginalization	319	83.20%	65	16.80%	384	100%	3

Source: Field Data,2021

Effect of socio-cultural practices on low turnover of girls in schools is a pertinent issue of concern and concurs with various study findings. As study by Timira (2014) on the strategic interventions for access, participation and performance of girl child education in Somalia confirms that alongside early marriages, lack of gender indecisive infrastructure and lack of enough female teachers to act as role models stood out as socio-cultural setbacks to girl child participation. In as much as the number of female teachers within Kakuma and Kalobeyei schools have improved, this has not reached the desired threshold; hence the findings are comparable. The study also reaffirms the need for strengthening the capacity of rescue centres towards provision of conducive learning environment in addressing the socio-cultural setbacks. As early girl-child marriage was confirmed as

a key factor both by KII, FGD and the quantitative data, this is confirmed by a study by Ngoran and Ngalim (2019) done in Cameroon. Their study reports that with early marriage comes the low self-esteem among the victims, low social status, and high dependence that make it hard for the victims to be reintegrated into education.

In the same breath, the congruence of the various study findings and our study on socio-cultural factors' influence on girl child participation to education can be used as baseline for infrastructural situational assessment in response to the gender mainstreaming agenda. As lack of proper facilities impede girl-child participation to education; provision of it thereof would necessitate their participation. There is also need for increased stakeholders' engagement in a bid of instituting lasting strategies towards the retrospective early girl child marriage culture. The recommendations need keen application of suitable psycho-social behaviour change and health promotion models with increased expected yields.

4.1.1 Domestic violence

The study sought to find out whether domestic violence and fighting was an effect of socio-cultural practices on humanitarian response for girl-child education. The study found out that 186 (48.4%) stated that domestic fighting was due to socio-cultural practices on humanitarian response for girl-child education whereas 198 (51.6%) were of the contrary opinion.

Regarding the foregoing results one of the key informants averred that:

Girls are emotionally weaker than boys. When they witness frequent fights at home they suffer from psychological breakdown. This affects their study. Unlike boys, who society regard as hard core, girls more often than not plunge into state of hopelessness when they experience fights. Girls also experience severe punishment when they are perceived to be with men whom their parents have not approved as suitors (Interview with key informant at WIK, Kakuma on 26/04/2021).

One of the key informants from UNICEF also stated that, when there is too much violence at home, girls can run away from home and consequently miss school for several days. This is likely to affect their education significantly as they are likely to end up missing out what had been covered at school. If this trend continues for a long time, then girls may end up dropping out of school or performing extremely poorly to the extent of not being able to proceed to the next level.

The findings are in agreement with Stern and Poole (2010), who assert that domestic violence happens at all ages. Domestic abuse is more damaging to children's stress levels than the degree of the abuse, according to Sterne and Poole (2010). Physical, emotional, behavioural and cognitive harms can all be induced by domestic abuse. These harms are often intertwined with each other. Despite the fact that injury can occur at any age. Domestic violence affects a wide range of ages, including toddlers aged 1–4, children aged 5–10, and adolescents aged 11–16, because of the unique problems and issues they face. It's important to keep in mind that these ranges are merely approximations, and that the experiences and reactions of youngsters vary widely depending on their unique circumstances.

4.1.2 Low enrolment of girls in school

The study sought to find out whether low enrolment of girls in school was an effect of socio-cultural practices on humanitarian response for girl-child education. The study found out that 323 (84.1%) stated that Low enrolment of girls in school was due to socio-cultural practices on humanitarian response for girl-child education whereas 61 (15.9%) were of the contrary opinion. The results are illustrated in table 5.1.

The precedent results were supported by one of the education officer at UNICEF who asserted that:

There is low enrolment of girls to schools due to deeply entrenched socio-cultural practices. More often than not girls are told to remain at home at attend to domestic chores as well as taking care of their siblings. Girls too are viewed as potential wives; therefore, they remain at home while being groomed in readiness for marriage. Unfortunately, a huge number get married at early age. This affects their educational well-being. When girls do not go to school they remain uneducated and underpowered in the society (Interview with education officer at UNICEF, Kakuma,27/04/2021).

On the heels of the preceding opinions, Musungu (2010) believes that the unfavourable attitude many parents have toward the education of girls is a major contributor to poor enrollment and high dropout rates. Traditional socio-cultural views about gender roles and skills are to blame for this unfavourable attitude. Throughout African history and culture, women were supposed to be solely responsible for raising children and caring for their spouses. Historically, women were viewed as caring creatures and were supposed to take care of their families and children at home. Obedience and subservience were also demanded of them. Women were viewed as less competent than men in all areas 24 outside of their established roles, including physical, mental, and emotional capacities. As a result, men were considered as the ones who needed to provide women with care, protection, direction, and leadership. Girls were also regarded a risk to educate since they were more likely to get pregnant or get married and drop out of school, and any money invested on their education would be lost, according to the findings (Musungu,2010).

Because of this, some parents stated that if they had the option, they would rather educate their sons than their daughters. In the words of the panelists:

"It is better to educate a boy because after all, most girls are viewed as very foolish, they allow themselves to become pregnant and drop out of school. Why should I waste my money? "Even few bright girls should be taught how to keep their homes in future (Discussion with parents in FGD at Hope primary school on 28th/04/2021)

Social difficulties for women can arise as a result of being labelled as "talented" (Musungu, 2010) Girls who are smarter than their peers may perceive that being clever is a disadvantage in social terms, according to several studies. It's not uncommon for brilliant young women to purposely downplay their abilities in order to avoid being perceived as ugly or deficient in social skills by their peers. To put it another way, they may "act stupid." As a result, parents may also convey negative messages to their daughters about how they should behave, how polite they should be, and how they should appear.

4.1.3 Poor Performance

The study sought to ascertain whether poor performance is as a result of socio-cultural practices that affect humanitarian response towards girl-child education. The study found out that out of the 384, 282 (73.4%) stated that poor performance was a result of socio-cultural practices while 102 (26.6%) were of the contrary opinion. The results are illustrated in table 4.1

The preceding results were supported by discussants in FGD who reasoned that:

Lack of priority for girls has contributed to poor performance. Many efforts have been put in place but not much has been achieved. Girls continue to perform dismally in class. Apparently, the situation is aggravated by parental negligence and prevailing male chauvinism in the society. Girls too need sanitary towels to keep them in schools. Girls who lack sanitary towels miss classes and since there are no proper mechanism for remedial classes for them, they end up performing poorly. Therefore, girls hardly perform well due these social disadvantages (FGD with BoM, at Newlight primary school, on 27/04/2021).

The foregoing assertion is in agreement with a study done by Auma (2014) titled '*An Assessment of Factors Affecting Girls' Performance in Secondary Schools in Rachuonyo South Sub County, Homa Bay County,*

Kenya. She asserted that poor academic achievement is the primary concern of all educational stakeholders. Consequently, countries around the world see their people, social and economic potential squandered. A number of factors, including a lack of resources in the classroom, a lack of discipline in the classroom, an unfavourable home environment, frequent absences and repetition, low intelligence and anxiety, contribute to poor academic performance (Ndirangu, 2007). On the other hand, Kunje, Selemani-Meke, and Ogawa (2009) found that the age, gender, and socioeconomic status of the students affected their academic performance.. Over the years, girls in Rachuonyo South have fared poorly and some of the explanations have not been determined.

Auma (2014) argued that unless a solution was found, the trend will continue. The Nyanza Education Women's Initiative (NEWI) undertook a study of the secondary school performance of girls in Nyanza Province through the Provincial Education Board. As a result, only eight of the applicants who received a "A" in Nyanza were female, with only one of those from Rachuonyo South Sub County. This is no laughing matter. In light of this, further investigation is needed into the factors influencing females' performance in secondary schools in Rachuonyo South Sub County (NEWI, 2010).

Women's academic performance in secondary school was affected by a wide range of home-based issues, which differed from school to school. NEWI (2010), the Nyanza Education Women's Initiative, reports that the majority of rural households continue to prioritise the education of their sons. After school, the girl was responsible for household chores, leaving them with no time to complete their schoolwork or read quietly. This has a significant negative effect on their academic achievement. Additionally, the girls had a negative attitude regarding schooling. Along with school and home-based factors on girls' performance, the survey discovered environmental and community-based influences as well. Raped students on their way to and from school, particularly in wooded regions. A group of "Boda boda" persons provided the girls gifts and lifts to keep them distracted from their studies. Nyanza Education Women's Initiative visited 162 secondary schools in Nyanza province and found that poverty, the education level of parents, sexual abuse, lack of motivation, and the absence of role models in rural areas are all factors that affect the performance of female students in secondary school. In Rachuonyo South Sub County, as part of Nyanza province, these characteristics had a similar impact on the performance of girls in secondary schools. Due to their busy schedules after school, most day scholars don't have enough time to study. As a result, their grades suffered. In most Kenyan societies, women are still viewed as primarily responsible for their families' economic well-being, and so, the necessity of education is overlooked. During a study in Kilungu District, Kenya, conducted by Kivuli (2006), the researchers sought to determine the association between parents' educational level and the performance of girls in scientific classes. Girls' performance was strongly influenced by their parents' education, career, and socioeconomic status, according to the study. Research on students' home backgrounds has been undertaken in a variety of ways. Several studies, including those by Eshiwani (1983), UNESCO (2001), Ayoo (2002), Njuguna (2004), and Kitavi (2005), have found that the elements on which students rely for their daily survival while in school have an impact on their final grades. The family background consists of the parents, the family's socioeconomic standing, the parents' educational level, and the living conditions in the home environment. Quality of the house, assets, and parental education and wealth are all factors that contribute to a child's home environment, according to SACMEQ (2005). According to Kitavi's (2005) argument, the home environment has the greatest impact on students' ability to study and succeed in school because of the combined influence of parents and the community. He made the case, both in school and in associated research, that a child's education benefits from a supportive home environment. High-quality education necessitates considerable parental involvement, according to UNESCO (2001). When a family's living conditions are bad, they will receive little assistance. In the Nyatike District of Kenya, Otieno (2008) conducted a study on the impact of home-based factors on girls' KCSE performance. The study's goals were to examine the effects of household income, the size of the family, domestic duties, and parental participation on the performance of female students. The study found that the size of the family, domestic duties, and parental participation all had an impact on the performance of girls in Nyatike District. Additionally, the current study tried to ascertain whether the same determinants impacted females in Rachuonyo South Sub County, Homa Bay County.

According to Cooksey (1981), a study conducted in Yaoundé, Cameroon found that fathers' education had a positive impact on the performance of girls in all occupations. Girls from the most remote parts of the country, those who were raised by ignorant farmers, scored lower on examinations. A prevalent scenario in third-world countries, according to Cooksey, is that education is viewed solely in terms of the financial rewards that it can bring with it. A person's level of education was a crucial determinant of one's lifestyle, employment options, and living style. According to Gould (1993), individuals who had a lot of money and a good work, as well as a great quality of life, compared to those with the same education, were more likely to be successful. From our own personal experience, a family's quality of life improves both financially and educationally the greater one's educational attainment. Parents who are well-educated make sure their children have all they need at home to succeed in school, including books, study areas, strict rules, and extra help with homework. When it comes to gender equality in the home, it is possible for the home environment to be gender biased when it comes to giving equal opportunity for both boys and girls.

4.1.4 Low Attendance

The study sought to ascertain whether low attendance is as a result of socio-cultural practices that affect humanitarian response towards girl-child education. The study found out that out of the 384, 233(60.8%) stated that poor performance was a result of socio-cultural practices while 151 (39.2%) were of the contrary opinion. The results are illustrated in table 4.1

The foregoing is in resonance with a study conducted by Komora (2014) on '*Challenges Facing the Education Of The Girl Child In Kenya: A Case Study On Experiences And Views Of Girls in Galole Constituency of Tana River County, Kenya,*' That's why girls aren't able to go to school because of the high costs of both direct and indirect education. She also points out that while several countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have recently implemented free elementary education programmes, the majority of countries still do not provide free secondary education. Authors who focus on the situation of young girls who fall pregnant while in school have previously been more likely to report exclusion, according to Bank (2007b). In countries with low primary and secondary school enrollment, excluding pregnant and nursing girls frees up classroom space for male students, who are more highly valued economically. As a result, they are often unable to engage in regular school activities, despite the fact that they are legally entitled to formal inclusion in many nations, he claims (Komora, 2014).

An additional case in point is the Human Rights Watch (HRW) (2005) report, which found that school fees and other related costs like electricity, water, heat, teachers' bonuses, books and maintenance and transportation put education out of reach for many children, particularly those from low-income families. Children are routinely forced to drop out of school, start late, or never attend school due to these combined costs in more than a dozen countries, according to Human Rights Watch. Colclough (2004) and Kane (2004) noted that boys and girls are viewed as having different levels of economic value. Girls are being excluded from school because of the high cost of education, the inadequate quality of education, and the lack of schools available. Since most of the work is done at home, the EFA monitoring report of 2003/2004 stated that many children may not attend school because they have to work. Children in Africa are most likely to be employed as child labourers at 41%, followed by Asia at 21%, and Latin America at 17%, according to a research from the International Labor Organization. Famine and armed conflict in Africa have also led to high child labour rates and low school enrollment in the continent's developing economies.

4.1.5 High Gender disparity

The study sought to ascertain whether high gender disparity is as a result of socio-cultural practices that affect humanitarian response towards girl-child education. The study found out that out of the 384, 310(80.8%) stated that high gender disparity was a result of socio-cultural practices while 74 (19.2%) were of the contrary opinion. The results are illustrated in table 4.1

The findings corroborate Adhikari's (2013) assertion that South Asia is one of the most male-dominated regions in the world, with almost half of females suffering at home and in society at some point in their lives as a result of their gender. More than half of the girls in a research on gender disparities in education in Nepal report experiencing gender inequality both at home and in the classroom (Bhusal, 2011). Other emerging countries, such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan, have high rates of female school dropouts, as does Nepal. Even though female literacy in these countries has increased, there is still a substantial gender discrepancy in literacy in these countries (Groot, 2007; Jacoby, 2011; Madhura 2011; Ismail, 2013 and Solotaroff et al, 2012). Since 1951, for example, it has increased by five times in India (Sharma et al, 2007). In many African countries, the scenario is nearly identical (Okediji, 2012). Gender inequality in Nepal is frequently identified as a barrier to girls attending school, but little emphasis has been paid to how patriarchal socio-cultural practises influence their attendance. Dropping out of secondary school is significant for women's educational, social, economic, and political status in Nepal today. To realise the aim of education for all, effective strategies to promote school advancement and minimise the percentage of female students who drop out are essential. Despite the fact that more girls are enrolled in primary school in Nepal, the rate at which they drop out is extremely high (Lewin and Sabates, 2011). Dropout rates among girls are complicated by a variety of interconnected issues at various tiers of society.

4.1.6 Low Self-Esteem

The study sought to ascertain whether low esteem is as a result of socio-cultural practices that affect humanitarian response towards girl-child education. The study found out that out of the 384, 285(69%) stated that low esteem was a result of socio-cultural practices while 119 (31%) were of the contrary opinion.

The preceding results were supported by one of the key informant who adduced that

Girls are viewed as inferior sex with low academic aspirations who should be at home attending to domestic duties. They are also regarded as of inferior status. This affects their well-being since their role and space in the society is only limited to home and not at school. Consequently, their self-esteem is interfered with (Interview with Headteacher at Fuji primary school ,Kakuma on 24/04/2021).

According to Duba (2014), girls' academic expectations are low in ethnic groups where females have internalised gender roles. Parental and teacher messages of academic inferiority can have an impact on the self-images of female students. Female students' low self-esteem is a result of their adoption of cultural norms that view women as the lesser sex. According to Okojie (2001), many girls' lack of ambition and interest in school is due to societal expectations, particularly those of their parents and teachers, that they should be focused on becoming brides and mothers. They've been taught from an early age that a college education isn't necessary to succeed in these jobs. As a result, many young women experience low self-esteem and low self-confidence to the point that their parents force them to drop out of school. Many African countries, according to Sifuna (2005), have a view that education is less important for females because of patriarchal ideas which assign women lower status and roles. Girls' self-esteem and academic aspirations were lowered as a result of internalising gender roles expectations.

4.1.7 High drop-out rates

The study sought to ascertain whether high drop-out rates is as a result of socio-cultural practices that affect humanitarian response towards girl-child education. The study found out that out of the 384, 298(77.7%) stated that high drop-out rates was a result of socio-cultural practices while 86 (22.3%) were of the contrary opinion.

During an FGD with drop out girls at Kakuma, it emerged that majority of drop out cases in schools affected girls. This was occasioned by numerous problems that these girls encountered in the society due to the biases that the society had against them. The FGD participants stated that girls going to school was not a priority to

many within their societal set. One of them indicated that they are expected to get married once they reach a certain age and hence to many people within that set up, going to school was seen a waste of time. It also emerged during the FGD that many women within this society had not gone to school and hence such low literacy rates among women aggravated the situation for the young girls who did not get support from their mothers to pursue education.



Plate 4.1: Researcher with Teenage mothers/drop outs during a Focus Group Discussion at Kakuma Camp

Source: Researcher, 2021

This finding is in agreement with Amadi *et al* (2013) in their study *Girl Child Dropout: Experiential Teacher and Student Perceptions* who argue that some cultural practises have a big effect on the girls' self-esteem because they make them feel less valuable. Some parents believe that because girls are less motivated to attend school, they will put in less effort. Boys are sent to school and girls are left at home with their mothers so that they can be taught household tasks like cooking and babysitting by their mothers. High illiteracy among Pakistani parents who do not see the value of education for their daughters was recognised by Nadia (2010) as a cultural and social barrier to accessing education for Pakistani women. Because of poverty, parents often choose to send their sons to school rather than their daughters; in some tribal tribes, women hold a low status. For several reasons, they are considered less bright; they are expected to do household chores and serve their families' male ancestors early in life; and they are more likely to get married early than boys. Many of these restrictions are based on centuries-old practises. These customs must change in order to remove these impediments.

In the Maasai society, for example, females drop out of school because of family and peer pressure to marry early. Circumcision is seen as a rite of passage into womanhood in the Maasai culture, which teaches females that they should not continue their education after they are circumcised, since education only applies to young people. Traditionally, the value of a Maasai woman is based on the number of children she can produce for her husband, not on her educational or economic status. A pregnant girl is viewed as bringing shame to the family and lowering the price of the bride, both of which are common practises in the Maasai society. As a result, many parents demand that their daughters drop out of school and be married at an early age (Afrol, 2007).

According to Arko (2013), one of the primary causes of female dropout is a lack of motivation in the classroom. Poor test passing rates and dropout rates are strongly linked by Mzuza *et al.* (2013), who found that girls who fail exams eventually lose interest in school and choose to drop out. Children with low academic

achievement are more likely to drop out of school than those with superior academic achievement (Hunter & May, 2003). Humanitarian crises only serve to intensify the problem.

The findings of Lloyd and Clark (2002), on a study of the effect of primary school quality on school dropout in Kenyan girls and boys, found that school characteristics including passive teaching tactics, neglecting the students' learning styles, influenced the girls' decision to withdraw from school.

4.1.8 Child labor

The study sought to ascertain child labor as an effect of socio-cultural practices that affect humanitarian response towards girl-child education. The study found out that out of the 384, 229 (59.6%) stated that child labour was a result of socio-cultural practices while 115 (40.4%) were of the contrary opinion.

The foregoing results are in tandem with the views of one key informant who averred that:

There has been a number of instances reported that young girls are involved in small merchandise while others are going to school. This is attributed to poverty levels within the camps. What UNHCR, or WFP offers is not enough, it is supplementary. No wonder children from very poor background are pushed by their parents to engage even in odious activities in order to get money for family subsistence (Interview with key informant at UNHCR, Kakuma on 28/04/2021).

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), the vast majority of child labour occurs in dangerous occupations such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing, bonded child labour, domestic work, and fishing. Environmental and occupational factors can have an effect on children's health and development. Children work in a range of industries, including agriculture, manufacturing, domestic labour, sex work, migrant labour, and street vending. Individuals' life may be impacted by their employment and other activities in other countries. Additionally, the inequality is exacerbated by differences in children's ages, gender, and employment status (Donnell et al, 2002).

According to Amon et al. (2012), child labourers in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia are primarily involved in the most heinous forms of child labour that continue to exist, including child trafficking, bonded child labour, child domestic work, and hazardous child labour. Over 90% of working children are exposed to poisonous substances and hazardous tools as a result of their jobs. Numerous harmful vocations exist in underdeveloped countries, where children and adolescents lack access to healthcare facilities and basic information about the health risks and preventative measures related with these activities (ILO, 2012, Aqal, 2012 & Miller, 2010).

According to Soares (2002), there are three types of variables that affect students' academic progress: those related to students' individual and family circumstances. Both the school's processes and teaching techniques, as well as its socioeconomic background, comprise its characteristics. The direction of causality in the relationship between child labour and schooling is influenced by a number of interrelated factors. Child labour has a direct impact on education, but poor academic achievement may also have a direct effect on child labour. Students' premature entry into the workforce could be caused by a combination of factors, including poor school quality and apathy on the part of parents and students.

The researcher argues that child labour has a significant impact on educational success. This is because relatively few youngsters are able to attend both school and work continuously, as these activities are typically conducted concurrently. Those who attend school and work find it difficult to devote the necessary attention to their schoolwork, and hence perform poorly in school. For the majority of children, the decision is between education and labour.

Child labour, according to Tomas (2011), is work that is harmful to children or prevents them from attending school. Globally including in the United States, widening disparities between affluent and poor have forced millions of young children out of school and into labour in recent decades. According to the International Labor Organization, 215 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 today labour in illegal, hazardous, or very exploitative situations. Children under the age of 18 labour in a variety of vocations throughout the world, mostly because they and their families are extremely poor. Children labour in significant numbers in commercial agriculture, fishing, manufacturing, mining, and domestic service. Certain youngsters engage in illegal activities such as drug trafficking and prostitution, as well as other traumatic occupations such as military service. Child work, according to James (2009), entails at least one of the following characteristics: Infringes on a country's minimum-age rules, Endangers the physical, mental, or emotional well-being of children Consists of unacceptable maltreatment, such as child slavery, child trafficking, debt bondage, forced labour, or illegal activity. Prevents youngsters from attending school and exploits children to subvert labour regulations In underground mines, opencast mines, and quarries, child employees face exceptionally high rates of illness and injury. As young as six or seven years old, children break up rocks and wash, filter, and haul ore. The nine-year-old works underground, detonating bombs and transporting cargo. Children are employed in a wide variety of mining operations. 2009 (Annie). Around 215 million youngsters work worldwide today, many of them full-time. They are not educated and have little or no opportunity to play. Numerous individuals do not obtain adequate nutrition or attention. They are deprived of the opportunity to be children. Over half of them are subjected to the most heinous types of child labour, including dangerous work settings, slavery or other forms of forced labour, criminal activities such as drug trafficking and prostitution, and participation in armed combat (Jay, 2005). Child labour is still prevalent in developing nations with high levels of poverty and limited educational options. Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest rates of child labour in 2010, with several African countries reporting over 50% of children aged 5–14 working (Dickens 2009) Agriculture is the world's greatest employer of child labour.

In Kenya, poverty and a lack of educational opportunities are important contributors to child labour. The country is facing teacher and school shortages, as well as overcrowding in classrooms and procedural issues resulting from children's unregistered status. Kenyan law prohibits a youngster from attending school if he or she is not registered with the Kenyan authorities as a citizen. Currently, 44% of rural Kenyan youngsters are unregistered. Thus, even when schools are available, rural children are unable to demonstrate their citizenship, and these unregistered children risk losing their educational opportunities (Angelina, 2008).

4.1.9 Irresponsible parenthood

The study sought to ascertain whether irresponsible parenthood is as a result of socio-cultural practices that affect humanitarian response towards girl-child education. The study found out that out of the 384, 225(58.7%) stated that irresponsible parenthood was a result of socio-cultural practices while 159(41.3%) were of the contrary opinion.

The parents' educational attainment plays a significant impact in principals' influence on girl-child engagement in education. On the other hand, Okwara (1992) finds that females with educated parents are more likely than those without educated parents to be enthusiastic about attending secondary school. Mworira (1993) states that in order for a youngster to maximise his or her educational opportunities, the child must have easy access to fundamental educational instruments like as books, newspapers, light, and stillness for convenient study; all of these demands can be recognised only by parents who have received formal education; the family environment must be supportive of girl child academic engagement in order to foster good self-esteem.

Girls' chances of staying in school could also be influenced by their family's cultural beliefs. Parents who had been educated themselves were more likely to encourage their children to do the same.

4.1.10 Lack of female Role Models

The study sought to ascertain whether dearth of female role models is as a result of socio-cultural practices that affect humanitarian response towards girl-child education. The study found out that out of the 384,

221(57.6%) stated that dearth of female role models was a result of socio-cultural practices while 163(42.4%) were of the contrary opinion.

The preceding results were underpinned by a key informant who stated that:

There are fewer female teachers in our schools. Comparatively, male teachers are more than female teachers. Kakuma area is considered as a hardship area therefore few female opt to teach in our schools. This ratio disproportionality affects girl-child in the end. Girls like confiding to female teachers to express their problems. In the event that there are fewer teachers then girls suffer (Interview with Head teacher at Horsed primary school on 27/04/2021).

In other studies that resonates with the foregoing, Radhika (2018) on *Factors Affecting Girl Child Education*, remarked that, those who live in rural areas and have traditional views desire that their girls only be educated by female teachers. There is a dearth of female teachers in schools, especially in rural regions, and this creates a barrier to girls completing their education, leading to school dropout rates. Female teachers are more likely to make students feel at ease and be able to effectively interact with them about academic and nonacademic issues.

4.1.11 Poverty

The study sought to ascertain whether poverty is as a result of socio-cultural practices that affect humanitarian response towards girl-child education. The study found out that out of the 384, 321(83.5%) stated that poverty was a result of socio-cultural practices while 63(16.5%) were of the contrary opinion. The high poverty levels are associated with dearth of appreciation of other sources of income from parents. Those of contrary opinion believed that humanitarian assistance was sufficient and that, they were not suffering from poverty.

The foregoing results regarding poverty levels were underpinned by one key informant who stated that:

Failure to embrace education has caused untold misery and suffering among South Sudanese. Young girls who would be economically empowered are betrothed early and this affects their education. Majority are dependent on aid and forget how to fish. This dependence does not cushion them from hard times instead it worsen the situation. Life becomes unbearable because of attitudinal approaches (An interview with WIK official, on 26/04/2021).

Similar studies resonate with the preceding assertion. In a study conducted by Ochieng (2012) on ‘*Socio-Economic Factors Leading To Girl-Child Drop-Out In Public Mixed Secondary Schools In Kisumu West District, Kisumu County*’ Researchers found that societal causes included early marriage, lack of mentorship by teachers and parents, adolescent pregnancies, poor performance and distance to school, which transfers responsibility to the girl-child. Poverty has been found to be a major factor in the dropout of girls. Research shows that social and economic factors reinforce each other and/or feed off each other, resulting in high dropout rates among girls.

The study established poverty prevalent within the rural areas as a major cause of girl-child drop out. This variable was found to have a spill-over effect in terms of its consequences. For example, girls from poor households were found to drop out of school due to lack of school fees, inability to purchase personal effects necessary to facilitate smooth learning at school. On-the other hand, poverty drives a lot of girls into extreme situations where they are forced to partner with men from well off families in return for economic gains. In certain cases, the study established that girls dropped from schools to get married to men with better economic status than the girls' families. Similarly, the experts in the study argued that due to poverty the parents or guardians are completely unable to provide the numerous needs of the adolescent girl child. This is normally a very critical stage in the development of a child when they go through identity crisis and hence want to do all within their powers to belong or fit in properly amongst their peers from well off families. Unfortunately,

because of their parents' poverty they are unable to dress like their peers and/or possess other things that are deemed to make them "fit in" properly.

"In an attempt to fill the economic gap, girls find themselves falling into sexual traps laid by men wanting sexual favors from them leading to unwanted pregnancies hence drop out of school. There was a case in point of a girl whose father was a herdsman and whose mother's house help. The girl was very bright in school but ended up getting pregnant and falling out of school due to unmet needs." (An interview with a UNICEF official, on 28/04/2021).

According to a study by Duba (2014), the economic status of parents in Merti District is a contributing factor to the decline in the number of females attending school in the district. There are many reasons for this, including the community's high level of poverty and the reliance on GOK foods and humanitarian foods provided by donors. According to the findings of the study, when money is tight, the boy child is given priority when it comes to paying school fees.

4.1.12 Marginalization

The study sought to ascertain whether marginalization is as a result of socio-cultural practices that affect humanitarian response towards girl-child education. The study found out that out of the 384, 319(83.2%) stated that marginalization was a result of socio-cultural practices while 65(16.8%) were of the contrary opinion.

Using these facts, Komora (2014) asserts that hurdles to education for many girls are global. As a result, girls have been denied the opportunity to improve their lives and the freedom to pursue their interests. As a result, the girls are denied many of their human rights as a result of their marginalisation. This could be seen as a type of social injustice. For these reasons, ensuring that girls have access to an education is seen as a means of liberation from the constraints that confine them to socially and economically marginalised groups. These barriers must be understood in order to achieve a significant and meaningful rise in the number of girls who are able to attend school.

Marginalization of women in post-tsunami relief and reconstruction activities due to lack of engagement on requirements and nearly sole reliance on male workers for response efforts. Women's health, safety, and privacy were frequently ignored in refuges and camps.

5.0 Conclusion

The study concludes that the effects of sociocultural practices are more pronounced in terms of domestic fighting, low enrolment of girls and low attendance are pervasive. Therefore, there is need to prevent such occurrences. Child marriage, domestic chores assigned to girls and biased value on boys influence humanitarian response to drop out from school among south Sudanese girls. Additionally, other sociocultural practices otherwise considered harmful do not promote such influence – such as negative attitudes towards education

6.0 Recommendation

The study recommends that the government and humanitarian agencies should employ more female teachers to act as role models to girls and inspire the participation of girls in education. This will lessen the effects of socio-cultural practices. Additionally, agencies should provide school boarding opportunities for girls to maximize their focus on school away from socio-cultural practices such as domestic chores. Besides, the government should strengthen child protection services and policies to protect girls from harmful socio-cultural practices that would affect their education.

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