

**EXPLORING FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO FEMALE STUDENTS DROP  
OUT RATES IN COMMUNITY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TANZANIA: A  
CASE OF MBINGA DISTRICT**

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**2014**

**CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned certifies that she has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by the Open University of Tanzania a dissertation entitled *Exploring Factors Contributing to Female Students Dropout Rates in Community Secondary Schools in Tanzania: A case of Mbinga District*.

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Date:

**DECLARATION**

I, Luklesia Pankras Hekela, declare that this dissertation is my own work and that has not been presented and will not be presented to any other University for similar or any other degree award.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my parents, Pankras Tembes Hekela and the late Colleter Komba who laid the foundation and paid for my education in the initial stages, may God bless them. Also to my brother Gisbert who encouraged me in all stages of process to learn, as well as my sons Innocent and Baraka for the tolerant heat during my studies.

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the current study was to explore the factors contributing to female students dropout rates in community secondary schools in Mbinga District in Tanzania. The study used a qualitative approach involving a sample of four head teachers, forty secondary school female dropouts and their parents from four secondary schools in Mbinga District. Several research instruments were used including questionnaires, interviews and the documentary review of school records. Content analysis technique was used for the analysis of data.

The findings showed that factors contributing to female students dropout rates include school facilities and socio- economic issues had an adverse influence on the school dropout rate of the female students. Insufficient school facilities influenced more female students to dropout from school. Some female students who wanted to leave school for marriage used to become pregnant as a shortcut. The parents` perception on value of education influenced parents` neglect on investment in their daughters` education for fear of pregnancy.

On the basis of these findings, it was recommended to establish girls` re-entry programs to help those who terminate schooling because of pregnancy; to campaign for public girls` clubs at school level; establishing an effective enforcement law; and deployment of female teachers in rural schools to act as role models. There is a need also to change the societal negative attitudes and overall socio-economic issues hindering investment in girls` education.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BEST	Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania Schools
CBOS	Community Based Organizations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DR	Dropout Rate
ECLAS	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EFA	Education for All
ESR	Education for Self Reliance
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FEMSA	Female Education in Mathematics and Science in Africa
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
MDGs	The Millennium Development Goals
PEDP	Primary Education Development Program
PR	Promotion Rate
RR	Repetition Rate
SEDP	Secondary Education Development Plan
SEMP	Secondary Education Master Plan
SIDA	Swedish International Development Research Group
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TADREG	Tanzania Development Research Group
UNGEI	United Nations Girls Education Initiatives
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UPE	Universal Primary Education
URT	United Republic of Tanzania

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents introductory information about efforts made by Tanzania in the provision of secondary education. The main focus has been the background to the problem and the development of secondary education in Tanzania, the enrolment, completion and dropout rates in Tanzania schools. Other areas covered in this chapter include statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study, conceptual framework of the study and the structure of the study.

#### **1.2 Background of the Problem**

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) witnessed the increase in the enrolment of the female students during the 1990s with the gender parity rising from 0.83 to 0.88 percentages in 2000 for primary education and from 0.63 to 0.82 percentages at secondary level at the same year (UNESCO, 2006). This means that with every 100 male students enrolled there were 88 and 82 female students at primary and secondary education levels respectively. This is the ratio of female students to male students where the gender parity index of less than one expresses gender parity in favour of male students and where more than one gender parity index expresses gender parity in favour of female students. It has also been observed that in spite of all these gains in developing countries where an equal intake in enrolment rate is observed, two thirds of those leaving school before completing the third year are girls (Netft and Levin, 1999).

According to Neft and Levin (1999) this was projected to double by 2005 with more girls out of school. A number of studies have indicated the small percentage of girls who

received formal education at primary level, secondary and post secondary level in Africa (UNESCO, 2010). According to the UNGEI (2005) report, girls' education has been a priority in most of the developing countries including Tanzania. Responding on the Tanzania education girls' program condition, the United Nations Girls Education Initiatives (UNGEI) was launched in Tanzania in November 2002. In collaboration with Forum for African Women Educationalist (FAWE) Tanzania, United Nations Children and Education Fund (UNICEF) supported a national forum which was convened in November 2004 to build partnerships in Tanzania and propose modalities to build future implementation of girls' education strategies.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) aimed at ensuring that by 2015 all boys and girls are able to complete a full course of primary schooling and to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferred by 2005 and to all levels of education by 2015.

In the developing world, enrolment in secondary education is not only low, but is also facing problems of relatively high dropout rates. In eight Latin America countries, the dropout rate at secondary education level are higher, exceeding 15 percent resulting in reports by UNESCO (2003) indicating that in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), only 46 percent of girls complete primary school education as compared with the average of 76 percent in the rest of the developing world. These statistics suggest that dropout and school repetition, are critical problems in SSA requiring immediate and deliberate efforts to alleviate them. Secondary education in Tanzania is defined as formal education offered to persons who will have successfully completed entry requirements (URT, 1995). The aims and objectives of secondary education in Tanzania include the preparation of students for tertiary and higher education, vocational, technical and professional training or to equip

them with skills and knowledge to join the world of work. Secondary education is subdivided into ordinary level (Form I-IV) and advanced level (Form V to VI). This study is concerned with ordinary level, which covers four years of schooling. The basis for selection and enrolment in o-level is the pre-set national standard and cut off points of the performance in the national primary school leaving examination (URT, 2006).

Since independence in 1961 the government has passed various acts and policies in an effort to expand the secondary education sector. The education act of 1962 was passed to regulate the provision of secondary education in the placement of the 1927 education ordinance which aimed to abolish racial segregation in the provision of education (Chedié, et al, 2000). In those education acts, however, less emphasis was given in the expansion of secondary education and no particular attention was given to female participation.

In 1967, the philosophy of Education for Self Reliance (ESR) was introduced proposing several reforms in the school curricula, including diversification. As in the former education acts, no particular emphasis was made in favor of female participation in secondary education. The expansion of secondary education sector in Tanzania was partly a result of the recommendation made from the 1980-82 Presidential Commission on Education (URT, 1984).

The Commission reviewed the existing system of education and proposed the necessary changes to be adopted by the state. It was recommended that there was need to expand secondary education. In response, the government opened the door for the private sector and local communities to engage in provision of and expansion of secondary education.

The move was intended to raise the enrolment rate from standard seven to form one at least by 15 percent by 2000 (URT, 1984). For instance, in 1981 there was a significant rise in the ratio of female-to-male presentation at ordinary level of secondary education, that is, from 31.6 percent to 47.5 percent in 2006 (URT, 2006). One would argue that Tanzania had gone far ahead in recognition of gender parity at secondary level. However, much needs to be done to ensure equity in participation of both male and female students at secondary level.

In the period between the year 2000 and 2005 secondary education in Tanzania was guided by Secondary Education Master Plan (SEMP) which focused on several key areas such as equity in Education with reference to gender, geographical and socio economic status (Mbelle and Katabaro, 2003; Rajan, 2001). However, strategies for implementation of SEMP faced some difficulties, including high female dropout rates. In response, the government of the Tanzania launched the Secondary Education Development Program (SEDP) in 2004 attempting to expand secondary education (URT, 2004). One of the objectives of SEDP was to raise the access of both girls and boys secondary education by improving the transition rate from primary to junior secondary level from 21 percent in 2003 to 40 percent in 2009, which was to be done through a number of strategies, including reducing dropout and failure rates less than 2 percent by 2009 (URT, 2004).

Table 1.1 indicates that female enrolment rates for both government schools and non-government schools rose from 45632 (2002) to 48106 (2003), an increase of 5.4 percent. The statistics for male enrolment indicates a drop from 52063 students in 2002 to 51638 in 2003 equivalent to 0.8 percent.

**Table 1.1 The Enrolment and Dropout Rates in Secondary Schools in Tanzania for the 2002/2005 and 2003/2006 Cohorts**

2002/2005 COHORT					
ENROLMENT RATES				DROP OUT RATES (%)	
FORM I(2002)		FORM IV(2005)			
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
52,063	45,632	42,460	33,273	18.1	27.1
2003/2006 COHORT					
Form I (2003)		FORM IV (2006)			
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
51,638	48,106	41,651	30,729	19.3	36.1

**Source:** URT (2006)

However, the dropout rates for female students rose from 27.1 percent in the first cohort to 36.1 percent in the second cohort. On the part of male students the dropout rate rose from 18.4 percent in the first cohort to 19.3 percent in the second cohort (URT, 2006). It is evident from these data that dropout rates for girls are almost twice that of male students. Moreover the data show that the ratio of female students in form one rose from 0.88 percent in 2002 to 0.9percent in 2003. This means that for every 100 students enrolled in form one there were 88 and 93 female students in 2002 and 2003 respectively. One would argue that the increasing rates of school dropout could spoil the effort of the government and communities to expand secondary education.

However, the variation in completion and dropout rates exist from one region to another in Tanzania. In Lindi and Rukwa regions, for example, only 50 percent of the students who

were enrolled in form 1 in 2001 reached form four in 2004. The number of girls in Lindi and Rukwa regions was only a third of the number of girls enrolled in 2001. This suggests that two thirds of the girls had either dropped out or transferred to another region (URT, 2004d). Worse still, the trends of dropout rates tend to affect female students more than their male counterparts. The dropout rates are closely related to various factors including pregnancy, early marriage, domestic chores and distance from schools. There is need to take appropriate measures in redressing the problem to avoid any further loss of public resources allocated to education and creation of illiterate nation. Thus, completion rates of secondary school students are still low as it is indicated in table 1.2.

**Table 1.2 Completion Rates for Secondary Form 4, 2008-2010**

2008				2009				2010			
M	F	T	(%)	M	F	T	%(F)	M	F	T	%(F)
5623	1846	7469	5.7	8692	3384	12076	28.8	46896	48560	95456	29.2

**Source:** Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania (BEST), 2006-2010.

### 1.3 Statement of the Problem

Investment in education in Tanzania through the provision of secondary education in the community secondary schools is geared to develop human capital (skills and knowledge of students). However, these effects have been hampered by unacceptable higher rates of dropouts more seriously affecting female students. In addition, increasing rates of dropouts for female students threatens the efforts to promote gender equality in accessing to and benefiting from the secondary education.

The government of Tanzania has initiated several programs and strategies to support girls schooling. The establishment and implementation for SEDP and other strategies such as

reduction of school fees from 40,000/= to 20,000/= were geared to promote both access and quality of secondary education; including retention and completion rates of female students. However, completion rates in secondary schools have remained relatively low; for example, female gross secondary school completion rate dropped to 33.1percent (SADC & UNESCO, 2010). The decreasing trends of completion rates of secondary school female students can increase illiteracy rate among the female population and gender imbalances in Tanzanian society

Various studies have indicated the challenges on female drop out at secondary level, because the rates are increasing at alarming rates. This study intended to explore the factors contributing to female students dropout rates in community secondary schools in Tanzania.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to explore the factors contributing to female students dropout rates in community secondary schools in Mbinga District in Tanzania.

#### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

- (i) To examine the school trends on factors contributing to female students' dropout rates in community secondary schools in Mbinga District.
- (ii) To assess the role of school facilities on factors contributing to female students' dropout rates in community secondary schools.
- (iii) To explore the influence of parent occupational status on factors contributing to female students' dropout rates in community secondary schools.
- (iv) To explore the parents' perceptions on value of education on factors contributing to female students' dropout rates in community secondary schools in Mbinga District.

## 1.6 Research Questions

- (i) What are the school trends on factors contributing to female students dropout rates in community secondary schools in Mbinga District?
- (ii) How do school facilities influence female students' dropout rates in community secondary schools in Mbinga District?
- (iii) What is the influence of parent occupational status on factors contributing to female students dropout rates in community secondary schools?
- (iv) What is the influence of parents' perception on value of education on the factors contributing to female students dropout rates in community secondary schools?

## 1.7 Significance of the Study

The study intended to provide a detailed description on how factors which influence female students dropout rates in community secondary schools, act as barriers to schooling. Specifically, the findings are expected to raise the awareness of parents and all members of the community on the benefits of investing in the education of female children. In addition, the findings are expected to contribute knowledge to the existing literature about the factors contributing to female students dropout rates at secondary level in Tanzania; moreover, to stimulate researchers to conduct further research on factors contributing to female students dropout rates at secondary level; and also to provide recommendations to policy makers on some possible ways to promote retention and completion rates of females in secondary schools.

## 1.8 Definition of the Terms

This section includes definition of terms as they are used in the study. The term **retention**, according to Hornsby (2004), refers to the action of keeping something rather than losing

it or stopping it. The term **completion** is the act or process of finishing something; or the state of being finished or completed. For the purpose of this study, retention refers to the action of keeping schooling rather than losing it; whereas completion is the state of being finished with secondary schooling, that is the four year educational cycle (O-level).

**Dropout**, according to Brimer (1971), is a pupil who leaves school before the end of the final year of the educational cycle in which s/he is enrolled. In this study a dropout is a secondary school student who could not complete his /her four-year educational cycle (Ordinary level).

According to Horby, (2000), the term **community** refers to all people who live in a particular area or country. It also means, the feeling of sharing things and belonging to a group in the place where you live. For the purpose of this study,

**Community secondary schools** are schools that offer programs that are four years long including practical skills. Such schools have been established within communities with government support.

In this study, the term **school facilities** is used to mean things provided by both parents and school to facilitate the learning of girl students. Facilities provided by parents include uniforms, exercise books and writing materials. Facilities provided by schools include dormitories, toilets and water.

### **1.9 Conceptual Framework of the Study**

It has been revealed from various literatures that school dropout rates is a function of both economic and social economic factors (URT, 1995; Bendera, 1997 & Raynor, 2005).

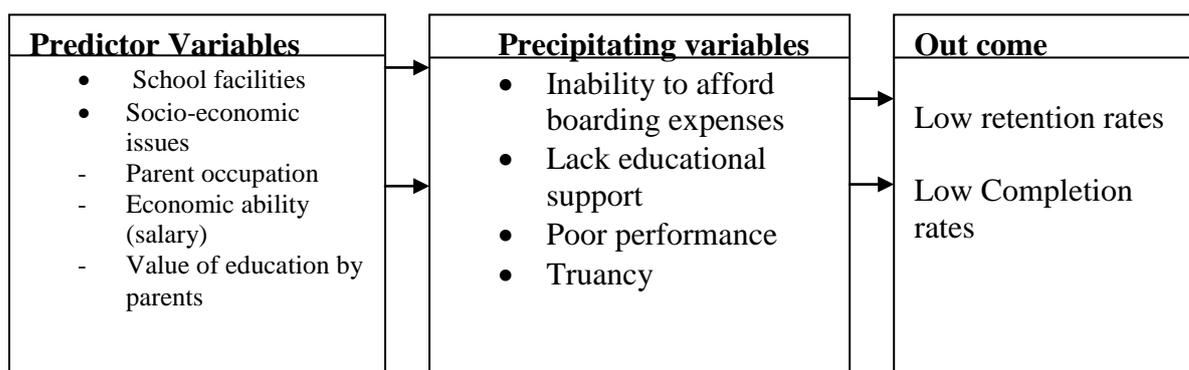
Economic factors limit the parents` ability to meet the educational cost for their children. Parents from poor households, are unlikely to afford both the direct cost such as school fees and other indirect cost of schooling for their children. School facilities and socio-economic issues have shown positively as among causes between dropout rates on the part of female students. They include factors such as parent occupation, economic ability (salary), and parents` perception on value of education.

The model or framework of this study was adopted from Machimu (2010) in the relationship between the predictor variables, precipitating variables and the outcome. Machimu`s Model was successful in identifying the factors contributing to female dropout rates among the secondary school students in Morogoro, Tanzania. He revealed that, the retention and completion favored more male students than female students. In terms of reasons for high female students dropout rates, his study identified that school facilities and socio-economic issues including parent occupation, economic ability and values of education by parents were responsible. So, the rationale for adopting Machimu`s Model was based on the fact that the study was conducted within the United Republic of Tanzania where society shares almost the same problems in low retention and completion rates.

Two categories of variables were used to guide the framework for this study, namely the predicting and precipitating variables. The predictor variables comprise school facilities and the socio-economic issues like parent occupation, economic ability, and value of education by parent. The predictor variables act as the root cause leading to other factors that may precipitate the retention and completion of the school. Precipitating variables are those characteristics which come as a result of pressure from predictor variables that the students may display sooner or later. Precipitating variables for that matter would include

lack of education support, poor academic performance, truancy and inability to afford boarding expenses.

The current study is based on the assumption that predictor variables may precipitate some behavior which in turn influences low retention and completion rates in schools. School facilities may lead to inability to afford boarding expenses, socio-economic issues may lead to lack of educational support, poor performance of the children predicting early with drawl. The major components of the overall conceptual frame work are summarized in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** The relationship between predictor variables and the completion rates in schools

**Source:** Adapted from Machimu (2010)

### 1.10 Delimitations of the Study

The study believes that completion rates can only be influenced by two factors namely school facilities, and the socio-economic issues which include parent occupation, economic ability and value of education by parents. In some cases they may not give adequate picture of the problem. The current study covers a small community in Mbinga District, which may not necessarily be representative of all the communities in southern region of Tanzania thus limiting the generalization of the results. The small study will

base on the views and information from the small sample of dropout secondary school female students' on retention and completion rates; and also from their parents and teachers. Secondary school female students were from only four schools in the district.

### **1.11 Limitation of the Study**

The exploring of factors on female students dropout rates involved some sensitive and confidential individual or family issues such as family styles, and income which may result into biased responses. This is because individuals would not have disclosed “secrets” concerning their private lives. The study concentrated mainly on school facilities and socio-economic issues as independent variables which may inadequately provide a clear picture of the problem. The study assessed no contribution from other factors, such as school factors, including teaching and learning methods.

### **1.12 Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter one introduces the study by presenting the background information, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, definition of the terms, conceptual frame work of the study, delimitation and limitation of the study. Chapter two reviews the literature related to the topic by presenting reasons for emphasizing on girls education, challenges facing girls participation in secondary education, global interventions towards girls rights to education, societal value and attitudes towards girls education and knowledge gap.

Chapter three describes the research design and methodology by presenting the research design, area of the study, population sample and sampling techniques, data collection methods and procedures, validation of the study instruments, data analysis plan, research ethical issues and chapter summary.

Chapter four presents data and discuss the findings by focusing on the objectives of the study, including the school trends on factors contributing to female students dropout rates in the sampled schools in Mbinga District, the students enrolment rates by sex, students dropout rates by sex, the influence of school facilities on female students dropout rates in community secondary schools, the influence of parent occupational status on the factors contributing to female students dropout rates in community secondary schools and the parents` perception on value of education on female students dropout rates in the sampled schools in Mbinga District.

The final chapter presents summary on the study findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature related the factors contributing to female students dropout rates in community secondary schools in Tanzania and elsewhere in the world. The review of the literature focused on factors contributing female student dropout rates in community secondary schools in Tanzania. These include school facilities and parents` socio-economic background issues as the predictor and its outcome.

#### 2.2 Reasons for Emphasizing on Girls Education

It is generally acknowledged that education is of great importance to any society, as Ishumi (1997) defines it.

*Education as a means is an essential asset to any country or an individual that is aspiring to development. Education raises people's aspirations, increases social, economic and cultural performance and individuals' level of awareness of environment and equips them with the necessary skills and ideology for contending with the problems they counter (p. 6).*

The argument above suggests that every individual in the society should be educated because skills and knowledge are needed by individuals to control their environment and improve their lives. Other studies have particularly specified the importance of education to women in relation to their responsibilities and the role they play in the development of humankind as the UNICEF (2003) suggests;

*The negative of not attending to school are greater for girls than for boys and their impact transfer for the next generation of both girls and boys. Whether educated*

*or not girls are more at risk than boys from HIV/AIDS, sexual exploitation and child trafficking. Without knowledge and life skills that school can provide, these risks are multiplied; so it is that school allows girls and their families multiple protections and its absence means multiple exposures (p.8).*

It appears from the quotation above that to educate women is more important and the impact of not doing so is more severe for girls than for boys. Girls' education is associated with the development and welfare of the next generation (multiplier effects) in all aspects on human life that is political, economic, and social welfare (Subbaralo et al, 1991). Socially, girl's education may be helpful in lowering fertility rates and infant mortality rates, improved nutrition, increased life and expectancy and better opportunities for the children of the next generation (Kane, 1995).

### **2.3 Challenges Facing Girls Participation in Secondary Education**

There was an increase in pupil enrolment in primary education between 1999 and 2004, which grew by 27 percent in SSA compared with 19 percent in South and West Asia. But the global primary education pupil's enrolment stood at 86 percent (UNICEF, 2005). The increase in grade one is hampered because too many children who start school do not reach the last primary school grade that is less than two-thirds in half of the countries in sub-Saharan African. The students most likely to dropout live in rural areas and come from the poorest households. On average, a child whose mother has no education is twice as likely to be out of school as one whose mother has some education (UNESCO, 2006).

Studies have shown that child marriage is decreasing with increasing level of female education (UNESCO, 2005). Thus education is being seen as key to preventing child marriage. The argument is that women aged 20-24 years with primary education are less

likely to be married by age of 18 years than those who are not. In Senegal, for example, 20 percent of women who have received primary education were married at the age of 18 years compared with 36 percent of those who did not attend school. In addition women with secondary education were less likely to be married by the age of 18 than those without it. In the United Republic of Tanzania, for example, women with secondary education were 92 percent less likely to be married by age of 18 than woman who had received primary education only (UNESCO, 2005). For a woman who had received tertiary education, child marriage rates were often negligible.

Gender relationships at household level determine the roles and responsibilities expected of females and male by their communities (Cammuish, 1997; UNESCO, 2000; Kane, 1995). This has introduced a lot of bias when decisions are made as to who should be sent to school. Traditionally, female children are expected to perform household chores and look after siblings more than male children are. This gendered division of labor affects the relative chance of girls and boys attending school. One argues that in these communities the cost at sending girls to school is higher than for the male children. In some circumstances parents worry about investing in their daughters because of the risk.

Pregnancy is stated to be among the major barriers to investment in education for female children (FAWE, 1994 & Kane 1995). Furthermore, schooling of girls beyond the basic level is considered both expensive and risky in some cultures. Parents believe that formal education has the power to change the behaviors of their daughters and make them lose their culture. It is assumed, for example, that formal education can make daughters to deny their subordinate positions to men and may question parental decisions on their choice of a spouse. Kane (1995) argues that, parents fear that these behaviors might affect the family

honor and jeopardize the marriage ability of the daughters and that of other women in the family.

UNESCO (2005) has identified various challenges regarding the investment in girl's education world wide ranging from those related to the "demand" for education to those related to supply. On the other side there are domestic responsibilities, which force girls to drop out of school earlier than boys. These challenges are linked to high cost of girls education in that, girls perform a vast array of unpaid domestic tasks to the social norms that discourage female autonomy and hence education and to practice such as early marriage, dowries, taboos, and those harmful to sexual maturation. On the other hand there are supply- side challenges that include: the distance of schools from the habitations of marginalized groups with particular concerns for girl's safety, the unfavorable school environment that reinforces low expectations from girls education, through non-provision of facilities required by peers and/or teachers. There are also direct costs of education that constrain girl's participation, perception of low economic returns from female labor, lack of female teachers and the tendency to reinforce the symbolic association of the school with male authority (UNESCO, 2005).

#### **2.4 Global Interventions towards Girls Rights to Education**

There have been several global and regional efforts to fight for girl's right to education. In the same line of thinking UNESCO (2005) suggested that it remains a stubborn fact that girls continue to comprise the majority of out of school children and women forming the majority of the world's adult illiterates. As long as they do, the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) and the Education for All (EFA) goals are at risk. The United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) was launched at the World Education Forum on Education for All (EFA) in Dakar, Senegal (April, 2000). UNGEI'S aim is to raise awareness of the

importance of educating girls and to generate support nationally, regionally and internationally for these crucial tasks.

The launching of the World Bank's New Agenda for Secondary Education is evidence of the global recognition of commitment to girl's education. World Bank (2005) recommends that one way the countries in the world can ensure the quality of UPE is by expanding secondary education. That means parents will be influenced to send their children to primary education school if they are sure that opportunities are available at secondary level. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) aim to ensure that, by 2015 all boys and girls are able to complete a full course of primary schooling and to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and to all levels education by 2015. Other global initiatives include the 1960 Convention Against Discrimination in Education and the 1979 Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which have defined discrimination in many spheres including education as violation of Universal rights. The 1989 Convention on the Rights of Child has made the promotion of free primary education and quality education, an obligation for governments to respect children and youth up to 18 years. The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action outlines a great number of actions for governments and civil society actors to pursue within the field of education (Rose & Sub-Rumanian, 2005).

The Jomtien Conference of 1990 emphasizes the need for educational reforms worldwide by putting enough effort into achievement of real learning and emphasis outcomes rather than exclusively school enrolment (UNESCO, 1990). However as far as the objectives of Education For All (EFA) are concerned, progress towards their implementation was disappointing especially in sub-Saharan Africa. This is why the 2000 World Education of Dakar called for all partners to ensure not only access to education, but also school

completion and achievement of learning. Girls and Women's education was emphasized in all these International vision of development priorities. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for gender equality and women's empowerment support the goals that the previous conventions emphasized (Moser et al, 2004). All these efforts started with the 1948 United Nations Declaration on human rights which acknowledge, inter alia, the right to education for all people, including girls and women (UNESCO, 2003).

### **2.5 Societal Value and Attitudes towards Girls Education**

The societal image of girls and the idea of an ideal woman have pervasive effect on the educational development of female students. A study conducted in the Coast, Iringa and Kilimanjaro regions in Tanzania by Malekela (1994) revealed that, secondary school girls value African marriage more than education. The female students believed that the education is likely to produce a superiority complex in educated girls that African men would not tolerate for marriage. As a result, some school girls would not like to continue with higher schooling for fear that they could not easily get men to marry them if they are highly educated. Raynor (2005) contributed that female children because of marriage are expected to benefit their husband's families. In contrast, it is perceived by many parents that male children receive education because parents and families are likely to benefit from their education. These are common perceptions within patrilineal systems where males are expected to stay with their families. This shows that the parents are reluctant to "water the neighbor's tree."

The Waluguru people in Morogoro Rural District are amongst the few remaining matrilineal societies in Africa and in Tanzania. Though the market economy is right to be accessed, the peasant way of life is still dominant. In this society, woman holds very influential positions in terms of property rights influencing their daily lives. It is not

surprising, therefore, that traditionally girls are preferred to boys (Hamdani, 2006). Machimu (2010) revealed that pregnancy, performance, mismanagement of academic time and truancy are some of the factors influencing higher dropout rates among female student in secondary schools. In examining, who performs better between boys and girls, the majority (93.8%) of the respondents (teachers) said boys and the least (6.3%) said girls. This indicates that boys do better than girls in formal examinations compared to girls. As Masanja (2007) notes, the most influential factors for the under representation of females in natural science subjects is due to the low participation rates of female students in advanced courses and lower performance levels in examinations.

Pregnancy, pressure to marry and lack of appreciation of the importance of schooling are among the factors that affect the dropout behavior of school children (Sikazwe, 1993). His study on the evaluation of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program in Sumbawanga showed that parents did not care about the schooling of their children because they did not appreciate the importance of education. In addition, the findings showed that most of the girls were expelled from school because of pregnancy or pressure to marry, and the desire to fulfill their mission of becoming mothers. Social pressures on girls and boys are particularly strong during puberty and development of adolescent sexuality. In many countries adolescent pregnancy, either within or outside marriage result in the discontinuation of girls schooling. In both Malawi and Chile, pregnancy was often mentioned as the major reason for girls leaving school early, although statistical evidence is sparse (Kadzamira & Chimbwa, 2000; Avalos, 2003).

A study conducted in Tanzania by FAWE (1994) indicates that the school careers of many girls are cut short because they are expelled from school for becoming pregnant. However, in countries like Guinea and Malawi where girls are encouraged to return to school after

delivery, few girls can do so, due to growing fears among the parents that their daughters would become pregnant again, and partly because the girls themselves are afraid of ridicule (Colclough et al, 2003).

The social values that assign girls domestic responsibilities hinder their access to and retention in education. These include gender-biased division of work, which does not realize the importance of education for girls. In Nepalese Culture, the notion of early marriage is encouraged. UNICEF (2005) argues that, Limbu girls of Panchtar District in Nepal are normally involved in the culture of carrying gifts at marriage, post-marriage and death ceremonies, for which are required. Once these girls have gone on such a ceremony they remain absent from school for a number of days and this has affected the schooling of female students.

Studies done in Ethiopia and Guinea by Colclough et al (2003); and Cock Burn (2001), have indicated that boys and girls often specialize in different sorts of work. Girls specialize in domestic work, such as cooking after siblings, preparing and cooking food, cleaning the house and fetching water and firewood. Boys on the other hand are mainly involved in working on the family farm, looking after livestock and engaging in income-earning activities. According to the patterns and activities practice in those countries, girls help their families more than boys. The studies revealed that house hold and domestic specializations provide a significant reason for the non-attendance of girls more than boys. In both countries the tendency was for girls to drop out of school for family responsibilities.

## **2.6 Knowledge Gap**

In this chapter the factors contributing to female students dropout rates have been presented. The empirical studies by TADREG (1994), Bunto (2002), Ndimba (1996) and

Ssekamwa (1997) have indicated the challenges on female dropout rates of primary school students. Unfortunately, these studies have concentrated on primary school level, leaving much at the secondary level undocumented. Studies are needed to specifically concentrate on female students at secondary education level because their rates of dropout are increasing at an alarming rate (Hamdani; 2006; Masanja, 2007, Machimu 2010, World Bank, 2005 and URT, 2006). This study intends to explore the factors contributing to female students dropout rates in community secondary schools in Mbinga District.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the research design and methodology of studying the factors contributing to female students dropout rates in four sampled schools in community secondary schools in Mbinga District. It includes a description of the area of study, population and sampling procedure, instrumentation for data collection and analysis.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

Research design is a conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Gimbi, 2012). For the purpose of this study, the research approach mainly used was qualitative supplemented with quantitative data. The word qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Qualitative approach use methods of data collection in which the data to be obtained are not ordinarily expressed in numerical terms. This does not mean that numerical figures are never used, but that description is emphasized. A design is used to structure the research to show how all of the major parts of research project such as the samples of groups' measures, treatments or programs, to try to address the central research questions.

In this study, factors that contributing to female students dropout rates included school facilities and socio- economic issues such as parent occupation, economic ability and how parents value education.

### 3.3 Area of the Study

The area of the study was Mbinga District, one of the five districts in Ruvuma Region, south of Tanzania. It covers a total area of 11,396 square kilometers. Other districts in the Ruvuma Region include Namtumbo, Songea rural, Songea urban and Tunduru. The district is bordered to the north by the Iringa Region, to the east by Songea rural and Songea urban district and Ruvuma River to the south which forms an international boundary with the Republic of Mozambique (see map below).



**Source:** [www.google.go.tz/maps/Ruvuma](http://www.google.go.tz/maps/Ruvuma)

According to the 2012 Tanzania National Census, the population of Mbinga District was 353, 683 ([www.nbs.go.tz/takwimu F. html](http://www.nbs.go.tz/takwimu_F.html)) accessed on 13, Sept 2013

Mbinga District was chosen as a study area because of its relatively high dropout rates of female secondary students, a concern that is demanding public attention. This concur the

Machimu`s data in his findings that, like many other regions in Tanzania, although the number of girls who are enrolled in secondary schools is increasing, the risk of them to dropout asserted to be higher than boys (Machimu and Minde, 2010).

In addition, girls in Mbinga, like girls in any other districts, had better chance to join secondary schools which could influence a high number of girl professionals. This view is true for the fact that almost each year since 2007 in Mbinga District, a high number of female students are selected to join secondary schools after completing their primary level of education.

### **3.4 Population, Sample and Sampling Techniques**

#### **3.4.1 Study population**

The population of this study included female secondary school dropouts, parents and the head of the schools in Mbinga District. According to Ary et al (1996), the population includes all members of any well defined class of people, events or objects from which possible information about the study can be obtained. It is a group of units with common characteristics in which a researcher is interested for study purposes.

#### **3.4.2 Sample and sampling techniques**

A sample is a small group or section of the population, which a researcher selects for the purpose of the study and from which generalization is made about the characteristics of the population (Ary et al, 1996). Sampling technique refers to the process of selecting the participants of the study in a sample from the population (Enon, 1998). This study employed snow ball or chain sampling technique of selecting the secondary school female dropouts who were also used to identify their parents. A snow ball technique is the strategy of identifying subjects after getting information about them and the possibility of

their usability from other informants (Enon, 1998). In addition, purposeful sampling was used for selecting 4 head of schools. Purposeful sampling on the other hand is a strategy in which a researcher selects samples based on a certain purpose. This sampling technique helps to increase utility of findings.

The researcher, as well, employed random sampling to select four sample schools which were in remote areas in Mbinga District. The schools are A, B, C and D. Random sampling is a strategy used when a researcher needs to ensure that different members of a population have an equal chance of selection. It is used to eliminate any possible researcher`s bias.

These schools were selected because, most of the parents have no adequate income compared to those in urban areas, who most of them are employed in government or private sectors, and or have their own income generating activities. In this view, these two types of parents might have different attitudes concerning female schooling. In addition, most of the parents in rural areas have permanent residences which enabled a researcher to easily get information from them compared to those in urban areas who most of them are out comers who may migrate any time with their children, hence a researcher fail to find them.

### **3.5 Data Collection Methods and Procedures**

Data collection methods are the tools that the researcher expected to use for the collection of data in the field. It refers to the gathering of information aimed at proving or refuting some facts (Massomo and Ngaruko, 2012). This section provides a description of the instruments used in data collection process, which included semi structured interviews, questionnaires and documentary review of school records.

### **3.5.1 Semi Structured Interview**

An interview is a data- collection technique that involves oral questioning of respondents, either individually or as a group (Massomo and Ngaruko, 2012). Face to face interviews enabled the researcher to establish rapport with potential participants and, therefore, gain their cooperation. Semi structured interview is a kind of interview which is open and allows individual response (Enon, 1989). The interview schedules were designed to include both open-ended and closed ended questions. Open ended questions are those questions which allow flexibility while closed ended questions are those which provide limited response. The use of both categories was intended to obtain in-depth information from the female dropouts, the parents of the female dropouts and the head of the sampled schools. Interviews were considered useful instruments with parents who might have reading or other language difficulties (Best and Kahn 2006).

The interviews schedule comprised of seven questions which sought to capture information based on the students' retention and completion rates (see Appendix B). The language used during the interviews was Kiswahili, which was chosen for easy communication because both researcher and the subjects were conversant with the language. The researcher administered the interviews in person after visiting the parents at their homes. Forty parents were interviewed. The researcher recorded the interviews manually on the interview guide prepared for the purpose. The interview procedures were continued after the researcher had asked the interviewee for his or her permission to do so. The researcher interviewed one parent at a time because parents were met at their residences when the researcher visited them. All together 40 interviews were made. In addition, four head teachers of the sampled schools were interviewed. This was done each one at a time when the researcher visited that particular school. The interviews to the head teachers of the sampled schools were useful for the researcher to identify the school

progress and obtain more information about the female dropouts and the strategies they took to overcome those problems (see Appendix C).

### **3.5.2 Questionnaire Schedules**

Questionnaire is a data collection technique which involves the use of written down items to which the respondent individually respond in writing (Enon,1998). The items are in form of statements or questions. Questionnaire is a useful instrument because of the possibility of using distant respondents.

The questionnaires were administered to forty female dropouts. It helped the researcher to retain the proportion of usable responses (Ary et al, 2002; Best & Kahn, 2006), The questionnaires were collected immediately after completion. Questionnaires were filled at girls` homes when the researcher had visited them and been permitted to do so. In addition, the presence of researcher was helpful in providing assistance or answer questions about any ambiguities or to remind the respondents in case of missing information, or skipped items. The questionnaire comprised of six questions mixing categories of both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The closed form of questions was preferred in the design because of their tendency to keep the respondents to the subject of concern and to the study objective (Best and Kahn, 2006) (see Appendix A for the questions). This instrument, was administered in Kiswahili because both the researcher and respondents were familiar with it. The researcher translated the respondents' answers into English for reporting purposes and sought assistance from the editor for grammatical editing.

### **3.5.3 Documentary Review**

A document is an official paper or written materials that provide information about something that can be used as an evidence or proof of something (Hornby, 2000). For the

purpose of this study attendance registers were used as documents to identify the enrolment rates, completion rates and the names of female dropouts in the sampled schools. Other school records showing information about female dropouts included reports and warning letters to female dropouts` parents. The researcher got these documents: attendance registers, reports and warning letters from the head of the sampled schools, district and regional offices after permission was obtained from each one of them to do research in his/ her school. The researcher made two tables on paper, the first table was designed to collect data on enrolment records for a period of five years that is from 2007 to 2011; while the second table was designed to collect data on students` dropout rates by sex for the same period of time (see Appendix D). Documentary review on attendance registers was useful to the researcher in order to identify enrolment, completion and the names of female student dropouts in the sampled schools.

### **3.6 Validation of Study Instruments**

The validation of the instruments was done by conducting pilot testing and by seeking the expert opinion of my supervisor who went through the questionnaire items and made recommendations for improving the clarity of wording. The draft questionnaire was also pilot tested with three female student dropouts, three parents and one head of the school from the Kinondoni Secondary School in Dar es Salaam. This school was chosen because it was familiar to, and near the researcher`s residence and, therefore, was accessible. These respondents volunteered to be concerned with the study. The researcher asked consent from them and the school authorities and there after started the activity. The quality of data gathering instruments depends on whether the instruments can measure what it is supposed to measure and if items carry the same meaning for all responds (Kerlinger, 1986; Best and Kahn 2006). Pilot testing helped the researcher to identify the ambiguities and unclear questions to answer for the necessary revisions.

### **3.7 Data Analysis Technique**

Analysis means putting things in their categories (grouping) (Enon, 1998). Since the study employed qualitative approach methods for data collection and analysis, qualitative information was subjected to content analysis technique. According to Silverman (2001), content analysis is a systematic procedure designed to examine and analyze the recorded information. Content analysis is the most important purpose of the analysis which principally involves ordering (Ngaruko, 2012). In the process of coding and analysis, the content of the same category was considered and treated in the same manner. After the data have been coded and grouped into their respective themes the next step is tabulation. Tabulation can be described and the results be concluded. Tabulation is one of the best techniques of summarizing qualitative data because of its ability to group all the information reflecting to the same content. The technique was advantageous because of its objectivity as any bias by the researcher was far from being included

in the findings. In addition, the use of content analysis enabled the researcher to establish a set of categories. For the purpose of this study, therefore, content analysis was used to identify the factors which influence dropout rates of female students including school facilities and socio-economic issues.

### **3.8 Research Ethical Issues**

Research ethical issues is a term that refers to ethical standards which in this study were necessary to be observed in the conduct to avoid unnecessary physical and psychological harm to the subjects (Enon, 1998). It is important for the researcher to write letters to the responsible authorities, and also to ask consent of the subjects so that they can willingly participate in the study. In addition confidential information must be restricted to its access except for the willingness of the subject. For the purpose of this study, ethical standards

were observed in the planning and conduct of the study. First, the researcher wrote a letter to the Educational Officer of Mbinga District to ask for permission to conduct research in Mbinga District.

Second, the study was conducted with the consent of the subjects after they had been informed about the purpose of the study and so it was their choice to participate. Third, the researcher observed the right to privacy of the subjects and confidentiality of the information identifying individuals. In addition, the researcher was responsible for the security and storage of information which provided personal identities and controlled access to it by authorized individuals. In the report, neither names nor any personal identifiers are associated with any information on the information the respondents provided.

### **3.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has covered the important elements of the study design and methodology. The qualitative approach was used to get views and opinions of the respondents on issues related to the factors contributing to female dropout rates in Mbinga District who were enrolled in community secondary schools.

The study used questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and documentary review as the major data collection methods. The study sample involved 40 female dropouts, 40 parents and four head of schools from four sampled schools in Mbinga District. Random and purposeful sampling methods were employed. Content analysis technique on narrative format was used for qualitative data.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This study Explored factors contributing to female students dropout rates in community secondary schools in Mbinga District. The chapter presents data analysis and discussion of the findings. The data for the study were collected through questionnaires, interviews and school records. The study involved forty secondary school female students, forty parents and four head teachers of the schools from four sampled schools in Mbinga District. In this part pseudonyms of respondents have been used to ensure ethical consideration.

The questions that guided the study were: what are the school trends on female students' dropout rates in community secondary schools in Mbinga District? How do school facilities influence female students' dropout rates in community secondary schools? What is the influence of parent occupational status on factors contributing to dropout rates of secondary school female students? What is the influence of parents' perception on value of education on the factors contributing to female students dropout rates in community secondary schools?

This chapter is divided into four main sections, with each section presenting data from one objective of the study. Thus section one will focus on the school trends on factors contributing to female students dropout rates in Mbinga District; section two will concentrate on the influence of school facilities on female dropout rates in community secondary schools in Mbinga district; section three will deal with the influence of parent occupational status on the factors contributing to female students dropout rates in community secondary schools in Mbinga District; and the final section will focus on the

influence of parents` perception on value of education by parents on factors contributing to female students dropout rates in Mbinga District.

#### **4.2 Students Enrolment and Dropout Rates by sex in Percentage in the Sampled**

##### **Schools**

Objective one of the study wanted to examine the school trends on factors contributing to female students dropout rates in community secondary schools in Mbinga District. Through the review of records, the study identified the number of students who enrolled and those who dropped from school in the sampled schools by their sex in the period of five years, that is, from 2007 to 2011. The information is demonstrated on Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1 Students Enrollment in the Sampled Secondary Schools by sex in Mbinga District (2007- 2011)**

<b>NAME OF SCHOOL</b>	<b>BOYS</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>GIRLS</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
A	436	48.5	462	51.4	898
B	296	47	328	53	624
C	385	50	362	48	747
D	283	49	290	51	575
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1400</b>	<b>48.6</b>	<b>1442</b>	<b>50.8</b>	<b>2844</b>

**Source:** Field Data (2013).

The findings in Table 4.1 show that, there is a large number of female students who join form one in the sampled secondary schools in Mbinga District. Considering A, B and D secondary schools for instance, the number of female students who had enrolled is higher than that of male students. The table shows the total number of female students who were enrolled between 2007- 2011 were 1442 compared to 1400 boy students enrolled during the same period. Admission registers were also used to collect information about student`s dropout rates. The findings showed that, there were higher dropout rates soon after

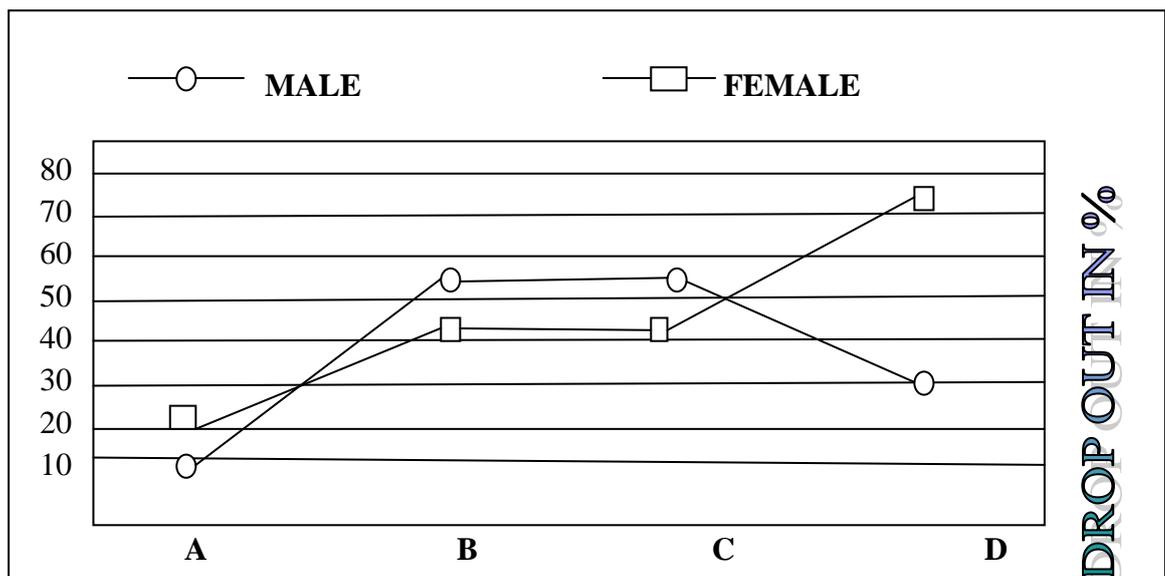
enrollment into Form One in the schools studied as shown in Table 4.2. Form One is the first year in the secondary education level.

**Table 4.2 Students Dropout Rates by sex in the Sampled Secondary Schools in Mbinga District (2007 - 2011)**

NAME OF SCHOOL	BOYS	%	GIRLS	%	TOTAL
A	53	12.5	97	21	150
B	77	52	71	48	148
C	139	53.5	126	46.5	265
D	23	29	56	71	79
TOTAL	292	36.8	350	46.5	642

**Source:** Field Data (2013).

The findings in Table 4.2 show that, the dropout rate in the sampled secondary schools in Mbinga District between 2007- 2011 is generally higher for female than male students. The total number of female students who dropped out of school for instance, was 350 while male dropouts were 292. Figure 2 below portrays the data presented on Table 4.2 on student dropout trends by sex.



**Figure 2:** Dropout Rates in the Sampled Secondary schools by sex in Mbinga District (2007 – 2011 ).

**Source:** School Records, (2013).

As demonstrated in Table 4.1 above, the enrolment rates in the sampled schools between boys and girls are almost the same. “A” for instance has enrolled more students than other schools; and in Table 4.2, the dropout rates were higher for girls than for boys in all schools. On average, dropout rates for boys ranged from a minimum of 12.5 percent (“A” Secondary school) to a maximum of 53.5 percent (“C” Secondary school). For girls, dropout rates were relatively higher ranging from a minimum of 21 percent (“A” Secondary school) to a maximum of 71 percent (“D” Secondary school). This situation justifies the contention that dropout rates at secondary school level are higher for girls than for boys in Mbinga district.

In addition, these findings support what was found by Neft and Levin (1999). The researchers argued that secondary school completion rates in developing countries are very discouraging and the girls are disadvantaged, in spite of the fact that when joining Form one both sexes are equally considered. According to their findings, girls were affected by many things including pregnancy, home responsibilities and distance from schools.

### **4.3 The Influence of School Facilities on Factors Contributing to Female Students Dropout Rates in Community Secondary Schools in Mbinga District**

Objective two of the study explored the role of school facilities on factors contributing to female students dropout rates in community secondary schools in Mbinga District. The influence of school facilities was one of the factors identified to be related to the dropout rates. Data were collected from the female dropouts and their parents through interviews and questionnaires. Table 4.3 summarizes the question and the category of responses provided by the female student dropouts.

**Table 4.3 The Category of Responses From the Female Dropouts on the School Facilities Provided by Parents (N=40)**

Statement	Category of Responses					
	Agree(Yes)	%	Not sure	%	Disagree	%
According to my schooling needs, school facilities were satisfying	13	32	–	–	27	68
Parents struggled to find alternative means to satisfy my school facilities	13	32	6	16	21	51
School facilities negatively affect schooling of female students	26	65	3	8	11	27

**Source:** Field Data (2013).

Information summarized in Table 4.3 indicates that school facilities provided by parents are a serious issue in the sampled schools in Mbinga District. When asked whether the school facilities were satisfying, more than 50 percent of the respondents, that is, 27 female dropouts said “No” while 13 dropouts said “Yes” and none was neutral. It is observed from the data that most female students who dropped out of school were not satisfied with the school facilities provided by parents including uniforms, sanitary wears, books, writing materials as well as pocket money for their extra needs. Such facilities seem to negatively affect most of the girl students hence fail to complete their schooling cycle.

The findings also revealed that there was a tendency of some parents to neglect providing basic school needs required by female students which discouraged those girls in schooling. Some neglected school girls were compelled to find alternative means of getting their needs to manage school life.

Such findings explain why pregnancy becomes one of the common problems which forced many girls to drop out of school in Mbinga District. It is also noted in FAWE (1994) that many students in Sub Saharan Africa have been affected as a result of lack of parental support with regard to school needs. When one female dropout was asked, she had this to say;

*...mm! What kind of life is this! Schooling! Is schooling a punishment? Most of the time I am in trouble to satisfy my school needs My parents do not care for it though they force me to learn. Can I manage to deal with two issues at a time? I am a girl with crucial needs including sanitary wears, lotion for my neatness just to mention a few. How do I get them? For this reason I hate schooling...*

School facilities, on the other side are those which are provided by the school. These include hostels, toilets with reliable water. One respondent in this study had contributed that:

*... School facilities should also be considered such as female students` residence when schooling. Since most of the community schools have no hostels, female students are at a greater risk of being exposed to unhealthy behaviors than male students.*

This comment implies that due to unavailability of reliable hostels at school, students in community secondary schools rent rooms in private homes near their schools while those staying close to schools are lucky to live with their parents. With this view, therefore, female students are at risk since many fail to control themselves over the freedom they get while away from parents` supervision hence engage inappropriate relationships with males which most often result in unwanted pregnancies. Such pregnancies lead to dropping school before completion of the education circle. To overcome these problems, one of the heads of the sampled schools had this to say:

*... When we considered the difficulties our female students face, especially when they are on the way coming to and from the school, we decided to use some of our classrooms as dormitories where the students could be under our supervision. But we realized that giving female students shelter was not enough. They still needed support on other things from parents and or guardians. As a result some of them involved themselves in inappropriate relationships hence dropped out the school...*

The Head of school`s comments imply that, some parents were not providing adequate school supplies or other needs for their daughters. It was also found that, most parents used to provide to their children few school needs only once per term, believing that they were enough to manage schooling. Such view is not true because female students have extra needs which need to be satisfied. Failing to get their needs from parents, such girls find themselves engaging in wrong relationships regardless of the risks to them. When asked concerning this, one of the girl dropouts narrated,

*... My father warned me not to disturb him for he had already provided me with enough money for my school needs, but most of the time I ran out of supplies and money before the term ended.*

Furthermore, a sanitary facility with reliable water is another crucial need to be considered in any institution, especially school. Table 4.4 demonstrates the responses provided by the female student dropouts on school facilities provided by schools.

The findings in Table 4.4 demonstrate that most of the community secondary schools in the sampled schools in Mbinga District identified inadequate sanitary facilities including toilets.

**Table 4.4 The Category of Responses From the Female Secondary School Dropouts on the Facilities Provided by Schools**

Statement	Category of Responses					
	Agree (Yes)	%	Note sure	%	Disagree (No)	%
Your school had adequate sanitary facilities which satisfied your school needs	9	22.5	-	-	31	77.5
Your school had reliable water	12	30	-	-	28	70
Sanitary facilities with unreliable water negatively affected your schooling	27	67.5	5	12.5	8	20

**Source:** Field Data (2013).

This makes no privacy for girl students when in calls especially during their menstruation circle. Lack of water is another problem in community secondary schools, which as well make female students feel uncomfortable to stay at school hence, contributing to dropout. When asked whether sanitary facilities satisfied her needs at school one of the female secondary school dropout narrated;

*....things were really bad; few toilets, no privacy, inadequate water, these increased hardships especially when we reached our menstruation periods, the time when we need enough water, and or proper place to hide or dry our sanitary wears. How can one be able tolerate with such a situation, four years of schooling..?*

#### **4.4 The Influence of Parent Occupational Status on the Factors Contributing to Female Students Dropout Rates in Community Secondary Schools in Mbinga District**

Objective three of the study wanted to find out the effect of parent occupational status on the completion rates of secondary school female students in Mbinga District. Data were

collected from the female secondary school dropouts and their parents. The instruments used for collection of data were questionnaires and interviews. Table 4.5 summarizes the responses collected from the respondents on the influence of parent occupational status on the factors contributing to female students' dropout rates in community secondary schools.

**Table 4.5 Responses from the Female Secondary School Dropouts on their Parents' Occupational Status on Female Dropout Rates in Mbinga District**

Statement	Category of Responses					
	Agree (Yes)	%	Not sure	%	Disagree (No)	%
Your parents occupation managed to meet your school needs	10	26.3	4	10.1	26	63.1
Your parents occupation negatively affected your schooling	22	57.5	–	–	18	42.1

**Source:** Field Data (2013).

Table 4.5 indicates that 26 female dropouts disagreed on the statement that their parents' occupation managed to satisfy their school needs. Only 10 female dropouts agreed that their parent occupation managed to satisfy their school needs. The findings also showed that 22 female dropouts were negatively affected by their parents' occupation status and got married soon after they had dropped out of school, compared to 18 female dropouts who were not negatively affected by their parents' occupation status.

The study findings revealed that most of the parents in Mbinga District face economic difficulties. Most of them were farmers who grow coffee. The fact that the price of this crop in the world market is not stable, it highly affects the farmers. The price, for instance

may rise up or slow down in different periods, hence disturb economic stability of the farmers. In addition, the cost to run such a crop is too high to afford. These expenses include getting manure and insect-sides for the crop.

One bag of fertilizer for example, may cost between 70,000/= and 80,000/= Tanzania. shillings. Since most of the farmers fail to afford this cost, they as well fail to manage schooling of their children, hence increase school dropout. When talking with one of the respondents, he had this to say:

*..... in the previous years (1990s) this crop (coffee) was highly produced and it also paid the farmers a lot of money to enabled most of us to afford the school expenses and thus, a reasonable number of girl students succeeded to complete their schooling with good performance. Most of these girls are now teachers, doctors or technicians. Nowadays things are different. Coffee, these years produces very little money, which make most of the families become economically poor. This, therefore, limits our intention to send our children to school.....*

This view, therefore, supports the statement that, economic factors limit the ability of families to meet the education costs for their children (URT, 1995; Bendera, 1977 and Raynor, 2005). It seems that parents from poor households are unlikely to afford both direct cost such as school fees, and indirect costs of schooling for their children. It was learned also from parents that, due to low economic ability, most of them loose interest or reject to send their children to school. Parents only do so when there is a legal action which forces them to send their daughters to school once they get selected to join secondary schools. When legal actions take place, such parents sell whatever they have including their farms and animals they have like cows, pigs or goats to ensure that their children start schooling. Since schooling takes a long period to complete, that is four years

for ordinary secondary school level, such parents fail to proceed with providing of school needs, or they have no more to sell. To them, therefore, better performance of their children in school is a punishment. When interviewed one of the respondents, said:

*... I had only one cow at home. I sold it to enable my daughter join secondary school. When more expenses were needed, I had nothing to do. My daughter, therefore, decided to terminate the school. What better have I got! Only that I have lost my cow...*

Another parent on complaining about this had this to say:

*Oh! My farm! My farm! I've lost my farm to pay for my daughter who has got nothing, and is now at home after dropping out from school. Oh! This poverty!*

What is this parent trying to say about this is that legal actions make many parents sell everything they have regardless of the success their daughters get. As a result of this families remain economically poor. One female dropout's mother, narrated that;

*We are now slaves! They chase and jail even females! Why don't they punish only male parents who are supposed to pay fees for their daughters? Can a mother manage to do anything when she is jailed? Who has to care for the young kids at home?*

This mother's view implies that when legal actions take place, those who suffer are female parents. This is because male parents tend to hide themselves when the soldiers come to look for them at home. Failing to meet fathers at home, the soldiers take their wives and jail them hoping that the husbands must come to rescue their wives. It is that what such mothers call it oppression to them.

#### 4.5 The Influence of the Parents' Perception on Value of Education by Parents on Factors Contributing to Female Students Dropout Rates in Community Secondary Schools in Mbinga District

Objective four in this study was to explore the influence of the parents' perception on value of education in Mbinga District. Data were collected from the female dropouts and their parents. Questionnaires and interviews were the instruments used in the collection of these data. Table 4.6 summarizes some responses as provided by the female secondary school dropouts and their parents.

**Table 4.6: The category of Responses on the value of Education by Parents as provided by Female Dropouts and their Parents**

Statement	Category of Responses					
	Agree (Yes)	%	Not sure	%	Disagree (No)	%
Sons in your family are given more priority than daughters in their education						
The parents	23	37.5	5	10	12	26.5
Female dropouts	27	47.5	7	15	6	12.5
Priority to educate son affect the dropout rates of female children.						
The parents	24	57.5	2	2.5	14	35
Female dropouts	27	52.5	4	5	9	22.5

**Source:** Field Data (2013)

The information displayed in Table 4.6 shows that there were 23 parents and 27 female dropouts indicated that sons were given more priority than daughters in respect to

education. On the contrary 12 parents and 6 female dropouts rejected any son preference with regard to education in their families. Only a small segment of parents (5) and (7) female dropouts were not sure whether or not son preference with regard to education prevailed in their families. The findings also show that there were 24 parents and 27 female dropouts who agreed with the argument that son were preferred with regard to education and this has adverse effects on girl student education resulting into high dropout rates of female secondary school students. Their views showed that members of the society still believe that investment in female education is risky. It was learned that parents would simply refuse to educate their female children at secondary level education to avoid the risk of becoming pregnant. For them, investing in female education was simply a waste of money.

According to this view, Malekela (1994) and UNICEF, (1990) argued that, in many situations the access of the girl child to education is denied by more than a shortage of educational facilities. The girl's gender is an overriding constraint. In contexts where girls are "born to marry" parents see little economic value in educating a girl. The fact that female skills command lesser pay than the comparable skills of the male is recognized by parents and shapes their decision not to invest in the education of the girl child. In explaining more about this point one parent had this to say:

*... It was a waste of my money to send female children to secondary school. I've never experienced any success in female students in this village (Lusonga) unlike their male counterparts, very few female students managed to complete their schooling. I don't think of spending the little money I have for my daughters' education. It is better to do it for her brothers or keep for other business. I know, she will not bring back education, but only pregnancy...*

With these comments, one would argue that some parents have negative attitudes towards girls education, believing that they pay for nothing, and that paying for female children is not a reliable investment than that of sons. The parents negative attitudes have adversely affected the schooling of their daughters by neglecting their requirements. This is why, when families face critical economic problems, girls' education is almost neglected.

According to UNESCO (2003) gender inequalities in education in some societies are systematic discrimination against women and girls. Due to this view, Forum for African Woman Educationalist, on Tanzania Girl Education, an Agenda for Change (2008) stated that, it is a fact that girls grow up together with boys at home and in the community, but the problem is that girls are forced to grow up differently and are not given the same opportunities and the same facilities as boys (FAWE, 2008). In Tanzania, Malekela (1994) argued that, some parents are reluctant to invest in their daughters' education. This suggests that parents do not expect economic returns from their daughters, who are now under the control of their husbands' families.

The findings also showed that the parents were able to mention names of some female students they know from their areas, who failed to complete their schooling due to pregnancy. That is why the parents in some societies in Mbinga District would prefer to educate boys rather than girls.

On the other hand, some parents in study rejected the idea that sons enjoy the preference of parents with regard to schooling. They believed that, no parent would dare to discriminate against his/her own daughter on her right to education. These parents said, they encourage their children of both sexes to get education although

there is a problem of dropout to female students, which they said it was the girls' own problem including lack of interest in education. In explaining this concern one parent said:

*.... I wonder why our daughters around here do not successfully complete their secondary education. My daughter dropped out of school not because of the preference to educate sons, but I think she didn't see the importance of education to her. I don't remember even a single female student from our village (Mikiga) who managed to reach high levels of education in recent years....*

These views imply that, female models were important in motivating female students to remain at school until they complete their schooling. But it revealed that very few female students in the sampled schools managed to reach the end of schooling hence discouraging those who follow schooling after them. When one of the female dropout was asked why she decided to drop out of school, she said:

*..... it is just wasting my time, for there is nothing good in schooling. I've seen a lot of those who joined secondary schools in the previous years, they have ended pregnant or got married before the end. If so, then how am I going to succeed?*

As demonstrated by the findings, female dropouts in secondary schools is resulted from multiple factors: parents, girl students themselves and community culture. When interviewing some of the heads of the sampled schools on how they think about the parents' opinions concerning female education in their areas, most of them said that girls are subject to pregnancy and early marriage.

#### **4.5.1 Parents**

The head of schools think that most parents are of the opinion that they waste their resources for paying their daughters school fees. Others think that girls are source of income through dowry when their daughters get married. For these reasons parents do not strictly make follow up for their daughters schooling or even discourage them when they get involved on inappropriate relationships. Due to this, therefore, female students feel free to behave in whatever way they want.

#### **4.5.2 Girls themselves**

Loss of interest is another reason for female dropout in schools as they become discouraged by their counterparts in the area concerned. Other people for instance tend to tell the girl students that, “school will delay them to get marriage.” Such statements, therefore, discourage most of the female students hence drop out of schools.

#### **4.5.3 Community culture**

The study also revealed that the community culture of the Matengo tribe in Mbinga District tend to “over – respect” their children whereby most of the parents become silent or do not strictly discourage wrong behaviors when they find that those children are grown up, like when they complete their primary level of education (at 15-16 years old). They may, for example, understand of what is going on about their daughters with their boyfriends, but they will not intervene. This freedom, therefore, contributes to increase female students dropouts, since it is true that, such kind of relationships do not allow these students to perform well in their schooling, and obviously will make them lose interest on schooling hence dropout of school. To support this view, Skar (2009), stated that, over the last thirty years or so, the Tanzania government has been intervening in this situation by enforcing the legal requirement for

all children to attend primary school. As a result, for example, these days pastoralist children attend school for at least a few years. However, girls are sometimes taken out of school by their parents when they attain puberty, and marriages are then arranged for them. They do not complete primary education and are therefore not eligible for secondary education.

This finding concurs with what Sikazwe (1993) found in his evaluation of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program in Sumbawanga. He pointed out that, many children were dropping out of school because both the parents and their children had lost interest in education. The parents do not care about whether their children attend school or have the required facilities. Parents also appear to be silent when their daughters dropped out of school after they had become pregnant. In support of this argument, one head of the sampled school had this to say:

*....Nowadays both parents and their female children do not recognize the significance of girl education. Neither was it true that female students were getting married on their own volition (without encouragement or support from their parents). If it were without pressure from their parents, their parents would have taken legal actions against those who impregnate or marry their daughters while still at school...*

What this head of the school was trying to say is that, the parents support their daughters' decisions to leave school for marriage. Otherwise, the parents would have taken legal measures against these impediments to their daughters' education. The suggestion is that, those who are responsible for interrupting girls' school through pregnancy or marriage should be punished. Second, it is obvious that early marriages are indirectly related to female dropout from school.

When interviewing the heads of the sampled schools in Mbinga district through interviews which were conducted individually, on different days on what strategies they take or planned to overcome the problem of female dropouts in their schools, they listed some of the measures they intended to take including, first, to introduce peer education at schools so as to promote life styles. Health officers from the nearest Health centers are to be invited for counseling of the female students. Second, parents meeting are to be organized to address the challenges on female students. Third, preparing the lists of the school truants and submit to the ward executive officers for follow up.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a summary of the study findings, conclusions and recommendations for administrative action and for further research. The purpose of the study was to explore the factors contributing to female students dropout rates in Community Secondary Schools in Mbinga District. Factors namely, school facilities and socio – economic background including parent occupation, economic ability and value of education by parents were included in the study.

#### **5.2 Summary of the study findings**

Generally, the findings showed that factors contributing to students dropout rates have both direct and indirect influence on female dropout rates. The evidence indicated that more school girls than boys dropped out of school. The summary of the findings is as follows:

Female students of dropout were relatively higher an indication of how the internal efficiency of the educational system is adversely affected. The study recorded an average of (46.5%) female students drop out rates for dropout rates compared with (36.8%) dropout rates for male students. The factors contributing to high female dropout rates influenced by school facilities are associated with inability to afford boarding expenses. The study revealed that, parents provide with unsatisfied school facilities to their children which forced them likely or unlikely to engage in sexual activities hence pregnancy or drop the school.

Occupational status of the parents on school dropout of female students was both direct and indirect effect. The occupation status of parents affected families with the failure of them to afford the costs of running their families. In addition, occupational status of parent is associated with growing conflicts among family members with the effects of them being isolated in some rights. For instance, there was a tendency of some parents to educate son than female children, fearing to invest on female children education and waste of their money resources, since female children were vulnerable to pregnancy.

High school dropout rates of female students is associated with a lack of interest in education by both the female dropout and their parents. It appears as if parents supported the dropout behavior of their daughters because no parents dared to take legal action against those who impregnated their daughters. Becoming pregnant was therefore, a shortcut to female students who left school to get married or for loss of interest.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

In view of the current study on the factors contributing to female students dropout rates, the following issues emerged:

Generally, the female dropouts and their parents in Mbinga have little or no interest in schooling. It appears that the parents and their daughters have little understanding about the importance of investing in female children. School facilities and socio-economic background such as parent occupation, economic ability and value of education by parent are still barriers to investing in female education in Mbinga District. The effect of these factors is more on female students than on their male counterparts.

The parents have negative attitudes towards investing on the education of their daughters. It is likely that, they are unaware of its importance for their daughters. This has affected

the parents' decisions in investing in their children's education. It appears that marriages are traditionally very important roles for female children.

The influence of school facilities and socio – economic issues on school dropout of female students in Mbinga District poses a big challenge to the government, local authorities and the parents. There is a need to raise the awareness of the parents about the importance of investing in education of female children and how factors influence retention and completion rates become barriers in investing in education of female students.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

In the light of the study findings, conclusion and the limitations of the study, the following recommendations are made for administrative action and for further research.

##### **5.4.1 Recommendations for Administrative Action:**

##### **5.4.2 Establishing Girls' Re – entry Programmers**

As long as a good number of female students drop out of school because of pregnancy, it is recommended that the government should enact a law to allow teenage mothers to return to school after the delivery. Similar programs have enabled a good number of teenage mothers to return to school in Malawi, Botswana and Kenya (Kasente, 2000).

##### **5.4.3 Campaigns for public awareness**

It was learned that some parents had negative attitudes towards investing in the education of their female children. Thus, it is recommended that the government at both the central and local levels should organize campaigns in order to raise public awareness about the importance of investing in female children's education. These can be through

publications, conferences, public meetings and media such as television programs and radio. Public campaigns might be very helpful in raising the awareness of parents and all members of the community of the socio-economic benefits of investing in the education of female children. An educated woman is likely to control fertility rates, participate in civic activities and to educate her children (UNESCO, 2006).

#### **5.4.4 Establishing Girls clubs at school level**

It is recommended that female student clubs should be encouraged at school level in order to provide the female students an opportunity to discuss matters of concern including these factors which influence dropout rates of female students in secondary schools. The members in these clubs should include female teachers, school girls and other gender experts. Discussion in these clubs should provide an opportunity for members to identify factors barriers to female students. One of the responsibilities of the discussants in those clubs should be to discourage malpractices such as early marriages and involvement in sexual activities.

#### **5.4.5 Establishing education funds**

The government at both the central and local levels should encourage establishing education funds through contributions from individuals and organizations (government and private) to focus on education issues. These funds would help schooling for female students from poor families who manage not to afford school expenses. This strategy will help to increase retention and completion rates of secondary female students.

#### **5.4.6 Establishing Community Based Organizations (CBOs)**

The findings showed that, the community lacked knowledge about the social and private benefits in investing in education of female children. It is recommended that CBOs might be useful intervention in addressing these factors barriers to female students.

The CBOs should involve multilateral partners such as religions leaders, ethic / cultural leaders, business leaders and representatives from the government for sensitization campaigns. This organization could effectively and easily identify the factors barriers to female students.

#### **5.4.7 Establishing Effective Enforcing Laws**

It is stipulated in the Education Act no. 6 of 2004 that the attendance of school girls at primary and secondary levels should not be interrupted by pregnancy or marriage. It seems that, this Act does not effectively work to prevent the incidents of pregnancy and marriage of school girls, and is of course ignored by the parents. In principle, the Act provides legal powers for the parents and heads of schools to convict those who impregnate the school girls and also recommends the punishment for the wrongdoers (URT, 2006). It is recommended that the law should also convict the parents and the head of schools who hesitate to take legal measures against the wrong doers.

#### **5.4.8 Deploying adequate female Teachers for Rural Schools as Role Models**

It was observed that, there is lack of female teachers in rural schools and thus discouraging female students' retention at school. It suggested that, the government should train and deploy more female teachers in rural schools who would act as models. Lack of female teachers and female educational administrators in rural schools make many parents believe that higher education and employment opportunities were purposefully meant for males. Marriage and domestic responsibilities were responsibilities of female children. Female teachers will encourage female students to remain at schools.

#### **4.5.9 Recommendations for further Research**

Considering of the limitations of this study, further research studies are recommended in the following areas.

It is recommended that, a study should be conducted to involve other factors such as the influence of fostering children, distance from school, polygamous marriage and domestic roles so that the factors influence female students dropout rates and completion rates can be understood from a holistic perspective. The current study covered only two factors namely: school facilities and socio-economic issues such as parent occupational status and value of education by parent.

It is recommended that, a study could be conducted to include wider and multilateral rural population characteristics such as community leaders, school management and religious leaders so that factors that influence retention and completion rates of female students can be understood from different viewpoints. The current study involved only the female secondary school dropout and their parents.

A similar study could be conducted to investigate the factors contributing to female students dropout rates at other levels of education such as Primary education, Advanced secondary schools (A-level) and College / University levels. This may allow comparison of the results from different levels of education.

A study as well could be conducted to investigate the influence of religious factors on school dropout of female students

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### MASWALI DODOSO (QUESTIONNAIRE SCHEDULE) KWA WASICHANA WALIOACHA SHULE

##### SEHEMU A: Taarifa za awali

- i) Jina la shule uliyokuwa unasoma .....
- ii) Kabila lako .....
- iii) Umri wako miaka .....
- iv) Uhusiano wako na Mzazi/Mlezi wako .....
- Baba ..... Mama..... Kaka .....
- Dada.....
- Mwingine ..... (Taja)
- v) Uliacha shule kidato cha .....
- vi) Uliacha shule mwaka .....

##### SEHEMU B: (Weka alama ya tiki (√) mahali panapostahili

1. Unadhani elimu hasa ya sekondari ina faida yoyote kwako au kwa jamii yako?

Ndiyo /Hapana .....

Kama jibu ni **Ndiyo**, taja faida hizo: .....

.....  
.....

2. Taja sababu zilizosababisha wewe uache shule?

a....., b....., c..... au zaidi

3. Wakati ulipokuwa mwanafunzi uliishi katika bweni au ulitoka nyumbani?

.....

4. Ni mahitaji gani ulipata kutoka kwa wazazi/mlezi au jamii?

a)....., b)....., c).....

au zaidi.

Je, mahitaji hayo yalitosheliza? Ndiyo..... Hapana.....

Kama **Hapana** kulikuwa na tatizo gani? .....

Wazazi wako ni:

a) Wakulima .....

b) Wafanya biashara .....

c) Wafanyakazi serikalini .....

d) Wafanyakazi katika ofisi za .....

e) Shughuli nyingine, taja .....

Je walikuwa wanakuhimiza kwenda shule ..... Ndiyo.....

Hapana.....

5. Wazazi wako wamesoma? ..... Ndiyo/Hapana ..... kama ni

**Ndiyo**, hadi kiwango gani?

Baba: .....

Mama: .....

Mlezi: .....

**APPENDIX B****MASWALI YA USAILI (INTERVIEW SCHEDULE) KWA WAZAZI/WALEZI  
WA WASICHANA WALIOACHA SHULE****SEHEMU A:**

- (i) Kabila lako .....
- (ii) Kazi unayofanya.....
- (iii) Idadi ya watoto ulio nao: Wavulana: ..... Wasichana:.....

**SEHEMU B:**

1. Unadhani elimu hasa ya sekondari ina faida kwa mwanao?.....  
Jamii yako?.....
2. Unadhani kuna umuhimu wowote wa kusomesha watoto wa kike? Yaani kwa usawa na wale wa kiume katika familia yako? Ndiyo/Hapana  
.....  
(Toa maelezo).....
3. Je, shughuli zako unazofanya zina kuwezesha kumudu gharama za shule kwa wanao kwa kiasi gani? .....
4. Je, mwanao aliacha shule kwa sababu gani? .....
- Baada ya hapo anafanya nini?.....
5. Mwanao aliporudi kutoka shule alifanya majukumu gani?  
a)..... b)..... c).....  
au zaidi
6. Je, mwanao alijisomea hapo nyumbani? Ndiyo:.....  
Hapana:.....  
Kama jibu ni **Ndiyo** alisoma wakati gani/lini?  
(siku/saa).....

7. Je, wewe kama mzazi unajisikiaje baada ya mtoto kuacha shule?

.....

Je, unafikiri kuna athari zozote kutokana na hali hiyo? ..... toa maelezo.

**APPENDIX C**

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE HEAD TEACHER**

**NAME** **OF** **SCHOOL:**

.....

1. For how long you have been in this school?  
.....
2. What is the proportion on the enrolment rate of both male and female students each year since 2007?
3. Are the female students who join Form one each year since 2007 to date, manage to complete their schooling? OR What are the trends in female student's completion rates?
4. What strategies have you planned to overcome such problems?
5. Do you think the school is proceeding to fulfill its goals with regard to female student school completion? Yes ( ) No ( )  
Why?.....
6. What do you think are the parents' opinions concerning girl's education in your area?

**APPENDIX D****DOCUMENTARY REVIEW (SCHOOL RECORDS)**

**NAME OF SCHOOL:** .....

**A: STUDENTS ENROLMENT IN THE SCHOOL BY SEX (2007 – 2011)**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
2007					
2008					
2009					
2010					
2011					
<b>TOTAL</b>					

**B: DROP OUT RATES BY SEX (2007 – 2011)**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
2007					
2008					
2009					
2010					
2011					
<b>TOTAL</b>					