

Gender Disparities in Enrollment and Completion of Secondary Education in Strong Cultured, Pastoralist Communities in Tanzania

By

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Abstract

Although the past decade Tanzania has witnessed high increase in girl's enrollment in almost all regions of Tanzania, but very few girls compared to boys in pastoralist are able to access and complete formal education. This study explores people's views on gender related norms that continue to create gender disparities in education in pastoralist communities. The study adopts the ethnographic approach to studying people's views in their natural setting. The sample size of the study was 46. Respondents were selected using purposive and snowball sampling procedures. Data were collected using ethnographic interviews, focus group discussion and participants observation and they were analysed using content analysis. The study found out that forced and early marriages; the practicing of initiation rituals and denying of girls' school education were the most common gender related norms contributing to gender disparities in a study area. Further, all the identified gender norms factors in a study area were seen to inevitably denying pastoralist girls entry, retention and completion of formal education. The study recommends that, the Tanzania government and other educational stakeholders should strive to educate pastoral communities to amend their belief and norms that continues to denying girls education.

Key words: Societal gender norms, Pastoralists' Girls, Access to and Completion, Primary and Secondary Education, Tanzania

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1.0 Introduction

A well-used education can be an effective tool to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). An educated citizen might be a source of poverty reduction and future economic prosperity of the nation. The Global Education Monitoring Report of 2016 reveals that, education reduces working poverty as it affects almost 90% of workers in low-income countries. The report shows that increasing tertiary education in 10 recent European Union (EU) member states would reduce numbers at risk of poverty by 3.7 million (UNESCO, 2016). The report further shows that education can help increase agricultural productivity where field schools and extension education help farmers increase productivity by 12% and net revenue by 19%. This implies that education is a very important tool in poverty reduction as well as a weapon to improve and change socio-economic one's life, therefore, every person is obligated to have it without any kind of discriminations or violence of any gender if a nation wants to reduce poverty. Gender equality is a fundamental principal of the Global Education for All (EFA) campaign launched in 2000. Gender equality in education is a basic human right (UNICEF, 2012) and it is also essential to achieving sustainable development. However, the existence gender disparities in education limits the ability of students to realise their education privileges with regards to access and completion of formal education.

Achievement of gender equity and women empowerment (GEWE) has been an elusive goal in Tanzania (HRW, 2017). The Tanzania Five Year Development Plan (2016-2021) which focuses on human capital for transformation of the economy into a middle-income semi-industrialized economy identifies gender equity and empowerment as key to enhance human capital development and participation in economic transformation for industrialization (URT-FYDP, 2016). According to the 2012 Census 51.3 percent (more than half) of the population were female (URT-2012 Census,2013). Ignoring gender parity in human capital development invariable means eliminating direct participation of the majority of the workforce in the economy. Achieving gender parity in education and lifelong learning opportunities for all is key to the long-term transformation of the economy through women economic empowerment (Wuyts and Kilama, 2014). However, this paper show that there are gender disparities in education in pastoralist communities. Therefore, the study intends find out gender related factors constraints girls from attainment of education.

One of the key aim of Tanzania's education policy has been the promotion of equitable access to education for both female and male. In ensuring that, Tanzania has made significant progress in increasing enrolment in basic education, and technical and tertiary education in past few years (MoEST, 2016). 1974 the Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy was introduced. UPE resulted to rapid increase in enrollment rate from 56% in 1974 to 98%, 110%, 111% and 168% in 1975, 1976, 1977 and 1978 respectively (UNICEF & World Bank, 2009). Also, efforts were made to lower school fees to Tsh. 20 000/ for day schools, and Tsh. 70 000/ for boarding

government schools. The government also committed to provide capitation fund for every enrolled student in public secondary schools, to improve access, retention and allowing out of school students to resume their studies (PO-RALG, 2016a).

Another bold step was to issue the Education Circular no.3 of 2016, which directed public schools to implement fee-free education to ensure that, secondary education is free for all (PO-RALG, 2016b). This was to align with the implementation of the Education and Training Policy, 2014 which made secondary education basic and compulsory for all children. For pastoralist communities, there are local organisations that have been established such as the Local Pastoral Women’s Council (PWC) for empowering the Tanzania’s pastoralist communities which works to transform non-developmental cultural traditions into viable practices including allowing girls to have access to education. Despite all above initiatives, great inequalities still exist between children from pastoralist communities especially girls and non-pastoralist community, male and female, children from different geographical location and those from different cultural groups (UTR, 1992, Ngonyani 2020). In pastoralist communities, a huge number of girls are out of education, a situation which, although improving, is still a significant concern in Tanzania (especially at secondary level) (Raymond, 2012).

Since 2000 Tanzania has witnessed rapid increase in enrolment in primary and secondary education with some district significantly increasing enrolment, narrowing gender gaps and extending opportunities for the disadvantaged groups. However, the provision of formal education for pastoralist communities (and especially for girls) has remained a challenge. Ngonyani (2020) indicated that most pastoral communities are the most disadvantage of all because most of them still live colonial era, the awareness of educating their formal students is very low due the belief that girls are suppose to be married and boys are the one to study because the increase their family while girls are not. Parents from these communities have low level of education that contribute to little understanding of the importance of educating girls education (Okantey (2008). Table 1.1 presents number of students enrolled in Government and Non-Government by sex from 2021 to 2023 in Ngorongoro district. Data on girl’s enrollment for 2023/2022 show significant improvement over 2020/2021. According to Basic education Statistics in Tanzania (BEST) 2023 indicated that 1,608,202 girls and 1,469,153 boys were enrolled compared to 1,389,613 girls and 1,282,314 boys in 2021 (MoEST, 2021, 2023). Despite the improvement in enrolment of girls in Tanzania is not the case for strong cultured, pastoralist communities. The table below present the enrollment situation in the study area.

Table 1.1: Trend in Gross Enrolment in Government and Non-Government in secondary School from Form I-VI by sex at Ngorongoro District

Sex	2021	2022	2023
Boys	4,839	5,047	5476
Girls	4,095	4,472	4890

Source: Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania (BEST), 2021,2022 &2023

These statistics offer evidence to justify the need to pay attention on addressing issues of gender disparities in education to strong cultured, pastoralist and nomadic communities.

It is in this context that this study seeks to find out the factors contributing gender disparities in enrollment and completion of secondary education in strong cultured, pastoralist communities in Tanzania.. Specifically, the study explores the gender related norms contributing to gender disparities in education from strong cultured, pastoralist and nomadic communities' enrollment and completion of secondary education in Ngorongoro district, Tanzania.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 An Overview of Education Issues in strong cultured, Pastoralist and nomadic Communities

The access to and completion of secondary education in Tanzania has always been a big problem among girls, and this has been so evident among the pastoralist communities (MWEDO, 2006). The author further indicated that gender relations among the pastoralist communities have been negatively affected by male dominance over decision-making. Women and girls are not accorded great importance in pastoralist society and hence they are denied access to education and other economic opportunities. Study by (Ngonyani,2020) indicate that awareness of education their female students is very low due to the belief that girls are supposed to be married and boys are the one to study because they increase their families while girls not. This is also linked with parents' level of education.

A study by Okantey (2008) noted that educated parents would have increased emphasis on girls access to education. This tendency, therefore, made women and girls from these communities to stay out of the school system making them become illiterate and hence ignorant of their basic human rights in their respective societies (Heather, 2009). A findings of research study conducted by Education Development Trust (2018) on the pastoral community's perspective on girl's education revealed that parents and other members of the community had negative stances regarding the value of educating girls. Large number of girls and children's in pastoralist and nomadic communities do not attend school and remain outside the education system (Ngonyani, 2020; Kamuhangiro et al., 2003; Ngoitiko, 2008). To them, article 1,3 and 5 of the Education for All Declaration does not apply, no deliberate effort was made to isolate them but, the available literature shows that there several factors related to this challenge including the culture, environment, the infrastructure, type of their economy, gender related norms, social organisations which exist in their communities etc.

Many researches who focused on women and girls access to secondary education have tended to focus on inadequacy of funding due to poverty and distance to schools to be among the factors which have contributed to poor schooling among pastoralist girls in African countries (Bendera and Mboya, 1998; Kamuhangiro et al., 2003). Tamale and Oloka-Onyango, (1997) and Yahya-Othman (2000) noted that the studying environment of women, remains different from that of men, and is likely to contribute to discrimination. Study by Jacky (2011) found out that girls face a lot of challenges while in institutions of learning and are readily frustrated when they experience financial difficulties and consequently drop out of school. Another study by Ombur (2007) found out that there is misconception that women are women, learned or illiterate and that girl do not necessarily need high education qualification to perform duties. Mbilinyi (1991) observe in his study that some nomads' communities keep their girls' children out of school due cultural factors which force the parents to remove the girls from school. Girls are seen as the producers and reproducers in the society.

Socio-cultural circumstances has also been reported as barrier to girls' participation in varied education programmes (Dyer, 2006, 2010b; Kaunga, 2005; Hailombe, 2011). Studies by Warrington and Kiragu (2010, Sharma (2011) and Chege and Sifuna (2006) found out that patrilineal nature of pastoralist communities favour boys over girls; the high opportunity costs for girls' education given families' reliance on child labour for survival; and the belief that, once married, girls become part of their husband' family so that any investment in their education is lost. Other studies by (Mbogoma, 2005; Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005; Raymond, 2009; Warrington & Kiragu, 2011) found out that cultural practices, attitude and social belief contribute to limiting girls' education. There are, however, few studies that explore gender related norms from perspective of strong cultured, pastoralist and nomadic communities. This study intends to fill these literature gap by exploring gender-related norms contributing to gender disparities in enrollment and completion secondary school education in strong cultured, pastoralist and nomadic communities. The broad aim of the study is to understand the strong cultured, pastoralist and nomadic community's perspective on girls' education.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by Pearson's gender relation theory, this theory was developed in 1995 by Pearson (Pearson, 1995). The main argument of the theory is that society views all activities that are carried out to be based on social roles and interaction of men and women. The society seems to have ultimate authority on the precise nature of what women and men should do or who have access to or have the right to certain opportunities. Pearson's gender relation theory is appropriate for this study because it emphasizes the various socio cultural and gender related norms and standards which must be considered to unmask gender-disparities and allow women to take opportunities to participate in social activities such as education. These cultural and gender related norms emphasized in the theory are the factors that affect girls' students to access and complete school. This theory is relevant for this study because it captures the variables, in traditional set up where male is seen as a dominate and women as subordinate and education for them is less important. In these society patriarchal ideology is thus dominant. Patriarchal ideology discourages women from reaching their desired goal. The social right of girls and women are narrowly defined. Girls and women are expected to be good wives and mothers. According to Psacharopoulous and Woodhall (2005) gender become a crucial factor in deciding who goes to school and for how long. This applies in this study where several barriers of girls access to and completion to primary and secondary education in pastoralist society in Ngorongoro are to analyzed.

3.0 Methodology

To achieve the research objective, the study adopted the ethnographic approach to studying people's views in their natural setting. This was done in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the community's perspectives regarding gender disparities in access to education between boys and girls. This approach enabled the researcher to explore and understand the gender related norms of the pastoral community from the perspective of the community itself. The study intended to start by understanding girl's everyday life realities and experiences and to examine the gender related factors contributing to these educational disparities. The study was conducted in Ngorongoro district in the Arusha region of north east Tanzania.

In Tanzania, pastoral communities include the Maasai, Iparakuyo (Wakwavi), Barbaig, Kurya and Ilarusa (Waarusha, with the Maasai forming the largest group (Kipuri and Sorensen, 2008). The Maasai are mainly found in four districts, Ngorongoro, Arumeru, Kiteto and Monduli, in the North East part of the country. Ngorongoro district (the study area) is predominantly a pastoralist area inhabited by Maasai as the largest ethnic group. It covers area of 14,036km² (5,149sqmt). According to the 2012 population and housing census. Ngorongoro District has a population of 174,278, where by 82,610 are men and 91668 are women (URT, 2012). The Maasai make up 98% of residents' population, the remaining are Datooga and very few Hadzab family. Life for the Maasai is focused on gathering and grazing large herds of cattle. In 2023 the national net secondary enrolment rate was 3,077,355 (URT, 2023) while the Ngorongoro district net secondary enrolment rate form I to VI was only 10,366 (URT, 2023) where by boys were 5,476 and girls 4,890. The sample size of the study was 46. Data were collected using ethnographic interviews, focus group discussion and participants observation. The study site was Ngorongoro district, Ngorongoro district is predominantly occupied by pastoralists. The main activity of people in this district is nomadic pastoralist. The target populations of the study are all pastoralist girls, religious leaders, head of schools, traditional pastoralist leaders, and students.

The Ngorongoro districts was purposively selected whereas key informants such as religious leaders, head of schools, and traditional pastoralist leaders were also purposively selected to participate in the study. Respondents were selected using purposive and snow ball sampling procedures. Purposive sampling was used to get pastoralist girls in school and pastoralist girls out of the school were selected using snowballing techniques. The study employed a cross-sectional design using a triangulation of methods: content analysis of documents, interviews, focus group discussions, and participants observation. In this study, unstructured interviews were used to generate information from the respondents including the students, unstructured interviews were used to allow the researcher to acquire in-depth information and evidence on MHM from the interviewees.

Also, unstructured interviews were used to generate information from the students, teachers, parents and DEOs. Unstructured interviews allow more flexibility and provide a natural flow of conversation about MHM. The observation was therefore conducted to observe the natural setting, social interaction, relationships, actions and events within it. FGDs were employed as a test for the credibility of or to clarify some of the information given by individual interviews. In total the study interviewed 46 respondents. There were three categories of respondents. Category one included key informants (10): Category II included 10 primary school pupils and 10 secondary school students and Category III included 16 pastoralist girls out of the school.

Data were analysed using content analysis. Data was analyzed by using content analysis. According to Cohel, Manion and Morrison, (2011), content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data. Using content analysis, researchers can quantify and analyze the presence, meanings, and relationships of certain words, themes, or concepts. Data was analyzed using a systematic text condensation' by reviewing all qualitative transcripts from the interview and FGD. In qualitative analysis, data was arranged, organized, coded and validated. Then the data was presented

systematically through a report. Content analysis was done on descriptive and interpretative that involved both structure and unstructured interviews.

The rationale of content analysis is relevant since it provides more complete and accurate information for the study. Content analysis was conducted through the following three steps; first developing and applying code, secondly identifying themes, patterns and relationships and lastly summarising the data. Triangulation was the approach that helped to achieve validity of the data. According to Yeasmin and Rahman (2012) triangulation is a process of verification that increase the validity by incorporating several viewpoints and methods, like multiple theories and empirical materials to overcome the weakness and problem of using singles. It is argued that triangulation helps to control bias (Golafshani,2003).In this type of triangulation, Patton(1990) focuses on to comparing the data collected from different sources ,that is, perspectives from different points of views so as to come up with a single idea which becomes consistent

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This sub section presents finding and analysis of data of the study on exploration of gender related norms that contribute to gender disparities in education in strong cultured pastoralist and nomadic communities. Forty six interviews were coded identifying gender related norms and how they limit girls' education (codes) from each interview. Similar codes were grouped, that is, Key gender related norms were grouped together. This theme answered research objective which intended to find out key gender related norms contributing to gender disparities in education in strong cultured pastoralist and nomadic communities. The analysis went further more to investigate how the identified gender related norms limit pastoralist girls access to and completion of primary and secondary education.

4.2 Key forms of gender related norms contributing to gender disparities in strong cultured, pastoralist and nomadic communities

The main theme leading this study was to gender related norms contributing to gender disparities in education in strong cultured nomadic communities in Tanzania.

Subthemes identified as major internal barriers include early and forced marriages, ritual and denying of girl's education.

4.2.1 Early and Forced marriages

Early and forced child marriage was one of the key forms of gender related norm practiced in the study area where by majority of respondents interviewed pointed out. Early and forced child marriages are deeply entrenched cultural practice in strong cultured pastoralist and nomadic communities like Maasai communities of Tanzania. In this community's majority of girls are ready for marriages as soon as they reach puberty, which is usually between the ages of 11 and 14. The similar findings were reported by Human Right Watch (HRW) (2014) showing that in Tanzania 4 out of 10 girls are married before 18 years of age. According to a report by the United Nations, over 60% of girls in the Maasai community are married off before the age of 18. Girls from pastoralist and nomadic communities are often forced to drop out of school, limiting their access to education and economic opportunities. A study by Ndaula 1018 found out child

marriages is practiced in Maasai communities where the legible age for marriage of Maasai is 6-15 years depending on the number of competing men and economic status of the family.

One of the key informants (Informant 5) indicated that:

Strong cultured pastoralist and nomadic communities have patriarchal social structure, where women are considered inferior to men Early child marriages is common in this communities, with girls as young as 12 years old being married off to old men (Informant 5).

One of the respondents (Respondent 6) had the following to say:

According to Maasai tradition and culture, Men can choose a wife while she still in her mother womb and when that girl is born and grow up to be a big girl is not allowed to get married to a different man she is forced to get married to man who paid for bride price when she was still in her mother womb (Respondent 6).

This finding show that majority of pastoralist girls are already wives before they are born and if a girl refuses to get married to man who paid for bride price to her parent when she was still in the womb, the man requested marriage can put a prohibition preventing the girl from marrying another man. During the FGD another respondent (Respondent 15) indicated that

Girls in strong cultured pastoralist and nomadic communities are forced married because their parents wants to maximize bride wealth payments.

One of the respondents (Respondent 8) indicated that:

I felt very sad. I couldn't go to school, dowry was paid, and I could not disobey my father. I was forced to marry a marry a 38 years old man who already had a wife.

Despite the existence of the affirmative action's, convention, policies, plans and visions to end forced and early marriages against young girls, girls in pastoralist society are faced with challenge of forced marriages. Some of these initiatives include, UN convention on the Rights of the Child, emphasizes involvement in schooling rather than marriage to assist every child grow and make informed decisions on future engagements rather than marriage at young age. Girls in pastoralist societies are often married forcibly, especially when they still young.

Other key informants (Informant 8) indicated that:

Early child marriages in strong cultured pastoralist and nomadic communities is often seen as a way of ensuring the security and protection of their girls because in this communities' girls are often seen as vulnerable to sexual assault and mistreatment so by marrying them off at a young age, they believe they are protecting them from dangers and are providing them with a sense of security within their husband's family (Informant 8).

During the interview with the respondents, one of the respondents (Respondent 9) indicated that:

...early marriages in very common in community and one common justification for early child marriages is because it is a way of preserving our culture and traditions.

Another respondents (Respondent 11) indicated that:

Early marriages is a deeply entrenched key gender related norms and practice because our communities believe that marrying off our daughters at a young age helps to ensure that our cultural practices and values are passed down to the next generation.

Another respondent (Respondent 4) indicated that:

...early marriages in strong cultured pastoralist and nomadic communities is very common because it is way of strengthening family ties and creating alliances between families.

This finding indicate is common in pastoralist and nomadic communities because is seen as way of cementing relationships between different clans or families

During FGD respondents indicated that most early and forced marriages mostly result of traditional ceremonies. One respondent (Respondent 16) indicated that:

One reason for early marriage is pastoralist and nomadic communities is poverty, young girls in many families are regarded as an economic burden therefore the family prefer to marry her to a much older man than to take her to school. Families value more dowry price than to educate a girl.

This finding indicates that poverty is the critical factor contributing to early marriage. In families where poverty is acute, a young girl may be regarded as an economic burden and her marriage to a much older man, a practice common in pastoralist communities, is a family survival strategy, and may even be seen as being in her interest. In pastoralist communities in Africa, the bride family may receive cattle from the groom, or the groom's family, as the bride wealth for their daughter (Rwezura, 1994). This is because in Africa the monetary value of bride wealth is linked to marriage. Bride wealth enhances the practice in most African communities as it is highly valued and encourages parents to marry off their children early (UNICEF, 2001). In addition, pastoralist communities do not regard education of the girl highly as that of the boy child. Similar findings were reported by Nyange et al (2016) that the dowry price payments highly contribute to early marriages. Although early marriages are indicated as violation of human rights but is still practiced in pastoralist and nomadic communities. Otoo-Oyortey and Pobi (2003) indicated that early marriage before 18 years is a violation of a number of international human rights conventions. Therefore, it is important for this practice to be stopped.

These findings indicate that strong cultured pastoralist and nomadic communities are faced with challenge of early marriages. In strong cultured and nomadic communities' marriages are carried out below the age of 18, before girls are physically, psychologically and physiologically ready to bear the responsibilities of marriage and child bearing. Study by (UNICEF, 2017) show that Tanzania is one of the countries with the highest prevalence of child marriage in the world, it is estimated that more than 18 million young women in Tanzania are victim of child marriages and teenage pregnancy. The prevalence of child marriage is more critical in regions dominated by pastoral societies (Ndaula, 2018 and Backlund & Blomqvist, 2014). Pastoral societies, notably the Maasai, do not consider girls' education important where male parents see education to their daughters as wastage of resources (Bali & Mbavai, 2015). The Education and Training Policy of 2014 indicate that early marriage as an obstacle to girl's education, however, it does not state the appropriate strategies to deal with the problem. The statutory laws also contradict the age of a child and legal age for marriage. In the Law of the Child Act number 21 of 2009, the government states in section 4 (1) that "a person below the age of 18 years shall be known as a child" (URT, 2009, p. 665). The marriage Act of 1971 permits marriage of a child aged 15 years on the consent of parents. These contradicting laws have to be amended if the government realizes that child marriage is a problem.

During interview the study was also interested to understand how early marriages is linked to numerous negative consequences. The study revealed majority of respondents indicated that early and forced marriages have effect on girls' access to and completion of education. The study found out that out of each 10 pastoralist girls, 7 girls were either enter into early marriages or were forced to get married. This practice inevitably denies young girls' right to education necessary for personal development, preparation for adulthood, and effective contribution to future well-being of family and society. For example, it is observed that, despite of government emphasis on ensuring that all students enrolled at school complete their final grade, quite number of students in the investigated area never attended classes and some of them never reached their final grades. During interview with students one respondent (Respondent 17) indicate that:

I lost my sister because she got a lot of complications during labour time, this is because she was very young. In her primary education she performed very well but she was forced to marry an older man.

One of the key informants indicated that "*we have a number of reported cases of maternal child mortality*". This show that early child birth is linked with health risks from most of the girls from pastoralist societies are at higher risk of developing health problems related to early pregnancy. Similar findings were reported by WHO and UNICEF (2012) that in each year, around 70,000 girls die in labour since their bodies are not mature for child bearing. Further, the study found out that about 14 million teen and adolescent girls get married, and others are forced into marriage arrangement by parents yearly, UNICEF (2012).

The study also found out that when young girls start to engage into sexual intercourse at young age, and lose concentration and focus on their studies. Eventually, some decide to drop out from school following early marriages and early pregnancy as a result. Secondary data show that droup out casefor the year 2022 form I to IV was 3,298boys comparing to 4,833 girls (basic statistics 2023). In Ngorongoro total droup out was 323 from form I to IV. These findings show

that girls drop out is high comparing to boys and could be contributed to early marriages. Early marriages often result in the termination of girl's education, after marriage girl is expected to take on domestic responsibilities and bear children which at the end of the day she is limits her opportunities for personal and economic growth and perpetuates the cycle of poverty.

In similar vein, it is clear that early and forced marriages are circled around the respect for traditional values in the society and family setup. Some of these have negative effects when are they get pregnancy, eventually increasing the chances of these youngsters to drop out of school and many girls die in labour since their bodies are not mature for child bearing. All this denies young girls' right to education necessary for personal development. During the interview with one of the key informants (Informant 19) indicated that:

...early motherhood responsibilities exposed girls to suffering in the hands of cruel and abusive partners which denies them opportunity to pursue and complete education like boy counterparts.

These findings collaborate well with the findings by Mwamsojo (2023) who assess the influence of early marriage on girls' school dropout in Mufindi District, Tanzania. The study found out that that most girls were dropping out from school due to early marriages, and most of the students who are affected by this cultural practice are the ones in the lower level of secondary school, Form I –II level.

In the similar vein, UN convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the African charter on the rights and welfare of the child 1999 which was domesticated during Children's Act 2001, that abhors early marriages or forced marriages prevent the girl child from participating in education. It was further established that, in some families, forced and early marriages was seen to be necessary for families to be able to acquire dowry price payments. At Ngorongoro District were majority of its people are Maasai it was found that despite of progress made to eradicate the past traditional practices affecting girls' students' participation in education, these communities still preserve their culture and traditions. The community believe that marrying off their daughter at a young age helps to ensure that their culture practices and value are passed down to the next generation. However, this practice forced and early marriages practices, which contributed and interfered with girls' pursuit of education.

4.2.2 Rituals

In pastoralist communities specifically Masaai there are many ceremonies and rituals in Maasai society including **Enkipaata** (senior boy ceremony), Emuratta (circumcision), Enkiama (marriage), Eunoto (warrior-shaving ceremony), Eokoto e-kule (milk-drinking ceremony), Enkang oo-nkiri (meat-eating ceremony), Olngesherr (junior elder ceremony) etc Also, there are ceremonies for boys and girls minor including, Eudoto/ Enkigerunoto oo-inkiviaa (earlobe), and Ilkipirat (leg fire marks). Traditionally, boys and girls must undergo through these initiations for minors prior to circumcision. However, many of these initiations concern men while women's initiations focus on circumcision and marriage. Men will form age-sets moving them closer to adulthood. Women do not have their own age-set but are recognized by that of their husbands. Ceremonies are an expression of Maasai culture and self-determination. This study

found out that the prevailing initiation rituals practiced are male circumcision, seclusion and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

During interview one of respondent indicate that: “Both boys and girls of the Maasai society are traditionally eager to undergo through circumcision. This initiation is performed shortly after puberty.”

Other respondent indicates that: “Young boys are very eager to be circumcised and become warriors. Once the boys become warriors they resume responsibility of security for their territory.”

In one of the FGDs, one of the informants (Informant 7) indicated that:

...girls must be circumcised...Without that they are priceless...No one can dare to marry her because she is unclean...” (Informant 7, FGD Session, April, 2, 2022)

The study found male circumcision is the main initiation rites taking place in pastoralist communities, followed by seclusion and finally female genital. All these rituals are seen as common things among pastoralist communities. Pastoralist communities value the issue of initiation ritual because they see as a way of preserving their culture. These rated initiation rituals represent common traditional initiation rituals practiced, which to some extent influence students’ decision to drop out of school. This is because, these are among the common African cultural practices, which mark the period where adolescent boys and girls are oriented to assume social, familial and sexual responsibilities in the community. Study by Munjor (2021) shows that, about 41(44.6%) of the respondents rated the age group of between 13 and 15 years to be the age when most youngsters are put through the initiation rituals. Besides, those aged below 13 years old were reported by 33(35.9%), and those aged between 16 and 18 years were reported by only 1(1.1%) of respondents. However, about 17(18.5%) of the respondents could not determine the age group, which these rituals are performed on youth. These results indicate that, the common age group of which most children are put through the initiation rituals ranges between 13 years and 15 years old. Nevertheless, this is the tender age, in which most children are supposed to be in school and it is characterized by different psychological, biological and bodily changes and maturation. These findings indicate that most of boys and girls are at risk of dropping school due to initiation rituals.

During focus group discussion the study revealed that For Maasai boys, assumption of the role of warrior took place soon after being circumcised, which may lead to loss of interest in schooling as they were taught to take care of the community and search for means of family’s survival. Participants also reported that, initiation rituals among the Maasai normally takes place between July and September, the months believed appropriate and conducive for quick healing of wounds after boys’ and girls’ circumcision. They added that, sometimes parents ask for permission for up to 2 to 3 weeks from school on behalf of their children for prior preparation, before the actual initiation practices. This was confirmed by one of the teachers (Teacher 9) who indicated that:

...in July and September student's attendance is always low ...this is because of the rituals' preparations that are going on those months'...(Teacher 9, Interview Session, March, 30, 2022)

These findings indicate that, although initiation affect the education of boys and girls still rituals are seen as important cultural practices among the Maasai community that cannot be avoided, since it acts as a bridge between childhood and adulthood. This finding confirms the assertion made by Ronoh (2016) that, among the Maasai, traditional learning experiences acquired during initiation period emphasize the dominance of the Maasai culture over other cultures. This is including aspects of formal education, which is thought to be foreign culture imposed on them. Therefore, this is an indication that, despite of modern system of education, traditional values and practices still hold a strong part of their tribal survival honored for decades, despite of new formal education that penetrated in their society and has different system and timing. Therefore, this might be the reason for clashing of school and initiation ceremonies.

During the interview students and key informants agreed that, the initiation rituals significantly influence students to drop out of school students, because they lead to early marriage and unwanted pregnancy. The study revealed that participation in initiation ceremonies like seclusion may also lead to students' truancy and absenteeism Furthermore, respondents indicated that initiation rituals interfere with school timetables. However, majority of students agreed that, time taken by initiates during initiation ceremonies can highly affect school participation and eventually lead to school dropout.

The study findings correspond to various previous studies conducted For instance, Okorie (2017) found out that, initiation rituals put girls in dilemma as they collide with the school calendar, contradicting the initiates to perform conflicting roles, which may lead to dropout. Another issue is time taken to heal the wounds. Okorie also attest that, the time taken to heal before resumption of classes increases their chances to change attitudes and expose them to participate in behaviors that, can affect their schooling. Similarly, in a study by Colclough (2003) in Ethiopia and Tanzania, it was revealed that, girls' interest in schooling declined considerably after being involved in initiation ceremonies and some families failed to pay school fees and other demands after spending family savings to cover for initiation ceremonies, which involve luxurious expenditure.

Furthermore, the study findings concur with Magesa et al. (2014) who found that, the girls' attendance at the ceremonies led to mistreatments, abuse and sometimes interfere with their school time table. They further maintained that, there are some changes in behavior occurring on students after attending ceremonies, especially the behaviors that contrasts with formal education, leading to their eventual school dropout. Malawoni (2013) also revealed the similar findings that, in terms of gender, girls are more prone to initiation rituals as the timing and manner they are conducted (hibernation/seclusion) increase their chances of being absent from schools, meanwhile exposing them to risk behaviors.

4.2.3 Normalization of Denying Girls school education

Normalization of denying Girls school education is an obstacle to girl's rights to meaningful progress in education. Denying of girls' school education was seen as a norm practiced in pastoralist families in Ngorongoro District. The in-depth interviews done with the parents,

elders, religious leaders and traditional pastoralist leaders revealed mixed attitudes among community members regarding girls' education. Majority of interviewed participants did not see the importance of sending girls to school while few members had positive attitudes towards girls' education.

Participants who were positive about girls' education explained the way the community had realised the importance of educating girls and the way some parents were motivated to send the girls to school. Women (mothers, female elders and religious leaders) were concerned that life had changed and families demanded support from both males and females. It was observed that those who were positive in their attitude about educating girls were those who had been educated or had realised its benefits from learning from the girls (now women) who went to school. The educated women in the community were able to support their parents and to some extent supported the community at large. One respondent (Respondent 8) indicated that:

I have allowed my girl to go school because I think education is very important and when she finishes she will not be the same and I know she will help me one day. We Maasai we need to change and accept that education is important for our girls and if we do not change we will always remain behind (Respondent 8, 2022)

Another respondent (Respondent 14) indicated that:

Education is good for us and our children these days. You know the world has changed very rapidly and if our children do not get education we shall continue to be left behind. We have just realized that although most of the people in our community are not educated, denying our children the opportunity to get education, we are depriving them of a very precious thing because one can be having a lot of cows which do not help much if his children are not educated to help with the management of the cows (Respondent15 [mother], 2022).

Another respondent (Respondent 13) indicated that

My husband stopped our daughter from going to school, I wanted my daughter to go to school but I couldn't do anything because I do not have power to oppose my husband. I tried to explain to my husband but he was not ready to listen. I also complained to village leaders, but they never listened to me (Respondent 13 [mother], 2022).

The study observed that mothers had more positive attitude about educating girls. They understood the importance of educating their children (both girls and boys), with the hope of receiving some support from them in future. This finding aligns with study by Shao (2010) who found that some parents in Monduli district had realized the value of educating their daughters although they were still confronted with a number of challenges when it came to sending girls to school. Another study by Raymond (2012) found out that some of the participant's had a positive attitude about girls' education. Some parents were motivated to send the girls to school. Further, the findings show that village leaders do facilitate girl's freedom to acquire formal education.

The study observed that leadership posts in the village were held by men which to a large extent created uneasy way for girls to attend school.

Participants who did not support the idea that educating girls were many, they indicated that pastoralist women must work longer and harder than men in the family therefore there is no need of going to school. The burden of housework limited many girls to go to school or to complete they education. During FGD it was observed that women shoulder increasingly heavy burdens to provide for their families, which also impacts on girls' education and constrains their participation in public life. Respondents indicated that pastoralist women must work longer and harder than men, fulfilling 'female' roles in the household, as well as making money from tasks traditionally deemed to be 'women's work', including collecting firewood, and making and selling handicrafts. This labour is in such demand that girls are often removed from school in order to work. Girls do not attend school due to social occasions at which men make decisions that affect the whole community. Women play a central role in livestock production, the main source of income and prestige for pastoralists.

From observations and from the in-depth interviews conducted with various participants, it was revealed that, many parents did not see the importance of their daughters' access to education. To large extent this impacted girls' access to and completion of their studies. Observations revealed that women in the study area were not involved in making family decisions. Males were normally described as the main decision-makers in all issues in the community and in the family. During FGD some girls' were concerns about the way decisions were made. One respondent [a girl] indicated that:

I really want to go to school but I am under control, I cannot say anything before my farther. My father told me that it is not important for me to go to school. I have no right to challenge my father, that's why these issues become hard and I fail to know what to do (Female Student, 02 2022).

Another respondent (Respondent 19) indicated that

There is no need for girls to go to school, the key responsibility of girls is undertaking household chores and few years he will be married and to her husband (Respondent 19, [Parent] 2022).

The study observed that some cultural practices of denying girls education and requiring girls to perform household activities have hindered many girls to go to school. The pastoralist community is closely tied to culture. The much dealing with domestic issues can conflict with the formal schooling system. This happens when girls spend most of their time doing petty activities, looking after cattle and do not get time to partially (poor attendance) or fully (drop out) attend school. Poor school attendance conflict with students' academic achievements while drop out cause students not to get access to formal education at all. Poor attendance and drop out increase poverty to the nation. Research shows that boys' educations are valued more than girls something which can make girls to be pulled from normal schooling and help with cattle herding in pastoralists communities.

Similar findings was reported by (Weisner et al. 1994) who found out that, women tend to take the largest burden of household work across many of the pastoral communities in Africa. In another study by Balehegn and Kelemework (2013) indicated that women in pastoral communities are responsible for more than 60% of household chores. The investigation by Balehegn and Kelemework (2013) also indicated that the majority of household chores are taken care of by women. The larger domestic burden creates pressure on the time women spend on their personal needs such as attending to their personal sanitation, health, education and other intellectual needs, creating health challenges to women (Balehegn and Kelemework 2013). Recent development such as sedentarization is also said to exacerbate the already higher work load of African women, as women usually become engaged in emerging petty trading activities, while continuing to take their traditional burdens from the pastoral system (Inkermann 2015). This disproportionately higher physical engagement of women than men, common across many pastoral areas, is probably why there is higher prevalence of wasting (Fentaw et al. 2013) illiteracy and sickness (Coppock et al. 2011), in women than in men in many pastoral areas in Africa.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded as follows: early and forced marriages, the practicing of initiation rituals and normalization of denying of girls' school education were the most common forms of gender norms contributing to gender disparities. Early and forced marriages made pastoralist girls to drop out from school following early pregnancy and other family responsibilities. Further, negative health-related effects had caused some students to drop out of school, following health complications they encountered after attending FGM during initiation period. It was also observed that Pastoralist families in a study area did not see any value of educating women and girls and therefore did not see the importance of sending girls to school. Women tend to take the largest burden of household work across many of the pastoral communities because that was seen is the only thing they can and not going to school. The larger domestic burden creates pressure on the time women spend on education issues.

Basing on study findings, the study recommends that education should be provided to the pastoralist to revert the situation. Education is crucial in mitigating incidences of early and forced marriage, the practice of FGM and the practice of denying of girls' education. This means that enhancing access to quality education for girls while at the same time enlightening community to amend societal norms that enable early and forced marriage, FGM practices and tendency of denying girls education. Furthermore, to reverse this trend of gender disparities in pastoralist communities, strengthening access to education from early childhood through primary to secondary would create sense of independence, ability to make own decisions and use acquired knowledge to manipulate environment for sustainable development. Moreover, Government, NGO, education stakeholders and International organization need to supports the vision of providing quality education, creating friendly learning environment and nurturing interactive learning process that will encourage girls to remain in school longer. They should also support and emphasizes expanded opportunities, campaigns against early marriages, integrating sex education across curricula and training teachers on girl's specific attributes for enhanced participation and retention in school beyond basic education. This entails supporting a complete cycle of quality education by focusing on girls' rights in addition to adopting

approaches which build friendly education for girls. The Tanzanian government, NGO and other educational stakeholders should strive to develop further understanding of the pastoral communities' situation in relation to their beliefs and norms of denying girls education.

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