

**Low Transition Rates of Girls from Primary to Secondary Schools in Rural Kenya**

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## **Abstract**

This paper considers the impact of education on development with a gender perspective. The paper selects four areas of interest: Education and Development, Gender and Development, Gender and Education, and Low Transition Rates of Girls from Primary to Secondary schools with the main focus on rural Kenya specifically Bomwanda clan, in Kisii County. The paper reviews the evidence from literature review and personal experience on how women's illiteracy can be traced to low transition rates from primary to secondary schools. It seeks to explore gender disparities in education and development processes. Finally, there are recommendations.

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## **Chapter 1-INTRODUCTION**

Globally low transition rates of girls from primary to secondary school has been pointed out as a major contributor to low levels of education among adult women. Although this is a worldwide problem, it is more profound in countries which have been categorized as developing. Research and personal experience have proved this fact to be more prevalent especially to those girls who live in rural areas of non-Western societies. Girls lack education as a basic human right. This is a huge a problem as the lack of education is what is creating the barrier that prevents women from obtaining equality in society.

Research and evidence has shown that education is one of the most critical areas of empowerment for a girl, overall leading to a healthier and more productive life. Taking this right away make the girls lose the right to learn, develop and succeed in life. The importance of providing girls with good education cannot be over emphasised. There are notable advantages of educated women. An educated woman can manage her life and that of her family well. She can maintain herself more efficiently. An educated woman has ample knowledge of hygiene and health and this helps her to maintain hygiene standards of her family.

Uneducated women have negative impacts to themselves and society. Majority of uneducated women are more likely to get married quite early usually against their will. This is common in thousands of illiterate young girls without the relevant tools to build a healthy and educated family. Uneducated women have difficulties in communicating and expressing themselves at home and in public places. It is quite common that lack of education among women has allowed men to exploit their ignorance. This is specifically true when women are convinced that they can not participate in some leadership positions especially politics.

There are few women in leadership positions both internationally and domestically. Very few women occupy leadership positions and are seriously underrepresented in politics. However, studies have shown that this is a complex issue which could be traced back to a number of historical, cultural as well as socio-economical factors. Women's illiteracy is always mentioned as number one reason why this is happening. Reports show that although women could be interested to join politics, they are held back by lack of education and training as well as limited participation and skills in decision making.

Cultural bias against women forms another factor militating against girls' education. Some cultures have been mentioned as making girls to have poor images about themselves making them to carry the burden of being a housewife, mother and provider.

Economically, it has been proved that increase in women's education increases the GDP of a nation. This can only happen when girls' education is not ignored especially secondary school education. Other than educated women participating in formal employment, a woman who is educated would be able to keep her own business records as well as managing her income and expenditures. Women in non-Western countries with post primary school education are meaningfully involved in informal businesses in a scale which reduce poverty from their lives.

It has been shown that lack of education has severe negative impacts which can easily be prevented if women are educated. The benefits of education are so many, however, lack thereof blinds people to the fact that education is a powerful tool to bring about development to individuals and to the country. Research has shown that majority of the illiterate women live in countries with increasing economic difficulties. Citizens in such countries have refused to acknowledge that the solution lies in educating their women. Educated women will be able to contribute to the development of their country because they will join the labour force. This might

reduce poverty and other social problems in non-Western countries. Educated women will naturally find their voice not just in the family but within society. Education will make women gain self confidence and courage they need to speak out and resist the injustice they see around them or are facing among themselves.

Many have pointed out how educated mothers have played a great role in reducing the infant and child mortality. This is common because educated mothers tend to have fewer children who they are able to care for. Such women are more likely to ensure that their children are also educated leading to a generation well prepared to contribute to society. This supports the commonly said theory that investing in a girl's education is investing in a nation. Education removes ignorance, allows women to realize their full potential by becoming conscious, skilled and productive citizens.

Educating women in poor countries might be a solution to reduce the issue of gender disparity at the same time enabling women's full potential while simultaneously boosting their developing country's economy. There is evidence that the development of any community will be destructed if the girls are not given quality education because girls form almost half of any society. Educated women obtain the confidence, skills and knowledge they need to lead a meaningful life, be more productive in their lives, while they raise the standards of living of their families and society.

The girl-child is commonly referred to, as biologically female ranging from birth to the age of 18 years. This is a period of various types of development from the body structure to the mental state building up personal behaviours and traits. Learning from the parents, guardians, teachers, peers and the community.

The focus of this thesis is more centred on my research question: “**What are the obstacles preventing primary school girls, in my community, from proceeding to the secondary school level?**” Based on my personal experience, it was very difficult for me to transition to secondary schools. Many of my friends did not transition to secondary schools although they had good grades. And also in the contemporary Kenya, I have witnessed many young girls not transitioning to secondary schools. Because of this problem’s historical persistence, I was encouraged to try and find out the causes so that solutions would be found.

My extensive experience with this problem and as a Kenyan woman, encouraged me to focus on the Kenyan education system specifically data surrounding transition of teenage girls from Primary to secondary schools. Statistics in Kenya show that a big number of girls do not transition to secondary schools. This has caused negative impacts of uneducated women as well as the development of some communities in Kenya. This gave a clear picture of the realities of the problem.

In the present world, education is considered as very important and directly linked to development. Education is as a powerful tool that can empower individuals to improve their lives to the level that they can bring about their own development and that of a nation in a meaningful way. Various forums have taken place where the role of education in the development process has been evaluated. In the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), education is number four. This is a clear indication that education is important in the process and realization of development of individuals and nations.

Gender disparities in development exist in every society in the globe. There are various reasons which contribute to fewer numbers of women compared to men who participate in development activities. Many theories have been formulated in trying to solve these inequalities

in development. Women's levels of education have been linked to the kind of jobs they do. Different strategies have been applied as a solution to gender disparities in development.

Globally statistics show that more women are illiterate compared to men. Secondary school education is described as having positive impact on women's lives than primary school education as explained by many researchers. It is noted that differences between boys and girls at lower levels of education are the foundation of gender differences later in life. The gender disparity in education has resulted to gender disparities in development process in Kenya. The paper explores the root causes of these disparities. In this paper I argue that there are low transition rates of girls from primary to secondary schools in rural Kenya.



## **Chapter 2- LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.1: Education and Development***

Generally, it is believed that everyone deserves access to quality education because it is believed to be the most powerful tool, which can be used to develop the world by poverty reduction, empowering women, and preventing disease. Because education has proved to have a variety of benefits to individuals and society, different scholars have defined formal or informal education differently. Langdon (2009) has defined education as a form of learning where knowledge, beliefs, habits, values, and skills are transferred from generation to generation, through teaching, storytelling, discussions and training; while, Bertram (1966) declares that formal education is identified as promoting quality of life as well as the quality of society. Bertram argues that increase in the knowledge and skills of citizens through formal education increases productivity and income in much the same way as an increase in stock of physical capital, this makes education the main variable in economic development and human capital.

Similarly, Freire (1970: 81) has described education as that which makes people start to reflect about the world and their position in that very world specifically, on how education relates to them. This includes their consciousness about education, which becomes a part of them. For Freire, education provides individuals with critical thoughts about truth. Freire emphasises that true education would liberate and empower individuals with the focus of reconciling the contradictions which exist within oneself and within society.

Freire points out that, education is a social action which can empower or domesticate learners. The author suggests that the true process of education is where the teacher poses problems derived from the student experiences, issues in the society and subjects in the academic

world, in a dialogue created mutually. For Freire, this will invite learners to think critically about the subject matter, the learning process itself and their society. The author highlights that true education is one that will make individuals to start changing their relation to the world than the one which will make them adapt to their oppressive conditions.

Equally, Kinuthia (2009) describes education as a process, which results in producing people for society who are able to participate in social governance, realize individual potentials, and provide a system where everyone is able to develop an integral and holistic understanding of the community; through education people can find their own place in the systems they live in.

From a development perspective, Ozturk (2001) defines education as a fundamental element of development with emphasis that no country can achieve development when its people have limited education in understanding themselves and the world. Ozturk has highlighted that, there is need for educated people to occupy significant positions in order to improve a nation, because they possess adequate skills. Ozturk shows, statistically, how skills and education levels of farmers can be linked to general development in agricultural productivity and family health. The author further highlights that, in increasing efficiency and value in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, education has become important to the nation's and individual's productivity.

Same as the other researchers, GyimahBrempong (2011: 225-227) emphasize that research shows that education has a major role in development. The authors highlight how different levels of education, primary, secondary and tertiary, affect development differently. They explain that educated people have better information about health and can make better decisions since, with good earnings and knowledge, they can and know how to invest in their health. After comparing different levels of education in correlation to different development

outcomes, such as health, earnings and political stability, the authors conclude that increased education results in improved development.

On the same note, Water, Clean et al (2015) have described the importance of education to development and have linked this as to why it was identified as number four in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs: these were the widest created consultation programme the UN has ever undertaken; citizens, civil society, academia, the private sector and local and regional governments all provided input, unlike the MDGs which were created in a closed environment. This goal aims that by 2030 all male and female students achieve meaningful education resulting in beneficial outcomes. The goal anticipates the kind of education that will end all gender disparities at all levels of education, offering vocational training for vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, indigenous people, and children in need. Water, Clean and et al concludes that this kind of education will equip individuals with skills and knowledge they need for sustainable development, life skills, and gender equality.

Van der Berg et al (2011) shows that education and poverty are inversely related: the higher the level of education of individuals, the lesser the amount of poor individuals. This inverse relationship between education and poverty occurs because education imparts knowledge and skills which a person requires to earn higher salaries and wages or access employment.

The studies of Bertram, Langdon, Freire, Kinuthia and Ozturk have shown that education has been valued, historically, as the main factor for lasting individual and economic development. They explain why education is the best tool for general development and social change in a country since educated citizens are able to analyse situations critically both positively and negatively. Truly educated people can speak out and contribute ideas for development. These authors did not, however, include the aspect of gender in their research.

Freire, Kinuthia and Ozturk have assumed that males and females are affected the same way with education. I feel that there is a need to identify the gender gaps in education rather than assuming that education brings change to both men and women the same way. I find their arguments too general to be realistic because they do not address specifically the impacts on gender. I argue this because, historically, research and experience shows that gender gaps in education have been normalised in most communities and this has always encouraged gender disparities in education and development.

GyimahBrempong (2011) give detailed estimations of education achievements of adults above 25 years, but they lack the deeply embedded and complex nature of gender inequalities in education. There is every possibility that very few females are in the estimates and this needs to be taken into account. The authors did not examine the representation of males and females in their figures. In the same way, Van der Berg explains how higher education is linked to employment but does not mention gender differences in this education. These authors generalize their studies, giving a blind eye to the fact that women are affected differently. Their findings could be more satisfying, if they gave the number of females and males in their percentages. There is need for researchers to give clear male and female estimates of the different affects education has on development, which I hope will inform policy makers.

## ***2.2: Gender and Development***

Momsen (2004) argues that historically men and women are affected differently by development processes. Momsen highlights that the legacies of colonialism exacerbate the effects of discrimination on women. In addition, the author says that the emergence of capitalism which resulted to modernisation and changes in subsistence and traditional economies produced gender-based disadvantages. For example, the modern industry displaced many economic activities such as food processing and making of clothes which was historically important to women and their families. Displacing women from such activities meant they had to go out and seek for other sources of income which involve new technology commonly possessed by men.

Rathgeber (1990: 4-8) contends that, globally, women's participation in development has been a challenge as reflected in various theories such as women in development (WID), women and development (WAD) and gender and development (GAD). Such theories have been used since 1970s as development strategies and action programs with the focus of involving more women in the productive sector with aims of ending discrimination against women.

Rathgeber highlights that the analysis was criticised in 1970s by arguments that the position of women in the formal industrial sector was in low paying jobs, and that health-impairing jobs were mandatory according to their low level of education. Although there were educational expansions, women were less likely to benefit considering their low enrollment figures at the secondary school level. Later analysis of these approaches revealed that there was no success since gender bias persisted. Women were found to have limited access to formal education. They concluded that, women's limited access to education was identified as a constraint which resulted in high female illiteracy.

The above authors discuss how the emergence of various development strategies were applied as treatments to women's issues in development. The authors failed, however, to identify that the strategies failed to recognise that the complexities and changing technologies require females to transition to secondary schools which will enable them to proceed to higher levels of education where they will gain relevant skills. An example of strategy failure was WID identifying women's lack of access to resources as the main reason for inequalities but I find that the authors also failed to analyse the role of secondary school education in the lives of women and girls. The authors have ignored the fact that the development approaches of the time did not bring any great attention to the then already forgotten reality that women could not participate in development as men participated due to the poor transition rates of girls to secondary schools. There is need for information from diverse sources, which I feel, would contribute to the existing knowledge, by giving an understanding of different reasons why girls do not transition to secondary schools; this is important education ally as a pathway to achieving necessary skills for development participation.

### ***2.3: Gender and Education***

Ahooja-Patel (2007: 322) states that global statistics show that more women are illiterate than men because in many countries boys are schooled based on the understanding that they will care for their parents in old age. In fact, Ahooja-Patel argues that although there is improvement in literacy levels, millions of girls are counted as illiterate. Even if not many countries are lagging in achieving gender equality in education, more needs to be done in other regions where the problem is greater. On the same note, GyimaBrempong (2011: 221) point out that there are

chances of education breaking traditional obstacles which would allow women to be actively involved in national politics.

In detail Ozturk explains that it is important to educate women and girls especially in developing countries because education is necessary for better life. Ozturk highlights that educated women make better decisions in birth spacing, nutrition and health, reduced child mortality, and promotion of children's education. In fact, Ozturk emphasises that a country with both men and women who are educated, participates well in economic development nationally and internationally. Similarly, Van der Berg et al (2011) has emphasised that education indirectly helps in the fulfillment of basic needs like water and sanitation, utilization of health facilities, shelter and it can affect the women's behavior in fertility decisions, family planning and their ability to participate and make decisions in general development both locally and internationally.

On the same note, Chege et al (2006: 26-28), argue that research shows how education for girls encourages their contact outside the household realm, to which they are usually confined. They highlight that this education has proved to open opportunities for girls such as finding social encouragement for self-esteem, although gender aspects in education face challenges in low female transition rates. According to the authors, such challenges for women's education persistently led to men benefitting more in all areas of economic development while women remained in the domestic arena.

Similar to Ozturk, Chege et al (2006) further emphasise that research shows that women's education would improve primary healthcare, as compared to that of males, by giving examples of the areas of "delayed marriage age, lower fertility rates, and desire for fewer children". In fact, the authors point out that, secondary school education has more impact on a female's life than primary school education. They mention with certainty that rural female-

headed homes sent their children to primary schools more than male headed homes possibly because females were in control of decision making and family resources.

Similarly, Ahooja-Patel pointed out that there is need for some action to be taken regarding the many girls who are out of school in some countries. Ozturk recognises that the gender gap in education remains a big problem in some regions; he highlights that the differences between boys and girls at lower levels of education are the foundation of gender differences later in life. Ozturk, however, lacks any recommendation on what should be done to solve this problem.

Although Chege and Daniel highlight how important education is to the lives of girls, they lacked detailed analysis on when women are affected in achieving meaningful education. From the research evidence of low transition rates of girls to secondary schools, I think more attention should be devoted to not only increasing the enrollment numbers in primary schools, but ensuring that girls transition to secondary schools. From the views of scholars and leaders, women's education is a social issue which must be the driving force behind growth of underdeveloped countries. Most certainly there is a need to solve the problem of gender disparities in education.

#### ***2.4: Low Transition Rates of Girls from primary to secondary schools***

Hanewald (2013) points out that transitioning from primary to secondary schools is an important stage for young people since this is the period they move from a small classroom to a large more diverse school with more expectations of independent academic achievement and reduced teachers' instructions. Hanewald emphasises that at this time changes in peer group occurs with concerns of social acceptance which can result to low self esteem, grades and



increased levels of anxiety and depression. The author highlights that the period is a social and academic turning point for young people. Conclusively, transitioning from primary to secondary schools prepares young people for future careers and employment opportunities and life chances.

World Bank (WB) Annual Report (2015) highlights that, globally, there are low transition rates from primary schools to secondary. Although significant progress has been made in education for all, Siddhu (2011) tells readers that some children in many countries, especially girls, do not proceed to secondary schools. Siddhu emphasises that this problem has severely affected girls as compared to boys. After carrying out research, Siddhu highlights that this could be the main reason for low participation of women in development. Siddhu clarifies that, although there is evidence describing this problem, very little is known about the causes of low transition rates of girls from primary to secondary schools. He points out that, not much has been done on this topic and emphasises that the problem is acute in the rural areas especially girls from agrarian backgrounds.

I agree with the argument of Siddhu that very little is known about the causes of the low transition rates of girls from primary to secondary schools in some countries. There is need to fill this important gap in the literature available so that this problem can be solved. I think if more details of the causes were to be known, stakeholders such as parents, school and local committees would be involved in supporting girls to proceed with their education.

It is common knowledge that globally young people face various issues in transitioning from primary to secondary schools depending on which part of the world. After carrying out studies in Canada, Australia, US, UK Germany, Peru, Norway Estonia and Ireland, Hanewald (2013) identified divorce as an obstacle students face while they are transitioning to senior grades equivalent to what is commonly known as secondary school levels. Students living with

both biological parents display fewer worries about transitioning from primary to secondary school than their peers from single parent or blended families. Perceived or lack of support from parents and teachers make some students not to transition to secondary schools in the mentioned countries. Students who feel that they are not supported by parents or teachers are not motivated to school work and they experience negative social and emotional well being.

Haneld mentions that measures of the academic achievement through mathematics and literacy tests discourages students from transitioning to secondary schools. Students who happens to be weak academically are mostly affected. This can result to low self-esteem, stress and other vulnerabilities.

The author has mentioned that lack of student preparation and support by some primary schools specifically in facing new challenges and learning activities, feeling of success and confidence, discourage them from transitioning to secondary schools.

Haneld concludes that transition disruptions can be caused by peer and emotional problems resulting into anxiety and depression, fear of bullying and getting lost, changing school demographics especially if students are supposed to move to secondary schools where students are ethnically different.

The study of Haneld is an eye opener to the readers into more underling major causes to low transition rates of students from primary to secondary schools. What rweessed with me is how the study has vividly informed us that it is a collective responsibility from parents, family, teachers, peers, and the school to make it more possible in the primary to secondary transition process. I can only imagine how successful this process could be if each group played its role well.

Researchers such as Ahoojapatel (2007:188-90) have revealed that there are similar causes globally that attributes to women and girls not to achieve secondary school education. Ahoojapatel has emphasised that this has caused critical consequences for women's productive and reproductive roles. Mentioning Asia as an example, Ahoojapatel say that many women do not go to secondary schools because poor families make a choice of spending disposable income on boys than girls because of social believes that it is better to invest in boys because they will care for parents at their old age, although it is common that daughters care for parents whether they have steady sources of income or not.

From this study, I can say that the main well known enduring theories why few girls transition from primary to secondary schools compared to boys is based on financial concerns. Culture has also underscored; since in many societies it is always assumed that girls will be married away while the boys will continue the family lineage. Such believes are also prevalent in my community.

Literature has shown that the problem of transitioning to secondary schools is a global issue although some regions of the world are most hit. It is true that various factors such as poverty intertwined with culture, early pregnancy and marriage pose challenges to girls' education. This are not necessarily the only causes of the problem. We need to look deeper at which girls are most likely to become pregnant, get married, or leave school prematurely because of poverty. For example, if the girl's family is poor and unable or unwilling to pay fees, she may not have the support she needs to continue with her education to secondary school. Her parents may decide marriage to be a better option for her future security

## ***2.5: Education and Development in Kenya***

Studies and personal experiences have revealed that Kenya has not achieved meaningful levels of education needed for development. Although the government, Non-governmental organisations, Religious groups and private individuals have taken various measures regarding quality education for Kenyans, research findings and experiences have testified that there is still greater gender disparity in the education system, which has resulted to overall gender disparity in every sub-section in the country. In fact, many of my friends I grew up with did not proceed to secondary schools and I have witnessed that even in the present Kenya few girls transition to secondary schools.

UNESCO Report (2008) gives evidence that the government of Kenya recognises education as a basic human right and the most important tool for human and national development since her independence in 1963. Government policy documents and programmes such as sessional paper No. 1 of 2005 reinforces this. The report further highlights that, Kenya is a signatory to various international conventions and Agreements and that she has ratified a number of them committing herself to the implementation of the recommendation therein, such as Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) among others. The Kenyan government indigenised the same through legislative and policy pronouncements. Such Documents reiterate the need to eliminate all forms of discrimination and the right to education by all Kenyans, for example, the Free and Compulsory Primary Education (2003) for all Kenyans. Kenya's new development blueprint for 2008 to 2030 (Kenya Vision 2030) aims at making Kenya a newly industrialized, middle income country. The education goals of the Vision 2030 are to provide globally competitive quality education, training and research for development.

After their national survey, Oketch et al (2010) argue that Kenya has not achieved its hope for development by making education available to all Kenyans since independence in 1963. The authors point out that the country has been experiencing changes in the educational system since its independence without much success. In fact, Oketch et al point out that, even though the response to both initiatives has been massive in terms of significant enrollment at primary school intake, by the time the student reaches senior classes, their impact had faded especially among girls. Neither of the education systems have come near to achieving the economic, social and political pillars, in the country's long-term national planning strategy, known as Kenya Vision 2030.

Yakoboski et al (2011) highlight that Kenya has faced numerous challenges in education since its independence. The authors trace how the British government used entrance exam and fees as a means to hinder Kenyan students from moving upward in the education system. In the same way, Oketch et al (2010) has described the current education system as hierarchical; exams and fees are used to hinder many students from getting secondary school education and majority who are affected happen to be girls.

## ***2.6: Kenyan Education System***

Mungai (2002) informs the readers how education in Kenya has evolved with time from an informal setting to a formal function that is measured through testing students before they move to the next level. Mungai describes how formal (western) education was established in Kenya in 1846 by missionaries at Rabai in the Kenyan coast. This school promoted Christian evangelism which later developed into producing skilled laborers for white settlers' farms and clerks for colonial administrators. At this time, education was racially classified: Asians, Arabs, Whites and Africans would be educated at different levels according to race. Great disparity

existed between races, males and females. Culturally, only men were trained to work for colonial government while women remained at home. Generally, boys were given formal education while girls were taught domestic skills such as sewing and cookery. Mungai highlights that after independence in 1963, Kenya concentrated on expanding education system to make it accessible to all Kenyans without bias to western values such as traditional British history. Education became valued as important to development.

The current education system in Kenya, as described by World Education News and Reviews (WENR 2003), is structured on an 8-4-4 model with 8 years in basic/primary education, 4 years in secondary education, and 4 years in an undergraduate program. This model replaced the 7-4-2-3 (7 years' primary, 4 years secondary, 2 years advanced secondary, 3 years undergraduate) system in 1985. Formal schooling, even now, starts at age six, which is compulsory and free, running through the age of 14 prior to joining secondary school. From this basic cycle, students who do not proceed to secondary school may go to technical or trade schools. Secondary schooling is not compulsory. The free primary education was started in 2003. This increased attendance within 4 years by millions by 2007, as shown in the report.

Primary or Basic education is divided into three sections: lower classes (standard 1-3), middle classes (standard 4 and 5), and upper primary (standard 6-8). At the end of the primary cycle, students receive the national primary school education (KCPE) supervised by Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) exams under the Ministry of Education. The examination is used to rank and stream students into secondary and technical schools. The curriculum is uniform across the country, which includes English, Kiswahili (which is the national language), mathematics, science, social studies, religious education, creative arts, physical education and

life skills. Exams are held in five subjects: Kiswahili, English, mathematics, science and agriculture, and social studies.

Secondary school education lasts for four years. At the end of the fourth year, students take exams supervised by KNEC, which lead to the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). This exam is used for admission into universities and training at other institutions of higher education in the technical and vocational streams. Studies have shown that a lower percentage of primary school students continue on to secondary schools. Different studies have given various reasons as to why gender disparities, specifically the low transition rates of girls from primary to secondary schools, remain a problem in Kenya.

### ***2.7: Gender and Development in Kenya***

Chege et al argued in their research that Kenya is also one of the countries which has redefined women as important participants in national development and their role is recognised as crucial in development activities. The authors emphasise that formal education was identified as the operational framework where women's empowerment and full participation in national development was to be located. Chege et al emphasised that this education would provide skills and knowledge for the needed workers.

In analysing gender relations and how they determine development outcomes in two sub-counties of rural Kenya, the research of Bikketi et al (2016) informs the readers that there is unequal access to property and discrimination in the labour market which hinders women from contributing to development and well being of their families. The author highlights that men are still regarded as the owners of assets and resources and may control their use and sale. The

authors point out that such attitudes are linked indirectly to the systemic processes which hinder women from participating in development activities geared towards building the families and nation.

With more emphasis, Francis (1993: 7) argues that although education has been perceived as crucial in economic development, developing countries are unable to make full use of human resources because masses in the developing world lack education, which would enable them to participate effectively in development as families, group members, leaders and citizens. People need training and education in order to participate meaningfully in development. Francis has cited Kenya as one of the countries with disproportionate distribution of education within the country.

I have experienced that, in my community, the lives of men and women, and their experiences, even in the legal system, happen in a complex setting of different cultural and social expectations. In such construction, I find Walters et al (1996) description of education as having a role in development of communities, specifically in relation to social change, important. Focusing on feminists' politics and the role of communities with a dedication to equity in society, these authors consider education as something which can make women develop ideas which can challenge them to connect individuals' situations and their society at large.



## ***2.8: Gender Disparity in education in Kenya***

Dawo et al (2010:40-41) argue that, although the Kenyan government has invested many resources in enhancing 'girl child education' (as girls' childhood education is popularly called in Kenya), participation of girls in secondary school education is low. The researchers found out that most parents live below poverty level and they view girls' education as a waste of resources because she would be married away. They described poverty as the main challenge girls face in achieving secondary school education, because it causes absenteeism alongside inadequate general welfare. The authors mention that families pull girls out of school to engage them in activities which would earn income to the family. They highlight that in low-income homes, schoolgirls engage in domestic chores such as fetching water and firewood, cleaning, cooking and caring for siblings. Besides, some girls lack support in undertaking schoolwork at a home, because of a poor academic atmosphere and parental low level of awareness. According to the authors, with all these burdens, some girls decide to quit school, affirming the traditional assumption that girls are stupid and lazy.

Similarly, Chege et al argue that despite the widespread knowledge about the importance of girl child education, Kenya is still struggling with multiple challenges of finding better ways that would work in promoting females' education for greater gender equality. The authors say that some communities in Kenya do not value educating girls when they consider opportunity costs associated with it. In addition, they say that some cultural beliefs and practices portray education of girls as an unwelcome challenge to male hegemony. These include social-cultural attitudes, expectations that define successful womanhood in terms of domestic roles, which create vicious circles in communities where uneducated women reproduce generations of uneducated girls, who also reproduce the roles of their mothers. In fact, the authors argue that

this is persisting because research on girls' education avoid the gender perspective, while policy dialogue continues to marginalise debates on gender and the education system. In simpler terms, although Kenyan independence increased women's education and employment opportunities, gender inequality has remained persistent in the educational systems of Kenya.

In the same way, Shabaya et al (2004:395-424) argue that there are educational disparities between males and female in the rural regions of Kenya. Similar to other researchers, the authors point out that the factors which have worked to perpetuate these disparities include poverty, political realities and sociol-cultural and ethnic groups' perspective on gender roles. Shabaya et al highlight that poverty can reduce the parents' ability to pay for the school's financial requirements, which cause them to pull their daughters out of school sell in the market and become breadwinners, forcing them into early marriages to earn bride price or raise younger siblings. They conclude that although there is remarkable progress in education over the last 40 years, there are gender gaps in education, especially in rural regions.

On the same note, the study of Sawamura et al (2008: 103-108) inform the readers that gender gaps between boys and girls have been consistent across the country and always they appear in each subsystem of education in Kenya. The authors argue that although gender issues have been debated for a long time, accelerating girls' education has remained a mirage that interferes with women's personal and national development. Sawamura et al highlight that obstacles to female education are often region-specific and they seem to hinge on various factors which include poverty and cultural practices and beliefs that portray girls' education as an unwelcome challenge to male hegemony. In conclusion, the authors have emphasised that there is a need to address gender inequalities in education system, not only in one region but across the country.

Just like Sawamura et al, Njoki and Gatonya (2003) have emphasised that when opportunities of formal education are available to women and girls, the benefits are greater according to one of the local Kenyan saying: “*Wathomithia muiretu, ni wathomitha mbururi*” (When you educate a girl, you educate a whole nation) because of the roles women play in families. This is similar what Chege et al mentioned earlier using Nigeria as an example, that research has shown how educating girls encourages their contact outside the household while they delay marriages and prefer few children. On the other hand, Njoki and Gatonya have clarified that after primary school, the plans to enhance girl’s enrollment numbers in secondary school are low compared to that of primary school. This imbalance has been attributed to poverty and other cultural practices such as earlier marriages.

Yakaboski et al (2010:1-2) say that the educational status of many women nationwide is low ethnically and regionally. In fact, Yakaboski et al argue this is happening because educators and leaders have not examined the access issues in secondary schools. These authors highlight that the number of females affected in this process is not known and for that reason, they recommend that there is need to examine access issues of females to secondary schools.

I agree with the views of the authors that this problem of female lack of access to education has persisted and some action needs to be taken. However, as I have said above, I dispute poverty as a main reason because if it were the one, then boys would be affected the same way. Dawo et al are right to say that there are complex reasons, which need diverse research in order to address gender disparity in secondary schools. I support the argument of Chege et al that gender disparity is persisting because research on girls’ education avoids the gender perspective, while policy dialogue continues to marginalise debates on gender and the education system. In fact, I agree with the argument of GyimahBrempong (2011: 221) that there

is the chance for education to break traditional obstacles which would allow women to be actively involved in national politics.

Similarly, Yakaboski et al argue that disparity is persisting because educators and leaders have not examined the access issues to secondary schools. Based on my personal experience, transitioning to secondary school is a very crucial stage in life in rural Kenya. I support the authors' views that the number of girls who do not proceed to secondary schools is not known and for that reason, more research need to be done.

More than a decade ago, Mungai argued that although Kenya has improved in educational ratio, gender disparities in education persist. Mungai mentioned that the reasons could be due to holding onto traditional practices and beliefs, females are not given a chance to proceed with education or other underlying reasons. In the same vein, after examining the outcome of the Kenya affirmative action (strategies which were employed to encourage women participating in the university education, such as lower entry mark for women and financial assistance), Onsongo (2009: 71-81) argues that there is gender disparity in universities despite the fact that these policies have been applied. Onsongo highlights that access to primary school education is not reflected in secondary schools.

The author argues that there is gender disparity in university admissions, which is a matter of concern in the country. The author mentioned 2007 as an example of a year where a small percentage of the total students were females in the public universities. Onsongo suggests that to address this disparity, universities need to expand education and training in relation to population growth, promote private sector investment in the development of university education and training and provision of scholarships and loans to the needy, all the while taking into account gender parity.

Onsongo is right that free primary school education did not translate into a large percentage of students entering secondary school, especially girls. However, the author fails to recognise that gender disparities in the Kenyan universities is linked to low transition rates of girls to secondary education, which is and has been low for quite some time. I dispute the author's suggestion of expanding university education and training, encouraging privatization, scholarships and loans to the needy. The author's suggestion seems not to address the root cause of the problem. I do not understand why university education should be improved without recognising that secondary school entrance is the main path to university. I think addressing the problem by improving university accessibility should focus on transition rates to secondary schools. In fact, the parity in the university depends on parity both at primary and secondary schools. On the whole, for Kenya to achieve gender equality in education, attention needs to be paid to all levels of education. I feel that there is need to investigate and find out the factors which mainly contribute to the problem.

### ***2.9: Low Transition Rates of Girls from Primary to Secondary schools in Kenya***

Studies of Oketch et al (2010) show that some children do not proceed to secondary school after they complete their primary school education. They have emphasised that other studies have shown how many children in Kenya are affected during the transition period from primary to secondary schools. They highlight that the education of girls in rural Kenya is adversely affected by gender issues ranging from female genital mutilation, early marriages and low transitions rates to secondary schools since most parents prefer to educate a boy child rather than the girl child when faced with financial constraints. Oketch et al are reminding readers that, there are complex realities for girls in transitioning from primary to secondary schools, even

though policies stipulate that secondary school education is basic and every Kenyan child has a right to get it.

On the same note, Ohba (2011) as the above authors, states that the number of girls who transition from primary to secondary schools in Kenya is less than that of boys. Ohba has pointed out that poverty and examinations are the main reasons why girls are lagging behind in achieving secondary school education; This is because some households are not able to provide some of the school requirements which are linked to finance, such as books and uniform. The standard eight examination is another factor the author has mentioned, which hinder girls from proceeding to secondary schools. The students who fail this exam are likely to repeat standard eight or to go to vocational training in Youth Polytechnics for 1-2 years to get skills in tailoring, carpentry and masonry but they may instead simply leave the education system completely. Ohba says that girls' lower transition rates most certainly exist in Kenya compared to that of boys.

Similarly, Achoka (2007: 237) argues that the lower transition rates of girls from primary to secondary schools compared to that of boys is a signal of an unfulfilled objective, goal and aim for the individual as well as the community. Like the other researchers, Achoka emphasises that Kenya has a challenge of low transition rates of girls from primary to secondary schools. The main reasons the author mentions include poverty, early marriages and pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, violence, and drug abuse. The author highlights that, some girls take up parental responsibility when parents die of HIV/AIDS. The questions the author asks are: "where do these girls who don't get secondary school education go? What do they do wherever they go?" The author concludes by calling for more diverse research on this persistent issue.

I agree with Oketch et al that there are complex realities that hinder girls from transitioning from primary to secondary schools. It is true for these authors to argue that neither

of the education systems in Kenya have come near making education accessible to all Kenyans, specifically not for women. I am certain of this failure. I, myself, attended a system (7-4-2-3) of education that was replaced by the current 8-4-4 system mentioned above. I saw for myself that in the two systems girls are still lagging behind and the most challenging level, where the most girls stop, is transitioning to secondary school, which seem to be given a blind eye. I dispute the argument by Ohba and Achoka that poverty is one of the major reasons for the problem because, if it was, boys should be affected the same way. I find it encouraging when the authors recognise that the problem exists and that there is need for more diverse research, which would contribute to new approaches in promoting female education for greater gender equality. I acknowledge that Achoka identifies that the low transition rate is a signal of unfulfilled objective, goal, and aim of the individual as well as the community. Achoka asks the very questions I am concerned about: Where do the girls who do not transition go? What do they do wherever they go? Finally, I concur with the authors that the issue of low transition needs more investigation.

It is general knowledge that there are many contrasts from landscape to demographics, social and economic inequalities that describe Kenya as a country. Segments of its population experience different challenges in accessing services like education. On the same note, Ngware et al (2007) clarify, in their study, that there are regions in Kenya which have remained behind in implementing effective education because of challenges such as insufficient facilities in the rural region, poverty and other reasons unknown. The authors argue that this regional lagging behind leads to low educational achievement among women compared to men in the country. They further explain that the strategies employed by the government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and churches, related to girl child education, have not been effective in ensuring the provision of equitable and quality education for males and females in some regions.

Siddhu mentioned earlier that the problem of low transition rates of girls from primary to secondary schools is more pronounced in rural regions especially to girls from agrarian backgrounds. After the 12-year survey in Kenya by Oketch et al, mentioned above, they identified Kisii District as a rural district with high agricultural potential, far away from urban regions, and with a less developed educational system. Many adult women in this community do not have the secondary school education which prepares students for higher education and other community roles.

Globally, it is acknowledged that education is crucial in empowering women and girls in advancing their self-development and that of humanity. Research has shown that having some level of education enables the individuals to take up leadership positions in their homes, communities and nation. I have experienced and witnessed that, despite these global pronouncements about ‘girl child education’, females in rural Kenya (particularly in my community) lag behind in education and this has led to their lessened participation in development activities such as politics and leadership positions. This is why I am concerned with the question: **“What are the obstacles preventing primary school girls, in my community, from proceeding to the secondary school education?”**

In order for me to answer my question, I wanted to detect change over time and this needed large samples. I needed information about low numbers of girls who proceed to secondary schools and gender disparities in education and development activities. For this reasons, I carried out secondary research whereby I got the information from administrative records taken routinely as part of day to day operations of educational and development activities in Kenya.



## **Chapter 3- METHODOLOGY**

Before going to the field, I intended to carry out a qualitative field research. However, because this problem has persisted, I identified that a broader picture was needed of the situation. For this reason, I decided to get the data from the local, district and national level. The thesis heavily relies on Government Agency reports, Government district annual reports and Non-Governmental Organisation. These sources were formal administrative documents that were comprehensive and routinely done. The sources met the requirement of my problem. This is to say, my thesis is composed of secondary data cross referenced with my personal experience.

### ***3.1: Formal Sources***

Formal reports in Kenya are got from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS). This is a corporate body established under the statistics Act (2006). It is the main government agency responsible for collection, compilation, analysis, publication and dissemination and custody of official statistical information. It also oversees the coordination, supervision and development of programmes within the National Statistical system.

### ***3.2: Education and Development***

Since Kenya recognises formal education as fundamental to the success of its new development blueprint; Kenya Vision 2030 covering the period 2008-2030, with aims to transform Kenya into an industrialized nation whose citizens would be enjoying high quality life, I was interested to know its commitment in supporting education. From the Education for All Global Monitoring Report Fact Sheet October (2012), I found out that unlike other sub-Saharan African Countries, Kenya receives a small proportion of the education aid approximated to be around 4%. This shows the country's commitment to education.

From the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) Economic Survey (2017), I wanted to find out the importance Kenya attaches to education as reflected in the country's gross expenditure for the ministry of education. From this survey, I found out that the country spends good amount of its social expenditure on education and expects this to increase as shown on page (37).

### ***3.3: Gender and Development in Kenya***

Kenya is also one of the countries, which has redefined women as important participants in national development and whose roles are recognised as crucial in development activities. The country also seeks to address the abuse and rights of women and girls. In trying to achieve this, Kenya is a signatory to Universal Declarations of Human Rights and many other instruments including the Convention of all forms of discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, the African Charter on Human Rights and People's Rights. Generally, the country has tried to implement the outcomes of the conventions although there is contradiction between policy and practice. For example, according to the Constitution of Kenya women can inherit properties where they were born something which cannot happen therefore.

I have experienced that in many rural communities in Kenya, the lives of men and women, and their experiences, even in the legal system and in development activities, are lived in a complete setting of different cultures and social expectations. For these reasons, I wanted to know women's participation in development activities geared towards building the families and nation. I had to get this information from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) Economic Survey (2017) report where data for both men and women involvement in development in Kenya is recorded upon retirement as shown in the mandatory National Social Security Fund (NSSF) scheme both in formal and informal.

The survey provided me with an overview about the role of the government in improving the status of women socially, economically and politically. I found out that the government encourages women to form registered groups after which they are able to access loans for business through Uwezo (power) and women enterprise Funds. Overall membership keeps increasing. They are also encouraged to participate in politics.

### ***3.4: Gender and Education***

Contemporary literature showed gender gaps in all formal sectors in Kenya including gender disparity in Kenyan universities. It has also been my concern for many years that a great number of adult women across the country do not have secondary school education and, therefore, have no preparation for higher education and other community leadership roles. For these reasons, I needed both male and female student enrollment in public and private universities in Kenya 2013/14-2016/17 academic years. I was able to find this information in the KBNS Economic Survey (2017) as the table on page 37 confirms.

### ***3.5: Low Transition Rates of Girls from Primary to Secondary Schools***

Generally, studies and experience have proved that majority of Kenyans do not proceed to secondary school education specifically more figures being women. Since this has been my experience and concern for many years, I wanted to have a general idea about the national trends of transition rates of male and female students from primary to secondary schools. From the KNBS (2017) report, I found out the numbers of male and female students who completed Kenya Certificate of Primary School Education (KCPE) in the period of 2012-2016 nationwide.

The enrolment of both males and females in the secondary schools during the same period showed few female students proceeding as shown on the tables on table 4.

I wanted to get the overall picture of girls who transitioned from primary to secondary schools in Kisii County. I had to look at the government's registration records of girls and boys in class eight and form one in the past five years as shown in the tables on table 5 and 6. The clans make the county and low levels of girls transitioning to secondary school at the county level indicates low levels at the clans. I found out the same trend as the national level whereby more females do not proceed to secondary schools.

Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is an international faith based organization which provides individuals and communities in need with services such as food security, economic development, primary health and basic education. Kenya is one of the countries where ADRA has its operations. The organisation pursues strong, equitable relationships with communities and grassroots organisations to ensure that its work impacts those who need it most. ADRA also rely on the invaluable partnerships with governmental and nongovernmental partners to foster lasting change in countries it works. Many of its activities are in Bomwanda village.

The end of phase Evaluation report for the Anti-Female Genital Mutilation project implemented by ADRA I obtained some of the causes contributing to low transit rates of girls from primary to secondary schools. The report highlighted that the cultural practice of female genital mutilation in the area contributes immensely to girls having lowing interest of transitioning from primary to secondary schools. This is because the culture encourages marriage

after the ritual. These findings hitherto presented an indication that there are low transition rates of girls from primary to secondary schools in Kenya.

### ***3.6: Informal Methods***

Because I have engaged with the Kenya education system both primary and secondary, and I was born, raised, schooled, and worked in rural Kenya for some years, I used my informal methods (personal experience and observation) to make judgement about low transition rates of girls from primary to secondary schools in rural Kenya. I have taken time to reflect on my personal experience as a girl who grew up in Kenya.

### ***3.7: Personal Experience***

My understanding and passion to this topic of low rates of girls' transitioning from primary to secondary schools in rural Kenya is grounded on my personal experience, from a peasant-farming family, who had no hope of proceeding to secondary school education like most children in rural Kenya. Completing secondary school for me was the most challenging experience I ever had in my life. I remember that when I completed primary school education we were 28 girls in our class and I was the only one who managed to continue to secondary school that was boarding.

In Kenyan rural communities, there is communal living and family interactions than Kenyan urban settings. Because of this very social culture, during my holidays, I was able to meet with my primary school classmates who did not manage to proceed to secondary schools

and ask them why they did not join secondary schools. Many mentioned poverty as the main reason while others felt that there was no need of women spending time to study. After one year of helping parents at home, many got married while others became pregnant. Although this was in the 1980s, the reasons that made my colleagues not to proceed to secondary school education are the same as those hindering girls from proceeding with their high school education presently.

After experiencing many challenges during my secondary school life, I had no hope of continuing to post-secondary education. Therefore, I got married under the Kisii customary law at an early age, which was and is, normal in my community. I got the chance of joining many young mothers who had very little or no formal education in the village. We did the daily routines of housewives commencing from early morning to late night but we were counted as not working in the society because our roles within the families are not the product of formal education. I experienced that majority of the women did not like the fact that they did not have some education and they had no choice. When I could ask them why they did not proceed with their education, the reasons were poverty, teenage pregnancy and families not willing to support them compared to their brothers. Unfortunately, some children of these women did not go to school. After becoming a wife and mother, I decided to go back to school and I have been studying at different levels since then.

### ***3.8: Participatory Observation***

When I was working at different communities in Kenya, I observed that many girls were not transitioning to secondary schools after completing primary school education. To date, I have observed many girls having similar challenges as I had in the 1980s. Literature from different years has shown that some girls especially in rural Kenya have challenges in continuing to secondary schools. I have always been bothered with such challenges facing girls after completing primary school. There is need to recognise that Oketch and others are right to say that there are complex realities that hinder girls from proceeding to secondary schools. In fact there is need for acritical analysis of this problem.

Despite the fact that there are many hands such as the church, and non-governmental organisations on girl child education in Kenya, I have witnessed that there is gender parity in proceeding to secondary school education. After achieving my undergraduate from ST. Francis Xavier University in Canada, I decided to pursue my Masters in a program which will give me an opportunity to find out why this problem has persisted for many years and how can it be solved. I chose rural Kenya where the problem is pronounced.

## **Chapter 4- DATA**

### ***4.1: Education and development***

The research of Muedini (2015) has shown how data from 1800s to early 20<sup>th</sup> century regarding education and economic development in society for some countries such as United Kingdom, France, and Germany reveals that higher percentages of students enrolled in schools' years later resulted to increased GDP per capita. Further analysis suggested that 1% in the enrollment rate rises GDP by 0.38%. In less-well educated population an increase from 2 to 3 % of population education equals enrollment rate of 50% or .41 log units would rise GDP by 15.4%.

From the Study of UNESCO Muedini (2015: 3) found out that increase levels in education increase levels of development of a country. Data of 19 countries of the South indicated that yearly increase of the adult populations' level of education increased a country's long-term economic growth by 3.7%.

On the other hand, Chabbott (2013) provides evidence that education is a basic human rights globally in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1945. This world conference on Education for All (WCEFA) was held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990; 1500 men and women attended representing 155 governments, 33 intergovernmental organisations, and 125 nongovernmental organisations stood up and supported the World Declaration on Education for all (pg. 1).

Using percentages, Ozturk (2001) has shown a relationship between schooling, income inequality, and poverty in 18 countries of Latin America in 1980s. Positive feedback about improved education in relation to increased income equality related to development revealed that



¼ of the variations in workers' income was accounted for by variations in schooling attainments; "the conclusion was that education has the strongest impact on income equality". Suggestions were that 1% increase in the labour force with secondary school education would increase the portion of income of the bottom 40 and 60% between 6 and 15% respectively. In 36 countries, findings proved the significance of high secondary school enrollment rates.

Using numbers Chege et al (2006: 8-9) have estimated that Africa has 600 million people where 86 million of this are secondary school age. Gross Enrolment Rates (GERs) at secondary school averaged 25 per cent which is approximated to be 64 million, making 75 per cent of secondary age students who are not enrolled in the region. The number of those excluded is likely to be more than this, since some places are filled by repeaters. It is likely that the numbers of those who failed to enroll was 70-75 million or over 80 percent of the total number of secondary school children, where majority are females.

The research of Gyimah-Brempong et al (2011) has shown that in 2005 only 18, 9, 1.5 percent of the adult (25 years and older) in Africa had completed primary, secondary and tertiary education respectively. Educational attainment in Africa is low when compared to the rest of the world. The proportion of adult population with tertiary education increased by 490 percent between 1960 and 2005, the ratio of post secondary education in the world in relation to the ratio in Africa increased from 3.5 times to 4.6 times in this period.

## ***4.2: Gender and Development***

The findings of Ward (1990:5) have shown how research on women and the world economy specifically in the Trans-National Corporations revealed that women comprises of 28 % formal workers although there is a higher percentage in Asia, Caribbean and Central America. In the agricultural and service sector, formal work or informal work such as industrial assembly, work at home, sweatshops, factories, or housework.

Ahooja-patel (2007) have said that 90% of women in the developing countries work and live in rural areas. 950 million of them work and struggle on land as the only source for their livelihoods. Similarly, Wegren et el (2014) have illustrated how more than 40% of Russia's rural women fit the pattern of women in less developed nations. 9.5% of women occupy managerial positions on large agricultural farms and 14 % in medium sized farms. The majority of women work in positions as milkmaids, unskilled manual workers and as tractor drivers and farm managers.

The research of Cotter et el (2004: 20) has shown estimates of gender segregations in job titles and calculations of female percentages in United States in specific occupations ranging from pre-school (98%) female to heavy vehicle mechanics who are less than 1% females. Median women work in an occupation that is 71% female while typical men work in an occupation that is 25% female. 52 % of all women work in occupations which are 70% female and 57% of men work in occupations which are more than 70% male. Only 11% of women work in "male" positions such as managers and supervisor occupations, while 7% of men work in female occupations. This results in nearly ½ of men (41%) and 37% female working in mixed occupations. 31-69% females in 2000 the majority of females worked as secretaries, cashiers, elementary and middle –school teachers.

### ***4.3: Gender and Education***

Reports such as World's Women 2015 report have given evidence that out of 781 million adults above age 15 estimated to be illiterate, 496 million are women. The report concludes that in all regions of the world, more than half the illiterate population are women.

On human capita and the family, OZTURK (2001) informs readers that in the developed part of Turkey, families have a lower number of children on average, unlike the less developed regions. Educated women have 1.4 children and uneducated women have 5.1 children in the eastern region of Turkey.

The studies of Muedini (2015) on female education point out that 1% increase on female secondary school education results to 0.3% rise in yearly per capita income. Studies in Asia and sub-saharan Africa show that more equality in education among the genders leads to increase in GDP under 1%.

### ***4.4: Low Transition Rates of Girls from Primary Schools to Secondary Schools***

Findings of Siddhu (2011) after the study of 701 child cases transitioning to secondary schools in India states, that six children failed to pass grade 8 and were dropped from the analysis. From the remaining 695 children, 130 dropped out, meaning transitioning rate of 81% and of the 130 dropouts, 89 were girls. The 89 girls represented 26% of the sample girls while 11.5% of the sample boys dropped out.

The research of Filmer et al (2008) in Cambodia states that 85% of 15-19, year olds had completed grade 1 and 27% completed grade 7, the first year of lower secondary. The

percentages are lower for rural areas 83% and 21% respectively while it is lower for rural girls 78% and 17%.

From the analysis of Lewin (2009) on 44 countries in Africa, their access to primary schools has increased to 97% while 32 million children are not in school. 2/3 complete primary schools and the majority do not complete secondary schools. Transition rates from primary to secondary schools are approximately 50% where more girls are more disadvantaged at transitioning time in all countries. (pg. 20). Muedini (2015) most recent studies show that 57 million children are not in school.

Ombati et al (2017) in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Madagascar, Mozambique and Niger, informs readers that, less than 15% of girls' complete primary school although they are the majority in school age children. School enrollment in secondary schools increased from 800,000 to approximately 12 million between 1960-1999. 34% of girls enrolled in secondary schools in 2008.

#### ***4.5: National Overview***

Onura (2015) informs readers that the Republic of Kenya is located within the tropics in East Africa. Kenya is varied in terms of geography and ethnic population. The Equator passes almost at the middle of the country through Kisumu, Maseno. The land area in km<sup>2</sup> is 582,648. It is bordered by the Indian ocean, Uganda Tanzania, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Somali. In 2017, Kenya is estimated to have a population 49.70 million people ranking it as 29<sup>th</sup> in the world. The last official census took place in 2009 and 38,610,097 people were confirmed to be living in the

country. Estimation is done regularly and in 2011 the population was said to have risen to 41 million, it is now claimed to be 49.70 in 2017.

In relation to population density, Kenya is the 47<sup>th</sup> largest country in the world in terms of pure land mass. Though sparsely, on every square km of land there is an average of 79.2 people (205 per square mile) meaning that it is the 140<sup>th</sup> most densely populated country on earth. The capital city is Nairobi where there is always shortage of clean water and education. Other big cities are Mombasa, Kisumu and Nakuru. There is diverse ethnicity in Kenya such as Kamba, Kipsigis, Kikuyu, Arabs, Indians, Europeans, Luo and Abagusii.

There are 42 tribes in the country with diverse and rich cultural beliefs and languages such as the Masaai dressings, culture, tool and way of life, Kisii soapstone carvings, Kamba wood carvings and traditional dancers; Turkana beads and dressings, Bukusu culture on circumcision. The languages spoken are; Kiswahili as the national language, English as the official language, Kikuyu, Dholuo, Ekegusii, Kamba Kikuyu, Dholuo, Kikuria among others; up to 42 languages occur. Official currency is Kshs. (Kenya Shillings).

Kenya is famous for growing tea and coffee for export, tourism landscape, wildlife, sports athletics, especially long and medium races. The people are friendly, cultural-Masaai, Ndorobos in molo near Nakuru. Natural landscape-Lake Bogoria hot springs and Arabuko Forest in North Coast; which hosts the only elephants in Africa, Kakamega Forest and Kaya forests in the Coast, Kenya Rift Valley around Nakuru and Eldoret, Kapsabet to Eldoret, and the crying stones of Kakamega among others.

Generally, the temperatures are warm, ranging from 19-33°C with the rainfall in 2 peaks: March-July where there are long rains; September-November with short rains. Due to global

climate change there are varying weather patterns. Kenya is mostly semi arid 2/3, while 1/3 of the area, which occupies the Western part, is wet and productive.

**Figure: 1**

*4.6: Map of Kenya showing position of Kisii near Lake Victoria in Nyanza Province*



*Note.* Figure reproduced from: <https://www.bing.com/images/search>

#### ***4.7: Kenya Politics***

From Callen (2017) highlights that the politics of Kenya generally is in transition-things are changing from the old order to new era of multi-party. The country is characterised by uneven and dysfunctional legal, political, social and economic structures which has led to deeply embedded structural violence. There exists tangible political violence creating instability threatening the country.

Further Callen explains how Kenya has experienced political conflicts on the use of political power and resource management. The conflicts are far reaching and they include lose of lives, properties, destruction and educational disruption. There is no clear data about lose of lives or the depth of property destruction. Conclusively there is no clear records of the exact number of people who have been killed for fear of depicting a bunch o f losers or weaklings. Much property has been torched and households' goods stolen/destroyed during political conflict as a way of punishing the enemy.

The country is divided along political and ideological lines which has resulted to a wave of ethnic and land clashes specifically during elections as evidenced in 1992,1997, and 2007, and 2017. Some political leaders incite communities in efforts to portray themselves as defenders of their community. Lives and properties in Kenya are lost during elections.

#### **4.8: Kenyan Schools**

Oketch et al (2010) using data from 17 schools in 4 different predominantly rural districts including Kisii, informs readers about schools in Kenya and how they are run by the government, religious denominations, and private proprietors. There are 3 types of secondary schools organised in a hierarchy of three parts where prestigious national schools are at the top, provincial at the middle and district schools form the base of the pyramid.

The distinction among the schools is that national schools recruit students of highest grades nationally, while provincial select those with average grades and district schools take students with low marks. In some isolated cases where students have high grades but parents/guardians can not afford the high cost national school, the student joins a district school. Provincial and District schools recruit students from the province or district in which the school is located.

National schools are prestigious, with well established traditions and they are supported by influential old pupils. Though selection to national schools is based on district quota basis, the competition for access is intense so that only 1 primary school leaver in 100 wins a place in a national secondary school. Provincial schools are more numerous than national schools. District schools serve local catchments. Some have boarding facilities though most offer day schooling. District schools were originally established by local communities as self-help “Harambee” in Kiswahili (meaning pulling together). Gradually these schools have been absorbed into the public system as the government began meeting costs, such as teachers’ salaries. They are the most common secondary schools in the country.

At the end of primary school education (standard 8), students take the Kenya National Examination of Primary Certificate Education (KCPE) which is a standardized national exam



taken by all standard 8 students at the same time. Students are tested in 5 subjects: Kiswahili, Mathematics, Science, English and Social Studies. Each subject carries a maximum of 100 marks, for a total of 500 possible marks. The scores of the students determines to which secondary school he/she will go starting with best grades going to national schools.

Each school has a head teacher and deputy, and a number of teachers. Classes vary in number up to a maximum of 60 students in some urban crowded schools. Extra curricular activities such as choir, drama, scouting, girl guides and different sports take place in schools. Schools compete against one another both academically and in extra curricular activities.

Pupils must complete primary school education which lasts 8 years in order to join secondary school. Selection to secondary schools reinforces and reflects the tripartite hierarchy. When pupils are in their final year in primary, they register for Kenya Certificate of Primary School Examination (KCPE); they also apply for a secondary school place. They are guaranteed 7 choices (2 for national schools, 2 for provincial schools, and 3 for districts). When the results are available, selection is done in 3 levels, first national schools, 2 provincial schools, and 3 the district schools. The hierarchy is also maintained through fees structure where by district schools are more affordable for those from less income homes.

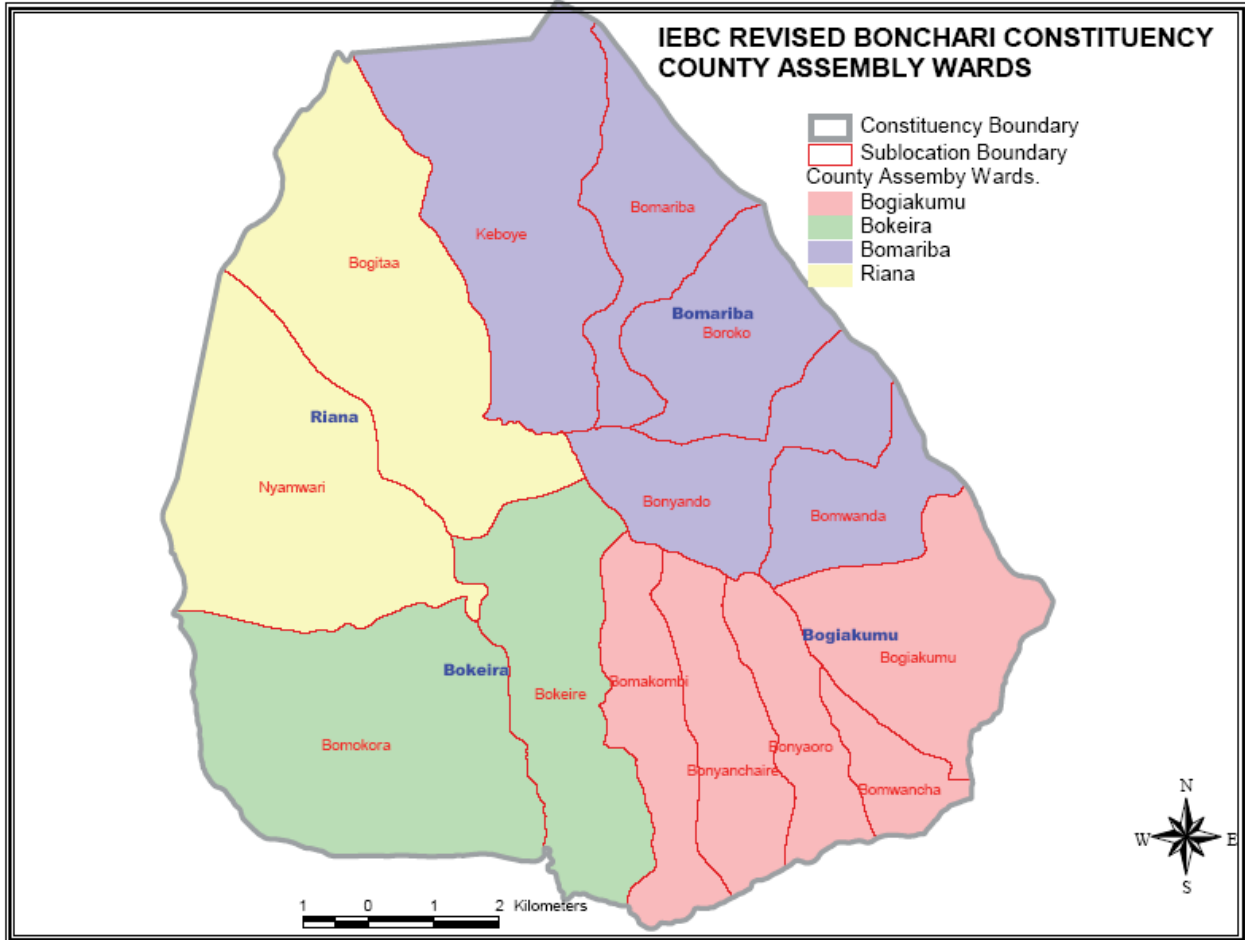
Secondary school education last for 4 years. The Kenya Certificate of Secondary School Education (KSCE) ends the 4-year secondary circle. The results are calculated by converting KSCE letter grades into a twelve-point numeric scale. Grade A converts to 12 points, A- TO 11; B+ 10 it continues down until E, which convert to 1 point.

#### ***4.9: Study Area***

In my research, I focussed on the low transition rates of girls from primary schools to secondary schools, a problem in rural Kenya which has been my concern for many years. Policies have been formulated in Kenya addressing the issue of girl child education but little change has taken place. What is happening in most communities in Kenya is what has been explained in the study of Chege et al (2006); that gender gaps between boys and girls have been consistent and always they appear in each subsystem of education in Kenya although the country values education as key to development. The authors argue that, although gender issues have been debated on for a long time, accelerating girls' education has remained a mirage that continue to pose serious challenges among women such as unemployment, low income and limited ability in development participation. For these reasons, my question is, what are the obstacles preventing primary school girls in Bomwanda clan Kisii County, Kenya, from proceeding with their education at secondary school level?

**Figure 2**

*Map of Bonchari constituency where Bomwanda is one of the clans as shown*



Note. Figure reproduced from: <https://softkenya.com/kenya>

#### ***4.10: Development and Education in Kenya***

Muedini (2015) has said that one-year additional education could add 7-10% in earnings of individuals. Mueden also states that income increases with higher levels of education and each year of schooling increases worker's wages between 5-20% in Kenya (pg13).

From the Kenya national Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) Economic Survey 2017 established under the statistics Act (2006), there is evidence on the importance Kenya attaches to education seen in the country's gross recurrent expenditure for the Ministry of Education including that of Teachers Service Commission (TSC); it is expected to increase by 13.5% from 280.3 billion in 2015/16 to Ksh 318.2 billion in 2016/17. The ministry of education is expected to grow by 65.4% to KSh 24.2 billion (pg. 24-25).

Social expenditure on education is expected to increase by 23.3% to Ksh 495.5 billion in 2016/17 from 401.9 billion in 2015/16. Expenditure for the Ministry of Education including Teachers Service Commission (TSC) is expected to rise by 13.5% from Ksh 280.3 billion in 2015/16 to Ksh 318.2 billion in 2016/17 (pg 63).

#### ***4.11: Gender and Development in Kenya***

The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) Economic Survey (2017) shows that development expenditure for the Department of Gender Affairs is expected to grow to Ksh 3.4 billion (pg40). Loans disbursed through the women enterprise Fund is expected to decline by 27.8% to Ksh 1.8 billion in 2017

Data for Women involvement in development in Kenya can be recorded in the representation of women upon retirement as shown in the mandatory National; *Social Security as shown in the table below:*

**Table: 1**

*Fund (NSSF) scheme both in formal and informal sectors upon retirement:*

Sex	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Male	2954.7	2955.0	2975.4	3234.0	3491.5
Female	1001.2	1001.3	1005.1	1154.7	1312.8
Total	3,955.9	3,956.3	3,980.5	4,388.7	4,804.3
Annual contributions Ksh(Million	6571.1	6571.6	6587.9	11,749.0	12,875.0
Annual benefits paid Ksh (Millions)	2765.3	2844.6	2881.3	3,091.0	3,121.0

*Note.* Data taken from: KNBS Economic Survey 2017

These represents thousands of employers and employees as reported by the National Social Security Fund (pg 91). There is gender disparity as shown on the table and women are lagging behind.

By strengthening equity and gender equality, the number of registered women groups by membership contribution and source of loans through Uwezo and Women Enterprise Funds increased by 1.5 per cent from 154,425 in 2015 to 156,792 in 2016. Overall membership increased by 1.9 per cent to 6.3 million in 2016 at the same time group contribution increased by 1.2 per cent from Ksh 625.0 million in 2015 to Ksh 632.4 million in 2016.

#### ***4.12: The Uwezo Fund***

It is an initiative aimed at enabling women, youth and persons with disability access to finances to promote business and enterprises at constituency level. It is assumed that this will enhance economic growth towards the realization of vision 2030 and sustainable development goals. The funds are expected to increase by 5.9 per cent from Ksh 5.1 billion in 2015/16 to Ksh 5.4 billion 2016/17. The number of beneficiaries is expected to rise by 4.1 per cent from 865,045 in 2015/16 to 900,516 in 2016/17.

#### ***4.13: Women Enterprise Fund:***

It provides accessible and affordable credit to support women to start and expand business for wealth and employment creation. Government loans disbursed through Women Enterprise Fund are to decrease by 27.8 per cent from Ksh 2.3 billion in 2015/16 to Ksh 1.8 billion in 2016/17. The number of beneficiaries is expected to decrease from 178375 in 2015/16 to 119690 in 2016/17.

#### ***4.14: Women in Decision Making***

The government prioritises improvement of status of gender equality and empowerment of women to encourage participation in decision making positions from 2015-2016. Women are at 19.8 per cent in the National assembly and senate, 26.9 per cent of the total members of parliament and senators in 2016. There is a 1/3 gender rule in the number of magistrates, practicing lawyers, high court judges, county commissioners and members of county assembly. From this figures the reality remains women are still underrepresented in leadership and this can be traced to majority of girls not proceeding to secondary schools. Women and girls need to go to school and receive the same kind of education as men do.

#### ***4.15: Gender and Education***

The table below gives evidence of gender disparities in Kenyan universities.

**Table: 2**

***Student Enrollment in public and Private Universities 2013/14-2016/17 Academic years from KNBS Economic Survey 2017***

Sex	Male	Female
2013/14	213967	147412
2014/15	259618	184164
2015/16	297813	212872
2016/17	330387	234120

Total		
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Note. Data taken from: KNBS Economic Survey 2017 Pg. 74-82

Total enrollment is expected to increase by 10.5 per cent from 510, 685 in 2015/16 to 564,507 in 2016/17. The growth is projected to be due to the increased number of public universities and financing of students.

#### ***4.16: Low Transition Rates from Primary Schools to Secondary Schools***

Education for All Global Monitoring Report Fact Sheet (2012) has highlighted that Kenya is the ninth highest in the world with one million children out of school. In this report, 6.7% of the country's GNP was spent on education in 2010 which was an increase from 5.4% spent in 1999. This increase was only in primary school while 32% of young women have no secondary school education.

**Table: 3**

#### ***Candidates by sex in Kenya Certificate of Primary Examination (KCPE) 2012-2016***

Sex	Male	Female
2012	415620	396310
2013	426369	413390
2014	443256	437228



2015	467904	459885
2016	478706	473684
Total		

*Note.* Data taken from: KNBS Economic Survey 2017

**Table: 4**

***Kenya Enrollment in Secondary Schools Form 1 sex 2012-2016 from KNBS Economic Survey 2017***

Sex	Male	Females
2012	282555	249573
2013	327775	289753
2014	342378	331041
2015	380448	352216
2016	382774	375130
Total		

*Note.* Data taken from: KNBS Economic Survey 2017 Pg 70-73

**Table:5**

*Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) Standard 8, Enrollment Kisii South 2013-2017*

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
2013	1000	1139	2139
2014	1077	1242	2319
2015	1245	1416	2661
2016	1410	1617	3027
2017	1470	1662	3132

*Note. Data taken from: Kisii South Sub-County 2017 Annual Report*

**Table: 6**

*Kenya Certificate of Secondary School Education (KCSE) Form 1 Kisii South Enrollment 2013-2017*

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
2013	812	533	1345
2014	928	579	1507
2015	1019	794	1613

2016	1012	675	1687
2017	974	857	1831

*Note. Data taken from: Kisii South Sub-County 2017 Annual Report*

## **Chapter 5- DISCUSSIONS and ANALYSIS**

### ***5.1: Low Transition rates of girls to secondary schools***

The identification of education as number four in the sustainable development goals (SDGs) with the aim that all male and female should achieve meaningful education by the year 2030 shows the important role of education in development. Gender disparity at all levels of education exist globally. The Women's 2015 report on education mentioned earlier emphasised that although literacy levels have improved, more women are illiterate than men worldwide. Ozturk said early that the differences between boys and girls at lower levels of education are the foundations of gender differences later in life.

Similarly, Hanewald (2013) informed readers that transitioning from primary to secondary schools prepares young people for future careers, employment opportunities and life chances. It was quite important for Sidhu (2011) to emphasise that girls not proceeding to secondary schools could be the main reason for low participation of women in development.

The transitioning rates of boys and girls from primary to secondary school in the period of 2012-2016 in Kenya from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2017) nationwide showed low numbers of girls transitioning to secondary schools compared to boys as shown on table 3 and 4. The table showing the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) Standard 8, Enrollment Kisii South 2013-2017 from the Kisii South Sub-County 2017 Annual report (table 5 and 6) gives a clear picture of very low numbers of girls who transition to secondary schools in the region. This gives the overall picture of what is happening at the clan level. Although some students may go to other counties and not be reflected on the tables, the numbers are way too many to doubt that there are quite low transition rates in this specific region. I believe and have

experienced that women's illiteracy can be traced to low rates of girls proceeding to secondary schools.

Although governments and other stakeholders such as non-governmental organisations have tried to come up with various programmes supporting girl-child education, women illiteracy has remained stubbornly and noticeably unchanged for decades. It is a well known fact that more women are illiterate and few participate in development activities compared to men especially in rural regions. I grew up knowing this and I was motivated to take up this study in pursuit of trying to answer my question, **“What are the obstacles preventing primary school girls, in my community, from proceeding to the secondary school level?”**

### ***5.2: Identified Obstacles***

The problem of young people transitioning from primary to secondary schools is a global problem with different causes. Studies from the western countries, divorce was mentioned as a major contributing factor to this problem. Children from single parents display more worries about transitioning to what is equivalent to secondary schools in Kenya, unlike their peers who come from both biological parents' families. Perceived or lack of support from teachers and parents make some students not to transition to secondary school because of lack of motivation as explained early. They also mentioned mathematics and literacy tests as an issue which subject weak students to stress. Lack of student preparation from primary schools for readiness to face new challenges, activities and low self esteem discourage some students from proceeding to secondary schools. Other disruptions may be caused by peer and emotional problems which might lead to anxiety and depression. In this region of the world, successful transitioning to secondary schools need collective responsibility from parents, family, teachers, peers and the school.

In the Southern part of the world, poverty has been mentioned commonly as the main obstacle that hinder girls from proceeding with their education to secondary schools. Ajooja-patel (2007) cited Asia as a region where poor families make a choice of spending disposable resources on boys than girls because of social believes that in future girls will be married away while boys will be home caring for them during old age. This culture is also common in rural Kenya and has subjected girls to be treated like strangers by their own families. That is why I dispute the issue of poverty as a reason because if it was, then boys and girls should be affected the same way.

The other reasons given and which cuts a cross communities of the south including rural Kenya range from poverty intertwined with culture, teenage pregnancy and early marriage among others. In such situations of poverty in a family, I have witnessed that poverty conditions in a family has contributed to women's illiteracy greatly. Some parents especially those who have negative attitudes towards girls' education make them work as house-helps or sell in the market for family income without sparing them for school. In fact, this has locked some families in rural communities into a vicious circle of poverty.

There is a huge difference in the female literacy rate based on various regions in Kenya. Female literacy rate in urban areas is higher as compared to rural Kenya. Many of the communities in Kisii are known to be rural. Saito et el (2004: 583-594.) has further highlighted that majority of the people in rural Kisii have inadequate education which cannot enable them to get formal employment. The author described the inhabitants of as Parents with little schooling and many children who drop out of school. Although there is free primary school education, I have witnessed that still there are many children especially girls who face many challenges in transitioning to high school, resulting to many adult women not having formal education. This

is one way which illustrates the absence of skilled women at national level development activities.

Saito's views on the composition about the Kisii people especially women in the labour market has been my concern for many years. Women in Kisii have inadequate education and this has been the main reason why they are not able to participate in activities requiring high level of education. Majority of the people in many rural communities where I worked especially women do not have secondary school education. I witnessed that some mothers who did not proceed to secondary schools never saw reason why their daughters should go to secondary schools. In fact, I witnessed cases where, if the girl's family is poor and unable or unwilling to pay fees, she may not have the support she needs to continue her education. Her parents may consider marriage to be a better option for her future security.

When I was working with one of the International Humanitarian Organisations and I had a chance to be actively involved in implementation, monitoring and evaluation of education and development programs with schools and other stakeholders including government departments. From this exposure, I can say that many of the programs for girls' education are not based on the evidence and I wonder if ever they have been evaluated to demonstrate whether or not they were achieving their goals. There are many hands both private, public, national and international organizations trying to address the issue of girl child education across the country but the sad news is that many girls do not proceed to secondary schools. I think many of the programs have not proven to be effective. Resources might be going to programs that lack evidence-based proof of success.

Mungai (2002) informed readers early that disparity existed among races, males and females because only men were trained to work for the colonial government while women

remained at home. In this system formal education was meant for boys while girls were taught domestic skills such as sewing and cookery. Maybe the culture of some women working as home makers and not valuing formal education might be linked to colonialism though I do not like blaming colonialists while they left Kenya before I was born. I say this because by now Kenya should be have adapted an education system suitable for all her citizens.

Some researchers have shown that educational status of many women nationwide is low ethnically and regionally. In fact, Yakaboski and Katelyn argue that this is happening because educators and leaders have not examined the access issues in secondary schools. These authors highlight that the number of females affected in this process is not known and for that reason, they recommend that there is need for more research to examine the root cause of less women in attaining secondary school education.

Lukas and Isaac (2012) said that since the implementation of free primary school education in Kenya in 2003, there is gender parity in primary school because many students graduate, although there are regional variations between districts. The authors highlight that the program of free primary education in Kenya boosted primary school completion for both boys and girls, had a greater effect on boys but it increased gender gap in transition rates to secondary schools. According to the authors, free primary school education increased the access to primary school education, but did not close gender gaps. I find the idea of “free primary school education” in Kenya blinding many Kenyans from the reality that there are many women who have no secondary school education in the country.

Some cultural practices in Kisii community hinder girls from proceeding to secondary school education. The end of phase evaluation report of an international organisation working in the Kisii community emphasised that female genital mutilation contributes immensely to girls



not proceeding to secondary schools. The practice is done when the girls are in their 2-3 years prior to completing their primary school education. The practice encourage marriage after the ritual. Many girls after the seclusion period are thought how to be good wives and mothers.

When girls are young, there is no difference compared to boys in their enthusiasm, excitement, interest and confidence in education. However, as they grow, they receive messages about who will get formal education, and who should get careers and what roles are appropriate for them in the future. Such gender stereotyping even comes from such parents, who for example, are far more likely to put their boys in school and not girls

### ***5.3: Gender and Education***

Early Ahooja-Patel (2007) stated that more women are illiterate globally compared to men because some communities prefer to school boys because they believe that boys will care for them in the old age. However, on the same note GyimaBrempong et al (2011) consider education as what might break traditional obstacles which allow women to participate in development like men. On the same note, among other scholars, Ozturk remarked that education is important for life especially for women since it will enable them make better decision such as nutrition, birth spacing and reduced child mortality, health and children's education. I support these views because when a woman is not educated, it is not only she who suffers but the entire family has to bear the consequences of her illiteracy. I have experienced that illiterate women face more hardships in life than literate ones. I have witnessed that many illiterate women have more children with few resources to cater for them and they suffer from malnutrition and related health problems. Their children go through the same suffering and hardships. In many cases their lifestyles are inherited by their offspring. Some of the illiterate women do not know the

importance of education in life, therefore does not emphasise the same for their children. This hampers the family's well being as well as the nations progress as a whole.

Lack of education means lack of awareness of some of the basic things such as personal rights. I have witnessed illiterate women working round the clock for example collecting firewood from the forest, collecting water from a distance, washing family clothes and milking cows plus living an abusive kind of life unnecessarily. They know nothing about initiatives taken by the government for their welfare. Illiterate women keep on struggling hard and bear harshness of life, family and even their husbands.

In some homes negative attitudes of parents towards girl child and her education is one of the major reasons of low female literacy in rural Kenya. In most of the families, boys at home are given priority in terms of education but girls are not treated in the same way. From the beginning, parents do not consider girls as earning members of their family, because after marriage they have to leave their parents' homes. So their education is considered as wastage of money as well as time. For this reason, parents prefer to send boys to school but not girls.

#### ***5.4: Education and Development***

From personal experience and the definitions of different scholars as discussed earlier in the literature review chapter, education is an important tool for social, economic and political development. The various descriptions given about relationships between education and development made it clear that, increased education leads to improved development. Freire (1970) made a statement on education as what makes people to start reflecting critically about the world and their positions in the very world, stood out for me. I have experienced that most people with education are able to think clearly and rationally in whatever they choose to do. We are living in a world whose economy is driven by information and technology. We are dealing with very fast changes in our daily lives. This has placed demands that require intellectual skills and the ability to analyse information and be able to solve problems. I totally agree that critical thinking and ability to analyse situations is very important in this fast changing world.

For example, Kinuthia (2009) credited education as a process which will give birth to individuals who are able to realize own potential, participate in social governance and understand the community systems. This is inline with Ozturk (2009) who I think was right to highlight that majority of the people with limited education are not able to understand themselves and the world they live in. From this, I can say education is empowering and enlightening.

I sincerely agree that education is critical to development. It enables individuals to develop skills, abilities and values critical to success in every day life. I have witnessed that for individuals to live a meaningful live, and to structure their lives accordingly, one needs to justify and to reflect on own values and decisions. Coming from a patriarchal society where most families' men are in authority over women in all aspects of society, I think we need what Freire

calls true education which would liberate and empower individuals with critical thoughts about truth rather than relying on men for decision making and guidance.

Some of the authors such as Ozturk (2001) emphasised that no country can achieve development when its people have limited education. I could say Ozturk is very right because it is always common knowledge that Africa is lagging behind in development because majority of its people are illiterate. I consider it very important for people to have education for their personal development and that of their countries in terms of political, social and economic areas. It is common knowledge that education creates citizens who understand how the government works for the good of all.

By learning new things, a person will educate others more and more. Individuals without education will not explore the new ideas, meaning, they will not develop the world because without ideas there is no creativity and without creativity there is no development. In the data chapter, it was highlighted that increase in enrollment rate rises GDP 0.03%. It is very true that in less-well educated population an increase from 2-3% of population education, will rise GDP by 15.4%. This means that countries where school enrollment is stagnant or not steady at all levels, their GDP will also be stagnant and unsteady. The figures in the data chapter revealed the link between citizens' education and economic development of a nation. Some authors such as GyimaBrempong et al concluded that educational attainment in Africa is low when compared to the rest of the world.

Reports such as UNESCO (2018) as said earlier gave evidence that the government of Kenya recognises education as a basic human right and the most important human and national development since the country's independence from the British colonialism in 1963. The government policy documents and programmes as explained early, reinforces how Kenya

recognises education as a basic human right and the fundamental asset for human and national development. However, from personal experience and studies, Kenya has not achieved meaningful levels of education especially for women needed for development. Many reasons including economic, social and political have been given why this is happening.

Kenya has been experiencing continuous changes in the education system. I find this a clear evidence that the country has not achieved the intended benefits of education to all citizens. Yakaboski et al (2010) rightly pointed out that, the country has faced numerous challenges in education since its independence. Among others, Yakaboski et al said that the country inherited a system from colonialists a system which the British government used entrance exam and fees as a means to hinder Kenyan students from moving upward in the education system. Mungai (2002) described early how during the colonial period the education system was geared towards producing skilled labourers for white settler's farms and clerks for colonial administrators. Mungai highlighted how education was racially classified; Asians, Arabs, whites and Africans were educated at different levels according to race. On the other hand, Oketch (2010) informed us early that, the current education system in Kenya is hierarchical; there are exams where students are tested and fees used to hinder many students from proceeding to secondary schools where majority are girls.

After such explanations, my questions are, it is over fifty years since Kenya got her independence and the local Kenyans are governing the country. For how long is the colonial era going to be blamed for the underdevelopment of Kenya? Who took the position of the British and who are the Kenyans? Why are some Kenyans benefitting from the education system and others not or who took the positions of Asians, Whites, Arabs and Africans like what happened during the colonial time? I wish all Kenyans would answer the questions.

Kenya changed the system of 7 years in primary, 4 years in secondary, 2 years advanced secondary and 3 years undergraduate (7-4-2-3) in 1985. In 2003, the country changed this system in the model of 8 years in primary, 4 years in secondary and 4 years in an undergraduate program (8-4-4), a system which came with 'free' compulsory primary school education. The system is not free because to my experience many students drop out because of other school requirements such as school uniform, books or money for buying building materials or desks commonly known as school building fund in Kenya. I have personally witnessed that in this system similar to the previous one, many students especially girls do not proceed to secondary schools. I am one Kenyan like many Kenyans whose dreams were to achieve higher formal education and this might have not happened because of not meeting financial school requirements. Currently, the country is in the process of changing into another system. This leaves me with unanswered question, what does the Kenyan government need in order for it to have or create an education system that will succeed in terms of inclusivity, productivity and beneficial to all Kenyans.

I grew up knowing that formal education in Kenya was a government business and that the government was in control of education though there was fees and other expenses involved. I came to realize how difficult it was when I was sent home from school several times in a year because I was not able to meet the school financial requirements of that time. Nowadays there are thousands of very expensive national and international schools at all levels of education in the country. Though ability to study counts for one to proceed in education, our system is like students from rich families get more education than the poor ones. This is where I can agree that poverty can hinder some students from proceeding to high levels of education

### ***5.5: Gender and Development***

Rathgeber (1990) rightfully remarked that, historically women's participation in development has been a challenge. This has been evidenced in the various approaches and theories such as Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD) and Gender and Development. The focus of all this has been to involve women in development but it has not happened.

Scholars like Momsen (2004) linked the political, social and economic gender based challenges to colonialism and the emergence of capitalism. Modern industries displaced women from activities they used to do such as food processing and making clothes which were important to women and their families since time immemorial. When these women were displaced it meant that they go out and search for other sources of income which required skills and technology which they did not have because they did not have secondary school education. In the formal industrial sector, majority of the individuals who always occupy low paying jobs are women because of their low levels of education. It is common knowledge that education is a stepping stone to more engaged population in development

Though the adoption of sustainable development goals (SDGs) stated that gender equality and women's empowerment need to be number one and central of the efforts to combat poverty and tackle inequality and climate change by 2030. This would only be achieved by ensuring that all male and female should achieve meaningful education.

Kenya identified formal education as a tool through which women were to acquire skills and knowledge for empowerment in order to fully participate in development processes. However, I realize that it is not clear which level of education can disseminate skills for

development. I totally support authors such as Bikket et al (2016) who emphasised that there is gender disparity in Kenya's development. I have witnessed that there is remarkable gender disparity in access to property and labour markets. From my experience, men and women in rural communities in Kenya live their lives and experiences differently in development activities both culturally and socially.

Majority of women in Kenya do not have formal jobs. In the data chapter, table 1 shows the results of Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2013-2017 years. From the figures, very few women are represented in having formal jobs which earn them benefits in their old age. I believe that there are many reasons why women are represented by very low numbers as seen on the table. From the figures, men are represented as the main productive participants in development. I think this is because women are not educated enough to have secure jobs and earn good incomes for their livelihoods. To me this means Kenya is not able to make full use of human resources because many women lack education

The report has just displayed figures with few women participating in formal jobs compared to men without giving reasons for this great disparity. It is obvious that skilled and educated people have secure jobs and earn good incomes for their livelihoods. People with less than primary school education have employments which leave them more noticeably vulnerable. That is why majority of the women especially in rural Kenya are poor and they work like daily laborers or run microfinances. For example, the initiatives (Uwezo and women Enterprise Fund) mentioned in the data chapter which aim to enable women, youth, and persons with disability to access loans to promote business and enterprises at constituency level seems to me as a way of keeping some group of people in a vicious circle of poverty. I know and I have lived the life of small business of selling vegetables and fruits and I know how much profit such people make. It



could be a better option to ensure that all citizens have meaningful education which will give them the ability of reflecting critically about the world and their positions in the very world as said early by Freire.

Small loans that enable women to be selling vegetables, fruits and cooked food in the open markets seems to keep some of them in circles of poverty because of illiteracy. The more educated women will be; the more chances their business will grow. I worked with some of these micro-enterprises and I witnessed that these women struggle in the small businesses and even those who attempt agricultural activities do not respond well to new information such as how to better utilise fertilizers, adopt soil conservation and erosion, cash crop cultivation and introduction of new seed varieties. All this happen because these women barely proceed with their education to secondary schools and are not trained on any skill after leaving primary school education. I strongly believe that educated people have knowledge, skills and competencies for work.

## Chapter 6- CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

### *6.1: Conclusion*

Transitioning from primary to secondary schools prepares young people for future careers and employment opportunities as well as life chances. Reports and statistics have shown that there are low transition rates and this problem affects girls more compared to boys. This has resulted to more illiterate adult women compared to men. Research has proved how this has led to low participation of women in development processes. This is why researchers have recommended more studies to be done on this issue. The problem is severe in rural areas especially in the countries of the South.

Proceeding to secondary schools is an important stage for young people since this is the period they move from a small classroom to a large more diverse school with more expectations of independent academic achievement. The period is a social and academic turning point for young people. This is the time changes in peer groups occur with concerns of social acceptance which can result to low self esteem, poor grades and increased levels of anxiety, depression and despair in life.

Studies have shown that some girls do not proceed to secondary school after they complete their primary school education in Kenya. Majority of the girls are affected during the transition period from primary to secondary schools. Education of girls in rural Kenya is adversely affected by gender issues ranging from female genital mutilation, early marriages and low transition rates to secondary schools since most parents prefer to educate a boy child rather than the girl child when faced with financial constraints. There are complex realities for girls in transitioning from primary to secondary schools, even though policies stipulate that secondary

school education is basic and every Kenyan child has a right to get it. Poverty and culture associated to gender issues are the main reasons researchers have given why girls are lagging behind in achieving secondary school education because some households are not able to provide some of the school requirements which are linked to finance, such as books and uniform.

The standard eight examination was mentioned as another factor which hinder girls from proceeding to secondary schools in Kenya. The students who fail this exam are likely to repeat standard eight or to go to vocational training in Youth Polytechnics for 1-2 years to get skills in tailoring, carpentry and masonry but while others opt out of the education system.

The lower transition rates of girls from primary to secondary schools compared to that of boys is a signal of an unfulfilled objective, goal and aim for the individual as well as the community. The main reasons given why this is happening include poverty, early marriages and pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, violence, and drug abuse. Some girls take up parental responsibility when parents die of HIV/AIDS.

Neither of the education systems in Kenya have come near making education accessible to all Kenyans, specifically for women. Statistics have shown that girls are still lagging behind in the Kenyan education system and the most challenging level, where the most girls stop, is transitioning to secondary school, which seem to be given a blind eye.

Segments of Kenya's population experience different challenges in accessing services like education. Some regions in Kenya have remained behind in implementing effective education because of challenges such as insufficient facilities in the rural region, poverty and other reasons unknown. This regional lagging behind leads to low educational achievement among women compared to men in the country. Studies have explained that the strategies

employed by the government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and churches, related to girl child education, have not been effective in ensuring the provision of equitable and quality education for males and females in most regions.

There is evidence that the problem of low transition rates of girls to secondary schools in Kenya is more pronounced in rural regions especially to girls from agrarian backgrounds. Kisii District has been identified as a rural district with high agricultural potential, far away from urban regions, and with a less developed educational system. Many adult women in this community do not have the secondary school education which prepares individuals for higher education and other community roles.

Globally, it is acknowledged that education is crucial in empowering women and girls in advancing their self-development and that of humanity. Research has shown that having some level of education enables the individuals to take up leadership positions in their homes, communities and nation. There is evidence that despite these global pronouncements about 'girl child education', females in rural Kenya (particularly in Kisii community) lag behind in education and this has led to their reduced participation in development activities such as politics and leadership positions.

Conclusively, Kenya has not achieved meaningful levels of education needed for development in this period of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The progress is slow and there is considerable gap between male and female literacy levels as seen in the statistics. More men appear in the country's records of human resources than women. Low literacy rates mean an overall sluggish rate of development in Kenya.

Although the government, Non-governmental organisations, Religious groups and private individuals have taken various measures regarding quality education for Kenyans, research findings and experience have testified that there is still greater gender disparity in the education system, which has resulted to majority of the citizens who are not educated especially women to be at a great disadvantage as compared to the few educated people. This has placed majority of women in precarious financial positions. A big number of women in rural Kenya can at most work with their hands or do manual labor, doing small businesses and they struggle to earn their livelihoods. This has negatively affected women in their daily lives as well as the development of Kenya as a country. This problem calls for a collective responsibility from parents, family, teachers, peers, and the school to make the process of primary to secondary transitions more possible.

Globally there are low transition rates from primary to secondary schools. Although significant progress has been made in education for all, some children in many countries, especially girls, do not proceed to secondary schools. The problem has severely affected girls as compared to boys. Many have highlighted that this could be the main reason for low participation of women in development generally. Although there is evidence describing this problem, very little is known about the causes. There is need to fill this important gap in the literature available so that this problem can be solved. Knowing more details of the causes would help stakeholders such as parents, school and local committees to be involved in supporting girls to proceed with their education.

The main well known enduring theories why few girls transition from primary to secondary schools compared to boys is based on financial concerns. Culture has also underscored; since in many societies it is always assumed that girls will be married away while

the boys will continue the family lineage. Such believes are also prevalent in Kisii community. Literature has shown that the problem of transitioning to secondary schools is a global issue although some regions of the world are most hit. It is true that various factors such as poverty intertwined with culture, early pregnancy and marriage pose challenges to girls' education especially in countries of the South. This are not necessarily the only causes of the problem. We need to look deeper at which girls are most likely to become pregnant, get married, or leave school prematurely because of poverty.

It is common knowledge that globally young people face various issues in transitioning to secondary schools depending on geographical location. Identified causes in the Western world include divorce as an obstacle students face while they are transitioning to senior grades. Majority of students living with both biological parents display fewer worries about transitioning from primary to secondary school unlike their peers from single parent or blended families. Perceived or lack of support from parents and teachers make some students not to transition to secondary schools. Students who feel that they are not supported by parents or teachers are not motivated to school work and they experience negative social and emotional well being.

In some cases, measures of the academic achievement through mathematics and literacy tests discourages students from transitioning to secondary schools. Students who happen to be weak academically are mostly affected. This can result to low self-esteem, stress and other vulnerabilities. Lack of student preparation and support by some primary schools specifically in facing new challenges and learning activities, feeling of success and confidence, discourages them from transitioning to secondary schools. Sometimes transition disruptions can be caused by peer and emotional problems resulting into anxiety and depression, fear of bullying and getting lost, changing school demographics especially if students are supposed to move to secondary

schools where students are ethnically different. Conclusively, it is common knowledge that globally young people face various issues in transitioning from primary to secondary schools depending on which part of the world they are located.

Education is the tool which provides people with knowledge, technical skills and information that enable them to realize their rights, roles towards their families, society and nation. It expands the visions and outlook to see the world. It develops the capabilities to fight the injustice, violence, corruption and all evils. The level of education determines the level of development of a nation. Completing primary school education only does not equip individuals with knowledge and skills needed for sustainable development.

Bomwanda community is one of the rural areas of Kenya where I have witnessed that majority of the people have basic education which cannot enable them to get formal employment. Many Parents have little schooling and indeed their children face challenges in proceeding with formal education. I have witnessed that, although there is free primary school education, still there are many children especially girls who do not transition to secondary schools. Many adult women in this community do not have secondary school education, which prepare students for higher education and other community roles.

Various reasons have been given as to why there are low transition rates of girls from primary to secondary schools in rural Kenya. Some gaps have been identified with recommendations for more research. For future research, there is need to consider a number of actions in trying to solve this problem. There is need to investigate and find out the obstacles preventing primary school girls in Kenya especially in rural communities from proceeding with their education at secondary school level. In seeking to find out and understand why this problem is persistent, there is need to talk to a number of people who may know why some girls do not

proceed to form one or what the perception of girl child education in the community is. There is need to talk to the girls who did not pursue their secondary school education and elicit information about them. There is need to talk to the head teachers of these girls in order to obtain more insights into their education. The parents of these girls need to be talked to in order to figure out their perception about girl child education and the decisions they make on their children going to school. There is need to talk to community leaders (local education official, area chief, church leader, community members) about girl child education. Girls in class eight yearly need to be talked to in order to know their perceptions about education, and if they are intending to join form one. There is need to talk to older women of some age to know why they did not go to school. There is need to do regional distinction between rural and urban schools as recorded by Regional Ministry of Education Office. Conclusively, there is need to know the economic activities of the region and of the parents of the girls who do not proceed to secondary school.



## ***6.2: Recommendations***

Poverty has been one of the major issues that hinders transitioning of girls to secondary schools. Therefore, governments should put in place policies which will ensure that there are adequate subsidy to enable parents/guardians to send the girls to schools. These subsidies ranges from school uniform, books and school fees school fees that weigh heavily on them.

The government should implement laws making secondary school education compulsory for everyone. Laws should should be put in place to increase the age of consent regardless of cultural beliefs and practices. Street hawking of school aged girls should be made illegal and earlier forced labour should be strictly checked. Professional development and specialized training should be provided for teachers. This will equip them with the skills necessary to tackle gender-related issues thereby enabling them to quickly recognize theses said issues and address them. Hawking of girls should be a source of income for families but rather as valuable members of society just as their male counterparts.

It is quite evident how difficult it is to highlight the specific challenges that hinder girls from proceeding with their secondary school education. I recommend that more attention needs to be paid to girls who face these challenges especially issues such as where do these girls live, their school performance and the pressures faced by the family unit. A thorough investigation needs to be carried out to identify the girls who are susceptible to pregnancy, marriage or any barriers prohibiting them from secondary education.

Despite all reasons, women must understand and realize that education can actually end vicious cycle of poverty, their misfortunes, so that they can live a life with pride and sustainable livelihood. In case of any misfortune in life, it is education that would help her. From the literature review, it was emphasised that education can change lives by mentioning how extra

years of schooling increases individual's earnings. For this reason, I recommend that women need to form groups whereby they can support and encourage each other to ensure their daughters get education as well as their sons. There is need for women to form peer support groups in each primary school which will ensure that majority of the girls, if not all, who complete primary school education proceed to secondary school.

It is also very important that teenage girls need to recognize that education is important for their personal and overall development as an individual. Programs involving girl child education in Kenya need to be evaluated to measure their success in helping girls to proceed to secondary school. If not, a needs assessment should be conducted to identify the gaps in order to provide solutions or other alternatives so that in the long run, the girls will be on the right track to achieve tools and skills which will enable them live healthy and productive lives.

A partnership needs to be created among the government, parents, teachers' associations as well as the private sector and civil-society organisations to find the best and most constructive way to improve the quality of education. Laws should be passed so that gender discrimination and female genital mutilation be made illegal.

It is paramount that the government provides long term funding that will be an investment in girl child education. This will not only guarantee transition on to the secondary level of education but also empower these young girls to break the cycle of poverty and street hawking and recognize the value of the education they are receiving so that they can become productive and contributing members of society.

Although Kenya has pronounced education as a human right, there is need to ensure that the right is upheld rather than using education as a commodity where by those who have money can

buy it. The government needs to ensure that all citizens have equal chances of getting education regardless of where you are born and where you live.

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