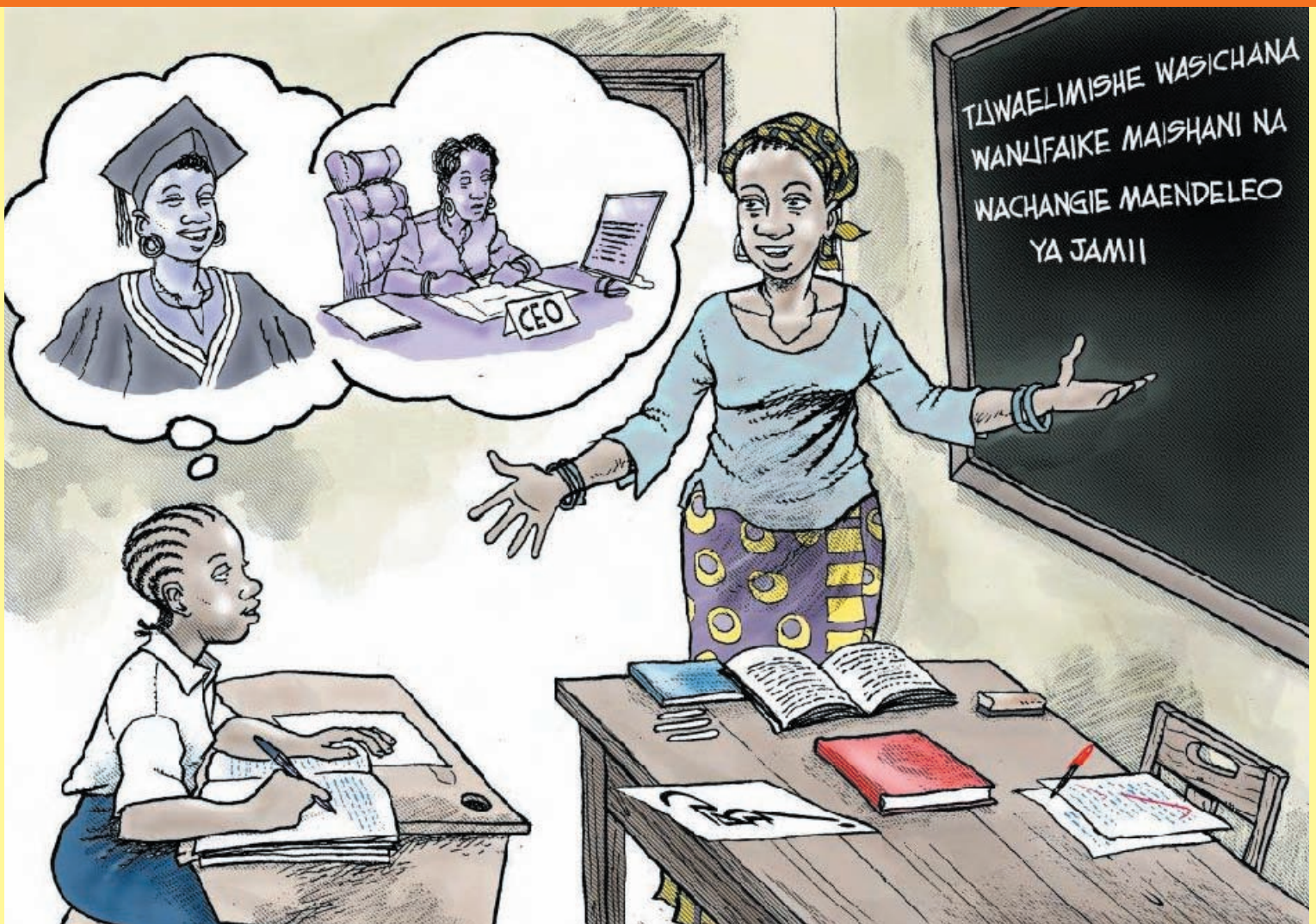


How to Ensure Educational Success for Girls

They have the right to complete their studies



December 2010



1.0 Acknowledgements

This research has been prepared by Mtemi Gervas Zombwe in co-operation with Naina Vira and Sylvand Jeremia, all employees of HakiElimu. Documents, books and research reports on girl's education were reviewed. In addition, the researchers interviewed girls who dropped out of school, University lecturers in the field of education, teachers, tutors, education activists, parents and students who are still at school. We are very grateful to all who participated in this exercise.

Special thanks go to the Mara Regional Education Officer, Mr Julius Mhanusi, for facilitating this exercise in his region. We are also grateful to the Statistics and Logistics Officer, Mr. Joachim Machella–Musoma, Andrew Mpalile and Ms. Penina of Morembe Secondary School for their readiness to work with us.

We shall never forget the contribution made by the Headmaster of Eckernford Secondary School, Tanga, Ms. Mary Singano, and Form 3 and 4 students who participated in this research.

We appreciate the contribution made by the Village and Ward Executive Officers from Tanga Urban: Mr. H Masudi (Mzingani), Rose George (Majengo Mapya), Zaituni Kulewa (Ward Development Officer), Said Bendera (Muheza), Ruta Peter (Gezaulule) and Issa Mbaruku (Mtambwe). As senior officials in their respective areas they were able to furnish us with information related to girl's education, particularly the real situation regarding drop outs as well as strategies to be used in promoting girl's education.

The editorial work was completed by Elizabeth Missokia, Mtemi Gervas Zombwe, Robert Mihayo, Fausta Musokwa, Tony Baker and both employees of HakiElimu.

We thank all who were ready to work with us and for their contributions which made this work a success.

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ISBN: 978-9987-18-005-9

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2.0 Introduction

In order to cope with today's world and be able to control our environment as well as improve our life, education is important. Education gives an individual identity and equips him/her with the relevant skills and knowledge which enables him/her to overcome the different challenges in his/her environment and life in general. Education enables an individual to be productive in different spheres of life. An educated person is capable of bringing about fast development. Moreover, education gives an individual a brighter future, and also enables him/her to cope with the challenges of globalization. In the globalized world, *less education means more poverty - and more education means a better life*¹

Nelson Mandela, one of the most respected retired presidents in the world, stressed and underlined the importance of education for social development in these words:

“...education is a great engine of personal development. It is only through education, a daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of mineworker can become the head of the mine, that the child of a farm worker can become the President of a great nation (Mandela, 1991).”

By understanding this reality, the Government of Tanzania and other African countries have made efforts to invest in education in order to create a nation whose people have knowledge, skills and competency to develop their respective countries. In Tanzania every government circular on education mentions quality education as a prerequisite for any programme implementation. The National Development Vision 2025², National Poverty Reduction Strategy (MKUKUTA), Education and Training Policy, and other sector based policies all mention the importance of education for socio-economic development. In order to achieve this Government of Tanzania initiated the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) and Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP). Both programmes aim at ensuring the provision of quality education for Tanzanian children.

Through PEDP and SEDP, there have been tremendous improvements particularly in the access to education for Tanzanian children. Data from the Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania (BEST) book show great achievements in the provision of education in Tanzania. For example primary school enrolment has reached 90 percent while a gender parity figure of 1 demonstrates equity.³ These are significant achievements that we must be proud of. Many Tanzanian children now have access to education. These achievements give new hope for Tanzanians and the expectations of parents' and guardians' to see children finishing school with relevant knowledge and skills for the betterment of the family and the nation are finally being met. However, we must remember that issues pertaining to quality education remain and still need to be addressed.

It is in no doubt that, despite tremendous improvements in enrolment, girls' education opportunities are still limited.

1 Education Philosopher Paul Freire insisted much on this in his writing and he stressed on the need for Africa to have an education system geared towards fighting ignorance, neo-colonialism and promoting African culture and love for all.

2 The National Development Vision 2025, is the road map towards achieving socio-economic development. The National Development Vision 2025 mentions education as the **pillar of development**.

3 The Book of Education Statistics, BEST: 2005-2009.

There are many social and educational challenges which force girls to leave school, voluntarily or involuntarily. Common stories regarding girls' drop outs particularly in the 'peripheral regions' include **pregnancies and early marriages (below the age of 18)**. Failure to finish school has undermined girls' development and as such their future is misty. It is imperative for society to understand that every human being has the right to education and that denying girls this right is a big mistake. Research shows a close link between a mother's education and improvements of her children's health.. When a mother is educated, the education and health of her children are guaranteed.

Statistics in the media and from the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training give a disappointing image of girls' education. There has been a significant increase in the number of girls who leave school despite efforts by education stake holders to arrest the situation. It is unfortunate that these efforts by stake holders do not carry legal power or implications, and that situations related to pregnancies and early marriages are mushrooming. Many events have been reported but little action has been taken against those who impregnate girls. Impregnating a school girl is a criminal offence and who ever is guilty of this should be treated in the same way as those who commit other crimes like stealing or murder. Any environment which accelerates girl's drop out should be equated to killing because it 'kills' a girl academically and her future life. Legal instruments are to blame for this because they do not participate effectively in safeguarding girls' rights. Corruption and irresponsibility have contributed towards undermining girls' education because those who put school girls in family way or rape girls are sometimes acquitted because of corruption⁴.

Available information shows that drop outs are more common in rural districts and villages as opposed to urban areas. Information collected from each district, if analyzed properly, shows the magnitude of this problem, but unfortunately this is not done effectively. The available information from Tanga shows that there are a large number of girls who leave school as opposed to other regions in the country. For instance in 2009 about 300 dropped out of school due to early pregnancies (Nipashe: March 15, 2010). The same situation prevails in Kagera Region where the available data shows that 880 girls were forced to leave school due to pregnancies. (Jambo Leo: January 12, 2010), and in the Coast Region (Pwani) about 500 girls dropped out of school in 2005-2009 because of pregnancy (Jambo Leo, March 2010).

Research on school age pregnancy conducted by the Tanzania Women Media Association (TAMWA) gives shocking information. For example, Tabora Region recorded 819 girls who left school due to pregnancy between 2006-2009 and in Morogoro Region, 331 girls had to leave school between 2007-2009 because of pregnancy⁵.

The Basic Education Statistics book shows that in Tanzania, a significant number of girls left school due to pregnancy particularly in primary schools (BEST 2005-2009). The number of girls who dropped out of school in 2005-2009 was 16,991 whilst in secondary schools 4965⁶ girls were forced to leave

⁴ Negligence in handling cases related to those who impregnate girls is a serious problem and was spoken of bitterly by 12 parents we interviewed at Mbuyuni Primary School in May 2010.

⁵ Research on early pregnancy conducted by TAMWA in April 2010 involved 17 regions. According to this research there is an alarming number of girls who leave school due to pregnancy.

⁶ Statistics given by BEST 2005-2009; page 19 & 64

school in 2009. This increase is alarming and thought provoking, it is disappointing, it is scary and it arouses feelings of responsibility to curb this growing menace. Women are part of society and their contributions to the development of this nation are significant. It is important to understand that Tanzania shall never develop if girls are denied their rights to education as well as their rights to enjoy their childhood, "Let children be children."

What we should ask ourselves here is, for how long are we going to contain this problem? What will be the future of these girls who leave school and lack relevant knowledge and skills that could help them to improve their welfare and life in general? Why has this problem become chronic? What should we do to arrest this problem and allow girls enjoy their right to education? Tanzania will never attain sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) if the majority of its citizens, particularly girls and women, are sidelined in the provision of education. Education is an opportunity for girls to acquire knowledge and skills that could be used for personal and social development. Can we manage to achieve sustainable development if part of the population is not effectively involved? How can an educated woman manage to bring about sustainable development without being empowered?

In an attempt to answer these questions HakiElimu in 2010, decided to prepare a special publication that suggests strategies that should be used to help girls finish school enabling them to be more successful in life. This publication is the result of information collected from parents, education officers, teachers and students who participated in the research, as well as an extensive literature review which included books, research papers, journals, newspapers, legal documents and girls' education networks. It details the available opportunities regarding girls' education and what exists in the real environment and highlights clearly strategies and measures that should be taken by parents, teachers, politicians and policy makers to ensure that girls proceed with their studies and succeed in education.

We hope that this publication will act as a catalyst for all education stakeholders (parents, teachers, policy makers and education activists) to help girls enjoy and complete their education. We believe it will act as a springboard to all Tanzanians, particularly education activists, to ensure that girls are not denied their right to education. Please read this book and help your neighbor understand the strategies explained for the betterment of our children, particularly girls. We want to end school drop out and hope that in future this problem will be completely eliminated in our country!

Elizabeth Missokia
Executive Director, HakiElimu
Dar es Salaam, December 2010

3.0 The Current State of Girls' Education

Although many nations in the world are determined to create more opportunities for girls' education in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals, girls still face many challenges, particularly in poor countries. Statistically, of the 150 million children who are out of school, 100 million are girls (UNESCO 2008).

In Tanzania, as indicated in the preface, girls' opportunities to education are still limited. Efforts geared towards improving education in the country are overshadowed by high numbers of drop outs. There are a number of problems that affect the education of girls, such as a failure to meet daily expenses meaning households cannot afford to send children to school, and school-girl pregnancy.

Lack of political will also hinder education development for girls. Society fights against those who harass girls, however a study by the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) showed that the people who are mostly involved in having affairs with girls and consequently make them pregnant include government officials, teachers (young teachers) who participate in teaching practice, bus conductors, businessmen, tax drivers, fishermen and other people who are relatively economically better off. They are all responsible for ruining the future of girls (TAMWA, 2010: 25).

Unsupportive social systems and poor learning environments are among the biggest obstacles facing girls. A poor school infrastructure results in poor attendance for girls. In areas with good social services and good learning environment girls attend schools regularly. Box 1 illustrates what a girl hopes to achieve if she is given the opportunity to learn.

Box 1: A call for conscientization: I am a girl crying for my education

If I get **knowledge** ... I will use it for self advancement and to create opportunity
If I manage to be **confident** ... I will be a daring person and I will be able to do what I am planning to do
If I get **self awareness** ... I will know my role at the level of the family and the society at large
If I am **motivated** ... I will have some curiosity and feelings to do what I deserve to do
If I make **efforts** ... I will work diligently and tirelessly
If I know my **responsibility** ... I will do the right thing
If I manage to **initiate something** ... I will implement it correctly
If I have **intellect and conscience** ... I will make efficient and wise decisions
If I am **patient and persevere** ... I will implement what has been initiated and get desired results
If I am **co operative** ... I will work in a team
If I acquire **problem-solving skills** ... I will implement what I know and what I can do
If I learn **to care** ... I will be a caring person and I will show love to my colleagues
If I become **patriotic** ... I will love my country, its people and its resources
****All of these I will get through education: facilitate me so that I finish my studies!**

Juddy Maan (1994)

4.0 Rights and Education Opportunities for Girls

Girls' education is not a privilege, offer, favour or bribe, it is a basic **RIGHT**. All girls in the world are entitled to this right just by virtue of being human. Those who are involved in perpetuating education opportunities for girls should know this basic **RIGHT**. The right to education is in-born, and there is no person or institution which has the right to deny a girl this right.

All institutions, the Government and other civil society organizations have laws, policies and regulations that promote and safeguard the interests of a girl. A woman, like any other citizen, has all the rights, just like a man⁷. This should be clearly understood. Every human has the right to education, medical cover, shelter, etc, there are no laws or specific programmes which talk about the rights of women and men alone, all conventions talk about human rights in general – female and male.

“When these rights are violated, international and national legal organs should take responsibility to safeguard these rights and ensure that stern measures are taken against those who violate them. That is why there are some laws which protect the rights of a girl because she has the right to education. Table 1 below shows some of these organs”

Table 1: International and National Legal organs that protect the rights of girls (and boys)

	Legal instrument	Details
1	United Nations' Declaration on Human Rights (UNHCR, 1948)	Stipulates basic human rights including the right to education for everybody without any discrimination.
2	International Convention on the Right of a Child (CRC, 1989)	Section 24 and 25 clearly stipulates that every child has the right to quality education. The child is supposed to get knowledge and skills that are useful to his/her life.
3	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979)	The official declaration that prohibits all forms of discrimination against women. Drop out is a form of discrimination which is not allowed, and governments are asked to ensure that girls/women get all their rights.
4	International Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).	It clearly states that all humans, regardless of disability or gender, have the right to education without any form of discrimination and that all humans have the right to finish school.
5	International Convention for Education for All (Dakar, 2000)	The international directive that asks all countries to make sure that every child, regardless of gender, is given the opportunity to join school.
6	Millennium Development Goal II	The Millennium Development Goal II asks all the countries to make sure that every child is enrolled and that s/he finishes school.

⁷ Opinion given by the education and human rights activist Ms. Elizabeth Missokia, who has always spearheaded the rights to quality education for children, particularly girls so as to make them successful in life.

National legal instruments that protect and safeguard a girl's right to education

1	The Tanzania Constitution, 1977, Section 11	<i>"..Every person has the right to education and that the Government shall put in place directives to ensure that all the people get equal opportunities to all stages of education".</i> Also, it is emphasized that, every person has the right to education advancement as well as the right to seek education opportunities in any profession one wishes, according to his/her ability. ¹
2	National Policy on Community Development Gender and Children, 2000	It clearly states the importance of girl's education development. It emphasizes the need for a girl to have access to all necessary services including education, in order to bring about self and national development.
3	Education and Training Policy, 1995	It is the national education vision which mirrors the type of education, as well as direction, we want to reach. It emphasizes the importance of offering quality education in Tanzania without any form of discrimination.
4	MKUKUTA, 2010-2014	MKUKUTA phase II insists on the importance of education for all children in order to reduce poverty in the society.
5	Children's Rights Act, 2009	This Act clearly stipulates the education right of a child without discrimination. This law also prohibits child employment and any form of torture. Impregnating school age children are among the criminal offences mentioned by this Act.

5.0 The importance of educating girls; for girls themselves and the whole community

“...Tanzania envisages becoming a nation whose people are ingrained with a developmental mindset and competitive spirit. These attributes are driven by education and knowledge and are critical in enabling the nation to effectively utilize knowledge in mobilizing domestic resources for assuring the provision of people’s basic needs and for attaining competitiveness in the regional and global economy. Tanzania would brace itself to attain creativity, innovativeness and a high level of quality education in order to respond to development challenges and effectively compete regionally and internationally, cognisant of the reality that competitive leadership in the 21st century will hinge on the level and quality of education and knowledge (Tanzania Development Vision, 2025)².

Educating girls is a form of empowerment which enables them to achieve total emancipation. Capacity building for women enables them to be productive in all spheres of life. Without education, a girl (or boy) is not able to get highly paid jobs, shall never benefit from the available technology and globalization, will not be able to understand the meaning of family planning, nor be able to protect herself from maternal complications or infant mortality. Education helps girls avoid backwardness and oppression as it is known that most of the poorest people in the world are those who are less educated. About three quarters of the poorest people in the world are women (Hill, 1995; Klasen, 2002). Education equips girls with knowledge and skills that help them to live actively and hence bring about socio-economic development.

The following are some of the advantages of educating girls (though it must be noted that these advantages are also relevant for boys):

5.1 When girls (and boys) are educated they acquire the ability to think critically and this is what is needed to participate in today’s society. A person who thinks critically is capable of coming up with new ideas, find alternative solutions to existing problems and guide colleagues in the right direction. Ability to think critically enables an individual to perform day-to-day duties effectively.

5.2 Education helps an individual to develop self-confidence and identity. Self awareness goes hand-in-hand with understanding one’s rights and responsibilities in society. An educated woman (and man) is confident in decision-making enabling her to participate effectively in social economic issues. The educated woman can make decisions without relying on somebody else.

When a girl is educated the national income also increases. Research has shown that women’s contribution to national economic growth is significant (Klasen, 1999).

5.3 Education helps a girl to harness available opportunities and bring about development. The educated woman will be able to employ herself and be employed. But these depend on the knowledge and skills she acquires in school. Knowledge helps an individual to utilize the available resources such as land, minerals and forest. Without education, it will be very difficult for a woman to use the available opportunities to bring about socio-economic development.

5.4 Education equips girls with communication skills and hence they manage to communicate effectively. Communication skills are the foundation stone for information sharing. The educated girl is capable of giving her opinions, expressing herself, is inquisitive and questions all matters about her life.

Mwalimu Nyerere (1967) once said that, education should develop an individual in several aspects,

“Education should help an individual in the following three aspects: to develop an inquiring mind; ability to learn from other people’s actions, to accept or reject people’s ideas depending on one’s needs; it makes an individual to be confident, to be free and to value her dignity and other people’s dignity. The educated person is respected for his actions and not for what one gets.”⁸

5.5 Education enables a girl or woman to determine and devise strategies for overcoming the challenges in life; such challenges include poverty and disease.

5.6 Education broadens one’s knowledge and makes an individual creative and develops problem-solving skills which help a person to overcome challenges in life. Education can liberate women from all forms of torture and poverty. What is imparted into a person is the ability to recognize and use one’s knowledge in the broadest sense⁹. If we deny girls opportunities for education we deny them important knowledge for their life.

5.7 If we educate women, we will be building in them ethical behaviour which will help them to participate effectively in development. Ethics are important for any human being as they help an individual to value work, to value dignity, to value human rights, to develop self awareness and to have good behavior.

5.8 Educating a girl makes her patriotic to her nation something which is very important for the development of any society. Patriotism makes a person to become a hard worker, makes a person to dedicate all her energy for her country, it makes a person respect human rights and offer services to all citizens, as well as make sure that there is an equitable distribution of resources. A patriotic person protects the welfare of her country instead of protecting the interests of others. Thus capacity building to women not only facilitates development but also strengthens national unity.

5.9 Educating girls, allows them to develop a spirit of valuing the importance of work and it instills in them a hard working spirit. Work is part and parcel of life¹⁰. Education will make women productive members of society as they will be able to work more efficiently. Work is the source of income. If women are undermined in this aspect, they cannot use the available opportunities effectively. There is no doubt that uneducated woman shall not be able to work efficiently. If the majority of women are employed, sustainable development will also be easily achieved. Without that, the majority of the people in society will continue to be poor.

⁸ Words spoken by Nyerere in one of his speeches on the implementation of education for self reliance in 1967

⁹ Types of knowledge imparted in a person as exemplified by an education activist Peter Senge in his book “Schools that Learn” (2000, pg 80).

¹⁰ The common slogan that was used when Tanganyika was fighting for independence is “Freedom and Work”

5.10 If girls are educated they will be able to make rational and efficient decisions. Rational thinking is very important to the development of any society as well as for the well-being of an individual. If women fail to make rational decisions, it will adversely affect the respective society. For example, most of the less educated girls fail to make rational decisions about their bodies as well as protecting their dignity. Most of the uneducated or poorly educated women and girls find themselves prey to men who use them as instrument of recreation by men.

During elections, many women queue for voting. The majority of these people, particularly those who live in rural areas, do not know the importance of elections and voting. They are easily deceived because they do not know their role and their importance in the voting process. This happens because they lack critical thinking and right judgment. They are just being used as stepping stones by corrupt leaders. Education is the only tool that will enable women to make rational decisions and judgments.

5.11 It is very difficult for uneducated women to achieve sustainable development in society (UNDP, 2008: 2). Education will enlighten women enabling them to develop a clear understanding about the resources available to them. This awareness is crucial to all humans because without this understanding it will not be possible to appreciate, protect and use them effectively. How many Tanzanians are aware that their energy is a useful resource? How many Tanzanians are aware that land is one of the main resources in the country? How many Tanzanians are aware that their unity and solidarity are important resources?

5.12 Educating girls enables them to understand the importance of national culture, traditions and customs as well as the importance of understanding other cultures. Understanding the national culture is important for development because culture can influence development positively or negatively - culture is part and parcel of the development of any nation¹¹. A person who does not understand the culture of a particular place will find it difficult to understand potential obstacles to development. If we fail to understand these obstacles, it is very difficult to fight poverty. To understand culture, traditions and customs will guarantee process of development.

Education will enable girls to understand, promote and safeguard good African culture. This will go hand-in-hand with determining which cultural practices are bad and can be forgotten. For example, educated girls will not perpetuate Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Nor will they encourage early marriages.

It will become more difficult for educated women to be oppressed by men as they will unchain themselves from the system of patriarchy. Culture is part of human dignity and identity. Education enables people to have a broader knowledge of culture. Culture is a mirror of our nation and therefore a nation without culture is as good as dead. Without understanding aspects of our culture, traditions and customs, it will be easy to be influenced by foreign cultures, some of which are not relevant to our environment¹².

11 Most of the World Bank reports indicate that some projects fail because of the failure to consider specific cultures of particular places (Rita 2009).

12 President Kikwete, most of the time, has been insisting that a nation without its own culture is a slave nation.

5.13 Educating girls will enable them to have a clear understanding of their human rights. A woman who understands her rights cannot be humiliated or oppressed in any way because she will be able to protect and defend her rights. Also, such women will not violate human rights.

There is no doubt that woman who does not know their rights will continue to be oppressed. Education is the light! It will enable them to determine laws which undermine their rights and those which protect their rights.

5.14 To educate women will increase the national income through agriculture particularly for countries like Tanzania which rely on agriculture as the main economic activity. Research shows that, educated women have a higher productivity in agriculture and that their families rarely suffer from malnutrition (Lisa & Haddad, 1995).

5.15 Research shows that educated women nurture small and healthy families which are self-sufficient in terms of basic needs. According to the research conducted by Subbarao and Raney (1995), an educated woman normally has an average number of 2 to 3 children and she manages to take care of them. On the other hand, uneducated women have an average of 6 to 7 children which she can barely afford to feed. (Bala vikasa 2006)

5.16 Educating a woman will reduce malnutrition and infant mortality by 5 to 10 percent. This is because educated women are aware of reproductive health and family planning principles. Also, research shows that, increasing girls' enrolment by only 10 percent will help to reduce infant mortality by 4 out of 1000 children (King, 1995).

The educated woman will be able to protect her children against diseases and her children will live healthier lives. Such a woman will effectively use health services, will improve children's nutrition, she will maintain cleanliness and protect the environment. An educated woman will also use her knowledge to increase the income of her family. Also, it will be unusual for the educated woman to have early pregnancies. She will have children at the right age and be able to take care of them (Schultz 1993). With all these advantages, why don't we educate women?

5.17 Educating women will help to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS. Research shows that, educated women have more possibility of escaping the spread of HIV/AIDS and hence they will live longer. Educated women know how to prevent against the infection of the disease, they are aware of their bodies and they make right decisions in their affairs with men. "Uneducated women are likely to be infected with HIV/AIDS pandemic unlike those who are educated" (Delamonica, 2000).

These are only some of the advantages of educating women. Educating women will enable them to realize their dreams. Should we continue to deprive our daughters of their right to education while we know the advantages of educating them? We can change this.

6.0 Reasons for girls' dropping out from school

Despite the fact that there are many advantages of educating girls in Tanzania, there are many obstacles that make girls quit school thus shattering their dreams become shattered. Some of the obstacles include the following:

6.1 Poverty of the family

Poverty of the family is one of the root causes of drop out. About 31% of education stakeholders mention poverty as one of the main reasons that girls leave school. Poor families barely meet basic needs of their children; as a result they find alternative ways for survival. Economic difficulties make girls leave school because:

6.1.2 Parents fail to meet the basic educational needs of their daughters, such as uniforms or notebooks. As a result girls become affected psychologically and some resort to staying at home while others get married. 6.1.3 Poor households use their daughters as a source of income, for example they force their daughters to get married so that they can get cows or money. They also engage their daughters in petty business to get income for the family¹³. This makes girls miss school. Because the education regulations clearly state that a child who misses school for 60 days should be counted out, most girls are expelled from school because of truancy. Girls therefore become victims of circumstances¹⁴. Parents claim that they mostly involve their daughters in business because they are faithful as opposed to boys¹⁵.

6.1.4 Poverty of the family, to the large extent, forces girls to engage in sexual affairs in order to earn income. This situation has affected most societies in Tanzania. Girls are tempted to engage in sexual affairs with men from different cadres including government workers, people who are well-off economically and business men. Girls are lured by small presents which most of them accept because they don't have any other alternative. Upon receiving these gifts, girls are forced to involve themselves in sexual affairs with men while still at a tender age. As a result they get pregnant in adolescence and risk contracting HIV/AIDS. According to Education Act No 25 of 1978 (60) if a girl is becomes pregnant, upon consultation with the school committee or board she will be expelled from school. Thousands of girls in Tanzania drop out of school due to unplanned school age pregnancies.

6.2 Girls are occupied with domestic chores and as a result they do not get time to attend school or do homework.

In some families girls are given too many tasks to do at home such as cooking, washing utensils, taking care of their younger brothers and sisters, fetching water, firewood and working on the farms. In some of the families where there are girl-orphans most of the duties at home are performed by these girls!

13 It was emphasized by Ms. Lizy Ntipula, a teacher at Mbuyuni Primary School in Tanga, that girls' drop out is caused by parents who use girls to conduct business.

14 The deputy master of Morembe Secondary School in Musoma also made it clear that girls leave school due to truancy..

15 These comments were given by parents of Mbuyuni Ward in Tanga Urban when we were interviewing them on the reasons for girls' drop out in May, 2010.

When the responsibilities are too many for a girl she fails to get time for effective private study. Some of them do not even get time to regularly attend school and as a result she is expelled from school due to truancy. Even those who like education hardly get time to attend school as they are supposed to take care of the family. Therefore, they are forced to drop out from school.

6.3 Irresponsibility of Parents

It is the duty of parents to make sure that a child gets relevant skills and knowledge. Mwalimu Nyerere once said that for those who work with children should be given due respect as they are important in society;

“...those who are entitled to work with little children, young men and women of this country should be treated in a very special way and have the responsibilities to work with young have a power which is second to none in relation for the future of our society. The power is shared by two groups-parents and teachers” (Nyerere, 27 August 1966).

Parents or guardians, who stay with a child for a long time, are important in shaping the future of their children as the first teachers. Children normally learn from the surrounding environment as well as people they live with. Education is very important as it gives a child knowledge, skills and ethics to live well in society. It also makes an individual live well in society as a good citizen and enables them to overcome challenges.

Parents get little time to interact with their children, especially girls, meaning they grow up knowing little. Those children who tolerate this end up being good people, but those who fail to withstand temptation end up on the streets. Many parents do not give education its weight because they only focus on accumulating money. Our commitment towards ensuring that children are nurtured in a good way and given the right education has vanished into thin air. Lack of seriousness on the part of parents has made many girls leave school.

6.4 Moral decay among men drives them to use girls as sex toys (i.e. have sexual relationships with girls).

Sexual relationships with men have made many girls abandon school. Some men use their influence to lure girls into having sex with them and as a result these girls become pregnant and some are infected with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). This makes girls drop out of school. When girls leave school their future becomes ruined. We interviewed parents who said that most of the men who lure girls are the educated ones, those with titles or with good economic status. Although these men know the importance of education they still attract girls and destroy their future life. Research shows that teachers, village executive officers, magistrates, businessmen and civil society organization leaders have frequently been cited as the main culprits reported to influence negatively girls' academic excellence. One parent we interviewed had this to say:

“...what is paining much is that the educated men, people who are knowledgeable and those who hold government positions are the ones who are in the frontline in luring girls. My children were affected by this and culprits include a teacher and a doctor. These people are supposed to be severely punished” (A female parent, Musoma Urban, May 2010).

6.5 Parents (fathers) are not close to their daughters.

Lack of closeness between male parents and their daughters is one of the factors for drop outs among girls. Normally when a girl reaches puberty she needs guidance from both parents and this helps her grow well both socially and academically. But in most societies, a girl is normally taken care of by her mother. A father does not talk with his daughter nor exchange ideas with her. And since, the father is not close to his daughter, the girl misses paternal love.

Therefore, most of the girls whose parents (father) are not close to them feel that they are not loved. Girls who live in such environments miss guidance from both parents and as a result they grow up without guidance from their male parents. As a consequence, when they reach puberty they become very close to boys who show them great love. These girls now feel that they are not only loved, but also valued. Soon these girls find themselves engaging in sexual relationship with the boys. Some of these girls find themselves in deep love with the boys to the extent of forgetting school and some of them drop out of school due to pregnancy. Observe the scenario in the Box 2 below;

Box 2: The consequence of poor parenting style of a male parent

“I must admit that the one who caused me to quit school is my father. He was very cruel to us as girls and he rarely talked with us. When you try to talk with him he became furious and he used to tell us that if we want something we have to channel that through our mother. He was not ready to talk with us and he rarely listened to us. And because I was a little kid by then, I thought, that is the way a father is supposed to behave. When I grew up I came to realize that the way our father acted was wrong since I came across men who are loving and caring unlike my father. I became open-minded and realized that men behave in a good way. I was very close to one young man who seemed to love and care for me. That young man became my main advisor and he gave me some money and in fact was very crucial to me. Because of that, we became very close friends-lovers. I unexpectedly became pregnant. I wept bitterly and he was also very terrified because we had never planned before! When teacher may discovered that I was pregnant, I expelled from school my teacher was very sorry for me because I was doing well at school” (Asha Ramadhani, Tanga, May 2010).

6.5 Poor learning environment.

A girl has many needs and she easily despairs when the environment is not favorable for her studies. Most rural schools have poor learning environment which contributes much to drop outs. In villages there is lack of important services such as water, toilets and privacy. In a situation when a girl is menstruating amidst poor environment, lack of clean toilets, lack of privacy, and lack of water makes the situation difficult. It is very difficult for her to tolerate this situation and most decide to return home. This causes her to miss studies and she begins to lag behind academically. This situation makes her despair.

Moreover when a girl is forced to sit on the floor because the school lacks desks or benches is another barrier for the girls' achievement in education. This is because a girl lacks freedom to sit in the most appropriate way she wishes. Distance from school is another problem that affects girls' attendance at school. This problem is evident within pastoral societies like the Maasai and Sukuma. Girls are unwilling to travel long distances to attend school as they are afraid of rapists and wild animals¹⁶.

6.7 Chronic truancy

According to the Education Act No 5 of 1978 (60) if a girl stays away from school for 60 days, she is expelled from school due to truancy. This law has greatly to girls' expulsion. This law does not consider the reasons that cause truancy. There are many girls who fail to attend school due to hardships they face at home and hence they are forced to leave school.

6.8 Lack of health education among girls

Girls who have reached puberty need health education so that they can take care of their bodies as well as accepting the changes that occur in their bodies. But it seems that most parents, particularly in rural areas, do not talk with their daughters about these changes. Lack of openness among parents has made many girls become pregnant unexpectedly because they do not know the ways of preventing them.

Although a girl can learn from different sources how to take care of her body, parents still have a role to play. It is better for a parent to teach a girl ways of preventing pregnancies and STDs. Most parents we interviewed reported that lack of reproductive health education has contributed much towards school-age pregnancies. One parent had the following to say:

"I think what makes girls get pregnancies at early ages is lack of reproductive health education. I believe that having sex does not necessarily cause pregnancy to a girl. Why is it that most of the girls in the urban areas seem to indulge much in sex as opposed to those in the rural areas? What makes them not become pregnancy is the reproductive health education. They know ways of preventing them. I think the newspaper contribute much to this kind of education" (A female parent, Tanga May 2010).

6.9 Bad cultural practices contribute to drop out among girls.

In some areas in the country there still exist initiation ceremonies which contribute towards girls leaving school due to sex and early marriages. These initiation ceremonies are normally conducted in rural areas where there are strong traditions and customs. When a girl passes traditional rites her sexual arousal increases. Psychologically, a girl develops a strong sex urge and many girls no longer want to continue with studies. Those who decide to quit school decide to get married or seek job opportunities as house maids, ideas learnt during the initiation ceremony. Also, there are traditions and customs that dictate a dowry to be paid while a girl is still a child. Because parents would have received this dowry while the girl was still a child, such a girl is forced to stop school so that she gets married after reaching puberty. In Mara region this problem still exists¹⁷. Is this not humiliation?

¹⁶ In Simanjiro District, girls are forced to walk long distances to find where the school is. Most of them quit school to escape that burden. Boarding schools have managed to retain girls at school and this is revealed by HakiElimu field visit which was made in Simanjiro District in July 2007.

¹⁷ Musoma Statistical and Logistics Officer, Mr. Machella, acknowledged that this problem still occurs as some girls get married at an early age. Most girls have dropped out of school because of early marriage.

6.10 Lust for luxury life.

Some girls want to possess things they are incapable of getting and as a result they involve themselves in sexual affairs to get what they want. They consider sex as a source of income to buy expensive clothes, expensive necklaces, attend music concerts or the cinema, buy mobile phones or perfume. Girls want to possess all these while not having any capital. When girls get pregnant they are forced to leave school and hence their life is ruined¹⁸.

6.11 Illiteracy among some parents.

Some parents, who have not benefited from education, understand that education is important but they do not see the importance of attending school. They argue that most of their children have acquired an advanced level of education but have ended up staying in the village doing nothing.

Because these parents do not see the benefits of education and instead see their daughters returning home pregnant, with disease such as HIV/AIDS, or with changed behaviours, these parents do not see the importance of education. They think that if a girl goes to school she may end up getting problems. Therefore, the parent feels that a girl should get married or go somewhere to seek employment which in turn will help her to contribute to the family income. This issue is worse in the rural areas. In rural areas schools face a lot of challenges such as villagers do not see the difference between educated and less educated people. Such schools seem not to nurture the talents of students. This is evidenced in the following statement:

“I decided to take my daughter out of school so that she gets married. I tried my level best to educate her sister but she let me down as she came back home while pregnant. Her brother learned to smoke bhang while at school and now he is loitering here and there doing nothing. I do not want this to happen to this girl again” (A parent, Tanga; May 2010).

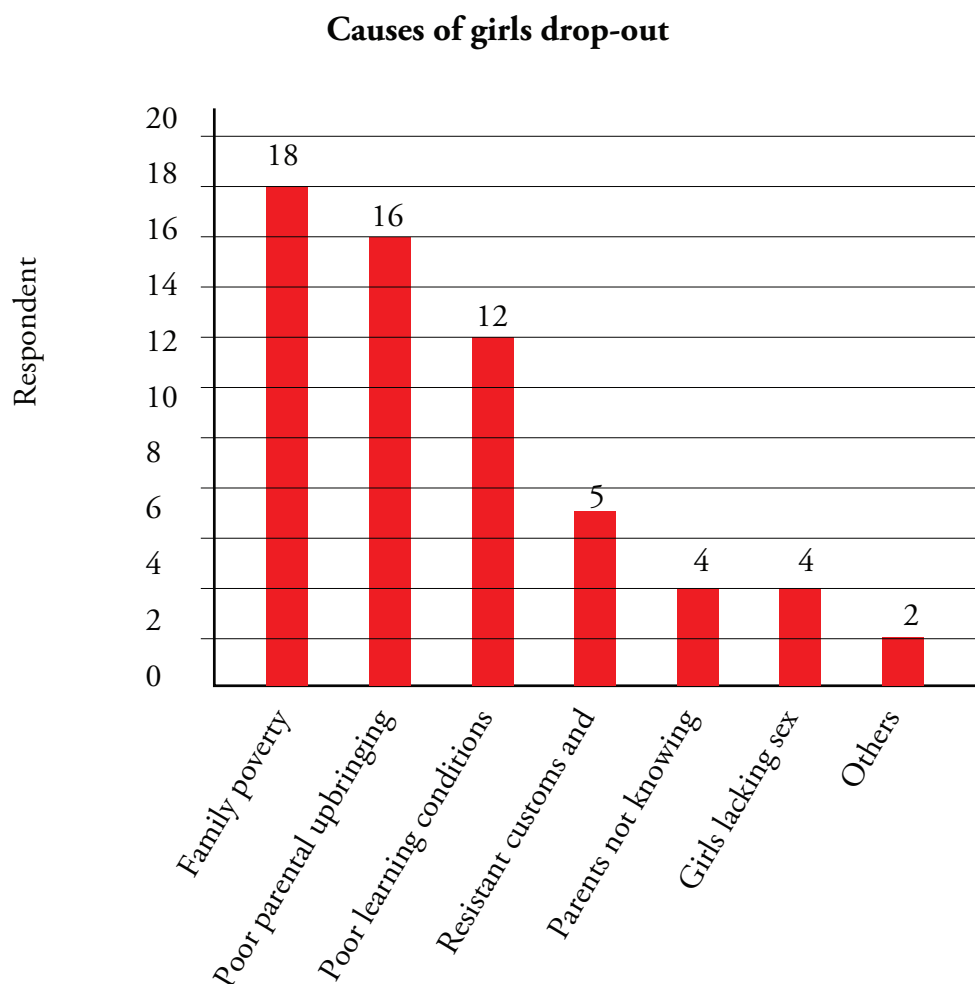
6.12 Lack of education among female parents

A mother's education has a big impact to the welfare of a child. The mother who is educated is likely to educate her child as well as making her successful in her studies and life in general. The recent research by Twaweza-Uwezo¹⁹ conducted in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda revealed that most children who did well in their studies are those from well educated mothers. Thus girls who come from less educated mothers are likely to face many challenges including drop out. In rural areas, where many mothers are less educated, this problem is more prevalent.

18 The First Lady, Mama Salma Kikwete, has been asking girls to avoid lust in order to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS infection and early pregnancies that force them to leave school.

19 Research by Uwezo which assessed reading and writing skills and numeracy for children aged between 6-15, in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda in 2010. According to the findings children whose mothers are educated outperformed their counterparts in reading, writing and numeracy.

Figure 1: Reasons for drop out among girls and their significance



Source: Analysis of the views given by education stakeholders

Analysis of the reasons for drop out given by 163 stakeholders mention **poverty of the family** to be the main contributing factor at 51 (31%), followed by **lack of good parenting** 44 (27%), **poor learning environment** 32 (20%), **resistant cultural practices** 13 (8%). These were followed by **lack of awareness on the importance of education by parents** and **lack of reproductive health education** particularly in the rural areas, both at 6 %.

7.0 What should we do to enable girls complete their studies successfully?

If we all agree that drop out among girls is a serious problem which affects their future, we can decide to minimize the problem, if not extirpate it completely. We know that girls who for various reasons quit school are part of our society. Because of that, solutions should come from within society. According to the interviews we made with the education stakeholders and the literature reviews, some strategies that can be used to mitigate the problem include the following:

7.1 Parents and guardians should demonstrate good parental style by guiding and talking with their daughters.

We can empower girls to determine their respective potential while still children. This can be achieved through a good parental system where the girls are nurtured as they grow. It is better to listen to the girls' problems and facilitate them to achieve their goals. It is better to advise and guide girls so that they can do better in life. If parents do not fulfill this responsibility the girls are likely to seek help outside the family and this may contribute towards ruining their future.

Parents should ask themselves the following questions: are we nurturing our children in an acceptable way? Are we exploring their potential? It is imperative to understand the potential of a child and be able to nurture her accordingly. This will help her achieve her goals and aspirations in life. One of the duties of a parent is to listen to what her child is saying as well as being able to offer support accordingly. A parent should be confident with her child because children are often daring. As for girls, this is paramount.

Teachers should co-operate with parents to explore girls' potential and guide girls in the right way. A teacher can easily determine the child's potential by observing the way the child co-operates with other pupils, see if the child has a hard-working spirit, explore the way the child thinks, the way she asks questions, how inquisitive she is, her level of creativity and many others. A good teacher is not the one who enters class as a routine but the one who has the ability to determine the pupils' ability at school and hence be able to nurture them properly. By understanding a child's abilities, a good teacher is in the position to advise the parent on the development of the child accordingly. Most students have the potential to deliver but the problem is that they lack correct guidance in their educational endeavors.

7.2 Poor households should be facilitated by being given a little capital in the form of small loans, agricultural grants or subsidies to help them reduce the burden of poverty. Tanzanians are hard workers and if they are given agricultural subsidies, and if taxes and levies on their crops as well as in their small business are removed they can easily generate income which can help educate their children and meet other family basic needs.

Because agriculture is the backbone of the country's economy extra efforts are needed to rescue this sector to give room for the lost children's talents, particularly from poor families, to thrive. Without developing the agriculture sector children from poor families, particularly girls, will continue to suffer from drop outs due to poverty of their families.

Thus it is important for education stakeholders to start supporting the needy girls directly without passing through the village executive officers or government officials. It seems that people who volunteer to give support to these girls get discouraged due to bureaucracy and strict regulations. Direct support of school girls will to some extent reduce the burden of poverty and other problems that these girls face. Areas which have implemented this programme, either through Tanzania social Action fund (TASAF) or other civil society organizations, can testify to the many benefit of this approach.

7.3 Girls should attend schools which are close to their home.

This will help to minimise drop out and help to reduce temptations which girls face on the way to and from school. Parents who enroll their children in schools far from their homes should stop this in order to reduce the obstacles of education which girls encounter. This occurs in rural areas as well as big cities and towns.

7.4 Schools far from girls' residence should be boarding schools which will help girls finish school without problems. If dormitories are built, especially where girls walk long distances to schools, this will help to minimize the problem of drop out²⁰. Most boarding schools in Simanjiro District and elsewhere have succeeded because of the availability of boarding schools for girls.

7.5 Girls who have reached puberty should be given reproductive health education. If girls are clearly told about the changes that occur in their bodies due to puberty, it will be possible for them to understand these changes and understand ways of preventing early pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. For those whose responsibility is to guide and take care of the girls, it is our duty to take care of them so that they can meet their dreams and aspirations. Girls should be advised not to involve themselves in early sex but they should also be taught about reproductive health education and sex. Parents who are open to their children have seen these benefits. It can be done.

7.6 We should keep on educating ourselves on bad cultural practices that undermine girls' education. Initiation ceremonies which teach girls to involve themselves in adult affairs while they are still at a tender age should be avoided. Village leaders have the responsibility to educate the people who perpetuate this system who should be asked to immediately stop this cultural practice. Parents should be encouraged to educate girls for the wellbeing of the family and society at large. This can be done as we all know that Tanzanian society has gone through hard times and has overcome many stumbling blocks on its way towards attaining development. It can be done especially if everyone plays one's part.

7.7 Stern measures should be taken against those who contribute towards school girl drop outs and those who ruin the future of girls.

There should be no excuse for men who take part in ruining the future of girls. Parents whose children are forced to leave school should not allow this to happen. They should take stern measures against those who make girls leave school due to pregnancy or early marriage. The cross generational sexual assilailant famous known in Swahili word as *fataki* who ruin girls' future should not be tolerated.

²⁰ HakiElimu in the 2007 study tour saw the importance of boarding schools for girls in Simanjiro District.

Stern measures should also be taken against parents who collaborate with men and marry off their girls just so they can acquire money. If parents are found to be involving their children in sexual activities for the purpose of getting money, such parents should also be subjected to legal measures. Selling a daughter to a man does not help to end poverty within the family. Poverty at the family level can only end through hard work and by educating girls. Let us take girls to school instead of looking for men for them to marry.

7.8 It is high time men abandoned old traditions and customs and found time to interact with their daughters.

Men should stop the habit of not interacting with their daughters. They should ensure continual interaction so as to know their problems. The work of advising their daughters should not be left in the hands of mothers only. Girls need the attention of their fathers as well. Successful families are the ones which have developed close relationships with their children. Fathers avoid this responsibility on the basis of culture and they sometimes claim that they are very busy or too occupied with office activities. As a result they make room for the *fataki* to infiltrate. Men are asked to change this life style.

7.9 There should be political will for government officials, especially from the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, to improve the school infrastructure.

It does not make sense to fund a school without toilets while it is known for sure that those who will be using that school will need toilets facilities. A good learning environment will reduce the problem of drop out and hence make girls finish school as planned. At school, there should be good, clean toilets facilities and a cubicle for girls only to provide privacy and safety. Without the availability of these essential facilities at school, it is difficult to end school drop outs.

7.10 Teachers have a significant role in making sure that girls do not quit school. Firstly, teachers stay with pupils for a long time. They are the ones who know the academic development of each child, any behavioral changes, attitudinal changes as well as educational ethics. Therefore they can play a significant role in making sure that girls finish school without problems. Teachers may decide to be close to pupils and listen to their problems as well as guide them to concentrate on education. When a girl is frustrated, it is often the teacher who is the first to give her counseling.

Secondly, during school hours a teacher acts as a parent to students. There is no parent who would like their child to experience problems. Every parent has high expectations for their child. A girl who is encouraged and given guidance by her teachers becomes successful at school and in her life in general. Teachers should strive to ensure that this is achieved. Thus the work of a teacher goes beyond teaching which is why teachers study education psychology and child development. These are the basic foundations of teacher education. If we effectively use education psychology girls will be successful at school and in life in general.

7.11 There is a need to put more emphasize on girls' education for the benefit of society.

In areas of Tanzania where awareness on the importance of girls' education is minimal should be given more emphasizing in making sure that girls' education is promoted. Education activists, the media,

local government authorities and other associations should put extra emphasis in making sure that mass education is promoted especially in rural areas where there is low awareness on matters pertaining to girls' education. Also, dissemination of information on issues related to girls' education should be promoted. It is evident that people in rural areas lack relevant information. Traditional dances, concerts and different ceremonies should be used to educate society on the importance of educating girls. It is no doubt that if citizens are educated they will change and put more emphasis on girls' education and as a result development will be assured.

7.12 Parents and guardians should reduce domestic chores for girls.

In most societies girls are given many responsibilities at home, like cooking and other farm or home activities. Some parents think that a girl can work all day without considering that she is human who needs to rest. This is not true and when a girl gets tired her ability to think decreases. Some girls are forced to leave school because of the many responsibilities at home. As parents we should know that once a girl is enrolled at school, she has special duties to do. It should be known that studying will be her main responsibility.

Therefore, she should use most of her time studying, attending school, playing exercising and for private study. While at home a girl should be given ample time to achieve all these 'school chores'. It is unfortunate that some parents think that when a child is at home, she is not supposed to engage herself with studies. This is absolutely not true. Whether at school or at home a child should be given ample time to study. This will help her to add more knowledge in her academic endeavors. When a child is given more time to study her interest with school increases, she values school and she normally performs better at school. But when she does not perform well at school she gets discouraged and as the result she may decide to quit.

8.0 The contribution of girls and women to socio-economic development

It is very difficult to separate the contribution of girls and women to the development of the family, society and the nation. However, it is clearly known that women make a great contribution in bringing about sustainable development.

8.1 Firstly, in the area of national income. Women have been on the front line in making sure that they pay relevant taxes and levies to increase government income. The population of women is bigger than that of men and many women are engaged in small businesses which adds significant income to government coffers.

8.2 Apart from paying taxes for those employed in formal sectors, women buy more commodities and services which include the payment of taxes through Value Added Tax (VAT).

8.3 Women are the main producers of agricultural commodities which are sold at market by men. The levies which they pay for their crops add income to government, particularly local government. But to what extent do women benefit from this?

8.4 Research shows that women work longer hours than men, between 18 and 24 hours every day. The National policy on Community development Gender, and Children 2000 clearly stipulates that;

“Women work more hours as compared with men, they form 80% of the labour force in rural areas, and they produce 60% of the whole stock of food. In case of the number of children, women do not have freedom to determine the number of children at the family although they are also parents” (2000: 10).

The same policy insists that:

“90.4% of women are the main producers in agriculture, animal husbandry and fishing. On the issue of agriculture, women use crude agricultural implements, they lack capital, they have low technological know-how and the majority do not own land” (2000: 13).

Agriculture is the backbone of the national economy. In the context of **Agriculture First (Kilimo Kwanza) no-one can deny this fact!**

8.5 With regard to division of labour and responsibilities, women significantly contribute to the national economy as they work more than men and they work for the benefit of the whole society. Most research reveals this fact (Paulina 1963; Uchendu 1965; Ame 1977; Aidoo 1981).

Due to the growth of urban areas, most men currently migrate from rural to urban areas leaving behind women and children who need something to eat, shelter, clothes and education. When children fall sick, women become frustrated as they have to take care of the sick children while their husbands in urban areas enjoy life. Who does not know this fact?

8.6 Women are not conservative. They easily abandon bad cultural practices which contribute to undermining their development. On the contrary it is men who are hard to change as they embrace even the bad cultural practices. Although there are also women who are hard to change, the largest traditional group is men.

8.7 Women like peace and tranquility, solidarity and political stability within the family, society and nation in general. Peace and tranquility can fast track and skyrocket development in community (Zombwe, 2009).

8.8 Women have the great responsibility of taking care of the children from the womb until they grow. If the women do not fulfill this responsibility effectively, we will have a nation whose people do not know their identities, a nation whose people are not good: a nation of thieves, robbers, and those who involve themselves in different crimes. Ethics, to a large extent are protected and maintained by women. Therefore, women's contribution is of great value to the development of society in general.

As we have seen above, the contribution of women to the development of this nation is paramount. If that is the case, shall we not develop further and faster if women are given greater opportunities to participate effectively in education, leadership and other activities? It is high time we honoured this great contribution given by women in the development of our country. Every citizen of this country should understand this. To some extent the government has started to put more emphasis on the role of girls and women for education and development. However, more efforts are needed to protect the education rights of our children, particularly girls.

9.0 Conclusion

It is not wise to undermine girls' education development since education is their right and therefore drop out among girls should not be allowed, at any level of education. A girl **does not get any benefits** for quitting school and On the contrary we see that almost invariably her life ends in misery. Education is very beneficial to girls as these girls achieve development very easily, unlike those who lack this important key to life.

Education facilitates development of any nation since it makes its people more productive. Girls who lack education can hardly liberate themselves from poverty since they lack the important tools for development. The developed countries were able to reach that level of development which they now cherish because they involved both men and women in education. Girls in developed countries were not left behind in terms of education. Developed countries make sure that girls are given quality education to enable them to be productive members of society. Moreover women were equally valued in the same way as men and they are effectively involved in socio-economic activities. These countries are now reaping what they were able to sow

The National Development Vision 2025 clearly states that;

“in order to achieve sustainable development, Tanzania strives to build a nation whose people have curiosity for development and competitive attitude. These attributes are built around education and knowledge that will enable a nation to utilize the knowledge base to enable the nation to effectively use the available resources for the benefits of the people, that is, by giving people basic needs as well as facilitating fair competition at both the regional and global level. Tanzania is striving to promote innovation, production of high quality industrial commodities and promotion of quality education. All of these are aimed at overcoming development challenges and is able to compete regionally and globally” (2002-2025:1).

This reality brings us to the point that, as a nation we should do away with all evils which undermine girls' educational rights. All children, both girls and boys should be protected by parents, the society, state organs and the nation as a whole. The time has now come as a nation; we should completely discourage school-age pregnancies. It is the responsibility of all Tanzanians to make sure that children are protected and ensure that children get all their rights as citizens of this country.

Girls should avoid the lust for money and other temptations which are avoidable. They should be courageous enough to say no to people who tempt to involve them in sexual relationships or other acts which can harass them. Girls are obliged to work hard at school and they should listen to advice given by parents and guardians. They should report all evil acts to their teachers, parents, the police and other state machinery which can help them in fighting the evils that undermine their educational excellence. Most importantly, girls have the right to be loved, valued and to be listened to as children.

If we are dedicated towards bringing about sustainable development under the directive of the Development Vision 2025, it is possible to change our attitudes on the female child. We can create more opportunities for girls to exercise their academic excellence as well as opening more development

avenues. Ending the problem of drop out for girls does not require a lot of money or many special programmes. It does however; need dedication, clear understanding of the problem, a strong will and motivation. **As Tanzanians, it is possible to end the problem of drop out among girls. Every one should play their part and be responsible!!**

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(Footnotes)

- 1 The Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania 1977, 2005 edition page 19
- 2 National development Vision 2025 is the official statement by the Government which gives the development direction of a nation as well as strategies to achieve its goals.

Despite the massive achievement in children's enrollment in schools and an increase in opportunities for Tanzanian children to access education, many challenges still face girl students. One of those challenges is the large number of girls who drop out of school and thus fail to enjoy the opportunities that come with education.

Efforts to ensure that girls attain an education and benefit from it have improved in recent years with different education stakeholders, including parents, activists, and the government, paying much attention to improve opportunities for girls to access education. However, these efforts have not born fruits fully.

We are still witnessing thousands of girls dropping out of school and thus ruining their lives for various reasons including early pregnancies and marriages. They drop out of school and join many others in society who have missed out on education and are now firmly entrapped in the cycle of poverty. How are we addressing this issue?

HakiElimu decided to publish a special publication that focuses on girls' education in order to broaden the debate and critically analyze the issue in order to find solutions to this problem. The publication indicates the reasons for girls dropping out of schools, effects associated with the dropouts, and the contribution and benefits arising from educating girls for their own development as well as for society as a whole.

Finally, based on the views and opinions gathered from different education stakeholders and analysis of research reports, the publication recommends several approaches that can be used to help girls acquire an education and benefit from it.

We urge all stakeholders to join us in cultivating positive thoughts and actions so that as one we can help girls acquire an education and benefit from it in their lives.

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