

Factors that influence girls' participation in primary schools' education in sumbawanga district, Tanzania

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This study was conducted in Sumbawanga district in Rukwa region to investigate Factors that undermine girls' full participation in primary schools. The study adopted Bronfenbrenner's (1970) ecological system theory, with some modifications, for a conceptual framework. The study had three specific objectives, namely to identify the underlying factors contributing to limited girls' participation in primary school; to assess the strengths of the existing education policies and guidelines in fostering full participation of girls; and to determine the effectiveness of alternative strategies employed by school in addressing the factors that limit girls' full participation in primary education. The study employed a mixed-methods research approach and specifically a cross-sectional survey design. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used in selecting 114 respondents and 10 public primary schools. The sample comprised head teachers, other teachers, school management committee (SMC) chairpersons, ward education co-ordinators (WEC), district education officer (DEO), faith-based organizations (FBOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), parents, and pupils in school. Data were collected through questionnaires, interview schedules, documentary review and focus group discussions (FGDs). Qualitative data was subjected to thematic analysis to develop common themes, while quantitative data was analysed descriptively by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The study established that the main factors that limited girls' full participation in schools were orphan hood due to loss of parents, poverty, school factors, domestic activities and parental preferences given to male children in education. The study findings underscored the importance of maintaining community communication between parents, teachers and officials. Strict enforcement of child protection laws, banning of school levies and parental responsibility in child care would also foster girls' participation in primary education.