



Role of Women during Post COVID 19 Lockdown on Girl Child Education in Baringo County

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine the role of women during post covid 19 lockdowns on girl child education in Baringo County. The study employed cross-sectional survey research design. All local chiefs, education officers, nyumba kumi heads and the local girls will be targeted. A sample of 130 respondents was used by the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to arrive at the study sample size. Data Collection instruments included interview schedules, observation and questionnaires. Interview schedules were used to collect data from the nyumba kumi heads and education officers. Questionnaire on the other hand was used to collect data from local chiefs and the targeted school girls. The study used SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) to analyze data. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to summarize the data. From the analysis, the study found that given the requirements of learning and prevalence of boys' education in most societies, women have great roles to ensure girls learn effectively. The study therefore recommended that the Government stakeholders and development partners should come out with interventions towards enhancing favourable girl child education learners, in particular and all learners in general, in order to enhance retention rates, especially through provision of necessary learning facilities in rural public schools.

Keywords: *women role, girl child education, post covid-19 lockdown, post-covid-19 lockdown education*

1. INTRODUCTION

A COVID-19 epidemic has been spreading in China and other parts of the world since December 2019. The epidemic has brought not only the risk of death from infection but also unbearable psychological pressure as well as economic, political and education stand still. Data from American College Health Association (2019), indicate high levels of psychological distress and negative academic consequences among students.

In many settings, women and girls are at increased risk during and after a pandemic because they have many roles and are responsible for caring for children, the elderly, their personal needs as well as societal activities participation. World Bank, (2018), acknowledged girls' educational attainment as vital investment in their future earning power. However, the issue of covid 19 has posted a great concern in education sector. Mostly among women, a large percentage of girl



child has been exposed to these challenges, among them includes early pregnancies, early marriages and increased school drop outs.

Travel restrictions, school closure, market closures, washing hands and distancing have disrupted economies and the informal and low-income work predominantly conducted by women and girls whose roles will be affected even during post COVID lockdown as noted by CARE, (2020) and World Bank, (2020)

UNFPA (2020) estimates that the pandemic will result to 13 million child marriages over the next decade, this would not have otherwise taken place. Global reports of SGBV against women and girls are also increasing as household mobility is restricted and tensions run high. Barriers to accessing basic needs or safe spaces amid lockdowns and stay-at-home orders increase girls' risk. Concerns have been persistent on the role of women on their girls' education after COVID 19 lockdown.

Schools have long been a safe haven for girl child. Those who were in boarding schools received support and protection from the government. But now that they have been confined to their homes, most girls lacked neither basic supplies like sanitary towels nor the resources to study from home. The result being already troubled overburden women added another role during and after COVID 19.

The magnitude of the crisis is unprecedented, and the pandemic is having a profound effect on health, social and an economic activity of all people inclusive is girl child education in Baringo County. According to Kombo, (2005), education is a key transformative power acknowledged worldwide. Through the use of education the environment has been transformed into a better place to live in. Critical role is in waiting for women on girls' education for the world to be a better place to live during post COVID 19 lockdown.

Parents in Baringo especially mothers have been using all means to ensure quality education without knowing the consequences of some unforeseen circumstance like COVID 19 which almost brought the earth economically, politically and socially to a standstill. The study revealed that Baringo County like other counties experienced teenage pregnancies during this season of Corona virus disease.

The disruption on students' routines has led to lacunas, especially among girls causing unusual behaviours. A survey by Young Minds reported that 83% of young respondents agreed that the pandemic worsened pre-existing mental health conditions, mainly due to school closures, loss of routine, and restricted social connections (YoungMinds, 2020). There are rampant cases of pregnancies among school going girls throughout this pandemic lockdown in Kenya, it has also been reported that the situation is also enormous in Baringo.



The role of women among girls in a region that still uphold traditional norms, is just but an added predicament among girls in Baringo, and the entire ASALs of Kenya. This study will shade more light on the role of women when dealing with a surge in COVID 19 case on girls education during post COVID lockdown in Baringo County. Baringo County is one of the counties highly affected by the effects of COVID 19; among them is teenage pregnancies among school going girls during this pandemic lockdown of COVID 19, where traditionally mothers are supposed to play a great role. The extensive effects of the problem concentrate within the county. The County leadership and mothers has been very helpful towards mitigating on the effects of substance use and teenage among school children. This is supported by the chiefs, assistant chiefs and village elders. Being one of the biggest counties in Kenya, with many areas sparsely populated low economic and illiteracy among parents, it suffers so much on the effects of the teenage pregnancy among school girls, which is an impact of global pandemic COVID 19. This study therefore intended to examine the role of women during post Covid 19 lockdown on girl child education in Baringo County.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study employed cross-sectional, involving both qualitative and quantitative paradigms. The target population consisted of all mothers of school going girls, *nyumba kumi*, education officers, girls and chiefs in Baringo County. This population was particularly targeted since it provided key information on the role of women during post Covid 19 lockdowns on girl child education in Baringo County.

The targeted population in this study consisted of teachers, head teacher, support staff and learners with mental and communication deficit from a selected primary school special unit in Nairobi. This population was particularly targeted since it provided key information on the role of women during post Covid 19 lockdowns on girl child education in Baringo County.

The researcher used both probability and non-probability sampling techniques to select respondents who have key information for the study. The sample size consisted of 130 respondents. Simple randomized sampling technique was used in sampling of the sample size from the targeted girls. Purposive sampling procedure on the other hand was used to select *nyumba kumi* heads, education officers and the selected chief from Baringo County. The selection of this method is due to the fact that the key respondents had the key information on the role of women during post Covid 19 lockdowns on girl child education in Baringo County needed by the study.

Structured questionnaire and interview guide were the major data collection instruments that were employed by the study. Questionnaire was used to gather information from the girls that participated in the study, while interview guide was used to gather information from the *nyumba kumi* heads, education officers and the local chiefs.



Descriptive analysis was used to analyze quantitative data. SPSS version 23 aided in data coding. The results were summarized in frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data on the other hand was reported in themes.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Background Characteristics of Respondents

In gender characteristic it was found that the majority of respondents support or are aware of the effects of girl child education by COVID 19 related cases were females with a total of 83 women (63%) and the male were 49 which is 37% . this would mean that women feel more affected by COVID 19 than men.

3.2 Factors Affecting Girls' Education during COVID 19 lockdown

The study sought to find out factors affecting girls' education during covid 19 lockdown. Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents

Table 1

Factors Affecting Girls' Education during COVID 19 lockdown

Item	Frequency	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Teenage Pregnancy	74	56	56
Basic needs	12	6	72
Home chores	28	14	91
Sanitary towels	16	9	100
Total	130	100	

Responses on pregnancy received the highest correlation with a response rate of (56%) rating teenage pregnancy during post-covid 19 lockdown to be the highest factor affecting girl child education. This could be as a result of low income levels in many of the families and lack of parental guidance during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Items such as sanitary towels are unavailable to the teenage girls. This leads to other behaviour as a source of money. Only (19%) rated them hardly accessed sanitary towels, (14%) confirmed overworked by their parents and guardians. Sanitary towels are normally offered during school sessions; however, the closure of schools and charitable places denies girls opportunities to have their access.

During the interviews, the respondents identified home chores, cultivating in the crop fields, lack of basic needs and teenage pregnancies as the biggest impediments to girls education during this COVID 19 pandemic lockdown, due to the low income levels in many of the families, items such as sanitary towels are unavailable to the teenage girls. This leads to other behaviour as a source of money. The accumulative loss of school days in due to COVID 19 has affected not only their understanding of the school syllabus but also their morale and fear of unknown about their



education in future due to many interruption. This affects the students' self-esteem and other than lacking enthusiasm for school, they tend to drop out of school all together in the long run.

The key informants gave an important contribution to this, that among the many factors affecting the education of the girl child is the fact that some of the community members have a negative attitude towards educating a girl child, since they strongly believe that the girls place is in marriage and be submissive to the husband and not to waste money in educating the girl. They argue that there is no point in educating a girl who will eventually get married and the benefit of her studying will be enjoyed by the husband's family instead of them who laboured for it.

3.2 Intervention Measures by Stakeholders to evade similar Situations in future.

The study sought to investigate the measures put across by the stakeholders to evade similar situation in future. Table 2 shows the summary.

Table 2

Distribution of Intervention Measures

Item	Frequency	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Creating awareness	74	56	56
Adequate materials	28	21	72
Sanitary facilities	18	14	91
Mentorship forums	12	9	100
Total	132	100	

Respondents were requested to indicate their opinion on what should be done to ensure girls in school fully participate in education. The respondents indicated that creating awareness on the importance of girls' education (56%), provision of adequate learning materials (21%), providing adequate sanitary facilities including sanitary towels (14%), and organization of mentorship forums by female role models including women (9%) Empowering women to take their role as first advisers for their girls at home are the top mitigation factors that can ensure girls in school fully participate in education.

An additional factor that was supported by most of the respondents and the key informants is the involvement of the church to integrate the role of women on girls' education in their teaching and also participation in school programs. This, according to them will ensure that the girls remain in school after the normal school programme to have extra hours for their studies and concentration in religious advices. This will therefore help save the girls from child labor, house chores and the likes. According to them this will go a long way in ensuring that they have maximum concentration in their studies and thus improving their performances and attendance in school.



4. DISCUSSION

When asked about the factors affecting girls' education, most respondents indicated that teenage pregnancy was the major factor. This could be as a result of low income levels in many of the families. Items such as sanitary towels are unavailable to the teenage girls. This leads to other behaviour as a source of money, (68%) rated them hardly accessed sanitary towels, (43.9%) confirmed overworked by their parents and guardians, work in farms (25.9%). lack of basic needs (40%) and (7.5%) cited irresponsible parents. The study appear to be in line with the research finding from Cao et al, (2020) who conducted a study on impact of COVID 19 on learners. The study finding established that the impact of COVID 19 on pupils and student's education is seriously absurd. Some of the factors that were brought up from the findings included: home chores, sanitary towels and basic needs. Further, the findings from Ciao et al reported that 25% of students involved in research about the epidemic, are characterized by anxiety symptoms, which are positively correlated with the increased concerns about academic; delays, economic effects of the pandemic, and impacts on daily life.

The disruption on students' routines has led to lacunas, especially among girls causing unusual behaviours. A survey by YoungMinds reported that 83% of young respondents agreed that the pandemic worsened pre-existing mental health conditions, mainly due to school closures, loss of routine, and restricted social connections (YoungMinds, 2020). There are rampant cases of pregnancies among school going girls throughout this pandemic lockdown in Kenya, it has also been reported that the situation is also enormous in Baringo.

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5. CONCLUSION

Given the requirements of learning and prevalence of boys' education in most societies, women have great roles to ensure girls learn effectively. Coupled with the fact that most societies in Africa still perceive females to belong to the marriage world even at tender ages, few learning opportunities are made available for them. Whereas majority of the respondents and scholars agreed that mothers are the sole immediate mentors equipping girls with skills during and after COVID 19.

The study recommends that the Government should formulate policies favourable to female learners, in particular and all learners in general, in order to enhance retention rates, especially



through provision of necessary learning facilities in rural public schools. The goal of free primary and secondary education that ensures high enrolment and retention and transition rates were only to become real if women roles on girl child education as well as poverty challenges are also addressed through sustainable poverty eradication policies, as no child can learn with a lot of challenges. In addition, All women, parents and guardians with girls in schools through government and relevant stakeholders must be sensitized on what ought to be done to ensure that girl child get retained in schools during and after COVID 19 lockdown.

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