

## **DISTANCE LEARNING IS THE KEY TO AVOID FACTORS AFFECTING GIRLS' DROP OUT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A STUDY OF WHITE NILE STATE-SUDAN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study states why primary school (level 8) girls drop out specifically among villagers girls in White Nile State – Sudan. Eastern White Nile State, rural areas in Algrashi locality have been chosen as a case study. To stop this phenomenon, the government of Sudan must promote distance learning to avoid the drop out of girls in primary school. The main objective of the present study is to find out and highlight the causes contributing to the problem and to provide some recommendations to avoid the female drop out in the primary stage specifically final grade (level 8). The study underpinning on a qualitative research method, using a semi-structured interviewing technique. The study finds out that there are some reasons why girls drop out, such as economic circumstances, academic reasons, and societal reasons such as early marriage. Therefore, the study points out that distance learning is the key to avoid the drop out of girls at the primary level without the need to attend classes. According to Algrashi locality culture, we can provide distance learning to girls to attend their classes from their home in order to avoid far distance walking and to avoid getting married at the early stage of their life.

**Keywords:** Primary education, Drop out, Girls' education, White Nile state.

### **INTRODUCTION**

It is no doubt that education is a cornerstone and strong component for achieving human development and prosperity. Of course, primary education develops the capacity to learn, to read and apply what has learned, to acquire information, and further to think critically. It is also the backbone to all different levels of education that develop humankind for instance scientists, teachers, doctors, etc. offers skills and puts you in the right direction, no matter how small or poor you are (Fadul & Khalda 2018). The education of women is a fertilize scope of discrimination against women, particularly in the third world and the Sudan community is no exception. Definitely, education is the privilege of girls in any corner of the world and it is the way to shifting both the life of the girls as well as their entire community. No doubt, that, girls without education are difficult to build up their maximum capacity and to play an important and beneficial role in their families, social, neighborhood, and the world as a whole. The most crucial technics and accessible to enable girls inside the family and inside society is a good education level. Likewise, teaching girls has falling advantages. Therefore, teaching girls can shield their families and themselves from any kind of social diseases, Sudan is one of the African countries that has been progressing in primary education enrollment since it was the Millennium targeted over 15 years ago by the United Nations. Offering basic education for girls is a potential factor that encourages and provides them with tremendous power by enabling them to choose their own way of life. According to a UNICEF report (1996), there are many women and men not attending

school. This study is focused on the primary or basic (level 8), the definition of drop out means leaving school before graduation. (Price 2007; Chugh 2011) point out that leaving school at an early age such as children, who enroll in the school and for such reasons, they leave school before completing the grade and that can be seen clearly in grade 8 in Sudan educational system.

### **DROP OUT STATUS IN PRIMARY LEVEL-SUDAN**

Drop out rate is a challenge in achieving progressing in primary education enrollment (education for all) by the United Nations by 2015. The dropout rate of girls in a primary school in different years is different as been decreased according to statistical reports by the ministry of education, Unesco, World Bank, and Unicef whereas, still there is a dropout in this educational stage.

**Table1:  
Percentage of drop out**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>24.15</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>10.6</b>
<b>2013</b>	<b>20.6</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>20.1</b>

The above table shows percentage of primary school drop out –Sudan.

Within the white Nile state context, drop out is a major challenge that has not been highlighted and sufficiently discussed in Sudan as general and specifically in White Nile state - countryside. In fact that girls' dropout in primary school has been marginalized and ignored in terms of researches as well as in official policies in Sudan. The table above shows that fluctuates of girls and boys drop among Sudanese states in primary school therefore girls' drop out in primary school seems to be problematic and must be highlighted, Kathleen (2018).

The present study attempts to investigate the causes behind why the girls" leaving primary school in rural areas in White Nile State in Sudan. The choice of rural areas is not random but as a result of the high numbers of girls dropping out of school, and that can be seen clearly in villages. So, the main objective of the present paper is to examine the extent to which social factors influence girls to drop out in primary school in White Nile State. To examine the extent to which economic factors influence girls drop out in primary school in White Nile State. To examine the extent to which school factors influence girls to drop out in primary school in White Nile State. Therefore, the findings of this study will invigorate the leaderships reformulate policies towards primary education in Sudan entirely and White Nile state as an exceptional case.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The present study adopted a qualitative phenomenological research method. Basically, it explains an in-depth understanding of a certain phenomenon being lived through as described by the participants (Creswell, 2014; Giorgi, 2012). Pertaining to instrumentation interview employed and specifically a sampling method is adopted. Only three out of ten girl's interviews were conducted; 3 interviews were conducted with primary school females who drop out of school on behalf of the researchers because in the rural areas culture is prohibited a male interview a girl. Therefore, according to the researcher distance learning is suitable for this environment. In addition to that, teachers and parents are excluded entirely in this study.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In fact, girls' educational right is a phenomenon that has been disseminating among developing nations all over the world and also Sudan is included specifically among villagers' girls in primary school. Unfortunately, previous studies have shown escalating of this phenomenon. Therefore, some literature review have highlight and showed many reasons for instance financial, economic achievement and early marriage (Kathleen, 2018; Derdar, 2014; Cynthia, et al. 2000; Jonathan 2014). Relating to academic factors, lead girls drop out Ananga (2011) pointed out that to academic and social factors school environment poverty and the opportunity cost of schooling. Some studies find out that there are two or more factors that motivate girls to drop out from primary school such as something related to society (Casey, 2014). The causes of drop outs generally relate to families' lack of resilience to cope with socio-economic combination of two factors ensure that drop out strongly that girls never comeback school. In addition, a study of (Fadul & Khalda, 2018) showed that economic factors were found the main reasons that motivated girls drop out from primary school girls 26.2% who dropped out compared with boys rate and 20.4% due to financial support. In the context of Sudan, although the government has been making tangible efforts to construct and reconstruct more primary schools in rural areas, that affected by civil war. It has been observed that there is so much work should be done, mainly within individual income specificity in the rural areas has been escalating that makes the problem greater for a citizen. In some areas, for instance the absence of simple services that without doubt that influence no girls' academic achievement. Whereas a study of (Erica & Ambrus, 2008) found out that different factors that motivate girls drop out in primary such as marriage is also associated with an increase in use of preventive health services. So, there is another factors that can influence girls drop out in primary which pointed out by study of (Adala 2016), these factors are early marriage, and economic factors such as poverty and civil strife in southern Sudan led to insecurity and stability and lack of motivation. Another problem causing girls' drop out is that some parents are not motivated to send their daughters to school in this situation. In fact, due to poverty and child labor that may lead girls to drop out from school (Devkota & Bagale, 2015). The literature review highlights that early marriage is one of the major factor that causes girls' drop out of primary school in White Nile State beside finical support and early marriage. Some findings pointed out that school climate, teachers and academic achievement are factors motivated and increased girls drop out. Overall, the risk of school drop out due to marriage heightens after girls complete the fifth or sixth grade, (Sekine & Hodgkin, 2017). The causes of females' drop out related to financial circumstances (Derdar, 2014). While, this study conducted in White Nile State – Sudan seeks factors for girls' drop out from school are related to several factors (Kathleen, 2018).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The root of girls leaving primary school specifically who were in grade eight in White Nile State – Sudan found in this study are related to these factors school environment are related to academic issues such as (syllabuses), deals with females teachers, services inside and due to the lack of interest in education, and early marriage. Therefore, distance learning is going to be the best method to encourage girls to continue their education in White Nile State.

## ACADEMIC FACTORS

Three interviewers out of ten who excused participation in this study after highlighted them about everything will be confidential and will be used for academic purposes. Girls who dropped out in grade eight who stated hard schooling environment as the main reason of leaving primary school - grade eight. The girls stated that they found themselves unable to continue schooling because of the miserable environment. In this regard, Gadah a 14 years

old (The respondents refused to use their direct name due culture and traditions who quitted school three months ago said: Gadah, is a girl code who was participated in the interview, I left school because academic causes said (according to the syllabus I think there is difficult to be understood whereas there is simple syllabus for instance Math is difficult and science specially Universe & Science was so complicated book. Whereas, some syllabus such as Arabic and religion are simple to gain high marks. Regarding to teachers females some of them are good attract pupils to study but others are cruel and rude towards us, they believed that girls must be punished hard in order to be able to cross grade eight to secondary school. I think school environment needs rehabilitation in terms of classes, furniture a bathrooms regularly and cleanness. In addition to that, the ministry of education should create a new method of learning such as distance learning to suit their culture. This result is found in a study of Adala (2016), these factors are early marriage, and economic factors such as poverty and civil strife, difficulty to meet school needs in a certain time may lead to girls drop out (Devkota & Bagale, 2015). Early marriage is one of the major factors of girls' drop out of school. Huda a girl in the age of 13 who has dropped out recently (level 8) because of academic reasons she said (There are some academic materials which are difficult to be understood whereas there is simple syllabus for instance English, Math is difficult and science especially Universe & Science was so complicated book. Always my marks were very low and felt shy among my colleagues. Over all, all participants agree to attend classes from their home using the new technology. In addition, they are highly motivated to have a training course on how to use the social media networking.

### **ECONOMIC FACTORS**

Sana a 13 years old who had dropped out of level 8 of primary school as a result of academic and economic issues. There are several studies, which highlight issues of economic and academic dropping out of school, particularly within the context of teacher/student relationship. There are a number of issues, which were realized by the participants as motivating reasons to their drop out. For instance, Sana said that they had to leave school because of their weak academic performance: I was doing very bad at school and there was no need to continue. My grades were very weak in terms of Math and Universe & science subject. Always my marks were below the average and I couldn't understand what the teacher of Math said. She told me that one day the teacher of Math beat her too much and I hated her. She also explained that it would be nice if she keep far distance from her teacher, so she was highly motivated to study Math through distance learning.

### **SOCIAL FACTORS**

The present study seeks to the factors that influence girls to drop out in primary school at White Nile State - Sudan. So, there is a connect between girls' early marriage and dropping out of school particularly within the life of villagers and poor families. In light of field data, all the participants who leave school explained they had stopped going to school immediately after they were engaged: Huda, Gadah & Sana said immediately after I got engaged, I stopped going to school because I think it is better to start a new life than the educational life that I got fatigued. Thus, all participants were highly motivated to make use of the distance learning from their home and to continue their life without getting married at the early stage of their life.

### **CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study reveals that the reasons beyond females' drop out of primary school in White Nile State specifically villagers are similar to previous research studies and literature review. This study was founded on narrative stories of villagers' girls who were victims of many reasons societal, economic and educational reasons and each factor can be

categorized into several reasons. It is clear that also no single factor can be completely accounted for drop out girls from primary education. There are various reasons, which interact and make the problem a process rather than a single event. Thus, there are number of factors related to families, schools, and communities that affect whether a female student is likely to drop out or continue. This study has highlights some real roots and reasons beyond female leaving primary school in White Nile State. It is important to summarize that the findings of this study may not apply to other places in Sudan. What has been found in White Nile State is where girls' dropping out of primary school is mainly due to academic, financial or societal factors (early marriage). It was found that the key to avoid this phenomena is to promote distance learning and that will be compatible within the White Nile State environment in Sudan.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To eliminate and eradicate the problems of females drop out in primary school level, the present study highlights these following recommendations: Concerning of rehabilitation of schooling environment regularly to be more attractive and terrific to pupils specifically girls such as toilets. Establish fund enable to assist pupils who are descending from poor families or orphans or headmaster of schools should inform official officers. Highlight parents of early marriage problems and difficulties beside that the importance of girls education. Provide pupils with additional and reinforcement courses in terms of English, Math and science. Teachers should work hard, create interactive environment to pupils, and encourage them to complete their early education levels and guide and mentor them how to go further in education and solve problems in their daily life. The Ministry of Education in Sudan should establish workshops and training to the teachers and students as well about distance learning and how to make use of it. In addition, a strict action must be taken by the Ministry of Education to establish a new method of learning, such as distance learning to suit the cultural environment of some rural areas in some different parts of Sudan.

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