

Drop out among Pupils in Rural Primary Schools in Kenya: The Case of Nandi North District, Kenya

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Abstract

The role of education in socializing the individual to fit in the society cannot be gainsaid. This is because education empowers people to improve their well being and participation in nation building. But recent research has shown that the spate of school drop-out among primary school pupils is worrying. This is happening in Kenya despite the inception of Free Primary Education programme in 2003. Practically pupils' drop out poses a serious threat to gains in education despite the Government's emphasis on Education for All by the year 2015. In Nandi North District, the problem is more pronounced among the primary pupils. The study therefore was conceived as a result of the increased pupil dropout rate in public primary schools causing wastage and affecting curriculum implementation. The study sought to establish the causes of drop out among pupils and strategies that institutions of learning can adopt to address this problem. The study adopted descriptive survey design. It targeted 6322 standard eight pupils, 2569 class teachers and 286 head teachers. Out of this target population, a sample size of 1970 standard eight pupils, 769 class teachers and 86 head teachers was selected. Data were collected using class teachers' and pupils' questionnaires and head teachers' interview guide to gather information on the causes of school dropout. Data were analyzed by use of descriptive statistics and the findings presented in form of figures and tables. The study findings indicated that teenage pregnancy, chronic repetition, family size, lack of motivation for schooling, parental negligence, influence from peers, lack of trained teacher counsellors and early marriages were the main causes of school dropout. It further pointed out that the factors leading to the dropout of girls are different from those for boys. The study therefore recommends that the government and other stakeholders should address the issue of school dropout rate and come up with measures to curb it to avoid wastage of school curriculum resources and facilities and above all, wastage of them would be future leaders full of discovery knowledge for this current era of information and technology. In addition, the government should strengthen policies on the expenditure of the FPE set aside to benefit all children for quality education.

Keywords: Drop Out, Pupils, Rural Primary Schools, Kenya, Nandi North District, Kenya

1. Introduction

Education is regarded as a prime mover for the socio-economic development of countries and accounts for as much as 20% of the annual Gross National Product (GNP) of developing nations (Alvares, Gillies, & Biadsher, 2003). This is considered so because education has been found to improve the productive value of human beings by imparting knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour traits referred to as human, social and cultural capital which are required in producing goods and services (Lazear, 2002). In addition to the productive value, education promotes harmonious co-existence, population control, healthy living, effective citizenship, nutritional adequacy and child upbringing (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1985).

It is generally agreed that education is a fundamental human right and also a catalyst for economic growth as well as human development. Globally, education has brought about high social rates of return which estimated to be 27% for completed primary education and 15-17% for secondary education. Correspondingly, private returns of education have been found to be significantly higher than social returns estimated at 49% for primary and 26% for secondary education. Notably, education remains a profitable occupation. For example, a report by UNESCO (2005) supports this notion by indicating that education is one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty, give people opportunity to improve their lives and raise their voice, improve their health, productivity and foster participation in civil society.

With the realization that primary schooling is important for the achievement of national development, many governments have made access to primary education a basic human right (Okuom, Simatwa, Olel, & Wichenje, 2012). However, many nations have not achieved the Universal Primary Education with an estimate of about 101 million children being left out of school. Among the reasons impeding the achievement of Universal Primary Education include: poverty, illness, malnutrition, absenteeism and high cost of schooling, cultural factors, inappropriate curriculum, examination, inadequate teachers, and lack of facilities (UNESCO, 2007). One way that the Kenyan government can attain Vision 2030 is to put more emphasis on basic education. But the major drawback in attaining Vision 2030 is pupil school dropout. This is in spite of the government's huge expenditure in providing free primary education. As a consequence, a substantial amount of this expenditure is spent on those

who drop out of school. This is wastage of the resources because those who dropout had not acquired the knowledge and skills expected of them.

According to Todaro (1994), causes of drop-out vary from region to region, country to country, school to school and individual to individual. For instance, in the year 2010, school dropout rate in Kenya stood at 2.1% for boys and 2.0% for girls. This is clearly depicted by Mwaniki (2008) in his study carried out in Suba District which indicated that young men who dropped out of school enticed young girls with money earned from fishing and made them to also drop from school. Similarly, an earlier study by Kimondo (2007) indicates that the dropout rate of male pupils in primary schools was higher than that of the females. It notes that in early childhood up to Standard Four there is usually a balance between the two sexes but later the number of boys declines. While there has been increased primary school enrolment in Kenya in recent years, the concern at the moment is with regard to the internal efficiency of primary education, particularly the ability to retain pupils until they complete the eight year cycle.

There is sufficient evidence indicating that primary school dropout has escalated from up to 6.1% in 2012. Kimondo (2007) further notes that of the Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) for boys and girls is 93.01%; however 55% of boys and 54.6% of girls reach primary four, while 31.2% of the boys and 27.7% of girls reach primary seven. Arguably, the problem of pupil dropout is quite unsettling especially to policy makers. This is partly because it reflects on the inadequacy of a schooling system in terms of either school quality or quantity. In effect, school dropouts are usually associated with high unemployment levels, low earnings, and poor health outcomes, persistent poverty.

Given the escalating drop-out rates of pupils and ghastly effects of primary school drop-out in undermining national human capital development efforts, there is therefore a dire need to establish the causes of pupils' drop out in primary schools in Nandi District. It is believed that the drop-out rate in the whole nation stands at 2.1% for boys and 2.0% for girls (Mwaniki, 2008). However, Mwaniki does not explain what causes that situation and that issue becomes the focus of this paper.

2.Statement of the problem

With the realization of the benefits of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), many governments globally have made a commitment to expand educational opportunities for children by 2015. This is in response to international conventions which recognize education as a necessity and a fundamental human right. The major drawback in attaining EFA and Vision 2030 is the rising cases of school drop-out. In Kenya, a lot of money is spent the Government in providing free primary education. But it appears that a substantial amount of this expenditure is spent on those who drop out of school. This is wastage of the scarce national resources because the drop-outs do not acquire the knowledge and skills expected of them. Any factor that interferes with pupil learning not only undermines the goals of education but also hampers the growth and development of the children. For this reason, there is a need to identify the causes of pupil drop-outs in primary schools in Kenya.

This paper reports on the following objectives:

1. To determine the causes pupils' dropout rate by grade and gender in primary school in Nandi North District
2. To determine strategies of reducing the dropout of primary school pupils by grade and gender in Nandi North District

3. Review of Related Literature

3.1 Factors that Influence Wastage

Ouma *et al.* (2002) say that according to 1998 data, 61% of Standard Six pupils had repeated at least once and 23% had repeated twice or more. The authors also note that while repetition is against government policy, it is actively encouraged at school and districts due to the publication of league tables based on mean scores in the KCPE. They also note that poor attendance leads to increased repetition and dropouts. Attendance rates are affected by health factors including the impact of HIV/AIDS and other diseases as well as the inability to pay school levies. The HIV/AIDS pandemic does also affect school attendance and participation in the sense that it has left many children orphaned. Those who are orphaned eventually drop out of school due to inability to raise levies charged in school. A study by Juma (2003) in Vihiga District confirms this. The researcher found out that the HIV/AIDS incidence had led to many children being orphaned. There being no one to pay their fees, they eventually drop out. Another interesting finding from the study was that up to 82% of the drop-outs came from large families thus suggesting that the size of family is also important in determining a child's success in school. Many other reasons have been advanced to explain high drop-out and repeater rates. First among these is the reluctance of many parents to educate girls when faced with a choice between educating them and educating their brothers (Republic of Kenya, 1976). This view is also supported by the findings in a recent survey in Kenya. When parents were asked what they would do if they had to make a choice about who stayed in school on cost

grounds, 58% indicated that they would withdraw a daughter and 27% said they would withdraw sons (UNDP, 1999). UNICEF (1992a) also indicates that although cost affects the schooling of boys and girls, sons often benefit from a selection decision. This attitude is partly influenced by the traditions of patrilineal family systems in which the girls will eventually leave their parent's home to be married. To many parents therefore educating a boy is a better investment than educating a girl.

Another factor relating to the drop-out of girls from school is pregnancy. In 1994, the Ministry of Education allowed girls to continue with education after dropping out of school due to early pregnancies (Republic of Kenya, 1999a). With their re-entry participation rates were meant to increase. However, Siringi (2002) indicates that this problem still persists. Reporting on a study carried out on Girl education in Wajir and Mandera Districts in Kenya, he said that girls drop out at the ages of 12-13 for early marriages to wealthy men, because their parents fear that if they get old they may not get husbands.

The Republic of Kenya (1999b) outlines other constraints faced by girls that explain their high dropout and repetition rates. These factors include socio-cultural practices such as early marriages and initiation rites often aggravated by weak counselling services due to lack of training for teacher counsellors. In addition to these are factors such as poor teaching and learning environment, which leads to lack of motivation, teacher's attitude and behaviour, and teaching practices that disadvantage girls. There is also the high demand for girls' labour which increases the opportunity cost of sending them to school and gender stereotyping in textbooks and other educational materials, which limit girls' expectations and reinforces negative self-perceptions.

Siringi (2002) points out other factors influencing wastage among girls namely: the parents' negative attitude towards the education of girls which they consider a waste of time and resources, the lack of role models for girls, and drought, which kills animals and leaves parents unable to pay fees. Girls also lack counselling programmes to assist them and are victims of discrimination in situations where families are poor. They lack facilities and this is often evident in fewer toilets and desks for girls in schools while boys are given preference.

The situation is made worse by a number of non-fee costs which some find difficult to pay; the costs include school uniform, building funds, equipment levy and activity fees. Even in countries where primary education is free, as it is in Kenya today, there remain many costs, for example, registration and exam fees, the costs of transport to school, uniforms and school meals and in-kind payments such as labour provision by parents (Watkins, 2000). Inability to pay these costs can lead to dropouts and wastage.

Another factor that plays a role in pupil drop-out is the poverty of households. Dropping out of school is most common among pupils of low social economic background (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1985). Parents, especially poor parents, continuously withdraw their children from school when faced with increased demand of household income. A study by Okumu (1992), based on girl education in Nairobi, has found that economic constraints have had the most devastating impact on girl participation in education. This is because parents prefer to limit their limited financial resources to boys' education which they believed fetched more returns. Muganda (1997) has reported a similar situation in her study of the effects of dropping out of secondary schools among girls in Shinyalu, Kakamega District. In her study, she found out that the lack of fees accounted for 90% of the dropouts from secondary school. Those who dropped out were mainly found among the poor families. The researcher also found out that although the parents believe in equal access to educational opportunities regardless of gender, the participation of girls lagged behind that of boys. Juma (2003) has also found out that poverty in the households had led to some dropping out to engage in petty trade to supplement family income.

A study carried out by Olweya (1996) in Homa Bay District on education among girls in secondary schools found out that the factors that led to drop-outs include adolescent pregnancy, inability to pay fees and other funds, and the need for girls labour at home. These findings confirm the UNICEF (1992b) report, which states that drop-outs result from economic, social, cultural, and pedagogical factors, including inability to pay fees, lack of interest in schooling, poor health and cultural practices, pregnancies and early marriages.

In a study by Mulwa (1998) on the causes of pupil absenteeism and dropping out of primary schools in the arid and semi-arid areas, conducted in Keiyo District, a different set of causes were identified. These are: the poor relationship between teachers and pupils, lack of motivation of pupils, lack of food at home, chronic sickness and medical problems, physically marked deviations among the pupils such as height and age, involvement in casual employment to meet basic needs and long distances between schools and homes. In these findings, the most important of them all could be the identification of the role teachers play in influencing attendance and participation. Based on the findings of the study, therefore, the researcher was of the opinion that teachers should be trained in establishing good working relationships between themselves and the pupils.

There exists a correlation between quality and relevance of education and the completion rates. Reid (1987) says that any meaningful curriculum, irrespective of subject content, has to be a coherent structure, be relevant, well planned, well taught, and challenging. When it is not, the results are dissatisfaction, apathy, rejection and in some cases absenteeism. In Kenya, concern continues to be raised in the failure of the education system to satisfactorily inculcate a modern scientific culture and to imbue learners with desirable social skills and values.

This is attributed to inadequacies in the provision and maintenance of essential physical facilities, instructional and human resource capacities and a broad and inflexible curriculum mainly assessed through exams, which demands memorization of facts at the expense of development of high order cognitive skills such as reasoning and problem solving (Republic of Kenya, 1999a).

Watkins (2000) sums up aptly the existing conditions of quality in developing countries:

Children are frequently taught in overcrowded class rooms by unqualified and unmotivated teachers, who are poorly paid and lack support. Teacher absenteeism is widespread, eroding public confidence in the value of education. Learning is further constrained by dilapidated schools, inadequate facilities, limited supply of learning materials, weak curricula, gender bias and instructional methods which inhibit rather than nourish the potential of children (p. 103).

Kyungu (2002) echoes this when he says that the quality of teaching and learning is often low with poorly trained teachers, and a very passive approach to teaching. This could have affected the completion rates and hence wastage. Ngau (1991) observes that retention in schools can be greatly enhanced if the quality of instruction is stepped up and the curriculum made relevant.

The literature so far reviewed indicates that wastage is a big problem in the education systems. This wastage affects the internal efficiency of education systems. It should therefore be curbed to ensure a maximum utilization of resources that go into education. The various studies cited above found out the causes of wastage. However, as Ngware (1994), UNICEF (1992a), and Rono (1990) say, the factors responsible for primary school wastage vary with gender, geographical region, country and school. What this implies is that the findings from previous studies do not necessarily apply to North Nandi District. There is a need therefore to conduct research in North Nandi District. Muganda (1997) encourages researchers to do this kind of research when she says that studies on drop-outs have only covered a few parts of the country.

Kirui (1982) conducted a research in Nandi based on the factors that influenced increased repetition in the district. Some of his findings were that more boys dropped out at the lower primary than girls and that absenteeism, pregnancy and early marriages affected the participation of girls. There is need to find out whether these findings still hold even after the district has been further subdivided into two. The research in which this paper is based also intended to widen the scope to include factors related to dropouts to give a detailed picture of wastage in Nandi North District.

3.2 Drop-out as an Aspect of Wastage

The phenomenon of wastage remains a big challenge. Early drop-outs in particular relapse into illiteracy thus frustrating educational goals (Republic of Kenya, 1993). Dropping out is a multiple tragedy. This is because leaving school not only increases educational costs, but also leads to a waste of human resources, teachers' and students' time.

A study by UNESCO (1998) reveals that while children in more developed countries and in Arab states move from one grade to another without a marked decrease in the number in the cohorts, the problem of loss of pupils in the cohorts is worse in the less developed countries, southern Asia and Sub Saharan Africa. Another study by UNICEF (1998) revealed that drop-out rates are highest in regions with lowest average incomes and lowest enrolment rates. In south Asia, for example, 40% drop out before completing primary school; in Africa 26% drop out; in South Asia up to 22% of the pupils drop out; in the Middle East 7%, in East Asia 6% and in the developed countries up to 2% of the pupils drop out.

Africa has been relatively good at getting children into primary school, but poor at inducing them to complete their primary education. This problem of drop-outs affects many African countries. They spend large amounts of money teaching children who do not stay in school long enough to acquire any qualification. In a study by Oxfam (Watkins, 2000), for example, it was discovered that fewer than one third of the boys and one tenth of the girls aged between 6 and 11 start school and one quarter of those who do start drop out during the first two grades. Girls are more likely to drop out in early stages than the boys are. The average time spent in school by those who drop out is 2.7 years. In Mozambique, the situation was found to be even worse because fewer than half of those who enter grade one reach grade five.

This situation seems to envelop other parts of Africa. For example, a progress report on Africa by Mingat *et al.* (2001) says that in Senegal 65% of each age cohort enters grade 1 and 40% of the entrants reach the end of the cycle, whereas in Chad the figures are 83% and 19% respectively.

4. Methodology

The study was carried out in Nandi North District, a district carved out from the former Nandi District in 2002. The District has very rich soil and receives adequate amounts of rainfall throughout the year. Because of this, the farmers in the District grow a wide range of crops: maize, tea, potatoes, wheat, tomatoes, beans and many more. They also engage in dairy farming. What this means for education is that this is a district that has adequate

resources to invest in education. Largely, it has managed to do that. These resources are however not efficiently used. Drop-out rates are still high, according to the district's education office.

This study adopted the ex-post facto research design. Ex-post facto design investigates plausible cause and effect relationships by observing an existing condition or state of affairs and searching back in time for plausible causal factors (Cohen & Manion, 1994). In this type of research, the researcher is in no position to manipulate the variables because their manifestations have already occurred.

The study population consisted of all the grade eight pupils of the 286 public primary schools in Nandi North district. The 286 public schools are spread over six administrative divisions: Emgwen, Kibiyet, Kapsabet, Kilibwoni, Kipkaren and Kosirai Divisions. The grade eight students were chosen because they were at the terminal stage and thus could give the required information. These schools have a total of 6322 grade eight students, 2569 class teachers and 286 head teachers. The six AEOs in charge of the schools in the administration divisions also formed part of the population. Stratified random sampling technique was used by the authors. The six divisions formed the basis of stratification. A proportionate allocation of the sampling fraction was used to determine the number of units to be drawn from each stratum. In this way, the authors drew a sample of 1970 students, 769 class teachers, which represented 30% of the population. All the 86 head teachers from 86 schools and the six AEOs formed the sample. The authors expected to get the necessary information from these categories of people that would facilitate a generalization of findings to the whole District.

For data collection, the study used questionnaires and interviews as the instruments. The study used structured questionnaires with closed form and open form questions to collect data from head teachers, students of class 8 and all class teachers in the schools in the sample. In the analysis of data, coding was done for responses to the closed form questions with, for example, "Yes" answers coded "1" and "No" answers coded "2". This data was tabulated and analyzed to yield frequencies and percentages. Responses to open form questions, requiring respondents to cite factors responsible for wastage and solutions were recorded word for word. Similar answers were tallied to yield frequencies and percentages. Cohort Analysis procedures were used to calculate repeater rates, dropout rates, survival rates, and wastage rates. Calculations were done for the coefficient of efficiency to determine the level of efficiency of the school systems in Nandi North District.

5. Findings

The factors causing pupil drop-outs are presented and discussed here. These are a product of the information received from the head teachers', class teachers' and pupils', questionnaire and the responses from the interviews with the Area Education Officers. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe this data.

5.1 Information from Head Teachers

Table 1 shows the head teacher's responses on why boys in their schools drop out. Of the 83 who responded, 32(18.6 %) of them thought that the factor that influences drop-out most among the boys was the need to look for work. This was followed by the effect of traditional practices like circumcision, a factor cited by 22(12.79 %) of the respondents. Many boys who were circumcised found it difficult to take instructions from female teachers because they were now men in the community where men perceive women as less important than they were. This led to serious indiscipline and the eventual dropping out. The influence from peers was cited as a factor that influenced drop-outs by 21(12.2 %) of the respondents, poor parental care and negligence was seen as a factor by 20 (11.62 %) of the respondents. The other important contributory factors cited included indiscipline, a feeling by the students that they were over age, and lack of money for uniform.

Table 1: Reasons for Boys Dropping Out

Reason	Frequency	%
Influence from peers	21	12.2
Traditional and cultural practices	22	12.79
Poor parental care	20	11.62
Too old for class	14	8.13
To work	32	18.6
Indiscipline	16	9.36
Use of drugs	5	2.90
Lack of motivation	6	3.48
Claimed school too strict	6	3.48
Absenteeism	7	4.06
Instability at home	6	3.48
Lack of money for uniform	10	5.81
Death of parents	7	4.06
Total	172	100

Source: Responses from sample

Table 2 on the other hand shows the findings on drop-outs among girls. It emerged that 48 (26.9 %), of the 83 respondents thought that pregnancy was an influencing factor. This was followed by the need for the girls to work which was cited as a factor by 23 (12.92 %) of the respondents. Lack of money for uniform was cited by 20 (11.23 %), influence from peers by 12 (6.74 %), and parental negligence by 11 (6.17 %) of the respondents. Early marriages, indiscipline, poor performance, the fear of harsh teachers, lack of motivation to read, the death of parents and absenteeism were the other factors thought to influence dropout though to a lesser degree.

Table 2: Reasons for Girls Dropping Out

Reason	Frequency	%
Influence from peers	12	6.74
Pregnancy	48	26.9
Poor parental care	11	6.17
Too old for class	7	3.93
To work	23	12.92
Indiscipline	10	5.61
Early marriage	10	5.61
Lack of motivation	5	2.80
Claimed school too strict	6	3.37
Absenteeism	5	2.80
Instability at home	6	3.37
Lack of money for uniform	20	11.23
Death of parents	5	2.80
Poor performance	6	3.37
Harsh teachers	4	2.24
Total	178	100

Source: Responses from sample

Figure 1 shows the responses by the head teachers when asked what they thought could be done to reduce dropouts in schools. In response, 32 (38.5%) of them thought that parents needed to be sensitized on the rights of children, 31 (37.3%) thought that parents needed to be sensitized on the importance of educating their children, 24 (28.9%) thought that guidance and counselling should be strengthened in schools, 16 (19.2%) thought that the provincial administration should be involved in ensuring that those who dropped out were taken back to school, 15(18.0%) felt that dropping out could be curbed if programs to provide food in schools were introduced to benefit all schools. Other suggestions floated were the eradication of child labour and a thorough enforcement of this policy, the recruitment of enough teachers, the creation of conducive teaching and learning environments in schools – which could be achieved by constantly in-servicing teachers on the latest skills on handling school pupils, the improvement of teaching approaches, and providing pupils with role models.

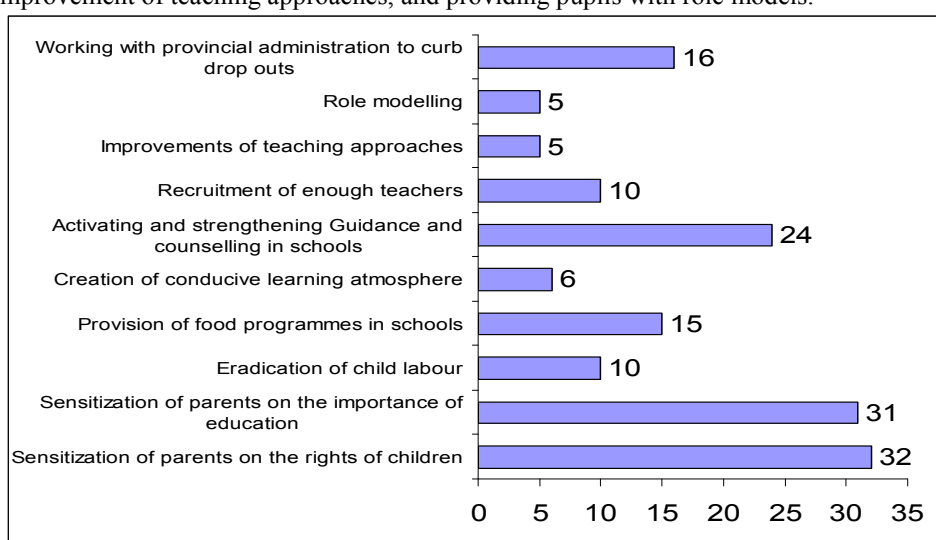


Figure 1: Solutions for Dropping out

Source: Responses from sample

5.2 Information from Teachers

These class teachers were told to look at their 2006 records and detail what it was that made pupils to drop out of their classes during the year. Table 3 shows their responses. From the table, it could be seen that pregnancy accounted for the largest number of drop-outs among the girls, affecting 35.2% of them. The negligence of parents accounted for 8.5%, and the need to look for work accounted 7.1% of the drop-outs.

Among the boys, the feeling that they were overage influenced 15% of the drop-outs. This was followed by the need to look for work which influenced 13.7 % and peer influence which accounted for 12.4% among others.

Table 3: Reasons for Students Dropping Out of primary schools

Factor	No. of Boys	Percentage	No. of Girls	Percentage
Poor performance	81	9.9	27	3.5
Lack uniform	48	5.9	38	5.0
Separation of parents	16	2.0	11	1.4
Take care of siblings	27	3.3	32	4.2
Pregnancy			268	35.2
Sickness	27	3.3	32	4.2
Lack of levies	75	9.1	54	7.1
Repetition	16	2.0	2	0.3
Peer influence	102	12.4	38	5.0
Marriage	6	0.7	54	7.1
Look for work	112	13.7	54	7.1
Severe indiscipline	75	9.1	16	2.1
Overage	123	15.0	59	7.8
Chronic Absenteeism	48	5.9	11	1.4
Negligent parents	64	7.8	65	8.5
Total	820	100	761	100

Source: Responses from sample

5.3 Solutions for Drop-outs

The figures below show results on the possible solutions to drop-outs from school as suggested by the head teachers and the teachers.

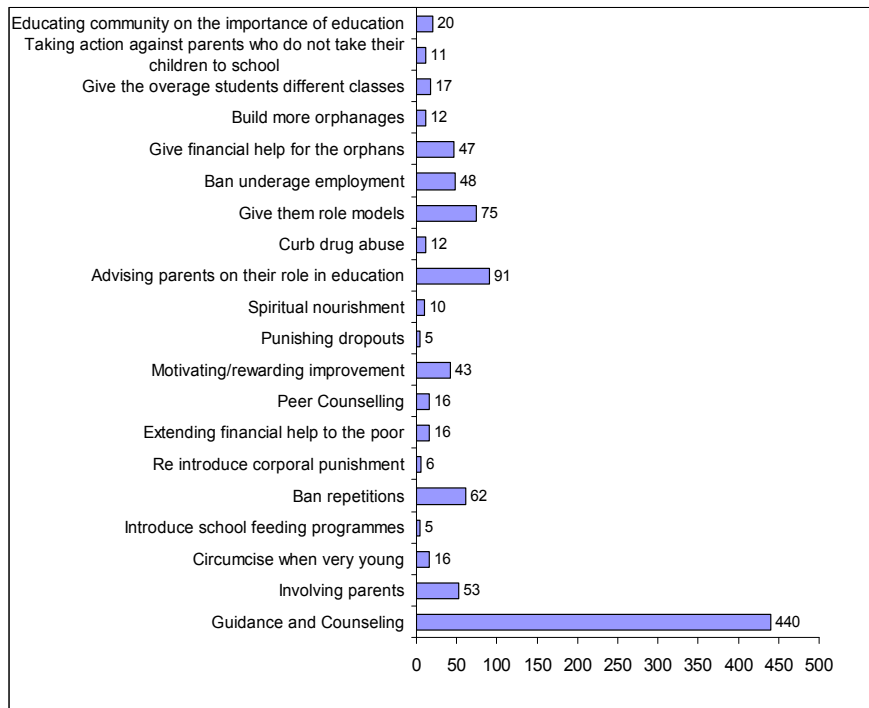


Fig 2: Solutions for dropping out for boys
 Source: Responses from sample

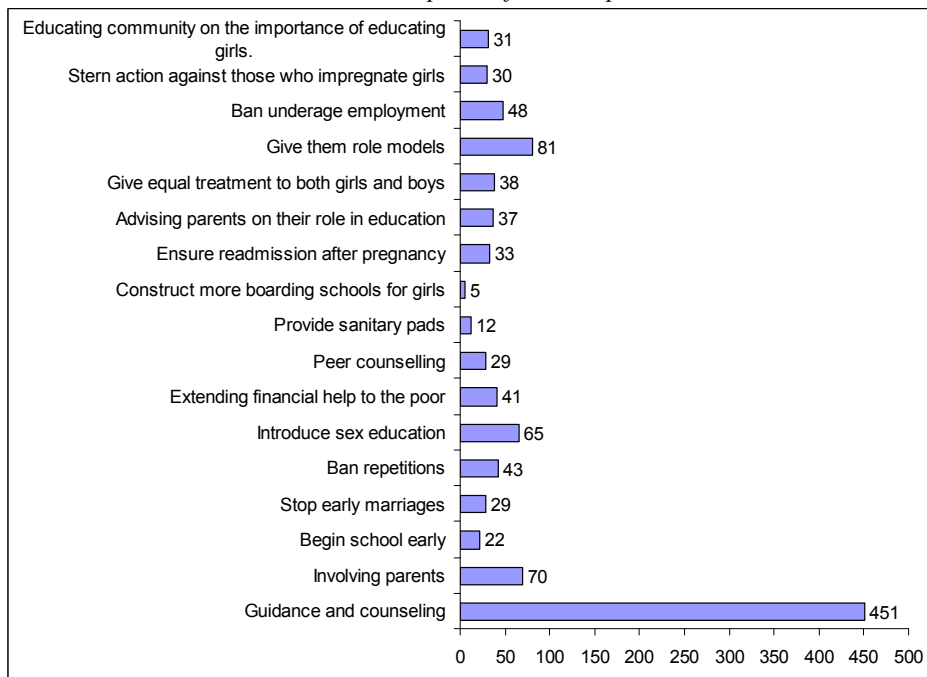


Fig 3: Solutions for drop out for girls
 Source: Responses from sample

From the responses, in Figure 2 and Figure 3, it is clear that there were some differences in perceptions on possible solutions to the problem of dropping out between the teachers and the heads of their schools. While the head teachers thought that the most important remedies would be to advise parents on the rights of children and on the importance of education, teachers overwhelmingly suggested that providing guidance and counselling would be the most important tool for dealing with this phenomenon. This should be done both in schools by teachers and at home by parents. The teachers also indicated a stronger inclination towards the use of role models than the heads of institutions. In addition to the solutions suggested earlier by the head teachers, teachers said that banning repetitions, introducing sex education and extending financial help to those unable to pay the

levies demanded for in schools and to buy school uniform, like the orphans, would also significantly curb this problem.

5.4 Information from Students

The authors also wished to get information from the students on their family size and to know whether they had siblings who had dropped out of school. Fig 4 indicates the responses of the learners. It can be read from the figure that the smaller the family size, the less likely it was to have children who dropped out of school. Among children with one or two siblings, there was a 4.7% chance of having a sibling drop out of school compared with a 15.4% chance if they came from larger families with seven or more children.

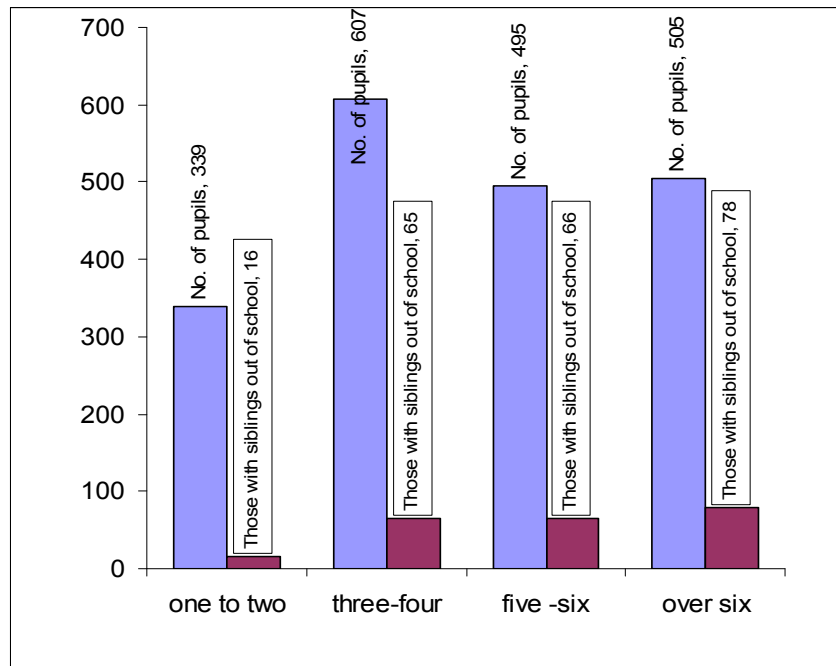


Fig 4: Relationship between family size and drop out

Source: Responses from sample

When asked to explain why their siblings had dropped out, the responses they gave were as shown in Table 4. The Table shows that 24.9% of their siblings were forced out of the school system because of the poverty of their parents and thus their inability to pay for all that they wanted in order to remain in school. A further 17.6% of them left school because they did not want to repeat a class and 14.5% of them failed their examinations and could not continue to the next level and so on.

Table 4: Reasons Why Siblings Dropped Out

Reasons	Number	Percentage
They didn't want to be in school	18	4.1
Did not want to repeat class	78	17.6
Parents too poor to send them to school	110	24.9
Failed their exams and could not continue to the next level	64	14.5
Became pregnant	27	6.1
Were married off	30	6.8
Felt too old to be in school	21	4.8
Stopped schooling to look for a job	45	10.2
Came home to help with domestic work	19	4.3
Were undisciplined	22	5.0
Too sick to be in school	8	1.8
Total	442	100

Source: Responses from sample

5.6 Information from Assistant Education Officers (AEOs)

The study involved six AEOs in charge of the six administrative divisions that form the district, and from whom the sample was drawn. The interviews took place after the administration of questionnaires to the students, teachers and head teachers. The authors sought to know from them how serious they perceived the problem of wastage to be in their divisions. They all shared the view that there was wastage in their areas of jurisdiction, and that the problem was significant enough to warrant attention. It however emerged that the AEOs did not quite have exact figures of repetitions and dropouts in their divisions and were thus unable to provide these numbers to the researcher.

The authors also sought to know from them the reasons for drop-outs in their divisions. Their responses echoed those of the teachers and head teachers detailed above. Poverty among the people was the leading cause for it made parents unable to provide uniform and other school levies and was also responsible for making pupils drop out of school to look for work in order to supplement family income. They also cited teenage pregnancy, poor performance in school, absenteeism, indiscipline among the pupils, the negligence of parents, and the influence from peers as the other factors that influence wastage.

When asked what could be done to reduce dropping out, they said that empowering people economically would help. Also, the training of guidance and counselling teachers to equip them to deal with the needs of pupils should be expanded and the parents should be educated on their roles in the education of their children and in guiding them. Other possible solutions include the introduction of peer counselling groups in schools, banning underage employment and punishing those who employ young children.

Dropping out is another face of wastage. There are many factors that contribute to drop-outs in Nandi North District. Among girls, teenage pregnancies and early marriages still account for a large number of dropouts in the study confirming Siringi (2002) and Olweya's (1996) assertion that this problem still plagues primary school education. This problem is further aggravated by the lack of trained teacher counsellors and therefore, a poor provision of weak counselling services. Poverty in households also influences dropping out in the District confirming earlier findings by Kirui (1992) and Juma (2003). This is because even with the provision of free primary education, there are other non fee costs of education that many parents cannot pay such as the costs of uniform and exam levies. Failure to pay these costs may force a pupil out of school. Also, poverty explains the huge numbers of students who leave school to look for work in the district. Other factors shown by the study to influence drop-out include influence from peers, parental negligence, indiscipline, chronic absenteeism, traditional and cultural practices, militancy of teachers, the death of parents, repetition, chronic sickness, lack of motivation for schooling and instability at home. Family size too influences dropouts as seen in Table 4 which indicates greater likelihood of dropping out of school, the greater the family size.

5.7 Students' Dropout Rate by Grade and Gender

The Grade Drop-out Rate (GDR) is an important indicator of internal efficiency. Grade Drop-out rate is calculated using the formula:

$$\frac{N_t^k - [(N_{t+1}^{k+1} - R_{t+2}^{k+2}) + R_{t+1}^k]}{N_t^k}$$

Where:

N stands for number enrolled in a grade

k stands for grade

t stands for year

R stands for number of repeaters

Therefore, using information in Table 5 for grade 1, the GDR for boys would thus be calculated as follows:

$$\frac{1640 - [(1575 - 124) + 147]}{1640} = 0.026$$

Therefore, using information in Table 5, for grade 1, the GDR for boys would thus be calculated as follows:

The same calculation could be used to get the GDR per grade and gender showing the figures summarised in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Drop-out rates by Grade and Gender

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Dropout Rate Boys	2.6%	3.1%	3.3%	2.9%	2.6%	4.0%	3.05%	1.8%
Dropout Rate Girls	5.0%	6.0%	1.6%	3.9%	5.1%	5.8%	3.21%	2.2%
Dropout Rate Boys and Girls	3.8%	4.5%	2.5%	3.4%	3.8%	4.9%	3.1%	2.0%

Source: Responses from sample

It can be seen from this table that the grade drop-out rate is highest at grade six for boys (4.0%) and lowest at grade eight (1.8%). For the girls it is highest at the second grade (6.0%) and the lowest in grade three.

6. Conclusion

Several factors influence pupil drop-out Nandi North District. These factors can be found in the home, in learners, in the schools and also in the implementation of the curriculum. Much should be done in this District to ensure that learners not only remain in school but that they go through the cycle in the least possible time.

Dropping out is a face of wastage. Among girls, teenage pregnancies and early marriages still account for a large number of dropouts in the study. This is further aggravated by the lack of trained teacher counsellors and therefore, a poor provision of weak counselling services. Poverty in households also influences dropping out. This is because even with the provision of free primary education, there are other non fee costs of education that many parents cannot pay such as the costs of uniform and exam levies. Failure to pay these costs may force a pupil out of school. Also, poverty explains the huge numbers of students who leave school to look for work in the district. Other factors shown by the study to influence drop-out include influence from peers, parental negligence, indiscipline, chronic absenteeism, traditional and cultural practices, militancy of teachers, the death of parents, repetition, chronic sickness, lack of motivation for schooling and instability at home. Family size too influences dropouts: the bigger the family size, the greater the likelihood of dropping out of school.

7. Recommendations

From the study findings and the conclusions drawn above, the following recommendations are made to help curb the problem of wastage through drop-outs in schools:

1. While the introduction of free primary education has reduced the burden of the cost of education on parents, levies such as exam fees and the cost of uniform still remains a burden to poor parents. The government should still explore means of alleviating these costs.
2. There is need to introduce stiff penalties for anyone who impregnates the primary school girls to curb dropouts that result from this vice.
3. There is need to sensitize parents on their role in the education of their children and on the rights of children to alleviate the problem of dropping out due to the apathy of the parents towards the children's education and thus negligence.
4. Parents and teachers should be sensitized on the need to actively participate in educating pupils about their sexuality in order to curb teenage pregnancy.

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