ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Girls' participation in formal education: a case of Maasai pastoralists in Tanzania

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Abstract

The study explores the participation of girls in primary education among the pastoralist community of Tanzania, and the way formal education facilitates the creation of the capabilities girls value. It specifically explores people's views on girls' education, the environments in which girls participate in education and the value girls attach to formal education in creating the capabilities they value. The study adopts the ethnographic approach to studying people's views in their natural settings. Capability approach underpins the theoretical framework adopted to guide the discussion of the study findings. Thirty participants were recruited in the study. The participants were selected using purposive and opportunistic sampling procedures. Data were collected using ethnographic interviews and participant observation, and they were analysed using thematic analysis. In this study, findings reveal that there are both supporting and opposing views regarding girls' education among members of the Maasai community. It also indicates that girls value the formal education; but, they are prevented by their home and school environments. Distance to and from school also limits girls' participation in education. The study concludes that efforts to empower marginalised Maasai girls and women through education are not enough. Thus, more community sensitisation about the importance of girls' education is required. In addition, concerted effort and dedication to the provision of education are needed to address the challenges faced by girls in and outside the school environments.

Keywords Girls · Maasai · Pastoralists · Formal education · Participation · Opportunities

1 Introduction

Reaching the marginalised groups with education provision has been recognised as an urgent global concern (UNESCO, 2010). Such concern is mainly based on the recognition of education as an important instrument for social change and a pathway towards achieving well-being for the marginalised people. Also, education widens people's horizons and freedom of choice. Besides, it increases beneficiaries' confidence. This eventually promotes their participation

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in the social, political and economic spheres in their societies (Walker, 2006). The agency of the matter is also based on the challenge faced by the current competitive global economy, as the marginalised people are deprived of their opportunities for education, which would otherwise promote their talents and opportunities for innovation and economic growth (UNESCO, 2010).

Provision of education for girls and women is fundamental for any country's development. That is why the World Education for All (EFA) declaration clearly stipulates that all boys and girls should acquire basic education without any kind of discrimination based on gender, language, location, socio-economic status or any other form of discrimination (World Decllerations for Education for ALL, 1990). Nonetheless, some groups still experience various forms of discrimination based on gender, disability, location and language. In most cases, these groups are over-represented by learners that are excluded and under-addressed in policy agendas. Although it was anticipated that by 2015 all children including girls and children in difficult circumstances and those from ethnic minorities would have access to formal education of good quality, millions of children particularly from the marginalised and from indigenous communities are still out of school (UNESCO, 2016). Moreover, it is estimated that there are about 21.8 million pastoralist children who are out of school worldwide (Carr-Hill, 2012). According to UNESCO (2018a, b, p 7) reports, there are 264 million children and youth who are not attending school. More critically, there is a persistent disparity on access, participation and learning outcomes, particularly for the most vulnerable groups and minorities. As such, the post-2015 agenda such as Agenda 2030 is, therefore, committed to help these groups, specifically by focusing on nations and international commitments and accountability. This would help to achieve the learning, equity and equality, quality education, skills development and the attainment of gender equality (UNESCO, 2018a, b).

The marginalisation of pastoralist societies in particular has been reported in many countries around the world, for example, India (Dyer, 2006; Sharma, 2011), Kenya (Sifuna, 2005), Namibia (Hailombe, 2011) and Botswana (Pansiri, 2008). UNESCO (2016) specifically reports that children from the marginalised communities are still denied of their right to education, and gender gap persists. Girls and women among pastoralist societies are much more marginalised than boys and men (Raymond, 2017). Women and girls from this group face double marginalisation. That is, they are marginalised like other girls and women in mainstream society, and at the same time they are marginalised as members of marginalised pastoralist communities. Essentially, this situation promotes discrimination against girls and women within and outside pastoralist communities (Carr-Hill, 2005; Kratli, 2001). Girls and women have continually been under-represented in social service provision including education, as gender barriers have constrained many girls from enrolling in schools (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2007; Raymond, 2009). Consequently, girls have experienced limited chances of acquiring formal education and are reported to have high rates of illiteracy, low enrolment rates and retention, and, most critically, the completion rates at all levels of education are lower than boys.

Tanzania's dominant pastoralist community is Maasai. This study was based on Monduli, a district where most members of Maasai population pursue traditional pastoralist activities. It is estimated that in 2009, the district enrolled only 49.6% of primary school-aged girls (URT, 2009), and in 2011, the district's total Net Enrolment Rate (NER) was 78%, where boys' enrolment was higher than girls' (URT, 2013). In Monduli District, for example, beside the low general enrolment rate, boys' enrolment rate was higher than girls' (Raymond, 2015). Again, despite the increase in the number of schools and the general enrolment trend, girls' participation in education has not been changed yet (URT, 2011, 2013). Furthermore, although the launch of the Tanzania's Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP, 2001,

2006) in 2002 was successful in most parts of Tanzania (Bray, 2003; Olengaire, 2009), many pastoralist children in Tanzania are still out of the school system, and the problem of girls' participation in education continues to persist (Kariuki and Puja, 2006; Olengaire, 2009; UNICEF, 2010). Only a quarter of school-aged children in the district have access to school, and, of this quarter, there existed fewer girls than boys (URT, 2011, 2013). The transition of girls to higher classes is always low, and transition to secondary education is worse (Temba et al., 2013).

A few studies were conducted on pastoralist communities in Tanzania concerning the provision of primary education, focusing on access, participation and representation of communities (Carr-Hill, 2005; Mbogoma, 2005; Ndagala, 2004; Raymond, 2009; Shao, 2010). Yet, little is known about the problems associated with the provision of formal education, particularly for Maasai girls. Raymond (2015) reports on the community's perspective regarding girls' education, but the study did not specifically explore on the girls' participation in education in Monduli District. The present study, therefore, intends to fill this knowledge gap.

The main goal of the present study is to explore girls' participation in primary education and the way formal education creates (valued) capabilities for girls. Specifically, the study aimed to explore the:

1. Views of the pastoralist community on the provision of education to girls;
2. Environment in which girls participate in education; and,
3. Value girls attach to formal education in creating the capabilities they value.

2 Review of the relevant literature

2.1 Education among pastoralist communities

Gender parity and equality in education constitute a basic human right as well as an important means of achieving other social and economic outcomes (UNESCO, 2012). The conception has currently been a serious concern especially in the international agenda as it is thought to be in line with promoting development and reducing poverty at global and local levels. Nonetheless, although education opportunities have been extended to all children, girls in marginalised rural areas still face many impediments to education as gender inequality continues to exist (UNGEI, 2008; UNESCO, 2018a, b). Gender inequality in the provision of education is a serious problem in most rural communities, including pastoralist communities (Temba et al., 2013). Various studies have attributed such inequality to various reasons most of which are rooted in the individual and social biases against girls. This is associated with unequal power relations between men and women, and they essentially interact with other factors that hamper girls' access to and participation in formal education (Allay, 2008; Raymond, 2009, 2015). Sex of a child still determines the child's access to education in pastoralist societies, including the Maasai. In her anthropological study on the Maasai in Tanzania, Hodgson (2001) observed that parents claim to educate both their sons and daughters; but, in practice, they focus on educating their sons. Warrington and Kiragu (2011) explored aspects of girls' retention in Kajiado schools in Kenya. The study revealed that, despite the lack of freedom that girls faced in several ways, they continued to study because they knew the importance of education in improving their life situation. Furthermore, Mbogoma (2005) in his study discovered that the socio-cultural factors contributed to gender inequality in access to formal education among the agro-pastoralists in Mgandu ward in Manyoni District in Tan-

zania. Likewise, Allay (2008), in her phenomenological examination of Barbaig children's participation in primary education, revealed that along with a generally low participation, the participation of girls was much lower than that of boys and the socio-cultural values of the community were one of the reasons why girls were not in school. In these communities, some parents also considered the provision of education to girls as a loss of investment. This means that girls are not expected to offer support to parents after school since they will end up getting married (Shao, 2010). Raymond (2015) also revealed that, although girls have positive views towards formal education, they are hindered by various socio-cultural and economic factors like girls' circumcision, early marriages and poverty.

2.2 Girls' participation in primary education among pastoralist communities in Tanzania

Primary education in Tanzania is compulsory, and all children regardless of their sex or geographical location are required to access it. Education and Training Policy (ETP) categorically states that primary education is compulsory, and the government will ensure access to pre-primary and primary education for all citizens as a basic right without any form of discrimination (URT, 1995, 2014). The government is also committed to enabling the disadvantaged social and cultural groups of hunter-gatherers, fishermen and pastoralists to receive education (URT, 1995, 2014). PEDPs I and II also aimed to improve both access to and the quality of primary education for all children. Despite these provisions, inequality among children continues to persist, especially between children in rural and urban areas, rich and poor families and those from remote geographical locations (Mlekwa, 1996; Mwengio and Mlekwa, 2003). Children of pastoralists and other mobile communities are the most disadvantaged and marginalised group on access to education. Girls, especially from pastoralist communities, face more challenges than boys (Kariuki and Puja, 2006; Lema et al., 2004; Shao, 2010). Evidence shows that, although the government has made a commendable progress on access to pre-primary and primary education to the majority of Tanzania children, Maasai children are still left behind. It is reported that Maasai pastoralists have the highest illiteracy rate (75%) and the lowest enrolment rate (5%) in formal education, which constitute the lowest rate in the world (TenMe, 2009).

Although it was generally believed that Tanzania has achieved gender parity in primary education and that it was among the successful countries in attaining the Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015 (UNESCO, 2010), more challenges remain for girls in terms of access to and participation in primary education (Magoti, 2016) and for girls in pastoralist communities in particular (Raymond, 2017). Strategies in place have achieved little success in promoting education provision for girls (Shao, 2010; Temba et al., 2013). Boarding schools have been started, but to no avail. For instance, to date, Monduli has a number of boarding schools (Bishop, 2007; Shao, 2010), but the number of girls has always been low. Emusoi centre which was established to provide education for girls from pastoralist and hunter-gatherer societies in Arusha region and to open opportunity for girls to participate in formal education is located in Monduli District. However, girls' situations on access to education are still poor and their enrolment has not changed over time (Raymond, 2009; Temba et al., 2013). This essentially presents a serious challenge that girls face in the provision of education in the studied district. Nnaemeka (2004) emphasised that there is a need to understand and analyse situations that girls in pastoralist communities face and the context in which they have to negotiate their situations in the patriarchy system that prevails in these communities.

3 Theoretical foundation of the study

This study adopts the Capability Approach (CA) developed by Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2000). CA is a framework that guides the conceptualisation and evaluation of individual's well-being, inequality, social arrangements, design of policies and proposals about social change in societies (Robeyns, 2003). CA is within the concepts of *Capability, Functioning and Agency* (Sen, 1999). Capability is an opportunity or freedom to achieve what an individual considers valuable. It is a person's opportunity and ability to generate valuable outcomes, taking into account relevant personal characteristics and external factors. It is being or doing what one values or have a reason to value (Sen, 2002; Nussbaum, 2000; Walker and Unterhalter, 2007). *Functioning* is being and doing what one considers valuable. It is a person's freedom to be or do things that contribute to a person's well-being (Sen, 1999; Robeyns, 2003). *Agency* is a person's ability to pursue and realise goals that one values or has a reason to value, the goals that are important for a life an individual wishes to lead (Walker, 2006).

CA emphasises the need to consider what people are able to do and be when we evaluate social policies (Robeyns, 2003; Sen, 2002). It also emphasises that social arrangements should be aimed at expanding people's capabilities. Likewise, CA posits that functionings depend on individual circumstances, the relation a person has with others and social conditions and context (Walker, 2006). That is why Sen (1999) views education as an overarching capability which should expand other capabilities, be it gaining skills, opportunities that these skills offer, or gaining other intrinsically important capabilities such as critical thought, respect and empathy (Sen, 1999). In this way, education stakeholders need to consider what actually influences Maasai girls to participate or not participate in formal education. This is because girls' participation may depend on social, economic and political arrangements of the community and the relative advantage they have in the society. It is reported that participation may be influenced by public policy's formulations and the environment, for example, presence of a gender equity policy in schools (Walker, 2006). The choice of CA was deemed appropriate for the present study because it assisted the researcher in identifying the freedom and lack of freedom of girls within their community, and the associated factors that could facilitate or hinder their participation in education.

4 Research methods

The study employs qualitative approach and ethnographic design. This design is considered appropriate because the study aims mainly to explore the experiences of the community's members regarding the participation of girls in education in their natural settings. For the period of 3 months, the researcher stayed in the field, and she was able to explore the social world of the Maasai community by observing, recording and analysing social structures in their natural settings. Particular attention was paid to the members' social, cultural, familial, political and economic lives in relation to the girls' opportunities to participate in formal education (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1998; Delamont, 2012; Denscombe, 2010). The researcher learned from the people's real-life experiences such as social relations, activities, socio-cultural arrangements, behaviour and perceptions. All of these have influence on people's perceptions on girls' participation in education. The researcher participated in various community activities like fetching water and firewood, cooking, milking, selling goods in the market, all of which were the activities which were carried out by women and girls. She also performed activities which are commonly performed by men and boys such as attending

meetings, participating in rituals (under special permission by the elders) and grazing. This design was useful in discovering the subjective experience and meaning of social actions in the context in which Maasai live, and the way girls' participation in education is interpreted (Creswell, 2009; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Hennink et al., 2011). Purposive and opportunistic sampling procedures were used to select study participants. Using this technique, the researcher purposively selected the groups and then used opportunistic technique to get the sample of thirty participants based on their location, proximity and their willingness to participate in the study. Participants included one traditional leader, sixteen parents (eight mothers and eight fathers), four elders (two males and two females), four school children (two boys and two girls), four out of school children (two boys and two girls) and one educational officer. This was to ensure that views and voices of each population segment are collected. These groups of participants had particular characteristics which enabled the researcher to explore in depth and gain an understanding of the perspectives of the members of pastoralist community with regard to girls' education (Cohen et al., 2011; Ross and Matthew, 2010). Boys were particularly selected because the researcher had a view that they have important views regarding the participation or non-participation of their peers. All participants were, however, selected to support the exploration of the research questions and not to represent the community population (Ross and Matthew, 2010).

Data were collected using participant observation (Angrosino and Perez, 2003; Punch, 2009) and ethnographic interviews (Heyl, 2001; LeCompte and Schensul, 2010). Using observation, the researcher participated in their activities, observing how they do things, their culture and norms, how they relate, regard and interact with one another, their way of division of labour and the general life routines from morning to evening. This method was suitable because it was easy to see things as they actually occur in the participants' really context. It also allowed the researcher to enter a close and prolonged relationship with the Maasai in their everyday lives, which enhanced a better understanding of their beliefs, motivation and behaviour in relation to girls' education than using other approaches (Angrosino and Perez, 2003; Tedlock, 2000). Alongside observations, conversations and ethnographic interviews with participants were conducted to collect their views, stories, experiences and opinions regarding girls' participation in primary education. Ethnographic interviews were guided by unstructured open-ended questions, follow-up questions and probes. Ethnographic interviews were considered relevant because they are good for grasping people's point of view, which is the core of ethnography and for assessing peoples' perceptions, meanings, definition of situations and their construction of reality (Delamont, 2012; Fetterrman, 2010; LeCompte and Schensul, 2010; Punch, 2009).

Thematic analysis was employed to analyse data (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2013). This method was used to analyse stories from the ethnographic interviews and informal conversations, and notes on the observation of participants. This analysis focused on the content of the stories and on identifying, analysing and reporting patterns in the data. Specifically, the study adopted the analysis steps provided from pages 87 to 93 in Braun and Clarke (2006). Data were first transcribed and then translated from Maasai language to Swahili, then from Swahili to English. The translation was done at two levels. At the first level, translation (during conversation) was done from Maa (the Maasai language) to Swahili by the research assistants. This is because most participants do not speak Swahili which is Tanzania's national language, and the researcher does not speak "maa". All data were then, at level two, translated into English. Codes were then manually developed from the data. Similar codes were combined to form major themes, and in some instances, individual codes formed themes. Thematic analysis enabled patterns, themes and accounts of events arising from interviews and other data sources to be identified. Since the study used various categories of participants, thematic

analysis helped and supported the development of a holistic understanding of diverse community members' perspectives on girls' participation in formal education. Various ethical issues were considered, including gaining access to the community and to individual participants, and considerations of the unique Maasai traditions, norms, culture and practices. This is because the researcher does not belong to the Maasai community. Also, she is learned and she physically looks strange in the natives' perspective. The awareness of researcher's appearance and identity and the way they would influence the quality of data collected was highly considered in this context. Informed consent was orally sought throughout the study, and the principles of privacy and confidentiality were maintained during data collection and writing of report. Pseudonames were used throughout the study.

5 Findings and discussion

5.1 People's views on girls' education

The study showed that there were various views regarding girls' education. While some participants did not value or support girls' education, others did agree that all children need to be educated without prejudices of sex preferences.

5.1.1 Fathers' reluctance to educate girls

Through conversations, Maasai fathers were asked about their willingness to educate girls. Their responses revealed that they were profoundly unwilling to educate girl children. Maasai fathers explained that they only believe in educating boys and not girls. Observations and conversations with mothers and girls further revealed fathers' attitudes on girls' education to be negative. Similarly, it was also expressed that pre-arranged marriage among the Maasai is practised to date. It was also revealed through interviews that parents and elders attach girls to marriage and not to engage them in formal education. Majority of the community members did not see the value of educating girls. All fathers who were interviewed believed that girls ought to get married. In this respect, they were required to remain at home to wait to serve for their future husbands and the family. Some fathers openly expressed that they "don't want to educate girls", as expressed below:

> …there is no benefit in educating girls… no reason… by the way in most cases they only bring loss to their families … some parents are poor, and they use all means to educate their daughters but disappointed in the end… (Makaa, male elder)

> …now people are trying to educate us about the importance of educating girls, but we do not want that…we don't want because when a girl is born into a family you find an old man wanting me to give him my daughter… you are disturbed every now and then by different men; so even if you had chosen to educate your daughter, sometimes you lose control and agree with your relatives in order to avoid quarrelling with them… (Menyelayo, a father)

> …the Maasai have not fully accepted girls going to school…a large percentage of the community is still negative about girls' education…..they understand a little about the need for boys' education but with girls there is still a big problem….few people understand why they should educate their daughters….but again the small percentage

of girls who go to school…disappoint other girls and their parents because of what they do… (Kalei, a father)

…When you take your daughter to school, where will you get the cows…we get about ten cows for every girl … for me I don't want to be pretentious…I am telling the truth, we get cows from these girls you see around here….girls in our area are not to be taken to school, because the fathers don't want that… he will lose the cattle…but for the boys it's free…they will study… (Nangipa, a mother)

These expressions present the way some members perceive girls' education as a loss. This means that the value of girls is associated with the household economy. While in the Maasai pastoralist society men would favour family wealth, yet they still do not consider the benefits they could get from educating girls. In this regard, it is stated that many young girls among the Maasai and other societies in Africa are still prone to early marriage (Jensen and Thornton 2003). The above excerpts confirm the belief of the male members in the Maasai community regarding the girl's education, and this may suggest a complex situation that gives little hope for a change in attitude on girls' situation. Such a deep attitude on girls' education promotes the idea that the schooling of girls is unnecessary for most girls, and if a girl is schooled, she cannot be a better wife (Chisamya et al., 2012). Although education allows children and young people to make their own choices about their future, and when marriage is delayed, it helps girls to stay longer in school and become literate (Chisamya et al., 2012). This, however, does not seem to be the case for the Maasai girls.

Experience shows that girls staying in school for a long time are likely to get married at an older age. However, the present study shows that girls get married early, and men still look at girls in terms of economic gain, even when they had identified certain potentials in a girl child that would save the community. This suggests that gendered norms and attitudes persist about how education is unnecessary for girls' lives (DeJaeghere and Lee, 2011). This is in line with Kratli's (2001) findings that for pastoralist parents thinking about formal education for girls are different from that of boys as educating boys is of more value than educating girls. Hailombe (2011) also reports that parents from pastoralist community in Zimbabwe do not send girls to school for fear that they will refuse to follow some of their traditional practices. This has been a serious obstacle to girls' participation in education and has constrained their freedom to achieve their functioning.

Moreover, fathers, as final decision-makers in the family, devalue girl children just like their mothers. Observations revealed that parents and the community view the rights of girls to attend school more negatively than it is for boys. This, indeed, represents that gender inequitable norms and beliefs are not only limiting girls from attending formal education, but also reflect wider perspective about secondary status of women throughout their lives (Chisamya et al., 2012; Raynor, 2008). Kaunga (2005) supports the position that education has helped to expose how women were discriminated within the pastoralist community. But, this was essentially not a case for women in the research area, where women were profoundly discriminated and had no chance to express their views. This implies that the expansion of girls' capabilities was limited by social arrangements and the dominant patriarchal system of their community. Women had no ability to speak; as such, their voices were yet to be heard (Walker, 2005). In addition, the gendered nature of the household and its low economic status meant that girls were not given opportunity to enrol in primary schools. On various occasions, fathers repeatedly expressed that the cost of educating girls was the reason for not educating them. This may be one of the reasons but not the main reason.

It was also noted that, although primary education in Tanzania is claimed to be provided for free, parents still had to pay to cover some costs. Observation, however, showed that fathers exaggerated the aspect of cost, and they used it as an excuse for not sending children to school. This echoes Raynor's (2005) argument that parents may use "costs" as a coded argument against girls' education. The author, further, states that they probably used "costs" to mean "waste", as in watering the neighbour's tree (Raynor, 2005, p. 98).

5.1.2 Fathers' supremacy over girls' education

During interviews, when mothers were asked to give their views on educating girls, it was noted that women had little power over various issues pertaining to girls' education. This promoted low participation of girls' in primary education. It was also observed that there was unequal power relation among men and women. Women were at the bottom end of the hierarchy; as such, it affected their decision on girls' participation in education. During conversations, mothers explained that men do not listen to their advice regarding girls' education. Mothers do not have power to make decisions about educating their daughters, as expressed by some of the mothers below:

> …If we, women could have any say in this community no girl could not go to school…if it were not for the orders given by our husbands …all the girls could be educated now…(Mama Yoyo, a mother)

> …I have no control over this issue (a girl being stopped from going to school)… even though I feel so bad or maybe very angry about the issue…I will just have to tolerate this because if the father does not want her to go to school… what can I do…that is what he has decided… (Ndito's mother)

> …Ooi mama!…this is another problem (girls' education) you are bringing to us…which of the men you are seeing here will allow a girl to go to school…maybe they will listen to you [researcher] because for us we have failed… (Kerimasi, a mother)

> …they (father and the moran) removed my girl from school saying that they did not have money to pay for the uniform or exercise books…. why didn't the boys lack those things… when my girl was first enrolled in school, they (father and the moran) only bought her one lot of uniform and nothing else. They never allowed me to sell even milk to give her other things….(Nengila, a mother)

Mothers' statements and fieldwork observations illustrate the way mothers have no power in various issues in the community. Among other things, they are not able to persuade their husbands to send their daughters to school. Traditionally, women do not make any decisions in the family or in society even if the decision is related to their own well-being. Women therefore cannot make any decision about their daughters' education. As a result, this limits girls' participation in education and the creation of the capabilities they consider valuable. That is the reason why the analysis of the way in which power structures produce social divisions in everyday lives of women was important. This helped in understanding the way decisions about girls' participation in education are made, and the way the low position of women in this society affect girls' education. This supports the argument that understanding women's experiences in daily lives is considered important in developing strategies that will empower women (Tong, 2009).

Moreover, mothers' complaints suggest that the patriarchy system holds strong beliefs in the community and hugely negatively influence on women's lives, in general, and girls' participation in education, in particular. This also has impact on women's agency and freedom to function in their community (Walker, 2005). Mothers' expressions reveal how the patriarchal structure of the community continues to discriminate women, and the way in which this power has rendered women and girls hopeless lives. Male supremacy embedded in community customs, traditions and identity is interconnected, and in most cases it promotes social injustices that are deep rooted against women. Male supremacy still maintains gender inequality in the Maasai community (Mirza, 2009). Women are aware of such domination, and they still believe educating their daughters would be their way out to freedom from injustices. Women voices, however, are yet to be heard. Women were subjected to holding low positions in the local power structure and were not given equal status with men. This echoes the belief that 'subaltern's' (women) are not being listened by men and have continuously been excluded, and because of this they constituted the marginalised group within their community (Spivak, 1990).

5.1.3 Girls' threats to acquiring formal education

During conversation, schoolgirls were asked to explain the challenges they face in acquiring formal education. Interviews with schoolgirls revealed that fathers hindered schoolgirls from enrolling and did not support them in school. They explained that fathers threatened them not to enrol to school as way of discouraging them from participating in education. The girls further explained that their mothers were also threatened and even divorced when they supported girls' education. Nonetheless, mothers continued to encourage and support their daughters. Such girls appreciated that their mothers' support encouraged them to continue with their schooling. The following were the expression from the girls who were interviewed:

…my father used to tell me that if I step in my feet at school, he would chop off my head…I was afraid … I stopped schooling… (Teresia, schoolgirl)

…my father used to force me to take care of goats and sheep….he never wanted me to study, one day he wanted to kill me … I ran to school… I managed to be enrolled here….my father became very angry…I remember my mother was beaten so much on that day…but she kept on encouraging me to continue studying… (Tumaini, schoolgirl)

…my father used to tell me that the girls who go to school will die ….he said my mother and I would die…he divorced my mother because I continued to go to school and now we are just living with our mother…I have never seen him since then. It is only my mother who supports me with school needs…(Teresia, schoolgirl)

….I like studying but I have been stopped by my father …he used to beat me very badly… yet I continued studying….there was a time I was being beaten daily, but I did not stop going to school…. I was very scared when he threatened to kill me if I put my foot in the school again. From then I stopped going to school… (Ndito 2, Out-*of-school girl*)

Mothers' testimony in Sect. 5.1.2, the girl's expressions in Sect. 5.1.3 and the researcher's personal observations demonstrate the way in which mothers had no power over anything in the community. Girls statements show how fathers' dominance over women and girls deeply affects their daily lives and how mothers' and girls' agency is limited. They also show

how unequal power relations and gender discrimination among the Maasai are embedded in everyday lives, and the way they affect their participation in formal education. Mothers were not able to prevent their husbands from marrying off their daughters at a young age or persuading their husbands to send their daughters to school. Traditionally, women in Maasai society do not make any decisions in the family or at societal level. In this respect, women cannot make any decision about their daughters' education. This echoes Lesorogoli (2008) observation that in Samburu community[1] women were unable to challenge the fathers on the issue of marriage or any issue relating to girls' lack of education, even though they wanted their daughters to go to school. This is also evident in the present study, where, as stated previously, fathers' negative mindset hinders girls' participation in formal education. Fathers are normally unwilling to give relief to women by allowing their daughters to participate in formal education. This indicates the control of fathers over women because women and girls in Maasai society have low status and value compared to men. It further implies fathers' determination to maintain status quo. This supports the observation that due to patriarchy, women are viewed as the "other" to male norms, and as such, they systematically remain oppressed and marginalised (Tong, 2009). Women have to shout behind the fathers' backs for the support of outsiders. Depriving girls from participating in formal education is depriving them of the power to question practices that discriminate women and propagate fathers' supremacy.

5.2 Supporting views and the emerging trends

5.2.1 Government and non-governmental organisations' (NGOs) influence

The study also reveals that the interaction between the pastoralist community with various groups outside the Maasai community, either through the cattle business or other means, has influenced the change of attitudes towards girls' education of certain community members. Field observations and in-depth interviews with parents, elders and the education officer revealed that the government's and NGOs' sensitisation about the importance of educating girls is gradually changing the perceptions about girls' education among the Maasai. Participants further explained that the government through its political representatives and district leaders sensitised people about the importance of educating their girl children. They also said that NGOs like the Maasai Women Development Organisation (MWEDO) educate people about the importance of educating girls. MWEDO as the only NGO established in the study village provides scholarships for girls in the village and other areas in Monduli District. One of the fathers explained that:

…the government continues to educate the people about educating our girls, and, regarding parents who are still reluctant to send their daughters to school, the government sometimes takes them by force… the government has power, and, by any means, those children will be taken to school…. Therefore, many people's daughters are now at school…there is also an NGO which educates women and supports girls to go to school. This has changed many of us… if it continues this way; there is a possibility that there will be greater changes by 2015… (Menyelayo, a father)

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[1] Samburu are among the pastoralist tribes located in north central Kenya, they are related to the Maasai because they are all pastoralists, but they are different. They herd cattle, sheep, goats and camels. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samburu_people.

… because of not being educated we lack a lot of things…for example there was a time the NGO took us to a seminar in Makuyuni… there was a mixture of people there…that is, the Maasai and Meeki (Waswahili) (Non-Maasai); so these non-Maasai… only talk in Kiswahili which we could not understand…when something is written on the board …you only see flowers being drawn since you don't understand even a single letter…. …our daughters need to be educated now; we don't live on our own like in the past…we need to be able to live with others….(Naishie, a mother)

The expressions above suggest that community members were able to learn from others what education could do for their daughters' lives. Apart from not being educated, they saw that educated women outside their community were able to support their families and earn better lives for national development. Although some members would still argue that the government and NGOs sensitisation efforts were not enough, they appreciated that it has brought some understanding of the importance of educating girls. From the researcher's field experience, it was understood that the motivation for pastoralist community parents to educate their children is low and much lesser for girls. It was also learned that, when some parents refused to enrol their children to school, they would be forced by their local leaders to send their children to school. Studies in Tanzania show that NGOs like Oxfam and Monduli Pastoralists Development Initiative (MPDI) have made a major contribution in terms of advocacy for girls' education among the pastoralist communities (Bishop, 2007; Temba et al., 2013). The government as the duty bearer in the rights-based approach to education is recognised here (UNICEF, 2007). However, participants criticised the government's approach of using public meetings for such sensitisation, because (sometimes) some people do not take them seriously.

5.2.2 Education as a new hope for poor parents

Education was considered to provide a new hope for poor parents in the community. During social interactions, participants showed that they had some understanding of the contribution of education to alleviate poverty. During interviews, a schoolboy explained poor parents do not have anything to provide for their children's future except giving them formal education. One boy, however, noted that such consideration was only given to boys since in poor families girls were still considered as quick source of income. This was evident to children from poor families who worked very hard in school and succeeded in getting jobs. This, in turn, helped them to buy cows and live a better life more than those who solely depended on the cattle. On this, a schoolboy said:

…In Maasai society, for a family which is poor like mine, parents do not have any cattle…we depend on education; parents send their children to school (boys and girls) and their children really work hard no matter how difficult the environment may be. For a family like mine which has only one parent…we depend on education to run our lives in future…my brother tells me to work very hard…because this will help in my future life… (Tobiko, schoolboy)

The consideration of the use of education as a tool for alleviating poverty is integral to poverty reduction policies in Tanzania (URT, 2007). The boy's statement reflects the poverty that exists in the village. Observations revealed that some people in the community live in an abject poverty. The International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) (2012) noted that most Maasai and other pastoralists in Arusha live in poverty due to climate change, land dispossession and high population growth. This, therefore, compels them to think of an

alternative way to life. Formal education seemed to be thought of as one of the best ways to get rid of poverty. This observation resonates with Warrington and Kiragu (2011) who studied the Kajiado girls and found that, despite the lack of freedom that girls experience in and out of school, they continued struggling to acquire education as a way of climbing out of poverty. This also supports Dyer's (2010) argument that pastoralist families are aware of the potential benefits of formal education, not only for providing them with literacy and numeracy skills, but also for giving them an awareness of the wider world that comes to them through the school curriculum.

5.2.3 Some fathers' changing views

When requested to give their views about what they thought of girls' participation in education, a few male participants supported that girls need to be educated. Older males explained that education for girls was equally important since they could also contribute to the family's well-being. Fathers also presented their views on the way some males motivated their age groups and other community members to ensure girls participated in education. Some fathers started supporting girls' education after they had acquired some awareness of formal education. These fathers said:

> …there is a big advantage for children to go to school…we are trying to educate them both (girls and boys)…and I've just discovered that those children who are not educated are like blind people who cannot see properly even when they are told to go or pass somewhere…they don't see life…and what is in the future… (Seuri, a father)

> …my belief is to let children study, today there is no shortcut in life …we must not lose any more time… we are already behind…I want my people to hear what I am saying, there is no more time to waste…so that in future children who decide to destroy their lives will not blame anyone…and those who prepare their lives well… will cause our society and their families to be respected… (Lemali, a father and traditional leader)

Changes of view of fathers give new impetus to girls' participation in education among the pastoralists. Although only few fathers are of this view (Shao, 2010; Temba et al., 2013), their contribution is commendable. Experience, however, shows that such males always hide their views for fear of being considered to have violated their community's customs. It was noted from the fathers' expressions that male participants who supported girls' education were hesitant and gave a generic response. This tendency is similar to experiences in Bangladesh (Raynor, 2005) and in Mali and Niger (Oxfam, 2009). It is also reported that "bias against girls is produced and reproduced through interaction between the school, family, community and broader socio–cultural, political and economic systems" (Chisamya et al., 2012). Despite their reservations, they were prepared to support girls' participation in primary education. This tendency gives girls hope that the situation will change in the future.

5.3 Environment for provision of education

5.3.1 Girls home learning environment

The best way of analysing gender equality requires a careful analysis of the factors that enable a child to or not attend school be able to participate, understand and engage in learning successfully (Vaughan, 2007). Observations and conversation with participants revealed that

girls had extremely difficult environment for participating in formal education. Observations also showed that the home environment was not conducive to children's learning. The nature of houses and the evening conditions made it difficult for children to learn. The village had no electricity, and many homes did not have any source of light other than torch. Such light is only available when someone has money to buy batteries. Kerosene is expensive, and most families cannot afford. In addition, students who lived far from school get home too tired in such a way that they cannot do self-study. Girls also had a lot of chores to do before it gets dark. This made it very difficult for them to do even homework.

In addition, parents had no time and, in most cases, unable to support their daughters' self-study at home. It was also observed that some parents were unaware of what children learn in school. During conversations, one of the mothers said: …*why should I bother of what the children learn… how shall I know any way…sometimes, I even don't ask them…I don't understand anything… (Mama Yoyo, a mother)*

Being aware of what children learn had implications for the support offered to them. Parents' lack of understanding formal education fails them to support children's learning or even creating the environment at home in which children could learn. This is contrary to the belief that parents' provision of a positive home learning environment is vital for improving children's learning, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Aref, 2011). This practice is opposite to Unterhalter (2007)'s suggestion that parents and community members ought to take active interest in their children's learning and ensure that school learning environment is healthy and safe for children. This made it difficult for children to compete with those in boarding schools or other children in mainstream society where most services are available. Thus, this consequently results into the continued marginalisation of girls and women in the community.

5.3.2 School environment

Availability of schools and school equipment is important for the full participation of students in the learning process. Field observation showed that there was only one primary school in the village. It was further observed that, although school fees were abolished in Tanzania in 2015 (URT, 2014), parents were still responsible for buying uniforms, exercise books and other needs. Observation further revealed that, due to parents' low socio-economic condition, it was difficult for some of them to provide for their children's school needs. This affected girls more than boys. Vavrus and Moshi (2009) specifically point out that, although school fees were abolished in Tanzania, parents were still responsible for some school costs which continued to rise annually. During field work, some children were going to school without exercise books or pens. On various occasions, children were punished and sent back home to collect those requirements from their parents. As a result, when parents were unable to provide the needs, children stayed at home. This made pupils not to attend school for a number of days while others were learning at school. On some occasions, some dropped out of school.

The impact of poverty on girls' participation in education is also recognised by international organisations (UNESCO, 2010). This undermines their self-confidence and lowers their perceived value of education. This situation was similar to the experiences in Ukerewe and Serengeti districts and other villages in Monduli District (Makongo, 2003; Raymond, 2009). This was also in consonance with the abolition of school fees that allowed children to participate in education (Davidson, 2004). Similar observations was noted in Uganda where the government has abolished school fees, but a child's sex and parents' level of education

still determine whether or not children attend school (Dennis and Stahley, 2012). Eliminating school fees is also challenged in Malawi, for not taking into account the opportunity costs parents incur when a working child attends school (Kadzamira and Rose, 2003). In this regard, one can argue that primary education in Tanzania is free, but this is not really a practice. Parents still incur costs for sending children to school. This has resulted in girls' limited access to and participation in primary education, especially in rural areas of the country like this Maasai village.

Field observations also revealed that pupils in schools were required to wear uniforms. It was observed that not all pupils had uniforms and most of them were sent back home to get one. Some children came to school bare footed; some had plastic sandals (popularly known as *yebo–yebo*) while others were wearing sandals made from tyres. Most of the children's uniforms were dirty, worn out and unrepaired. When these students were asked why, some of them said that there was no soap or water to wash the uniforms. Some children were going to school without taking shower, and they were usually punished. Kratli and Dyer (2009) argue that education that requires students to wear a uniform and have regular attendance is a western style of learning adopted by post-colonial governments. This has a greater impact on marginalised children like the Maasai in the studied village. Observing the Maasai in Kenya, Philips and Bhavnagri (2002) argue that teachers ought to understand the pastoralist community environment because children may not behave like those in mainstream society. They may not be able to be clean all the time because of the shortage of water and may fail to attend regularly and that was why teachers need to be compassionate to such children. This denotes a lack of consideration for special challenges facing pastoralist communities in terms of education provision (Carr-Hill and Peart, 2005; Dyer, 2006) and the uncritical transfer of the western education system to developing nations (Crossley and Tikly, 2004).

Regarding safety of girls in school, based on girls' experience acquired through normal conversation and field observations, participating in education in school was safer for girls and would help them escape from forced marriage and other traditional practices. Shao (2010) emphasises that going to school, especially boarding school, rescued some girls from being prone to cultural practices like circumcision and early marriage. Raymond (2017) further explains that, regardless of how much girls gained from school or how they were treated in school, safety was their main concern. Although gender-based violence is still generally considered to be an issue (UNESCO, 2016), and that previous research on gender violence has found that girls' safety is threatened in schools in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa (Dunne et al., 2006; Lesorogoli, 2008; Parkes and Heslop, 2011), girls in the present study were positive about the school environment and the learning process. Indeed, the school could help girls to grow in learning and shaping their personalities. This is opposite to remaining at home where the girl children were essentially being regarded as women.

5.3.3 Distance to and from school

As pointed out earlier, in the area where this study conducted there is only one school in the village. Some pupils were, therefore, compelled to walk for very long distances. Although the researcher could not know the exact size of the village, based on the fieldwork experience and observation, it was estimated that some children walked up to thirty kilometres a day (round trip). Observation revealed that, based on the rural nature of the village, such distances are risky and insecure for girls, hence, hindering some of them from participating in education. During conversation with girls, they explained that some of them were sometimes raped and failed to continue schooling out of shame. Surprisingly, long distances were not mentioned as a problem that hindered girls' acquisition of education, probably because they are used

to walk for a long distance to fetch water and firewood or going to the market. However, observations show that such a distance was difficult for girls to cover. Besides, there were bushes along the way, which were scary for girls, due to the possibility of hungry and fierce snakes and wild animals. Furthermore, during rains, huge valleys are usually filled with water, making it difficult for girls to cross. Although this does not occur frequently and does not only affect girls, when combined with other factors, girls become more vulnerable; hence, this limits their ability to participate in primary education. Kariuki and Puja (2006) have noted a similar thing in Ngorongoro and Kateri (2009) in other parts of Monduli District.

5.4 Value attached to formal education

The study findings reveal that pastoralist community girls value formal education and have high hopes of earning better lives by acquiring it. Interviews with school and out of schoolgirls showed that girls' attitudes, desires and willingness to participate in formal education are based on their experiences, and what they want to achieve in future. These included, *inter alia,* quest for achieving career opportunities such as being nurses, doctors, teachers, better farmers, desire to contribute to family income and as a way to evade from the community customs and traditions. The analysis in this part concurs with Walker's argument that education is a basic capability which affects the development and expansion of other capabilities (2006). The analysis also considers the contribution of education to other life functions, that is, what education can provide for children's life beyond the classroom (Vaughan, 2007). Interviews with other participants revealed that pastoralist community value formal education because they believe it will help girls and other community members secure jobs, earn income and live a better life. Women specifically were of the views that education can help girls support their own lives independent of men and change their own lives and other women lives. One of the participants said:

>…I feel good to be at school because if I pass the examinations I shall be able to go to secondary school… I am studying so that I can get my job which will help me to help my mother…in fact I want to pass well so that I can study more and be able to help my parents and my siblings…..although in this place you find that if you are lucky… the father only allows you to go for primary school but when you finish standard seven…even if you pass he will never allow you to go to secondary school…I hope I will get a chance to continue anyway… (Teresia, a school girl)

>…the education I get I hope will help me get a job …It will help me to get a job which will give me money to live a good life. This education will also help us to educate our people; it will help to change them especially when they will see we have succeeded, live a good life and help our parents to live a good life…. I want to study hard so that I may not live the difficult life like the one that my mother lives…I don't want to get married before I get a job…look at those got married while young, they are not able to support their children…they cannot buy them a tablet… (Tumaini, School girl)

>…when they finish school they will be able to get a job…any job, like becoming a nurse, doctor or a teacher; you know in the past we did not know the meaning of going to school or getting an education… but in this new generation, we have seen its importance and that is why we have started sending our children to school…that is why you see even old people join adult classes as you have seen under the tree…. (Ndito 2's mother)

This expression suggests a certain level of community members' change of attitude towards the value of girls' education. Although they did not receive any formal education themselves, they had realised the importance of educating their girls. Having educated daughters gives them a sense of self-esteem as they would be respected by others, regardless of the quality of education (Unterhalter, 2009). Such valued capabilities which are created through formal education support the belief that education is a factor for the expansion of freedom. This is because, first, education has an instrumental role for each person in helping him/her to achieve things like securing a better job (Walker, 2006). Second, education has intrinsic importance, because being educated is a valuable achievement in itself and for its own sake (Sen, 1999; Vaughan, 2007). Third, education facilitates understanding health issues and engaging in civil society activities and political issues (Vaughan, 2007). These considerations are, however, on the part of boys since girls from poor families were still considered as the source of income. On the other hand, Mbelle (2008) raises an important question about how much primary education is able to help to create such capabilities. Following the low quality of primary education in rural Tanzania, it is difficult to create necessary and valued capabilities for the pastoralist community to attain the kind of life they value. This involves a life free from oppression, insubordination and discrimination. Similarly, although women and girls hope that formal education will enable them eradicate poverty, the capabilities that could be developed in primary education were very elementary to enable girls achieve their functioning. Raynor (2008) argues that education for girls helps them develop self-esteem, win respect from others and build own autonomy. The researcher's field experience showed that women and girls in the Maasai society were aware that educated women had the capability to influence other women and other community members' attitudes and thinking about the value of girls' education. Educated women had the ability to influence other women's agency of change to educate girls as a way of overcoming the inequality they were facing. Education helps girls to view life with possibilities. Education enables girls escape from the domestic violence (Raymond, 2017). Mothers and grandmothers were proud of their educated daughters and granddaughters while the girls enjoying their enhanced status within the family and community. All these are important capabilities that can facilitate change of women and girls lives among the Maasai.

However, the challenge is that many social functionings work depending on some other factors. For example, someone may have specific skills to perform a particular job, but the freedom to take up the job depends on whether the job is available or not (Vaughan, 2007, p.117). Education may be thought of increasing women and girls' choices, yet constrained by other socio-cultural, economic and societal factors. This importance is attached to the relations a person has with others, to the social role of education and generally the capability to be full participant in the society (Sen, 1999, 2000). So, capability for social relation is arguably important and is essentially embedded in the social network of care and support (Nussbaum, 2003). Similarly, although Tanzania education policy envisages education which contributes to a full personal development of each learner, children do not have freedom to choose whether to attend school or not. Children are not able to choose whether to participate in the learning process. Maasai girls do not have the freedom to participate in education. This, in turn, constrains their choices and development of the skills they require to choose from what is valuable in their lives.

6 Conclusion and recommendations

The study generally aimed to explore girls' participation in primary education, and the way formal education creates (valued) capabilities for girls. It specifically explored the pastoralist

community's views about girl's education; the level and environment in which girls participate in primary education; and the value girls attach to formal education in creating the capabilities they value. The study found that, although some people's views and attitude about girls' education are still negative, some members in the community have changed, and they support girls' education for the well-being of the girls and the entire community. The study further revealed that girls have positive views about formal education and have high hopes that acquiring formal education will help them change their own lives and the lives of other community members. The study, however, found that, despite community's change of attitude, girls' participation was still low. This is because girls' education was compounded with many obstacles that hindered the girls from having full participation. The situation constrained the creation of capabilities they considered valuable for their functioning. Girls' capabilities were affected by poor home and school learning environments, long walking distances, household responsibilities, lack of support and psychological trauma due to continuous discrimination as well as fathers' negligence and threats. All these constrained girls from participating in education and in creating their capabilities.

Thus, the study concludes that, although educating girls is crucial not only for their identity and well-being, but also for the nation's development, the Maasai girls were still far from participating in education. The girls' agency to participate in education depends on various gendered contextual discriminatory issues and circumstances which limit the creation of the capabilities that girl's value. Thus, the study recommends policy formulation and considerations for what the community, women and girls value that would ensure Education for All (EFA) and Universal Primary Education (UPE) for all children and sustainable development at large. Tanzania education policy and programme developers need to listen to Maasai girls and women and consider what they articulate as important and valuable in their lives. They also need to give Maasai women and girls more chances to express their voices, exercise power and enjoy equal representation in education provision. Government policies also need to address girls concerns about poverty, violence, pregnancy, marriage and lack of facilities. It also needs to cooperate with local leadership and parents in overcoming hurdles that girls experience in school and at home. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) need to support girls so that they can have a better understanding about their rights to education and other aspects of their lives. More sensitisation to pastoralist community members about the importance of girls' education still needs to be done by the government, NGOs and other agencies. This will create awareness of the benefits of education to people's lives and to the nation's well-being and development. Lastly, strategies that will be developed for girls' education in pastoralist community by the government or NGOs require developing strategic interventions concerned with expanding girls' horizon. This entails that working in continued cooperation with teachers, parents, school committees, communities, local government and girls themselves is important in changing girls' levels of participation in education.

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