

Parent's Perception about Girls Education and Students' Dropout Rate in Selected Primary Schools of Hadiya Zone, Ethiopia

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine parent's perception about girls' education and to identify girls' to boys' dropout rate ratios of students in Weyra Boshera and Weyra Lalo primary schools of Hadiya Zone. A total of 130 households were selected using systematic random sampling technique from two selected kebeles (smallest administrative organs). Simple descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and ratios were used to analyze the collected data. The findings indicated that boys were given better appreciation and support than girl students by their family members for education though parents perceive that girls education is also important. The findings also showed that the dropout rate of girl students were greater than boy students in the schools due to multiple household duty responsibilities of girls and minimized appreciation towards girls from the parents. It is suggested to bring more attitudinal change from parents' side to give their girls and boys equal appreciation and support without gender bias for reducing dropout rates of girls from school.

Keywords: Dropout; Education; Gender; Perception; Rate.

1. Introduction

Education is a means for imparting knowledge about the universe from generation to generation. Education is a light that indicates the direction, a drug that cures and a key which unlocks all gates. It advances healthiness, productivity, ability to make decision and diminishes undesirable life styles such as child labour abuse [1; 2].

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Provision of education is the right of all human beings irrespective of any discrimination in any form. In fact, it is not only a human right in itself but also an essential means of comprehending human rights [3]. Creating opportunity to primary education has been officially recognized as a basic human right for more than over half a century by considering its significance for the attainment of national progress. However, numerous countries have not attained Universal Primary Education goal, and millions of children have not yet gone to school. There are several factors hindering the attainment of Universal Primary Education goal. Guaranteeing children's stay in primary school till they graduate their primary education is the main concern for minimizing the serious school dropout problem and to enable children get their basic human right to education [4; 5]. In Africa, the attainment of hundred percent children retention index in the primary schools is a difficult job for nations such as Chad with 72 percent children dropout rate, Ethiopia with 71 percent repetition rate, Uganda and Angola together with 68 percent and Kenya with 76.8 percent children primary school attainment rate to last grade [4].

The absence of parental participation in taking care of and educating children, and the deficiency of backing them is a substantial cause of children dropout. Parents' helpful approach to their children's schooling is significant in shaping their school presence and academic accomplishment of the children. Encouraging and hopeful approach towards education increases parental participation in their children's existing and upcoming studies [6; 7; 8]. Education of female children contributes a significant part for improvement and progressive change of a society. It is a most influential instrument for transformation and can lead girls towards the way to get socio-economic empowerment. To eradicate gender inequality in education and to attain worldwide education coverage, having a compulsory and free education access plan is the foundation of every nation [9; 10]. Educating girls means educating a family since they will become educated mothers and then they will take care and educate their children and family in the future [11]. The Universal Primary Education which was for completing the full program of primary education by all children of every nation in all over the world was promised to be attained in 2015 [12]. In appraising growth towards this goal of Ethiopia, the admission rate in primary schooling enlarged from 91 per cent in 2006/7 to 96.4 per cent in 2010/11 [13]. Nevertheless, the capability of a nation to attain this goal is determined by the ability of the nation to maintain students in the primary school. In Ethiopia, the primary school education is classified in to two cycles. The first cycle includes from grade one to four whereas the second cycle includes from grade five to eight [14]. Among various factors of school dropout of girl students, it could be determined by the perception of parents towards different gender in the community. There is no general consensus on the type of parental participation for children's primary school education but optimistic outlook of parents towards girls' education is vital in shaping appearance and school attainment of the children [2]. This study, therefore, examines parents' perception about girls' education and the proportion of girls' to boys' dropout rate in the study area. The specific objectives were to examine parents' perception about girls' education and to identify girls' to boys' dropout ratios of students in Weyra Boshera and Weyra Lalo Primary Schools of Hadiya Zone.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Description of study area

The research was conducted in the east Badawacho Woreda (district) of Hadiya zone. Hadiya zone is one of the zones of the Southern Nations, Nationalities, Peoples and Regions (SNNPR) of Ethiopia East Badawacho is one

of the eleven Woredas of Hadiya zone. The administrative center of this Woreda is 248 km away from Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. Based on the 2007 Census conducted by the CSA, this Woreda has a total population of 212,678, of whom 106,300 are men and 106,378 are women; with an area of 326.66 square kilometers and a total of 21,077 households were counted in this Woreda [15]. Map of the study area is indicated in Figure 1.

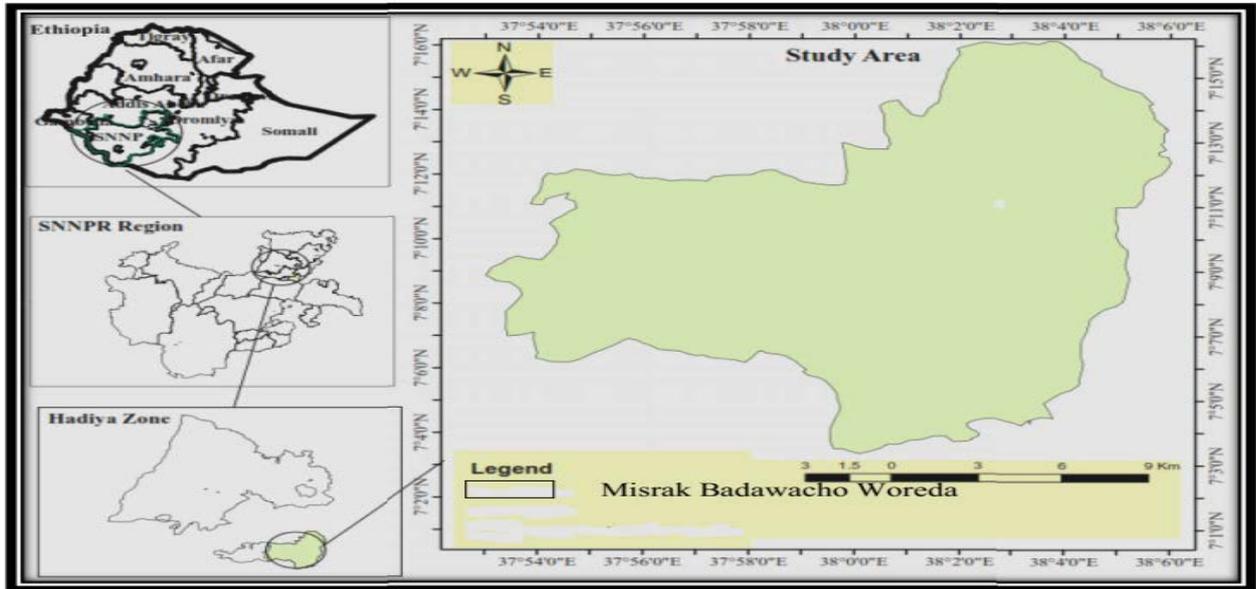


Figure 1: Map of the study area

Source: [16]

2.2. Data collection and sampling techniques

Primary data was collected from households of students using semi-structured interview schedule, key informants interview, and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). The sample size, in this study, was decided by considering various factors in to account like the research time, costs, availability and accessibility of transport facility. By considering these factors into account, it was limited to cover two Kebeles, where the primary schools are located, out of 42 Kebeles. Secondary data were collected from two primary schools to get information about the of enrolled and dropout students. The primary schools' directors and two teachers from each school were used as key informants. Two focus groups each with 8 members (one from teachers and the other from parents) were used for discussion. A mixed-multistage sampling procedure was used to select sample households. In the first stage, East Badawacho Woreda was selected purposively. Then at the second stage, two Kebeles were selected purposively where the primary schools (Weyra Boshera primary school and Weyra Lalo primary school) are located. Parents who teach their children in Weyra Boshera primary school and Weyra Lalo primary school were selected by using systematic random sampling technique. Afterwards the sample size in the study area was determined based on the trend of previous studies. Accordingly, 130 households of students were selected from the total of 2348 households based on probability to proportional sample size from each Kebele.

Table 1: Number of sampled households from Kebeles where the primary schools were available

Kebeles	Population to sample proportion	
	Households	Sample
Weyra Boshera	1340	74
Weyra Lalo	1008	56
Total	2348	130

Source: [15]

2.3. Methods of data analysis

Data obtained from respondents by semi-structured interview schedule was analyzed by simple descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions, percentage, rates, means and Standard Deviation (SD) using statistical package for social science (SPSS-16 version). On the other hand, qualitative data which are collected through FGD and key informants were expressed by summarizing, describing, and interpreting for further clarity.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Demographic and other characteristics of sample households

Some selected characteristics of sample respondents analyzed by descriptive statistics in this study are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary results of demographic and other characteristics

SN	Characteristics	Total sample size (N=130)			
		Min	Max	Mean	SD
1	Age of household head	28	44	32.5	3.8
2	Household family size in adult equivalent	1	12	5.6	2.75
	Variables		Frequency		Percentage
3	Marital status of household head	Divorced, separated and widowed	42		32.3
		Married	88		67.7
4	Educational status of the household head	Illiterate	28		21.5
		Adult education only	51		39.2
		Primary	22		16.9
		Secondary and above	29		22.3
5	Religion of the respondent	Orthodox	26		20.0
		Muslim	23		17.7
		Protestant	81		62.3

Source: Own Survey results, 2015

As indicated in the Table 2, the mean age of the household of the parents by year was 32.5 with a minimum

value of 28 and maximum value of 44 having a standard deviation of 3.8 year. The mean family size of the households in adult equivalent was 5.6 with a minimum family size of 1 and maximum of 12 with a standard deviation of 2.75. About 39% of household respondents were attendants of adult education (only able to write and read), 21.5% of the household heads were unable to read and write (illiterates), whereas 16.9% and 22.3% of the household heads were primary education and secondary or above education attendants, respectively. When we see the marital status of the household heads in the Table 2, it shows that 67.7% of them were married whereas the remaining 32.3% were divorced, widowed and separated. The Table 2 shows that the different religion follower respondents were 62.3% Protestant, 20% Orthodox, and 17.7% Muslim.

3.2. Perception of parents about girls' education

The result in the Table 3 shows about perception of parents' about girls' education by explaining their level of agreement. Parents were asked about level of agreement for the statement "Teaching girls' is totally wastage since they marry before completion." The result shows that 75.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed and the remaining 25.6% disagreed about the statement. This result indicates that parents were not considering educating girls as wastage whether the girls completed their education or not. They had good perception about importance of girls' education. This result is in line with the finding of [17] in Pakistan, it was reported that there was positive perception of the majority of parents about daughters' education. Parents were asked to give their level of agreement for a statement "Naturally, girls are more dependent and need help than boys". Of the total respondents, the majority were expressed their agreement (63.1% strongly agreed and 19.2% agreed). Only the remaining 17.7% of the respondents disagreed about it. It shows that parents did not perceive that girls were as strong as boys were. It means parents were not confident on their girls to let them do what they wanted to do regarding education such as going to study with friends or in library. Another statement read to the parents for seeking their level of agreement was "Girls can never achieve as good result as boys in education". The result shows that the majority of the respondents, 67.7%, agreed, 19.2% of them disagreed, and 13.1% of them were indifferent about the statement. It indicates that most parents did not expect their girls to achieve as good result as boys. This low expectation could lead parents not to support their girls as they did to their boys. This expectation of parents towards their children was reported to have positive association with the children's school achievement by minimizing school absence and dropout rates by several studies [18; 19; 20]. "Teaching boys gives more satisfaction to the parents than teaching girls". This was the other statement given to be leveled by the sample respondent. The result shows that though the majority of respondents, 50.8 % agreed and 25.4% strongly agreed, 17.7% disagreed and the remaining 6.2% strongly disagreed. It would be possible to say respondents had varied view for this statement. These could be due to the traditional belief of the community in which boys were given more social recognition and priority treatments than girls since their birth. So, parents were becoming satisfied while they invest more on boys than girls. This result is consistent with the findings of various studies conducted by different researchers [21; 22; 23]. Respondents were given a statement "Girls are better for helping the family in domestic work than boys in their childhood". The majority of them 72.3 % strongly agreed, 17.7% agreed whereas only the remaining 13% of the respondents disagreed about the statement. It indicates that most respondents were tending to assign more domestic works (e.g. cleaning room, washing cloth, fetching water, and looking after babies) to girls than boys. This finding is consistent with the finding of [24] in which it was reported that majority of the parents needed their girls in homes for domestic

work. The respondents were given the statement “Parents give equal chance to girls and boys for schooling”. The majority of the respondent (70.8%) disagreed, and 11.5% strongly disagreed whereas the remaining 17.7 of the respondents agreed on the statement. It indicated that parents gave more chance to boys than girls for schooling. This is in line with the finding of [23] in which there was a tendency of parents to discriminate against girls and give less education chances comparative to boys. This could be the gender inequality that exists within the community in general and the parents in particular.

3.3. Girls’ to Boys’ Dropout Rate Ratios in Grade 1 and Grade 8

Table 4 shows grade 1 and grade 8 Girls’ (G) to Boys’ (B) dropout rate ratios from 2010/11 to 2016/17. As it is indicated in the Table 4, the dropout rates of female students in the selected primary schools are greater than dropout rates of male students for all academic years from 2010/11 to 2016/17 both in grade 1 and grade 8. The total enrolment of grade 1 students for academic year 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13, and 2013/14 were 153, 145, 145 and 186 with 10:2, 7:5, 6:3, and 12:5 girls’ to boys’ dropout rate ratios, respectively. Similarly, for 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 academic years, girls’ to boys’ dropout rate ratios were 5:3, 10:4 and 7:4 from the total 192, 160, and 137 enrolled of grade 1 students, accordingly. Thus, it could be seen that the first two highest dropout ratios, 12:5 and 10:2, were observed in 2013/14 and 2010/11 academic years, respectively. The least girls’ to boys’ dropout ratios, 7:5, was observed in 2010/11 academic year. More importantly, the result shown in the Table 4 also shows that the whole academic years’ aggregate dropout rate of grade 1 girls is greater than that of boys. From the whole academic years’, 2010/11 to 2016/17, aggregate enrolment of 1118 students of grade 1, girls’ to boys’ dropout ratio was 8:4. The total enrolled students for the academic year 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13, and 2013/14 were 182, 142, 182, and 173 with girls’ to boys’ dropout rate ratios of 12:5, 8:3, 10:3, and 6:2, respectively. Similarly, from 178, 176, and 192 total enrollment of grade 8 students for 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 academic years, the girls’ to boys’ dropout rate ratios were 3:3, 4:3 and 4:2, respectively. Here, thus, we could see that the first two highest dropout ratios, 10:3, and 6:2, were observed in 2012/13, and 2013/14 academic years, respectively; Whereas the least girls’ to boys’ dropout ratio, 3:3, was observed in 2010/11 academic year. The aggregate dropout rate ratio of grade 8 girls’ to boys’ was 7:3 out of total 1225 enrolled students of the whole academic years of 2010/11 to 2016/17. The result tells us that in both sampled grades (grade 1 and grade 8) and for the whole sampled academic years (2010/11 to 2016/17); the dropout rates of girl students were greater than that of boys. There were some reasons mentioned by key informants and focus groups for high dropouts of girls from schools. Two school directors explained that the many parents were giving priority to teach boys than girls in motivating, fulfilling learning materials such as exercise books, reference books, pens, bags for handling learning materials, and paying school fees. This is because there was unresolved belief of many parents that they assume that educating girls is not as good as boys. Other key informants mentioned that when the parents face financial shortage, health problems, or high domestic work, parents prefer to quit their girls than boys from school. The two focus groups (one group from parents and the other from teachers) also supported the evidence given by the key informants. The parents’ focus group discussion explained that though education is good to girls and boys, girls are working more work than boys in the house that they do not spend much time to study as the boys do. So, what were explained by key informants and focus groups could be the possible reasons for dropouts of more girls than boys from the schools.

Table 3: Perception of parents about girls' education

SN	<i>Perception about girls' education</i>	<i>Level of agreements of respondents(N=130)</i>											
		<i>Strongly agree</i>		<i>Agree</i>		<i>Indifferent</i>		<i>Disagree</i>		<i>Strongly disagree</i>		<i>Total</i>	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Teaching girls' is totally wastage since they marry before completion.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	32	25.6	98	75.4	130	100
2	Naturally, girls are more dependent and need help than boys.	82	63.1	25	19.2	0	0.0	23	17.7	0	0.0	130	100
3	Girls can never achieve as good result as boys in education.	0	0.0	88	67.7	17	13.1	25	19.2	0	0.0	130	100
4	Teaching boys gives more satisfaction to the parent than teaching girls.	33	25.4	66	50.8	0	0.0	23	17.7	8	6.2	130	100
5	Girls are better for helping the family in domestic work than boys in their childhood	94	72.3	23	17.7	0	0.0	13	10.0	0	0.0	130	100
6	Parents give equal chance to girls and boys for schooling	0	0.0	23	17.7	0	0.0	92	70.8	15	11.5	130	100

Key: F=Frequency; N= Total sample; %=percent

Source: Own Survey results, 2015

Table 4: Girls' to boys' dropout rate ratios in grade 1 and grade 8

<i>Academic Year</i>	<i>Grade 1 enrolment and dropout rate</i>							<i>Grade 8 enrolment and dropout rate</i>										
	<i>Enrolment</i>		<i>Dropout</i>		<i>Dropout rate</i>			<i>G:B dropout rate ratios</i>		<i>Enrolment</i>		<i>Dropout</i>		<i>Dropout rate</i>			<i>G:B dropout rate ratios</i>	
	<i>G</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>B</i>		<i>G</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>B</i>		<i>G</i>	<i>B</i>
2010/11	72	81	7	2	10	2	10:2	89	93	11	5	12	5	12:5				
2011/12	69	76	5	4	7	5	7:5	65	77	5	2	8	3	8:3				
2012/13	72	73	4	2	6	3	6:3	90	92	9	3	10	3	10:3				
2013/14	91	95	11	5	12	5	12:5	84	89	5	2	6	2	6:2				
2014/15	92	100	5	3	5	3	5:3	88	90	3	3	3	3	3:3				
2015/16	78	82	8	3	10	4	10:4	85	91	3	3	4	3	4:3				
2016/17	67	70	5	3	7	4	7:4	95	97	4	2	4	2	4:2				
Total	541	577	45	22	8	4	8:4	596	629	40	20	7	3	7:3				
aggregate																		

Source: [25]

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

It has been found that the parents in the study area understood the importance of education towards girls and boys. However, in reality, parents were not giving equal study time for girls and boys. Girls were expected not to go with friends and to library for study like that of boys, girls were spending more time than boys for domestic work, and parents were more satisfying in supporting boys than girls for education. It was seen that the dropout rates of girls were higher than that of boys, in both grade 1 and grade 8, for almost in all academic years. Hence, in addition to being aware of the importance of girls' education, more practical works from parents' side as major actors, though not the sole actors, are needed to give equal access and support for the girls too for reducing their dropout rate from school.

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