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RESEARCH ARTICLE

LEADERSHIP INFLUENCE OF GIRL-CHILD ACCESS TO SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN BUNGOMA COUNTY: A CASE OF MOUNT ELGON DISTRICT, KENYA

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to establish environmental influence of girl-child access to secondary school education in Mount Elgon District. Despite impressive development towards achieving gender parity on access to education, enrolment statistics in Mount Elgon District at secondary school level reveals a worrying experience due to unknown environmental factors. The objective of the study included: determine influence of community factors on girl-child enrolment, establish the influence of home environment on girl-child school attendance, Identify influence of school enrolment on girl-child access to secondary school and establish the influence of family factors on girl-child access to secondary schools in Mt. Elgon District Bungoma County. The researcher applied gender Schema theory by Sandra Bern theory of 1981 that explains how as a cognitive theory to explain how individuals become gendered in society, and how sex-linked characteristics are maintained and transmitted to other members of a culture. The researcher employed descriptive design which involved gathering facts by obtaining precise information on the current status of phenomenon and drew conclusions from the facts. The target was 1611 on principals' teachers and head girls from 31 schools. Simple random sampling and purposive population sampling techniques were applied on a sample of 102 respondents. The researcher administered the questionnaires and interview schedules in collection of the data. The findings were that parents prefer educating girls than boys though girls admire doing to schools, that the girls have no problem with the school environment and teachers and parental support and commitment was lacking towards girls education. The study concluded that the girl child loves education and would wish to continue with education to high level but is affected negatively with the family factors. The descriptive statistics were used to summarize the whole study and the interpretation accompanied. The study recommended that parents were to stop discrimination against the girl-child and sensitization of parents to take place on the importance of education to girl-child education through the government policies on girl child education.

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Introduction:-

Education is one of the major fundamental pre-requisite for faster and more effective attainment of national and socio-economical development. Secondary education is a transitional stage between the primary school and higher education, training and labour market. It serves as a preparatory stage for adulthood and hence the need to plan and execute it carefully in order to ensure that schools produce well adjusted citizens according to the objectives of the secondary curriculum.

Education is life and life is education (Bishop, 1986). It is acknowledged that education plays a key role in the development of human capital, national development economic growth and poverty eradication among others. It is an important human right guaranteed by article 26 of the universal Declaration of Human Rights. The children's Act (2001) ranks provision of basic education as a basic human right. It provides for equal educational opportunities for both boys and girls through provisions of addressing cultural, religious and other forms of biases against girls. According to (Bem, 1981), when schools open their doors wide to girls, the benefits within the country multiplies. The end product will be an educated mother who applies improved hygiene and nutrition practices. Further observes that failure to raise the girl-child's education exerts a high development cost in lost opportunities to raise productivity and income to improve the quality of life. Despite the benefits associated with girl-child's education, various studies point out to the fact that girls are poorly enrolled in schools. Wamahiu, (1988) indicates that the majority of the world's out of school youths are female. In a global perspective, the challenge of equal education opportunities for girls is gradually becoming less a question of access to any education at all than of access within education to same range of opportunities open boys.

The Women's Decade (1975-1985) ushered in a commitment to the advancement of women (Kianda Foundation, 2011). The World declaration for all adopted in Jomtien, Thailand 1990, affirmed that "the most urgent priority is to ensure access to improve the quality of education for girls and women" (Kwesiga, 2002). At the Pan African Conference held at Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in March/April of 1993, it was observed that Africa was still behind other regions of the world in female access to education. Gender disparity was attributed to the age-long belief in male superiority and female subordination (Wamahiu, 1992).

In Beijing Conference of 1995, the United Nations International Children's Fund, (UNICEF) claimed that the goal of the World Conference for women will not be achieved without a commitment to the education of girls. Despite all this rhetoric in improving girls' education, the picture is far divorced from reality. Over the last decade or so, the politics of gender in developing countries like Kenya have been carried out within the context that women deserved better in terms of numerical representation. Though women constitute slightly over half of Kenya's population (Mblingi and Mbughimi, 1991), majority are engaged in subsistence and small holder Agricultural production and live in poverty mainly in rural areas. Indeed, Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Report is to promote gender equality and empower women, which seems a forgotten issue in Bungoma County. Since Kenya gained independence 1963, education reviews and policies in Kenya have severally been addressed on issues of gender inequality fruitlessly. The commitment by the government in the provision of education to All is reflected not only in the appointment of education commissions but also in the relatively large and consistent resource allocation to the education sector. According to the MDG report for Kenya (2007), 23.7% to 29.6% of the total government spending goes to education. Constituency Development Fund (CDF) spends significant proportion on education related activities. This involvement by the government together with public awareness of the importance of educating girls has led to great advancement towards achieving gender parity in enrolment and retention. However, the same cannot be said of scholastic progression rates for girls in secondary schools, especially co-educational ones.

The education of girls is of little value and is deeply -rooted in Bungoma County in Kenya. However, the strive towards universal primary education has tried to speed up enrolment; the girls who join primary hardly complete (Okojie et al, 1996). The majority of these children are in the Sub-Saharan region of Africa Bungoma being one of them in Kenya. According to UNICEF 1987, the United Nations Millennium Development Goals were specifically set to achieve universal primary education. The target was to ensure that by 2015, all over the world girls and boys were to complete a full course of primary schooling" but many girls in less industrialized countries are being denied opportunities of going to school. Many girls dropout of school before completing yet others never access primary education (Ominde Report, 1964). Africa has been noted to lag behind on girl-child education in accordance with the world report (October, 2008).

In Mount Elgon Sub-County, in 1990, gross enrolment rate was 8.4% compared to 14.4% for boys (UNICEF, 1999). In 2011, 907 girls enrolled for KCPE in the County and only 458 girls joined form one in 2012. The low enrolment of girl child to secondary school education continues overwhelmingly in the Sub-County. Educators and other stakeholders accuse the community members of holding onto traditions and refusing to change the mentality and provide the girl child an equal educational opportunities. Despite the government effort to support education sector by putting a lot of resources in education through FPE, subsidized secondary education and provision of Constituency Development Fund programmes, there is still gender parity in education in Bungoma County that is threatening girl-child education development. The government is to strengthen policy implementation and sensitize the community members through monitoring and bench-marking policy (Ezine, E. and Elizabeth N., 2018).

Statement of the Problem

Despite the impressive development towards achieving gender parity on access to education, enrolment statistics in Mount Elgon Sub-County at secondary level reveals a worrying trend to unknown environmental factors at home, school and community which have direct effect on enrolment, attendance, and transition and completion rate of girl-child education. For instance, in the year, 2011, nine hundred and seven (907) girls enrolled for KCPE in the County and only 458 (50%) girls joined secondary schools in 2012 in comparison to 73% girls who joined secondary schools nationally; implying that accessibility of secondary school education to girls in the completion are low compared to boys. Therefore, this study sought to address the outlined environment influence on the girl-child education in secondary schools in Mt. Elgon County in terms of enrolment, attendance, transition and completion which are components of access.

The Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to establish leadership influence on girl-child access to secondary education in Mount Elgon Sub-County.

Objectives of the study:-

1. To determine the leadership influence of community factors on girl-child enrolment in secondary schools in Mount Elgon Sub-County of Bungoma.
2. To establish the influence of home environment on girl-child' school attendance in secondary schools in Mount Elgon Sub-County of Bungoma.
3. To establish the leadership influence of school environment on girl-child access to secondary schools in Mount Elgon Sub-County.
4. To establish the influence of family factors on girl-child access to secondary schools in Mount Elgon Sub-County of Bungoma County.

Research Questions

1. What is the influence of community factors of the girl child access to secondary schools in Mount Elgon Sub-County of Bungoma County?
2. To what extent does home environment influence girl-child school attendance in secondary schools Mount Elgon Sub-County?
3. How does school environment affect school attendance of the girl-child in secondary schools in Mount Elgon Sub-County of Bungoma County?
4. What is the influence of family factors on completion of girl-child in secondary schools in Mount Elgon Sub-County of Bungoma County?

Significance of the study

The results of the study would assist the parents in promoting the educational level of the girl-child's education by removing social cultural barriers such as female genital mutilation, early marriages and patriarchal system of men dominance. The study findings would be beneficial in assisting the leaders identify the historical and social-economic background of every individual student in order to cater for their needs in order to increase access to education. Education officers would benefit from the results as it will contribute to the risk management of secondary school education based on the research findings that will give input to the existing situation. The result of the study would contribute towards achievement of Kenya government's national policy of education for All. Finally, the results of the study would help donors identify the challenges facing the girl-child and look for the possible way forward for eradicating challenges such as inadequate facilities to increase girl-child access to secondary education.

Justification of the study

Despite the growth of education in Kenya since independence in 1963, the introduction of FPE in 2003 and the legal policies concerning education, gender disparity in education still continue to prevail with regard to enrolment of girls, their retention, as well as girls participation in education (Republic of Kenya, 2007). This therefore causes a lot of concern to researcher and call for gender diagnosis. Girl-child access to secondary school education in Mount Elgon Sub-County of Bungoma County is low. This was largely attributed to environmental, factors such as home environment, school environment and community or cultural factors such as home environment, school environment and community or cultural factors. Therefore, there is need for an empirical study to be carried out to establish the underlying influence of environment on girl-child access to secondary school education in the County studied. The population of the students in the year 2011 as nine hundred and seven as girls registration for KCPE in the County and only 458 (50%) joining secondary schools in 2012 compared to 73% who joined nationally is an indication that the girl-child is discriminated.

Literature Review:-

Gender schema Theory

The study was guided by the Schema gender theory. The schema gender theory proponent was Sandra Bem (1981) who introduced it as a cognitive theory to explain how individuals become gendered in society, and how sex-linked characteristics are maintained and transmitted to other members of the culture. Gender-associated information is predominantly transmitted through society by way of schemata, or networks of information that allow for some information to be more easily assimilated than others. Bem agrees that there are individual differences in the degree to which people hold these gender schemata. These differences are manifested via the degree to which individuals are sex-typed. Being that gender schema theory is a theory of process and not content, his theory can help explain some of the processes by which gender stereotype become so psychologically ingrained in our society. Specifically, having strong gender schemata provides a filter through which we process incoming stimuli in the environment. This leads to an easier ability to assimilate information that is stereotype congruent, hence further solidifying the existence of gender stereotypes. Within adolescent development, Bem hypothesizes that children must choose among a plethora of dimensions, but that gender lead to the regulation of behaviors that confirm to the cultural definitions of what it means to be male or female.

Additionally, Bem asserts that there is also a heterosexuality subschema, which is likely encouraged the development of gender schemas. Most societies treat exclusive heterosexuality as benchmark for proper masculinity and femininity and that heterosexuality is the norm. Furthermore, the heterosexuality subschema asserts that man and women are supposed to be different from one another. It is hypothesized that this is why cross-sexed interactions are likely to be coded sexuality. Sex-typed individuals have general readiness to invoke the heterosexuality sub-schema in social interactions, behaving differently towards individuals of opposite sex that they find attractive together with unattractive. A strong source of sex-typed comes from rearing practices of parents. Bem offers strong suggestions for preventing the sex-typing of children, including the prevention of access to media that sex-type, altering media and stories to eliminate sex-typing information and modeling equal roles for mothers and fathers in the household. For example, Bem edited the books that her children read to create a more androgynous view. This included, for example, drawing long hair and feminine body characteristics on male figures. Ultimately, however, this is somewhat limited because children will become exposed to some of this sex-typing information, particularly when they begin attending school.

Therefore, Bem suggests teaching alternative schemata to children so that they are less likely to build and maintain a gender schema. Some examples include an individual differences schema, where children learn to process information on a person-by-person basis rather than make wide assumptions about groups based on information from individuals. Also, providing children with a sexism schema, where children learn to process sex-typed information through a filter that promotes moral outrage when sexist-information is being promoted, can assist in providing children with the resources to not only keep from becoming sex-typed but also promote positive social change. Thus this theory was applicable to the study on girl-child access to secondary school education. Bem wished to raise consciousness that the male/female dichotomy is used as an organizing framework, often unnecessarily, especially in the school curriculum. She stressed that the omni-relevance of gender has a negative impact on society, and that the gender schema should be more limited in scope. Within the feminist lens, androgyny is not radical enough, because androgyny means that "masculine" and "feminine" still exist. Rather, society should decrease the use of gender dichotomy as a functional unit, and be a schematic. This should be extended in the school setting to ensure that girl-child is given equal opportunities as the boy child.

The theory is relevant to this study because its emphasis and considerations are on the provisions of the basic needs for one to achieve the higher needs. The theory is concerned with achievement of self-actualization at the top of the pyramid which can only be attained through education. Unfortunately, the girl-child is not always motivated at home and at school. They are often deprived of these basic needs by the society. The schools and the entire environment settings should endeavor to provide all learners with these physiological needs or else the individual may end up in disillusionment. In school settings, teachers should be careful to guide girls to divert their sexual libido at adolescence to some vigorous school activities and games like soccer, rugby or basketball rather than the in-door games and stereotype daily routines that girl-child is permanently engaged in at home; such vigorous activities should be extended also at home. This could be reducing the problem of early pregnancy which happens to be one of the causes of school dropout for girls. When girls feel that they are not secure at school, home proper learning may not place. The buildings, toilets and other physical structures and even the distance to school should be secure and adequate. Another level of needs that the girl-child seems to lack is the love and affiliation need. The girl child is often given names and made to feel that they are worthless. They are often grouped separately from boys and made to compete with them in activities that are likely to favor boys to win making girls a laughing stalk. Teachers should therefore facilitate and encourage fair groupings and group activities that favor on the learners and award the good effort made by them towards their condition.

Leadership Influence of Community Factors on the Girl-Child Enrolment

Cultural factors and community attitudes towards education has been the focus of a good number of studies. Most of the pastoralist's communities in East Africa preferred keeping girls out of school due to the benefits anticipated later. They subjected girls on a series of cultural practices such as Female genital mutilation (FGM). Girls were denied education even in wealthy households. They were valued and categorized as part of a household property (Hughes, Gleason, and Zhang, 2005). In many areas, parents were reluctant to send their daughters to school for fear of losing income. They sometimes send them at an early age only to withdraw at puberty and marry them off after initiation. Furthermore educated girls were considered less submissive and disobedient, more resistant to cultural practices and more promiscuous. Their schooling was not seen to add any value to the bride wealth, but instead lowered it (Mbilingi & Mbughuni, 1991). Koech Report (1999) reported that girls' participation in secondary school education had been negatively affected due to social-cultural practices. The same commission was further reminded that close to 50% live below poverty line. In view of this, the prohibitive fees and other levies charged by educational institutions have had a negative impact on access to effective secondary education. The girl-child access has been affected. Another practice in Kenya which is as a result of poverty is the issue of child labour. It was reported to Koech Commission (1999) that child labour was a rampant practice that continued to keep children particularly the girl-child out of school. Therefore many school age girls are employed as house girls and baby sitters in both urban and rural areas. More ASAL areas boys and girls are expected to take care of animals (Herding) instead of going to school. The Ominde report (1964) and all other education reports emphasized the need for accelerating education for girls. The Koech Commission Report (1999) recognized the efforts made by the government to improve girls' education. Such effort include affirmative action in expansion of facilities to enable girls study science and technical subjects. The policies that allow girls go back to schools after pregnancy have slightly improved the education of the girl-child. These and other efforts have increased girls' participation in secondary education from 41% in 195 to 46% in 1999, (Koech Commission, 1999).

Despite this achievement, evidence of persistent constraints to the girl-child access to secondary education was reported as the girls' performance keeps on being hampered. Social-economic changes have made education necessary, not just for the purpose of providing income earning opportunities, but also for the potential to contribute to the improvement in the standards of living of individuals, families and communities (Hughes, Gleason, and Zhang, 2005). These traditional beliefs have been found to foster negative attitudes which limit family and community support for girls' education. Identification and examination of these attitudes is necessary before any decisions can be made on what should and can be done to bring about change. However, it is an indisputable fact that without parents and community support, any efforts to improve girls' participation in education will be greatly be hampered (Laara, 2006). The perceived ideal roles and characteristics of women and girls influence how girls and boys are socialized in the home, community and school. Because girls and women in general are considered physically weaker and less capable than men, they are often overtly protected and supervised to keep them from what is considered threatening to their safety.

Perceived gender roles and characteristics influence the way children are expected to behave, the kind of work they do and even the way they play. Girls are rarely the ones sent for shopping, neither are they allowed to play outside

their home for long periods as boys often do. This denies girls the opportunity to explore and experiment with the diverse activities and situations outside the home which could be useful to the within the SMT curriculum. Allowing the girls play outside the home will contribute the stamina build up and confidence. Boys who are allowed to play build confidence to work with tools and have an advantage in the use of exploratory and participatory methods for teaching subjects to the expense of the girls (Buhere, 2007). The study points out that in some cultures, after certain age, girls are not expected to look at men directly in the eye and are expected to appear humble and respectful before their elders. This attitude and the subsequent socialization of girls, has a number of effects. This makes the girls not to fully participate and benefit from participatory discovery methods that are recommended because they will be reluctant to ask questions, participate fully in discussions or work in groups with members of the opposite sex. This has contributed to negative performance by girls in schools. The other issue is that girls are expected to be obedient and not to socialize because boys are superior to them and many become vulnerable to physical and sexual harassment and abuse for lack of confidence, skills and knowledge of brushing off such situations. This exposes the girls to the risk of pregnancy and contraction of STIs infections and the resulting consequences. According to the wishes of the parents in the study, the role of the girls is wives and mothers. Many parents believe that formal education is not necessary to the girl-child. They can only learn their roles from their mothers. They believe that educating a girl is a waste of time and money because they will eventually get married off and their education will not help them but it will help the parents to the husband and the families they get married to. They believe that the money spent on the girl child on education is a loss. Since the boy-child will remain in the home, they feel that the boy child should be provided with all opportunities to learn as the heir of the home.

Leadership Influence of Home Environment on Girl-Child School Attendance

In exploring how students' family background may influence school attendance, many students pointed out to the importance of students' family cultural environment. The studies pointed focused on how family cultural environment may influence the standards that educators use to evaluate students and their parents Chepchieng, M. C. , (2004). Using the data from a central-city south west school County, conducted a study of cultural resources and social interaction in education stratification. The study looked at differences in school achievements across gender, ethnicity, and SES groups by examining the informal academic. Similarly, Charlton (1996) pointed out research evidence that supports the notion that children with more serious problems often come from homes characterized by parental conflicts and other disturbances. Traumatic events such as bereavement, divorce and violence are also harmful to child's education performance. For example, children from violence occupied families often become withdrawn or aggressive and hence increasing their chances of being branded trouble-makers and subsequent ejection from school.

According to the Government of Kenya (2002), transition and completion rates in schools remained below 50% essentially due to poverty and increased cost of education. For most families; families' decisions about children depend not only on the available resources but also what education is expected to yield to the individual children and the family at large. Meycoff (1981) noted that among the Sabot, the household is the basic unit of production and reproduction. The level of family income is another powerful influence on demand for secondary in education in Kenya and ASAL areas in particular. It has been noted further that parents in otherwise healthy families may also act in ways which can generate emotional problems for children. By holding unrealistic expectations about their off-Springs' performance in school, they may cause fear and anxiety and even depression within them. This may result in dropping out of school. Similarly, liberal parents can also generate anxieties in children. Children require boundaries and guidelines within which they can freely and feel secure. Therefore consequences of certain lifestyles within the home on child's education may be enormous.

Influence of School Environment on Transition of the Girl-Child in Secondary Schools

The importance of reforming secondary school education in Kenya cannot be underscored. It is the transition stage from primary school to tertiary and higher institutions of learning. Addressing issues that need reform in secondary schools would give access to the revitalization of both primary and secondary schools. Improving access at this level would give meaning to attending primary school due to the surety of continuation. Improving quality, relevance and equity in secondary education would mean well-prepared students for labour market of for tertiary and higher institutions of learning. In regards to quality of secondary education in other regions, especially the Asian countries, the focus has been on curriculum reform. A principal motivation factor for curriculum reform is the desire to design educational programmes that will adequately prepare young people for job market within the existing economic climate, while providing the human resources necessary to ensure sustainable national development (Buhere, 2007).

The Koech report called for the expansion of compulsory basic education from the current 8 years to 12 years and also for making it compulsory. This meant that secondary education was to be part of basic education. Most important, specifically for secondary education, were the reduction of subjects in the curriculum and the introduction of pre-university stage. The reduction of subjects would enhance quality at the secondary school level and also make the curriculum manageable for students. This would ultimately increase student participation. There are several variables that are directly related to the school in terms of influencing student participation in free day secondary school education. The less the number of teachers the low the rate of student participation in subsidized day secondary school education. This is part of the school related factors affecting the student participation in subsidized day secondary education as investigated in this study. The study found that the number of teachers per school scales the size and number of the streams thus limiting the students admitted in day secondary schools (Cole, 2008).

In understanding the disparities in educational outcomes especially relating to girl-child, many studies have pointed to the importance of the interpersonal aspects of schooling, including student-teacher relationships. These studies recognize that the quality of students' relationships with teachers is an important predictor of students' school outcomes. Support relationships with teachers can provide students with academic guidance, counseling on educational decisions, and encouragement and emotional support through daily interactions at school (Buhere, 2007). Socially disadvantaged students like girls often lack all forms of resources, social, material, and cultural, at home and from family networks. These students can benefit most from close student-teacher relationships (Goyette and Concas, 2002, Stanton-Salazar and Dornbush 1995, Cronsnoe, Johnson, Eder 2004). Student-teacher relationships are closely associated with students' academic achievement and school persistence. Some studies have found that stronger bonding with teachers was associated with higher academic achievements, controlling for previous level of achievement (Johnson and Elder, 2004). Other researchers have concluded that students with higher grades and higher occupational expectations have better relationships with teachers and counselors (Stanton-Salazar and Dornbush, 1995). Several studies have showed that poor student-teacher relationships are a major cause of student's alienation from school, which in turn may lead to dropping out of high school Croninger and Lee, 2001). One of the most important indicators of student-teacher relationships is the teacher's evaluation of their educational expectations for children. The teachers' evaluation of students' learning capacity and behavior may impact on how teachers interact with students in the classroom (Hauser-Cram, Sirin and Stipek, 2003). Meanwhile, teachers' evaluations have strong influence on children, whether these evaluations are accurate or not (Hallinan, 2008).

Influence of Family Factors on Completion Rate of the Girl-Child in Secondary Schools

School learning was a joint process that involved the home and school (Lockhead et al., 1991). This was evidence in the early years of formal schooling. Family background affected the probability that children would go to school, attend and complete various level of education. The occupation and education level of parents shape the schooling attainment of girl-child (Smith and Cleming, 1860). The unwillingness by parents to release girls for schooling and historically the most outstanding barrier to women's education is just negative attitude of parents (Phelps Stokes Report, 1925). Girls from poor families struggled to achieve education. In their struggle, some girls give up. Girls whose homes provided a stimulating environment full of physical objects and learning materials consistently learn more quickly in schools than deprived counter parts (Egghen, 2000). In some strict communities who stuck to their culture, hold their girls at home not to school, such hostile environment caused a major negative affect and discourage parents from sending their daughters to school. In those communities, where parents were aware of importance of and concerned about the education of girls, enrolment levels were still low due to their inability to meet cost of education coupled with the deteriorating economy, which had reduced the disposable income available to the families, had made it difficult to provide an education for all the children regardless of sex. In almost all the countries, education is financed through sharing with parents bearing the bigger share of the burden (Buhere, 2007)

Another issue that further aggravated this situation is the fact that, especially in the rural areas, families tend to have a fairly large number of children. The cumulative effect of the finances required for education often proves to be too much for many families. In many communities, the large family size was said to be the result of traditional attitudes, an example of which in the view that many children as a source of free labour and a source of security during parents' old age. In communities of the catholic and Muslim faith, the use of artificial contraceptives is forbidden, resulting in families having large numbers of children. However, it was also noted that in communities where girls' education was valued, the issue of poverty further aggravated the situation of the girls' lack of access to education because in such areas parents when faced with scarce resources choose to educate boys rather than girls. This also affects parents' willingness to pay for tuition and provide educational resources for their daughters. The parental

status of a pupil refers to the situation of having both alive or dead, single parenting or one parent dead or alive. As children grow up they need both parents for proper impartation of desired character. Orphans may find problems in financing their education. They may not have people to pay fees for their private schools and therefore opt for public schools, some of which may not be performing well. Total orphans or children with single parents need a lot of counseling to cope up with the realities of their situations so as to settle and perform well in academic work. Such children may appear reserved or engaged in bad behavior to make up for their parental “inadequacy”. Some school administrators note that most of the indiscipline cases in schools involve learners who do not have both parents; may be total orphans, or are single parented. The parental status definitely affects performance of such learners at all levels. Such children must be understood and counseled to excel in academic performance (Eughen, 2000). Students’ capacity and motivation is determined to perform by the quality of the home and school environment, pupils’ health and nutritional care or status and their prior experiences including the degree of parental stimulation. Studies comparing effects of schools and family influences conclude that more than 60% of differences in students’ achievement can be attributed to differences in individual and family characteristics (Lombard, 1994).

Research Methodology and Design

The research design of the study was descriptive survey design. The design involved gathering of facts or obtaining precise information on the current status of phenomenon and whether possible draw conclusions from the facts discovered (Orodho, 2008). The study employed qualitative and quantitative research design that could enable the researcher collect requisite information about the environmental factors influencing the girl-child access to secondary education. Such a design is a systematic empirical inquiry in which the researcher does not have direct control of independent variables because they cannot be manipulated. The qualitative and quantitative approaches were also applied whereby the data was concurrently collected to forming triangulation collection model. Inferences about the relations among variables were made without direct intervention from variation of variables (Creswell, 2008). The design was appropriate such that it allowed the use of questionnaires and interview schedule so as to gain insight of the variables of the study. The data collected in the study were measured using interval scale, thus, the measurement level in the study determined the type of analysis that was used. The Likert scale used in the study was the most common scale which was a popular example and practicable and applicable of interval scale that accommodated both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The method was appropriate as it gave a detailed description of the environmental factors influencing the girl-child access to secondary education in Mount Elgon Sub-County, which can be generalized to the other parts of Kenya. The study design adopted deemed applicable because it enabled the researcher to deeply scrutinize the environmental factors influencing girl-child access to Secondary education in Mount Elgon Sub-County.

Target Population

The target population was 1611 which involved Principals, teachers, and head girls from 31 public schools. The schools in Mount Elgon are only 31. A sample of the study was found by the notion that 30% of the total population gives the Sample of the study. The research applied simple random sampling, and purposive sampling techniques

Table 1:- Sample Frame.

Population	Target Population	Percentage	Sample	Method
Principals	17	100%	17	purpose
Teachers	80	85%	68	Simple random
Head Girls	17	100%	17	Purposive
Total	114	-	102	

Source: Researchers Own (2014)

A sample of was procedurally selected from the target population which was used and ensured that conclusion was generalized to the population (1993). Simple random sampling Technique was used to select 17 secondary schools in the County. From the 17 schools, sample of 17 head teachers and 17 head girls were selected by purposive sampling technique. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 4 class teachers from 17 single stream schools. Generally, each school was represented by four class teachers making a total of 68 teachers as presented by the above diagram

Findings and Discussions:-

The study established that many secondary schools had been instituted as from the year 2000 through CDF assistance. It was established that majority of schools had four streams each an indication that parents knew the importance of education. The study also established that many teachers in the community had completed their studies within the areas. It was also found that many schools were understaffed though many schools had been established. The study established that there were several factors that were affecting girl-child education in Mt. Elgon Sub County, Bungoma County being; poverty, social-cultural factors and many girls engage in child labour as asserted (Koech Report, 1999). The study also established that girls left schools for early marriage. The study established that poverty that afflicted the area was environmental in which parents' life is negatively affected. It was also established that girls leave schools for genital mutilation which meant that there was early marriage in Mt. Elgon Sub-County as asserted by Laara (2006). It was also found that lack of school fees was the main reason for keeping girls at home (District Education Office, Mt. Elgon, 2014). The study established that there was too much absenteeism by girl-child in the schools because girls are subjected to household chores at the expense of their education. Study revealed that girls suffer discrimination by parents as regards to accessing education especially in secondary education.

Conclusion:-

From the findings it was noted that the girl child loves education and would wish to pursue it to secondary level and beyond for the purposes of self-development. The study however concludes that family related factors negatively influenced child's participation in secondary education. Several factors in the family have led to the girl child not joining secondary school education, poor performance in schools among the girls and dropping out of school before completion. Culturally, girls are discriminated against education by the parents who prefer to educate boys denying the girl that family support that she really needs. It is also evident from the findings that even at school; the teachers are believed to be lazy and not focused. This belief makes the teachers to prefer teaching boy-child and not girls. This amounts to discrimination. To improve girl-child participation in secondary education, it is important that they get support and encouragement from both the family and the school. This is very necessary because an educated girl is not only an asset to herself but also to the society and nation at large. Cultural practices such as female genital mutilation, early marriages and patriarchal system of men dominance among the Sabot community are aspects of culture that have adversely affected girl-child to access to secondary education. Poverty and increased cost of education have hindered girl attention, transition and completion of secondary education. Unwanted pregnancies and early marriages have been contributed by the walking distances by the girls who cover long distance to and from school. Furthermore, the forced repetition due to poor performance as a result of too much absenteeism have affected girl child access to education in Mt. Elgon Sub-County. The parents even from wealth families have negative attitude towards girl-child access to education for fear of losing income with the implication that education to a girl child among the Sabot community does not add any value to the bride's wealth.

Recommendations:-

The study made the following recommendations based on the findings:

1. From the findings of the study, it is evident that girl-child suffers discrimination from both the parents and teachers. It is therefore recommended that the parents should stop discrimination against girl-child. They should give equal schooling opportunities to both sons and daughters irrespective of the status of their cultural norms that bind them into social affiliations.
2. The teachers in schools should have positive attitude towards the girl-child education in school so as to encourage girl child to enroll in secondary schools. Provision of guidance and counseling for the girls will enable them change their attitude towards education and make good of informed decisions as regards their education.
3. Efforts should be made to sensitize the parents on the importance of education to all their children without discrimination. Parents are to be sensitized on the importance of girl education. They should understand that girl-child education is important not just to the individual girl but to the society. The parents should be able to know the needs of paying fees for girl child education.
4. The government should establish policies to enhance girl child education in secondary education and to enforce parents to take all children to school without discrimination. Involving parents to monitor the progress of the girls' education in schools so as to encourage them work hard.
5. Provision of sanitary towels to school girls would curb absenteeism from school that is necessitated by lack of sanitary towels for use during their "bad" days.

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