
CULTURAL NORMS AND GIRL CHILD EDUCATION IN UGANDA. A CASE STUDY OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NAKASONGOLA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Cultural practices such as Female Genital Mutilation, early child marriages and patriarchy have been on the rise in secondary schools in Nakasongola District despite interventions by government and non-state actors over the years. These outdated cultural practices have hindered the progress of girls academically. It is vital to educate the girl-child in society. However, teenage pregnancy gets girls at the wrong time when they are still in schools and this affects their education very much and eventually ends up ruining their future. This paper looks at how various cultural practices have affected girl child education in secondary schools in Nakasongola District. The study was conducted in secondary schools in Nakasongola District targeting head teachers, students and teachers. The respondents were selected through purposive and simple random sampling. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. Data collected were analyzed using percentages and frequencies. The results of the study showed that the status of girl-child education was low. Cultural factors like; early marriages, female genital mutilation, child labour, widowhood practices and taboos influenced girl-child education. The study found out those cultural factors in the study area affected girl-child education negatively as it slowed down their transition, academic performance and also the acquisition of knowledge required at the basic education level. The study recommends that the government should take legal action against parents who take their girl-children for FGM and early marriages; there is a need for awareness on the importance of girl child education, provision of scholarships for girls at basic and tertiary level and introduction of guidance and counselling sessions in schools.

Key words: **cultural norms and girl child education**

Background of the study

Schooling is as antique as guy. historically, informal education existed and it changed into equally supplied to each boy and ladies. both boys and women had been taught all the ones factors which had been taken into consideration vital in their lives (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023). Women have been for example taught by using their mothers and aunts' issues like discipline, cultural practices, paintings specially that which turned into taken into consideration to be for ladies, consisting of digging, fetching water, cooking, and babysitting (Vincent & Peter, 2023). Throughout adolescence they had been subjected to the cultural practices as in step with their societal cultures. those covered among others, female circumcision whereby the lady's genitalia were cut so that it will lessen their libido as changed into the case in many societies of Kenya and the Pokot and Sebei of Uganda. alternatively, in different societies like Buganda, Ankole, Toro, and Bunyoro (where the modern-day examine changed into executed), ladies have been subjected to elongating the labia as a way of getting ready them for marriage, something which became considered prestigious among girls (Musaibah et al., 2023). In step with the Uganda Bureau of data (UBOS) 2013 Statistical abstract, about 70% of the populace is age 24 years and beneath; almost 1/2 of the population fifty-two% is under the age of 15. With this high share of young people, it is not tough to imagine the challenges that young people face (Mark et al., 2023). One of the most urgent demanding situations going through young human beings in Uganda today is the difficulty of teen being pregnant. In Uganda, twenty-4 percent of women between 15 and 19 are either pregnant or has had a baby, (Jac & Kazaara, 2023). the highest charges arise in East significant location at 31.6%, Japanese at 30.1%, Karamoja at 29.7% and West Nile at 26.4%. Teenage being pregnant is one of the most devastating reproductive fitness demanding situations and has negative influences at the woman infant (Aisha et al., 2023), network and the USA at large. younger human beings have so many myths around intercourse and pregnancy (John et al., 2023). in keeping with a survey with the aid of UNFPA and immediately talk foundation performed in Kampala, Mityana, Mubende and Wakiso districts, while 70% of boys and 54% of girls begin sexual sex as early as 15 years, 50% of them consider that a girl cannot get pregnant if she has sex even as status. forty-six percentage agree with a girl can't get pregnant the primary time she has sex (Yudaya & Aggrey, 2023). A 2011 New imaginative and prescient area visit to Kasese district as an instance observed that on average younger women drop out of college among ages of 12 and 15, to discover boyfriends and husbands. This trend is partially blamed on poverty (Shamim et al., 2023). for decades, girls did now not enjoy the privilege of stepping in college. regardless of the hole of girl's colleges inclusive of Gayaza Junior and Gayaza excessive college (1905), Mt. St. Mary's college Namagunga (1942), many ladies were not able to go to high school; in large part due to triumphing adverse societal cultural attitudes of educating ladies (Aisha et al., 2023). It turned into a time of strict cultural observance that girls have been presupposed to be homemakers, to kneel before men, to be married off at adolescent age and to produce kids. It turned into worse for the daughters of peasants (Joventa et al., 2023). Although colleges had come, in the beginning the colleges have been reserved for the daughters of chiefs in order that the knowledgeable sons of chiefs ought to marry educated women from rich households with a purpose to keep the status quo (SSekamwa, 2017).

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Problem Statement

According to the UNICEF file (2007) maximum cultural and conventional practices affects ladies ensuing in denial of girl's right to schooling (Jac & Kazaara, 2023). In Uganda, such practices include lady Genital Mutilation and early marriages, which often lead to high school dropout. Uganda has the best adolescent being pregnant fee in sub-Saharan Africa: 43% of lady children are pregnant or have given delivery at the least as soon as by way of age seventeen (John et al., 2023). In part this phenomenon is due to poverty and battle wherein early marriage can be seen as a way out of poverty entice by each the young lady and her parents (Shamim et al., 2023). Also, instances of mother and father insisting that ladies depart schools and marry so early so they get advantage of bride price are not unusual. a few women succumb to this strain leading to high school dropouts (John et al., 2023). notwithstanding all this, female child training has not been without demanding situations (Sub- County et al., 2023). With some of the ladies that enroll in secondary schools not able to complete their education, there's difficulty over the substantially high drop-out costs of ladies at this degree and beyond (Mark et al., 2023). In keeping with a 2010 United countries academic, medical and Cultural enterprise's global tracking record on marginalization, handiest 31% of all ladies that enrolled for secondary education were able to finish O' level schooling in comparison to 39% for boys. 31.1% of the girls were capable of be a part of A degree compared to 41 (Suzan & Kazaara, 2023). Early pregnancies, negative sanitation facilities in colleges and shortage of help mechanisms specially for girls have contributed lots to girls losing out of faculty (John et al., 2023). The scenario is frequently worse in rural areas (Uganda Bureau of information, 2017). As a consequence, this examine seeks to observe the influences of cultural norms on lady-child schooling in secondary schools.

Objectives of the study

1. To examine effects of cultural norms on girl-child education in secondary schools.
2. To assess community perceptions about educating a girl child in relation to cultural norms.
3. To analyze the relationship between cultural norms and girl child education in secondary schools in Uganda.

Methodology**Research design.**

The study was carried out using cross sectional survey design, a data collection method that incorporate both the use of interviews and questionnaires method basing on the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches that were adopted to establish the impacts of early marriage and cultural norms on girl child in Uganda. The design was used for profiling, defining, segmentation, estimating, predicting, and examining associated relationships.

Study population.

The population used in this study covered about 150 respondents including leading cultural leaders, parents and students and different people from various organization concerned with the protection of the rights of girl child, mothers and children and both leading government stakeholders concerned with girl child education in Uganda. The

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population sample was designed to obtain adequate and diverse views on the impacts of cultural norms on girl child education in Uganda through using Ekitangaala secondary school as the case study.

Sample size

The sample size used in this study consisted of 60 respondents because it is large enough compared to study population that is 15 parents, 40 students, and 5 cultural leaders in Nakasongola. This sample size was assumed for research to be enough representatives of the entire population.

Table 1: Sample size of the respondents

Category	Respondents	Frequency
Parents	15	25%
Students	40	67%
Cultural leaders	5	8%
Total	60	100%

Sampling technique

The study was mainly using two sampling techniques. These are stratified sampling and simple random sampling methodologies. Stratified sampling is a method of sampling that involves the division of a population into smaller groups known as strata (Trochimand William 2006). Simple random sampling is defined as any sampling that ensures that all possible variables within a given sample size have the same probability of being selected. Alternatively, one can say that every element of the population has the same probability of being selected for inclusion in the sample in one extraction.

Methods of data collection and instruments that will be used.

Questionnaires.

A questionnaire is a written set of questions to which respondents records their answers, usually within rather closely defined alternatives (Sekaran2003). The questionnaires were used on the basis that the variables under study cannot be observed for instance the views, opinions, perceptions and feelings of the respondents. The questionnaire was equally used because the information to be collected is from a large sample in a short period of time yet the respondents could read and write. The questionnaire was used in collection of data from respondents especially child mothers, school girls, leaders and some people in the community. The questionnaire consisted of both open and closed ended questions administered to respondents and key informants.

Data processing analysis

Data processing.

Data that was collected must be checked for completeness, categorized, coded and entered into a computer where they were summarized into frequency tables, charts and graphs.

Data analysis

The data was analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) (Nelson et al., 2022). Linear correlation index was used to correlate the impacts of culture on girl child education. The index is simply selected because it helps to measure the degree and direction of the relationship between variables.

RESULTS

How cultural factors influence Girl child academic achievement in secondary schools in Nakasongola District.

The study was to find out how cultural factors influence Girl child academic achievement in secondary schools in Nakasongola District. The information collected was presented as showed in the presentations below.

Whether cultural factors influence Girl child academic achievement in secondary schools in Nakasongola District.

Table 2: Showing whether there are cultural factors influence Girl child academic achievement in secondary schools in Nakasongola District.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	38	63.3
No	14	23.3
Not sure	8	13.4
Total	60	100

Source: Primary Data, 2022

The study findings on whether there are cultural factors influence Girl child academic achievement in secondary schools in Nakasongola District. The findings reveal that 63.3% of the respondents agreed with the responses, 23.3% disagreed and 13.4% were not sure. The findings imply that cultural factors influence Girl child academic achievement in secondary schools in Nakasongola District (Anthony, Kazaara, & Kazaara, 2023)

How cultural factors influence Girl education in secondary schools in Nakasongola District .

Table 3: Showing the responses to cultural factors affecting girl child education in Secondary schools in Nakasongola District

Effect of cultural factors	Frequency	Percentage
Stereotypic gender role dispositions	6	
Early marriage	11	18.3
Circumcision affects the state of girl child education for marriage	13	21.6
Our parents delay/ do not pay fees hence we are often at home for fees instead of being in class"	6	10
The need for bride price has forced girls into marriage	7	11.7

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We develop insecure feelings which reduce our concentration on academics	9	15
We are given too much work at home. This denies us study time besides leaving us fatigued	8	13.3
Total	60	100

Source: Primary data, 2022

The study findings on the responses to cultural factors affecting girl child education in secondary schools in Nakasongola District. The findings were that majority of respondents agree with Circumcision that affect the state of girl child education for marriage 21.6%, Early marriage had 18.3%, We develop insecure feelings which reduce our concentration on academics had 15%, We are given too much work at home (Joventa et al., 2023). This denies us study time besides leaving us fatigued had 13.3%, The need for bride price has forced girls into marriage had 11.7%, our parents delay/ do not pay fees hence we are often at home for fees instead of being in class had 10% and Stereotypic gender role dispositions had 10% of the respondents (Brian & Jacob, 2023). These findings imply that several cultural factors are in place in secondary schools in Nakasongola District to cause girl child education failure

Extent to which cultural factors influence Girl education in secondary schools in Nakasongola District

Table 4: Showing responses to the extent to which cultural factors influence Girl education in secondary schools in Nakasongola District

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Large extent	30	50.0
Small extent	20	33.3
No extent	10	16.7
Total	60	100

Source: Primary Data, 2022

Table 4 presents that 30(50%) of the respondents agreed that to a large extent cultural factors influence girl child education in secondary schools in Nakasongola District, 20 (33.3%) agree that the cultural factors influence girl education to a small extent and 10 (16.7%) of the respondents were for no extent. This implies that whereas other factors influence girl child education other factors are into play to explain the same.

Other factors that influence girl child education in secondary schools in Nakasongola District.

The study was to assess other factors that influence girl child education in secondary schools in Nakasongola District. The study findings on this objective were collected as shown below.



Whether their other factors other than culture that influence Girl education in secondary schools in Nakasongola District

Table 5: Showing whether their other factors other than culture that influence Girl education in Secondary schools in Nakasongola District.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	40	66.7
No	12	20.0
Not sure	8	13.3
Total	60	100

Source: Primary data, 2022

The study findings were that their other factors other than culture that influences girl education in secondary schools in Nakasongola District. The findings were that 66.7% of the respondents agreed, 20% disagreed while 16.7% were not sure. This implies that many respondents agreed that there are cultural factors influencing girl child education.

Other factors other influence Girl education in secondary schools in Nakasongola District

Table 6: Showing responses on other factors other influence Girl education in secondary schools in Nakasongola District

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Poverty among parents	23	38.3
Lack of scholastic materials	10	16.7
Sexual violence	12	20.0
Lack of community emphasis on education	09	15.0
Limited government support	06	10.0
Total	60	100

Source: Primary data, 2022

The study findings are that there are other factors other influence Girl education in secondary schools in Nakasongola District. The findings were that Poverty among parents affects girl education in secondary schools in Nakasongola District 38.3%. Lack of scholastic materials had 16.7%, Sexual violence had 20%, Lack of community emphasis on education had 15% of the respondents and Limited government support had 10% of the respondents. This implies that these factors contribute to low levels of girl child education in secondary schools in Nakasongola District (Mercy et al., 2023)

How do you compare the influence of cultural than other factors

Table 7: Showing how do you compare the influence of cultural than other factors

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
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Cultural are less influencing	24	40
Other factors influence more	36	60
Total	60	100

Source: Primary data, 2022

In comparing the influence of cultural than other factors. The study findings were that-cultural are less influencing according to 40% of the respondents while 60% argued that other factors influence more. The study findings imply that many respondents agree with other factors much hindering girl child education in secondary schools in Nakasongola District though culture fundamentally contribute (Aisha et al., 2023)

Strategies that can be adopted to improve girl's education in the cultural diversity in secondary schools in Nakasongola District.

The study was to assess the strategies that can be adopted to improve girl's education in the cultural diversity in secondary schools in Nakasongola District. The study findings can be further presented as below.

Whether the sub-county or any form of administration has tried to intervene in girl child education in secondary schools in Nakasongola District.

Table 8: Showing responses to whether the sub-county or any form of administration has tried to intervene in girl child education in secondary schools in Nakasongola District.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	23	38.3
No	17	28.3
Not sure	20	33.4
Total	60	100

Source: Primary Data, 2022

The results the whether the sub-county or any form of administration has tried to intervene in girl child education in secondary schools in Nakasongola District had 38.3% of the respondents, those who were not sure were 33.4% and those who disagreed had 28.3% of the respondents. This implies that many respondents had little has been done by local administration to improve the girl child education.

What interventions have been established in secondary schools in Nakasongola District

Table 9: Showing responses on the interventions established in secondary schools in Nakasongola District

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Sanitization of masses	15	25
Rescheduling the circumcision ceremony	28	
Provision of school services to girls	12	20
Improved concentration on educational services	5	8.3

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TOTAL	60	100%
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Source: Primary data, April, 2015

The findings on the interventions established in secondary schools in Nakasongola District. Sanitization of masses of masses had 25%, Rescheduling the circumcision ceremony had 46.7%, provision of school services to girls had 20% and Improved concentration on educational services had 8.3%. The findings imply that many respondents agreed with the prevailing conditions of life.

Level of appropriateness of the interventions in the sub-county

Table 10: Showing the level of appropriateness of the interventions in the sub-county

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Effective	27	
Not effective	33	
Total	60	100

Source: Primary Data, 2022

On the level of appropriateness of the interventions in the sub-county. The researcher presented that 45% of the respondents argued that the interventions are effective while 55% of them argued that they are not effective. The findings imply that many respondents agree that the interventions by the sub-county are ineffective.

What need to be done to improve the state of affair

Table 11: Showing responses to what should be done to improve the state of affair

Response	Frequency	Percentage
The need for sensitization amongst parents	15	25
Provision of scholastic materials to girls	30	
There is need for political intervention on education	10	16.3
Ensure effective education policy dissemination and implementation	5	8.3
TOTAL	60	100%

Source: Primary data, 2022

The findings what should be done to improve the state of affairs. The findings were that the need for sensitization amongst parents had 25%, Provision of scholastic materials to girls had 50% of the respondents, there is need for political intervention on education 16.7% of the respondents, ensure effective education policy dissemination and implementation had 8.3% of the respondents.

Conclusions

The study was set to evaluate the contributions of cultural practices on girl child education in secondary schools in Nakasongola District. It was guided by three research objectives which included to find out how cultural factors influence Girl child academic achievement in Secondary schools in Nakasongola District, explore other factors that influence girl child academic achievement in secondary schools in Nakasongola District, explore the strategies that can be adopted to improve girl's education in the cultural diversity in Secondary schools in Nakasongola District. The study findings were that cultural factors affecting girl child education in Secondary schools in Nakasongola District. The findings were that majority of respondents agree with Circumcision that affect the state of girl child education for marriage 21.6%, Early marriage had 18.3%, We develop insecure feelings which reduce our concentration on academics had 15% We are given too much work at home. This denies us study time besides leaving us fatigued had 13.3%, The need for bride price has forced girls into marriage had 11.7%, our parents delay/ do not pay fees hence we are often at home for fees instead of being in class had 10% and Stereotypic gender role dispositions had 10% of the respondents.

Recommendations

Based on the study objectives/questions and results, the researchers herein recommend the following for implementation in order to enhance girls' academic performance in girls' schools in Secondary schools in Nakasongola District and schools in other areas but with similar circumstances. The government through the Ministry of education should supply sanitary towels to secondary school girls

The government to enhance affirmative action and enforcement of laws on girls' rights among others.

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