

Full Length Research paper

Prospects and challenges in the implementation of re-entry policy of girls in secondary schools in Kenya: a case study of Emuhaya District

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A report by the Centre for Study of Adolescence shows that the dropout of girls due to pregnancy stands at 23% nationally and 39% for Emuhaya District. Few of these girls resume despite the re-entry policy. Majority is unable due to stigma and ridicule from teachers, peers and the communities thereby missing out on the benefits that accrue from education. The purpose of the study was to establish the challenges and prospects in the implementation of the Ministry of Education policy on the re-entry of girls. The study was guided by a conceptual framework. The research design for the study was descriptive survey. The study population consisted of 24 head teachers, 24 teachers of guidance and counseling, 24 chairpersons of parents' teachers associations, 24 chairpersons of boards of governors, one district quality assurance and standards' officer and 1040 girls in 24 schools. The study found out that it is parents who seek re-entry for their daughters in different schools from the ones they initially attended, despite unawareness on re-entry guidelines. Schools willingly allow re-entry despite the absence of guidelines. The study concluded that re-entry is practiced in Emuhaya District as evidenced by the cases that seek it. However, re-entry policy guidelines have not been received in most schools. As a way of strengthening this policy, the study recommended that the ministry should not only provide policy documents, but also enforce and monitor its implementation.

Key words: Prospects, challenges, implementation, re-entry policy, girls, secondary schools, Emuhaya District.

INTRODUCTION

The International Federation of Women Lawyers, Kenya Chapter (1997) recognized that females were disadvantaged at all levels of education in terms of access, participation, completion and performance. The plan outlines remedial steps such as community mobilization and sensitization in support of girls, with a follow up to ensure their re-entry. However, the government is yet to show a strong political commitment. Despite the school re-entry policies existing in Kenya factors that hinder girls in secondary schools from accessing it have not been pursued yet, leading to several dropout cases for girls with teenage pregnancies. What this leads to is the fact that many young girls will continue to either get married off at early ages or acquire

casual jobs that can barely support them. The end result therefore is a cycle of poverty and denied opportunities for both mother and child (Akelle, 2007).

The Forum for African Women Educationalists has supported girls rescued from early marriages and female genital excisions. There has been some intervention to upgrade the position of women in the recent past through affirmative action or gender mainstreaming in all development endeavours (Abagi et al., 2000). Africa is still grappling with early withdrawal of girls from schools and Kenya is a signatory to various Conventions on Elimination of Discrimination against Women and Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1985 (Chege and Sifuna, 2006). In Tanzania, cases of girls who had left school due to pregnancy have been reported (Bendera and Mboya, 1996). Despite three decades of gender equity in education policy the law regarding pregnancy has not changed. Girls are still expelled from school

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when found pregnant (Bendera and Mboya, 1996 and Mumbua, 2000). According to the Ouagadougou declaration (UNESCO, 1993) the millions of girls out of schools in Africa is concrete evidence of the shortcoming in our efforts to establish national education system as well as indication of the distance between the present situation and achieving Education For All target. This Pan African Conference sitting in Bukina Faso recognized that there are 26 millions girls out of schools, most of them in rural areas. In response to the 1992 National Conference on the girls held in Nyeri, the outcome of the Machakos National symposium of 1994 was the setting up of the gender and education task force and the girl child project to be implemented by both Kenya Institute of Education and Ministry of Education. Pregnancy interrupts a girl's education hence interfering with her potentialities. Society frowns at and views them as immoral and outcasts (Nyassy, 2007). Whether left out, pushed out or dropped out, the end result is that such girls are peripherals and sometimes incidental beneficiaries of education system of their country (Marope, 1995). Re-entry offers some hope to gain education and to ultimately reap some benefits of schooling. A national survey in 2003 indicated that 13% of secondary school students in Kenya had experienced their first pregnancy by the age of 14 years (Otieno, 2008, Omondi 2008). The Ministry of Health reports the unwillingness of school heads and teachers to re-admit those who drop out (Ministry of Health, GTZ, 1998). According to Mpesha (2000) 77.3% of schools were against the re-entry, with some heads not being sympathetic to give room. Globally 5.5 million girls aged between 15-19 years give birth yearly (Omondi, 2008). At least 40% of Kenyan adolescent girls without any education are either pregnant or have already become mothers with poverty and ignorance fueling this in rural areas. Therefore, the challenges encountered and the prospects available in the re-entry of girls formed the basis of this study.

Research Questions

1. What prospects and challenges are there for head teachers in the implementation of the policy on re-entry of girls in secondary schools?
2. What challenges are faced by teachers of guidance and counseling in the implementation of the re-entry of girls into secondary school?
3. What prospects and challenges are there for the girls when they seek re-entry in secondary schools?
4. What community factors influence the implementation of the re-entry policy?
5. What strategies are there for coping with prospects and challenges available in the implementation of the re-entry of girls into secondary schools in Emuhaya District?

Conceptual Framework

The study was guided by a conceptual framework (Figure 1) below. The policy on implementation of the re-entry of girls emanated from Ministry of Education, 2001 (Appendix H). The launching of a ministerial task force on girls' education in June 2004 was to create awareness on existing government guidelines on re-entry policy. Head teachers were to sensitize girls, parents, communities and all stakeholders at large on the possibility of return to schools of girls who had 'slipped'. On the other hand schools should through their guidance and counseling department receive such girls and change the perceptions of viewing them as mothers and offer support and acceptance. Schools can also allow re-entry on the basis of the 'old' admission number. Schools are expected to provide textbooks, learning materials and bursary to those who 'return'. Not only has there been a lack of a legal framework to enforce this policy but also the absence of monitoring and evaluation unit to check on non compliance. Poverty, resistance from society and other community factors have also been stumbling blocks.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was to establish the challenges and prospects in the implementation of the Ministry of Education policy on the re-entry of girls. The specific objectives of the study were to: establish the challenges and prospects for the head teachers; establish the challenges faced by the teachers of guidance and counseling; establish the challenges and prospects for the girls who seek re-entry; find out community factors that influence Re-entry policy and find out the strategies of coping with the challenges faced in the implementation of Re-entry policy. The study was guided by a conceptual framework. The research design for the study was descriptive survey. The study population consisted of 24 head teachers, 24 teachers of guidance and counseling, 24 chairpersons of parents' teachers associations, 24 chairpersons of boards of governors, one district quality assurance and standards' officer and 1040 girls in 24 schools. Saturated sampling technique was used to select the standards' officer. Simple random sampling was used to obtain 22 head teachers, 22 teachers, 22 chairpersons of parents' teachers' associations, 22 chairpersons of boards and 347 girls. Data was collected using questionnaire for head teachers, teachers and parents. Focus group discussion was done with students to obtain information. Interview schedule was used to obtain information from the standards' officer. Document analysis schedule was used to obtain information on re-entry practices in schools. Validity of research instruments was determined by experts in research

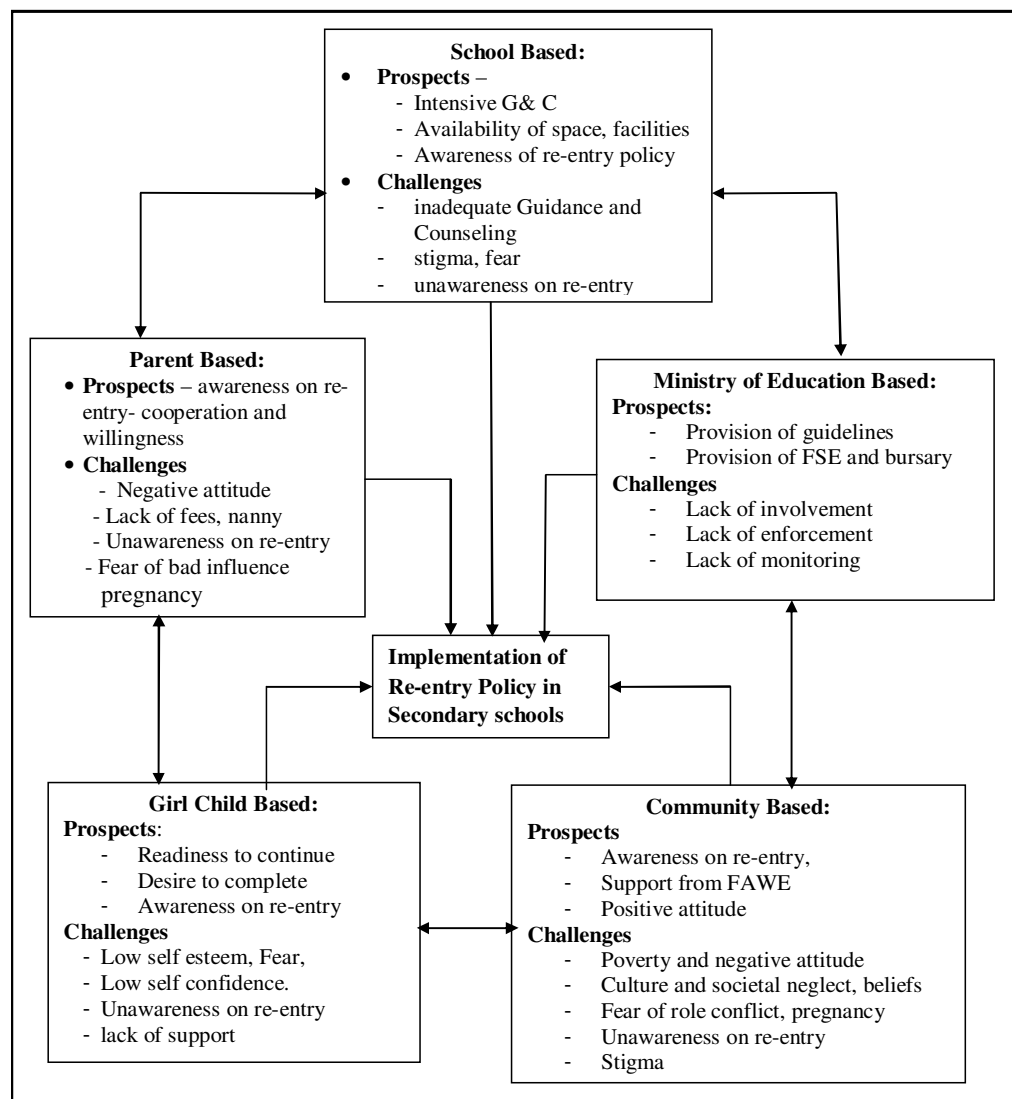


Figure 1. A Conceptual Framework showing Prospects and Challenges in the Implementation of the Re-entry Policy of Girls into Secondary Schools, Emuhaya District.

KEY: FSE –Free Secondary Education, FAWE- Forum for Africa Women Educationists **G and C** – Guidance and Counseling

methods in the Faculty of Education. Reliability was determined by piloting in two schools to address the weaknesses and inconsistencies. Qualitative data was analyzed on an ongoing process as themes and sub-themes emerged. Quantitative data obtained was analyzed using descriptive statistics in form of frequencies, mean and percentages

RESULTS

Demographic characteristics of Respondents

The respondents involved in the study included

Headteachers, Teachers, Guidance and Counselling teachers, Board of Governors chairpersons, Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons and District Quality and Assurance and Standards Officer.

Demographic characteristics of Secondary School Head Teachers

Demographic characteristics of head teachers were as shown in Table1.

Table 1 shows that most secondary school heads in Emuhaya are male (68%). Similarly most have a bachelor's degree (86%) with their ages ranging between

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Secondary School Head Teachers in Emuhaya District as reported by Head Teachers (n =22)

Demographic	Characteristics	F	%
Gender	Male	15	68
	Female	7	32
Age in years	36 -45years	7	32
	46-55years	15	68
Academic Qualifications	Diploma	1	4
	B.ED	19	86
	M.ED	2	10
Years worked as Head in the station	1-5years	14	64
	6-10years	5	23
	>10years	3	13

Key: **B.ED**- Bachelor of Education Degree **M.ED** – Master of Education Degree

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of Guidance and Counseling Teachers, Emuhaya district as reported by Teachers of Guidance and Counseling (n = 22)

Demographic Characteristics	F	%
Gender		
Male	11	50
Female	11	50
Age in years		
29 years and below	3	14
30-40yrs	11	50
42-50yrs	8	36
Reasons for choice		
Gender	14	64
Training	4	18
Academic qualifications		
M.ED	3	14
B.ED	18	81
Diploma	1	4
>1year	2	10
1-3yrs	12	54
4-6	6	27
>6yrs	2	10
Years worked as Guidance and Counseling Teacher		
Additional courses		
High diploma in psychology	1	5
M Ed in G/C	1	5
Peer Counseling (APHIA II)	13	59

Key: **B.ED**- Bachelor of Education Degree **M.ED** – Master of Education Degree

46-55years (68%). Whereas a few have been in their station for more than 10 years (13%) majority have worked for between 1-5 years (64%).

Demographic characteristics of Guidance and Counselling Teachers

Demographic characteristics of Guidance and Counselling Teachers were as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 shows equal percentage (50) of teachers of Guidance and Counseling in terms of gender with the main reason for choice being 64% disregarding training (14%). Besides 14% of the counselors are aged 29 years and below, 50% of them are aged between 30-40 years implying that they are young. 81% have a first degree with 14% having acquired a second degree. 54% have worked for between 1-3 years meaning they are yet to gain the added experience. In terms of additional training, 59% have undergone peer counseling education in APHIA II.

From Table 3 it is evident that all chairmen of secondary schools Parents Teachers Associations are male (100%) negating gender balance. Their ages range between 50-60 years (50%). Most are new at their station (59%) having worked for between 1-3 yrs. However, in terms of their academic qualification, 27% have 'A' level education with most being at 'O' level (63%). Similarly, more males hold the post of chairman Board of Governors (90%) as opposed to females (10%) with their ages ranging mostly (55%) between 60-69 years. Whereas Ministry of Education recommends a minimum basic undergraduate degree for one to be a secondary school chairman of the board, in this district most (41%) are with 'A' level of education violating policy guidelines on constitution of school boards.

Research Question 1

The research question responded to was: What prospects and challenges are there for head teachers in the implementation of the policy on re-entry of girls in secondary schools? The responses to this research question were as shown in Tables 4 and 5.

From Table 4 it emerges that all (100%) head teachers agree on the prospect of re-entry being sought in different schools. They know the value of the implementation of the policy (81%) and are willing to support such girls (81%), giving a possibility that these girls can be re-admitted because there is space in most mixed schools (81%). This is exhibited by their willingness to offer re-entry into their schools (68%), as indicated by their response on availability of tuition and boarding facilities (68%). Head teachers also indicated that teachers are willing to receive and teach these girls (64%). Regarding whether the guidelines had been dispatched to schools,

only 64% responded indicating they had seen them. Concerning parental awareness on re-entry, heads agreed at 50%.

Similarly 72% of teachers agreed that they are ready to receive and teach the girls who re-enter. Concerning the willingness of the head teachers to support those who seek re-entry, and the prospect of girls seeking re-entry elsewhere. 68% of these teachers thought so. On the prospects of the schools' willingness to take in these girls and the head teachers knowing the value of implementation, 59% of the teachers indicated so. 54% of the teachers felt that space was available in schools whereas 50% of them indicated that re-entry guidelines have been dispatched to schools. Table 4 further shows that 95% of the chairmen of Parents Teachers Association. were of the opinion that tuition and boarding facilities were available. While 86% of them felt that teachers were ready to receive and teach these girls, 81% indicated that such girls should seek re-entry elsewhere. At least 72% are in support of the prospect of head teachers' willingness to support these girls. While 68% felt that head teachers know the value of implementation of the re-entry policy, 59% of these parents indicated that parents are aware of the re-entry policy; in addition to knowing that there is space available in schools. Further, 72% of the chairmen, Board of Governors responded that it were better if girls sought re-entry in different schools. They believe that schools are willing to take in these girls (59%) and that head teachers know the value of implementation of re-entry policy (54%) and are willing to support them. Regarding the availability of space in schools, 54% indicated so. Only 50% of the chairmen Board of Governors considered the teachers' readiness to receive and teach these girls as a prospect.

From Table 5 81% of the heads agreed that schools fear admitting teen mothers because of stigma associated with having such girls in a school environment. This challenge is further compounded by the fact there is fear of schools being ostracized (86%) and being viewed as a maternity school (81%). There was a general feeling that the girls themselves do not seek re-entry (63%) fearing that they will be frowned at (86%) coupled with their parental objection to re-entry (59%). The fact that re-entry is only allowed early in the next calendar year to allow a fresh start makes those who seek it lose track of schooling and end up dropping out altogether. School calendars have programs planned for and admission carried out in term one. Ministry of Education funding is also based on enrolments at the start of the year. Further, Table 5 shows that of the 22 teachers of Guidance and Counseling captured in the study; only 63% agreed to parental objection to re-entry while 59% felt that school mates frown at these girls. 54% of them agreed equally in the challenges of lack of guidelines and school being ostracized. While 50% indicated that Ministry of Education does not sensitize heads, 50% feared having mothers in the school

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of Board of Governors chairpersons and Parents Teachers Association chairpersons as reported by the Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons (n=22) and Board of Governors chairpersons (n=22)

Demographic Characteristics	PTAC		BOGC	
	f	%	f	%
Gender :				
Male	22	100	20	90
Female	0	0	2	10
Age in years				
40 -49	3	13	5	23
50 -59	11	50	3	13
60 - 69	6	27	12	55
70 and above	2	9	2	9
Years worked at station:				
<1 year	0	0	3	13
– 3 years	13	59	10	45
4 – 6 years	7	31	4	18
> 7 years	2	9	5	23
Academic qualification :				
'O' level	14	63	6	27
'A' level	6	27	9	41
B.ED	1	4	6	27
M.ED	1	4	1	4

Key: B.ED- Bachelor of Education Degree, M.ED – Master of Education Degree
PTAC – Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons, **Board of Governors-**
Board of Governors Chairpersons, '**A' Level** – Form six Secondary Certificate;
'**O' Level** – Form four Secondary Education Certificate.

Table 4. Prospects available for the head teachers in the implementation of re-entry policy as reported by Head teachers (n = 22), Guidance and Counseling teachers (n = 22), Board of Governors chairpersons (n=22) Parents Teachers Association chairpersons (n=22)

Prospects	H/TS		G&C TRS		PTAC		BOGC	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Schools' willingness to allow re-entry	15	68	13	59	11	50	13	59
Parental awareness	11	50	10	45	13	59	8	36
Guidelines dispatched to schools	14	64	11	50	9	40	10	45
Head teachers know value of implementation	18	81	13	59	15	68	12	54
Space available	18	81	12	54	13	59	12	54
Tuition & boarding facilities available	15	68	9	40	21	95	10	45
Teachers ready to receive and teach	14	64	17	72	19	86	11	50
Head teachers support	18	81	15	68	17	72	12	54
Girls to seek re-entry in other schools	22	100	15	68	18	81	17	72

Key: PTAC – Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons, **BOGC-** Board of Governors Chairpersons, **H/TS-** Head teachers **G and C TRS** – Guidance and Counseling Teachers.

Table 5. Challenges faced by Head teachers in the implementation of re- entry policy as reported by Head teachers (n =22), Teachers of Guidance and Counseling (n = 22), Chairmen Parents Teachers Association (n = 22) and Board of Governors Chairmen (n = 22)

Challenges	H /TS		G&C TRS		PTAC		BOGC	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Lack of guidelines	21	95	12	54	12	54	11	50
Fear of schools being ostracized.	19	86	12	54	18	81	12	54
Fear of having mothers in schools.	18	81	11	50	16	72	14	63
Lack of space.	9	40	7	31	11	50	8	36
Girls don't seek re-entry	14	63	9	40	18	81	17	77
Peers frown at them	19	86	13	59	18	81	16	72
Teachers do not accept them.	14	63	7	31	13	59	15	68
Parental objection.	13	59	14	63	17	77	6	27
Ministry of Education does not sensitize heads.	14	63	11	50	12	54	10	45
Re-entry allowed early in the year.	18	81	10	45	17	77	12	54

Key: PTAC – Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons, CBOG- Board of Governors Chairpersons, H/TS- Head teachers, G and C TRS – Guidance and Counseling Teachers.

Table 6. Challenges faced by teachers of Guidance and Counselling in the implementation of re-entry policy in secondary schools as indicated by Board of Governors Chairmen (n = 22), Parents Teachers Association Chairmen (n= 22), Teachers of Guidance and Counseling (n = 22) and Head teachers (n = 22).

Challenges	G & C TRS		H/TS		PTAC		BOGC	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Lack of adequate training	15	68	21	95	12	54	13	59
Society sees them condoning immorality	13	59	19	86	15	68	12	54
Unawareness on re-entry	15	68	17	77	14	63	11	50
Fear of having teen mothers in school	12	54	18	81	10	45	13	59
Fear of bad influence to others	12	54	19	86	15	68	13	59
Female teachers do not support them	12	54	16	72	12	54	8	36
Fear of stigma of immorality	12	54	22	100	13	59	11	50

Key: PTAC – Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons, BOGC- Board of Governors Chairpersons, H/TS – Headteachers, G and C TRS – Guidance and Counseling Teachers.

environment. 81% of the responses from the Parents Teachers Associations chairmen were in agreement with the three challenges namely: fear of the school being ostracized, girls don't seek re-entry and the challenge of peers frowning at girls who seek re-entry. Considering the challenges of parental objection to re-entry and that of re-entry being allowed early in the year; 77% of Parents Teachers Association chairmen confirmed so. In essence 72% of the Parents Teachers Association chairmen questioned indicated that there is fear of having mothers in the school environment. Further, 77% of the Board of Governors chairmen indicated that girls themselves do not seek re-entry with 68% adding that teachers do not accept them. Only 54% feared that the schools which allow re-entry will be ostracized and that re-entry should be allowed early in the year. Further, 72% indicated that peers will frown at teen mothers who seek re-entry while 63% indicated that there is fear of having mothers in the school environment.

Research Question 2

The research question responded to was: What are the challenges faced by teachers of guidance and counseling in the implementation of the policy on re-entry of girls in secondary schools? In response to this research question the respondents stated the challenges as shown in Table 6.

From Table 6 it is evident that 95% of the head teachers indicated that teachers of Guidance and Counseling lacked adequate training especially on matters related to sexuality. It was not offered during their pre-service training. Attempts to fill this void by way of in-service courses has been minimal owing to the fact that most teachers are busy with school duties. Added to this is the fact that heads indicated that female teachers do not support pregnant school girls (72%) with respondents attributing this to the fact that women are enemies unto themselves. They abuse, ridicule and discourage them,

viewing them derogatively. Standing at 81% was the challenge of fear of having teen mothers in a school environment owing to the physical body changes that betray these girls. Along side this is the stigma of immorality that will be attached to schools that allow re-entry (100%) resulting in such schools being shunned. Parents advise their so called innocent daughters not to be seen in the company of girls who have delivered babies. Because of fear of bad peer influence (86%) corrupting the otherwise good morals in schools, head teachers indicated that they would rather not have these girls in schools. Moreover, another challenge is posed by the feelings that society will view teachers that allow re-entry as condoning sexual immorality (86%). While unawareness on re-entry for the head teachers stood at 77%, 68% of the teachers responded thus with Parents Teachers Association chairmen and Board of Governors responding at 63% and 50% respectively. On lack of adequate training for the teachers of Guidance and Counselling teachers' responses stood at 68%, 54% for the Parents Teachers Association chairmen and 59% for the Board of Governors chairmen. Only 59% of the teachers fear that society will see them as condoning sexual immorality when they allow re-entry. On the contrary, 54% of the teachers feared having teen mothers in the school environment; feared that these girls will have bad influence to others and that the stigma of immorality will be attached to schools that allow re-entry. Concerning responses from the Parents Teachers Association chairmen, 68% indicated that society will see teachers allowing re-entry in schools as condoning sexual immorality. A similar 68% was shared with the challenge of fear of bad influence to the rest of the students. In addition 59% of these Parents Teachers Association chairmen considered fear of stigma of immorality being attached to schools that allow re-entry to be a challenge. Concerning responses from the Board of Governors chairmen, 59% indicated that schools fear allowing re-entry of teen mothers because of fear of bad influence they will have on others and fear of having teen mothers in schools. 50% felt that schools feared allowing re-entry due to stigma of immorality that will be attached to those schools. Similarly, 54% of the chairmen felt that society sees teachers as condoning sexual immorality if they allowed re-entry.

Research Question 3

The research question responded to was: What prospects and challenges are there for the girls when they seek re-entry in secondary schools? The responses to this research question by respondents were as shown in Tables 7 and 8.

From Table 6 most respondents indicated that girls believe that they have the potential to reform with 81% given by the heads, 63% by teachers, 95% and 72% by

Parents Teachers Association chairmen and Board of Governors respectively. This was attributed to the fact that they have seen fellow girls in similar circumstances return to schools and excel. Alongside this was their readiness to continue standing at 72% for heads, teachers, and Parents Teachers Association chairmen, with Board of Governors chairmen response being at 45%. Only those who had the confidence and conviction to face the school communities, withstand ridicule and embarrassment, sought re-entry. Respondents did not find lots of support from Non Government Organizations, with 59% given by heads, 45% given by teachers, 54% and 50% for the chairmen respectively. The prospect that the government funds girl child education, did not attract much opinion-54% from heads, 27% from teachers, 40% given by Parents Teachers Association chairmen and 50% of the Board of Governors chairman. On whether girls are aware of the Re-entry policy, only 68% of the heads, 31% of the teachers, 36% of the Parents Teachers Association chairmen and 40% of the Board of Governors chairmen considered this to be a prospect. This was attributed to the fact it is the parent who seeks re-entry for the girl.

Views from the sampled girls during interviews indicated that the following were the prospects for them as they sought re-entry in secondary schools after having dropped out due to pregnancy: Self confidence, belief, strong will and conviction and readiness to continue learning to obtain a certificate so as to secure a bright future, desire to complete schooling. With encouragement from parents, friends, and understanding teachers the potential to reform is heightened, role models abound of such victims who have excelled in life after re-entry and lessons learnt therefore no need for repetition.

From Table 8, it is obvious that most girls do not seek re-entry due to shyness, as indicated by 100% of the school heads, 86% of the Parents Teachers Association chairmen and 77% of both the teachers of Guidance and Counseling and Board of Governors chairmen. This is attributed to feelings of inadequacy brought about by a break of societal norms. Society abhors girls who become pregnant before marriage. Most respondents indicated that shyness could be born out of individual's low self esteem as given by 90% of the head teachers 86% of the Parents Teachers Association chairmen, and 77% as shared by both Board of Governors chairmen and teachers of Guidance and Counseling. And even if they sought re-entry, one would fear being ridiculed and discriminated against with 81% of the heads indicating so, 86%, 77% of the teachers and of the school chairmen agreeing to it. In addition 81% of the heads, 59% of the teachers, 90% and 77% of the Parents Teachers Association chairmen and Board of Governors indicated that girls feared being frowned at. However, heads and Parents Teachers Association chairmen were of the opinion that these girls deserved to be punished by being

Table 7. Prospects and challenges for the Girls as they seek re-entry as reported by Head teachers (n = 22), Guidance and Counseling Teachers (n = 22), Parents Teachers Association Chairmen (n = 22) and Board of Governors chairmen (n = 22)

Prospects	H/TS		G&C TRS		PTAC		BOGC	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Readiness to continue	16	72	16	72	16	72	10	45
Awareness of re-entry policy	15	68	7	31	8	36	9	40
Self belief of potential to reform.	18	81	14	63	21	95	16	72
Space available in schools.	16	72	12	54	10	45	12	54
NGOs supportive.	13	59	10	45	12	54	11	50
Govt. funds to support their Schooling.	12	54	6	27	9	40	11	50

Key: PTAC-Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons, CBOG- Board of Governors Chairpersons, H/TS- Head teachers, G/C TRS – Guidance and Counseling Teachers.

Table 8. Challenges faced by Girls as they seek Re-entry as indicated by Head teachers (n = 22), Teachers of Guidance and Counseling (n = 22), Parents Teachers Association Chairmen (n = 22) and Board of Governors Chairmen (n = 22)

Challenges	H/TS		G&C TRS		PTAC		BOGC	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Society belief that they cannot go back	13	59	10	45	8	36	12	54
Girls' belief that they can't be allowed back	14	63	11	50	10	45	7	31
Unawareness on re-entry.	15	68	15	68	11	50	13	59
Fear of being frowned at.	18	81	13	59	20	90	17	77
Fear of being ridiculed and discrimination.	18	81	19	86	17	77	17	77
Belief they deserve to be punished.	12	54	11	50	12	54	9	40
Low self esteem.	20	90	17	77	19	86	17	77
Shyness	22	100	17	77	19	86	17	77
No confidence to challenge expulsion.	19	86	16	72	14	63	14	63
Lack of a maid.	19	86	20	90	20	90	15	68
Fear of being labeled a mother.	22	100	16	72	18	81	17	77
Lack of fees.	19	86	14	63	14	63	12	54
Fear of being seen as immoral.	20	90	15	68	17	77	17	77

Key: PTAC – Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons, BOGC- Board of Governors Chairpersons, H/TS – Head teachers, G and C TRS – Guidance and Counseling Teachers.

kept out of schools (54%). While 86% of the heads indicated that girls lacked the confidence to challenge their expulsion, 72% and 63% of the teachers and chairmen respectively supported this attributing it to ignorance of the policy. Responses on unawareness on re-entry was pegged at 68% for both heads and teachers, 50% of the Parents Teachers Association chairmen and 59% of the Board of Governors chairmen. Considering the challenge of lack of a maid, most respondents agreed with it, with 86% of heads, 90% of both teachers and Parents Teachers Association chairmen and lastly 68% of the Board of Governors chairmen indicating so. Concerning the fear of being labeled as a mother in

schools, 100% of the heads supported this entirely, 72% of the teachers agreed to it, while 81% and 77% of the Parents Teachers Association chairmen and Board of Governors indicated so respectively.

Views obtained from the sampled girls from secondary schools indicated that the following were challenges they faced while seeking re-entry: Fear of being ridiculed by neighbors, peers and teachers; fear of harassment, mockery, being laughed at, being labeled mothers and abused that they are stinking milk; feeling of inferiority, shame, guilt, embarrassment, low self esteem, stigmatization, and of being and gossiped at; lack of school fees due to parental anger, lack of confidence and

courage to seek re-entry, lack of parental support and guidance, lack of adequate Guidance and Counselling at school; absence of supportive and understanding community and lack of a maid. Parents chase them away from homes, peers frown at them, talk of boy' girl relationship is found to be intimidating.

Research question 4

The research question responded to was: What community factors Influence the implementation of the Re-entry policy? In response to this research question the respondents indicated the community factors that influence the implementation of the Re-entry policy as shown in Table 9.

Table 9 above shows that 100% of the Parents Teachers Association chairmen indicated that parents are not aware of re-entry policy guidelines. On this 86% of the chairmen, 68% of the teachers and 90% of the heads reported so. Concerning the fear of a second pregnancy, 81%, 63%, 68% and 90% of the Parents Teachers Association chairmen, Board of Governors chairmen, teachers and heads indicated so respectively. While 81% of both Parents Teachers Association chairmen and teachers indicated that re-entry of teen mothers will be of bad influence to the rest, 77% of the Board of Governors chairmen and 90% of the heads reported on the same. Others will view being pregnant as okay, after all there is re-entry. This will make them not fear the consequences. Likewise, 81% of both heads and teachers indicated that lack of a maid can keep the girl at home, while 68% and 59% of Parents Teachers Association chairmen and Board of Governors agreed to this challenge. In support of this was the challenge of parents finding it a burden to raise the teen mother's child and still pay school fees. 95% of the heads, 68% of both the Board of Governors chairmen and teachers of Guidance and Counseling and 86% of Parents Teachers Association chairmen supported it. While, it is acknowledged that it is hard for one to be a mother and student at the same time due to inability to balance roles, 81% of both the Parents Teachers Association chairmen and heads considered it so. One cannot serve two masters at the same time, the saying goes. Only 77% of the Parents Teachers Association chairmen considered lack of school fees as a challenge. 54% of the Parents Teachers Association chairmen considered girls who fall out due to pregnancy as spoiled and therefore they should not be allowed back to school. Given that they have already entered motherhood; deviating from societal norms. Most parents then develop a negative attitude towards them as indicated by 54% of the heads. As indicated by the heads (68%), girls who become pregnant are expected to get married to coordinate their love for their child and husband. Fanning this is the belief that such girls should be socially isolated (63%). On the whole there is stigma

attached to having teen mothers in the school environment (95%).

Research question 5

The research question responded to was: What strategies are there in coping with the challenges faced in the implementation of the re-entry of girls in secondary schools? The responses to this research question by the respondents were as shown in Table 10.

From Table 10 most respondents indicated that re-entry should be sought in a different school (72% of the heads, 54% of the teachers, 50% of the Parents Teachers Association chairmen and 63% of the Board of Governors chairmen). Since the girl's background will be unknown this will minimize and prevent stigma. As a strategy, re-entry in the same school attracted only 40% from the teachers. This is attributed to the fact that the girl will not feel free and may be made fun of. Within the schools, 72% of the head teachers agreed that gender responsive guidance and counseling programmes should be initiated, while 50% of the teachers, 59% of the Board of Governors chairmen supported this strategy. This is to improve on the schools' understanding of the re-entry policy and provide sex education. The involvement of parents in guidance and counseling attracted 68% backing from the heads, with 50% of the Parents Teachers Association chairmen and 63% of the Board of Governors chairmen. This will make them accept the situation and facilitate the girl's re-entry. As concerns provision of maternity break followed by unconditional re-entry 54% of the teachers responded. They felt that this would enable quick recovery, enable mother child to bond and ensure that schools do not lose good girls with potential to excel. Whereas 40% of the teachers indicated that the girl should be allowed to study until when due if she is comfortable with her stay and to keep a breast with syllabus, most found this stressful. They urged that these kinds of girls are a challenge to handle and needed special attention which can not be provided by a hectic school routine. While 36% of both chairmen accepted that teachers should be in close touch with girls who drop out due to pregnancy for the purposes of future placement, 40% of the heads and 31% of the teachers thought so. Of all the respondents only 36% of both heads and teachers agreed that teachers should be in contact with these girls to monitor their progress. It was urged that teachers were too busy to prepare and give direction to such students for continuity and allowing them to attain their right to education.

DISCUSSION

Schools' willingness to re-admit girls who drop out due to pregnancy was observed by most head teachers as a

Table 9. Community Factors that influence the Re-entry Policy as reported by Board of Governors Chairmen (n=22), Parents Teachers Association Chairmen (n=22), Head teachers (n=22) and Teachers of Guidance and Counseling (n=22)

Factors	PTAC		BOGC		G&C TRS		HTS	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Belief that they are spoiled	12	54	9	40	8	36	14	63
Parental negative attitude	11	50	11	50	9	40	12	54
Lack of a maid	15	68	13	59	18	81	18	81
Fear of 2 nd pregnancy	18	81	14	63	15	68	20	90
Parental unawareness	22	100	19	86	15	68	20	90
Stigma of teen mothers in school env.	19	86	17	77	17	77	21	95
Fear of bad influence	18	81	17	77	18	81	20	90
Expectation of such girls to marry	13	59	12	54	13	59	15	68
Burden to raise child and pay fees.	19	86	15	68	15	68	21	95
Belief of social isolation.	11	50	8	36	9	40	14	63
Belief schools don't allow re-entry	14	63	13	59	15	68	15	68
Belief it's hard to be student/ mother	18	81	16	72	13	59	18	81
Lack of school fees.	17	77	10	45	15	68	16	72

Key: PTAC – Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons, BOGC- Board of Governors Chairpersons, HTS – Head teachers, G and C TRS- Guidance and Counseling Teachers.

Table 10. Strategies of coping with Challenges of Implementing the Re-entry Policy as indicated by the Head teachers (n = 22), Guidance and Counseling Teachers (n = 22), Parents Teachers Association Chairmen (n = 22) and Board of Governors Chairmen (n = 22)

Coping Strategies	H/TS		G&C TRS		PTAC		BOGC	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Providing maternity break	10	45	12	54	8	36	8	36
Re-entry in the same school	8	36	9	40	7	31	2	9
Re-entry in different schools	16	72	12	54	11	50	14	63
Establish gender responsive Guidance and Counseling	16	72	11	50	8	36	13	59
Teachers keep in touch for place	9	40	7	31	8	36	8	36
Girls to study till delivery	6	27	9	40	6	27	7	31
Teachers in contact to monitor	8	36	8	36	7	31	5	23
Invite parents for Guidance and Counseling	15	68	13	59	11	50	14	63

Key: PTAC- Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons, BOGC- Board of Governors Chairpersons, HTS – Head teachers, G and C TRS- Guidance and Counseling Teachers.

prospect that should be utilized to enhance the implementation of re-entry policy. Though they feared the negative influence this would have on the rest of the innocent girls, some schools did it as a matter of fulfilling Ministry of Education re-entry policy. This finding is consistent with Omondi's views (2008) which emphasized that re-entry is an intervention measure that seeks to increase the retention of girls in schools and promote their right to education. However, unless the communities are sensitized on the need for re-entry, schools could as well remain empty, their willingness to take in such girls

not withstanding. The level of parental awareness on re-entry policy is low. The fact that parents seek re-entry for their daughters who had dropped out due to pregnancy implies that they are aware of re-entry policy. Despite some informed ones ignoring it out of annoyance, cases of parents asking for chance are on the increase regardless of their not being sensitized by the Ministry of Education. Based on the reports from the heads, schools in the district have received circulars detailing the re-entry of girls. District Quality Assurance and Standard Officer agreed with this view when she stated that 'secondary

schools that were in existence before year 2001 must have received them.' Information has been relayed at conferences and seminars. Though head teachers indicated that they had seen them, no record was available for perusal. Where guidelines had been received they were simply being ignored and had not been posted on the notice boards. Head teachers know the value of implementing the re-entry policy. This was found to be true given that most heads admitted girls from other schools and advised their own to seek re-entry elsewhere. This is in line with achieving Education For All goals as stipulated in the Ougadougou Declaration (UNESCO, 1993). It is also considered that those who know the value of implementing this policy do it on the basis that they are also parents. Availability of space in secondary schools is a prospect to be utilized especially in non-competitive schools. While it is accepted that when a girl drops out due to pregnancy her space remains vacant and that she can always reclaim it, this is not true for some schools. Surprisingly this girl can join another school where she is least known. The government is yet to attain a 1:1 ratio in enrolment in secondary schools. Constituency Development Fund is contributing to construction of schools. Ministry of Education is offering infrastructure funds to some selected schools. Tuition and boarding facilities are available in Emuhaya District. This finding is inconsistent with the District Quality Assurance and Standard Officer's view that 'most secondary schools are mixed day implying that tuition facilities are available and boarding ones limited'. Thus, it was possible for a pregnant school girl to drop out from a day school only to emerge into another after delivery. Those who dropped out from boarding schools rarely returned in the same schools and their space was quickly filled up.

Teachers are ready to receive and teach girls who re-enter. In keeping with the issues of gender balance in enrolment, added to the fact that teachers are also parents, teachers will readily accept and teach teen mothers to implement the policy. In contrast, it is acknowledged that such girls will be a threat to discipline and therefore it were better if they were transferred especially in cases where it is a teacher from the same school who was responsible for the pregnancy. Some teachers empathize with them while others condemn them. The willingness of the head teachers to support the girls who re-enter after pregnancy is exhibited through writing recommendation letters to other schools and when they readily admit those seeking re-entry. With girl child awareness education going round mounted by various pressure groups, head teachers not only offer admission, but with guidance and counseling too. However, this is inconsistent with Mpesha (2000) view who observed that schools were against re-entry with some heads not being sympathetic to give room. The prospect that re-entry should be sought in a different school from the one originally attended emerged

as the best in the implementation of re-entry policy (Table 4). It is believed that this will help the girl hide her past. Whereas it helps eliminate stigma, mockery, intimidation and ridicule, the girl may lack new resources such as uniforms, caution money and Parents Teachers Association funds to begin again. While it may take some time getting used to the new environment, her inner feelings of shame may betray her, ease of acceptance notwithstanding. Lack of guidelines on how to implement the re-entry policy emerged to be the main challenge for the school heads. Schools in this district seem not to have received this circular. Therefore they are not aware of re-entry guidelines. However, even those who are aware ignore it and do not allow re-entry. The Ministry of Education does not show any involvement in the implementation of this policy through enforcement or monitoring. The fear of the school being ostracized as a maternity school appeared to be a challenge for all. With the reputation of the school being at stake and its public image requiring guarding head teachers fear that their schools can be termed as having a role to play in the pregnancy of students. It is feared that re-entry will cause schools to be shunned. Parents will consider them to be a requisite to promiscuity. This finding is in agreement with Chege and Sifuna (2006) argument that re-entry policy will condone sexual promiscuity amongst adolescents. Communities can label the school as tolerant to such problems, laughing at and perceiving them in that manner. Teachers on the other hand fear their school being ostracized as a maternity school (Omondi, 2008). The fear of having mothers in schools was a challenge strongly reported by the heads. Girls who re-enter schools after pregnancy are considered as miniature mothers (Bendera and Mboya, 1996). A number of respondents agreed that mothers require special attention on diet and maternal child health care. Given that there are no special facilities for such students and considering the rigorous school routine students are subjected to, there is general fear that this will give bad publicity to schools, the stress that comes with physical body changes notwithstanding.

Lack of space in secondary schools especially where the overall entry was on high demand was not found to be a major challenge. Some heads simply denied such girls re-entry on basis of fear of bad influence. Being aware that the only school she can access is the former due to the vacancy she created by dropping out, some girls may be confident enough to seek re-entry in that school. On the contrary, if the cause of the pregnancy was the boy in the same school, 'this girl may shy away' said the District Quality Assurance and Standard Officer. The study also found out that girls do not seek re-entry. Respondents attributed this to lack of awareness on re-entry guidelines, their tender ages, feelings of shame, fear of stigma and ridicule and opting for early marriage. Most girls are ill prepared to seek re-entry. This negates the attainment of Millennium Development Goals

especially goal number three. The tendency of being frowned at by school mates was a major challenge. It is observed that teen mothers will have negative peer influence to their schoolmates. They will not perform well due to their mixed concentration. Therefore they are shunned and frowned at by their school mates, as supported by Nyassy (2007). Some head teachers agreed that teachers do not accept girls who re-enter after pregnancy. On the contrary, once the school re-admits teen mothers teachers have no alternative but to accept and teach them. The challenge lies in what happens during teacher student interaction. While some encourage them to stay, others taunt them and make them reference material in the classroom.

The challenge of parental objection to re-entry was based on their negative attitude. Most parents condemn pregnant school girls. They feel that they have been let down and that their money has been wasted. They wouldn't want to be cheated again. Parents object to re-entry in the same school because their daughters may not settle down. Besides, Ministry of Education has done little to sensitize and popularize the re-entry policy amongst teachers and communities (UNESCO 1993). Where the policy exists, it is not given lots of emphasis and where tried it has not succeeded because of long held ideas and sentiments that create conflicts. The few who may have been sensitized have failed to implement it citing lack of a legal backing to support its implementation as observed by Ogutu (2008). Though a few schools may show understanding of this policy enforcement and monitoring has not been forthcoming from the ministry. School academic calendars normally begin in January every year. Therefore, girls who seek re-entry after pregnancy should be allowed in early in the year. It is acknowledged that this will ensure that the girl gets enough time to heal and bond with the infant. On their return these girls are usually asked to repeat the class so as to catch up. Based on this, re-entry should be sought in the next calendar year. It is also easier to plan for these cases early in the year as opposed to mid year. What puzzles is that the flow of funds from Ministry of Education in terms of Free Secondary Education continues to their schools even after their departure. Lack of adequate training especially on matters related to sexuality emerged as a main challenge faced by the teachers of guidance and counseling in secondary schools. Respondents attributed this to the fact that their pre - service training curriculum was not based on sexuality save for a unit on general guidance and counseling. Neither does the Ministry of Education arrange in- service seminars for teachers. The few who have been trained on matters related to sexuality have too much work load in teaching to spare a moment for guidance contravening the demands of the policy (Appendix H). Society also sees teachers as condoning sexual immorality when they allowed re-entry. As evidenced by the response in Table 6 teenage pregnancy

has always been associated with immorality. It is a taboo for unmarried females to be pregnant especially if they are schooling. Therefore schools admitting teen mothers will be assumed to have had a hand in the pregnancy and will be considered to be encouraging the vice. Many teachers of Guidance and Counseling were unaware of policy guidelines stipulating unconditional re-entry. Indications are that if they were available then they are within the confines of the school boards' files. None has been posted on notice boards or has been brought to the attention of the staff. In a nutshell, there is no communication on how the guidelines should be implemented making implementation weak and inconsistent, as noted by Ogutu (2008).

The fear of having teen mothers in schools was glaring. This was attributed to the fact that their return would trigger a multiplier effect amongst other girls (Chege and Sifuna, 2006). Other students will be influenced to engage in immoral acts since there is re-entry. They would become rude and lack respect for teachers. There is also fear of their numbers increasing in schools. However, having them in school ensures that they gain their right to education to build a career. Teachers of Guidance and Counseling feared that girls who re-enter schools after pregnancy will influence other girls to misbehavior. This view is supported by Association of Women Educators (2006). Due to peer pressure, there will be a tendency of the teen mothers to explain to the rest what they went through, thereby corrupting the otherwise good morals in the schools. Girls who re-entered after pregnancy lacked support from female teachers. Ogutu (2008) observed that there is some anti-female tendencies amongst some female teachers with their refusal to support pregnant school girls. They lack time to listen to and love these girls perceiving them as equals. Most are ridiculed and abused instead of being supported and encouraged to forge on. Females hate one another; they abuse and compete with each other. They do not want to be associated with failures. However some do support and encourage them, that's why they recommend their transfer to other schools and counsel those who re-enter on the dangers of pre-marital sex. They are motherly given that they are also parents. On the other hand, such girls look at female teachers as their "co-wives". Teachers feared stigma of immorality that is attached to schools that allowed re-entry. They are looked at as surrogate parents. That is why parents entrust them with their children. When a school girl falls pregnant then it is assumed that the school may have had a role in this especially if the cause is one of male teachers or classmate. Teachers then lacked the ability to condemn when the victim was within the system. Society then ended up labeling such schools as rehabilitation centers. Girls are ready to continue with schooling (Table 7). Those with the will to continue have noted and learnt from their mistakes. Some are remorseful and want to be educated so as to improve on their future. Having

realized where they strayed, they came with lots of determination. At present, a girl's chance of completing secondary school once she becomes pregnant and makes a decision to return to school is very low (Association of Women Educators, 2006). Girls are not aware of the re-entry policy. Respondents attributed this to ignorance. On the contrary, there are many cases that sought re-entry in schools. Girls know their rights to education and would want to start afresh. Information is passed through Guidance and Counseling departments and there abound a number of role models who have re-entered and succeeded as collaborated from the focus discussion group. Many have been sensitized. Most girls believed that they had the potential to reform. They regretted having fallen pregnant especially those who accidentally conceived. They believed it was an error which shouldn't ruin them. When talked to they identify their hidden talents and want to be given a second chance. On the contrary some get demoralized due to criticism.

According to the heads and teachers, space is still available. There were many cases of re-entry being sought in day secondary schools as opposed to boarding ones. In these schools, 'a girl needs not to be suspended due to pregnancy', reported the District Quality Assurance and Standard Officer. They simply stayed away only to resurface in another day school. The support coming from Non Governmental Organizations as a prospect was not encouraging. Respondents attributed this to little sensitization and funding coming by. However, quite a number of Non Government Organizations are championing girl child education and sponsor fees elsewhere. There was a belief that Ministry of Education was keen on secondary education by way of FSE in order to attain gender parity. Of particular interest is the girl child education. Through special bursary allocation to girl schools, the government supports secondary education. There are also funds for 'pockets' of poverty not to mention Constituency Development Funds. This prospect should give girls hope to re-enter. Society believed that girls cannot go back to schools once they drop out due to pregnancy. Most communities are not aware of re-entry policy (Mpesha, 2000). They believed that a girl's future in schooling stops at the altar of pregnancy. They viewed them as mature mothers who should take up child rearing responsibility or marriage. They viewed them as immoral and as failures who need not mix with others. They have let down their community and schools. However, those who have sought re-entry have been taken in, given their tender age. Girls believed that they cannot be allowed back into schools after being away due to pregnancy. Individual fears, self blame and low self esteem escalated this belief. Teen pregnancy in schools is equated to academic doom. It lays ground for indiscipline and is seen as going against norms set. Because of the way they were handled before being sent home, they feared going back to the same schools

believing that they are already destroyed. Based on their ignorance, many girls are unaware of re-entry policy guidelines. Some haven't seen others seek and obtain re-entry. Lack of information makes them stay away. Girls feared being frowned at by their schoolmates who knew their reasons for dropping out of schools. Frowning is evidenced during sports days and music festivals. Despite the above those who have re-entered are considered to have weathered the storm. They have courage. With schools being within close range in locality, school mates of different schools share villages. District Quality Assurance and Standard Officer indicated that 'even if re-entry is allowed in a different school from the one attended earlier, the neighbor hoods would know given the distance apart'. Girls feared being ridiculed and discriminated against. Though they may not re-enter the same schools, there is always gossiping and mocking about being seen as mothers not worthy being in class. This challenge kept the girls out of schools especially if it is accompanied by physical changes that go with motherhood. Going by the out come listed by respondents, there was little belief that girls who become pregnant should be punished. Girls indicated that their being kept out of schools due to pregnancy was a punishment which needn't be repeated. Some head teachers and teachers were of the opinion that these girls should be discontinued since they were given a chance and they never utilized it. There is a belief that they have wronged the society by going against norms and expectation. However, many are seeking re-entry to demystify this belief.

Girls who have delivered children have developed low self esteem. This is supported by Kasente (1990) who views this as a challenge amongst females. Lack of suitable role models compounds the problem. Therefore, it is apparent that those who have sought re-entry must be having high self esteem. Similarly, girls who dropped out of schools due to pregnancy felt shy to seek re-entry. Respondents attributed this to fear and feelings of shame. Girls lacked confidence to challenge their expulsion from schools. Head teachers are well placed to expel pregnant school girls. Girls lack courage to face school administration and economic power to withstand legal issues making this challenge to stand out. The girls are gullible and there has never been any support forthcoming for such an action. Lack of a maid to look after the baby keeps the girl at home. This finding is in agreement with Mwakio (2007) views. However, cases have been witnessed where mothers take charge of the young babies to enable daughters go back to school. The fear of being labeled as mothers is a major challenge to re-entry. Teen mothers are discriminated against and labeled mothers, grandmothers and old mothers. This keeps them away. In the discussion held with girls, many confessed that teachers sometimes use them as examples in lessons requiring responses from adult mothers. This kills their morale and the will to continue.

Similarly, lack of school fees kept the girls at home. Girls are viewed as an important source of income for their families in terms of bride price and household production. Any need for additional household income often takes priority over education (Chege and Sifuna, 2006). How else does one explain lack of funds for fees as a challenge to re-entry only after the girl has dropped out due to pregnancy? Despite this, parents are still seeking it, supported by FSE and bursary. Finally, girls who conceived at a young age and consequently dropped out of schools were frowned at and viewed as immoral. This finding is consistent with Nyassy (2007) observation that these girls are seen as easy prey for immoral practices.

There was a general belief that school girls who have delivered children are spoiled. Having been involved in sexual matters in their early years and having deviated from societal norms it is concluded that chances of repeating the same were high. With this in mind, there is a general feeling that she may not complete her course. Further, there is belief that teen pregnancy is associated with being indisciplined hence spoiled. Parental negative attitude towards re-entry was found to influence re-entry of girls. When girls left schools due to pregnancy, some parents considered them as counter parts parents other than daughters. Therefore, there is no need for re-entry. Instead, they were to take care of the babies, just like the adults do. On the other hand, knowledgeable parents think otherwise. They seek re-entry, despite feelings of having wasted their money in the first place. Lack of a maid to take care of the baby so that the girl can return to school is a major challenge especially for those from poor families. Guidelines stipulate that parents should be sensitized on the rights of the girls to education even after pregnancy and that they should support their grandchild (Bendera and Mboya, 1996). The fear that the girl might get pregnant again was quite evidenced amongst the respondents. This was attributed to parental fear and worry about wasting money on the education of girls who are likely to get pregnant or get married before completing schooling. Parental unawareness on re-entry was confirmed by most parents. This finding was in agreement with Mpesha (2000) view that communities are not aware of re-entry policy. According to Nkinyangi (2005), the policy has not been internalized and mainstreamed in the education system. It exists more at policy level than in practice. Besides, there is stigma associated with having teen mothers in schools. Respondents attributed this to the fact that such girls were a challenge to handle and therefore needed special attention and rehabilitation. They were considered immoral and there is fear that this vice would attract a bad name for the schools, giving them bad image. Some found it difficult interacting with fellow students partly due to their conscience or to their changed physical shapes. However, some weather all these to complete schooling. The fear that girls who re-entered after pregnancy will be of bad influence to others was a factor that needed to be

militated against. Respondents observed that bad company spoils. Since girls who returned to schools after pregnancy were considered immoral there was fear that they may influence others through sharing of the experiences resulting into the spread of the vice. Because of this, parents and teachers warned their daughters not to be found in the company of girls who have children. Having returned, they will be viewed as heroes sending signals that there is no need to be careful since you can re-enter after pregnancy. They may make the rest not fear the consequences of being pregnant while at school. The expectation that such girls should marry off was also found to influence re-entry. When girls left schools due to pregnancy they are expected to marry off to continue with family life. This is in consistent with Bayona and Kandji (1996) views that it is a cultural expectation for girls to marry when they conceive. It is understood that pregnancy and marriage go hand in hand. These girls are mature and have switched off from class work. Marriage will solve the problem of taking care of both the mother and child and it is the only open door for them. Through this, parents will obtain bride wealth and those with high levels of sexual desire will be contained. Besides there is a very high status accorded to marriage and parenthood (Chege and Sifuna 2006). Whosoever that is responsible for the pregnancy should marry them and their families compensated. However, given that these girls are under age and still of school going age, marriage is not an alternative. Re-entry policy is the best option available for them.

There was a common observation that it is a burden to raise the girl's child and still pay school fees. Within the nuclear families, there are a number of other extensions in the form of relations. One new born may not be a burden. Parents can bear, as evidenced from the cases that have sought re-entry. Alternative help can come from the very extended family or the child can be adopted, noted Mwololo (2008). The belief that girls who have had children should be socially isolated had influence on their re-entry. Drawing from the fact that they are already bad role models and that they are seen as sexually weak, teen mothers should not be allowed to mix with other girls. Parents chased them away considering them a disgrace to the society. Neighbors warned their daughters against getting close to pregnant school girls, lest they are introduced to men. On the other hand, they should not be isolated. They are part of our society. Giving birth while in school is not the end of life. Re-entry policy provides for safe passage to schools offering opportunities to make it in different careers. The degree of social isolation can be lessened by remaining at school (Association of Women Educators 2006). This is happening through re-entry, though there are reports of such girls being isolated especially in social gatherings reports Omondi (2008). There was a general belief that schools do not allow re-entry to girls who dropped out due to pregnancy. Parents need to know that not all is

lost when a daughter gets pregnant (Mwololo, 2008). She can still pick up the pieces and move on. The return to school policy is available to help them reconstruct their lives. The unawareness on the part of illiterate parents makes them not to believe. In the past, girls have been sent away without information on their re-entry. While it is observed that some parents know that schools are supposed to allow re-entry, some schools have not fully accepted the policy. The belief that one cannot be a student and a mother at the same time also influenced re-entry. Education for girls ends at the altar of pregnancy with her concentration shifting from books to the baby. There is role conflict, with both roles demanding mentally. Balance between these two roles will be a challenge in itself. Whereas some have been successful, it is believed that divided attention will not amount to much. However, parents are supportive in raising the new born. The few who re-enter have entrusted their babies under the care of their parents and siblings. Lack of funds for school fees was the reason girls remained at home. Early leaving of schools is a major factor in challenges and in shaping a set of circumstances which often spell a life of hardship and poverty for the young woman herself, her child and any other children she may have. Parents sacrifice to obtain school fees. Once a school girl becomes pregnant all of a sudden financial funding stops with emphasis on how she has wasted the funds already. On the contrary, some parents have managed to raise fees.

Providing maternity break followed by unconditional re-entry is a strategy that should be considered. Teachers of Guidance and Counseling were in agreement claiming that it was already happening after all. In support, Omondi (2008) noted that the policy says that girls who become pregnant while in schools should be re-admitted unconditionally to continue with their education soon after the maternity break. The government is set to strengthen the re-entry of girls after weaning off the babies and together with other stakeholders sensitize communities in negative socio cultural practices that reduce the effective participation of girls in education (Mulama, 2006). Maternity break will allow recovery and condition both head teachers and parents to assist the girl. With cooperative implementers unconditional re-entry will ensure that potential performers are given a second chance to excel. Further it emerged that allowing re-entry in the same school helped cut down on the cost of education. Even though the girl will not pay for school projects, caution money and retain the same uniform, she will not feel comfortable and will have to content with being made fun of. This is recommended for those who are confident and courageous. Same school is too familiar and the girl will require less adjustment. However, there are those who content that this will set a bad precedence for the school, and will lower the girl's self esteem.

Allowing re-entry in a different school to minimize stigma is a strategy that can be utilized to cope with

challenges of implementing the policy on re-entry (Table 10). This finding is in agreement with Mpesha (2000) views that re-entry in a different school should be allowed to reduce not only psychological and emotional suffering but also to minimize stigma. A new environment where her past is unknown will help the girl settle fast and socialize better. Change of schools reduces stigma, prevents ridicule and boosts confidence. 'This strategy is very popular in the district' noted the District Quality Assurance and Standard Officer. This was due to the fact that maybe the boy responsible for the pregnancy was in the previous school. Within the schools establishing gender responsive Guidance and Counseling programs will strengthen the Guidance and Counseling departments, helping teen mothers and others in similar circumstances. This strategy was expected to teach sexual education making girls informed on how to minimize pregnancy. Teachers of Guidance and Counseling will be given the added skills. Ensuring that teachers are in touch with the girl to plan for her placement is another strategy. Respondents noted that this will enhance the girls' self image making the students feel wanted and consequently improve on her future performance. Knowing that teachers are best placed to find new schools, this will assure girls of going back to schools. A sense of belonging will be developed with a possibility of catching up on lost time. The girl will also keep abreast with what's happening at school. However, this is not happening with a claim that the teachers are too busy. Allowing the girl to study until delivery date was unacceptable (Table 10). The fear of some delivering in dormitories in addition to stress that accompanies it makes this strategy impracticable. Granted, allowing one to study until when due to enable her keep abreast with the syllabus and minimize wastage in schooling is only possible if she can cope with the uncomfortable school routine. On the contrary, it is obvious that schools do not have facilities for tired expectant girls, reason why they are sent home except those sitting their exams.

Ensuring that teachers are in contact with the girl who was sent away due to pregnancy prepares the girl for re-entry and subsequent continuity. It builds her self esteem and fosters good working relationship. Constant contacts will give them direction promoting and encouraging their re-entry thereby minimizing drastic drop in academic performance. Rarely does this happen except for girls who are in an exam class. Teachers see this as a parental obligation yet the policy demands that it happens so. Based on this argument it is not surprising that only a few of the respondents supported this strategy. Inviting parents to schools for guidance and counseling will not only help them to accept the situation but also sensitize them to create awareness on the need for re-entry of girls after delivery. It is understood that parents have greater influence on their children. Therefore, talking them out of anger can help them accept and support their child. Inviting parents to schools can be only possible before

their daughters sneak away. The policy is very particular about parents being invited to schools to discuss the condition of their daughters. 'It is easier for boarding schools to do it than mixed day schools', noted the District Quality Assurance and Standard Officer. In mixed day schools pregnant girls arranged their departure before the school noticed only to resurface elsewhere.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the prospects available for the head teachers in the implementation of re-entry policy included the following: the schools' willingness to allow re-entry, head teachers' knowledge of the value of implementation of re-entry policy and their willingness to support the girls who seek re-entry, availability of space and the fact that re-entry can be sought in other schools. The study concluded that the challenges faced by the head teachers in the implementation of re-entry policy included the following: lack of policy guidelines, fear that the schools will be ostracized if they allowed re-entry, fear of having mothers in schools, the fact that peers will frown at them, and that re-entry is allowed early in the calendar year. The study concluded that the challenges faced by the teachers of Guidance and Counseling in the implementation of re-entry policy included the following: lack of adequate training, unawareness on re-entry and fear of bad influence these girls will have on others. The study concluded that the prospects for the girls as they seek re-entry in secondary schools included the following: their readiness to continue, availability of space in schools and their belief that they have the potential to reform. The study concluded that the challenges faced by the girls as they seek re-entry in secondary schools included the following: fear of being ridiculed and discriminated against, shyness, low self esteem, lack of a maid, fear of being frowned at and fear of being labeled as a mother. The study concluded that the community factors that influenced the implementation of re-entry policy included the following: parental unawareness on re-entry, fear of a second pregnancy, fear of bad influence, belief that it is hard for one to be a student and mother at the same time, and the feeling that it was a burden to raise the child and still pay fees. The study concluded that the strategies of coping with the challenges of implementing the re-entry policy included the following: allowing re-entry in different schools from those originally attended and inviting parents for guidance and counseling.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ministry of Education should sensitize school heads and Field Education Officers on the importance of implementation of the re-entry policy so that girls who

drop out due to pregnancy can re-enter.

Schools to allow unconditional re-entry of teen mothers provided they fulfill other school requirements necessary for their learning.

Head teachers should take initiative and sensitize parents on the need to return girls to their former schools after maternity leave.

School communities should mitigate stigma so as to create a need for teen mothers to accept to return to school and continue learning.

Parents should be encouraged by head teachers, civil societies and the government to consider taking care of the babies to allow girls to return to school.

Head teachers should consider setting up gender responsive guidance and counseling programs to teach matters related to sexuality as it would help in rehabilitation of teen mothers.

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