



Graduate School of Development Studies

**Disabling Barriers to Girls' Primary Education in
Arua District – An Intersectional Analysis**

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Dedication

To my little son Jonathan and my mum Ruth.

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List of Acronyms

ABEK	Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja
COPE	Complementary Opportunity for Primary Education
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
EFA	Education For All
EIC	Equity In the Classroom
EPRC	Education Policy Review Commission
ESIP	Education Strategic Investment Plan
FAWE	Foundation for African Women Educationalists
FAWE U	Foundation for African Women Educationalists Uganda chapter
FRESH	Focusing Resources for Effective School Health
GoU	Government of Uganda
HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Network
MDGs	Millenium Development Goals
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
NAPW	National Action Plan on Women
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
NGP	National Gender Policy
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PLE	Primary Leaving Examinations
PTA	Parents and Teachers' Association
SFG	School Facilities Grant
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UDHS	Uganda Demographic and Health Survey
UNAIDS	The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNEB	Uganda National Examinations Board
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

Abstract

Equal access to education for all children is a basic human right. Educating girls is particularly an effective way of eradicating poverty and the positive effects of education for girls on the health and welfare of families as well as on economic opportunities and social transformation on a larger scale are well documented. Despite this, however, several barriers still hinder girls' educational participation, particularly in Uganda. This study analyzes how the intersection of poverty, geographical location and socio-cultural factors with gender shape the experiences of girls who have enrolled in primary school in Arua district under the UPE program. It further explores how the government, schools and communities are responding to the multiple and intersectional experiences of girls and this is accomplished through the application of the concept of intersectionality both as a theoretical and analytical tool. Through a critical analysis the study establishes how the misrecognition of multiple and intersectional experiences produce chains of discriminations for girls who are at the junction of the intersections. The study concludes that although girls are more disadvantaged than boys in as far as gender equity in education is concerned the best way to address this is not to halt the one who has an edge but rather to remove everything that serves as an impediment to freedom and equal opportunities.

Chapter One: Introduction and Insights about the Research

1.1 Introduction and general background

‘If “education for all” is the rallying cry of educators in the 1990s, then in no learner group is the challenge of attaining this goal greater than in the case of girls’(Tietjen 1991:10).

This study is concerned with girls’ primary education in Arua district in Uganda who enrolled through the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program. Gender disparity in education is a salient feature of Uganda’s education system right from the primary school level and in recognition of this, the government through the ministry of education and sports has been implementing the UPE program since 1997. Under UPE program, all children have equal access to primary education irrespective of their sex and indeed following the introduction and implementation of this program, girls’ enrolment has increased significantly. However, a key observation has been that the retention and completion rates have still failed to match the enrolment due to the prevalence of high drop out rate (Moes 1999).

The Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) as Uganda’s comprehensive development framework highlights education as one of the instruments for enhancing the quality of life of the poor (Mofped 2004). Primary education is perceived to benefit the poor directly by bringing higher incomes, better health and empowerment, especially for girls. The Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP) 1998-2003 commits government to allocate at least one quarter of public expenditure to the education sector for this period. Most of this money has gone towards supporting Universal Primary Education (UPE). The current National Constitution includes elements of economic and social rights that help to underpin efforts to mainstream gender equality in policies and programmes but high levels of poverty and resilience of patriarchal social constructs play a big role in constraining the impact of many well intentioned policies (D. Kasente 2003).

As a result of two decades of war and civil strife in Uganda, the Education System, especially at lower levels, suffered from years of neglect resulting into poor enrolment, high drop-out rates, high attrition rate and a low completion rate at primary school level and dramatic differences in enrolment between geographical locations and individual schools and an overall system showing very low efficiency in terms of total cost per child. According to (Moes 2001), parental contributions to school maintenance (including partial

support to teachers' salaries) accounted for 50 – 75% of all school financial requirements despite low government tuition fees and such dues resulted into poor parents not being able to enrol all (or any) of their children in school. 'Generally, enrolment at primary school level was much lower before the introduction of the Education Reform.' (Ibid: 6) This is reiterated by (Fawe 2000) that the capacity to manage the education sector is increasingly under threat due to rising levels of poverty which have reduced families' abilities to provide for the basic needs of their children, including education, and this is reflected in growing rates of school dropout particularly among girls. According to (Moes 1999:6), disparities between rural and urban areas and regional imbalances in the provision of educational facilities have increased over the years as well as increased cost of education. As a result, the quality of education suffered greatly with many students dropping out prematurely at the primary level and millions of children remained totally uneducated which meant low gains on whatever resources government spent on education.

Having recognized that tuition was one of the major barriers for the majority of its population which is poor, the Uganda government launched UPE in 1997 and since then the country's primary enrolment rates have risen remarkably. At present, over 7.7 million (about 89%) of primary school age children attend primary school (Unesco (No date):31). However, research in the recent past has indicated that gender inequalities in education in general and primary education in particular have persisted in the rural areas of Uganda. Despite increased enrolment and considerable improvement in the education of the girl-child since the introduction of UPE in 1997, many more girls than boys still have limited or even no access at all to primary education. In Uganda in general, inequities associated with high levels of poverty, high opportunity costs, gender, geographical isolation, little or no education for parents, especially mothers and socio-cultural traditions persist. According to MoFPED in 1998 just a year after UPE was introduced in Uganda, there was a clear gap at all levels of primary education but by 2003, the gap was small only during the first five grades implying that the gap remained or rather became bigger and more evident in the last two grades of the primary cycle (Mofped 2004).

According to (M. Ward, Penny, A., & Read, T 2006), substantive reduction of the gender gap in enrolment at primary level is mainly related to deliberate government policy to improve the social sector, particularly education, health and water and sanitation. Since 1997, government's main education priority is to ensure that all children enrol in primary school. The plan tries to address gender concerns and sets specific output targets for

different components. For example, as part of the UPE programme, school buildings and facilities have been provided by government through a School Facilities Grant (SFG) which is fully supported by funding partners. The grant includes funds for compulsory provision of separate latrines with doors, for girls and boys (D. Kasente 2003). The grant operates through a ranking system which prioritises poorest schools and rewards schools with 48% or more girls' enrolment.

Uganda has made substantial progress in social and economic development since 1986, but several challenges remain. Although free primary education is available to all Ugandan children, only 60% complete primary school. Adult literacy rate was 69% (as of 2006), with female adult literacy rate of 59.2% (as of 2004); net enrolment ratio in primary education was 90% and ratio of boys to girls in primary education – 1.01; in secondary education – 0.85 and the ratio of literate women to men – 0.89 (both as of 2006) (Ubos 2008). In addition, data available shows that girls' enrolment at secondary school level has consistently lagged behind that of boys by about 20% and the gap is persistently wider than at primary school level because of the perception by government and funding partners that the poor benefit less directly from secondary education and because it does not contribute directly to the realization of the PEAP development framework (D. Kasente 2003).

Trend data on access as shown by enrollment data from the Ministry of Education and Sports indicates progressive increase of girls' enrollment into primary schools. The available data (Ubos 2002) indicates that 87% of primary school age children (6-12 years) attend school (87.3% boys and 86.9% girls). While attendance is higher today compared to ten years ago, there are regional differences with the highest attendance rates in the Eastern region (94.3% boys and 93% girls) and the lowest in the Northern region (84.1% boys and 80.6% girls). Arua district where this study was carried out is found in Northern Uganda. Trends show a clear move towards parity in access between boys and girls and towards universal enrollment of all school age population at primary level.

The problems facing Uganda's educational system can not, however, be over-generalized because of the diversity characterizing its history which makes some problems peculiar to certain regions. This means for example, that while the education of girls and women is characterized by lower enrolment than that of boys, in most regions females enrol in larger numbers at the lower primary levels than males, which numbers begin reducing midway in the cycle and drop drastically by the end of the cycle. In Uganda,

variations in female educational participation¹ between geographical regions and within the socio-economic strata is quite significant and the similarity of problems in most rural parts of the country nevertheless, makes concern over female education pertinent and deserving of special attention.

1.2 Objectives and Research Questions

This study has three objectives. First, it aims at establishing why gender inequalities in primary education persist despite deliberate efforts to eradicate them; second, to analyze the interaction of gender with poverty, geographical location (rurality), and socio-cultural factors in mediating the lived experiences of girls who have enrolled in primary education under Universal Primary Education; and to evaluate the extent to which the government, schools and communities are responding to the challenges of the multiple and intersectional experiences of girls.

The study has two research questions; *first, to what extent is the persistence of gender inequalities in Primary Education under UPE attributable to the interface between poverty, geographical location (rurality) and socio-cultural factors?* *Second, how are government, schools and communities responding to the barriers to girls' educational participation?*

1.3 Methodology

Methodology and methods

The nature of the research questions necessitated the use of a qualitative methodology necessary to get insights on the subject in question and hence the research mainly relied on in-depth interviews with girls both in school and those who had dropped out of school. Additional interviews were also held with parents/guardians and some key informants.

¹ Educational participation, for the purposes of this report encompasses the measures of access, persistence and achievement which are used synonymously with enrolment, attainment and performance respectively.

Two group interviews were held with girls and boys in school and these acted as an entry point to familiarise with the situation. Both group interviews sought the general knowledge, opinions and/or experience of the participants on girls' education and while for the girls the questions in a way directly related to their experiences, for the boys it mainly sought their thoughts about girls' education. Through this, it became easier to select the four girls for in-depth interviews.

As secondary data, statistical information from MoES and other official government documents such as national demographic and health surveys; district primary school enrolment; district primary leaving exams results plus enrolment and PLE performance of the particular school that was visited were also analyzed.

Study area and participants

This study was conducted in Arua district in the education department and Arua demonstration school. The district was selected both purposively and conveniently for being remote, one of the poorest in the country (sixth poorest according to UBOS) and the researcher being fairly knowledgeable and familiar with the district, considering the short research period. The school on the other hand, was also purposively selected for being the only demonstration school in the district, meaning that it has a fair representation of children of all (dis)abilities. As a demonstration school, it provides an all-inclusive education to all children of school-going age and shows 'good examples' to other schools. According to its 2008 enrolment that was visibly displayed in the head-teacher's office, the school has a total of 1613 pupils, 810 males and 803 females; 269 of them orphans, 119 males and 150 females; and 46 of them having various handicaps, 25 male and 21 female. The school also has the required government staff ceiling of 25 teaching staff, 7 male and 18 female including the head-teacher and one of the two deputy head-teachers.

There were 36 participants in the study; 9 school girls randomly selected from upper classes P.5-P.7 where drop-out is highest and because they are expected to have the experience after surviving the lower classes. All took part in the group interview while only 4 were randomly selected for individual interviews; 9 in-school boys randomly selected from P.5-P.7 but only taking part in group interview; 6 key informants purposively selected for being knowledgeable about the subject; 6 parents/guardians randomly selected because they are key decision makers when it comes to which of the children should (not) attend school and 6 school drop-outs conveniently selected because they were easily accessible.

Table 1: List of participants in the study

S/No.	Participant Category	Number
01	In-school girls	9
02	In-school boys	9
03	Out-of-school girls	6
04	Parents/guardians	6
05	Key informants	6
	Total	36

Source: Author

Data Analysis and presentation

The qualitative data was analysed according to the content of the interviews and responses were grouped according to themes and presented in form of statements. In addition, individual interpretations, judgements, opinions and conclusions have been made and drawn and some of these are complemented with quotations from the qualitative primary data in order to give it more meaning.

The research employed in-depth interviews and since it also used a combination of methods, triangulation was made possible because data that was analysed came from secondary sources, interviews and literature among others.

Organization of the report

This paper comprises five chapters. Chapter one is an introductory chapter that gives a general background, research objectives and questions and the methodology. Chapter two reviews literature on gender and education while chapters three and four which form the core of the paper analyze the empirical findings of the study whereby chapter three presents the barriers to girls' educational participation while chapter four presents the responses to the challenges of girls' multiple and intersectional experiences in an attempt to answer the research questions. The final chapter gives a summary and conclusion of the study.

Chapter Two: Gender and Education – A Review of Literature

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the relevant literature on gender and education. There is overwhelming evidence that there is a direct relationship between education and development and that girls' education directly contributes to sustainable development. It is further well documented that educating girls and women is an *important* investment that yields maximum returns for development. The infant mortality rates decrease, children have a higher probability of getting a good education and most importantly women become income generators, which increase the economic power-base of the family. Therefore, the most important issue in any country is the number of girls that have access to education and the quality of education they receive as measured by levels of retention and performance (Fawe 2001, Unicef 2005).

In the following sections, we present the relevant literature that explores the major themes of the study and the analytical framework. The literature is sub-divided as barriers to girls' educational participation and response strategies or how these barriers have been dealt with. The research notes that although all the barriers affect children generally, the effects are more on girl children. The barriers to girls' educational participation are a maze of socio-cultural, economic and political realities that vary from one community and family to another and although the literature mentions other barriers, the focus of the research is on poverty, geographical location and socio-cultural factors.

2.1 Literature review

Barriers to girls' educational participation

(Unicef 2003a) indicates that as a tool for empowerment and sustainable development, education in particular can serve as a door to poverty reduction, with girls' education a key to unlocking its full transformative potential. This has been recognized in the MDGs for education and gender which take up the EFA goals of eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015, as well as ensuring that, by 2015, all children everywhere will be able to complete primary school. These targets are echoed in the *World Fit For Children* adopted at the Special

Session for Children and are enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child which recognizes the right of all children everywhere to a quality education. Educational inequality is a major violation of the rights of women and girls and an important barrier to social, economic, and personal development. In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights acknowledged that everyone has the right to education (UDHR Article 26). Since then a number of treaties and declarations have been adopted to turn this aspiration into reality². Nevertheless, discrimination against females in education remains pervasive in most societies. The Jomtien Declaration (1990) and the Dakar Framework for Action (2000) strive to go largely beyond the human rights treaties. With time-bound targets they are more achievement-oriented and facilitate monitoring of progress. However, the result by 2005 was that seventy countries failed to meet the second MDGs’ target – more than 100 million children remain out of school out of which two-thirds are girls. Although the highest numbers of out-of-school girls are found in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, and Nigeria, enrolment of girls in Uganda increased from a dismal 1,420,883 in 1996 to 3,632,838 in 2004 and has been gradually reducing³. Consequently, the Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) for females in Arua district is 4.37% compared to 8.51% for male (Ubos 2002: 33).

The fact that UPE has not attracted all children shows that making schooling free does not necessarily get all children to school and that more effort is required to address the problems that continue to keep children from going to school and that keep the gender gap in access in place. For the children that are not enrolled in school, there are explanations for what drives the decisions taken by their parents/guardians. A comparison of five top reasons for non-enrolment in 1997 and 2001 is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Key reasons for never attending school by sex in 1997 & 2001 in Uganda

Reason for never attending school	Boys	Girls
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² The two most recent conventions – on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and on the Rights of the Child – contain the most comprehensive set of legally enforceable commitments concerning both rights to education and to gender equality.

³ Annual National School Census in Uganda (2007) indicates that 3,272,637 girls against 3,337,040 boys were in school.

	%	%
1. 1997 Uganda DHS Survey (from age 6 years)		
Too young/sickly/disabled (Physical considerations)	53.2	34.3
Monetary costs	22.4	29.5
Child indifferent to education	15.1	23.6
Orphaned	2.4	5.2
Need to work	2.7	3.8
2. 2001 DHS Education Data Survey (age 6-18)		
School too far	21.6	26.3
Labour needed	14.4	24.4
Monetary costs	24.2	22.5
Disabled	15.6	17.9
Too young	17.8	17.3

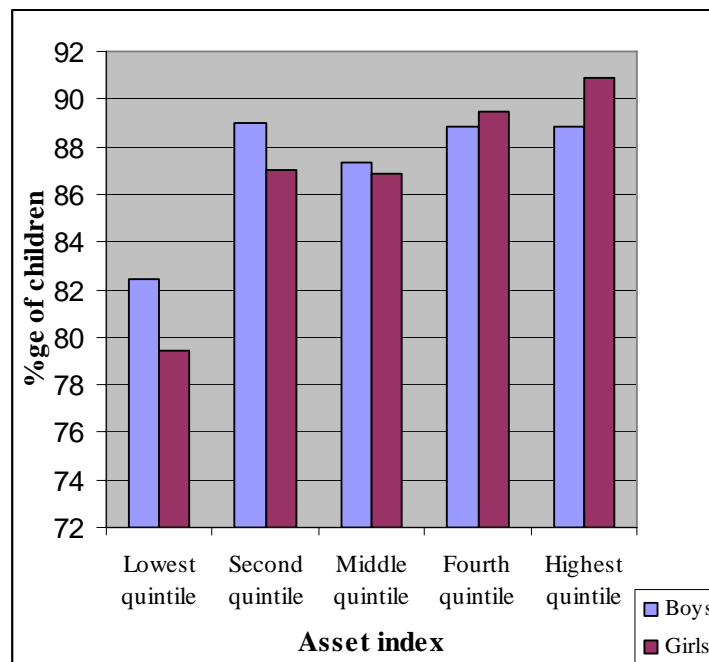
Currently, concern about the girl child's safety, need for her labour and monetary costs top the factors that drive decision to enrol her in school, for the boy it is monetary costs, school distance and the child's physical readiness that drive the decision to enrol him in school. There is evidence of a shift in concerns that were expressed at the start of UPE in 1997 where the reasons were the same for boys and girls but with variation only in emphasis. At that time, decision to enrol a child in school was predominantly shaped by the perceived physical readiness of the child, monetary costs and the child's interest to go to school. For the girl to enrol the considerations seem to take the trend; is it accessible and safe, can we do without her labour, can we afford it while for the boy it is: can we afford it, is it safe and accessible, is he fit? It would appear that the girls' comfort and safety and the need or not for labour take precedence over monetary affordability to determine whether she can enrol in school or not. But for the boy, if it can be afforded, he will enrol in school as long as the school is not far and he is physically fit.

Poverty

Unsurprisingly, household survey data incorporated in the global study show that children of primary school age who live in the poorest 20 percent of households are three times more likely to be out-of-school than children living in the richest 20 percent (J. Kirk

2005). (Herz 2004) corroborates the above finding that this is quite predictable given that fees for tuition and other costs of attending school can sometimes amount to 20-40 percent of a household's income. Even where education is provided "free of charge" by the state, families incur substantial expenses in sending children to school. Among these costs are those of transport, uniforms, textbooks, school supplies and ancillary fees charged directly and retained by the school to supplement its budget. For instance the figure below shows Uganda's primary school net attendance ratio by wealth.

Figure 1: Uganda's Primary School Net Attendance Ratio by Wealth



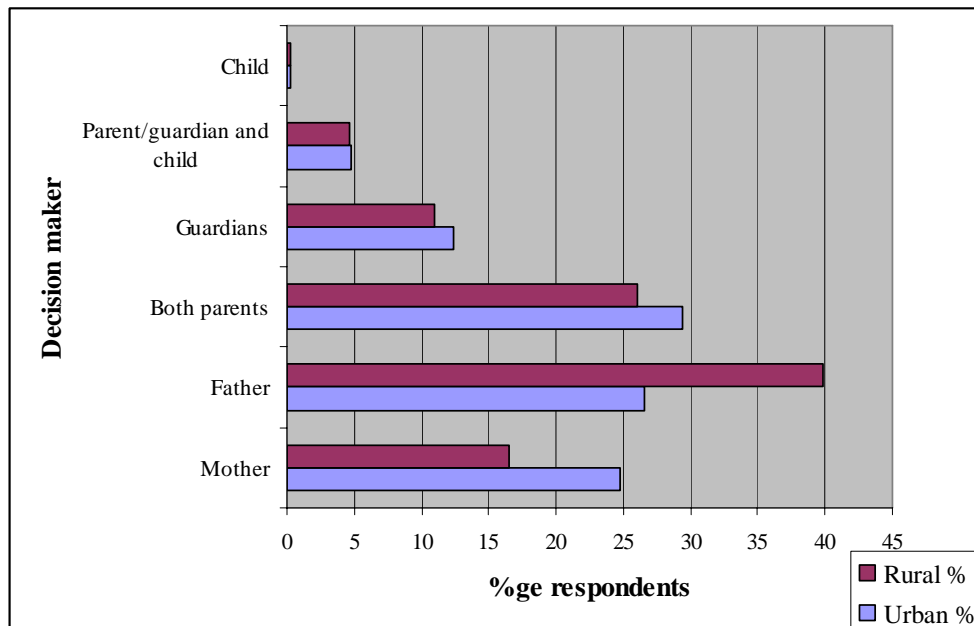
Source: Uganda DHS Education Data Survey 2001 pp38

Although no trend data was found to compare with, literature from several studies illustrates low attendance rates among the poor, especially before UPE started in 1997. However, as the data shows, there is a wider gap in access among girls from the lowest and highest wealth quintiles than there is among boys. This pattern is reflected in higher levels of education where most of the girls that access secondary and, much more so, higher education tend to come from middle and above wealth quintiles while the pattern for boys has a fairer representation across all wealth categories (Kasente 1995).

Among the most serious obstacles that children from poor social groups face is the high opportunity cost that a child's family incurs from the loss of that child's labour in the formal or informal sector and resulting reduction in household income earning potential.

There is a lot of empirical evidence pointing to the fact that the necessity for children to perform economically important tasks that support their household survival limits their participation in education, especially in rural and urban squatter groups (Anderson 1988; Lockheed and Verspoor 1992) in (Chimombo 2005:131). Lloyd and Blanc 1996 in (Ibid) further noted that even when schools are accessible and affordable, families have to see a net advantage to themselves and their children from forgoing children’s full-time participation in domestic and economic activities further arguing that in countries where the state has limited powers to enforce compulsory schooling laws, families serve as their children’s gate-keepers through their control over children’s access to the educational resources made available by the state. Despite UPE, decisions still get taken that deny 12.7% boys and 13.1% girls of school-going-age from getting access to primary school education. Research shows that the children themselves hardly make these decisions but rather it is their parents, guardians and relatives (Moes 1999). While more than one member of the household may have input in the decision for a child to start school, there is evidence that the final decision is made as indicated in Figure 2. The total number of parents and guardians that participated in the study were 4,246 sampled from all regions of the country.

Figure 2: Household Decision-making about Children’s School Enrolment in Uganda



Source: Figure generated by the researcher as accessed from Uganda DHS Education Data Survey 2001 pp. 51

Figure 2 indicates that the child's father emerges as key in deciding a child's enrolment, this trend being more prevalent in the rural areas and highest in the Northern region (55.9%). The Northern region also has the lowest enrolment rates for girls in the country, but it is followed by the Eastern region (44%) which also has the highest girls' enrolment rates. Joint decision making by both parents is next, more prevalent in urban and highest in the Western region. The role of a father as household head and decision maker comes through as one of the key influencing factors in taking the decision for boys and girls to enrol in school, especially in the rural areas. In the Eastern region where there is the highest rate of enrolment for girls, mothers also have the least decision making power over a child's enrolment, thus showing that fathers can be key players in enhancing girls' access to primary education. It should also be noted that in urban areas and some regions, a mother either jointly with the father or singly can influence the decision for a child to enrol in school.

Table 3 gives an indication of dropout rates in Uganda five years since 1997 when UPE was introduced in the country.

Table 3: Percentage of Primary One Cohort Reaching Primary Five (1997-2001)

Year	Level	Total	Girls	Boys	Girls%	Boys %	Both%
1997	P1	2,159,850	1,057,504	1,102,346	49	51	100
1998	P2	1,312,593	640,648	671,945	30	31	61
1999	P3	1,128,216	543,804	584,412	25	27	52
2000	P4	962,052	466,098	495,954	22	23	45
2001	P5	832,855	403,713	429,142	19	20	39

Source: Statistics Abstract, 2005.

Recent studies done on causes of children dropping out of primary school show that multiple social-economic related factors in the community and in the school are key in causing dropout and these are location specific and varied for boys and girls (D.H. Kasente, Nakanyike, M. Balihuta, A 2003, Ubo 2002). The DHS survey (2001), which had a national coverage, established that the majority of school going boys and girls aged 6-18 who have left school dropped out during primary school. Only about 10% dropped out while attending secondary school. The mean age at dropout for boys and girls is 13, indicating

that children dropout at the time they are supposed to be completing primary school. The main causes of dropout can be multiple and are indicated in Table 4.

Table 4: Main Causes of Dropout at Primary School Level in Uganda

Reason for Dropout	Boys%	Girls%
Monetary cost(school fund, uniform, text & exercise books, supplies)	57.9	51.3
Labour needed	8.7	15.9
Failed exams and did not want to repeat	10.9	10.1
Child perception that had enough schooling	28.2	20.9
Disability or illness	11.2	8.5
School too far	3.4	3.0
Travel to school unsafe	2.5	2.6
Poor school quality	1.4	2.4
No secondary school places	3.3	5.7
Number of dropouts that participated in study	415	363

Source: Uganda DHS Education Data Survey 2001 pp 59

The monetary costs of schooling continue to lead reasons for dropout even with UPE. Cost is cited as a factor more in urban than in rural areas. Children's low aspiration for post primary education is the next important factor for dropping out of primary school, more pronounced among older children (13-18 years), more so boys, particularly in the Eastern region. The main attraction for boys outside school seems to be petty business to make their own money while it is early marriage and pregnancy in the case of girls (Ibid).

Geographical location

The place of residence is another significant factor of school enrolment. (Unesco 2005a) indicates that the proportion of children out-of-school is greater in rural areas, where incidentally poverty is also concentrated (30 percent vs. 18 percent) due to the insufficient development of roads, transportation, and large distance to school. Other issues with rural schools revolve around inadequate/lack of school facilities and supplies such as classrooms and furniture and instructional materials as well as the availability of (female) staff. In many rural parts of Uganda the nearest school is up to 3 Km away from home and yet most girls have to help their mothers with household chores early morning before going to school. Because of the number of chores, they are hardly left with any time for breakfast, forcing them to go to school and usually spend the whole day without a meal. After school when they return home they have to work again fetching water, fire wood and cleaning up

hardly leaving them time to concentrate on homework and usually, if not always rendering them tired both in the mornings and evenings. During the rainy season and on market days many still can't attend school because they have to help their mothers on the family farm and help sell the farm produce in order to raise some household income in the market. At school the situation is not any better, particularly with regard to infrastructure. Due to inadequate furniture, the lower classes, usually P.1-P.3 have to sit on the floor (with a few lucky ones sitting on mats if they have brought one from home) until progressing to using benches and desks in the last classes of the cycle. While this progress is a big motivation for some children to have the chance to use the last two facilities, it is also a big discouragement for others and hence forcing them to drop out along the way. Likewise, few of the school teachers are women and in many cases the only female teacher is the senior woman teacher, some of them being very harsh, unfriendly, threatening and unapproachable – their availability to girls always meaning something was wrong! Under such circumstances, difficulties in access and retention for rural girls are particularly acute (Challender 2005, Unesco 2000, Unicef 2003a).

Socio-cultural barriers

Parents' demand for the education of their daughters is low, reflecting both cultural norms and girls' work in and around the home. This is worsened by cultural perceptions of girls as childminders, marriage material and a burden to the family. In many cultures, parents decide that education is not worthwhile for their daughters who will move into their husbands' families when they marry and that the gains in productivity or income due to education will accrue to the families of the sons-in-law rather than to them. Some parents only educate their daughters with high bride price in mind because the more education a girl has, the higher the bride price payable. 'Literate parents are more likely than illiterate ones to enrol their daughters in school and at the same time regions with the highest proportions of illiterate adults are therefore those with the widest gender gaps.' It has been further documented that 36 percent of children whose mothers have no education are out-of-school compared to 16 percent for children of mothers with some education. Demographic surveys across the developing world show that a significant percentage of girls get married by the age of fifteen and with very few exceptions, marriage ends their schooling. Although teenage pregnancy has substantially declined from 43% in 1995 to the

current level of 31%, Uganda has the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Africa south of the Sahara and these pregnant teenagers usually drop out of school either by themselves or the school forces them to, while others are forced into early marriage. This adds to the vicious cycle of maternal illiteracy – diminishing the chance of daughters' schooling and studies show that maternal illiteracy is a far more significant factor than paternal illiteracy in depriving girls of schooling (Challender 2005, Chimombo 2005:133-134, Unesco 2005b, W.B. 2003).

In many countries traditional cultural practices strongly impact girls' enrolment. Where family resources are limited, families tend to place the highest priority on educating boys, recognizing them as future heads of household. Where girls are enrolled, they often face many more barriers to learning than boys do. For example, given the paucity of adequate day-care centres throughout much of the developing world and high levels of women's participation in the informal and formal labour markets, it is not uncommon for young girls to have to bring younger siblings to school with them, disrupting not only their own studies but those of other children (Leach 2003:75). Moreover, studies have revealed that on average, girls are likely to have far less time available after school to study. They typically have to assume a multitude of household chores including cooking, cleaning and even serving as a principal caregiver for younger siblings—responsibilities that boys are virtually never expected to assume (M. Ward, & Penny, A 2003). This study found that these competing demands on girls' time had translated into relatively poorer academic performance than their male counterparts, often leading to high repetition and, ultimately, higher dropout rates.

In addition, socio-cultural norms promulgating early marriage and childbirth cut short if not preclude girls' education in many countries. In many countries, girls who become pregnant (out of wedlock) are not permitted to return to school although no equal sanction is borne by the fathers of such children. Considering that one in five pregnancies in Africa occurs among teenagers aged 13-19 and that more than 50 percent of girls are

married before the age of 18, these norms become significant obstacles on girls' path to education⁴.

Other barriers

A (Fawe 2000) study found that 32 per cent of primary schools in Uganda had no toilets and no hand-washing facilities. Data from 30 African countries indicates that a majority of young women do not attend school when they are menstruating if there are no private latrine facilities to enable them to care for personal hygiene, World Bank cited in (Task-Force 2005). This factor causes limited access to school and particularly affects girls, because they are more vulnerable than boys to study in a school with no hygienic facilities. The lack of adequate sanitation facilities also primarily affects both (female) pupils and teachers. As reported by The New York Times in 2005, “researchers throughout Sub-Saharan Africa like (Leach 2003) have documented that lack of sanitary pads, a clean, girls-only latrine with doors and water for washing hands drives a significant number of girls from school. The United Nations Children's Fund, for example, estimates that one-in-ten school-age African girls either skips school during menstruation or drops out entirely because of lack of sanitation.”⁵

In Uganda about 880,000 people out of a total population of 24.4 million are living with HIV (UNAIDS/WHO, 2005a, b). According to UNAIDS (2004), teenage girls are five times more likely to contract HIV than boys. In Uganda, women account for more than half of adults living with HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS, 2004 in (Kakuru 2006:54). HIV/AIDS has adversely affected the provision of education through the loss of qualified human resources. Many children have also become orphans and have dropped out of school for lack of financial and other support while others, particularly girls, have dropped out to support ailing parents and other family members. Today, over 50% of the young people world-wide are sexually active by the age of 17 years as a result of an earlier onset of

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http://www.Oxfam.Org.Uk/What_We_Do/Issues/Gender/Links/1105yemen.Htm,I.R.I.N Namibia 2005.

⁵ *Another School Barrier for African Girls: No Toilet*. The New York Times, 23 December 2005.
http://www1.worldbank.org/education/efafti/documents/NYT_article_girlsdec2305.pdf

puberty as well as poverty, particularly in developing countries where sex is sometimes used as a means of exchange/source of income. In this era of HIV/AIDS for instance, household responses to the impact of the epidemic not only decrease children's capability to attend school but also their learning and equal participation and this is particularly true with response measures such as girls' involvement in sex for financial/economic gains which expose them to the risk of contracting HIV. This partly explains why today's young people are more affected with sexual health problems such as teenage pregnancy & early motherhood and STIs including HIV/AIDS all of which have negative educational and socio-economic consequences on the victims as individuals and society as well the nation as a whole.

A global study conducted by (Unesco 2005a) concluded that four major criteria determine a child's participation in primary education: child's age, place of residence (urban/rural), household wealth, and mother's education. The study explains:

“The age of a child is one of the most important variables to be considered when analyzing patterns of school (non-)attendance. It matters whether children start school at the prescribed entry age and, thereafter, whether they are in the appropriate grade for their age. When children start late or repeat grades, it increases the likelihood that they will drop out before completion.”

Responses to the barriers

Many studies have found out that the poor are less able to afford education and they often live in the remotest areas of their countries that are farthest from government service provision and they are most dependent on their children's labour. Innovative and/or alternative approaches therefore, have been mostly developed in such a way as to help overcome problems associated with poverty since research in the recent past shows that if the costs of education can be kept low and if the quality of education is reasonable, most parents will be able to educate their daughters at least at a basic level – even where cultural barriers seem strong. Most evidence shows that what has been done consists of a package of policies and programs in four broad areas namely making girls' schooling more affordable; providing safe schools nearby; making schools more girl-friendly; and providing decent quality education. However, it should be noted that although these strategies/innovations provide good lessons from which other countries (which are far

from achieving UPE) can learn, the extent to which they can be replicated will depend on the social, economic and cultural contexts (Chimombo 2005).

Making girls' schooling more affordable

Research has shown that reducing direct costs for example by cutting school fees increases girls' school enrolment. For instance in Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda among other countries, reduction and/or elimination of tuition fees was followed by dramatic increases in enrolment especially among girls, suggesting that fees had actually put poorer children especially girls at a disadvantage and therefore cutting it helps to quickly boost enrolments, often dramatically. For the Ugandan case in particular, the introduction of the UPE program led to a dramatic increase in enrolment, suggesting that both the direct and indirect costs of schooling constituted a significant obstacle to more widespread primary school attendance by the poor and this is particularly true for girls whose enrolment rates increased significantly (in some cases more than doubling) (Deininger 2000:292, Herz 2004).

Many countries across the globe (with the help of NGOs) are increasingly implementing programs that not only reduce the direct costs of schooling but also help cover the indirect and opportunity costs incurred when parents let children go to school. Since many parents find the schooling costs higher for girls, particularly because of lost chore time, scholarships have proved particularly important for girls in varied settings. Evidence from research carried out by different people shows that programs that reduce the cost of schooling by providing supplies like textbooks and uniforms or programs that offer meals or school-based healthcare have significant impacts especially for girls. For instance through its Food for Education program, WFP in Uganda selects food-insecure areas with the most urgent educational need (e.g low enrolment/attendance, high gender disparity, high drop-out e.t.c) such as conflict areas and those hosting refugees and IDPs and provides in-school feeding as a way of attracting children to school, alleviating their hunger and helping them to learn. This has been very helpful particularly for children who go to school without a morning meal, often after walking a very long distance and come from families where the parents depend on the children to work in the family fields, care for younger siblings, gather firewood and search for food, meaning that these children don't have time, the economic means or the energy to attend school. The strategy adopted in such a case incorporates a take-home ration – basic food items to families in exchange

for the schooling of their children to help offset the loss of the child's (girls and orphans) contribution to the family's livelihood. Also UNICEF's child-friendly basic education and learning program in the country includes support for the development of integrated early childhood development services and child-friendly schools in the priority districts. These child-friendly schools emphasize the importance of girls' education, particularly at the lower primary level as well as the inclusion of unreached children and children affected by HIV/AIDS. It incorporates cost-effective models developed at household, community and district levels to help link child survival, growth and development with a focus on services and interventions (Herz 2004, Unicef 2003b, Wfp 2007).

FAWE Uganda Chapter has mobilized funds to provide scholarships to girls from poor households who perform well in national primary leaving examinations but fail to join secondary school because their parents/guardians cannot afford the monetary costs involved. This started as a small effort, but because it was managed effectively and kept monitoring results and performance of the girls that were supported, the project has recently attracted large funds from donor agencies and quite a large number of girls are now in secondary school sponsored by FAWE. The project also already has a multiplier effect because a number of other women-led NGOs have adapted this project in the areas where they operate. The efforts described are just used as examples, there are several initiatives trying to address the gender gap in education targeting different aspects. The efforts are often small and do not cover the whole country and some of them are still at the experimental stage.

Providing safe schools nearby

Common sense suggests that distance matters for any child but matters particularly for girls implying that building schools close to girls' homes helps boost their enrolment. Removing fees or offering scholarships therefore, offers little help where children have no schools to attend and in such situations community schools that offer flexible schedules or provide child-care support have been particularly successful at increasing girls' enrolment. This goes hand in hand with providing trained teachers, teaching materials and a reasonable curriculum. Through the use of such innovative techniques and flexible time tables, the Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK) is extending educational opportunities to children of pastoral, semi-nomadic communities of north eastern Uganda, while

Complementary Opportunities for Primary Education (COPE) is being implemented in 8 districts in the country where disadvantaged children have remained outside of the formal school system (Unicef 2003b). Providing such flexible schedules and services has also helped particularly, girls' enrolment since it can accommodate their work by making it easier for them to care for younger siblings, do chores or even work for wages while enrolled in school. Such options have been most effective in community schools where the community easily supports and sustains the flexible approaches.

Making schools more girl-friendly

It appears to be common knowledge that as girls grow older, having private latrine facilities in schools is not only very necessary but also critical in order for them to cater for their personal hygiene. The education policy in Uganda is supported by studies that have been commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Sports to set a baseline for improving both the quantity and quality of education. The findings of the baseline study (IEQ, 1999) indicated that classroom interaction of some teachers discriminated against girls and physical facilities in most schools were disregarding girls' need for privacy. These and other discriminatory factors were addressed in the budget to schools. The grant included funds for compulsory construction of separate latrines for girls and boys that must have doors and a strong teacher development program that includes a gender perspective was also put in place. One of the reasons for the success of UPE in Uganda is the strong leadership that the Ministry of education has provided to address short comings that are identified with evidence. In other parts of the country there are multi-partner initiatives (between government and NGOs) such as FRESH (Focusing Resources for Effective School Health) which is providing appropriate water and sanitation facilities, training teachers in skills-based health education, and school-based health & sanitation services (Unicef 2003b).

Providing decent quality education

A first and critical step in achieving quality education is to have enough qualified teachers who attend school regularly. No school can work for any child (boy or girl) without a capable and acceptable teacher and this is why a good teacher can make a difference in girls' enrolment and attainment even without a school building. Uganda has

done quite a lot with regard to quality education particularly in relation to aspects of good teaching, i.e, well trained teachers as well as enough instruction in the right languages. For example through the School Facilities Grant (SFG), the Ministry of Education and Sports by 2004 had so far managed to increase classrooms from 25,676 in 1996 to 78,403 and the number of teachers from 81,564 in 1996 to 125,883 in 2004. These have had significant improvements on quality indicators like teacher-pupil ratio (50:1), the pupil-classroom ratio (84:1) and the pupil-textbook ratio (3:1) (Bitamazire 2005, Moes 2003/04).

2.2 Analytical Framework: Intersectionality and multiple experiences

This study has a human rights vision and it employs the argument that ‘if we are willing to sacrifice the rights of a group, the human rights of all are undermined’ (Bunch 2002:111). Gender equality is understood as a result of an intersection between various aspects of the social structure/organisation within which schools are situated. In this regard, Tomasevski argues that where the right to education is denied or violated, many people are deprived of the enjoyment of many rights and freedoms and other human rights problems can not be solved unless the right to education is addressed as the key to unlock other human rights (Tomasevski 2001:9).

In the study, it is further argued that since school processes are shaped by social dynamics within the society, the benefits of removing the obstacles will eventually be seen in the education sector/system. Over all there will be an improvement in gender equality in terms of students’ participation and progression as well as academic competences since some barriers will be out of their way. The study therefore employed an intersectional analysis which enriched the question of gender justice in education basing on the argument that human life in reality reflects lots of discriminations which further reflect prejudices that are usually based on human characteristics that are not easy to change such as gender, ethnicity, age, class, culture among others. These quite often become the basis of violations of human rights and their intersection can mean girls’ and women’s experience of multiple forms of oppression in different circumstances, including education. This can be a helpful way of analysing girls’ educational participation because it suggests that rather than being discriminated because of one factor, it is rather a combination and an overlap of factors operating together. It is, therefore, very important to recognize that girls and women have a multiplicity of identities as well as experiences (P.A.B. Abena 2002,,Kakuru 2006).

An intersectional analysis captures the consequences of the interaction between two or more forms of subordination. 'It arises out of the combination of various oppressions which, together, produce something unique and distinct from any one form of discrimination standing alone. An intersectional approach takes into account the historical, social and political context and recognizes the unique experience of the individual based on the intersection of all relevant grounds. This approach allows the particular experience of discrimination, based on the confluence of grounds involved, to be acknowledged and remedied.' (Peb 2001:3) 'Intersectionality is an approach to understanding the relationship between gender, race and other aspects of identity that are sources of systematic discrimination. Intersectionality is an approach to understanding the differences among women and among men and the ways that these differences interact to exacerbate marginalisation. It identifies subordination not solely as an issue of gender or race or class inequalities, but as a location where there are often simultaneous and compounding relationships of subordination. Intersectionality offers potential as a framework for contextual analysis that may improve development outcomes for women by ensuring that particular groups of women are not excluded in policy and practice.' (Riley 2004:110). It is further argued in (Peb 2001:5) that, applying an intersectional or contextualized approach to multiple grounds of discrimination has numerous advantages. It acknowledges the complexity of how people experience discrimination, recognizes that the experience of discrimination may be unique and takes into account the social and historical context of the group. It places the focus on society's response to the individual as a result of the confluence of grounds...' Basing on the recognition that individuals have multiple identities which shape their experience of discrimination, the interest of this research in intersectionality, therefore, was to use it both as an analytical tool as well as a theoretical one to explain and argue the multiple and intersectional experiences of girls.

With the current increasing recognition of the role of education in enhancing human well being and the prominence girls' education has gained due to their previous as well as ongoing educational deprivation, a lot of studies have been and are still being conducted on gender (in)equality in education. When talking about gender equality in education, reference is made to gender parity and gender equality and therefore it is important to clarify them here. 'Gender parity refers to the numerical difference between boys and girls in enrolment, participation and graduation rates whereas gender equality requires viewing gender as 'a relational process' that plays out through educational systems, and the norms

and values institutionalised within them' (Subrahmanian, 2005:399 cited in (Mersha 2007:10). 'Equality deals with the actual patterns in which something (e.g years of schooling) is distributed among members of a particular group' (Farrell 1999:154).

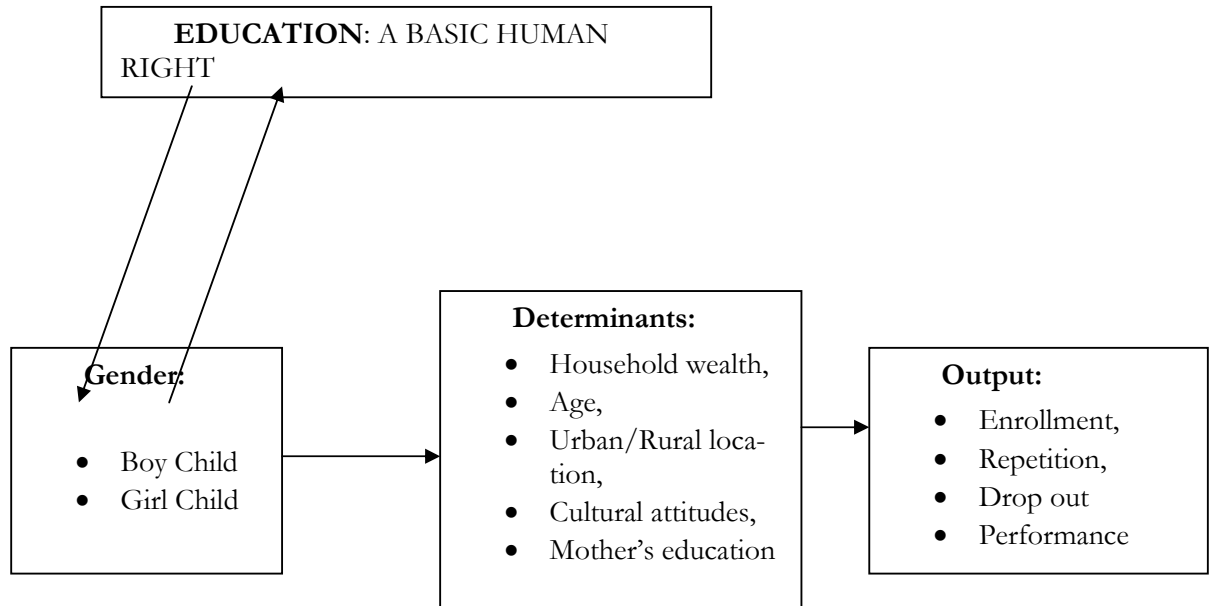
The research uses Farrell's "model" of educational inequality which argues that schooling operates as a selective social screening mechanism. 'It enhances the status of some children, providing them with an opportunity for upward social or economic mobility. It ratifies the status of others, reinforcing the propensity for children born poor to remain poor as adults, and for children born into well-off families to become well-off adults.' He distinguishes four facets of equality namely equality of access, equality of survival, equality of output and equality of outcome. *Equality of access* focuses on the probabilities of children from different social groupings getting into the school system or some particular level or portion of it; *equality of survival* focuses on the probabilities of children from various social groupings staying in the school system to some defined level, usually the end of a complete cycle (primary, secondary, higher); *equality of output* focuses on the probabilities that children from various social groupings will learn the same things to the same levels at a defined point in the schooling system; and *equality of outcome* focuses on the probabilities that children from various social groupings will live relatively similar lives subsequent to and as a result of schooling (have equal incomes, have jobs of roughly the same status, have equal access to sites of political power, etc.) (Ibid, 155-156). The last type of equality refers to the junction between the school system and adult life, especially (but not exclusively) the labour market. While this may be relevant to this study, emphasis was put on the first three types of inequality which refer to the workings of the school system itself and therefore, being more relevant for this research. This is important because much as girls have had equality of access with the advent of UPE, their equality of survival starts deteriorating at some level before the completion of the primary cycle and this further diminishes their equality of output which has long-term implications on their equality of outcome (vulnerability in adult life). Even for those that get to the level of equality of outcome, there are still instances where they are discriminated against in employment because they are women.

The research also draws from Unterhalter's three meanings of gender as a verb, a noun and an adjective in the discourse of gender equality in education. The issue of concern in using gender as a noun is to do with the presence and absence of boys and girls in school; gender as an adjective also referred to as the gender regime is associated with

changing social processes – it describes a range of social relations and institutional forms which structure social relations leading to particular forms of action in school and as a consequence of school; gender as a verb signals a process of being or becoming ‘girl’ (Unterhalter 2007:3). This research makes reference to gender more as a noun and an adjective because these meanings have more impact about gender and schooling in general and the issues entailed herein. This is particularly true for the second research question – response strategies to the barriers to girls’ educational participation. Furthermore, the ideas of Judith Squires are borrowed for use in this research. These are based on the three types of gender equality debate she identifies namely inclusion, reversal and displacement whereby inclusion aims at widening girls’ and women’s participation and focuses on politics of equality and numerical representation of men and women while seeking gender neutrality (liberal feminism). Reversal espouses a difference politics by recognizing the different experiences of men and women (and boys & girls) and it seeks the recognition of the female gendered identity by talking about ‘woman’ or ‘women’. This group is also referred to as the radical feminists. Advocates of displacement, on the other hand, speak of subject positions and of gendering (as a verb) rather than gender (as a noun) and espouse a diversity politics (and are often labelled post-modern). ‘The strategy of inclusion seeks gender-neutrality; the strategy of reversal seeks recognition for a specifically female gendered identity; and strategy of displacement seeks to deconstruct those discursive regimes that engender the subject.’ (Squires 2004:3-4).

To sum up, the gender and education literature, I visualised the empirical analysis of the research issue as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Framework of Analysis for Gender and Participation in Education



Source: Formulated by the researcher basing on conceptual and theoretical literature

Figure 3 indicates that education is a basic human right. The right to a basic education for all children is a global commitment enshrined in numerous human rights treaties. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights acknowledged the right to education for all people. However, intervening factors like the child's age, place of residence (urban/rural), cultural attitudes, household wealth, and mother's education determine the child's enrolment and performance in school. The above coping strategies are just a few of the reforms and innovations suggesting promising approaches and therefore, in a few, if any, cases will any one of them be a "silver bullet." (Herz 2004).

Chapter Three: Barriers to Girls' Educational Participation in Arua District

3.0 Introduction

Gender inequalities have persisted in Uganda's primary education despite deliberate and specific government interventions such as the implementation of UPE. This research was carried out in order to establish the extent to which the persistence of these inequalities are a result of the interface between gender, rurality, poverty and socio-cultural factors. Various studies have been carried out on the determinants of girls' and women's participation in education producing a long list of factors that affect their school enrolment, repetition of coursework, drop out, and attainment and these factors include parents' socio-economic status, religion, distance to school, cultural attitudes, poverty, availability of schools, parents' particularly mothers' illiteracy and unsuitable curriculum among others. While these factors in themselves are important, an analysis that limits itself to their identification in a typically segmented, disconnected fashion confuses immediate with ultimate causes and fails to understand gender as an institutionalized expression of power in society (Stromquist 1990:108).

(Kakuru 2006, Riley 2004: 110) argue that an intersectional approach in such a case helps give a better understanding of the differences among females and males and the ways in which these differences interact to exacerbate marginalization. The approach considers subordination not solely as an issue of gender or any other social identity, but as a location where there are often simultaneous and compounding relationships of subordination. It is a tool that helps us understand and respond to the various ways in which different identities intersect as well as how these intersections facilitate oppression and/or privilege. It is believed that systems of discrimination such as gender, geographical location, social class/socio-economic status e.t.c create inequalities that structure individuals' relative positions.

This chapter therefore, presents the research findings as a way of answering the first research question. In the sections below, a discussion of the barriers to girls' educational participation in Arua is done first, an intersectional analysis then follows.

3.1 Barriers to Girls' Educational participation in Arua District

Looking at girls' experiences as a process enables us to grasp the complex life situation and the level of participation better because the past experiences have imprints on the present. Hence, the barriers are derived from the larger social context to trace the multiplicity of experiences and since educational institutions are not separate entities, linking the institution with the larger social context enables us to capture the intersection at the institutional level. The multiplicity of girls' experiences translates into barriers to girls' educational participation. The Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) for females in Arua District is 4.37% compared to 8.51% for males (Ubos 2002: 33). The constraints on girls' educational participation in the district are household gender division of labour that limits or completely deprives girls of study time, lack of parental support, boy-child preference, teenage pregnancy and early marriage, lack of role models, economic problems and inconvenient school facilities. This was manifested in one of the group interviews with Arua Demonstration school girls:

Issues that hinder girls from attending school include lack of school dues, staying in the company of bad friends/peer influence, mistreatment by some parents/guardians, lack of good parental advice, early marriage/pregnancy, hunger at school, too much household work allocated to girls, sending girls to work as housemaids and baby sitters in order to earn money for the family and, the tendency of some working parents to leave school girls in charge of younger siblings at home.

It is clear from the above points that girls' educational participation is determined by – gender, poverty, spatial location and cultural attitudes as discussed in the sub-sections below:

Gender as a barrier to Girls' Educational Participation

As the study established, girls are often required to carry out essential household tasks like childcare, fetching water, gathering firewood and cooking which tasks are quite demanding in terms of time and physically and in many cases their scheduling coincides with school hours. They continue with such demanding work even after school and this prevents them from doing home work which puts them at a disadvantage in class, feeding teachers' and classmates' prejudices that they are lazy or unmotivated. For instance during group interviews with school girls and boys of Arua Demonstration School, when they were asked what they do on a daily basis including school days, the responses were as follows:

Washing utensils, cooking, cleaning the house & compound, collecting firewood, fetching water and bathing younger siblings (girls' responses).

Eating, playing, taking a bath, revising school notes, helping sisters fetch water, cleaning the compound (boys' responses).

From the above responses, all the girls' activities were household chores while for the boys there was hardly any household chore but rather things like playing and revising school notes which did not feature in the girls' routine and yet they are essential for effective learning (DFID 2006, UBOS 2002: 33, UNESCO 2003).

In-school barriers, also affects girls' access/entry and retention in school such as student-teacher and student-student interactions which re/produce and reinforce gender hierarchies and stereo-types. This study confirmed this by establishing that even at school, girls spent more time on performing non-school activities such as cleaning the classrooms & offices; fetching water and doing things for teachers such as serving them tea at break time which tea the girls are not entitled to take! This observation was made throughout the time that the researcher was in this school. This puts girls at a disadvantaged position because part of their time is wasted on non-academic work and they may be too tired to comprehend what is being taught since they get tired by the time they get back to class, thus significantly affecting their academic performance and intensifying their marginalization.

The tables below for example show the district primary school enrolment for 2004 and 2005 as well as the Arua Demonstration School enrolment for 2008.

Table 5: Arua District Primary School Enrolment for Government-aided Primary Schools in 2004 and 2005

Year	Level	Total	Girls	Boys	% Girls	% Boys	% Both
2004	P.1 - P.4	258,654	125,721	132,933	48.6	51.4	100
	P.5 - P.7	75,858	31,252	44,606	41.2	58.8	100
2005	P.1 - P.4	257,176	125,67	131,506	48.9	51.1	100
	P.5 - P.7	74,154	30,128	44,026	40.6	59.4	100

Source: Table generated by researcher using statistics obtained from the Arua District Education Office

Table 6: Arua Demonstration School Enrolment 2008

Level	Total	Girls	Boys	% Girls	% Boys	% Both
P.1	276	140	136	50.7	49.3	100
P.2	173	90	83	52.0	48.0	100
P.3	304	153	151	50.3	49.7	100
P.4	323	191	132	59.1	40.9	100
P.5	207	89	118	43.0	57.0	100
P.6	205	84	121	41.0	59.0	100
P.7	125	56	69	44.8	55.2	100
Total	1613	803	810			

Source: Table generated by researcher using statistics obtained from the Head-teacher's Office

While these statistics establish a general pattern of female underdevelopment, they conceal the disparities that exist within the district between different schools as well as within individual schools and thus failing to clearly demonstrate the fact that many girls never get to school in the first place. Further, of those who enroll, most drop out by the end of the third year. This is confirmed with the enrolment statistics (refer to tables 5 and 6 above) whereby if one only looked at the total enrolment either of the whole district or the school, one would be easily tempted to conclude that the girls are doing quite well as compared to the boys. However, the picture is different with specific class enrolments where in some cases there are more girls than boys in the lower classes, with the number of girls dropping drastically by the time they are mid-way the primary school cycle.

Geographical location as a barrier to Girls' Educational Participation

The concept of rurality is a complex discourse and its themes vary depending on the context of the discussion. However, in this paper we took the debate that relates with the 'otherization' of rurality and construction of rural identity in relation to the discourse of 'modernization'. Certainly, the issue of poverty is linked to the debate of rurality as it also emerged during data analysis. However, directing the debate to poverty simplifies the causes of exclusion of rural people. Rural people are marginalized by urban-centered development projects (that depends on linear thinking of industrialization). Over and

above, they are labeled as ‘traditional’ in the discourse of ‘modernity’ (Arturo 1992, Bonner 1997, Cloke 2006).

In Arua district, the rural-urban disparity in both the quality and the availability of educational institutions is quite significant. Rural areas have generally been deprived of educational services and thus making geographical isolation a significant aspect in the equity question.

The rural area has a problem of distance – the distance between home and school is quite long for many children and may be unsafe for the girl-child; water is life and lack of water impacts negatively on adolescent girls in particular because the rural areas don’t have proper and adequate water and sanitation; the rural has few or nothing as role models- there are no women for the girls to emulate; rural girls have a problem of negative attitude (towards girl-child education) of the people there in terms of the rural setting itself and the values of the people (Mr Wayi, DEO Arua).

The rural area has few schools most of which are far away from home for most children. Because some parents/guardians are worried about their daughters’ safety along the way, they prefer to keep these girls, especially the adolescents at home (Mrs Onia, senior woman teacher Arua demonstration school).

The urban areas have very many disruptive activities such as day-time video shows, night-time dances and this coupled with peer influence affects the girls’ education (Mr Nyakua, Chairperson PTA Arua demonstration school).

The above excerpts are corroborated with findings from other previously done researches and other literature which show that there is often a limited possibility to find schools in close proximity within rural communities. Children spend most of their time travelling long distances between home and school, especially for upper classes. Although these situations are similar and affect all children in the affected areas, girl-children are more likely to face problems specifically related to their security/safety in the course of travelling the long distance to and from school. Since economies of scale imply that it is generally more cost-effective to locate schools in relatively densely populated places, for poorer families, which tend to be disproportionately located in remote rural areas, may parents face substantially higher private costs to send their female children to school and, as a result, tend to acquire less education (Coady 2002, Task-Force 2005, M. Ward, Penny, A., & Read, T 2006).

Poverty as a barrier to Girls' Educational Participation

Although there are no tuition fees for primary education in Uganda, families have to incur other school costs such as for clothing, uniforms, school materials, building funds, and travel. The study established that the upper classes still have many financial requirements even though tuition has been waived. In P.7 for instance, in order for one to sit the PLE exams, s/he has to formally register with the national examinations board (UNEB) through their school and this registration is with money for both examination and registration itself. Also in many schools the upper classes from P.5 to P.7 have extra classes both beyond the normal school time as well as on weekends as a way of catching up with the syllabus. These constitute a significant burden for poor families, especially affecting girls. When discussing the poverty aspects of gender inequality, Herz and Sperling (2004) maintain that parents may not be willing to pay additional costs associated with schooling for girls although they appear to be willing to pay the same costs for boys. Since girls usually have extra requirements such as the provision of sanitary pads especially for adolescent girls, in a situation where this money is either not enough or lacking altogether, the parent/guardian is faced with a choice to take a decision on which child should stay in school or be pulled out and such decisions mostly favour boys. This partly explains the fewer number of girls in the upper primary level which continues to levels beyond primary school (refer to tables 5 & 6) (Dfid 2006, Herz 2004, Moes 2003/04).

Female-headed households which form the majority of poor households affects the girl-child's participation in education because when the mothers have to go out to look for a means of livelihood, the girl steps in the mother's shoes and takes over her role at home. And if these mothers depend on small businesses whereby most of the time they are not home, the girls are overused for household chores, leading to their reaching school late, or attending irregularly or not attending at all (Mrs Onia, Senior woman teacher Arua Demonstration School).

Because of poverty some parents send their daughters to work as house maids and baby sitters in order to earn money for the family (Tali, female interviewee Arua demonstration school).

At school some children come from rich families and this can be a source of discouragement for those who come from poor families and lack many school requirements (Mr Nyakua, Chairperson PTA Arua demonstration school).

This finding is consistent with other researchers' findings which have revealed that the prevalence of poverty in rural and urban squatter areas and its gendered nature greatly shapes the experiences of girls who are from poor families since they quite often engage in activities to help their families. Various studies have revealed that there is a direct effect of parents' economic status on their children's education by way of determining their study time at home and the provision of educational materials (Herz 2004, Kakuru 2006).

Socio-Cultural factors as a Barrier to Girls' Educational Participation

Cultural factors are reflected in the patterns of behaviour, beliefs, preferences, customs and traditions, which account for gender-based differences within a society. Therefore, the socio-cultural environment in which female and male members of society operate is an important factor in determining the extent to which they can attain their full potential. In Arua, this fact is also reflected in the level of girls' educational participation in the different areas.

Some parents still think that girls do not need to stay in school as long as boys and hence they prefer to pay boys (Poya, P.7 girl interviewee Arua demonstration school).

There are still parents that practice early forced marriage so that they can use part of the bride wealth obtained from marrying off the girl to educate her brothers (Mr Pariyo, parent).

Some parents believe that a girl who has (accidentally) conceived is no longer a child and can't go back to school and complete (Cheka, P.5 drop-out).

The research found that in Arua like in many other rural districts in the country, traditional cultural practices still strongly impact girls' enrolment. Where family resources are limited, families tend to place the highest priority on educating boys, recognizing them as future heads of household. Since women are not perceived as breadwinners and are traditionally viewed as potential mothers, they have a lower social status than men in Uganda. Consequently, low value is granted to girls' formal education. A MoES (1999) study found out that many community members think school is a place for children and, thus, not appropriate for girls who have begun the menstruation cycle - these girls' are no

longer considered children. After going through the initiation rites, girls do not usually go back to school because the community makes them understand that they have become women and need to be ready for marriage. Right after their first menstruation (12-15 years old) they start living with their husbands. Early marriage is widespread in Uganda with approximately 22 per cent of girls married by the age of 15 in 2004. Pregnancy is one of the main reasons for girls dropping out of primary school at the age of 14-24. Although they have been granted chance to continue schooling after child delivery, the community does not encourage young mothers to go back to school (Kakuru 2006, Moes 1999, Ubos 2007). This was confirmed by Arua District Education Officer that:

Government has now come up with a policy on the re-admission of girls who have got pregnant and given birth. It has made it clear that school girls who get pregnant be brought back to school to complete their education after delivery.

Many of the respondents also raised the issue that in places where there are few schools implying that there is a long distance between home and school, some parents/guardians are discouraged from sending girls to school for fear of their (in)security along the way, especially adolescents. As a result, in many societies mobility restrictions arise when girls reach puberty and this affects their school retention more than entry. Among some tribes for example, as soon as girls reach puberty they are taken through the initiation rites in which they are taught the knowledge and wisdom of their societies so as to maintain and develop it. These instructions are considered to be relevant for preparing the girls for life as wives and mothers. In such a situation, sometimes a conflict arises between what is taught at home during the initiation ceremony and at school which leads to some parents opposing girls' continued school attendance (ODA 1996:8) cited in (Chimombo 2005: 135). Likewise, some parents refuse to send their daughters to school because of the clear danger of sexual abuse from classmates or teachers. FAWE (2000) reports that it is becoming common in Uganda to find cases of sexual harassment and rape against girls by teachers, without any punishment from the system. Parents/guardians in this study also indicated fearing their daughters becoming pregnant as a result of contact with teachers (who are usually men), fellow students, or even strangers encountered along the way between home and school. They have to prevent pre-marital pregnancy and their distrust of male teachers, unfortunately is well founded in many cases. Reports from (US Department of State, 2006) also indicate that girls were forced to exchange sex with teachers to get

passing grades. Aikman et al. (2005) provides a case study about widespread harassment of girls by male teachers, ranging from verbal and physical abuse to sexual abuse. Aikman maintains that this is a major influence on girls' decisions to drop out of school. Parents do not let girls attend school because they want to avoid their daughters' pregnancy before marriage arrangements have been made. Perpetrators of crimes associated with child sexual abuse have rarely been identified and prosecuted and punishments were not commensurate with that of a serious crime (Aikman 2005, Department-of-State 2006, Fawe 2000, Unesco 2003, 2005c).

3.2 Intersectionality and Multiple Experiences of Girls

Responses from the interviews revealed that households in the study area depend on members' labor for earning income and undertaking reproductive tasks like childcare, cooking, looking after the sick among others. Such overdependence on household labor was found to conflict with girls' education in particular. Irregular school attendance for instance is closely related to gender-biased division of household labor while at the same time an intersectional problem and this is because background factors such as socio-economic status, age and patriarchy among others conceal the intersectional nature of such issues, making girls to absorb the consequences of gender-biased division of labor. This is a result of the common belief in the study area that most (if not all) household work is to be done by females and hence overburdening the girl child while neglecting her education.

Intersectionality of Gender and Geographical location

The study established that the place of residence is a significant factor of both school enrolment and retention. The study found that parents in rural areas did not encourage their daughters to go to school. The reasons revolved around security of the girls as well as low income levels which is a characteristic of many rural areas. This was confirmed by the responses of some parents/guardians and the children themselves as already noted in some earlier sections as well as the Senior Woman Teacher of Arua demonstration school who said that:

In case the home is too far from the school, girls, particularly those in adolescence are considered insecure between home and school by their parents, hence affecting their school attendance.

The above statement corroborates Ward et al (2006) findings that in some regions of Uganda, school children have to travel long distances between homes and schools, especially for upper primary schools in rural areas. Similarly, a previous study by Kasente

(2003) had indicated that many families have to remove girls from school because of the concerns for their safety, where they have to walk long distances to school. Also UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2005) indicates that the proportion of children out-of-school is greater in rural areas (30 percent vs. 18 percent) due to the insufficient development of roads, transportation, and large distance to school. While walking great distances to school equally hampers boys and girls from attending school, this factor specifically increases the risk of assault for girls. Thus, it is fair to conclude that family location plays a significant role in encouraging or discouraging the participation of girl-children in education.

Regarding the issue of low income in rural areas, the Senior Woman said;

Most families in rural areas are poor and unable to provide for the girls' special needs in adolescence, for example, sanitary facilities which stop them from attending school or missing specific days like when in their menstruation periods.

In traditional and more conservative communities, it is particularly difficult to address menstruation directly even in the home and also unlikely to be discussed in the school context. The findings of a study of sexual maturation that was conducted by FAWE U in 2003 and 2004 with girls and their families in rural communities of Uganda revealed that along with lack of knowledge and understanding about menstruation amongst girls themselves, other members of the community, including the male members of their families, were completely uninformed as well. With very little factual information, they understood menstruation as a mysterious weakness of women rather than a biological and normal recurring experience of life for post-pubescent girls and women. The girls further explained that menstruation is a taboo subject even within their own families, describing a 'culture of silence' with regard to their menstruation. They feel unable to discuss menstrual issues with their mothers and certainly not with their fathers. Not being able to talk about their experience and having limited information means that menstruation becomes something shameful and to hide, and is consequently ignored in families, schools and communities (J. Kirk, Sommer, M. no date: 2).

Intersectionality of Gender, Poverty and Geographical location

Poverty lessens the possibility and opportunities of children from affected households to acquire/progress in education, which limits their employment opportunities which again is linked to the lack of economic success which in turn limits their access to health care, especially in privatized systems. Investment in children's education both in terms of

time and money (ideally) would require that household tasks and activities don't conflict with children's school attendance and that children have access to the necessary school requirements – scholastic materials, clothing, food, e.t.c. The research, however, revealed that girls' school attendance and their access to learning materials were greatly influenced by their socio-economic status. For example girls from poor households were found to be more prone to missing school so as to supplement household labour. In this study area, gender differences in school attendance were either due to the demand for girls' domestic labour or lack of materials and other school requirements. Multiple intersections of gender, socio-economic status, geographical location, age and socio-cultural factors among others show a system of subordination.

Poverty plays a role in parents' decisions to favour and value male children/family members over females. This is because parents are required to provide scholastic materials like exercise books and pens to their children. In addition, parents are expected to provide uniform and lunch to their children. All these requirements cost money which in most cases is unavailable to rural poor households. Further, their own biases and unwillingness to work around the obstacle of poverty helps to reinforce the subordination of girls within the family.

Children from poor families cannot access basic education because of lack of basic scholastic materials like exercise books and uniform driving them away from school in preference for dowry- the parents/guardians prefer to sell off the girls into marriage in order to get the boys moving (Arua District Education Officer).

(Kadzamira 2003) argues that money also plays a role in the quality of education girls and boys have access to. That government education institutions are often poorly funded and therefore of poorer quality and as a result, the rich attend well-funded schools while the poor have access to schools with inadequate facilities, reinforcing disparities in access, retention and completion. This is especially true for the female learners who already start from a cultural and social disadvantage and the situation is worse in rural areas where schools are fewer and money is scarce. This implies that poverty leads to school drop out as well as failure of some children to enrol for education. Herz and Sperling (2004) corroborate the above finding by arguing that even where education is provided "free of charge" by the state, families incur substantial expenses in sending children to school. Among these costs are those of transport, uniforms, textbooks, school supplies and ancillary fees charged directly and retained by the school to supplement its budget.

Nearly all children who are out of school are from poor families. The study found that families could not afford to pay for their children's education and were often obliged to choose which child went to school and which one stayed at home or went to work. Poor children are also more likely to drop out of school because of illness, poor nutrition and domestic demands, such as caring for siblings or parents.

When parents leave the home to go look for means of livelihood, their role in the family is affected. Children are left to stay on their own most of the time without guidance. In such a situation, the girls step in their parents place, particularly that of their mothers to take care of their siblings which affects their concentration on studies and consequently their performance (Chair person PTA-Arua Demonstration School).

The poor performance is reflected in the Primary Leaving Examinations⁶ results of the whole Arua district as well as Arua demonstration school both of which show that girls' performance was always below that of boys in the same class. This is shown in tables 7 and 8 below:

Table 7: Arua District Primary Leaving Examination Results (2003-2007)

⁶ Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) is an examination sat by pupils who have completed 7 years of primary school in Uganda. It enables them graduate to secondary school.

Year	Gender	No. In Division I	No. In Division X	% in Div. I	% in Div. X	Total No. In the Year
2003	Female	82	190	17.4	34.5	2624
	Male	389	361	82.6	65.5	5975
	Total	471	551	100	100	8599
2004	Female	36	289	11.0	39.2	3301
	Male	293	448	89.0	60.3	6696
	Total	329	737	100	100	9997
2005	Female	28	368	16.3	35.5	3771
	Male	144	667	83.7	64.5	7051
	Total	172	1035	100	100	10822
2006	Female	27	359	11.3	43.7	3778
	Male	212	462	88.7	56.3	6854
	Total	239	821	100	100	10632
2007	Female	19	344	18.3	38.3	3647
	Male	85	555	81.7	61.7	6329
	Total	104	899	100	100	9976

Source: Table generated by researcher using statistics obtained from the Arua District Education Office

From table 7, it can be clearly observed that the PLE performance has been declining in the district over the years with girls maintaining a poorer performance than the boys throughout the five years. Even though their total numbers were fewer than that of the boys, their performance was still worse than that of the boys. For example among those that passed in division I, girls were always fewer than boys while among those that failed (passed in division X), the girls were always more than the boys.

Table 8: Arua Demonstration School Primary Leaving Examination Results (2000-2007)

Year	Gender	No. In Division I	No. In Division X	% in Div. I	% in Div. X	Total No. In the Year
2000	Female	0	5	0	83.3	
	Male	7	1	100	16.7	
	Total	7	6	100	100	143
2001	Female	4	5	33.3	62.5	
	Male	8	3	66.7	37.5	
	Total	12	8	100	100	143
2002	Female	5	1	26.3	100	
	Male	14	0	73.7	0	

	Total	19	1	100	100	127
2003	Female	1	0	7.7	0	
	Male	12	1	92.3	100	
	Total	13	1	100	100	130
2004	Female	4	0	80	0	
	Male	1	0	20	0	
	Total	5	0	100	0	149
2005	Female	4	0	80	0	
	Male	1	0	20	0	
	Total	5	0	100	0	112
2006	Female	4	0	30.8	0	
	Male	9	0	69.2	0	
	Total	13	0	100	0	114
2007	Female	0	0	0	0	
	Male	3	0	100	0	
	Total	3	0	100	0	128

Source: Table generated by researcher using statistics obtained from the office of the Head-teacher Arua Demonstration School

In table 8, a similar observation can be made to that on table 7 but performance of the school seems to have been improving over the years, particularly from 2004 to 2007 when the school didn't register any failures. But generally girls continued to perform worse than the boys except in 2004 and 2005 although this could not even be explained by the school administration.

Intersectionality of Gender, Cultural attitudes, Poverty and Geographical location

Culturally, girls are not seen as leaders and their school performance is affected because they do not see themselves as able to perform like the boys and this affects their mind because they don't use it as much as the boys to reason (Rucoru- a P.7 girl child from Arua Demonstration school).

Girls also feel inferior such that they do not participate in education wholeheartedly. They see themselves as a source of wealth for their parents and see men as the source of their wellbeing thus limiting their motivation to learn (Adriko- a P.6 boy child in Arua Demonstration school).

The above assertions reveal that girls themselves tend to be inferior because of the nature of the community that does not expect much education from them. Negative social attitudes and cultural practices like the belief of some fathers that it is of no use sending their girl-child to school because another person will marry her and she becomes that person's family member; that sending a girl to school makes her more exposed and civilized

and can't be under a man any longer; and that a woman's job is in the home and she doesn't need to go to school to learn it all negatively impact on girls' educational participation. These beliefs are more common in rural areas where most parents are less or not educated. Consequently, girls typically have to assume a multitude of household chores including cooking, cleaning and even serving as a principal caregiver for younger siblings—responsibilities that boys are virtually never expected to assume. This study found that these competing demands on girls' time had translated into relatively poorer academic performance than their male counterparts, often leading to high repetition and, ultimately, higher dropout rates.

Existing social relations of gender that structure women as providers of reproductive labour also affect the girls who are socialized as apprentices of their mothers so that they can play similar roles in future. This factor is key in keeping the gap between girls' and boys' enrollment in primary schools, monetary and safety considerations notwithstanding. According to (F.D. Abena 1991: 49), in African traditional societies, cultural norms and values dictate that the major role of the woman is centered on maintaining the home-front, whereby she was expected to marry soon after puberty. In this role, she does not need formal education to fit in. It is fairly easy for a woman with no formal education to cope with retail trading. The girl may have to stay out of school to be a baby-sitter for younger siblings, and after a series of such interruption from school, she will have difficulty catching up with her classmates and gives up completely. Her trader mother feels she herself is doing well in the market, and if all the girl needs education for is to be able to earn a decent income, then the earlier she starts learning to trade with her the better. Therefore, she is not motivated to continue with formal education. On account of this, most girls who start school don't continue beyond the primary school level. On the other hand, boys who are expected to be future husbands are expected to provide for their wives, and since formal education has become a means of entering highly paid jobs in the formal sector, it is considered more appropriate for boys since they will become bread-winners in the family.

Even with the ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity in the district, the family systems are patrilineal – asserting male over female supremacy. This also has a negative implication on girls' education. Likewise, the religious and value differences also have a bearing on the attitudes of various groups towards girls' education. For example the moslems exhibit more conservative attitudes towards women in general and (western)

education in particular and consequently their women have made the least development with respect to (western) education. In this regard, the World Bank (2006) suggests that some tenets of the Islamic religion could easily be misinterpreted and used to prevent female participation in education such as the restriction of girls from appearing in public places or to mix up with the opposite sex for religious reasons which makes sending girls to school a problem. Consequently, rural girls drop out at a much higher rate, which drop out is more for social and family than for education-related reasons (Worldbank 2006).

Socio-cultural norms promulgating early marriage and childbirth cut short if not preclude girls' education. The study found that in Arua district and everywhere else in the country, girls who become pregnant are not permitted to stay on in school although no equal sanction is borne by the fathers of such children. Early marriage is widespread in Uganda with approximately 22 per cent of girls married by the age of 15 in 2004 (UBOS, 2007). Pregnancy is one of the main reasons for girls dropping out of primary school at the age of 14-24.

I dropped out of school as a result of unwanted pregnancy and my parents forced me to marry the man that made me pregnant, thus ending my school participation (Miru, female School drop out).

Such unwanted pregnancies were blamed on the absence of sex education in primary schools as well as the traditional culture prevalent in rural areas that parents are prohibited from talking about sex with their children.

Some parents seem not to help the adolescent girl child to understand the body changes. There is a cultural attitude that it is not good to freely talk to children about issues of sex and sexuality. When girls reach the reproductive stage, some parents prefer to keep them at home (Mr. Matua – a parent).

This implies that some parents refuse to send their daughters to school because of the clear danger of sexual abuse from classmates or teachers. FAWE (2000) reports that it is becoming common in Uganda to find cases of sexual harassment and rape against girls by teachers, without any punishment from the system. Consequently, parents do not let girls attend school because they want to avoid their daughters' pregnancy before marriage arrangements have been made (FAO & UNESCO, 2005).

This sub-section has highlighted the nature of the intersections that shape the background of direct and indirect discrimination upon which gender inequality thrives in the context of poverty, geographical location and socio-cultural factors. We have argued that all these factors affect all children but affect girl-children more disproportionately, thereby adding impressively to the magnitude and complexity of inequalities. Girls are affected by a combination of their gender, their origin from poor households or within rural areas. Measures aimed at achieving gender equality in such a context should therefore not only broadly target girls or boys as a homogeneous category or gender dimension, but rather include specific interventions for those dimensions that cause subordination and/or marginalization in various ways.

Chapter Four: Responses to the Challenges of Girls' Multiple and Intersectional Experiences in Arua District

The second objective of the study was to evaluate the extent to which the government, schools and communities are responding to the multiple and intersectional experiences of girls. The study found that several measures had been implemented at these various levels as follows:

4.1 Government-level Responses

The issue of gender disparities in education has been one of concern to government and all civil society stakeholders. The Government of Uganda (GoU) policy provides for equal opportunities in education and other sectors for both sexes. The GoU through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) formulated the National Action Plan on Women (NAPW) and the National Gender Policy (NGP) to help advocate for gender equity at all levels in all aspects of life. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) in collaboration with the GoU and the International community have in addition put in place a number of initiatives/interventions/policies. One major intervention has been Universal Primary Education. UPE was launched in 1997 following the recommendations of the Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC, 1989), the subsequent relevant stipulations of the GoU White Paper (1992), and the development of the Children's Statute (1996). UPE emphasizes equal opportunity for both boys and girls. It focuses on promoting gender parity in enrolment, retention, and performance in primary education.

According to Arua District Education Officer, PTA chairperson and parents contacted, several interventions had been implemented by government to disable the barriers to girls' educational participation in the district.

The government has ensured that every primary school, particularly mixed and girls' primary schools has a senior woman teacher to guide and counsel the girl children.

Every school is supposed to provide sanitary facilities and wash rooms for the girl children and in this respect the UPE grants provide for purchase of soap, cotton wool and pads for the girls.

Government has also come up with a policy on re-admission of girls who have got pregnant and given birth. It has made it clear that school girls who get pregnant be brought back to school to complete their education after delivery.

The Girls' Education Movement in Africa (GEM) was launched in Uganda in 2001. The movement aims at promoting gender parity in education through enabling girls to realize and concretize their rights to participate in identifying best practices that enhance their participation in education, and issues that affect their education, and life skills hence forth. GEM specifically targets girls with special needs and creating awareness among the communities about the benefits of educating girls.

Deliberate appointment of women administrators in schools to act as role models for the children.

Affirmative action – provision of additional points to the girls for entrance to educational institutions like Universities and;

Awarding bursary to the best performing girls.

This implies that the government has spearheaded the fight against gender inequality in education. With such government support, it is hoped that other institutions have been shown a clear direction to follow- disabling barriers to girls' education. However, our argument is that these responses in themselves may not be sufficient and/or effective for various reasons such as having good policies on paper which may not necessarily be implemented. For example it is not enough to just have senior women teachers, but they should be approachable and nurturing; it is not enough to just get all children of school-going age into school but rather more needs to be done to ensure that they survive to the end of the cycle; it is not enough to say that part of the UPE grant can be used to purchase sanitary facilities for the girls, but its timely release is more important if it is to serve its purpose.

4.2 School-level Responses

The Equity in the Classroom (EIC) program is implemented in Arua District with an aim of facilitating equal participation of girls and boys in the classroom. Its great target is to increase girls' classroom participation and completion of primary school. It is in line with the MoES' mission to "provide quality education to all". Teachers have been sensitized to change any negative attitudes towards girls' education and adopt methods to promote equity in the classroom.

Emphasis has been put on the establishment of girls' schools to teach girls to be in leadership positions/ roles. Consequently, girls are taught to take their studies more seriously so as to acquire employment in future. In this school, student leadership (prefects) is taken as an example of encouraging girls to fully participate in education (Senior woman teacher).

Old Students' Associations have been formed to raise money to sponsor some of the less fortunate girls to continue with their education (Chairperson –PTA).

Monitoring attendance through registers daily, weekly and monthly so as to take remedial measures (The Head teacher of Arua Demonstration school).

We have a senior woman teacher who looks into affairs of girls with the help of other female staff and also male staff to carry out counselling and guidance, especially in case of problems (Mindreru- A primary seven pupil of Arua Demonstration school).

In all, schools in Arua district are still trying to cope with the contemporary ideal of gender equality in education. The pupils in school also treasure their school experience and majority of them appeared to be focused on acquisition of knowledge. This was confirmed by girls in a group interview in Arua demonstration school who indicated that;

They go to school to get more knowledge, to be responsible in future, to acquire skills, to learn to read and write; to learn to be good citizens, to learn English and be independent in future (P.5-P.7 girls of Arua Demonstration school).

This implies that the girls were focused to their goal of going to school.

4.3 Community-level Responses

During the study, it was revealed that the majority of the urban community members were in support of girls' education while most of the rural folk questioned the importance of girls' education. Consequently, parent/community educators and pressure groups were necessary to carry out sensitization with the community on the importance of girl child education as well as advocate for girls' education rights.

In support of girls' education, the study established that community members were involved in starting community schools in areas where government schools were too far apart. In addition, some parents reported that they used to go to visit their children at school, checking on their academic progress and packing for them something to eat while

at school among others. In addition, there was community concern especially among urban community members about indiscipline of the girl child and at times, concerned parents reported such indiscipline cases to schools.

Some parents within the community who are concerned about education of the girl child report cases of misbehaviour and some actually come with their daughters to school to help us combine efforts to curb indiscipline that eventually contributes to school drop out (Parent).

These reports indicate that the communities have taken steps to improve the education of the girl-child and although their efforts are commendable, more effort is needed to disable the cultural barriers to girls' education. This is because the community members are the custodians of culture in any society. In my opinion, it has become inevitable for men and women to adapt to changing life patterns made necessary by social change. Part of this adaptation is to acquire education both qualitatively and quantitatively to function meaningfully in the present society that has experienced change in its social fabrics. The demands of social change have resulted into the need for transformation in gender relations and the integration of communities into the capital world system. Therefore, to continue to be indifferent to the dictates of the time could be problematic for both the individual and the general society. This is in line with the argument of (Abena, 1991: 1) that "every human society has a body of beliefs that regulate the way people behave and relate to each other in the society. Over the years, these beliefs and modes of behaviour are modified to suit the changing circumstances of the society concerned." Arua is therefore no exception.

Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusion

5.0 Introduction

This research aimed at analyzing the interaction of gender with poverty, geographical location and socio-cultural factors in mediating the lived experiences of girls who have enrolled in primary education under UPE in Arua district and to evaluate the extent to which government, schools and communities are responding to the multiple and intersectional experiences of girls. This chapter presents a summary and discussion of the empirical findings and a conclusion.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The research sought to understand the reasons for the persistence of gender inequalities in UPE even after deliberate measures had been put in place to address them. The research specifically focused on how the persistence of educational gender inequalities (in primary education) are influenced by the interface of poverty, geographical location, socio-cultural factors and gender, with the study centered specifically on a rural setting. The research objectives focused on issues relating to the persistence of gender inequalities in primary education despite deliberate efforts to eradicate them, the interaction of gender with poverty, geographical location and socio-cultural factors in mediating the lived experiences of girls who have enrolled in primary education under UPE and how government, schools and communities are responding to the intersectional and multiple experiences of girls. The interaction of gender with poverty, geographical location and socio-cultural factors was analyzed in relation to other school-specific factors like classroom interaction. Lastly, the research advocates for the need to take an intersectional perspective for better understanding and elimination of gender inequalities in UPE.

The findings revealed that poverty is indeed a barrier to children's, particularly girls' educational participation. The situation is worsened by the societal norms, values, beliefs, practices and patterns which maintain a gendered household division of labour, decision-making and resource allocation. For instance children from poor households have to increasingly help their families with tasks such as working on the family farm or business and domestic chores. Girls in particular have to work every day before going to school by taking part in various household chores like fetching water and cleaning the homestead. This explains why girls usually arrive at school later than boys and/or participate less in classroom activities because they are extremely tired.

Regarding the socio-cultural factors, the study established that traditional cultural practices still strongly impact girls' enrolment. Where family resources are limited, families tend to place the highest priority on educating boys, recognizing them as future heads of household. Since women are not perceived as breadwinners and are traditionally viewed as potential mothers, they have a lower social status than men in Uganda. Consequently, low value is granted to girls' formal education. Also negative social attitudes and cultural practices such as the belief by some fathers that it is of no use sending their girls to school because they will marry and join other men's families still persist and continue to deprive girls of their right to education.

With regard to geographical location, there is often a limited possibility to find schools in close proximity within rural communities and they are also fewer in numbers. Children spend most of their time travelling long distances between home and school, especially for upper classes. Although these situations are similar and affect all children, girl-children have an additional problem specifically related to their security/safety in the course of travelling the long distance to and from school.

Another objective of the study was to establish how government, schools and communities are responding to the intersectional and multiple experiences of girls and in this regard the findings revealed that government has spearheaded the fight against gender inequality in education and schools and communities are also doing their best to this cause. Under government, UPE grants allow for the provision of girls' sanitation requirements by every government-aided primary school; a policy has been formulated on the re-admission of girls who have got pregnant and given birth to be brought back to school to complete their education; awarding bursaries to the best performing girls who lack fees e.t.c.

At school level the implementation of the Equity in the classroom program is ongoing so as to facilitate equal participation of girls and boys in the classroom, particularly targeting girls' increased classroom participation and completion of primary school. In this case teachers have been sensitized to change any negative attitudes towards girls' education and adopt methods to promote equity in the classroom. At community level on the other hand, community members are involved in starting community schools in areas where government schools are too far among other things.

5.2 Conclusion

Since gender disparity in education is widely recognized as a developmental problem, there is the need to step-up efforts in bridging this gender gap. There is significant evidence as shown from the factors that influence disparities in educational participation that poverty is a major factor in making decisions concerning children's education, which results to preferences on the particular sex to send to school. In view of this, there is the need for interventions and programs that could improve the household income. This means reducing poverty in the long term, and more immediately, providing economic opportunities for families. Therefore, for girls to participate fully not only in their own lives and those of their future families, but also in their country's development, the factors militating against their full participation in education must be removed so as to increase the number of girls that acquire education as well as acquire appropriate skills for development. To remove these hurdles requires a deliberate effort and the adoption of an integrated approach to eradication of poverty by all stakeholders.

Since there are various intersections forming the background of discrimination upon which inequality thrives, the struggle for gender equality should not focus on developing and implementing measures which target girls or boys in general as though they were a single category but rather include specific interventions for those subordinated in particular ways. This will help address the unique experiences of the affected children according to the magnitude of their affliction. For example the provision of lunch and writing materials for all children enrolled in UPE could help to counter discrimination in the allocation of household resources.

Finally, the overall conclusion from many studies on gender equity in education is that girls are more disadvantaged than boys. While this is true, and demands measures to address the imbalance, addressing imbalance among people is not to halt the one who has the edge but to remove every thing that serves as impediment to freedom and equal opportunities. Therefore, the tendency to focus empowerment interventions/strategies on women and girls alone obscures the fact that some boys and men are also affected by social inequalities as girls and women. This kind of attitude distracts from the main issue of relations of power and powerlessness that put both men and women in situations of deprivation and impoverishment in various societies.

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