

Contributing Factors for Girls' School Dropout among Rural Girls: the case of Oromia Nationality Zone, Ethiopia

Fatuma Abdu Ali

Wollo University, Department of Sociology, Ethiopia; Email: bilalez2014@gmail.com

Abstract

Across the world for improving women's status education is considered as the most significant instrument and also has a profound effect on girls' and women's ability to claim other rights, girls overall attain less education and tend to drop out earlier as compared to boys because of different factors. Though, this study was done aiming to investigate contributing factors for girls' school dropout focusing on the Oromia Nationality zone, Amhara regional state. A cross-sectional study design with a mixed research approach was applied and the data were collected from five purposively selected second cycle schools from five Woredas/districts by using data collection tools of the questioner, interview, and focus group discussion/FGD. The respondents were 384 randomly selected grade 9 and 10 female students from five secondary schools, purposively selected 5 school administrators, 30 teachers, 10 parents, 5 religious leaders 4 zone education, and Woreda administrators. The secondary

data on students' enrolments and dropout status were collected from the Woreda and Zonal education offices. The study explored a high girls' school dropout rate with the average rate of 20% because of early marriage, migration, community's biased attention to girls' education, and school distance. Girls have dropped out of their education from the lower grades tremendously without any improvement. Though, girls' education needs all responsible stakeholders' attention seriously. The study recommends as the problem is deep-rooted it needs cooperative Practical actions with appropriate monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of laws, policies, and strategies regarding children's education, age of marriage, and violence against women and girls.

Keywords: Contributing factor, Education, Enrolment rate, Girls School dropout

I. Introduction

Education is the way to advance the development of a given nation. It is the means to produce skilled human power which is vital to overcome the development challenges of a country. "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." [1]. Education is universally acknowledged to benefit individuals and promote national development. Educating females and males produce similar increases in their subsequent earnings and expand future opportunities and choices for both boys and girls. However, educating girls produces many additional socio-economic gains that benefit entire societies. These benefits include increased economic productivity, higher family incomes, delayed marriages, reduced fertility rates, and improved health and survival rates for infants and children [2]. Girls' and women's education is necessary for realizing key development goals, such as breaking the cycles of poverty and poor health [3]. "Educating girls quite possibly yield a higher rate of return than any other investment available in the developing world" [4]. It also helps to assure women's empowerment effectively. On this regard,

Asad also Saied "The most critical component of Women's empowerment is found to be education. It leads to improved economic growth, low fertility rate; health and sanitation and, an awareness of factors that disempowered women" [5]. Education has also a profound effect on girls' and women's ability to claim other rights and achieve a better status in society, such as economic independence and political representation [6].

That is why the universal declaration of human rights (UDHR) of 1948 demands that everyone has the right to get the education and it couldn't be a charity rather it is a fundamental human right for all people irrespective of their sex, race, economic status, and other differences. From this one can understand that peoples have equal rights to have educational access without any discrimination as a human being. Similarly, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) also aimed at ensuring that by 2015 all boys and girls can complete a full course of primary schooling and to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary

education preferred by 2005 and to all levels of education by 2015[7].

Regardless of the national as well as international promise to achieve Education for All by 2015, nearly 58 million children of primary school age worldwide were not enrolled in school in 2012. [3] The right to education is denied to 58 million girls, and a further 45 million boys, even at the primary school level. More than 75 countries are likely to miss the 2005 MDG target for gender parity in primary and secondary enrolments. One-third of these countries are in sub-Saharan Africa. On current trends, more than 40 percent of all countries with data are at risk of not achieving gender parity at primary, secondary, or both levels of education even by 2015 [8]. According to [6] reports the phenomenon of primary school dropout rate continues to pose a big challenge to the successful implementation of national policies of the country. In Ethiopia, the dropout of students from school denies the opportunity for employment as well as to develop social, economic, and political participation. In addition, the students drop out from schooling contributes to the poor performance of economic and social developments [9] According to the Education Strategy Center, regardless of immense improvements in narrowing the gender gaps over the last two decades, gender parity index /GPI still remains in favor of boys than girls (national GPI was 0.93 in 2014/15) and the index is 0.84 and 0.86 in the same years for Afar and Benshangul-Gumuz regional states respectively [10]. Though male and female enrolments are almost equal in urban areas, girls' enrolment was less than that of their counterparts in rural Ethiopia during the same years, entailing that more actions are needed to close the gap between rural male and female children's enrolment than in urban Ethiopia. Many research findings and literature shows that girls' dropout rates are higher compared to boys' in most parts of the world. For instance, according to [11], the dropout rate is higher for girls in 49 countries compared to boys. Holmes [12] also found that girls overall attain less education and tend to drop out earlier as compared to boys because of different factors. Among the main factors for girls' school dropout early marriage, Pregnancy, School distance, Cultural Beliefs, and household works are mentioned in dozens of works of literature.

Dropout has also received little attention in the global education agenda, which until recently has emphasized access to education through a focus on enrolments, rather than retention in education with an emphasis on completion. While the proportion of children admitted to the first grade of primary school at the official entry age has increased globally and in

every developing region since 2000, little and uneven progress has been made in reducing the rate at which children drop out before reaching the last grade of primary school.

The major development objectives of the Ethiopian government are concerned to reduce poverty and improve primary school enrolment, to date education performance indicators show that only access-related targets (gross enrolment of 65 percent by 2004/05) have been achieved. Gross and net primary enrolment rates increased from 45 and 21 percent in 1995/96 to 61 and 34 percent in 1999/00 and to 74 and 38 percent in 2004 (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development). However, primary school dropout rates in 1999/00 almost doubled in 2003/04 from 9 percent to 19 percent [9]. Though there are researches conducted on factors affecting female University students' academic performance at Bahirdar University Ethiopia there is no related researches mainly in Oromia special zone. Having this in mind, there is a significant need for efforts to minimize school dropouts and improve girls' education by identifying the main contributing factors for girls' school dropouts. Consequently, the researcher needs to conduct this study.

Thus the general objective of the study is investigating the contributing factors for girls' school dropout in Oromia special zone second cycle primary schools and to achieve the above-stated objectives, the following research questions were raised.

✚ What are the main contributing factors for girls' school dropout in the Oromia nationality zone?

✚ What is the tendency of girls' school dropouts in the Oromia nationality zone?

II. Theoretical Framework

The study was elaborated on the Liberal feminist theory which claims that gender differences are not based on biology, and therefore those women and men are not all that different, their common humanity supersedes their procreative differentiation. Women should have the same rights as men and the same educational and work opportunities and the Human Capital theory which advocates for investing in human beings through education so as to achieve personal and national development (economic and social development). It is in light of these theories that this study was executed

III. Methods

A. Study setting

The study was carried out in the Oromia nationality zone which is one of the special zones in Amhara Regional State. According to the Central Statistical Agency (CSA 2007), this Zone has a total population of 457,278, a decrease of -1.23% from the 1994 census, of whom 227,328 are men and 229,950 women; with an area of 3,470.04 square kilometers, Oromia has a population density of 131.78. While 51,728 or 11.31% are urban inhabitants, a further 2,005 or 0.44% are pastoralists. A total of 101,442 households were counted in this Zone, which results in an average of 4.51 persons to a household, and 97,957 housing units. The two largest ethnic groups reported in Oromia Zone were the Oromo (86.07%), and the Amhara (12.54%); all other ethnic groups made up 1.39% of the population. Afaan Oromo was spoken as a first language by 82.13%, and 16.99% spoke Amharic; the remaining 0.88% spoke all other primary languages reported. 97.07% were Muslim, and 2.4% of the population said they practiced Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity and have five woredas /districts named Artuma Fursi, Dawi Harwa, JilieTimuga, DawaChefa, and Senbetie [13].

B. Study Design

A cross-sectional study design was employed to gather factual data from 384 respondents selected by using a proportionate random sampling method and 54 purposively selected key informants. Relevant retrospective data on female students' school dropout was also generated. A mixed research approach was employed to reconcile between the limitations with the representativeness from the qualitative approach and the reductionist nature of the quantitative approach. FGDs, key informant, and in-depth interviews were carried out.

C. Study Population, Sample Size, and Sampling

Study participants were composed of female students, teachers, woreda and zone education personals, women and children affairs officers, community elders, and religious leaders.

The study participants were recruited by employing both probability and non-probability sampling strategies. Accordingly, four rural Second Cycle Primary Schools were selected purposively based on high female students' school dropout rates. The study sample size was determined by using Chcharan, 1977 Sampling methods.

$$n = z^2 \times p(1-p) \text{ thus } n = 1.962 \times 0.5(1-0.5) = 384$$

m²

0.052

Based on the formula 384 grade 9 and 10 female students were selected randomly from four rural second cycle primary schools and the other 54 research participants were selected by using a purposive sampling technique based on the appropriateness for the study.

D. Data collection tools

The data was collected by using both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools. Quantitative data were collected by a questioner from 384 randomly selected grade 9 and 10 female students from five secondary first cycle schools and qualitative data were collected by using key informant interview with purposively selected 5 school administrators, 30 teachers, 10 parents, and 5 religious leaders 4 zone education and woreda administrators. Four focus group discussions also implemented with female students and teachers. The secondary data on students' enrolments and dropout status were collected from the Woreda and Zonal education offices.

E. Method of Data Analysis

The questionnaires completed by respondents were checked for completeness and consistency, then coded, and analyzed thematically based on the sequences of the research objectives. Descriptive statistics such as a table, frequency, and percentage were used to describe the socio-demographic characteristics and enrolment and dropout rates of grade 9 and 10 female students of the selected second cycle primary Schools. The qualitative data were summarized and presented concurrently alongside the quantitative data by using thematic analysis techniques. Subsequently, based on the similarity of the themes, qualitative data were integrated with the quantitative ones concurrently based on themes in sequences of the study objectives.

IV. Results and Disruptions

A. Socio-Demographic Features of Participants

According to the data obtained from the survey, socio-demographically, all student respondents were female, majority 75% respondents were with age group of 14-18, and a significant majority 82.5% belongs to the same religious category (Muslim), 25% were the followers of Orthodox Christians and the minimum 10% of them were protestant. Regarding marital status among the respondents, 50% are promised to marry, 30% were single; the remaining 11% and 9% were divorced and married respectively. Regarding parents

level of education more than half (60%) were Illiterate, 26.5 primary level educated, 10% secondary level educated, and 2.5 College and above. On the other hand, 36% of research participants have experienced

school dropout, half of the respondents do have both parents and the remaining 49% have single parents. Moreover, the majority of respondents (73.5) belonged to the agrarian family

Table 1: Description of survey respondents

The trend of girls' school dropout in Oromia nationality zone second cycle primary schools

Socio-demographic characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Age of respondents	14-18	260	67.7
	19-21	100	26
	22-25	24	6.25
	Total	384	100
Respondents' Level of education	9 th	260	61.5
	10 th	124	38.5
	Total	384	100
Religious affiliation	Muslim	165	82.5
	Orthodox	25	12.5
	Protestant	10	5
	Total	384	100
Marital status of the respondent	Married	18	9
	Divorced	22	11
	Single	60	30
	Promised/ echogna	100	50
Their family's level of education	Illiterate	120	60
	Primary education	57	26.5
	Secondary education	20	10
	College and above	5	2.5
	Total	384	100
History of respondents school drop out	Yes	180	46.8
Families source of income	Agriculture	234	70
	Self-employed	85	22
	Government employee	43	11
	Others	22	6
	Total	384	100

Based on the primary and secondary data collected from the Oromia nationality zone education bureau and the survey data School dropout is a serious problem mainly in the rural districts. Both male and female students were leaving the School increasingly even if the degree of the problem is more on female students because of different reasons. The average female students' dropout rate was 20% in grade 9th and 13% in grade 10th with the highest rate of 46% in Dawi Harewa and the lowest rate of kamise town. The rate of

girls' school dropout increases in line with their grade levels increases. Sometimes no one girls graduate grades 10 and 12 because of school dropout. In the study area, there is a secondary school in which female students never sat grade 10 national exam in its 36 years history. In every academic year before grade 10 national examinations, all-female students dropped out of their education continuously. Nobody worried about girls' school dropouts except teachers and education officers. It is common practice in all grade levels and in

almost all districts without any improvements. As the problem is deep-rooted and has multidimensional factors, it is very challenging to minimize and end girls' school dropout basically rather it needs cooperative mass efforts of all responsible bodies.

As shown in the table, data collected from female students about contributing factors for girls school dropout, the majority 41.7% of respondents said that the main factor for girls school dropout was early marriage, 26 % migration, 13% community and family deferential perception to girls' Education, 7% school distance, 5.2% Sexual harassment/gender based violence/ and 4.9% economic problems.

B. Contributing factors for girls' school dropout

According to Hunt et al., (2008), school dropout is often a process rather than the result of one single event and therefore has more than one proximate cause. There is not one and only cause of school dropout. Therefore, there are several factors that stand as the factors of school dropout. Though, this section identifies the main contributing factors of girls' school dropout in the study area and as well the respondents being questioned on what they perceived as causes of school dropout. As shown in table 2 early marriage, migration, Community's perception towards girls' education, school distance, sexual harassment, lack of awareness about girls' education, and Low academic performance are the main contributing factor for girls' school dropouts respectively.

a) Early marriage

The majority 41.7% of respondents said that the main reason for girls' school dropout was early marriage. The qualitative data also supported the female student's resonance. As a result, almost all key informant interviews and FGD participants agree with the idea of the students. Early marriage is a highly acceptable traditional practice and affects girls' educational performance and accomplishment fundamentally. The study community gives more attention to early marriage than education. As the majority of the community is Muslims, they strongly argue early marriage has a religious foundation and acceptable practices in most Islamic states. They never want to discuss and negotiate on the age of marriage. Girls getting married at an early age help to have successful married life in the future than her education.

As a result, even though, there is progress in enrolment, dropout is a great challenge mainly for female students. When the grade level increases, the female students' dropout rate also increases. Mainly in ArtumaFursi, DawiHarwa, DawaChefa, JilleTimuga,

Table 2 Female Student's response regarding factors for girls' School dropout

Contributing factors for girls' school dropout	Frequency	Percentage
Early marriage	160	41.7
Migration to Arab nations	100	26
School distance	30	7
Biased attention to girls' education by the community and family	50	13
school environment	5	1.3
Sexual harassment/gender-based violence /	20	5.2
Lack of income / economic problem /	19	4.9
Total	384	100

and Bati woreda, there is a high female student's dropout rate. They never concern about their child's education. So the responsible bodies highly devoted to change communities' outlook towards education general and female education in particular. In general performing in an indirect manner, the religious factor is on balance is a positive one, though it is often overcome by the fundamental socio-cultural prejudice in support of males.

Girls themselves also accept such beliefs and have less attention to education rather they need to marry at an early age because early marriage is considered as a guaranty for the success of her future married life. Based on the traditional beliefs of the research community when the age of girls increases their preference for marriage decreases and they exposed to polygamy or to the marred old man most probably. Though, Even to migrate to abroad, girls need to get married before migration because, there is a fear that when their age increases after return to migration males never prefer them for marriage and they forced to marry a very old man or forced to be second, third or fourth wives. So girls want to marry at an early age.

Female teacher FGD participants also support the idea of educational officers. They tooled that the

community gives less attention to girls' education and most girls were married starting from the age of 12 and 13 years and forced to leave the school at an early age. Early child marriage is highly practiced and affects girls' education negatively. There is no response body that says no and confronts mainly the practice of early marriage because society relates the practice of early marriage to Islamic religion and never allows any external intervention and negotiation. So, they are highly reluctant and simply prefer to observe the hurt of girls. As a result, girls were voiceless and helpless victims.

On this regard a 13 years grade 9 female student from Seden Mekena school said the following heartbreaking calls. She said

I am 13 years old and my parents arranged my marriage and I will marry soon without my interest. I have a great pleasure to continue my education but after getting married, definitely, I will stop my education. So I am highly worried and needs help if possible please convince my parents to cancel my marriage and stay at school.

The other hand, a 14-years grade 10th female student interview participant from Senbete secondary school said that

Based on the social norms of the community negotiation regarding marriage is shameful and unexpected. Girls simply accept her parent's decision without any refusal. If my parents need to leave school and get married or migrate just I accept it because I have no alternative to reject their idea/ command. When I reject they are disappointed and reject me and my last chance may be a runaway and becoming a prostitute. Though I will accept and do it.

Based on the interviewee, the main factor for girls' school dropout is an early mirage. In the study area, girls have not any possibility to reject, negotiate, or discuss their education, marriage, and their future life at all. Simply they accept their parents' decision as it is because it is shameful and unacceptable at all. So, large numbers of school girls have dropped out of their education because of early mirage in the study area. In this regard, Mansory (2007) also realized early marriage is the foremost cause of early school dropout of girls in Afghanistan.

b) Migration

Based on the collected data as showmen in table 4 and the interview participants the other contributing factor for girls' school dropout was female migration to the Arab and Middle East countries. A large number of female students dropped out of school and migrate to the Arab countries at an early age legally or illegally to support their family economically. Most parents consider their daughters' migration as a source of income and they prefer sending their daughter abroad than sending them to school. There is a lack of female role models who are successful in the educational area plays a great role in the negative attitude of parents to girls' education. So, they give less attention to girls' education and prefer migration because several role models are migrating to the Arab nations and support their families economically. In addition, there is an illegal agent locally called Askoblay who pushes and convinces parents and girls to migrate abroad and will have a better future life. Those illegal agents tempt girls to travel and cross the border and will have better economic status in a short paired of time. As a result, parents force their daughters to drop their education and migrate to the Arab countries tremendously. So migration has a great contribution to girls' school dropout in the study area.

c) Community's perception on girls' Education

Community's perception towards girls' Education is the other contributing factor for girls' school dropouts in the study area. The study community has biased attention on girls' education. They strongly believe with gender role division and sending their daughter to school is valueless rather girls must west her time in the house with her mother and master household tasks that help them for their future life. According to the interviewee, after girls getting marriage leaving the school is obligatory because based on societal traditions for married girls her house is the right place. She spends all her time in the house and performs household-related activities appropriately. Though Schooling is not essential for a married girl they must leave the school as soon as a girl is married, she has crossed the beginning into motherhood and no longer needs an education. In this regard thirty-four Plan's program experience around the world tells us girls who are forced into early marriage are most likely to miss out on school. Schooling girls is considered as a resource and time wastage. As a result, education is not essential for taking such roles and responsibilities, rather wasting their time in the house and specialized reproductive roles with their mother and sister which are helpful to be a good wife and mother in the future. According to key informant interview participants, for girls, the ultimate goal of her life is to be a good mother

and wife, losing her time at school is meaningless or affect her future marriage life negatively.

d) School distance

As shown in table 4 School distance is an important determinant of school dropout for female students. In this regard, Juneja (2001) observes that if school distance is considered too far from home, young girls tend to drop out more due to the vulnerability to sexual harassment Parents are afraid for the safety of their children when they have to travel long distances to school. Ainsworth et al. (2005) found that the likelihood of attending secondary school for girls decreases with the greater the distance compared to the nearer secondary schools.

Nekatibeb (2002) also asserts that school distance is the foremost obstacle for girls' education in many countries in Africa. On the other hand; School distances a cause for students' poor academic performance. Numerous studies link learners' poor academic performance in specific with the walking distance in which the learners travel to reach their schools and those students who have poor academic performance led to leave the school mostly.

e) Sexual harassment/gender-based violence

In this regard, the school director from Metie second cycle school tolled the amassing story of female students who cross the long distances from their parents to attend secondary education. He was told as only in one semester eight female students were raped and after that practice was happened parents never allow their druthers to Crosse long distance at all. Though, such kind of situations affects girls' educational attainment highly in the study area. On the other hand, girls may expose to abduction during traveling long distances alone. Abduction is practiced as a way of forced marriage when parents of girls reject marriage proposals. Once somebody abducted girls it is obvious to marry the abducted girl based on the tradition of the researched community.

f) Lack of awareness about girls' education

According to interview participants from the Oromia nationality zone education bureau, there is a lack of awareness about the importance of education and as a result, the study community has a negative outlook on education at all and girls' education in particular. She said the majority of the communities are Muslims they are highly reluctant to attend modern education. Sometimes they relate modern education to Christianity and believed attending modern education makes them Christian. More specifically the community and student parents have a negative outlook for girls' education and considered girls' education as

wastage of time and resources. Including the time of national examination, students were absent from the class carelessly. Though the responsible bodies cooperate with kebele administrators, security bodies, and other stack holders to motivate and also forced students to sat in the national examination even though there is a lack of preparation for the exam. This shows the deep-rooted problems and challenges of achieving the millennium development goals and also indicates the efforts which will be performed in the future to improve education in both enrolment and achievement/quality of education in the study area. It needs intensive and all-rounded efforts mainly to change the whole community members' outlook towards education entirely and girls' education particularly.

g) Academic performance

Academic achievement has to do with what a learner is able to accomplish by the execution of classwork in the school. Stiggings (2001) sees academic achievement as something a learner do or achieve at school, college, or university, in class, in a laboratory or fieldwork. Academic performance is the other contributing factor for girls' school dropout in the Oromia nationality zone second cycle primary schools. The school teacher interview participants said that most of the time students who have low academic performance dropped their education Poor academic results and performances are associated with higher levels of grade repetition and dropout, and with lower progression ratios to higher levels of the education system (Colclough et al., 2000).

V. Discussion

The current study shows that there was high girls' school dropout because of early marriage, migration, Community's perception towards girls' Education, School distance, Sexual harassment/gender-based violence, Lack awareness about girls' education, Academic performance. Among those factors, early marriage and migration were the most common contributing factors for girls' school dropouts. Overall, the risk of school dropout due to early marriage and migration heightens after girls complete the fifth or sixth grade and it out peaks in the seventh and eighth grades and remain high in the ninth and tenth grades. The very high percentage of girls in the study area responding to early marriage and migration as the dominant factor for school dropout. Early Marriage could be potentially used as an ex-post justification for leaving school rather than being the actual cause. Girls choosing to cite a positive social status (marriage) rather than less desirable factors (poverty or lack of academic interest) may have influenced the results. However, this in itself indicates the social dimensions

of the issue of child marriage and the need to address social norms around marriage and the aspirations of girls.

The incompatibility between marriage and schooling is partly attributed to social norms towards married girls in the Oromia nationality zone. Because of safety and security concerns, especially fear of rape and abduction, restrictions on married girls' movements by their husbands and parents-in-law are common particularly in rural areas where many villages have no secondary school and girls are forced to travel outside their village. Social pressure to protect the family's honor could lead to families keeping married girls at home, which results in absenteeism and then drop out. Marital status may also reinforce the family perception that they are no longer children who require formal education or the notion that the returns on investment in education are negligible. Moreover, families are motivated to marry off their daughters at a young age because of fear of pre-marriage sexual practice and sexual harassment. As a result, formal education programs need to support girls as the transition between grades, particularly with a focus on secondary education and those in the fifth to tenth grades. Since child marriage practices are deeply rooted in gender and social norms in a patriarchal society, it is also important to work with males relatives (fathers, fathers-in-law, and husbands) of girls at risk of early marriage, as well as male school teachers.

Cultural beliefs also play an important role in the high incidence of early dropouts of girls. Sometimes it depends on parents on how to perceive girls' education. On the one hand, there are human perceptions formed by several factors such as education, socioeconomic status, religion, and environment of the community where they live in. These perspectives constrain girls' education especially in developing regions of the world like Ethiopia. Some traditional cultural practices and beliefs of a particular religion or community massively affect as barriers to girls' education, especially in male-dominated societies. Migration to the Arab nations is the other dominant factor for girls' school dropout. Most parents force their daughter to leave the school and migrate abroad in order to have better future economically. In the study community female migration is the primary source of family income than education. There is a lack of female role models who were successful in the education sector. Therefore because of such varieties of contributing factors, there is high girls' school dropout which needs fundamental changes. It needs well organized cooperated actions of all responsible stockholders.

VI. Conclusion and recommendations

The current study yields solid evidence about the situation of girls' education and the main contributing factors for girls' school dropouts. In the study area, the girls' school dropout rate is very high and needs attention. Generally, the research community has less attention to education at all and girls' education in particular. The community considers girls' education as wastage of time and resources. They strongly believe with the gender-based division of labor and duty and girls' appropriate duty is reproductive roles it is mandatory to the west all their time in the house and master reproductive roles with the help of their mother and younger sisters to good wife and mother in the future. Though, to be mother and wife education is not mandatory. They learn simply from their mother in the house. So the girl's school dropout rate is very high with the average female students' dropout rate were 20% in grade 9th and 13% in grade 10th with the highest rate of 46% in Dawi Harewa and the lowest rate of kami town.

The major factors for girls' school dropout in the study area were early marriage, migration, community's deferential attention to girl's education, school distance, low academic performance, and gender-based violence sequentially. Mainly early marriage and migration were the primary factors that need serious attention. Because the community gives more attention to early marriage than a girl's education and it is a highly acceptable traditional practice in the study area. Though, every year a large number of female students leave the school because of early marriage basically. Next to early marriage, female migration to the Middle East and the Gulf countries were the leading factors which aggravates female students' school dropout. Having a daughter and wife in the Arab countries considered a sign of wealth and prestige in the study area. Besides the community's biased attention for girls' education, school distance low academic performance and gender-based violence have their own role for girls' school dropouts. Though, the study recommends girls' education needs great attention in the Oromia Nationality zone. Every responsible body including government and non-government organizations and institutions play their role timely and appropriately to keep girls at school. The community's outlook towards education particularly girls' education must be changed through creating awareness about the importance of education and girls' education for community development to the whole society and the danger of child marriage and female migration. Not only awareness actions also are taken to minimize early marriage and female migration which are the main factors for girls' school dropouts in the study area. Generally, girls' education requires practical collective

and consistent actions with timely monitoring and

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