

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL BARRIERS FACED BY ADOLESCENT
MOTHERS ON THEIR REINTEGRATION BACK TO SCHOOL IN YIMBO WEST
WARD, SIAYA COUNTY**

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has never been presented for examination in any other University.

Signature:  _____ Date: 27/06/2023

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.

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PROF. W. ONYANGO-OUMA

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to all parents and guardians of adolescent mothers in school in Yimbo West Ward, Siaya County who have made sacrifices to support their daughters to return to school.

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ABSTRACT

This was a cross-sectional descriptive study on challenges faced by adolescent mothers on their reintegration back to school in Yimbo West Ward, Siaya County. The study examined the socio-economic and cultural barriers in access to education for adolescent mothers, and the strategies that have been adopted by the schools and community to address these challenges. The study population comprised of adolescent mothers and the data was collected through case narratives, in-depth interviews, and key informant interviews. The study was guided by Schlossberg's Transition Theory. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data and the findings have been presented along the research themes.

Most schools readmit adolescent mothers after delivery and they are allowed to continue schooling during pregnancy. However, the findings of the study indicate that the challenges faced by adolescent mothers on their reintegration back to school relate to lack of basic needs such as school uniforms, clothes for their babies, food, and diapers.

Other challenges include the stress associated with balancing the student role and motherhood, isolation by fellow students or teachers, frequent truancy from school to take care of the baby, and lack of support from the immediate family and relatives. In most cases the parents (mothers) or guardians assume the burden of caring for the babies and providing for the family in order for the girls continue with their education.

The study recommends that stakeholders in the education sector need to create awareness on the legal frameworks that have enabled the adolescent mothers to be reintegrated back to school especially the return to school policy, socio-economic and cultural barriers in access to education for adolescent mothers, as well as the adverse effects of adolescent pregnancy. The government and key stakeholders ought to implement strategies to combat the increase of adolescent pregnancy in the region.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AU	Africa Union
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
BPFA:	Beijing Declaration & Platform for Action
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CRC	Convention on the Rights of Child
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COK	Constitution of Kenya
EFA	Education for All
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GOK	Government of Kenya
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
KDHS	Kenya Demographic and Health Survey
KII	Key Informant Interviews
KPHS	Kenya Population and Housing Survey
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation
NCPD	National Council For Population and Development
NGO	Non- Governmental Organization
OHCHR	Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual Gender-Based Violence
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections

UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

We all have the right to an education free of discrimination based on our gender, age, race, or ethnicity. Learning equips us with the knowledge and understanding of our rights, responsibilities, and liberties, as well as enhancing our role in the country's social, economic, cultural, and political development. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) declared literacy to be a global human right (UDHR, 1948). This was later reinforced in Article 10 (a) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which directs State affiliates to adopt wholly relevant steps to eliminate prejudice against women and ensure equal education equality for all. The primary goal of the article is to reduce school dropout rates by girls and to establish alternative programs for early school dropout (CEDAW, 1979). The first Global Proclamation on Academic achievement, Education for All (EFA) was signed in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, and it states that academic essential to both men and women around the world, irrespective of their age (Degener & Koster-Dreese, 1995). The Government of Kenya being a signatory to these declarations, conventions, treaties, and other legal frameworks that recognizes the access to Education for All (EFA), passed the re-entry policy in 1994. The policy has guidelines for the readmission of teenage mothers into approved learning institutions. It also provides for unconditional readmission of girls who become pregnant back to school after delivery. It is geared towards giving adolescent mothers a second chance to continue with their education and not shatter their dreams.

Articles 43(f) and 53(1)(b) of the Constitution guarantee all children, irrespective of gender, the right to education, as well as the right to universal and obligatory fundamental learning (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). Despite the government's efforts to promote education as a fundamental right through the laws that protect access to education, most adolescent mothers are not guaranteed this right as they frequently drop out of school before or after giving birth.

The 2011 World Health Organization report on adolescent pregnancies recounted that the

teenage pregnancy rate was highest in the Latin America and the Caribbean 18% of births while the Sub-Sahara region had the second-highest rate of teenage pregnancy at 16.5% of all births regionally. In Sub-Saharan Africa, teenagers represent 23% of the total population, and 22% of teenage girls married between 2002 and 2009. Therefore, the rate of teenage pregnancies differs proportionately between developed and developing countries (World Health Organization, 2011).

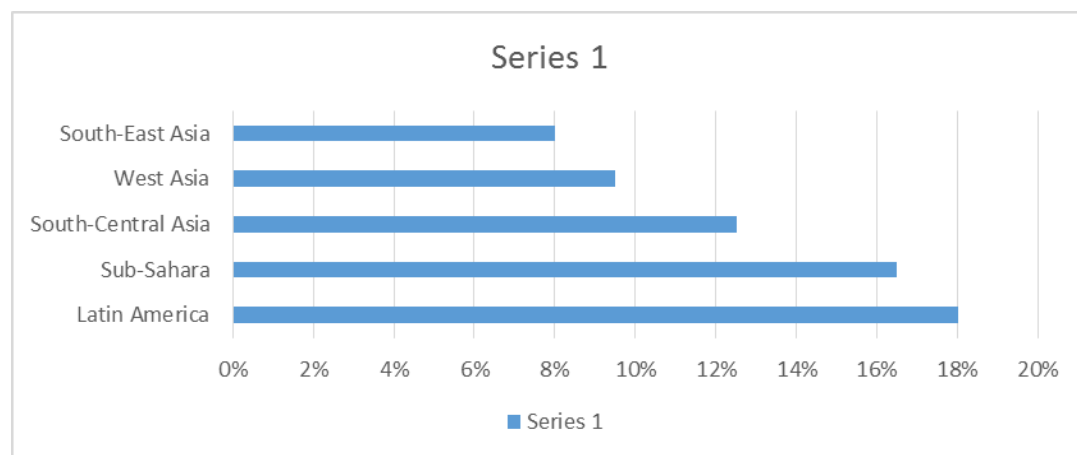


Figure 1.21.2.1: Prevalence of Adolescent Pregnancy

Source: (World Health Organization, 2011)

The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey report indicates that childbirth begins early in Kenya where 18% of adolescent girls between 15-19 years are parents or expectant with their first child which has remained unchanged in the last five years. According to the report, 15% of ladies between 20-49 years had their first carnal interaction by 15 years, whereas 50% by age 18, and 71 % by age 20, in the Nyanza region, women between 20-49 years begin their sexual experiences at 16.4 years while in Siaya County, the age of first sexual interaction for women is 16.6 years. . The report also shows that women with no education begin sexual activity earlier than those who are educated up to the secondary level (KDHS, 2014). According to the (OHCHR, 2022) report on the status of the teenage pregnancies per county, Siaya County had 349 adolescent pregnancies aged 10-14 years and 7049 adolescent pregnancies aged 15-19 years 2020. Therefore, teenage pregnancy remains a serious problem in the County with risk factors

such as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), early and forced marriages, and Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV).

This research looked at girls' education in Kenya as a vital step toward gender equality. It examined the socio-economic and cultural barriers that the adolescent mothers encounter during their reintegration back to school. The research also suggests ways to effectively address these challenges.

1.2 Problem Statement

Notwithstanding the introduction of the return to school legal framework and policy for adolescent mothers, previous studies by (Birungi et al., 2015; Macharia & Kessio, 2015; Onyango et al., 2015) show that adolescent mothers are stigmatized, excluded within the school environment, and denied readmission. They also receive inadequate support and care from their parents. Teenage motherhood has been recognized as a global problem that has greatly impacted access to education by teenage mothers (Karimi, 2015). According to the research, actors are unaware of the policy and there are insufficient resources to implement it.

According to (Okumu, 2020), teenage pregnancy disrupts girls' education resulting in low academic performance, abortions, and dropouts. Adolescent mothers who are reintegrated often face isolation, humiliation, and stigma from their classmates and teachers (Chigona & Chetty, 2007).

There is inadequate information regarding the legal frameworks, policies, and support given to adolescent mothers who desire to continue with their education after delivery. This research sought to explore the barriers and experiences of these adolescent mothers who have returned to school. The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the legal frameworks that address the right to education for adolescent mothers?
2. What are the socio-economic and cultural in access to education for adolescent mothers?
3. What are the strategies that have been adopted by the schools and community to

address challenges faced by adolescent mothers during their reintegration back to school?

1.3 Research Objective

1.3.1 General Objective

To examine the socio-economic and cultural barriers faced by adolescent mothers during their reintegration back to school in Yimbo West Ward, Siaya County.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To assess legal frameworks that address the right to education for adolescent mothers.
2. To explore the socio-economic and cultural barriers in access to education for adolescent mothers.
3. To identify strategies the schools and community have adopted to address challenges faced by adolescent mothers during their reintegration back to school.

1.4 Assumptions

- 1 Legal frameworks improves adolescent mothers' access to education.
- 2 Socio-economic and cultural barriers hinder adolescent mothers from accessing education.
- 3 Implementation of strategies by the schools and community address the challenges faced by adolescent mothers during their reintegration back to school.

1.5 Justification of Study

The study focuses on adolescent motherhood as a unique key social problem threatening countries globally. Adolescent motherhood has been recognized as a major distress to parents/guardians, policymakers, social workers, and other service providers because of its negative impact and consequences on access to education by adolescent girls (Annan, 2006).

From this standpoint, the study looks at both the legislative frameworks and policies in

existence as well as socio-economic and cultural barriers encountered by adolescent mothers who return to school after child birth, in order to reduce the recognized gender inequality in education. . According to (Chikhungu et al., 2020), adolescent parenthood is among the most significant barriers to adolescent girls' complete educational attainment in Sub-Saharan Africa. The growing tendency of girls becoming pregnant while still in school poses a challenge to all actors in the education system as well as the community at large.

Thus, the study will be beneficial to researchers interested in further investigating of reintegration policies, legal framework, socio-economic and cultural barriers faced by adolescent mothers. It will aid policymakers in the gender and education sectors school management, teachers, and counselors in effective implementation of the policy.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study was conducted in Yimbo West Ward, Siaya County as one of the regions in the area that recorded significant cases of adolescent pregnancies in 2021 and 2022. The study recruited adolescent mothers between the ages of 10-19 years who had been reintegrated back to school within the Ward. The adolescent mothers shared the socio-economic and cultural challenges, the support that they have received at home, school, and in community.

Due to privacy concerns and limited access to adolescent mothers, the researcher enlisted the assistance of school administration, their parents, guardians and Community Based Organization (CBO) in recruiting them. Thus, the researcher administered interview schedules, and interviews were conducted during school hours and weekends.

The researcher only interviewed fifteen (15) adolescent mothers, seven (7) of whom were pupils and eight (8) were students. As a result of the small sample size, the study's findings can only be applied to Yimbo West Ward and are not applicable to other adolescent mothers in diverse geographical, local, or cultural contexts.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the international, regional, and national legal frameworks that strive to address adolescent mothers' rights to education. It emphasizes the key Articles and Sections that safeguard the rights of teenage mothers to access education.

Secondly, the chapter explores the various barriers to education to understand the hurdles that adolescent mothers face during their reintegration back to school. Thirdly, the approaches taken to address the issues confronting adolescent mothers. Finally, the theoretical framework relevant to the study and the definition of the key terms.

2.2 Legal Frameworks that Recognize the Right to Education for Adolescent Mothers

2.2.1 International Legal Frameworks

According to (Omwancha, 2012), guidelines advocating for ongoing readmission of teenage mothers in school after delivery are not only significant in Kenya but also in other regions. This is to ensure that adolescent mothers are allowed to complete their studies. As a result, global agreements or treaties that support the rights of adolescent mothers to be readmitted back to school have been formulated. These includes: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948, the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966, the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (1976), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1985, Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989, the Dakar Framework for Action; Education for All (2000) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2015.

All the preceding Conventions and commitments regard literacy as a fundamental right and advocate for the right to an education for all children including adolescent mothers, without discrimination. The conventions aim to ensure that children receive consistent formal education and the school dropout rates are reduced. Therefore, Kenya is legally required to ensure that its laws and policies are aligned with the principles of ratified treaties.

2.2.1.1 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

This Convention directs the States to provide provisions aimed at care and guidance for adolescent parents to promote their welfare and that of their babies. The governments are also directed to adopt measures that will support and enable adolescent mothers to be reintegrated back to school. Through affirmative action measures, governments should guarantee that adolescent mothers are not discriminated against on any grounds whatsoever (CRC, 1989).

2.2.1.2 The United Nations Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Article 10 of the Convention eliminates all unfairness against females in the learning system and aims at reducing early school dropout rates for girls. The article also advocates for the development of diversion courses for women and girls who drop out of school before completion (CEDAW, 1979). Therefore discrimination against adolescent mothers on access to education will be construed to be a violation of this Convention.

2.2.1.3 International Covenant on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) 1966

Article 13 of the Covenant guarantees the right to education, acknowledging that education can help socioeconomically disadvantaged children, men, and women who are break the cycle of poverty. It can also enable them to engage within their communities without any discrimination, therefore, focusing on education in eradicating poverty and bringing gender equality in social and economic spheres (United Nations, 1966).

2.2.1.4 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 Agenda

The United Nations Assembly passed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as development goals, in 2015 to build on Millennium Development Goals (MDG) that were not fully achieved. The Goals' vision is to eliminated poverty, hunger, disease, fear, and, violence. It also promotes a dignified world without any form of discrimination and upholds gender equality at all levels of education and opportunities for the full realization of human potential. Goal 3 provides for the promotion of good welfare for all and Goal 5 advocates for gender equity in education and equal educational opportunities for all (United Nations, 2015). The adoption and execution of school re-entry strategies for underage parents are focused on achieving Global Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

2.2.1.5 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960

This was the first transnational accord to address the right to education in its entirety. State Parties have a responsibility to provide basic literacy that can accommodate all children, including those who have dropped out of primary school (UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, 1960).

2.2.1.6 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

The Declaration was the first worldwide basis for basic fundamental rights and freedoms established by the United Nations General Assembly. Article 26 recognizes the liberty to a free and obligatory basic literacy and outlaws gender discrimination in technical, professional, and higher education. The Article also highlights the necessity for particular facilities for people with

disabilities and for adolescent mothers to get special attention (UDHR, 1948).

2.2.1.7 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

Articles 2, 3, and 5 of the Covenant require States parties to establish essential legislation to accord implementation of the Covenant's recognized rights. It also advocates men's and women's rights without prejudice on race, color, sex, religion, country, or socioeconomic status (ICCPR, 1966).

2.3 Regional Legal Frameworks

Developmental challenges that would affect both the current and future generations are directly linked to increased dropout of girls from the education system. According to UNESCO, there is an increased number of adolescent girls who drop out of school in the lower classes compared to their male counterparts. If girls are not encouraged to stay in school or return to school after dropping out, it will be difficult to equip them with the necessary knowledge that would help in eliminating poverty, hunger, and disease and conserving the ecosystem (UNICEF, n.d.)

The following regional instruments defend and safeguard individuals' basic human rights and freedoms across the African continent, including the right to education for adolescent mothers, as well as to achieve regional progress.

2.3.1 African Charter on Human & Peoples' Rights 1992

The Banjul Charter is a document that defends and protects African people's liberties. It places a strong emphasis on people's socioeconomic and cultural rights. Both genders, including adolescent mothers, have academic freedom under Article 17 (1) of the Charter (African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1992).

2.3.2 Protocol to the African Charter on Human & Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa 2005

This protocol is commonly referred to as the Maputo Protocol because it guarantees girls and women equal access to education and training. Article 12 clause (2) (c) requires States Parties to implement plans to enhance the admission of girls to educational and training programs, as well as diversion programs for girls and women who have dropped out before completing their education. The Article also mandates the State Parties to ensure the retention of girls in the learning and training institution (Kounte, 2005).

2.3.3 AU African Union Agenda (2063)

The Agenda 2063 was adopted by the African Union in 2013 which is a commitment towards socio-economic strategic growth among countries in African Continent. Governments have pledged to increase human capital by engaging continuously in education and eliminating gender disparities at all levels of schooling (Africa Union, 2013).

2.3.4 African Youth Charter

The Charter was enacted in 2005 to provide a platform for youth empowerment and recognizes the right to education for all including adolescent mothers who are desirous to be readmitted back to school after delivery. It also advocates for equal access to quality education at all levels without discrimination and promotes the use of modern information, communication, and technology by young people (African Youth Charter, 2005).

To show the commitment of West African countries to ensuring pregnant adolescent girls are not discriminated against in the quest to access education, the Community Court of Justice of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in its judgment dated 13th January 2021 in a case: *Women Against Violence and Exploitation in Society (W.A.V.E.S) and Child Welfare Society, Sierra Leone (CWS-SL) Versus The Republic of Sierra Leone* held that the government of Sierra Leone violated the right of expectant adolescent mothers by prohibiting them from accessing school. The government was also ordered by the court to adopt actions and social programs to address increased teenage pregnancies and sensitize the community against discrimination. This case had been brought by the applicants seeking the enforcement of

fundamental rights of pregnant school girls in Sierra Leone as a result of the expulsion of pregnant school girls from schools pre-dated the 1991-2002 civil war that ravaged the county (Community Court of Justice of Economic Community of West African States, 2020).

2.4 National Legal Framework and Policies

(Kumar et al., 2018) opined that “equal access to ideal health and educational opportunities by women is important for the physical and socio-economic welfare of the families and communities.” Thus, it becomes vital for Kenya to ensure an environment that is dedicated to eliminating all the impediments that would prevent teenage mothers’ reintegration back to school. The Government has enacted various laws that not only address the right to education for adolescent mothers but also protect them from discrimination and exploitation. The government has also developed various policies to implement these laws.

2.4.1 Constitution of Kenya 2010

Adolescent parents are classified as a special interest group that includes people from marginalized or minority groups, people with impairments, and senior citizens. Article 55 of the Constitution requires the government to take steps such as implementing affirmative action programs to ensure that such special interest groups have the opportunity to essential training and support while also being protected from harmful cultural practices and exploitation. Adolescent mothers are also included in these programs. Furthermore, Article 27 recognizes equality and freedom from discrimination, with sub-section (4) prohibiting the state from discriminating against anyone based on ethnic or social origin, race, color, sex, religion, marital status, health status, age, disability, conscience, belief, culture, dress, pregnancy, language, or birth. Under Subsection (a), the State shall implement legislative and other measures, including affirmative action programs and policies, to correct any disadvantage experienced by individuals or groups as a result of prior discrimination (Constitution of Kenya, 2010).

2.4.2 Basic Education Act No. 14 of 2013

The requirements of the Act are guided by the human dignity of any child to basic education, as well as impartial availability to quality learning for youth, equal access to education or institutions fostering respect for the right of the child's viewpoint in situations that concern the

child; protecting every child from discrimination within or by an education department or institution based on race, ethnicity, or gender, non-discrimination, encouragement, and protection of the marginalized and those with special needs, elimination of gender discrimination and promotion of the right to participation and development of children.

Sections 28 and 30 of the Act mandate the Cabinet Secretary in charge of education to implement free and compulsory education in public primary and secondary schools in conjunction with the National Education Board and the County Education Board. Section 29 of the Act provides for free education in public schools for all pupils and students. When applying for admission to any school, Section 34 specifically prohibits discrimination against children, including adolescent mothers, on the grounds of skin color, sexual orientation, age, religious belief, race, color, language, or culture (Basic Education Act, 2013). The Act criminalizes the failure of a parent to enroll his or her child in school. As a result, regardless of socioeconomic status, every child is entitled to free and compulsory education.

2.3.3 Children Act 2022

The principles entrenched in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) are given effect by this Act. Section 9 of the Act protects children from discrimination on the grounds of age, origin, sex, religion, creed, custom, language, opinion, conscience, color, birth, health, status, pregnancy, social, political, economic, or status, race, disability, tribe, residence or local connection or any other status. Section 11 states that every child has a right to parental care and protection. Whereas, Section 13 provides for the right to basic education whereby every child has a right to free and compulsory basic education in line with Article 53(1) (b) of the Constitution. The section also mandates every parent or guardian to present for admission or cause to be admitted to his or her child, as the case may be to a basic education institution. In addition to this, every child shall be entitled to leisure, play, and participation in non-harmful cultural and artistic activities (The Children Act, 2022).

2.3.4 Employment Act 2007

Section 54 of the Act prohibits the employment of a child in the labor sector to carry out tasks that would be child labor and exploitation. However, a child of 13-16 years of age can be

employed to undertake light work that is not harmful to the health or growth for a financial benefit. This Section protects teenage mothers from seeking employment or who might be labor trafficked in a bid to provide for their children (Employment Act, 2007).

2.3.5 Marriage Act 2014

Section 4 of the Act upholds that the minimum age of marriage is 18 years and this has also been recognized in the various international and regional frameworks (Marriage Act, 2014). According to this section, it puts a stop to child marriages that have been a cultural practice in many communities. Child marriages have also impeded the reintegration of adolescent mothers back to school.

2.3.6 Penal Code

Section 157 criminalizes the defilement of a child and Section 210 of the code also criminalizes infanticide (Kenya Penal Code, 1930).

2.3.7 Sexual Offences Act 2006

Section 8 (1) and 9 (1) criminalizes the defilement and attempted defilement of a child. Section 11 criminalizes sexual harassment. The Act also recognizes that the age of consent is 18 years and above (Sexual Offences Act, 2006).

Therefore, the Penal Code and Sexual Offences Act protect adolescent mothers against further sexual violations within the school and in the community.

2.3.8 National School Health Policy 2009

The policy recognizes the right to quality education including the vulnerable groups for all children. It also provides that parents/ guardians should make adequate arrangements for the care of the child at home while the young mother is in school and, mandates the schools to provide counseling services and life skills to prevent future unintended pregnancies. Under the policy, the young mothers shall be admitted back to school at the level where they were dropped as a result of the pregnancy (National School Health Policy Kenya, 2009).

2.3.9 Basic Education Regulations 2015

Under Section 60 of the Regulations, the County Director of Education shall in consultation with the County Education Board constitute affirmative action to enable learners to form a minority or marginalized groups with special needs for those living in especially difficult circumstances to be readmitted to secondary schools. The Regulation also protects learners of school-going age from being denied admission into the school on lack of proof of age (Government of Kenya, 2015).

2.4 Barriers in Access to Education for adolescent Mothers

Many adolescent mothers around the world confront several obstacles to accessing education and are often subjected to societal prejudices as a result of discrimination. As a result, they are unable to fully exercise their rights and dignity. Understanding the impact of these hurdles is the only way to make considerable progress in the reintegration of adolescent mothers back into school.

Gender inequality is pervasive in African educational institutions, where cultural, socio-economic, psychological, historical, and political issues all play a role in preventing adolescent mothers from accessing quality education. Despite positive opinions on the benefits of education for adolescent mothers, many socio-cultural beliefs and practices negate those benefits. These are linked to cultural traditions, parents'/guardians' lack of education, and difficult economic circumstances, which often contribute to a preference for boys (UNESCO, 2014).

According to (Ruzibiza, 2021), allowing pregnant and young mothers to attend school would have negative influence on their peer behavior. Teenage mothers reported feeling stigmatized, which resulted in lowliness, isolation and solitude. Adolescent mothers rarely receive professional counseling to prepare them deal with stigma, parenthood and schooling which resulted to them dropping out of school. Sometimes their parents distanced themselves from the girls as they felt ashamed that the community would look down upon the family because of their child's actions.(Chigona & Chetty, 2008).

2.4.1 Socio-Economic Barriers

In theory and practice, the entitlement to education for adolescent mothers is not obligatory. Adolescent mothers confront several obstacles that prevent them from obtaining an education.

According to (Kalee, 2020), monetary and sociocultural barriers have also been implicated as factors that prevent a substantial proportion of girls in underdeveloped nations from continuing their education following teenage pregnancies.

2.4.1.1 Stigma and Discrimination

Adolescent mothers are sometimes stigmatized by their teachers, comrades, and community due to poor academic performance after pregnancy. According to (Education Law Center, 2019), in Philadelphia, most adolescent mothers reported feeling disconnected from school and having no contact with teachers following the birth of their children because they often received no information from the school. Stigma from teachers, fellow students, and the community emerged as a major challenge faced by adolescent mothers in most schools. Some parents felt betrayed and their dreams shattered discouraging them from taking their daughters back to school (Karimi, 2015; Macharia & Kessio, 2015). Teenage mothers are often perceived as sex workers by society and this lowers their self-esteem and unable to interact freely with the members of the community. This has thus increased in teenage mothers opting to drop out of school (Okumu, 2020).

2.4.1.2 Poverty

According to (Okumu, 2020) research findings in Ukwala Ward in Siaya county, poverty was a key contributing factor to early pregnancy. It was also evident that limited resources such as food and money made most girls engage in sexual behaviors making them vulnerable to early pregnancy. Poverty thus increases the vulnerability of teenage girls to pre-marital sex or transactional sex which are contributing factors to child pregnancy (National Gender and Equality Commission, 2016). The study also found that girls who became pregnant terminated their education. Teenage mothers are forced to rely on their maternal grandmothers to nurse their toddlers when they are in school (Willan, 2013).

The adolescent mothers also lack knowledge of income-generating skills such as handcrafts and inadequate financial support from their poor parents. Inadequate financial support to continue with their schooling and take care of the children results to access to low-quality education. According to (Nabugoomu et al., 2020), training young mothers in making handicrafts or practical skills would give them the capacity for self-employment and self-sustainability.

2.5 Cultural Barriers

2.5.1 Early and Forced Marriages

The cultural practices of early and forced marriages for pregnant adolescent girls or mothers negatively impact their access to education. This is because once they are married, they are unlikely to continue with their education due to the additional roles of being a wife and a mother. Some communities such as the Maasai in Kajiado still practice early marriages. The Luo, Luhya, and Kisii have a cultural practice of “Siebo” which also has a great impact on adolescents, the adolescent (National Gender and Equality Commission, 2016). They also practice early and forced marriages for their teenage girls once they become pregnant to cover the family’s shame in the community as childbearing out of wedlock is viewed as being immoral.

Traditionally among the Luo, a girl who became pregnant out of wedlock could be forced to marry the defiler or handed out for marriage to an older man as a second wife. She was mockingly referred to as "Afuongo luorore," implying that she had shady morals. Because there are culturally acceptable options, this technique is said to give a semblance of normalcy to females who become pregnant at an early age.

The tradition of bride wealth also perpetuates the rate of early marriage not only within Kenyan communities but across sub-Saharan Africa. According to (Human Rights Watch, 2014), such dowry payments is one of the main reason associated with child marriage in Tanzania. Females are seen as a source of wealth in most East African tribes and are often forcefully handed away for marriage to protect the family from severe familial poverty (National Gender and Equality Commission, 2016). Such communities perceive that early marriages bring quicker returns than education (Gimbo et al., 2015).

Therefore early and forced marriages have negative influences on the rights and participation of girls within the context of education.

2.5.2 Son Preference

In South and East Asia, the desire for male children, also known as son preference, has been well-recorded and regarded to be ensuring the perpetuation of genealogy (Milazzo, 2014).

Parents or guardians who allow their daughters to attend school do not provide the same level of moral and material support that they do for their sons. This is because boys are highly regarded as the continuity of the next generation and are given special preference. Parents put greater attention to boys' education than girls' education, which harms girls' education. Low educational attainment, school dropout, and a lack of formal career opportunities are the most common outcomes of uneven treatment.

The son's preference behavior also harms the women's health by weakening their risk of maternal mortality and morbidity. Therefore, it is important to improve the livelihoods of women and their children (Milazzo, 2014).

2.5.3 Patriarchy

According to (Allanana, 2013), patriarchy is a set of social relations that is a material base and in which there are hierarchical relations between men and solidarity among them which enable them in turn to dominate women. A patriarch is regarded as the head of the family, and he exercises control over productive resources, labor force, and reproductive capacities based on the concepts of superiority and inferiority, which are justified by gender and generational inequalities. This societal norm also has an impact on adolescent mothers' educational opportunities. According to research findings in the coastal region, the re-entry of young mother learners in school was primarily reliant on decisions made at the family level by dads, who sometimes did not value education once the girl became a mother. If the elderly mothers stood up to them, they feared the repercussions and the wrath of their husbands (Karimi, 2015).

2.5.4 Gender Roles

Social roles are gender-specific duties men and women are expected to fill based on their sexuality. According to the conventional concept of womanly gender roles, a woman is responsible for nurturing her family by working all round at home, whereas men are seen as the breadwinners and leaders. Therefore, the head of the household and the provider in the family and makes important family decisions. Adolescent mothers are therefore expected to engage in domestic chores such as house cleanness, washing, cooking, and child caring while at the same time engaging in academic activities at the school (Blackstone, 2003). It implies that a majority of girls use their time attending to domestic chores rather than in their studies. According to

(Mobar, 2015), girls are not enrolled in schools to enable them to attend to household chores. Such roles hinder girls from achieving the best academic performance, especially in day schools. They also tend to undermine the continuation of education by teenage mothers thus favoring the boy child in the education system. Difficulties in balancing their roles as learners and mothers might result in them not returning to school (Willan, 2013).

2.5.5 Misguided Social Perceptions

Girls' education is viewed as worthless by society in general as a result of being married off and their education will only help their children and the husband's family. Educating adolescent mothers is considered a waste of money and effort in some primitive societies, as they feel that education will cause girls to refuse marriage proposals. Furthermore, some members of society believe that if a girl is educated, finding a husband will be difficult ((Mollel & Chong, 2018). According to (Shahidul & Karim, 2015) the belief that literacy limits girls' marriage prospects by raising dowry payments to unaffordable levels, causes many girls to drop out of school, often against their parents' wishes. According to (Amadi, 2013), parents assume that girls' schooling is a waste of resources since it increases bride prices while decreasing the girls' understanding of home activities that they are expected to perform as soon as they become brides, according to the report. As a result, educated girls' reputation in the society is tarnished.

These perceptions obstruct girls' academic achievement since the community views their right to education unfavorably. The community will thus find it difficult to encourage and support adolescent mothers to attend school or discourage them from dropping out.

2.6 Gender-Based Violence

2.6.1 School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV)

This is defined as Gender-Based Violence in and around schools, as well as on the way to and from school, and encompasses expressions of physical, sexual, and/or psychological violence such as verbal abuse, bullying, sexual abuse and harassment, coercion, assault, and rape (UNESCO & UN Women, 2016). This abuse has impacted adolescent mothers' physical and mental health, as well as their physiological and behavioral development. According to a study carried out in South Africa, violence in the classroom can be perpetrated by students against

other students and by teachers against other students. Many females may be unable to participate in education due to a hostile climate both outside and inside the school (Komora, 2013).

2.6.2 Home and Community Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

GBV are violent acts conducted primarily on the ground of a woman's gender or violence that unfairly targets women. Mental or sexual damage or suffering, Physical and threats actions, coercion, and liberty deprivation are all (CEDAW, 1979). According to (Muluneh et al., 2020) research, half of the women in Sub-Saharan Africa have suffered Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), with a significant percentage of females victimized by non-Intimate Partners. The most common kind of IPV was emotional IPV. GBV was also shown to be more widespread in the Western and Eastern sub-regions of Sub-Saharan Africa than in the southern regions, according to the study. According to the 2014 KDHS, 45% of females of 15 to 49 years reported having undergone physical abuse, and 14 percent indicated sexual violence (KDHS, 2014).

2.7 Improving the welfare of adolescent mothers at school and in the community

Expecting and nursing learners are legally entitled to policy adjustments, support, and interventions that will accommodate them throughout their gestation and ensure that they are reinstated to the same status as other students when they return to school (Education Law Center, 2019). According to the (MOE, 2018), support for pregnant and parenting adolescents is crucial as they experience a range of emotions, responsibilities, and challenges that can be difficult for them to navigate. Therefore are numerous strategies of locally designed and operated programs through which schools and communities have adopted to address the challenges faced by teenage mothers during their reintegration back into school. These strategies seek to empower adolescent mothers and protect them from any form of discrimination.

2.7.1 Strategies adopted by the schools

2.7.1.1 Special infrastructures

Some schools have put up special measures by redesigning the lavatories to help pregnant and adolescent mothers (Team Nation, 2021). In December 2021, the first Kenya private school for pregnant and adolescent mothers was established. This has enabled adolescent mothers to be

with their children around the school (Voice of America, 2021). According to (Education Law Center, 2019), the Los Angeles Unified School District in the United States permits timetable adaptability wherever practicable to facilitate full inclusion and prevent school interruptions as a result of health concerns. It also allows alterations to school activities to minimize lost school time and give access to childcare, as well as a modified class schedule for students who are experiencing medical issues as a result of pregnancy or childbirth.

2.7.1.2 Special Dietary and Nutritional Meals

Through the school feeding program under the National School Health Policy 2009, the schools have also established special meal plans to meet the dietary needs of teenage and adolescent mothers. The schools also offer comprehensive medical care to pregnant and adolescent mothers (National School Health Policy Kenya, 2009).

2.7.1.3 Psychosocial support

Principals and head teachers have established guiding and counseling departments in schools to provide guidance and counseling services to adolescent mothers. The schools provide medical care and psychosocial support through the counseling department. Some schools have also started developing a policy on antenatal care for expectant learners. In Homa Bay County, a special center has been set up to provide counseling to pregnant girls and adolescent mothers (Team Nation, 2021). According to (Motjelebe, 2018), teachers' assistance includes supporting teenage mothers to feel comfortable during pregnancy and when they resume school after delivery. This is beneficial to adolescent mothers when addressing mental health problems.

2.7.2 Strategies Adopted by the Community

2.7.2.1 Family Support

According to (Nabugoomu et al., 2020), training young mothers in making handicrafts or practical skills would give them self-employment and self-sustainability. The Community Based Organizations have established programs for economic empowerment for adolescent mothers through handicraft training, through this the mothers can engage in the handicraft business to generate income during weekends and school holidays. The income greatly assists them in taking

care of their children and catering for their school fees as most of them come from poor families. The programs also target the parents of adolescent mothers to enable them to cater to their families' basic needs through informal employment.

2.7.2.2 Community Awareness Campaigns

The community awareness programs are aimed at sensitizing adolescent mothers on the benefits of formal education and taking advantage of the school re-entry policy. The adolescent mothers are also sensitized on the use of contraceptives to delay subsequent pregnancies, how to protect themselves from Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV/AIDs, the health impacts of teenage pregnancy, negative effects of drug abuse and alcoholism. The programs have also been effective in addressing sexual violence, child abuse, and exploitation within the community which is likely to affect adolescent mothers. The community workers also frequently train adolescents on dietary needs and nutrition required for their development and that of the children, how to take care of their children.

2.7.2.3 Establishment of Child Care Programs

Some of the communities have also established childcare facilities to take care of the children when adolescent mothers are in school. The facilities are a great help to the mothers as they do not have to worry about their children while in school because the children are left in a safe environment. This also enables teenage mothers to avoid frequent absenteeism in school. Through this program, the communities have also established special feeding programs for adolescent mothers and their children.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

2.8.1 Schlossberg's Transition Theory

The study was guided by Schlossberg's Transition theory. Nancy Schlossberg created the idea in 1981, describing transition as any occurrence or non-event that influences interactions, habits, expectations, and responsibilities. Thus, an individual must have or is experiencing the event or non-event. According to Schlossberg, there are 3 types of transition; anticipated-this where the transition is predicted, unanticipated- the transition is not predicated and non-events- here transitions are expected but do not occur and they include individual aspirations (Schlossberg, 1981). For the majority of adolescent mothers, pregnancy impacts their childhood negatively and after delivery, they have to balance the motherhood role and being a pupil/ student.

This research perceives adolescent motherhood as an unanticipated transition. Individual adolescent mothers also experience changes in their academic aspirations as their return to school and successful completion of school up to the highest level depending on the support that they receive at home, community, and school. This transition also affects the day-to-day lives of individual teenage mothers. According to the theory, there are 4 sets of factors that influence the ability to cope with the transition: self, support, and strategy. The situation identifies what caused the transition, timing, duration, previous experience with similar transitions, and changes in the roles and duration. Personal and demographic qualities, as well as psychological resources, are regarded as essential elements of self. Social support comes from close relationships, families, comrades, institutions, and communities. The strategies or coping mechanisms that help to adapt

to the circumstance, control the meaning of the problem, or manage the stress in the aftermath are known as coping mechanisms.

According to (Evans & Slowley, 2010) in pre and post-pregnancy, young mothers have mostly been excluded from school for pregnancy-related reasons or poor behavior. Sometimes they are also intimidated or stigmatized by their teachers or peers.

This theory assisted the researcher to capture the individual teenage mothers' perceptions and experiences on their reintegration back to school, understand the situation in which the adolescent mothers find themselves, what is the social support system available to them at home, school, and community on the reintegration back to school and how their personal and demographic characteristics affect how they cope with early teenage motherhood and learning.

2.9 Definition of Key Terms

Adolescent Mother	An adolescent between the age of 10-19 years who became pregnant while at school and is parenting her child and has been reintegrated back to school
School	A formal learning institution either primary or secondary as defined under the Basic Education Act 2013
Barriers/ Challenges	External and internal factors that hinder adolescent mothers from accessing education
Legal Frameworks	International, Regional and National Laws that have been adopted by the Government of Kenya provide for the right to education for adolescent mothers
Strategies	Social Support has been given to the adolescent mothers at the schools and community to enable them to be reintegrated back to school

Reintegration The process of enrolling adolescent mothers back to school
The study used the terms adolescent mothers and teenage mothers interchangeably.

2.10 Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.9.1 Conceptual Framework

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Legal Framework & Policies
International
Regional

Barriers in access to education by adolescent mothers
Early & forced marriages
Son Preference
Patriarchy
Stigma & Discrimination
Poverty
Gender Based Violence
Gender Roles
Misguided Society Perceptions

Strategies that have been adopted
Special Infrastructures
Special Dietary and nutrition
Psychosocial
Support
Family support
Community Awareness Campaigns
Establishment of child care programs

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Reintegration of adolescent mothers back to school



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research site and design, study population, sample population and unit of analysis, sampling procedure, data collection methods, response rate, and ethical considerations that were taken into account during the study.

3.2 Research Site

This study was undertaken in Siaya. Dissected Uplands, Moderate Lowlands, and Yala Swamp are the three major geomorphological areas in the county. Different relief, soils, and land-use patterns exist in these places. The County's elevation ranges from 1,140 meters around Lake Victoria's coasts to 1,400 meters above sea level. According to the Kenya Soil Survey and Integrated Regional Development Plan for the Lake Basin Development Authority, the lower half of the County, particularly the shoreline of Lake Victoria, can be split into semi-humid and semi-dry Lower Midland zones (LM4 and LM5). These zones include the entire Uyoma neighborhood in Rarieda Sub-County and the Yimbo area in Bondo Sub-County. (National Council for Population and Development, 2015).

Figure 3.2.1 Map of Siaya County



Source: (Siaya County, 2018)

According to the (KNBS, 2019) census, Siaya County had a population of 993,183 people, with 421,669 men and 521,496 women. In 2009, the county's inhabitants were 842,304, with 398,986 males and 443,318 females. In 2022 and 2030, the population is projected to grow to 1,114,735 people, with 529,646 men and 585,088 women, and 1,285,971 people, with 610,179 men and 675,792 women, respectively.

The life expectancy of the female gender in Siaya County is higher than that of the opposite gender, this illustrates why females are the majority at 53 percent of the total population. There is a need therefore for increased investments in key social infrastructure and utilities, including schools, health facilities, water, sanitation, and services to satisfy the rapidly rising population.

According to the (KNBS, 2019), in 2018, 220,334 children of primary school age (111,334 boys and 109,000 girls) were estimated to make up 22.4 percent of the overall population. This is predicted to raise to 235,748 (118,158 males and 117,590 females) and 270,163 (136,295 males and 133,868 females) in 2022 and 2030, respectively.

Estimates for secondary schools were 49,524 males and 48,800 females, accounting for 10% (98,324) of the total population in 2018. The population growth is projected to be 105,423 (52,009 males and 53,414 females) and 120,855 (60,173 males and 60,682 females) in 2022 and 2030, respectively.

3.3 Primary & Secondary Educational Infrastructure

There are 652 primary schools in the county, featuring a combined population of 248,336 students, including 124,381 boys and 123,955 girls. The enrolment rate is 110 percent on a gross basis. The average number of years of attendance is 6.4. With most schools being understaffed, understaffing remains a serious issue. Despite the numerous schools, 18.25% of teenagers over the age of 15 are unable to read and write. There are also approximately 237 secondary learning facilities in the county, with a total enrollment of 78,468 students. A total of 40,463 boys and 38,005 girls are enrolled in the school. The average length of secondary school enrollment is 3.6 years. In terms of proximity to a public secondary school, 29.7% of the community lives within 0-1 kilometers, while 65.1 percent and 5.2 percent of the community live within 1-4.9 kilometers and 5 kilometers and above, respectively.

3.4 Research Design

A cross-sectional descriptive design was applied in this study. The qualitative method provided in-depth information on the obstacles faced by teenage mothers as they return to school, as well as the strategies used by schools and communities to address these challenges.

In-depth discussions, key informant interviews, and case narratives were used to collect data for the study. The adolescent mothers were recruited with the assistance of the key informants and Community Based Organization (CBO) in the study area. The study sought to obtain a detailed understanding of the local context and analyze data using both thematic and narrative forms.

3.5 Study Population

The study population for this study was teenage mothers who are pupils/ students and have been reintegrated back to school in Yimbo West Ward, in Siaya County.

3.6 Sample Population

The study was conducted in Yimbo West Ward in Siaya County. The Ward was purposively selected due to the increase of teenage mothers enrolled in schools under the reintegration policy. There are 4 sub- locations in the ward namely: Usenge, Got Agulu, Mahanya, and Mitundu.

Adolescent mothers were selected on the basis that they are the ones experiencing the challenges of reintegration back to school and are most likely aware of the strategies implemented by schools and community to facilitate the reintegration process. The unit of analysis was the individual teenage mother who has been reintegrated back to school.

3.7 Sampling Procedure

Sampling is defined as the research plan that indicates how cases are to be selected for observation, Kombo & Tromp,(2006)This study used a purposive sampling method to get the study sample from Yimbo West Ward. According to (Kombo & Tromp, 2006) purposive sampling targets a group of people believed to be reliable for the study. The desirable sample respondents were selected from various schools within the study area that have experience and knowledge about the study. The researcher did this to determine the participants of the target population to be included in the study. The researcher purposively selected:

1. 15 Adolescent Mothers (7 Pupils and 8 Students).
2. 7 Parents/ Guardians of adolescent mothers in primary/ secondary school.

3. 9 Key informants (An Officer at the office of the County Director of Education, a Chief/Assistant Chief, a Gender Officer, 2 Principals, 2 Headteachers, and a Representative of CBO).

The researcher took into consideration the academic experience of each participant during the sampling of adolescent mothers in primary and secondary schools as well as the increase of adolescent pregnancy among adolescents aged 10-15 years and adolescents aged 15-19 years.

The researcher also purposively selected 5 primary and 2 secondary schools which had reintegrated adolescent mothers back to school in the area based on the data at the Office of the Director of Education in the County. Therefore, a purposeful sampling procedure was used to deliberately select individuals who provided information relevant to the objectives of the study and answer the research questions.

3.8 Data Collection Methods

The researcher gathered primary data using the following methods: key informants, narratives, and in-depth interviews, which were translated into Dholuo and Kiswahili.

3.8.1 Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted with specific key resourceful individuals within the community, the office of the Director of Education, and schools. These people were considered to have valuable insight and resourceful specialized knowledge on the topic of study. The key informant interviews were probed for more information on the current reintegration policies, practices, and the challenges faced by teenage mothers during their reintegration back to school as a means to understand the issues, support the teenage mothers receive from the school and community, and strategies adopted in County and community to address these challenges.

This assisted the researcher to fill the information gaps in the research. The interviews were conducted on the phone and a visit to the respective offices. Each interview session was recorded after obtaining consent from the informants (**Appendix III: Key Informant Interview guide**).

3.8.2 In-depth Interviews

The in-depth interviews were the primary method of data collection (**Appendix IV: In-depth Interview guide**). It involved a manageable number of respondents to explore their views about the main objectives of this research. It also allowed the researcher to obtain detailed explanations of the challenges, barriers, and strategies that have been adopted during the reintegration of teenage mothers back to school. The study recruited 7 parents/ guardians of adolescent mothers who participated in the In-depth Interviews. This is because the parents/ guardians provide unmeasurable support to the adolescent before, during, and after delivery. The parents also play an important role during the reintegration process. For this study, the in-depth interviews were conducted either face-to-face or by mobile phone for approximately 1 hour depending on the availability of the respondents. The phone interviews served as an effective way to conduct in-depth interviews, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The interview sessions were recorded after obtaining the consent of the respondents.

3.8.2 Narratives

The researcher conducted narrative interviews with 15 adolescent mothers (7 pupils and 8 students) who have been reintegrated back to school (**Appendix IV: Narrative Interview Guide**).

This enabled the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the informants through their stories. The interviews were conducted face-to-face or by phone were necessary due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The interview sessions were recorded after obtaining the consent of the adolescent mothers and the consent of their parents/ guardians.

3.9 Data Processing and Analysis

For this study, two forms of data were collected: The first set of data was from the key informants and parents, and the researcher used thematic content analysis. The second set of data was the stories of teenage mothers which the researcher analyzed narratively. The researcher transcribed the audio recordings and verbatim/ direct quotes were used where necessary and took time to read through the transcripts for the accuracy of the data. The researcher then organized

the data according to the themes related to the research questions. In this process, the researcher also identified the sub-themes relevant to the study.

3.9.1 Response Rate

This study targeted three categories of respondents that were drawn from the community, schools, and local administration in Yimbo West Ward in Siaya County, Kenya. Table 4.1 presents a stratified summary of the target respondents and the response rate.

Table 1: Response Rate

Respondents' Categories	Sample Size	Responses	Response Rate
Narratives	20	15	75.0%
In-Depth Interviews	10	7	70.0%
Key Informant Interview	14	9	64.3%
Total	44	35	70.5%

Source: Research Data (2021)

The researcher targeted 44 respondents out of whom 35 (70.5%) were interviewed.

3.9.2 In-Depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with 7 parents/ guardians of the adolescent mothers. The interviews were abbreviated IDIs with each respondent given a serialized pseudo code G/PAM. G/PAM1, G/PAM3, G/PAM4, G/PAM6, and G/PAM7 were parents with the remaining two (G/PAM2 and G/PAM5) being other close relations to the adolescent mother.

3.9.3 Narratives

Narratives (abbreviated as AMCN) were conducted on 15 adolescent mothers (7 pupils and 8 students) who have been reintegrated back into school. Respondents were abbreviated ADMR1, ADMR2, ADMR3, ADMR4, ADMR5, ADMR6, ADMR7, ADMR8, ADMR9, ADMR10, ADMR11, ADMR12, ADMR13, ADMR14, and ADMR15. ADMR1 to ADMR7 were primary school pupils all in classes 6, 7, and 8 but drawn from various schools within Yimbo West Ward

in Siaya County. ADMR8 to ADMR15 were secondary school students distributed in all classes (2 in form one, 1 in form two, 3 in form three, and 2 in form four). Whilst the youngest respondent was a class 6 pupil at 13 years of age, the oldest respondent was found to be aged 20 (Form 3). All respondents had one child each with their ages distributed between five months and two years.

3.9.4 Key-Informant Interviews

These were abbreviated KII and conducted on 9 respondents. KII1 was a senior officer from the Department of Education in Siaya County; KII2 and KII3 were Location Chief/Assistant Chiefs; KII4 was a secondary school Principal with KII5, KII6, and KII7 being primary school headteachers/ deputy headteachers. The remaining two key informants were the Gender Officer (KII8) and the Representative of CBO (KII9).

3.10 Ethical Consideration

The norms of behavior, decency, and integrity that a researcher is required to follow when conducting a research project are referred to as ethical considerations. The study also took into consideration the ethical factors that must be observed when gathering data involving human beings. As a result, the appropriate ethical considerations were followed, and approvals to conduct the research were obtained from the National Commission on Science, Technology, and Information (NACOSTI) (**Appendix VII: Research Permit**). The researcher also obtained permission from the Bondo Sub- County Director of Education (**Appendix VIII: Data Collection Permit**) to interview the school Principals and Head Teachers.

When dealing with human participants, it is critical to take ethical steps to ensure that their safety and dignity are not jeopardized and that their privacy is not violated. As a result, all study participants were notified of their privileges, the discretionary nature of participating in the study, methods, as well as written and verbal informed consent (**Appendix I: Consent Form**). The researcher also obtained consent from the parents or guardians of adolescents for them to participate in the study (**Appendix II: Written Consent for Parents/ Guardians**).

Confidentiality was also ensured during data collection through the use of pseudonyms in cases where verbatim quotes were obtained. In addition, anonymity was observed during the

report writing and analyses of the findings from the study. The researcher also respected the rights of all the participants during the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION FOR ADOLESCENT MOTHERS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the findings of the study based on the first objective which sought to determine the legal frameworks that address the right to education for adolescent mothers in line with the available literature. The chapter then summarizes the findings drawn from the data.

4.2 Awareness of laws and policies that advocate for the reintegration of adolescent mothers back to school

Sixteen (16) respondents, who were mainly the parents/guardians as well as the key informants, were asked to indicate their awareness of laws and policies in place to facilitate back to school for adolescent mothers, either internationally, regionally, or locally.

According to the findings of the study, four (4) out of Six (6) parents/guardians interviewed had some understanding of legal frameworks addressing the right to education for adolescent mothers, particularly through radio and other media platforms. For example, G/PAM1 indicated that she heard on the radio that a girls who has given birth is legally entitled to return to school. G/PAM2 stated that she learned about the policies at the chief's barazas. Other platforms indicated included social groups in which members typically invite advocates, paralegals, and competent individuals to share opportunities and rights of adolescent mothers to be reintegrated back to school. An example was given by G/PAM7 who disclosed to be a member of a certain group where members are always trained by the *Mwendo Project* on the legal framework defining and explaining adolescent pregnancy and the need to reintegrate adolescent mothers back to school. The respondent divulged that “...if a girl becomes pregnant and has given birth, they should be allowed to go back to school and you as the parent to take the responsibility of taking care of the newborn baby.” This is in line with the provision of the National School Health Policy which provides that the parent/ guardian should make adequate arrangements for

the child at home while the young mother is in school (National School Health Policy Kenya, 2009).

Section 11 of the Children Act also states that every child has a right to parental care and protection. The Act also provides that every child has a right to free and compulsory education in line with Article 53 (1) (b) of the Constitution (The Children Act, 2022).

The existence of such a legal framework was affirmed by KII1, KII2, KII3, KII5, and KII8. Principally, KII1 acknowledged that they do reintegration of adolescent mothers back to school.

“There are many initiatives that we have implemented to support the adolescent mothers who have returned to school. We don't encourage them to drop out of school or stay at home because of unplanned motherhood/ pregnancy.”

To give more emphasis on the same issue, KII1 added that there is a policy that has been implemented to encourage and ensure that adolescent mothers/pregnant adolescents are allowed back to school to continue with their education without discrimination. This policy is consistent with the Education for All Principles which recognized the right to education for both men and women. This is reaffirmed under Article 26 of the (UDHR, 1948) which recognizes the liberty to free and obligatory basic literacy and outlaws gender discrimination at all levels of education. The Article also highlights the necessity of special attention to adolescent mothers.

On their part, KII2 and KII3 said that they are aware of a policy that focuses on the return to school of adolescent mothers after delivery and they do follow-ups as local administrators with the adolescent mothers and their parents “...*kuwaelezea umuhimu wakurudi shuleni baada ya kuzaa*” loosely translated as need of emphasizing on the importance returning to school after childbirth for the adolescent mothers. They have also been encouraging them that giving birth is not the end of everything. This is also provided for in the National School Health Policy which provides that the young mother shall be readmitted back to school at the level where they dropped as a result of the (National School Health Policy Kenya, 2009). The Basic Education Regulations also protect learners of school-going age from being denied admission to the school (Government of Kenya, 2015).

KII5 explained that currently, the Ministry of Education does not allow headteachers and high school principals to suspend or expel pregnant teenage mothers or even adolescent mothers from school. The respondent added that the Ministry has also given a provision that a student should be allowed to access education and they have the right to enjoy this provision without any discrimination. That is why once they conceive, the school has no capacity or right to deny them education. They attend regular classes up to when they deliver after which they can complete their studies. To sum it up, this respondent shared a case:

“...last year in the school we had two adolescent girls who were expectant and the previous year we also had two who delivered and we accepted them back. From there we have been encouraging them to concentrate on their studies and avoid the issues of boy and girl relationships so that they don't conceive before reaching class eight. The rate of teenage pregnancy has greatly reduced, we previously had several girls conceiving and dropping out of school/ disappearing while some would come back after delivery. We still accepted them back. Last year the school had 3 girls who had conceived in class eight and yet they were to proceed to secondary school. They have now opted to drop out of school and did not join secondary school due to shame and stigma. They are ashamed of joining form one.”

Lastly, KII8 expressed that the County Office of Gender does not condone neglect on the part of the parents and they are usually advised in the public barazas that once a girl has reached the age of 12 years, they should be open with her and educated them on topics related to reproductive health and sexuality other than just buying them the sanitary towels and pants. This will help the girls to open up to their parents in case they have any problems. This supports the provisions of the National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy which promotes the community awareness of existing legislation and regulations that protect teenagers from harmful cultural practices as well as the execution of the re-entry policy and social support system for adolescents (Ministry of Health, 2015).

This chapter has presented the study population's understanding on the existence of legal frameworks that have made it possible for adolescent mothers to return to school. They must be reintegrated back into the school system in accordance to the laws and policies. Students who drop out of school due to pregnancy can return if they request for readmission. As a result, the County Government and the local administration are aware of the applicable legal

structures and have implemented the re-entry policy. They also follow up with schools, adolescent mothers, and their parents or guardians to ensure the girls frequently attend their lessons before and after giving birth. Administrators and principals are not allowed to discriminate against adolescent mothers or deny them readmission for any reason.

CBOs have also have also play substantial part in sensitizing that parents and guardians on the importance of reintegrating adolescent mothers back to school. Finally, the data shows that schools have guidance and counseling departments with qualified teachers. The counseling sessions are available to adolescents before, during and after delivery. The counseling sessions also explore the detrimental effects of teenage sex. This is an attempt to reduce teenage pregnancy rates in the Ward.

CHAPTER FIVE

BARRIERS IN ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR ADOLESCENT MOTHERS AND STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES FACED DURING THEIR REINTEGRATION BACK TO SCHOOL

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the barriers to access to education for adolescent mothers and the strategies that have been adopted to address the challenges faced by adolescent mothers during their reintegration back to school. These strategies have been categorized into home-based strategies, school-based strategies, and government or policy-based strategies. The chapter also summarizes the findings drawn from the data.

5.2 Socio-Economic Barriers

5.2.1 Lack of Parental Care

Most adolescent mothers also come from single-parent households where the mothers are the breadwinners and often do not spend time with the girls as they go to work very early in the morning and come back late in the evening.

Therefore the girls are exposed to early teenage pregnancies due to a lack of parental care and guidance. They rarely open up during counseling but the most common challenge is how to raise the children as most of them come from very humble backgrounds meaning that raising the children is an added burden to adolescent mothers. Being an adolescent, most of them are not mentally prepared to handle the situation of being a mother.

5.2.1.2 Poverty

Adolescent mothers also face barriers in access to education due to poverty. For instance, G/PAM5 stated that she could not afford special diet or school fees for her daughter as she receives no support from her family or friends. Therefore she is the only sole provider despite shouldering the burden of catering for her daughter's requirements such as books, clothes, food, and sanitary towels. KII6 articulated the same and indicated that *“once a girl has become pregnant, and whatever they heard people say about the girls who had gotten pregnant before*

them, they prefer going back to school but a different school in a different location or environment but when the parent cannot afford the fees of the new school because here the parents can only afford fees for the day schools, some girls drop out.”

This corroborates the research findings of (Kalee, 2020) where monetary barriers played a key role in the lives of females in underdeveloped nations from continuing with their education following teenage pregnancy. The research by (National Gender and Equality Commission, 2016) likewise found that girls who became pregnant terminated their education.

This was similarly asserted by KII1 who revealed that most adolescent mothers experience a lot of issues depending on their background. The area around the lake has a high poverty level due to inadequate economic activities; they mostly rely on fishing which sometimes forces the girls to drop out to enable them to fend for themselves and their babies.

Supporting the results, KII6 voiced that *“If you talk to most of the girls, you will learn that they face difficulties in taking care of the babies’ provision. Most of the men who impregnate them are people who come here for a short period as fishermen; one minute they are in Honge Beach, the next they are on other islands in Uganda leaving the girl and the baby behind. Some of them are “shamba boys” in some homes or even their relatives. Pinning down a relative to take care of the child is a big problem because they might not own up to the pregnancy. When the parent finds out about this, they just want to cover it as it is so embarrassing to declare that so and so has impregnated my daughter, who is his relative. These are some of the difficulties that the girls undergo.”*

KII9 summarized the plight of adolescent mothers by stating:

“One of the main challenges would be the financial support for the adolescent mothers, mode of transport and the type or nature of the schools available in the area are limited to cater for the girls’ special needs. The distance between the school and home makes it difficult for the adolescent mothers to attend better schools within the region. They often opt for day schools which sometimes do not offer quality education to enable them to take care of their children, there is a poor relationship between the adolescent mothers and the community”

The above findings contradict studies by (Macharia & Kessio, 2015) and (Karimi, 2015) who found that some parents felt betrayed and their dreams shattered discouraging them from taking their daughters back to school. The National Gender and Equality Commission (2016) also found that girls who became pregnant terminated their education.

5.2.3 Low self esteem

Despite receiving assistance from family members and school, all adolescent mothers indicated that they experienced depression when they returned back to school after delivery. They found it difficult to relate with other students who were their friends before becoming pregnant. ADMR5 disclosed some thoughts that “*Sasa nimekuwa mama*”, lightly translated as “*now I am a mother and a mature girl*”.

ADMR14 also shared a similar predicament and narrated as follows:

Kutembea na mimba nikiwa na wasichana wenzangu ilikuwa aibu- lakini sikuwa ninajali juu itapita tu (walking around with pregnancy was a big embarrassment)”.

The informant nonetheless indicated that her relationship with her mother and family helped her to overcome the embarrassment that she initially felt.

This was further attested by ADMR15 that going back to school was not easy but her mother assured her that she would take care of the baby. Her parents also provided for the basic needs of the baby. Some of the students did not want to associate with her. She also expressed that it was difficult to adjust to being a mother and this has affected her concentration in class.

“I would often wonder if the baby was all right because I was not able to breastfeed him. Some of our neighbours still ridicule me whenever I meet them. It has also been difficult to get sanitary towels, clothes, and food for the baby. The child’s father has never supported me and I have not seen him since the child was born.” Conveyed ADMR15.

G/PAM5 also expressed that when pregnant, their daughter could often tell them that she was uncomfortable going to school and interacting with the teachers, pupils, and her friends. “*I kept encouraging her that all will be well.*” The parent/guardian also stated that she could see during the pregnancy period her daughter was quite embarrassed associating with her peers despite the

fact that she continued to attend school until she delivered. This was reinforced by KII5's claim that when the girls pregnant, they avoid teachers because they do not want to acknowledge they are expecting. When the pregnancy begins to show, they become very shy and humiliated, and they can no longer hide. They also do not actively participate in class. The pregnant adolescent girls find the situation extremely uncomfortable and inconvenient. The key informant described a situation in which the teachers learnt the previous year that one of the girls had conceived earlier before sitting for her examinations. She was always quiet and did not contribute much in class.

The parent/guardian also stated that she could see during the process that she was quite embarrassed associating with her peers her age, despite the fact that she continued to attend school until she delivered.

“We insisted that she attend school on a regular basis and that she become acquainted with the teachers. However, she remained shy and did not participate actively in class or in extracurricular activities. She could always pretend that she was in class. Another challenge we notice is that some of the people openly label them as mothers, so when they are seen attending their classes, they remark “that school is a school for mothers” therefore they are stigmatized and that the teachers are educating mothers. As a result, they are very embarrassed.”

The above findings above corroborate those of (Education Law Center, 2019) research in Philadelphia, which discovered that most adolescent mothers felt disconnected from school having no contact with teachers following the birth of their children because they often received no information from the school. Stigma from teachers, peers, and the community has emerged as a major challenge faced by adolescent mothers in most schools.

5.2 Cultural Barriers

Cultural barriers revolved around stigma and discrimination with parents/guardians unanimously agreeing that adolescent mothers are frequently ridiculed, mocked, or even laughed at by fellow pupils/students. Thus are unable to carry out their learning activities as they used to before being mothers.

One of the respondents G/PAM1 admitted that when her daughter returned to school, some of the students would tell her that she has had given birth and she was now a mother. *“I instructed her*

never to respond to their ridicule. Unfortunately some of the girls who used to make fun of her subsequently also gave birth.” This finding supports the outcome of the Education Centre report in Philadelphia which identified stigma from teachers, fellow students, and the community as a major challenge faced by adolescent mothers in most schools (Education Law Center, 2019). G/PAM5 also indicated that when her daughter went back to school, the respondent could still see that she was stressed.

“When I asked her if all was well in school, she said that she was adjusting well, but sometimes she was ridiculed by her former schoolmates or villagers who knew that she had a baby. My daughter would often tell me that people were gossiping about her. Even my fellow women at the shopping center. Some women still speak negatively about her. .” The respondent expressed. ADMRI verified the findings, saying that it is evident that once you have given birth, people talk about you. *“They used to say that I will drop out of school. I never asked why they were saying such things. I just sat back and let them talk.”* KII2 also added that their relationship/friendship with other learners are substantially affected because they frequently "look down upon them" or say derogatory words to them." This has a psychological impact on them.

It also interferes with their performance with KII7 stated that they are also stigmatized by the way other people look at them. *“You can imagine you are in a school uniform and you are expectant.”*

The above findings support those of (Education Law Center, 2019) in Philadelphia which revealed that most adolescent mothers felt disconnected from school and had no contact with teachers following the birth of their children because they frequently received no information from the school. Stigma from teachers, fellow students, and the community emerged as a major barrier for adolescent mothers in most schools. The findings are also similar to (Okumu, 2020) who found that society most often perceived adolescent mothers as sex workers, which lowered their self-esteem and makes it difficult for them to interact freely with the members of the community. As a result, teenage mothers are increasingly dropping out of school.

5.3 Gender-Based Barriers

5.3.1 Breast Feeding

Breastfeeding has led to adolescent mothers being restricted to only day schools in order to breastfeed in the evenings and at night. Although ADMR2 indicated that she was able to breastfeed her baby in the evenings, she revealed that the first month after returning back to school was difficult. She had to stay in school the whole day with breast milk, causing her a lot of pain in her breasts. This affected her mental health and interactions in school.

ADMR2 revealed that “I could only breastfeed the child in the morning before I go to school and in the evening when I come back from school. For the first two weeks, it was tough since I could not nurse the baby frequently and the milk would be full. This would make me feel quite uncomfortable. My body eventually adjusted, and I am no longer uncomfortable. However, this has not affected my performance in school. I perform well and I’m confident that I will get a good grade after my KCSE. I am determined not to drop out until I complete high school to get my form four certificate.” G/PAM4 disclosed that the school does not allow her daughter to come home to breastfeed the baby, thus the infant only breastfeeds before the mother goes to school and after the mother returns from school.

5.3.2 Balancing motherhood role and being a student

Eleven (11) Respondents also stated that balancing motherhood and being a student was a significant hindrance to their education. ADMR10 indicated that once she gets home in the evening, she is frequently assigned various household chores like washing nappies, and breastfeeding the baby. This interferes with her concentration on schooling particularly homework and personal studies.

“It is difficult for me to concentrate on my studies at home because once I get home, I breastfeed the baby, wash his diapers, clothes, and help my mother cook. She explained. I cannot just sit and let my mother take care of the baby.”

This finding is similar to that of (Blackstone, 2003) who found that adolescent mothers are expected to perform domestic chores such as house cleaning, washing, cooking, and child care while also participating in academic activities at the school. This also concurs with the study by (Mobar, 2015) who found that such roles hinder girls from achieving the best academic

performance, especially in day schools. (Willan, 2013) also found that difficulties in balancing their roles as learners and mothers might result in them not returning to school.

ADMR12 also described the agony of not fully healing after her childbirth operation. *“I had to have my stitches done twice. I often get back pains and scar pains from time to time. The doctor advised me not to engage in strenuous tasks at home or school”* ADMR14:revealed that she had to repeat class six so that *“I could catch up with the rest of the pupils and I had missed several classes...”* adding that even then her marks have dropped compared to what she used to attain before.

This was the same case with ADMR2 who went back to school a month after delivery this is because she had medical complications when she delivered the baby and had to undergo a cesarean section. The respondent added that *“even up to now I am not yet healed but I do not want to miss the classes”*.

On a positive side, Ten (10) out of the fifteen (15) adolescent mothers stated that they managed to cope with their circumstances with the help of their families. For instance, G/PAM2 cited that when her daughter delivered, she took the child from her and did everything for the child In order to allow her daughter to study.

“That is why I did not also allow her to breastfeed the baby. I used to sleep on the same bed with the baby and later on went to Nairobi with the baby. The baby did not experience any problem.” G/PAM2 proudly said.

“When I am in school, I try not to think about my child as much as possible, ADMR 5 said. This allows me to focus entirely on my schoolwork. I also feel more comfortable leaving the infant with my mother than with a stranger. “

Similarly, G/PAM6 stated that her daughter's stepbrother tutored his sister at home immediately after she gave birth so that she would not fall behind in her studies. G/PAM7 stated that she took good care of the baby to enable the daughter to focus on her studies. *“It was until recently that the child knew her as the mother. The child knew me as his mother.”* She said.

With such support, the study found that adolescent mothers never considered dropping out of school. For instance, ADMR1 confessed that she never thought of leaving school this is because

of the support that she received from “my *dada*” (that is her sister), mother, and grandmother before and after delivery despite being disappointed when she learned that she was expectant. However, ADMR4 revealed that she had thought of dropping out of school and just staying at home because of the shame, discrimination, and stress that she faced from the family, some teachers, and pupils. *“I thought of getting married at an early age. But my parents at some point began counseling me not to give up because education is very important”*, she said. This finding contradicts the findings of (Gimbo et al., 2015) research, which found that some communities believe early marriage yields faster returns than education. It also contradicts National Gender and Equality Commission’s finding that in traditional Luo practice, a girl who becomes pregnant out of wedlock is forced to marry the defiler or given to an older man for marriage as a second wife (National Gender and Equality Commission, 2016).

5.5 Strategies Adopted by Schools and Community to Address Challenges Faced By Adolescent Mothers during Their Integration Back To School

5.5.1 Home-Based Strategies

These strategies included financial, psychological, and domestic responsibilities Support.

5.5.1.1 Financial Support

The study found that parents/ guardians provided financial support to adolescent mothers to ensure that they regularly attend school. One of the parents/guardians (G/PAM2) revealed that she used to provide for the baby's food and diapers and could even buy him clothes. G/PAM3 added that she (the parent) had to take up the burden of supporting her daughter with basic needs although even her father had also supported them by paying all the school fees and other school requirements.

The respondent recounted that,

“After delivery, her dad asked her if she wanted to go back to school and she said yes. Therefore her dad provided the financial support that she needed to go back to school. We solely depend on her father as I currently do not have a source of income. We rather sleep hungry but her school fee is paid on time he does this to ensure that one day she will get a job to sustain herself and the child “Chieng moro oboyudo gima okonyerego”- translated as “One day she will get a job to sustain her.””

The above findings contradict the findings of (Karimi, 2015) in the coastal region where the re-entry of young mother learners primarily relied on the decisions made at the family level by dads, who sometimes did not value education once the girl became a mother;

However, five (5) out of the seven (7) parents/guardians who were interviewed disclosed that those responsible for impregnating the adolescent girls have never supported them financially with G/PAM1 saying that her daughter received no form of support from the child's dad.

“If he gave her then I am not aware of it. Even if she ever received any money from him then it was a small amount because I'm the one who used to buy even the baby's clothes” She voiced.

ADMRI lamented that:

“I have witnessed my mother and grandmother struggle to provide for the baby's needs such as food, clothes, and diapers. I wish I could assist them but I cannot drop out of school to look for a job or continue pursuing the child's father the support us.”

5.5.1.2 Psychological Support

Four (4) respondents (particularly the adolescent mother) recounted that relatives/close relations supported their daughters to continue with education during pregnancy and after delivery. ADMR1 cited her grandmother as the person who supported her when wanted to go back to school by quoting other girls who also gave birth and went back to school. Likewise, ADMR4 said;

“...going back to school was difficult but my mum is the one who encouraged me to go back. I come from a poor background and I solely depend on my mother, seeing her struggle to raise me and my siblings and now my child has made me struggle to work hard so that in the future I can also provide for her. Sometimes things are hard for us.”

Parents/guardians attested to these findings with G/PAM9 being expressive that her daughter’s baby never disturbed her adding that,

“Once I give the baby food and porridge and it just sleeps. My advice to pregnant adolescents is that they should not procure abortion since babies are blessings from God. Parents should also not abandon their girls when they become pregnant.”

The above findings are similar to that of (Willan, 2013) where teenage mothers are forced to rely on their maternal grandparents to nurse their toddlers when they are in school.

Psychological support (through counseling) also assisted adolescent mothers in coping with stigma from the members of the community or other pupils/ students. For instance, G/PAM6 disclosed that,

“Now that she is in high school, some people still talk negatively but I keep reminding her to turn a deaf ear to them and focus on her studies and not to give birth again because if she finishes school, the story will change from the community saying that so and so daughter gave birth to so and so daughter has taken good care of herself “Nyar ngane oritore”

The respondent even told the daughter an analogy of her first pregnancy, which was unexpected but she had to continue with her education. She emphasized the difficulties faced by girls who gave birth and made the mistake of not returning to school. They are now suffering the

repercussions. G/PAM7, likewise, always encouraged her daughter and cared for the infant as if it were her own. She stated that the chief always proclaims in the Baraza and at funerals that parents of daughters who have given birth, should ensure that their daughters return to school. G/PAM9's daughter also noted that she sometimes gets anxious and meditates a lot especially when she sees her mother taking care of the baby. *"...I normally assure her that all will be okay and that she should just concentrate on her studies."* G/PAM 9 stated.

G/PAM11 also added

"...my daughter would think a lot and be stressed that she is expecting and would soon give birth. I would talk to her in a soothing and friendly voice so that she does not worry a lot."

5.5.1.3 Household chores

G/PAM4 revealed that she takes care of all domestic chores to support her daughter. G/PAM4 stated:

"As a parent, I do all the house chores and take care of the baby to ensure she does her homework and studies as is required by the school. I cook, wash clothes, and take care of the child because she is not completely healed from the cesarean delivery complications. I also ensure that she is not worried about the child. Her siblings have also been very supportive."

5.6 Community-Based Support

Community-based assistance for adolescent mothers after their return to school included raising awareness, implementing policies, providing guidance and counseling, and providing socio-economic support.

5.6.1 Awareness Creation among adolescent mothers, parents/guardians

The key informant interviews revealed that the local administration sought to raise awareness among adolescent mothers, parents, and guardians about the right to education and the opportunities available for young mothers to return to school. This has allowed the majority of the adolescent mothers in the region to be reintegrated back to school. For example, KII9 stated that the community is eager to raise awareness about the value of adolescent mothers having

access to education. Parents are also encouraged to support and guarantee the girls return to school in order to avoid subsequent pregnancies.

5.6.2 Guidance and Counseling

The study further found that Community Based Organizations (CBOs) worked with religious leaders to provide assistance and counseling to the girls during pregnancy, after delivery, and when they returned to school. The guidance and counseling helped the girls cope with their new role as young mothers, health impact of teenage pregnancies, and sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS. KII9 encouraged community members to refer adolescent mothers to the CBO's office or church leaders for guidance and counseling.

“...refer them to our offices or even the church leaders to guide and counsel them to let them know that the stigmatization should not discourage them, they should focus and pursue their education. At times we even call those who are stigmatizing them to talk to them. You can also find that when the girls have gotten pregnant and maybe the mother or the parents cannot afford the school fees, they still go back to some members of the community like the local leaders to even organize for something like fundraising for them. In conjunction with the church we raise the funds for them.”

This was also echoed by G/PAM3:

“Within the community, people ridiculed her “ji nouwoyo” – loosely translated as “people talked.” This did not stop her from going to school. Currently, the neighbours and members of the community are very supportive as they have seen that despite being an adolescent mother, she is still determined to complete her studies. My girl is also a very quiet person, and whenever she is ridiculed, she just walks away.”

These findings corroborate the findings in Homabay County where a special Centre has been established to provide counseling to pregnant and adolescent mothers (Team Nation, 2021).

Nonetheless, Nine (9) respondents revealed that adolescent mothers do not always receive support from the community to enable them to be reintegrated back to schools. For instance,

G/PAM4 indicated that within the community, people feel that such a girl has let the family down by getting pregnant and they often discriminate against her.

On socio-economic economic support, respondents particularly KII4, KII5, and KII6, expressed that, their schools have developed some unique programs to assist adolescent moms in meeting their basic needs while at school, albeit the assistance has been quite limited. The schools are only directed to allow the adolescent mothers back to school and counsel them. "Nothing goes beyond that".

Schools also raise awareness by ensuring that the present curriculum includes Reproductive Health Rights, which are also actively taught in school. According to the findings of the research, parents, teachers, and local government officials focus on raising awareness about the dangers of adolescent pregnancy in order to reduce the increase among females. They also provide ongoing counseling to adolescent mothers. This is to ensure that they complete their studies and avoid recurrent pregnancies.

Respondents stated that their local schools have teachers who support adolescents to attend school and not drop out. Schools additionally urge them to seek post-natal and pre-natal care. They are also advised to request permission to attend the checkups and clinics. KII6 indicated that

“We also encourage them to share any problems that they might be facing in the course of their learning period whether the parents are cruel. We also talk to the parents when we learn that they are becoming very cruel to them. We also talk to their fellow pupils and encourage them to be friendly with the girls so that they get a conducive learning environment. We try as much as we can to not condemn them. Because they just find that they are already unplanned . We also have guidance and counseling teachers”

According to G/PAM4, the school principal was sympathetic and advised her daughter that the majority of the adolescents in the ward are already mothers, and her status as an adolescent mother would not result in her expulsion and denial of an education.

This chapter discussed the hurdles that prevent adolescent mothers from returning to school, as well as the measures used by schools and the community to assist adolescent mothers during their reintegration back to school. Adolescent mothers' schooling is hampered by socioeconomic, cultural, and gender-based barriers. The cultural barriers are based on the belief that, as mothers,

the girls should be at home caring for their children rather than attending school. The community also ridiculed the girls because they have humiliated their families. Adolescent mothers strain to navigate their multiple roles as mothers and students. Before finishing their assignments, they must assist their parents in household chores when they return from school. Furthermore, they are unable to exclusively breastfeed their children for six months. Some mothers nurse their infants before going to bed and before leaving for school. Others choose not to nurse at all, heeding to parental or caregiver advice.

It also emerged that majority of adolescent mothers experience stress, isolation among their peers, teachers, close friends, and family. There are no specialized initiatives at schools aimed specifically at adolescent mothers. As a result, the majority of adolescent moms endure stress, low self-confidence, and prejudice prior to and following delivery. However, guidance and counseling teachers have considered it a duty to provide emotional support to adolescent mothers while they are in school.

To ensure that the girls continue to attend school, guardians and parents must provide psychological support to the teenager both before and after the delivery. The parents or guardians also assume the role of parenthood of the babies as if it were their own, allowing adolescent moms to concentrate on their schoolwork and reducing frequent absenteeism from class. The local government and schools have fully implemented the re-entry strategy, but due to a lack of financial resources to assist adolescent mothers, they collaborate with churches and community organizations to raise funds for those who cannot afford their school fees.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations. The chapter also highlights suggestions for further research.

6.2 Conclusions

The general objective of the study was to examine the socio-economic and cultural barriers faced by adolescent mothers during their reintegration back to school in Yimbo West Ward, Siaya County. The study sought to determine legal frameworks that address the right to education for adolescent mothers.

The study found that the parents and guardians of adolescent mothers were unaware of regional and international legal frameworks governing adolescent mothers' return to school. To ensure that adolescent mothers are reintegrated back to school, parents/guardians rely heavily on information obtained through the school and local authorities. The county government and local administration were also credited for helping to put the school re-entry program into action. They were aware of current laws such as the Constitution, Children's Act, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Basic Education Regulations, and Basic Education Act that addressed adolescent mothers' right to education in order to improve the re-entry strategy. The school administration and local government also emphasized the significance of integrating the re-entry policy with current rules in order to provide full support for adolescent mothers.

However, neither the schools nor the ministry of education sub-county office preserved any records on the reintegrated adolescent moms to facilitate follow-up. The girls' parents/guardians believe that going to school will motivate the girls to work hard in order to acquire the highest degree of education possible. Their chances of acquiring a better job and improving their socioeconomic standing would rise as a result.

Secondly, the study examined the barriers to education for adolescent mothers. The findings revealed that shame, prejudice, and poverty remained the most major obstacles towards

education for adolescent mothers. They were perceived to have an adverse influence on other girls in school when they were reintegrated. Furthermore, the society assumed that adolescent motherhood was now the norm, making it harder to avoid teenage pregnancy in the ward. Other classmates or pupils dislike adolescent mothers because they regard them as mature girls who should not be in school.

Despite recognizing that the local administration and the school have had an important influence on the implementation of the re-entry plan, the research showed that there is insufficient financial help provided to adolescent mothers and their parents for their basic needs. The majority of the girls are enrolled back in day schools since their parents are unable to pay for them to expensive boarding schools. As a result, adolescent mothers' pursuit of quality education has been hampered due to a lack of financial resources. Parents/guardians are fully responsible for the care of adolescent mothers and their children. Finally, the findings showed that schools had used best practices, such as guidance and counseling sessions, to teach girls about their sexual and reproductive health. The headteachers and principals stated that their schools have guidance and counseling services managed by teachers who have undergone the requisite training to provide counseling to adolescent mothers. Notwithstanding of the additional responsibilities, parents/guardians provide emotional support to adolescent mothers in order for them to feel loved and appreciated. The counseling and mentoring sessions dramatically improved adolescent mothers' emotional well-being and assisted them in dealing with the discrimination and prejudice that they faced both at home and at school.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the analysis and findings of this study, the study makes the following recommendations:

- i. Promote the full implementation of the return to school policy, by encouraging adolescent mothers to exclusively nurse their infants for six months through establishment lactation rooms in schools where possible.
- ii. Improve the psychosocial assistance provided to adolescent girls in school, throughout prenatal and postnatal care, to assist them in carrying the pregnancy to term and pursuing their education after birth. This would reduce the number of adolescent mothers who drop

out of school and the number of unsafe abortions, which sometimes result in fatalities or major aftereffects.

- iii. The government should work together with CBOs, NGOs, and other government agencies to address the basic needs of adolescent mothers who have returned to school, such as sanitary towels, food, uniforms, and bursaries.
- iv. The Local government, schools, and parents should educate adolescents and the community about the risks of teenage pregnancy, STIs, and HIV/AIDS. Given the limitations and scope of this study, the researcher recommends a similar study be extended to other Counties for comparative purposes.
- v. The study should further include other variables not considered in this study given that the current study has only focused on the socio-economic and cultural barriers in access to education for adolescent mothers.

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[2.pdf?sequence=8&isAllowed=y](https://www.duo.uio.no/bitstream/handle/10852/44811/MASTERS-THESIS-2015-2.pdf?sequence=8&isAllowed=y)

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN THE RESEARCH

RESEARCH TOPIC: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL BARRIERS FACED BY ADOLESCENT MOTHERS ON THEIR REINTEGRATION BACK TO SCHOOL IN YIMBO WEST WARD, SIAYA COUNTY

Researcher: Jenipher Obetto

Department of Anthropology, Gender & African Studies, University of Nairobi

I Ms/Mrs/Mr_____ volunteer to participate in this research project on my own volition. I understand that I have the right to withdraw my consent or refuse to answer any question at any moment without fear of repercussions. I also accept that I have two weeks following the interview process to withdraw my authorization for the use of my interview data, and the materials will be erased. I understand that the interview will take approximately 1- 2 hours. I have clearly understood the purpose and nature of the study expounded by the researcher and I have the right to ask questions about the study. I am aware that the participation involves either;

- **Key informant interviews or**
- **In-depth interviews**
- **Narrative**

All the data and information provided will be kept confidential and your identity will remain anonymous. Keeping in mind that my name or title will not appear in any report or publication of the research.

In addition to the above, I understand that I will not benefit directly or indirectly from participating in this research. I also agree to have my interview audio-recorded. The notes and recordings shall be safely stored in a secure place.

Sign_____

Date_____

By signing, I confirm that I give my consent to participate in the study according to the information that has been given to me.

APPENDIX II: PARENT/GUARDIANS' CONSENT FOR ADOLESCENT MOTHERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH

RESEARCH TOPIC: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL BARRIERS FACED BY ADOLESCENT MOTHERS ON THEIR REINTEGRATION BACK TO SCHOOL IN YIMBO WEST WARD, SIAYA COUNTY

Researcher: Jenipher Obetto

Department of Anthropology, Gender & African Studies, University of Nairobi

PARENT/ GUARDIANS' CONSENT FOR ADOLESCENT MOTHERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH

I have read the foregoing information or it has been read to me. I have been explained to and understand the purpose of the study. I have been allowed to ask questions and have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that my child has been invited to participate in the case narrative or in-depth interview with the researcher. I understand that any information my child provides during the discussions will be kept confidential by the researcher. I understand that the child can voluntarily withdraw from this research at any time without giving reasons. I understand that data analysis or the final report will not identify my child's name or school and no opinions will be attributed to them in any way that will identify her.

I understand that the information my child has provided will be used only for this research. I understand that the information obtained will be securely stored. I understand that the data will be collected using a tape or phone recording and written notes.

I consent voluntarily for my child to participate as a participant in this study.

Print Name of Parent or Guardian _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian_____

Date _____

Day/month/year

APPENDIX III: KEY INFORMANT GUIDE

RESEARCH TOPIC: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL BARRIERS FACED BY ADOLESCENT MOTHERS ON THEIR REINTEGRATION BACK TO SCHOOL IN YIMBO WEST WARD, SIA YA COUNTY

Researcher: Jenipher Obetto

Institute of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies, University of Nairobi

Date and time began----- Interview # -----

. In addition, probing questions can be asked where necessary.

Ministry of Education Officials/ County/ Sub-County Education Officials/ Gender Official

1. Can you please a brief background about yourself and your role
2. What is the reintegration policy for adolescent mothers and how has it been implemented in Bondo Sub-County?
 - a) What is your role in the implementation of the reintegration policy?
 - b) What is your role in the implementation of the reintegration policy?
 - c) How many pupils/students have been reintegrated back to school in Yimbo West Ward?
 - d) What are the gaps in the implementation of the reintegration policies?
3. Are there other legal, and policy frameworks and initiatives that support the right to education for adolescent mothers at the national and county level

Probe:

- a. How many pupils/ students have been reintegrated back to school in Yimbo West Ward?
- b. Are there any new amendments to the 1994 Return to School Policy?
- c. What are your comments on the implementation of:
 - Basic Education Act 2013
 - Kenya School Health Policy 2018
4. Has the Ministry/Government/County allocated resources to reintegrate the adolescent mothers back to school? If yes

Probe:

- a. How much and what type of support is provided for adolescent mothers
5. What are the challenges in the reintegration process especially for adolescent mothers?
 - a. What are the strategies that have been adopted by the Ministry/ Government/ County to address the challenges faced by adolescent mothers during the reintegration process back to school?
 - b. What are the recommendations you would propose for the reintegration process for adolescent mothers?

I appreciate that you have created time to take part in this interview and the information shared.

Please feel free to ask any question (s)

Head Teachers/Principals

1. Are you aware of the reintegration policy?
 - a. Tell me more about it
 - b. What is the level of awareness of the reintegration policy among the staff and administration in the school?
 - c. How many adolescent mothers have been reintegrated back into your school?
 - d. What is your view of the reintegration of adolescent mothers back to school?
2. Please tell me some challenges you have identified and how these challenges have affected the reintegration process for adolescent mothers in the school.
 - a. What strategies has the school adopted to address these challenges? How have these strategies been successful and is there a monitoring framework in place?

Probe:

Support received from the county and national government, NGOs, and other institutions

3. What other measures would you recommend to be adopted to safeguard full access to education for adolescent mothers

I appreciate that you have created time to take part in this interview and the information shared.

Please feel free to ask any question (s)

Community Leaders/ Chief of Yimbo West Ward

- A. Please tell me, are you aware of the reintegration policy? Tell me more about it.
 - a. What is your role in the implementation of the policy?
 - b. What is the community's perspective on the reintegration of adolescent mothers back to school?
 - c. What are the challenges faced in the implementation of the policy at the community level?
- B. What are the challenges that adolescent mothers face on the reintegration back to school? How have these challenges affected the reintegration process?
- C. What are the strategies adopted at the community level to address these challenges?
 - a. What other basic measures/guidelines should be adopted to successfully reintegrate adolescent mothers back to school?
 - b. What are your recommendations on the reintegration process for adolescent mothers back to school?

I appreciate that you have created time to take part in this interview and the information shared.

Please feel free to ask any question (s)

APPENDIX IV: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

RESEARCH TOPIC: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL BARRIERS FACED BY ADOLESCENT MOTHERS ON THEIR REINTEGRATION BACK TO SCHOOL IN YIMBO WEST WARD, SIAYA COUNTY

Researcher: Jenipher Obetto

Institute of Anthropology, Gender & African Studies, University of Nairobi

Date and time began----- Interview # -----

Parents/Guardians of Adolescent mothers In-Depth Interview Guide

1. Please tell me your name
2. Are you aware of rules and regulations on return to school for adolescent mothers?

If yes: Probe

Any policies he/ she is aware of

3. Why did you decide to take your daughter back to school after delivery?
4. What challenges has your daughter faced during the reintegration process?

Probe:

- a. At home
 - b. School
 - c. Community
5. How has the school and community supported you to address these challenges?
 6. What kind of support have you given to your adolescent daughter in the reintegration process?
 7. Based on your experience, what advice would you give to other parents with adolescent mothers in school?
 8. What other information would you want to share as parents/guardians of adolescent mothers?

Please feel free to ask any question (s)

I appreciate that you have created time to take part in this interview and the information shared.

APPENDIX V: NARRATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE

RESEARCH TOPIC: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL BARRIERS FACED BY ADOLESCENT MOTHERS ON THEIR REINTEGRATION BACK TO SCHOOL IN YIMBO WEST WARD, SIAYA COUNTY

Researcher: Jenipher Obetto

Institute of Anthropology, Gender & African Studies, University of Nairobi

Date and time began----- Interview # -----

Adolescent Mothers Case Narrative Guide

1. Please tell me about yourself (name, age, where you live, grade/ form, and at what age you got expectant.

Probe:

- How many children do you have? If more than one, ask the age of each child
- Age of each child
- Age of the adolescent mother at each birth
- Who takes care of him/her while you are in school?

2. Are you aware of any rules or regulations on reintegration policy?

If yes, Probe:

- The rules and regulations

3. When did you go back? What motivated you to go back to school after delivery?

Probe:

Support received from:

- Parents/ Guardians
- School
- Community
- NGOs

- Have the support received been effective? Who has been your greatest support system during the reintegration process?

4. What are the challenges you have faced during the reintegration process? How have these challenges affected your academic performance?

Probe:

- Repeating of class
- Irregular class attendance
- Possibility of dropping out
- balancing the motherhood role and a student/pupil role
- The gaps in the support received in school, home and community

5. What recommendations would you propose to support the adolescent mothers during their reintegration back to school based on your experiences?

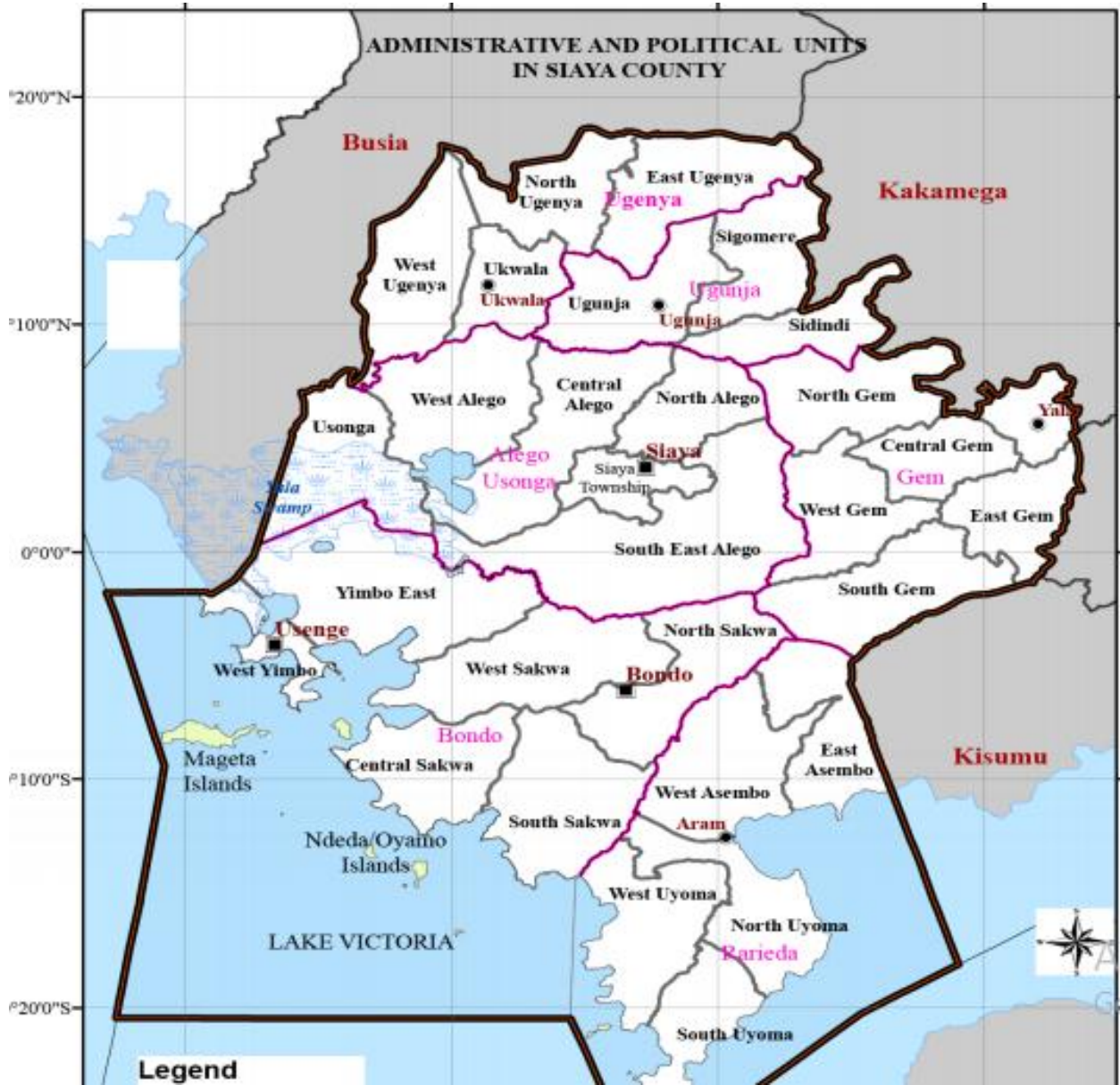
6. Do you have any additional information would you like to share on the reintegration of adolescent mothers back to school?

7. What other information would you want to share on the reintegration of adolescent mothers back into school?

I appreciate that you have created time to take part in this interview and the information shared.


Please feel free to ask any question (s)


APPENDIX VI: MAP OF SIAYA



Source: (Siaya County, 2018)

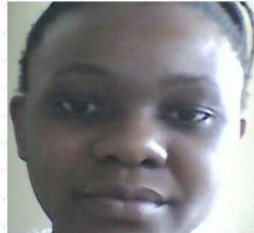
APPENDIX VI1: RESEARCH LICENSE


REPUBLIC OF KENYA


**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION**

Ref No: **815029** Date of Issue: **23/August/2021**


RESEARCH LICENSE




This is to Certify that Miss.. jenipher Okello obetto of University of Nairobi, has been licensed to conduct research in Siaya on the topic: Challenges faced by adolescent mothers on their reintegration back to school in Yimbo West Ward, Siaya County for the period ending : 23/August/2022.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/21/12540**

815029
Applicant Identification Number


Director General
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SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &
INNOVATION**

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APPENDIX VIII: LETTER FROM THE SUB- COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION



REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
State Department of Education

Telegrams "EDUC"; Bondo

Telefax (057) 520076
E-mail: deobondo580@gmail.com
When replying please quote

**Sub County Director of Education
Bondo Sub County
P.O. BOX 580 – 40601
BONDO**

Ref: EBD/UED/92/2 (179)

Date: 8TH SEPT 2021

TO
ALL HEADTEACHERS
ALL PRINCIPALS

REF: JENIPHER OKELLO OBETO – REG NO N69/11561/2018

The student named above from University of Nairobi, department of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies. She has been licensed to conduct research in Bondo Sub County Primary and Secondary schools respectively.

Enclosed with the letter please find:

1. Her research license
2. A request letter from the University of Nairobi

Kindly accord her necessary assistance she may require.

PP.

**PATRICK KOSOM MUYEL. P. O. Box 580-40601,
SUB – COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
BONDO SUB – COUNTY.**

