TIM MORRIS AWARD
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Girls' education in pastoral communities

An ethnographic study of Monduli district, Tanzania

Research report

By Adella Raymond | Winner of the 2012 CfBT Education Trust **Tim Morris** Award

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The Tim Morris Award

Tim Morris (1982-2012) was dedicated to providing education to those less fortunate in the developing world. As a key player in CfBT Education Trust's Business Development department, Tim was instrumental in designing and providing education and employment opportunities for the world's most disadvantaged people. Tim's experience in international education and economics led to the completion of his Masters in Educational Planning, Economics and International Development at the Institute of Education. Tim's dream was to use this foundation to launch his career on aid projects in the developing world. However, Tim was just 29 when his life was tragically cut short by cancer. His unwavering passion and dedication to improve education for public benefit worldwide is why CfBT Education Trust set up the Tim Morris Award in his name. While Tim is now unable to continue working to help those most in need, his legacy will continue to make a difference.

Launched in May 2012, CfBT Education Trust's 'Tim Morris Award' offers £2,000 in financial support to a PhD or MPhil student in the field of Education or International Development. The award's aim is to support field research in a developing country.

Our thanks go to Tim's family for their ongoing support and involvement, to Ruth Naylor and Maia Smith, from CfBT's Department for International Development and Education, for their work in selecting and supporting the recipient and to the two researchers who supported Adella's work in Tanzania.

Executive summary

Despite the focus on girls' education in the Millennium Development Goals, there remain a huge number of girls out of education, a situation which, although improving, is still a significant concern in Tanzania (especially at secondary level).

Women and girls in pastoral communities are subject to a particularly challenging situation: marginalised not only on account of their gender, but also as pastoralists. It is in this context that this research seeks to explore the issues facing girls within one specific community.

The research has three main areas of focus:

- Community members' attitudes to girls' participation in formal education
- The aspirations that parents and girls themselves hold for participation in formal education
- Perceived impediments to girls' participation in education.

In order to investigate these three areas, an ethnographic approach was adopted which involved the research team spending a period of time in the field, living with members of the Maasai community in rural Monduli, Tanzania. Observations and interviews were undertaken with a range of community members.

The research makes a number of key recommendations:

- The Tanzanian government and other educational stakeholders should strive to develop further understanding of pastoral communities' situation in relation to their beliefs and norms, helping to inform a better solution to the inclusion of girls in the provision of education.
- Traditional leaders should be more closely involved at district level in order to help the government to engage with pastoral community parents.
- Community women should be provided with adult education in order to educate them to use available resources to change their situation; and with some form of economic empowerment to enhance their agency in providing for their family's needs and in supporting girls' education.

1 | Introduction

Reaching marginalised groups with education provision has been recognised as an urgent global concern (UNESCO, 2010). The EFA (Education for All) goal for primary education sets the target that all children, boys and girls, should acquire basic education without any kind of discrimination based on gender, language, location, socio-economic status or any other forms of discrimination (UNESCO, 2000). It is also in line with the MDG (Millennium Development Goals) targets of achieving universal primary education and eliminating gender inequality in education by 2015.

Although the past decade has witnessed rapid progress towards universal primary education – with some countries significantly increasing enrolment, narrowing gender gaps and extending opportunities for the disadvantaged groups (UNESCO, 2010) – provision of formal education for hard-to-reach rural communities (and especially for girls) has remained a challenge all over the world (Sharma, 2011). Millions of girls are still out of school and innumerable numbers are admitted but drop out prior to completing their primary education (UNESCO, 2010).

Nomads are among groups of hunters, gatherers, pastoralists and fishermen which still face marginalisation and discrimination (Dyer, 2006; Sharma, 2011; Aikman, 2010). Pastoral groups in particular face marginalisation which is historical (Sifuna, 2005; Kaunga, 2005; Bishop, 2007; Dyer, 2010a) and associated with their mobile life-styles (Carr-Hill, 2005). Such marginalisation results in levels of school enrolment, attendance, academic performance, transition to higher levels of education and gender parity index for these communities being well below the national average (Krätli & Dyer, 2006). As a consequence, many pastoralists find themselves excluded from participation in democratic processes, including education planning and decision making.

Women and girls in pastoral communities are subject to a more challenging situation than men and boys: not only do they face marginalisation on account of their gender, but they are also marginalised as members of pastoralist communities. Essentially, they are discriminated against both within their pastoral communities and outside their communities (Krätli, 2001; Carr-Hill, 2005). Consequently, women have limited opportunity to undertake formal education, resulting in high rates of illiteracy and low rates of enrolment; they have low retention and completion rates at all levels of education compared with boys. Similarly, most girls from pastoralist communities are out of school and some of them do not hope to enrol in basic education at all (Dyer, 2006; Sharma, 2011). Table 1 (from UNESCO, 2010) gives details of the percentage of girls among the pastoral community who are not yet enrolled in school compared with the national averages.

Table 1: A comparison between the percentages of girls not enrolled in school from pastoral communities with their respective national averages (UNESCO 2010).

Country	Pastoral community	Percentage of girls not enrolled in school from the pastoral community	Percentage of girls not enrolled in school – national average
Ethiopia	Afar	90%	60%
Kenya	Somali	62%	9%
Nigeria	Fulani	84%	38%

As can be seen from this table, the situation that girls find themselves in requires deeper scrutiny, especially with regard to the challenges that are related to the wider community around them.

Studies of indigenous minorities and pastoral communities have revealed various issues that limit indigenous groups in general and pastoral communities in particular, in terms of their access to various services including education (for example Dyer, 2006, 2010b; Kaunga, 2005; Hailombe, 2011). Research has related women's and girls' marginalisation to socio-cultural circumstances within and outside the pastoral community. Sharma (2011), Warrington and Kiragu (2011), and Chege and Sifuna (2006) point to the patrilineal nature of pastoralist societies which favour boys over girls; the high opportunity costs for girls' education given families' reliance on child labour for survival; and the belief that, once married, girls become part of their husbands' family so that any investment in their education is lost (Shao, 2010). Others studies affirm that cultural practices, attitudes and social beliefs contribute to limiting girls' educational opportunities (Mbogoma, 2005; Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005; Raymond, 2009; Warrington & Kiragu, 2011). There are, however, few studies that seek to understand girls' education from the perspective of pastoralist communities.

This paper, therefore, seeks to fill this gap in relation to a Maasai community in the Monduli district of Tanzania. The paper reports on an ongoing study which broadly aimed at understanding the pastoral community's perspectives on girls' education. Specifically the study sought to explore: the attitudes of members of a pastoral community towards girls' education; parents' and girls' educational aspirations; the kind of education they value; and the way the community is involved in providing education to girls. This paper focuses on the first two of these, particularly looking at: community members' attitudes to girls participating in formal education; and the aspirations that parents and girls themselves held for participation in formal education as well as identifying perceived impediments to girls' participation in education.

2 | Research context

The study was conducted in Monduli district in the Arusha region of north east Tanzania. Pastoral communities in Tanzania include the Maasai, Ilparakuyo (Wakwavi), Barbaig, Kurya and Ilarusa (Waarusha), with the Maasai forming the largest group (Kipuri and Sorensen, 2008). The Maasai are mainly found in four districts, Ngorongoro, Arumeru, Kiteto and Monduli, in the north east part of the country.

Monduli district (the study area) is predominantly a pastoralist area inhabited by Maasai as the largest ethnic group. It has an area of 6,419 square kilometres and is divided into three administrative divisions. The district is estimated to have a total population of 158,929, comprising 75,615 males and 83,314 females (URT, 2012), of different ethnic groups. The Maasai constitute 60 per cent of the entire population, while 86 per cent of the population in Monduli live in rural areas and are engaged in the keeping of livestock and crop cultivation. In 2011 the national net primary enrolment rate was 94 per cent (URT, 2011) while the district's net primary enrolment rate was only 79 per cent (DEO, 2011). The district's literacy rate is estimated to be 39 per cent; 34 per cent for women and 45 per cent for men; literacy in rural areas is only 38 per cent compared with 85 per cent in urban areas (DEO, 2011).

There are a number of non-governmental organisations (NGO) focusing on, among other things, motivating pastoral communities in Monduli to educate their children, particularly girls. They include World Vision (WV), Monduli Pastoralists Development Initiative (MPDI) and Kimoloniki Integrated Developments Organisations (KIDO) (Raymond, 2009). However, they are yet to have a significant impact. Previous research conducted in the district (Raymond, 2009) concluded that initiatives to encourage girls to participate in education will only be successful when they are based on a profound understanding of the pastoral communities' perspectives and involve those communities in the process of education provision. That is why this study emphasises the understanding of pastoral communities' culture, power structures, economy, and their life experiences in relation to the provision of basic education to girls in particular.

3 | Research methodology

3.1 | Research approach

To explore the perspectives of a pastoral community in Monduli district with regard to girls' education an ethnographic approach was adopted. This was in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the community's perspectives regarding girls' education. This approach enabled the researcher to explore and understand the social, cultural and economic context of the pastoral community from the perspective of the community itself (the 'emic' perspective) (Hennink et al., 2011). The research intended to start by understanding women's everyday life realities and experiences and to examine the social, economic and historical circumstances which affected them in order to make visible how these interconnected factors contributed to these experiences (Khan et al., 2007).

3.2 | Data collection methods

Participant observation as a method of data collection in ethnography requires researchers to make extensive visits to the study area to observe what happens as well as requiring participation in some of the activities of the people they are researching (Denscombe, 2010). In this regard I lived with the community as a participant observer for three months (April to June, 2013), observing, recording and analysing social structures within their settings and paying particular attention to social, cultural, familial and economic factors. I learned about the world of the participants through questioning, listening, watching and talking with those involved directly and other members of the community (Fetterman, 2010). I observed how they understood and did things in relation to girls' education, the way they were related, their division of labour, the way they perceived things, the way they considered one another and the way they considered the world outside, especially in relation to education in general and girls' education in particular. I took notes on a daily basis, noting all events and issues that emerged and appeared to be important in relation to girls' education.

In-depth ethnographic interviews were also conducted, which were informal in nature and involved all categories of participants in the study. The interviews were carried out with six male parents, nine female parents, two male elders, two female elders, two in-school girls, two out-of-school girls, one in-school boy, two out-of-school boys, one traditional leader and one educational officer. It should be noted, at this juncture, that a number of conversations were had with these participants, and while all were important in understanding issues related to girls' education in the community, not all conversations were recorded. Furthermore, because some members of the community intervened in conversations/interviews even though they were not targeted to be part of the study it is difficult to quantify the exact number of respondents involved (Walford, 2008). These conversations were conducted at different times and discussed various issues. The traditional leader was interviewed only once because he lived in a different ward which was very far from the village in which the study was conducted. The conversations lasted between five minutes and 60 minutes.

Conversations were primarily conducted using Maasai language (for the participants who did not know Kiswahili) and the translation was undertaken by research assistants who were present. For one elder, one parent and the district educational officer, conversations were conducted in Kiswahili. Conversations were recorded on tape where consent was given. For those interviewees who did not give consent, notes were taken alongside the conversation. Tape-recorded conversations were fully transcribed and translated into English. Data were analysed using thematic narrative analysis which focuses on what is said and supported by people's voices (Riessman, 2008). The analysis frame developed by Riessman (2008) was used, while NVivo 10 software was employed to organise and analyse the findings.

3.3 | Ethical considerations

Although all research should abide by the ethical principles established by relevant research bodies, it is important to note that some of the principles have been challenged for not being sensitive to certain research methods and contexts and for unnecessarily constraining research processes (Mokake, 2005; Murphy and Dingwall, 2001). It was observed in this study that ethics in the Maasai community extend beyond obtaining consent and providing confidentiality. They required the research to consider and respect Maasai culture and people, to give people a fair chance to express themselves, not to criticise people's views and not to assume that I knew more than they did. This resonates with similar approaches among the Maori people (Smith, 1999). Thus the relationship that developed with the community members and participants enabled the researcher to gain acceptance, trust and to have an easy level of interaction with all members in order to obtain the necessary information required for this study.

Access to the research site and the people was first negotiated by obtaining permission from the Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS); the District Administrative Secretary (DAS) Monduli District; and the Ward Executive Secretary (WEO), who then introduced me to the village leaders who connected me with the people in the community. A hamlet was selected in which I was accommodated by one family for the entire period of the study. Homesteads were then selected from which participants were recruited, such as parents, elders and out-of-school boys. Other homesteads were selected later from which out-of-school girls were recruited, who gave consent and were willing to participate in the study. Research assistants were employed – a female and male – to assist both in gaining access to participants and in helping translate different conversations with the participants and with the community members.

In order to negotiate informed consent, the purpose of the study and the presence of researchers in the village was continually explained to the participants and other villagers who enquired about it. Consent was sought verbally from every participant. For men, permission was asked from them directly. For female parents and elders, permission was asked from their husbands before asking for their own consent. For the out-of-school children, permission was obtained from their parents (usually the father) who also asked the mother to be present all the time during conversations with the girls. For the in-school children, permission was obtained from the parents and from the school headteacher.

The privacy and confidentiality of all participants was also continually assured as a way of reducing people's fear and encouraging them to take part in the research (Pole & Morrison, 2003). Privacy was assured to both the research site and to the people involved in the study (Walford, 2008). Pseudonyms have been used throughout as a way of concealing peoples' identities.

4 | Findings and discussion

This section presents the study findings based on the community's attitude towards formal education for girls; girls' and parents' education aspirations and the impediments to girls' education. The aim is to offer a general representation of the way community members perceived girls' education and the way the community's social arrangements limited women and girls' agency to achieve their wellbeing.

4.1 | The community's attitude towards girls' education

This part of the study aimed to explore the community's attitude towards girls' education. The in-depth interviews with the parents, elders and children revealed that there were mixed attitudes among community members regarding girls' education. While some members had positive attitudes towards girls' education, others still did not see any value in educating women and girls and therefore did not see the importance of sending girls to school. Participants who were positive about girls' education explained the way the community had realised the importance of educating girls and the way some parents were motivated to send the girls to school. Women (mothers and female elders) were concerned that life had changed and families demanded support from both males and females. They thus acknowledged that girls needed to be educated in order to be able to support themselves and their families in future. These women said:

> *"I have decided to sacrifice everything for my daughters to get education. All I want is for them to do well in their education; they will help me in future. My neighbours are despising me, they say that my daughters are too old to go to school; they tell me that I am just wasting my money to educate them. I just look at them because I know my daughters will not be the same and they will help me one day."* (Mother, April 2013)

> *"Life has really changed nowadays – that is why we want our grandchildren to at least go to school. The life we lived is quite different from the life today – our grandchildren can no longer live relying on cattle. It is very difficult; animals have so many diseases and the number of cattle we have is less compared to the past: they have to look for new kind of life."* (Female elder, May 2013)

It was observed that those who were positive in their attitude about educating girls were those who had been educated or had realised its benefits from learning from the girls (now women) who went to school. The educated women in the community were able to support their parents and to some extent supported the community at large. They understood the importance of educating their children (both girls and boys), with the hope of receiving some support from them in future. Having had some kind of formal education they had witnessed how education had been supportive in their lives. This resonated with Shao's (2010) findings that some parents in Monduli district had realised the value of educating their daughters although they were still confronted with a number of challenges when it came to sending girls to school.

Of the ten adult male participants, four of them supported the idea that educating girls was equally important as educating boys. They argued that both could contribute to family income and general well-being, concluding that there was no reason to deprive girls of the opportunity to participate in formal education, since one could not predict how much support they would be able to offer in the future. Two of the male participants said:

> *"Education is good for us and our children these days. You know the world has changed very rapidly and if our children do not get education we shall continue to be left behind. We've just realised that although most of the people in our community are not educated, denying our children the opportunity to get education, we are depriving them of a very precious thing because one can be having a lot of cows which do not help much if his children are not educated to help with the cows."* (Male elder, April 2013)

> *"It is obvious that now the Maasai understand about issue of education. They are doing very well, let's say only… maybe five per cent of the girls are not at school but they are generally doing well. As you have seen around the children going to school in the morning or coming from school girls are also there… they are going to school."* (Father, May 2013)

This argument was further supported by other participants, who were of the view that education was important for girls and were astonished that some parents were still reluctant to send their daughters to school. They were amazed by some parents' attitude of still holding back their daughters for marriage in exchange for cattle. They expressed their concern that in the modern day world, cattle alone could not provide a secure livelihood, as they were vulnerable to infectious diseases and other problems. Some of the participants complained:

> *"As you can see most of the children who are at school are only boys. It is probably only three girls around our place that are at school. Some parents still don't see the value of educating their girls. Even those who enrol their children to school, they are just forced to. Most parents still do not care or bother to educate their children. Girls are still not sent to school; they are still considered as capital to some of them. They are married for cattle… it is not good for girls' life."* (Father, April 2013)

Based on these findings it can be surmised that pastoral communities' attitudes to formal education have changed over time. Although the majority of the community members were not formally educated, they nonetheless recognised the importance of educating their children for their own well-being and the well-being of their community. Some elders explained the way they had been advising their fellow elders and the parents on the importance of educating their daughters, as one of them said:

> *"For us who have already seen the value of education to our children's future life – we sit down with our fellow elders and other parents to tell them how important education is to our children (both girls and boys)… I just cannot explain why other parents still do not see the importance of educating their children."* **(Male elder, May 2013)**

However, some mothers further complained of some leaders who did not support parents' efforts to educate their daughters. Mothers particularly complained of the fathers who did not want to see the importance of educating their daughters. They also complained of not getting support from the village leaders whenever they reported the issue of their daughters either not being sent to school or being stopped from continuing with their studies. One of the mothers said:

> *"My daughter was stopped from school by her father… it was a very big pain for me... I cried... I pleaded with her father to let her continue schooling, but he would not listen to me… I knew the kind of life my daughter was going to live; because I have been in such kind of life since I was a teenager… I sought help from the village leaders, they never listened to me… I kept on complaining but no one helped me… I had no way, I just let her stay."* **(Mother, June 2013)**

Another mother also complained about the same lack of support from the village leaders by saying:

> *"I want my daughter to go to school but I have no power to say anything. The father doesn't take care of the family and does not want the daughter to go to school. It pains me a lot because you never know what she would be able to do in future. I complained to leaders about my daughter is being stopped from school but nothing was done. What I know is that he gave them something to stop the issue. I have nowhere else to run to."* **(Mother, May 2013)**

The above statement raises another concern about the role of the community and village leaders in facilitating or limiting girls' freedom to acquire formal education. In this case leaders were observed to be limiting agents in educating girls in the village. The study further observed that all leadership posts in the village were held by men because, culturally, women were not allowed to lead men. Some women participants continually complained of their problems not being addressed by various village leaders. Observations in the field backed up these female complaints: in conversations with some of the village leaders they claimed to have enrolled all school-aged children, yet girls in their own households and neighbourhoods were observed to be out of school. It was clear that any government initiative to increase girls' participation would be resisted by many community leaders.

Open resistance to girls' education was also encountered. Six out of ten male adult participants did not see the importance of educating girls. They considered educating a girl as a loss and could not see the point of spending the little they had, which would mean selling a cow or goat, in order to educate girls. They associated issues of early marriage and pregnancy with girls' failure to complete their primary education cycle, hence bringing more pain to the parents and the community:

"Why should a girl be sent to school? What will she bring out of it? It's only a shame. Besides many of them get to school and come up without even knowing how to read or write, so why bother, why waste time." **(Father, April 2013)**

"There is no need of educating girls; they just fall pregnant while at school. There is no point of dealing with such people because they only bring loss in their families in the end. You see some parents are poor and they use all means to educate their daughters but in the end they are disappointed. They find it unnecessary to carry such burden for nothing; they just marry them off." **(Male elder, April 2013)**

The parents' concern and negative attitude towards educating girls resonates with the findings of other research with pastoralists (Shao, 2010; Raymond, 2009; Allay, 2008; Dyer, 2006). This negative attitude influenced parents' decisions and considerations in sending their daughters to school to a great extent. It was further realised that this kind of attitude had implications for the type and level of support offered to the girls while in school. It was also observed that when a father was forced to enrol a girl in school, he gave very little or no support in terms of providing a uniform, exercise books, pens or other necessary items. This was in contrast to boys, who were normally fully supported even when resources were scarce. One of the schoolgirls said:

"My father used to tell me that the girls who go to school will die in the end… he said my mother and I would die... he divorced my mother because I continued to go to school and now we are just living with our mother… I have never seen him since then. It is only my mother who is supporting me with the school needs, my father wanted me to get married when I was in standard 4… I did not agree with him and my mother supported me… that is why he got angry and left." **(Schoolgirl, June 2013)**

This demoralised the girls and also placed more responsibility on mothers, which often led to girls dropping out because of the lack of support available. This finding resonated with Warrington and Kiragu's (2011) findings in Kajiado that fathers did not value education for their daughters, hence gave minimal support to those who did manage to go to school.

4.2 | Girls' and parents' aspirations

The study sought to explore girls' and parents' aspirations of acquiring formal education. In this aspect, interviews with in-school and out-of-school girls revealed girls' desire and willingness to acquire formal education as a way of changing their own lives and the lives of other women in the community. Girls also considered education as a way of helping their parents in the future. Some girls expressed their desire to follow certain career paths in the future; others counted themselves as the lucky ones because of their being at school. They were happy that they would not be subjected to some of the cultural practices of the community while at school. These girls said:

> *"I am lucky that I am going to school; I will not marry while young. On the other side of the village a little girl like this one (pointing to one little girl) is married… I don't know what they do there; I just thank God I am not at home."* (Schoolgirl, May 2013)

> *"It is good to be educated. I thank God that my father has not forced me out of school. I want to be a nurse because I want to help my mother and siblings in future. They live a very difficult life and I don't want them to continue living this kind of life."* (Schoolgirl, June 2013)

> *"I want to continue schooling but I have no way, my father does not want me to go. If I would get someone to support me to attend boarding school I would really thank him/her. They have chosen a husband for me. I will just accept to marry because it is my father's order – otherwise I would not do it on my own will."* (Out-of-school girl, May 2013)

Interviews with female parents demonstrated how much they wanted their daughters to get formal education in order not to live the kind of life they lived. They explained that they needed someone to support them with the life challenges facing them. One of the parents said:

> *"I really want my daughter to get education; I know she [the girl] will help me. Look, do you see, [pointing to a nearby homestead] that mama yoyo [an elderly woman] is lucky... When her daughter went to school people said a lot of bad things against her and her daughter, but she just kept very silent. Now the daughter is a nurse in Arusha, she is helping them a lot; you see she built a house and a toilet for them… Who else has those things around here?"* (Mother, April 2013)

The statements from the girls and their parents showed that they consider formal education as a way of having alternatives in life. Women expressed the way they were tired of the kind of life they were living and saw education as their way out. The above statements from the girls indicated that they understood that being educated would increase their ability to get jobs and live what they called a 'better life'. They were aware that education would help them function in the community in accordance with what they considered to be valuable in their lives; an awareness that was different from the often-observed norms of the Maasai women who are socialised not to know or exercise any of their rights. These girls' awareness resonated with arguments that education has a role in developing and expanding capabilities, in this case girls' abilities to use education to change their life situations (Walker, 2005).

4.3 | Impediments to girls' education

In various conversations with parents and children, a number of issues were raised as barriers to girls acquiring formal education. They included the following.

4.3.1 | Decision making

From observations and from the in-depth interviews conducted with various participants, it was revealed that, although some parents understood the importance of their daughters' education, they were checked by the way decisions were made in the family in terms of which child/children should go to school. Observations revealed that women in the Maasai community were not involved in making family decisions. Males were normally described as the main decision-makers in all issues in the community and in the family. Some mothers' concerns about the way decisions were made are revealed through the following quotations:

> *"We really want our daughters to go to school but we are under control, we cannot say anything before these men… they usually tell us that we have no children in a home so… whatever they (men) say is what they do. We have no right, that's why these issues become hard and we fail to know what to do. We just leave it for God."* (Mother, April 2013)

> *"There is no Maasai woman who will not want her children to go to school because most of them have already seen the advantage of educating their daughters and the disadvantage of not educating them – the only problem is that most men in our society are the ones who never want their girl children to go to school."* (Mother, April 2013)

The above remarks show the way the patriarchal nature of the community limited women's freedom to sending their daughters to school. Such findings resonated with findings that in pastoral Maasai communities, fathers were described as decision-makers (Warrington and Kiragu, 2011) which was an indication that voices of women and girls were often silenced, hence placing them in a marginal position within the community.

4.3.2 | Cultural practices

The study also observed that some cultural practices had a profound effect in as much as they determined or informed some, if not most, of the decisions and practices of the community. The community was closely tied to culture and it was difficult, if not impossible, to separate these from other practices. Practices such as genital cutting or pre-arranged marriage hindered girls from acquiring formal education and perpetuated patriarchal structures of the community which disadvantaged women and girls. On the issue of genital cutting, while interviewing some elders and parents, one remarked:

> *"Mama!!!!!! … as a Maasai woman, one is incomplete without circumcision. Who will marry you or who will marry your daughter if you do not take her for circumcision? Of course the government is behind us but who will allow you to stay with such a daughter, they will laugh at you and your daughter will remain at home."* (Female elder, May 2013)

According to field observations, genital cutting was a way of enabling women to be accepted by family and the community; it was regarded as a symbol of maturity. Some participants explained that it was therefore a great shame if it was not done to a woman as she would be segregated and never accepted as a mature member of the community. One of the elders described the issue in the following way:

> *"It is a shame for a girl to become pregnant before circumcision. This girl will never be respected as mature person in that boma. She is considered to have brought a curse in the family. It is also a shame to the new baby born, the mother, the family and the community at large. In our culture for a man born of an uncircumcised woman, no matter how educated one may be, he will always be considered as juvenile and can never be nominated to lead the Maasai community. This man no matter how old he may be will still be considered as a child. I am not sure if the Maasai women will ever be able to go without it. May be after so many years and it has to come from the girls who are now at school."* (Male elder, April 2013)

The suggestion from the above statements is that women may be willing to abandon these practices, but the beliefs of the community force them to continue; they are afraid of being stigmatised and rendered unacceptable by other members of the community. Furthermore they have to choose whether to do it or whether to send their daughters to school: according to the Maasai culture, after circumcision a girl is considered mature and 'ready' and hence is not allowed to go out without the mother. It was likely, therefore, that circumcised girls would not go to school. Thus girls may have been willing to acquire formal education, but they were caught between choosing to go to school or being circumcised and marrying. These findings were in line with Warrington and Kiragu's (2011) argument that female genital cutting and early marriage were manifestations of the unequal power relations that discriminated against women.

Early pregnancy in particular was observed as being a great hindrance to girls' education. Various male participants explained the way this problem dissuaded parents from sending girls to school. They therefore opted to marry off the girls rather than wasting cattle, which according to them would give them a quicker income than using the little resources they had to send the girls to school. One of the male parents complained:

> *"Personally I am among the elders who like to educate girls while keeping in mind that in the end they will be of advantage in the society… but on the other hand when some of them get there they just come back home pregnant… this is a shame in our society you know… it disappoints me and I sometimes regret so much… I remain confessing by my mouth that I will continue girls' education but in my heart it is difficult, because I have much pain."* **(Father, June 2013)**

The above argument supported Hunt's (2008) observation that pregnancy had become a significant cause of drop-out for teenage girls. It was also evident from research undertaken in 2011 by the Pastoral Women Council (PWC), in Temba et al. (2013) which found that Moran or young Maasai warriors were tasked by the community elders to get young girls pregnant so that they could be forced to drop out of school. This implied, therefore, that this practice was purposely done to limit girls from enrolling in school. This also echoed Raymond's (2009) findings that parents in Monduli value assigning their daughters husbands rather than giving them the exercise books and pens to go to school.

4.3.3 | Parents' negligence and lack of information

Some participants expressed their concern about the parents who still did not understand the value of sending their daughters to school. They described them as reluctant and as people who never wanted to open up their minds to see what educated people did. Girls, both in school and out of school, and some female parents complained of either not being enrolled in school or of being forced to drop out from school because of their parents' limited understanding of the value of education in their lives. They had these words to say:

> *"I like studying but I have been stopped by my father – he used to beat me very badly – yet I continued studying. There was a time I was being beaten daily but I did not stop schooling. I was very scared when he told me he would cut my neck if I step foot into school again. From there I stopped my schooling."* **(Out-of-school girl, May 2013)**

> *"The father and the Moran removed my girl from school saying that they did not have money to pay for uniform… or exercise books; why didn't the boys lack those things?… When my girl was first enrolled in school they (father and the Moran) only bought her one uniform and nothing else. They never allowed me to sell even milk to give her other things. She kept on complaining to me about the school needs but I was not able to provide her. The father and his Moran refused to support the girl so I just kept quiet and the girl remained at home."* **(Mother, April 2013)**

The statements above reveal the way some members of the community desperately wanted their daughters to acquire formal education; yet were constrained by some parents' lack of information on the value of formal education for girls. The study observations further revealed that some male parents and elders did not care whether their children (both girls and boys) went to school or not. Girls and women, however, revealed that they valued formal education but their agency to acquire it was limited. This resonated with Walker (2006) who highlighted Sen's concept of agency (one's ability to pursue the goals that are valued and that are important for the life one wishes to lead), but while agency is important, social and economic arrangements are also essential in enabling functioning in and through education. In this context the social organisation of the Maasai community was found to be a limiting factor for the girls to acquire formal education.

4.3.4 | Poverty

Interviews with some parents showed that, although they recognised the importance of education and were willing to send their daughters to school, they felt that they could not afford to do so. It was very difficult for some community members to afford the costs of maintaining families and also to send their daughters to school. Three elders explained the tough conditions that the parents were experiencing as the reason why some of them were not able to send the children to school. One of the parents said:

> *"As you can see, I only have three goats and one cow – nothing else – I have no job, no business – my children only eat once a day. Look at this one, he is always sick – I just survive by the grace of God. I cannot afford school costs. All these problems are just too much for me alone."* **(Mother, May 2013)**

The above shows that another significant problem in girls' efforts to acquire formal education was that although school fees for primary education in Tanzania were abolished, parents were still required to share the costs of their children's education through buying uniforms, exercise books, pens and other requirements which were often hard to obtain. The study observed that some families were so poor that they could not afford daily meals or clothing for their children. In a finding echoed by Subramanian (2005), although boys were susceptible to being excluded from school because of poverty, girls were much more likely to be deprived in this sense. Indeed, in this study, boys often enjoyed their fathers' support, stating that when they needed new uniforms or exercise books a goat would be sold or slaughtered to cater for such needs. Girls, on the contrary, complained of not receiving support from their parents when compared to their brothers, even when they were from the same family. This view was also shared by Warrington and Kiragu (2011) in the case of the Kajiado girls in Kenya: although some girls considered boarding school as a solution to the challenges they were facing at home, parents and families could not afford the costs involved. For a community like that of the Maasai, where there was opposition by some to educating girls, when the cost of schooling was a strain on families this was often used as a reason to withdraw girls from school.

5 | Conclusions and recommendations

This paper explains the pastoral community's perspectives on girls' education, based on their attitudes, parents' and girls' educational aspirations and impediments to girls realising their aspirations. Findings were based on observations and interviews with parents, elders, children and traditional leaders. Although some members of the community had positive attitudes, many still held negative stances concerning the value of educating girls. Many girls aspired to achieve specific careers that would enable them live what they called a 'better life'. Girls strived to achieve education in order to overcome the lack of freedom that has held them back, yet their opportunities were still limited by issues like the community norms as well as parental attitudes, support and considerations, and poverty.

Thus, despite the fact that women and girls are targets of initiatives such as EFA and the MDGs, the contextual and social arrangements of the pastoral community still marginalise them and do not allow their voices to be heard. In this regard the study suggests that consideration of the contextual circumstances of women and girls in marginalised communities is needed in order to enable their voices to be heard.

Based on the fieldwork findings, the study recommends that the following issues ought to be addressed in order to enable more girls from pastoral communities to participate in primary education in Tanzania:

- The Tanzanian government and other educational stakeholders should strive to develop further understanding of the pastoral communities' situation in relation to their beliefs and norms. This will help to inform a better solution to including girls in education provision rather than continuing to use the same strategies which are not specific to girls and which have proved unsuccessful in solving the problem of educating girls in these communities.

- Traditional leaders were discovered to have a potentially powerful position in convincing the parents and other members of the community to educate their female children. Thus a closer involvement and use of these leaders at the district level will help the government to engage pastoral community parents.

- Women were found to struggle to educate their daughters and provide for the family needs. Yet their agency to do that was observed to be limited not only by the social arrangements of the community but also by the low economic power they experienced. These women first need to be provided with adult education that focuses on educating them in ways that allow them to use the available resources to change their situation. Secondly, they need some form of economic empowerment, for example by being provided with loans (to strengthen the little business they are doing). This will help enhance their agency in providing for their family's needs and in supporting girls' education.

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