



Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Re-Entry Policy in Promoting Girls-Child, Education in Zambia Based on the Perceptions of Various Stake Holders.

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluating the effectiveness of the re-entry policy in advancing girls' child education in Zambia, with a focus on understanding the perceptions of diverse stakeholders. The re-entry policy, implemented in 1997, allows adolescent girls who have experienced early pregnancy or marriage to return to formal education after childbirth or marriage dissolution. The policy aims to mitigate barriers hindering girls' educational progression.

This research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys, to gather data from a diverse sample of stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, parents, community leaders, and the girls themselves. The study is situated within a socio-cultural framework, acknowledging the multifaceted nature of factors influencing girls' access to education.

Qualitative data is collected through semi-structured interviews, allowing for in-depth exploration of stakeholder perspectives, experiences, and recommendations. Quantitative data is gathered through structured surveys to quantify perceptions and measure the policy's impact on girls' enrollment, retention, and academic performance.

Preliminary findings reveal a complex interplay of social, cultural, economic, and institutional factors shaping the policy's effectiveness. Stakeholders acknowledge its potential to empower girls and improve their life prospects, while also identifying challenges related to implementation, resource allocation, and cultural resistance.

The study aims to contribute to the discourse on girls' education in developing contexts, providing valuable insights into the nuanced dynamics of policy implementation. Recommendations based on stakeholder feedback will be formulated to enhance the re-entry policy's efficacy and maximize its impact on girls' education in Zambia.

Keywords: re-entry policy, girls' child education, Zambia, stakeholder perceptions, qualitative interviews, quantitative surveys, socio-cultural framework, policy effectiveness, barriers to education, empowerment.

Keywords: Re-entry policy, perceptions, girls' child and education

1. Introduction

In September 1997, Government announced the Re-Entry Policy. The aim of the re-entry policy is to give chance to girls who fall pregnant while in school to reclaim their school place and complete their education. In view of this policy, all girls that fell pregnant in 1997 onward were allowed to reclaim their school places. In Zambia, teen mothers are allowed to re-enter twice only. The increase in unintended pregnancies among adolescents of school going age was the driving force for the Government of the Republic of Zambia to introduce the re-entry policy as evidenced below:

- 2002 -there were 3,663 teenage pregnancies
- 2004- the number rose to 6,528,
- 2007- the figure had risen further to 11,391
- 2009 -figure was 13,634 in 2009.
- 2010-2014- just under 15,000 school going teenage pregnancies

Between October and December 1997 the Zambia Association for Research and Development (ZARD) carried out an opinion poll on the re-admission of the pregnant child into school. The results confirmed the initial reactions. The church, parents, teachers and schoolboys were against the declaration. Interviewed as individuals, though, church representatives had more people in favor of the policy than against it. Politicians and the re-entry girls themselves had the highest support for the policy. The opinion poll also showed that a lot of people were still not aware of the policy.

As the results of the opinion poll were publicized, the Ministry of Education in December 1997 issued a circular to all Provincial Education Officers, District Education Officers and heads of schools. The circular formalized the re-entry policy and called on the officers to implement it without delay. The circular was vague, though, and most of the decisions touching on the policy were left to the discretion of the heads of schools. This study will seek to obtain perception of various stakeholders on whether the policy has been effective or not in minimizing teenage pregnancy in schools and in rehabilitating girls who fell pregnant while at school.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Despite the re-entry policy being in existence for close to 18 years, there are still less than 50% girls being re-entered after giving birth. In 2011 for example, only 37.5% of the total pregnancies in the schooling system were readmitted. The 2012 Education Statistical Bulletin reported that while the survival rate for grades 1 to 5 girls is good at 96.1%, their survival rates reduces at higher grade levels which stand at 58.95% by grade 9 level. Only 31.1% of girls that start primary school finish grade 12. The completion rate for girls remains low at 27.4 % while that of boys stand at 34.7 % largely due to unintended teenage pregnancies, child marriages, poor performance and general lack of education aspiration (FAWEZA, 2014).

It should be borne in mind that the ultimate aim of the re-entry policy is not just to see every pregnant girl back in school. It should be to equip girls psychologically and morally to say “no” to sex so that they complete their education without getting pregnant once. And further, such a policy should aim to instill in men and boys a sense of responsibility for their actions, and insist they show due regard for the rights of the girl-child. It appears most of these aspects have not successfully entrenched and this study will try to establish why.

1.1.1 Literature Review

Guidelines of the Reentry Policy in Zambia

In Zambia there are specific guidelines given on how schools should respond when a girl falls pregnant. Generally, it is so rare that a girl comes up to the school authorities to report that she is pregnant. Usually, the report is made by: Class/school mates; a teacher who notices a change in behavior (withdrawn and taciturn), the sports teacher who notices physical appearance and lack of agility, parents/guardians after a girl decides to stay away from school, hospital/clinic staff who discover pregnancy when pupil is treated for another complaint, or the matron (in a boarding school) through routine checks on girls (HEART, 2015).

The reports are made to the responsible teacher/ counselor. The teacher will call the girl and ask her if she is pregnant. Some will admit they are, while others will say they are not. In either case, the teacher will take the girl to a health facility for examination. In some schools, the parents/guardians are called at this stage so that the medical report is sought in collaboration with them. In others, the parents/guardians are called to the school after confirming that the girl is pregnant (HEART, 2015).

When the school receives a report confirming the pregnancy, the girl is asked to write a letter “confessing” that she is pregnant. In some schools the girl may be told that she is entitled to go on leave as soon as she feels that she can no longer cope. Other schools decide when the girl should be sent on leave. For example, some schools choose to send the girl away as soon as her pregnancy becomes obvious. A letter is then formally written to the parents/guardians about the girl’s pregnancy and exclusion from school (HEART, 2015).

The letter states that the girl is free to resume her studies after the agreed period of leave. In day schools, the minimum period for such leave is six months. For boarding schools, 12–18 months is the recommended period. The school notes the girl’s last day of attendance in the school register. Some students request a letter of transfer if they prefer to go to a different school afterwards. Sometimes it is the parents/guardians who make this request (HEART, 2015).

A copy of the letter of exclusion is sent to the District Education Officer. If a schoolboy is responsible, a letter is written to the head of his school, for information only because the boy remains in school. In some cases, the boy is counseled, too. When the girl is ready to go back to school, she applies for re-admission. This is just a formality because school admittance is automatic, if the girl goes back to the same school. If she got a letter of transfer, some schools will assist her to get a place in another school. Others leave it to her to find a school place for herself (HEART, 2015).

Research on the Effectiveness of the Re-Entry Policy in Various Parts of Africa

A number of studies have been conducted to explore the effectiveness of reentry policies in different parts of Africa.

In a survey conducted by Ahikire & Madanda, (2010) in 20 districts of Uganda, it was established that; the leading cause for girls to drop out of school is pregnancy (34%), followed by poverty (28%) and engagement in early sex/marriage (11%). In Uganda the challenge of girls dropping out of school due to pregnancies has been explained by a mix of socio-cultural views, perceptions and practices surrounding early pregnancy.

In most cultural settings, pre-marital pregnancy among girls is stigmatized both in school and in communities mainly on moralistic grounds, without addressing factors that lead to pregnancy among school girls. A girl who gets pregnant while still in school is “victimized”, seen as a “waste”, “a curse”, “a bad omen” and “a gone case”. Most times school careers of many girls are cut short because of pregnancy either by the girls withdrawing themselves from school or through expulsion with little or no chance of re-entry after delivery. The situation is worsened by an absence of a coherent national policy on pregnancy in school and on re-entry after delivery. This in many situations schools almost all schools expel pregnant girls and as child mothers, they often fail to return and complete their education (Ahikire, J. & Madanda, A., 2010).

The survey noted that although Uganda has made deliberate efforts to promote gender equality at national and school level, there are significant gaps in addressing issues of pregnancies in schools. Challenges of high dropouts and teenage pregnancies have continued to disrupt and affect girls’ education thereby blocking the celebrated achievement of increasing female enrolment in school. At the national level, no clear policies exist on how pregnancy in schools can be handled or assisting girls who would want to re-join school after giving birth. Findings also indicate that districts have no established mechanisms to deal with pregnancies in schools under their supervision. Some districts have information on the number of schools, their registered students and on dropouts, but they do not have information on students who drop out due to pregnancy, and how these are followed up (Ahikire, J. & Madanda, A., 2010).

Wanyama, E. & Simatwa, E., (2011) conducted research on the prospects and challenges in the implementation of reentry policy of girls in secondary schools in Kenya. The research design for the study was descriptive survey. The study concluded that the prospects available for head teachers in the implementation of re-entry policy included: the schools’ willingness to allow re-entry, head teachers’ knowledge of the value of implementation of re-entry policy and their willingness to support the girls who seek re-entry, availability of space and the fact that re-entry can be sought in other schools.

Many countries have now accepted the need for gender balancing in decision making bodies at all levels. This cannot happen by accident. It can only be achieved if girls have the same opportunities as boys to attain the education levels that will equip them for such positions. It is only girls who can get pregnant. But boys and men are equally culpable. All the girls I interviewed are looking after their children on their own. Many have not seen the boys or men responsible from the moment they told them that they were expecting their babies. Whatever measures are taken to address the girl’s problem should, therefore, be extended to the boy or man responsible. In that way, both will be sensitized to the problems that a baby born to a schoolgirl presents.

Data from the studies highlight how ill equipped schools, families, and education officials are to appreciate the range of issues that the exclusion of pregnant schoolgirls raises. The issue of pregnancy connects many different sites of policy and practice that usually work in separate fields, sometimes with tragic consequences. Some national government officials and teachers see it as a problem undermining school attendance or status, which is also undoubtedly the case. District officials and head teachers are concerned to observe regulations and often lack the professional language, confidence, or networks to work beyond these.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

This section details the theories of deviance, rehabilitation and punishment as portrayed by various scholars. Being pregnant while at school is socially considered to be a transgression of school rules and even a form of social deviance. Thus the theories presented in this section will be ideal for the topic at hand.

1.2.1 Skinner’s Theory of Punishment and Reinforcement

Behaviorist B.F. Skinner derived the reinforcement theory, one of the oldest theories of motivation, as a way to explain behavior and why we do what we do. The theory may also be known as Behaviorism, or Operant Conditioning, which is still commonly taught in psychology today. The theory states that an individual’s behavior is a function of its consequences. Reinforcement theory provides two methods of eliminating undesirable behaviors. One is negative punishment and the other is positive punishment (Buskist & Davis, 2008).

The type of punishment most people are familiar with is positive punishment. Positive punishment is easier for people to identify because it is common in society. It is usually called “punishment” or “punishment by application” (Hockenbury & Hockenbury, 2010)). Positive punishment occurs when a stimulus is presented following an undesired behavior and subsequent occurrences of the undesired behavior are reduced or eliminated (Cheney & Pierce, 2004). For instance a girl who is known to flirt too much with members of the opposite sex may be reprimanded or if students are caught in compromising sexual behavior they may be suspended. It is important to realize that even though consequences such as suspension, reprimand and so on induce dislike, they do not qualify as punishments unless they lessen or eliminate the undesired behavior.

Positive punishment is effective in eliminating undesired behaviors but it does have limitations. Positive punishment has been found to be more effective when the stimulus is added immediately following the undesired behavior as opposed to applying delayed stimulus. Another factor is consistent

application of a stimulus following an undesired behavior; this is more effective than occasional application of a stimulus (Cheney & Pierce, 2004). The greatest drawback is that positive punishment fails to teach desirable behaviors. Furthermore, positive punishment can produce undesirable emotional reactions such as passivity, fear, anxiety, or hostility (Skinner, 1974; as cited in Cheney & Pierce, 2004).

Negative punishment involves removing a pleasing stimulus other than the one maintaining the behavior in order to decrease the frequency of the behavior. Normally, the behavior decreases immediately (Coon, 2006). Nevertheless, punishments are linked to social structure and economy in that if people commit crimes, they will go to prison but after a time of punishment, they will be able to re-enter the society as citizen. The social order, maintained by culture and power is necessary because it maintains peace in the society), negative punishment may also be referred to as punishment by removal. Thus when a girl is suspended from school due to pregnancy, it is a form of negative punishment especially if she is one who enjoys school and attaches great value to education.

The power of positive punishment appears to be in its power to stop undesirable behavior as well as through its deterrent effect. The past policy of expelling girls who fall pregnant appears to have followed this rationale: If a girl falls pregnant she must be expelled so she does not repeat the behavior again and also to deter other girls from following the same behavior.

But the major disadvantage is that it may have forced girls who encountered such situation to seek abortions and in some cases to commit suicide. It also amounted to denying the girl the right to education just because she made a mistake. It moreover failed, to consider extenuating circumstances such as those girls who were the victims of defilement or who were deceived and exploited by unscrupulous men/boys. It is also possible that it did not have a strong enough deterrent effect as pregnancy cases continued to rise.

Thus the new reentry policy is not about positive punishment, but it seeks an alternative approach. It seeks to deter girls from engaging in sexual activity while at school while at the same time giving a second chance to those who fall pregnant. There is a form of punishment in the sense that the girl will be temporarily suspended, but not expelled. Sometimes the girl will be allowed to learn while pregnant while in other cases the girl will return after delivery. In both cases the punishment will be in for of their absence from school coupled sometimes with the shame and vilification by society that she will face during pregnancy-not to mention the stress and pain of pregnancy and labor. These will be punishment enough to deter her from repeating the behavior. Yet a key component is that she will be subjected to counseling and be allowed to return to school.

Thus the re-entry policy combines punishment, deterrence and rehabilitation. This study attempted to decipher of this has be effective in reducing proliferation of teenage/school-age pregnancy among girls in Zambia. There was also need to see if it has a strong enough deterrent effect. The investigation moreover sought to determine if it been effective in reforming girls who fell pregnant and then were given another chance to continue their education.

1.2.2 Durkheim's Functionalist Perspective of Punishment

Skinner's perspective was primarily a psychological perspective. It shows how the reentry policy affects individuals. But what about the sociological perspective on this policy? What is the value of the policy to society?

The functionalistic approach postulated by Durkheim argues that about collective conscience in that punishment is the result of a moral phenomenon because society requires a moral framework. He explains that vengeance is the primary motivation which underpins punitive actions so the explanation is not totally rational and owns much to the Christian theology of sin, guilt, punishment, expiation and redemption (Coyle, 2005). Punishments are linked to social structure and economy in that if people commit transgressions, they will be punished by society, but after a time of punishment, they will be able to re-enter the society as reformed and rehabilitated citizens. The social order, maintained by culture and power is necessary because it maintains peace and morality in the society (Holden, 1990).

However, it is possible to make a critic of Durkheim's theory because it is no longer the society who punishes but more a specific state apparatus represented in this case by the Ministry of General Education in Zambia. The application of Durkheim's theory enables this research to show the role the role that punishment play in modern correcting deviant behavior among girls and boys in school when viewed from the point of view of social order and stability when those pupils who are likely to disturb the discipline and stability of the school system are put on temporary punishment or when they are removed from school. Once people are in punished through the rehabilitation and reintegration programs, they are resocialized so as to make them conform to the norms and values of society thus are able to contribute to the better functioning of the school system and society as a whole. Thus this study will look at the value of the reentry policy from a sociological point of view.

2. Material and method

The research strategy for this the study combined both the exploratory and descriptive approach. A descriptive research intends to present facts concerning the nature and the status of the situation, as it exists at a time of the study and to describe the present conditions, events or systems based on impressions or reactions of the respondents of the research. The exploratory approach on the other hand seeks in depth explanation as well as previously unknown insights in to the topic at hand. This study was concerned with the experiences, perceptions, opinions and practices that exist with respect to land administration, land ownership and land disputes. The exploratory approach was moreover idiographic in that it highlighted some aspects of the reentry policy that were unique to the Zambian context.

Target Group A consisted of the 15 women from Kalingalinga who had experienced pregnancy while they were still at school. This number is sufficient because this is a qualitative study and the researcher is more interested in getting first hand opinions and experiences from women who have faced pregnancy while at school. Therefore, such a number would enable the researcher to achieve the point of saturation. Moreover, this sample size will ensure that the research is conducted within the stipulated time frame.

Target Group B was made up of three 15 key informants from the , Lusaka District Education Office, Forum for African Women Educationalists in Zambia, Women for Change, National Governmental Organization Coordinating Committee as well as head teachers from ten (11) Different Schools in Kalingalinga Township. These key informants were included in the study because they are involved in Education Policy, Administration, Research and advocacy among other roles aimed at helping girls who fall pregnant while in school. Thus they were likely to give first-hand information on the subject.

Snowball sampling was used to select Target Group A. In this case the investigator identified one or two women who fell pregnant while in school. These then directed the investigator to other women who have had a similar experience. Snowballing was used since the women who have experienced this situation are either rare or do not commonly make their experience public knowledge. Usually it is close friends or family members who are aware of their history.

Purposive sampling was used to select Target Group B. The researcher used personal judgment in choosing suitable participants. This means the selected individuals were those perceived by the researcher as having adequate information relevant to the study. They were more likely to provide accurate, up to date officially sanctioned information the reentry policy and how it has been implemented in Zambia generally, and Lusaka in particular. The advantage of using this method was that it served time as the researcher went straight to those people who were relevant to the study.

One to one semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from Target Groups A and B. The researcher used an interview guide made up of questions to guide the interview. The interviews were done on a one to one basis and the researcher took notes on the responses or made audio records where possible. In-depth interviews were useful in getting detailed information on research topic. The ability to get deep insight in to the subject matter was a key advantage of this tool. Another benefit was that, researcher could have a chance to ask for further explanation where they were not clear. Additionally, the interviewer could probe for more information on any new aspect arising during the interview.

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the responses from the interviews where the questions were open ended. This involved reading through all responses to the questions and grouping them in to common categories called themes. The general pattern of the themes was then analyzed to identify what the common views are on each question and also what the minority views are. This way, each different opinion was given due consideration. The responses to open ended questions in the interviews were reported in narrative form.

The main limitation faced in this study was that it was difficult to get full cooperation from the respondents. Some received the researcher with hostility, whereas others took a long time to answer the questionnaire due to a busy schedule. There were also some respondents declined to participate due to the feeling that it was taboo to talk about issues of childhood pregnancy. There also appears to be a research fatigue in that so many studies have been conducted there and people are tired of answering questions. A further limitation was also the lack of time to conduct the study as thoroughly as possible.

3. Results and Discussion

Causes of Pregnancy among School Age Girls

The findings above indicate that girls in school fall pregnant due to circumstances beyond their control such as financial vulnerability, early marriage and sexual abuse. As such financial vulnerability is a prominent cause. As already pointed out girls did their education in rural areas or from low income backgrounds were most prone to falling pregnant while in school. Girls in school require many items especially as they reach their adolescent stage. Some of these items may be essential –such as school fees, educational materials such as books, clothing or even food. Yet some of the things they require are driven by the pressure to own luxurious thing such as exotic hair, cosmetics, jewelry, clothes or smart phones. Inability to afford these things creates in them a sense of desperation. It is this sense of desperation that makes the girls vulnerable to males who see them as easy targets for sexual adventure. Edwards (2013) pointed out this challenge in his survey of Ghanaian schools.

The level of vulnerability is also exacerbated for girls who enter in to early marriage. They do not enter these marriages as equal partners with their spouse with power to control when to fall pregnant and bear children. Instead their husband and family determine when she will bear children and often demand her to have a child as soon as possible even when she is still in school.

It has also been established that sometimes pregnancy is a result of sexual crimes such as rape and defilement. Abuse is largely done by people the girl is familiar with such as a relative, a teacher or a boyfriend. These are people a girl trust or depend on and they take advantage of that trust and dependence to sexually abuse the girl. Zambia has recorded high level of defilement cases and this state of affairs inevitably produces high levels of teenage pregnancy. It appears there is still very little protection for girls from this vice and current steps to deter perpetrators do not appear to be effective enough. These causes confirm what was reported by FAWEZA (2010) and FAWEZA (2014).

On the other hand teenage pregnancy may at times be a matter of choice for some girls. In this case the girls may be under negative peer pressure, may engage in alcohol abuse or may feel a need to boost their self-esteem or just to explore the joys of sex. In all these situation girls fall pregnant as a consequence or ill-advised life choices rather than circumstances beyond their control. Their low level of emotional maturity is what makes them prone to engage in risky sexual activity at a young age without due regard to the consequences there of. It appears most of them realize the negative consequences of their actions when it is too late –when they are already pregnant and/or even contract sexually transmitted disease(s).

This state of affairs implies that lack of mentors or positive role models to monitor, inspire or counsel the girls makes them vulnerable to action that result in pregnancy. Also the lack of alternative activities to occupy their time and energy increases the likelihood that they will use sex as a form of recreation and entertainment, regardless of the consequences.

There is generally a low level of knowledge on the national reentry policy among school age girls. For this reason most of them appeared to believe that due to their pregnancy their right to continue with education was automatically revoked. They believed they had no chance of ever resuming their studies even after delivery. This lack of knowledge implies that school going pupils, education administrators, parents, guardians and community at large were not have not effectively educated or sensitized on the provisions of the policy as well as on the importance of ensuring girls who fall while in school are given a second chance.

Opinions on whether girls who fall pregnant while in school should be allowed to return to school were divided between those in support and those against. Those in support appeared to be in the majority. They believe such girls who fall pregnant while at school deserve a second chance for the sake of ensuring they learn from their mistakes and for the sake of ensuring their future is not jeopardized by their early pregnancy. It is well understood by most respondents that girls who fall pregnant in school still have a right to education and still deserve to enjoy the advantages and the empowerment that only education can guarantee.

Those in support of the policy thus take a reformatory approach to dealing with school age pregnancy. The focus is on reforming in question. They see punishment as a way of correcting the deviant behavior (in this case pre-marital or school age sexual activity and pregnancy) and encouraging "offenders" to adopt more desirable behavior (such as absence from sexual activity) They are more inclined toward applying Skinner's conception of Negative Punishment approach to the problem where it is believed punishment must be temporary and once the girl has learnt they must be given a chance to reenter the school community (Cheney & Pierce, 2004).

Those against reentry were in the minority. They appear to adopt a retaliatory approach to punishment. This approach is about chastising the "offender" and deterring others from following their behavior. As such there are more inclined towards Skinner's conception of positive punishment. Expulsion from school is thus meant to impose a painful consequence on the offender with the aim of teaching others that sex and pregnancy while one is in school is strictly forbidden and inevitably results in an adverse and irreversible consequence-expulsion. This attitude is also consistent with Durkheim's functionalist view of punishment (Holden, 1990; Coyle, 2005). As such the opponents of the reentry policy hold that the key purpose of this punishment is to impose fear on the rest of the pupils in the hope that this fear will deter them from engaging in premature sex. This punitive approach is widely used in many schools in Africa as was observed by Onyeka et.al, (2011).

The findings indicate that it is still difficult for school age girls who fall pregnant to resume their studies. This situation is not just peculiar to the Zambian context but a similar trend occurs on a global scale as highlighted by Achoka & Njeru, (2012). Ahikire & Madanda, (2010) in Uganda and Onyeka et.al, (2011) in Nigeria, observed a similar situation. On one hand the reasons girl drop out may be due to factors over which they have no control including refusal by parents/ guardian to sponsor the girl as well as sickness. An additional circumstance has to do with pressures arising from the additional responsibilities and demands that arise when the girl is married off.

The failure to continue can moreover be a result a personal decision made by the girls driven by a loss of motivation to continue school as also noted by Ahikire & Madanda, (2010). The girls in question lose motivation because of the hostile reception they receive from their community and schools alike, but also due to the personal view that they are too old to go back to school or they were not intelligent enough to succeed at education child. Ahikire & Madanda, (2010) and Edwards, (2013) observed this same problem when describing the global and regional situation on school age pregnancy. Thus it appears that the girls are not given sufficient counseling to cope with their situation. If such counseling services were available and effective, perhaps some of them could be convinced to continue with their education even after delivering.

From the findings above it is evident that the national reentry policy currently facing a lot of challenges in implementation and as such it is not yet meeting its objectives. The lack of knowledge on the exact provision of the policy entails that it is either ignored or wrongly interpreted and wrongly implemented. As such the level of awareness and sensitization on the policy still remains low and this impairs its effective implementation. Furthermore, some school administrators and also members of the community actively oppose the policy and as such are less likely to implement it. As already outlined in the previous section girls also make a choice not to continue with school and this further impairs implementation of the policy.

Thus though Zambia has a well-crafted reentry policy it appears a lack of sensitization and awareness creation, weak monitoring and enforcement mechanisms as well as the absence of support services such as counseling have led to its ineffectiveness. It has also been implied that these challenges are more acute in rural areas where a larger number of girls who fall pregnant drop out of school compared to urban areas. However more research may be required to verify

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study has demonstrated that the levels of pregnancy among school girls in Zambia still remains and is due to many different causes. It is evident that these girls should be treated as vulnerable victims rather than guilty offenders. Though the current reentry policy is well crafted it appears it is poorly enforced. The community and school administrators are more inclined to following a punitive approach rather than one that helps the girls to learn from their mistake or cope with the challenges of young motherhood. Moreover it appears the levels of awareness aimed at increasing knowledge on the policy and the level of sensitization aimed at changing attitudes still remains poor. Taking these issues into account this study concludes that the reentry policy in Zambia is still ineffective in promoting girl child education.

4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Taking the above findings and conclusions into account, this study recommends the following:

1. There is need to conduct more awareness and sensitization of the provisions of national reentry policy targeting education administrators, community leaders, parents, /guardians and the girls themselves.
2. There is need for special counseling services to be set up in every school to help girls who fall pregnant to cope with their situation and to encourage them to resume school on delivery.
3. There is need to incorporate sex education in the school curriculum tackling such issues as the need for abstinence, measures to prevent pregnancy, how to deal with sexual harassment and abuse and so on.
4. Government has to implement stronger monitoring and accountability mechanisms so as to compel school administrators, parents and guardians to adhere to the provisions of the reentry policy. Adherence to the policy should not be seen as optional, but mandatory.
5. There is need for a more scholarships to help vulnerable girls so as to reduce the tendency to exchange sexual favors for money. Such a fund also needs to be extended to those girls who fell pregnant but would want to continue with their education. However, recipients of these scholarships will also need to be closely monitored to ensure they are focused on education rather than merely abusing the fund.
6. Further research is required to compare effectiveness of the policy in rural and urban areas.

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