

Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
College of Social Sciences
Department of Social Anthropology

MA Thesis

On

**Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting Girls' Secondary Education in
Gambella Region: The Case of Nuer and Agnwa Communities**

By

Wossen Gebeyehu

October, 2016
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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**Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis Ababa University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master
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Advisor: Guday Emirie (PhD)

College of Social Sciences

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Approved by Board of Examiners

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABE	Alternative Basic Education
BOE	Bureau of Education
BOLSA	Bureau of Labor and Social Affair
BOWCA	Bureau of Women and Children Affair
BOFED	Bureau of Finance and Economic Development
CSA	Central Statistics Authority
EC	Ethiopian Calendar
EFA	Education for All
ESDP	Education Sector Development Program
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender based Violence
GNP	Gross National Product
KII	Key Informant Interview
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOWA	Ministry of Women Affairs
NGO	Non-Government Organization
SCD	save the Children Denmark
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region

UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
USA	United States of America

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GLOSSARY OF LOCAL TERMS

<i>Birr (Amharic)</i>	<i>Ethiopian unit of currency, now national legal transaction note</i>
<i>Cangwat(Agnwa)</i>	<i>Free day</i>
<i>Dumuye (Agnwa)</i>	<i>Locally made nickels</i>
<i>Kebele (Amharic)</i>	<i>The formal administrative unit below woreda</i>
<i>Ojiej (Nuer)</i>	<i>First phase bride price payment in Agnwa community</i>
<i>Per (Nuer)</i>	<i>Final bride price payment in the Agnwa community</i>
<i>Puot Kuen(Nuer)</i>	<i>Wedding day</i>
<i>Woreda(Amharic)</i>	<i>The formal administrative unit above kebele and below zone</i>
<i>Yoat (Nuer)</i>	<i>First phase bride price payment in Nuer community</i>

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this research was to identify and analyze the socio-cultural factors affecting girls' participation in secondary education among the Nuer and Agnwa communities in Gambella Region. To achieve this objective, both secondary and primary data were collected and analyzed. Secondary data were gathered through critical review of related literature and relevant documents from the FDRE Ministry of Education and Gambella Region Education Bureau and other sources. Primary data were gathered through focus group discussions with secondary school students and key informant interviews held with different Government Bureaus, UN agencies, NGOs and elderly people.

Once the data were collected then analyzed as follows. First, the primary data gathered through qualitative data collection methods were organized thematically based on the specific objectives of the study. The local language transcripts were translated into English and analyzed through triangulation of different primary and secondary data sources to increase the validity and reliability of the findings of the study.

The study found that the participation of girls in secondary education with in the studied communities of Nuer and Agnwa is low compared to boys. This happened mainly during the transition from primary to secondary education and also when it goes to preparatory education level. For this, early marriage, son preferences for secondary education because of community perception on direct and opportunity cost of schooling, gender role expectation and lack of female teacher role model are identified as the major Socio-Cultural factors.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

According to Abera (1999, cited in Guday (2005:1), education is an important tool to bring social change towards the desired direction. It has its own major contributions in bringing intellectual growth and development of the society which is applicable both in developed and developing countries. This is because education increases people's participation in different arenas. It creates the opportunity to access different knowledge, information and new ideas and help people to develop positive attitudes, behaviours and increase people's independence from traditional autocratic authority. In this regard, it helps people to respect and promote their inherent human rights and democratic values.

King and Hill (1993) also argued that education is very crucial for the national economic development and individual advancement as well. This has been clearly observed by analysing the link between the level of girls' participation in education and the economic development of the developing countries. In those countries, there is a clear gender gap in education and has showed its own implications to the national development.

In this regard, studies on women's education in developing countries (e.g., Hill and King, 1993; Rose, 1996) report the strong link between the education of girls and national development and girls' education can bring a long-term change on the life of the girls themselves, their family and the community at large. According to the result of those studies, however, in most developing countries, girls' education is affected by different socio-cultural barriers. These include, carry heavy burden of work and engaging in different home chores and outside home activities, limited their mobility and early marriage instead of sending them to school are some of the socio-cultural factors that hamper the education of girls. Therefore, though girls have the right to education, their education right is violated due to different cultural norms and attitudes (Calder and Huda, 2013).

Barbour (1997) also added that girls' learning is greatly affected by the attitudes, values, and actions emanating from home, schools, and communities, but, of course, the impact varies according to girls' stages of development and their amount of contact with those social settings. Therefore, education is an enabling and transformative right. A strong education system, in line with the principle of non-discrimination, is a key for redressing gender injustice in wider society, and for overcoming social and cultural norms that discriminate against girls and women (Global Campaign for Education, 2012).

Studies on benefits associated with girls' education such as Summers (1992), Abueghaid and Kalasen (2000) as cited in Kane (2004:2) argued that:

... Educating girls yields a higher rate of return than any other investment in the developing world. ... Educate a girl you educate a nation. Thus, girls must be treated equally with boys to attain educational qualification, which is necessary to increase their participation in different development programs.

According to studies on gender disparity in education such as Teshome (1979) and Pankhurst (1968) cited in Guday (2005:2), in Ethiopia gender disparities are prevalent in the education system. The participation of girls is limited. This has a strong historical linkage with the traditional education system of Ethiopia which was mainly linked with religious oriented education service. The churches and mosques were serving only for boys by excluding girls in their education system. This gender discrimination affects not only girls, but also the overall growth of the economy. It makes one-half of the population not to perform according to their full potential in social, economic and political life.

Even in the early 20th century, it has been observed by the majority of Ethiopian society that education was the sole right of males. The first formal school was opened in 1908 in Addis Ababa and the first girls' formal school was opened in 1931 by Empress Menen, which is a remarkable time and the beginning of the provision of education for girls in Ethiopia. However, the expansion of formal education in Ethiopia started in 1942 after the end of the Italian occupation (1935-41) (Guday, 2005).

Known to be a keystone to the nation's accelerated socio-economic development, the Ethiopian governments have made tremendous steps in promoting girls' education following the 1970s.

However, in Ethiopia and other African countries, getting girls into school and retaining them in schools is a very serious constraint as a result of which girls' enrollment and achievement in education does not yet reach at the required level in the sub-Saharan African countries. This is due to the deep-rooted misinterpretation and biased attitudes in the community, economic and education inequality related issues, and far less attention are the main causes to the problems of the education of girls. Even though National Girls' Education Strategy has been put in place by the Ethiopian government to increase the participation of girls' education, the participation of girls in education is very limited in the secondary education compared to boys (MoE, 2009).

Similarly, due to different reasons in Gambella region the participation of girls in education, particularly in secondary education, is low compared to boys. Taking related works into consideration, this study has focused on the socio-Cultural factors affecting girls' participation in secondary education in Gambella region among the Nuer and Agnwa ethnic community.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Education is one of the key contributing factors for development. Investing on education will directly raise the wellbeing of individuals. It is also a vital instrument for the development of the country. Especially for girls, there is a clear causality between educational attainment and improvement across other areas such as health, income, self-confidence, knowledge of rights and entitlements and interestingly, these impacts persist with future generations (UNICEF, 1982). Mothers who are educated tend to not only secure better paying and less risky jobs (which naturally benefit their children), but are able to make more informed health choices when their children are ill, are more likely (and able) to ensure their food security, and also have greater likelihood of educating their own children (EFA, 2009).

According to Calder (2013), in the race to fulfill the MDGs, many developing countries including Ethiopia have made great paces in promoting primary education among girls. However, there has not been enough push to get girls to continue their secondary education. This is mainly due to domestic and societal burdens, expectations, and an inability or unwillingness of families to invest in higher education for girls (as compared to boys). However, it is true that countries with educated, empowered girls have stronger economic growth and higher gross

national product (GNP). Despite this evidence, in developing countries, it remains a challenge to get adolescent girls on the policy agenda.

Gender disparity in education is rampant in most developing countries due to different socio-economic and cultural factors. Without bringing the gender disparity in education, it is uncommon to bring social advancement and enhance countries' development. It means girls and boys should have equal opportunity for education so that they can contribute and benefit from the social, economic, cultural and political development of a country (Wudu & Yonas, 2009).

According to UNESCO (2002b, cited in Guday 2005:4), creating education opportunity for girls is an engine to bring social change, enhance human advancement and country's development. It plays great role in improving the welfare of the population and increasing the economic productivity of the country. Therefore, educating girls means improving the economic and social situation of the women, their family and the community at large.

However, different researches and surveys that have been conducted at different times by different scholars and actors on the participation of girls in education (such as Guday, 2002, 2005; SCD, MoE & MoWA, 2008; MoE, 2009) revealed that the participation of girls in education in Ethiopia is low compared to boys due to different socio-cultural factors.

The Global Campaign on Education for All (EFA) report (2012) also explicitly mentioned that, girls in developing countries including Ethiopia are still far more likely to drop out before completing primary education, have markedly worse experience in school, often characterized by violence, abuse and exploitation, and have scant chance of progressing to secondary school and tertiary education. According to the same source, Ethiopian boys have more access to education than Ethiopian girls. The greatest disparity can be found in secondary education and adult literacy. According to the report, for every 100 boys enrolled in secondary education, there are approximately 77 girls only. This is because; the number of female dropout is high in the country, especially in the transition from primary to secondary education.

In relation to socio-cultural factors that hamper the participation of girls and women in education, Hirut (2004) argued that the society of Ethiopia is patriarchal oriented. Women spend most of their time at home in bearing and rearing children, cooking and taking care of the household. All these factors put women at the subordinate position. The basis of their

subordinate position is religious and different socio-cultural contexts. This has resulted in division of labour, share of benefits and puts them in an inferior position since they lose their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Kassa (2006) also argued on the constraints of girls' education on the supply and demand side as follows: On the supply side, schools are often far away and not accessible for girls especially for disabled girls. Women and girls may only be able to travel very short distance without male companions. So, even if there are all girl schools, it may be too far for them to attend. Often schools are staffed exclusively by male teachers. Minimal and no sanitation facilities can result in low attendance and high dropout rates among adolescent girls who are menstruating.

On the demand side, low-income families may prioritize boys' education than girls since they do not have adequate money to pay for girls' school fees, uniform and other supplies. Also, families often rely on girls to do household chores, care for siblings and generate family income. Early marriage and pregnancy are additional barriers to girls taking up or continuing their schooling. Even where girls are enrolled in high numbers, dropout rates towards the end of primary school are usually high (Kassa, 2006).

The study by Nigatu (2008) indicated that considerable attention should be paid to improve access to and quality at secondary level education because there is some indication that secondary level education may provide higher returns, especially for girls. It has been rightly remarked, "If you educate a boy, you educate an individual; if you educate a girl, you educate the whole family."

As schooling tends to improve a mother's knowledge and use of health practices, each additional year of schooling is estimated to decrease the mortality rate of children under the age of 5 by up to 10 percent. Moreover, it is estimated that one extra year of schooling reduces fertility by approximately 10 percent. Besides, it has been believed that women with schooling are more likely to send their own children, females in particular, to schools (Wudu & Yonas, 2009).

With the matter of fact, different studies have been conducted on girls' education in different parts of Ethiopia. However, most of the studies and researches (such as by Guday, 2002, 2005; Kassa, 2006) are in the Northern and Southern parts of Ethiopia mainly in Amhara region and in the SNNPR. However, as to the knowledge of the researcher, there is no anthropological

investigation of socio-cultural factors affecting girls' secondary education in Gambella region in general and among the Nuer and Agnwa communities in particular. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this research gap by investigating the socio-cultural factors affecting girls' participation in secondary education among the Nuer and Agnwa communities in Gambella Region.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

The main objective of this study is to investigate and analyze socio-cultural factors contributing to girls' low participation in secondary education among the Nuer and Agnwa communities of Gambella region and then to suggest possible strategies to address socio-cultural factors constraining girls' participation in secondary education among the study communities.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Explore and describe the gender gap in secondary education among the Nuer and Agnwa communities in Gambella Region.
2. Investigate and analyze socio-cultural factors affecting girls' participation in secondary education among Nuer and Agnwa communities.
3. Suggest possible strategies to address socio-cultural factors constraining girls' participation in secondary education among the Nuer and Agnwa communities.

1.4. Research Method

This study is mainly based on qualitative data collected through focus group discussions, key informant interviews, observation and case studies. Qualitative data collection method is preferred due to the fact that the information is richer and has a deeper insight into the phenomenon under study. This is because it has direct interaction with individuals on a one to one basis or direct interaction with individuals in a group setting.

Qualitative research approach perceived that knowledge is existed within the society, and this knowledge could be constructed according to the views of different social groups. Since it gives

much emphasis for the roles of individual's worldview, researchers who follow qualitative approach construct knowledge and interpret it according to the specific context and situation (Bryman 2004: 19). In the end, data are generated, analysed to figure out the socio-cultural factors that contributed to low girls' participation in secondary education among the Nuer and Agnwa communities in Gambella region.

1.4.1 Data Collection Methods

Different methods were used to collect the primary and secondary data.

Primary data were collected from selected girls and boys group, elderly people and other concerned actors of government sector offices, United Nation (UN) agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) using different data collection instruments. The data collection techniques that were employed for addressing the specific objectives of this study were different guides prepared for key informant interviews, focus group discussions for secondary school students, systematic observation and case studies using different data collection tools (see Appendix 1). The methods used to collect primary data are briefly explained below.

Focus Group Discussion

Focus Group Discussion (here after FGD) is one of the data collection methods through which groups of people will be chosen to discuss on the selected and specific issue under the facilitation of the moderator. Unlike other data collection methods, by bringing different individuals who have common background, FDG plays essential role to build meaningful data from common societal issues and confrontations to one another (Given 2008: 352). Participants of the FGD should be selected based on the pre-defined criteria of choosing those who share similar perspective towards the issue because such type of group composition generates active exchange among participants (Ibid.: 352).

Therefore, Focus group discussion, which is one of the qualitative data collection tools, was used for this research purpose. The FGD was used to collect qualitative data on the major constraints for girls' secondary education participation. It was used to collect students' opinion on girls' education and obstacles. In the process, groups of girls and boys (a group contained 7-8 participants) were asked about their own and their communities' perceptions, opinions, beliefs, attitudes and practices about female education. FGD questions were asked in an interactive group

setting where participants were free to talk with other group members. The FGDs were conducted through the participants' native language and in this case the FGD facilitator was also used as the translator and the discussion was conducted in the school compound.

Accordingly, a sample population of 60 students were selected from the class attendance list (30 male and 30 female students) that are from secondary school (grade 9 and 10) and preparatory school (grade 11-12) for the Focus Group Discussions. These students were selected from Gambella, Itang and Pugnido secondary and preparatory schools. In this sample 30 students (15 female and 15 male) are selected from Nuer ethnic group and 30 (15 female and 15 male) from Agnwa ethnic group) through purposive and stratified sampling technique from the class attendance list.

Key Informant Interview

Key informant interview is one of the methods of data collection about how people in a group or as an individual perceive their surroundings. This helps to understand the local community's personal, communal, and argumentative ideas, beliefs, and values within their natural and social environment. This will be done by asking similar questions for different members of the community in age, gender, and religious background, etc. (Bernard 2006: 299). However, this is not to mean that interviewers use the same wording of questions and they probe equally, but the purpose of the question posed to the study should be similar (Ibid. 148).

Key informant interview was also one of the data collection instrument used in this study. Key informant interviews were conducted with people from Government sector offices, school principals, teachers, concerned NGOs and UN agencies (who are working on girls' education) and elders from Nuer and Agnwa communities through informed consent. The purpose of the key informant interviews was to collect in-depth answer and information. For the Key informant interview purpose, different separate questioners were developed for different actors though there are some common questions for the key informant participants in relation to the objective of the study.

For the key informant interview (KII), thirteen people were targeted through informed consent. The KII participants were selected purposively thinking that they do have direct relation with the research objective. That is: One person from the Gambella Region Bureau of Women and

Children Affairs (BoWCA), one person from Gambella Bureau of Education, one person from Gambella Region Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs (BoLSA), two secondary school directors/principals, two secondary school teachers, two persons from the NGO(Plan International Ethiopia) and two persons from UN agencies(UNICEF), that provide different support to enhance girls education, and also two elderly people (one from Nuer and one from Agnwa communities).

In relation to the interview guide for the UN, NGOs and government sector offices, the researcher used the English version, whereas the interviews with Nuer and Agnwa elders were conducted with the local language through the translator. The interviews were documented through intensive note taking.

Observation

Since the researcher has been living in Gambella for 10 months, the researcher conducted observations on socio-cultural practices affecting girls' education, and curricular and extra-curricular secondary school activities. This has been done with the close support of the school principals. That is, once the researcher explained the main objective of the participant observation to the school principals, the school principal assigned guider to conduct the observation. Accordingly the researcher systematically observed school facilities, teachers' activities, classroom conditions, including girls' participation in extra-curricular activities in four secondary schools (two at Gambella town, one at Itang town and one at Pugnido town). The systematic personal observations were documented through intensive note taking.

Case Studies

The researcher also conducted two case studies. The first one is about a parent who is sending his daughter to school and the second one is about a girl who dropout from school and married. For this case study, separate questions were developed to gather information in the selected subject areas.

In addition to primary data Secondary data related to socio-cultural factors affecting girls' education were collected from different sources including books, research reports, surveys, reliable internet websites and reports of different international organizations including UN

agency reports, etc. Moreover, annual educational statistical abstracts, regional and Zonal documents were reviewed. These secondary data are used to triangulate the primary data and used for the comprehensive analysis purpose.

1.4.2 Data Management and Analysis

First, the primary data gathered through qualitative data collection methods were organized thematically based on the specific objectives of the study. The local language transcripts were translated into English and analyzed through triangulation of different primary and secondary data sources to increase the validity and reliability of the findings of the study.

1.5. Fieldwork Personal Experiences

The researcher has stayed in Gambella for ten months to conduct the ethnographic research. Since the researcher also collected some data outside Gambella town to validate the findings, travelled twice to Itang Special *Woreda* and Pugnido *Woreda*. The first round fieldwork was from 15th July 2015 to 30th November 2015. The second round was from 1st -31st January 2016.

As an initial stage before the data collection, the researcher communicated to the respective government offices, UN agencies and NGOS and introduced the objective of the study and conducted informal conversations. The government officials also guided the researcher on the selection of elders for the key informant interview. Following this, the researcher selected translators from both Nuer and Agnwa ethnic groups (1 for Agnwa and 1 for Nuer).

Accordingly, the researcher selected thirteen key informants for candid and in-depth interviews to collect relevant information on the socio cultural factors affecting girl's participation in secondary education using the standard questioners.

To select the FGD participants, the researcher communicated to the school directors and introduced the major objective of the study. Then they supported the researcher in the selection process by providing the list of students and used purposive and stratified sampling methods.

During the first field visit, the researcher conducted interview with the selected key informants and conducted focus group discussions and closely observed the engagement of boys and girls in different activities and discussed informally with the community members about their attitudes

towards girls' education. In each process of the informal discussion, the researcher put in writing the result of the discussions once departed from field.

In the second field visit, the researcher conducted observation in the study secondary schools. That is: Gambella secondary schools, Itang special woreda secondary school and Pugnido secondary school about school facilities and girls' participation in extra-curricular activities to fill the gaps on the first data collection stage and finally submitted the draft copy of the study to my Thesis advisor.

1.6. Ethical Considerations

By taking into account gender sensitive issues, the FGD held with female students was conducted using a female translator, whereas the FGD held with male students was conducted using a male translator. Both the FGDs and key informant interview were conducted with the consent of the participants. Thus, no data collection activities were done without the knowledge of study participants. Data collected from all the study participants were analyzed with confidentiality by using pseudonyms in the narration of case studies and other direct quotations of primary data sources.

1.7. Scope and Limitation of the Study

1.7.1. Scope of the Study

This study was conducted in Gambella town and in the surrounding *woredas* (Itang and Pugnido) targeting Nuer and Agnwa communities to investigate the socio-cultural barriers for girls' education. It mainly focused on the secondary educational participation of Nuer and Agnwa girls. These ethnic communities have been chosen because of according to Gambella regional Bureau of education, the presence of relatively large number of girls dropping out from school mainly in their transition from primary education to secondary education for different reasons. The critical issues that were researched are the gender gap in secondary education, the socio-cultural factors that limited female participation in secondary education and recommended possible strategic solutions to address the factors for low female participation in secondary education among the studied communities.

1.7.2. Limitation of the Study

Some of the limitations of the study are lack of literature (mainly anthropological literature) among the Nuer and Agnwa communities. There was also difficulty in getting the 2014/15 academic year students' statistics since it is not yet published both at the regional and federal level. This study was mainly conducted in Gambella town and the nearby two *Woredas* due to budget constraint. The researcher has also faced challenges in translating the FGD and key informant transcripts from the local language (Nuer and Agnwa) to English.

1.8. Significance of the Study

Being the major instrument for economic and social development, education has long been considered as the key to a better life by improving the productive capacity of a society. Due to several factors affecting it, the participation of girls in education and then in socio-economic development is much lower than that of boys (EFA, 2009). The results of this study provided information about the socio-cultural obstacles that hampered girls' participation in education especially in secondary education among the studied communities. The research findings will help policy-makers and practitioners in adjusting policy directions to tackle major problems on females' education especially at secondary and tertiary levels in Gambella region in general and among Nuer and Agnwa communities in particular.

In addition, the result of the study will help to widen the awareness of local communities on factors affecting females' education. Besides, the findings of the study will serve as reference by providing relevant information for further study. In general, the study will assist policy-makers to develop promising strategies and take pertinent measures that will minimize hindrances of female education, and enhance the enrollment of females in education among the Nuer and Agnwa communities of Gambella Region.

1.9. Organization of the Thesis

This study is organized in five chapters. The first chapter deals with background of the study, statement of the problem, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitation of the study and research methodology. The second chapter conceptualizes key terms used in the study and reviews related theoretical and empirical literature. The third chapter deals with description of the study area and the people. The fourth chapter is concerned with the presentation and

analysis of the gender gaps in secondary education and the major socio-cultural factors affecting girl's secondary education in the study communities of Nuer and Agnwa. The final chapter presents summary of key findings and concluding remarks.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

2.1 Conceptualization of Key Terms

2.1.1 Education

Education means the total process of developing human ability and behavior. According to UNESCO (1977), *education* is an organized and sustained instruction designed to communicate a combination of knowledge, skill and understanding valuable for all the activities of life. The education system includes both formal and informal. The formal levels of the Ethiopian education system include Kindergarten, Primary Education, Secondary Education, Tertiary Education and Alternative Basic Education systems (Gambella Regional Education Bureau 2013/14). The main focus of this research is mainly secondary education, which has two cycles. The first cycle is general secondary school (grade 9 and 10) and the second cycle is preparatory school (grade 11 and 12) (Gambella Regional Education Bureau 2013/14).

According to Kane (2004: VII), investing in people's education can boost living standards of household by expanding opportunities, raising productivity, attracting capital, investment and increasing earning power. According to the same source, *Education* is the ultimate liberator, empowering people to make personal and social choices. It is also ultimate equalizer, particularly in promoting greater equity for women and for the poor and disadvantaged groups. Moreover, *education* is a tool, which enables both women and men to make all-rounded participation in development processes by acquiring knowledge, skill and attitudinal change

2.1.2. Educational Indicators

Educational indicators can be defined as a statistical measure that provides information on what are agreed to be important features of the functioning, development and impact of educational system. In this day, educational indicators (*access, equity, quality and efficiency*) have become very important tools of looking at the functioning of educational system and highlighting success (Gambella Regional Education Bureau Abstract 2013/14). According to the same source, educational indicators monitor the broad context within which a policy operates and provides a bench mark measurement against the specified goals; they serve as to evaluate the performance

of educational system and to inform decision about educational priorities and direction; and indicator monitors progress in achieving priority educational goals, gender equity in school environment, etc. The following are the major educational indicators.

1. Access

Access is defined as the extent in which eligible school aged population starts to enroll in specified level of education. *Accessibility* is based on the premise that education systems should not discriminate on any grounds, and that proactive measures should be taken to overcome both physical and economic barriers to accessing school. Within this range of indicators, the following were selected as having the greatest impact on the accessibility of education for girls: *school fees, sanitation, and distance from school, socio-cultural barriers, women teachers, stipends and other demand-side interventions* (Gambella Regional Education Bureau Abstract 2013/14).

2. Equity

Equity is an instrument in which focuses on the provision of equitable education to the society, creating equal educational opportunity for both boys and girls without any discrimination and enables the government to meet the needs of the country and the economy as well. Ensuring equity in education is very significant to grasp who are out of school and what are the barriers of education. In the end, it helps to address those barriers so that both boys and girls will have equal opportunity for education (Gambella Regional Education Bureau Abstract 2013/14).

3. Quality

In order to develop responsible and competent citizen who meet the quantitative and qualitative demand for high level trained labour force, the provision of quality education is indispensable. It includes school facilities, extra-curricular activities, and teaching-learning processes and other school facilities (MoE, 2008).

2.1.3. Gender Disparity in Education

Gender disparity in Education, in this study, refers to the difference between girls and boys in enrolment, attendance and academic performance in a given year (MoE, 2015:100).

Gender equality or equality between women and men refers to equal enjoyment by women, girls, boys and men of right, opportunity, resources and rewards. Equality doesn't mean that women and men are the same but that their enjoyment of rights, opportunities and life chances not governed or limited by whether they were born female or male (UNESCO, 2003:11). Gender equality implies "equivalence in life outcomes for women and men, recognizing their different needs and interests, and requiring a redistribution of power and resources (Reeves and Baden 2000:10).

Gender inequalities in education are, however, a function of gender discrimination and patriarchal social and cultural structures. School is there but one gendered institution among many, due to different societal attitudes and practices that hamper girls' access to education (Zanden, 1997: 15)

Gender is socially constructed on the roles and responsibilities of male and female taking into consideration their biological difference. It is learned and pass from generation to generation and deeply-rooted in a certain culture. However, it is changeable over time (Guday, 2005:11). **Gender** is also defined as a socially constructed power relation that exists between males and females, as perceived by the society, and it results in particular types of expected behavior and status among them. In less advanced societies, it is distinctly different and varies from culture to culture (Zanden, 1997; cited in Kassa, 2006:11).

2.1.4. Patriarchy

Feminists mainly use the term 'patriarchy' to describe the power relationship between men and women. The word 'patriarchy' literally means the rule of the father or the 'patriarch', and originally it was used to describe a specific type of 'male-dominated family' – the large household of the patriarch which included women, junior men, children, slaves and domestic servants all under the rule of this dominant male (Walby 1990:20) Now, it is used more generally "to refer to male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterize a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways" (Bhasin, 2006:3). Walby (1990:20) defined "patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women."

Patriarchy is an institutionalized system of male dominance over women (Jagger & Rosenberg, 1984). The patriarchal system of social institution amplifies the biological difference between male and female and acknowledges that men are always dominant or masculine and women are at a subordinate or feminine position (Millet, 1977:35). Therefore, patriarchy is a social structure and practice in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women.

Patriarchy is a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways. They can face different kinds of subordination, discrimination, disregard, insult, control, exploitation, oppression, violence – within the family, at the place of work, in society (Millet, 1977:35).

2.1.5. Feminist Perspectives in Gender and Education

According to Stromquist (1990; cited in Guday, 2005:16), there are different feminist perspectives that promote the advantageousness of females in different arenas. In modern times, the feminist theoretical frameworks are classified into liberal, socialist and radical approaches. Therefore, the main purpose of the review of the feminist framework is to see their perspectives in terms of gender and education.

2.1.5.1. Liberal Feminist Perspective

Liberal feminists argued that women should have access to equal opportunities in every aspect as of men within the societies in different aspects of their life including equal opportunity for education. They believed that there is discrimination of women in the society in accessing of different opportunities as compared to men. Therefore, liberal feminists argued that equal economic and educational opportunities should be in place for women similar to men (Yokozeki 1998; cited in Guday, 2005:16).

2.1.5.2. Radical Feminist Perspective

On the other hand, radical feminists argued that girls and women should have access to power and policy formulation in school. They argued that education is a main tool to emancipate women and girls from the subordination of men and boys. Accordingly, radical feminists argued that there should be non-formal alternative education system for girls and single sex school (Yokozeki 1998; cited in Guday, 2005:16).

2.1.5.3. Socialist Feminist Perspective

The socialist feminist is mainly based on the neo-Marxist theory which is related to society and power. Contrary to the liberal feminism the socialist feminism does not consider education is positive. Rather they believe that the school system creates unfair situation which fosters sexist culture. For socialist feminists, the school curriculum incorporates sexist assumptions, and sexual division of labor is built into the context of education. In a gender context, schooling serves to perpetuate gender inequalities. However, much of the socialist feminism work in education emphasizes theoretical arguments, historical research or policy analysis, but relatively little research is done using empirical data. In other words, lack of empirical analysis is also a source of criticism. Furthermore, it is criticized for being more theoretical than implementation oriented (Yokozeki 1998; cited in Gunday, 2005:16).

2.2. Factors Affecting Girls' Education

Since the right of education is recognized as basic human right, it seems to follow those boys and girls should profit equally from education. Yet for centuries there was only little concern as to whether both boys and girls profited equally by education. It was regarded as natural that boys should receive more formal schooling as girls even though school education is compulsory for both gender groups. There are, of course an abundance of education studies with in a number of countries which confirmed girls participation in education is characterized by sexual differences.

In relation to this view, Kane (1994:1) wrote:

Educational system in most countries has been created for boys not intentionally, but the effect is the same. The student is seen as person who has time to study: whose work at home is not essential to the household; who is not physically, culturally or spiritually endangered in the school setting, who is not expected to marry early or is in danger of pregnancy; who has appropriate textbooks which reflect his concerns in life and who is taught by people like himself who can act as role model. That student is a boy. The resources have gone in to have education even if they fit a girl.

In support of the above statement Margaret (1999) has confirmed that in most region of the world, access to any education levels is more readily available to boys than girls. It was also noted that for variety of reasons girls' experience is considerable more difficult than boys in attending and staying in school. Because of these situations, there are many countries in Asia and Africa where girls' participation rate is being inferior to that of boys.

Therefore, Constraints on female education refer to conditions that influence the improvement of girls' education, which have been discussed in a number of ways. With particular reference to sub-Saharan Africa, Odaga&Heneveld (1995) discussed factors affecting female education under three categories: socio-economic and socio-cultural factors related to the school environment, and political and institutional factors. It is also pointed out that that some of the critical factors in females' dropout include pregnancy, psychological cost of pregnancy, direct cost of schooling, societal perceptions, the labor market, opportunity costs, family poverty, irrelevant curriculum, insecurity, structural attributes and classroom culture. Those factors are summarized under the following categories: cultural, economic, school and societal factors (Teshome, 2003:5).

2.2.1. Socio-Cultural Factors

According to Heinonen (2002; as cited in Guday 2005:23), the socio-cultural framework can be explained in terms of 'customs' and 'traditions' as two common denominators for the causes of low girls' participation in education. 'Customs' and 'traditions' can be understood as 'man made doctrines, beliefs, practices, or stories that are passed from generation to generation, orally or by example.'

The social norms and cultural barriers are the main factors that hamper female education. This social factor starts from home, school and the society at large. Socio-cultural beliefs, customs, practices, early pregnancy, insecurity, girls' expectations and other traditions play a significant role in decisions to enroll and/ or withdraw girls from school. Generally, there may be a deep-rooted cultural bias as suggested by the disempowered position of women in Ethiopian society (World Bank, 2006).

Religion is also frequently associated with low female participation in schools (Odaga&Heneveld, 1995). The reasons have to do with the fear of parents based on the

assumption that education promotes values and behavior for girls that are contrary to cultural norms.

Parents demand girls labor for household activities is one of the factors that hamper girls' education. Shurke (2006) also argued that, parents need females' labor for different home chore activities, school distance, socio-cultural factors including religious factors and parents' attitude towards female education, engagement of females in early marriage, the presence of female teachers and school environments are some of the factors that affects low female participation in Education.

Chore time or the amount of time girls spend on chores and other productive activities such as marketing reduces the time and energy they spend in schools, affecting their success and persistence. Nammu (1991) argues that poor performance of girls has relations with the greater demand on their time to perform household chores including fetching water and wood, cooking and the care of younger siblings.

Assefa (1991) did a study on female dropouts in rural primary schools in Ethiopia and his findings were mostly consistent with other studies. He mentions that the most important reasons for female students to drop out are labour demands by the family, unsafe road conditions from home to school distance from home to school, inability to buy learning materials, inability to pay schools fees, lack of interest in schooling, unclear future career, parents knowledge of and attitudes towards girls education, early marriage, pregnancy, illness repetition and fear of abduction.

Girls' expectations of their school performance and carrier prospects play significant roles in their persistence at school. Odaga and Heneveld (1995) refer to studies in different African countries which show that both girls and boys have low expectations of female achievements in school and of career prospects. The socialization process which constantly presents a subservient wife and mother role for girls affect not only the self-image and performance of girls, but also their career aspirations. There are now several studies, which show that children in urban areas and male students articulated a wider range of career choices (including law, engineering and medicine), while children residing in rural areas, and female students, had a more limited range of career aspirations, teaching and nursing being the most popular. Girls tend to aspire to

traditional ‘female’ occupations, particularly teaching and nursing, regardless of place of residence. (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995).

Different types of violence and abuse against school girls are prevalent, which negatively affected school girls’ education in various interrelated aspects. According to the study the different common violence and abuse prevailed on girls are: sexual violence, physical violence early and forced marriage, work load. The prevalence of these violence and abuse are most commonly in school, on the way to and from school and at home tended to affect girls’ access to education partly because of parents’ fear and concern for the safety and security of girls (SCD, MoE and MoWA , 2008:62). Girls who experienced violence and abuse tended to be absent from school, have less concentration in class, reduced class participation, unable to complete homework. The combined effects of all these leads to lower academic achievement of girls compared to boys. This in turn leads to higher grade repetition rate of girls compared to boys and ultimately girls may dropout from school. In sum, violence and abuse against school girls affect their future life in various ways, including their physical, psychological, educational, social, economic and general well-being. This contributes to extreme and persistent poverty, illiteracy and poor health which ultimately affect girls’ future life (SCD, MoE&MoWA, and 2008: 62).

Generally, the socio-cultural justifications of parents for low participation of girls in education can be summarized as early marriage, believing that the fate of a girl is to get married and have a role of mother as child bearer and child rearing and parents demand of female labor for household activities. Therefore, in Ethiopia, like the rest of women in Africa, socially constructed and culturally defined role expectation of women as a ‘wife’ and ‘mother’ is one of the factors that contributed to the subordination of women. Women’s activity is mainly related to child rearing and child bearing. Moreover girls become faithful wives and wonderful mothers are their role expected from the society and learn this role from their mother through socialization. Therefore, due to this reason, access to education for girls is limited (Hirut, 2004).

Therefore, it is clear from an examination of constraints that efforts to enhance girls’ schooling opportunities should also involve other influential stakeholders within a girl’s life. Working with parents to delay marriage, for instance, can also be critical for enhancing opportunities for education (Global Education Campaign, 2012).

A popular approach to shifting social norms – or accepted societal norms and behaviors – has been through multi-sectorial interventions. Evidence shows that such interventions are generally more effective than single-sector approaches, which do not tackle complex constraints holistically (Global Education Campaign, 2012).

2.2.2. Socio-Economic Constraints

According to several studies conducted in sub-Sahara African countries, girls' school dropout is directly related to the economic factors of the family. According to Odaga&Heneveld (1995) and Njau&Wamahiu (1998), the most important of these factors include direct and opportunity costs of schooling, socio-economic status, and the economic value of girls, rural/urban residence, and the level of parental education.

Direct schooling costs have been found to be the major reason parents offer for not educating girls or for removing them from the school. These include registration fee, scholastic materials and school uniform (Teshome, 2003:5). The opportunity costs of girls' schooling are associated with resources/services lost to sending the child to school. Child labor is indispensable to the survival of many rural households in sub-Saharan Africa: agricultural work, domestic work (cooking, collecting fuel, and fetching water) marketing as well as child care services are required from children, with girls demanded more than boys (Odaga&Heneveld, 1995).

Prospects of low economic return for girls' education reinforce school dropout rates in Africa. Historically, formal education has been linked to employment, particularly in the civil service sector in this region. When families learn that women earn less than men or are excluded from the labor market due to economic policies, boys are sent to school and girls are kept at home. Sometimes, legal or regulatory barriers to women's participation in the labor force or policies that restrict women's access to information and resources also help to perpetuate the tradition that girls stay home from school to do more domestic chores (Herz et al, 1991). Many girls, they say, perceive marriage as an escape from family poverty and mistakenly believe that pregnancy will help them to "hook" husbands (Teshome, 2003:6).

However, girls from better-off homes, who live in urban areas, and whose parents are better educated are more likely to enroll and remain in school longer than those from poorer homes and rural areas. In areas where overall enrolments are low, the gender gaps in participation are wider.

Parental perceptions or investment behavior concerning the irrelevance of girls' education influences both the enrolment and persistence of female pupils in schools (Teshome, 2003:6).

2.2.3. Institutional Factors

School Constraints

The school also affects the survival of girls and perpetuates the gender gap in education. The working environment, distance to school, teacher attitudes and teaching practice, gender bias in curricula and classroom culture all affect female attainment and persistence in schools (Teshome, 2003:9).

Distance from school has been another deterrent for girls' education in many countries in Africa. Odaga&Heneveld (1995) refer to a large number of studies in the region where it has been reported that the long distance girls (particularly rural girls) travel to school has two major problems: one relates to the length of time and energy children have to expend to cover the distance, often on an empty stomach, the other relates to the concern and apprehension parents have for the sexual safety of their daughters. The problem of distance from school also has implications for the motivation of girls to stay in school (Teshome, 2003:10). Therefore, Gender-sensitive and culturally appropriate school facilities have a great impact on school persistence of girls. Studies show that parents are unlikely to retain girls in school if they lack private lavatories, particularly after puberty (Herz et al, 1991). According to Wangai&Wamahiu (1998), it is rather embarrassing for adolescent girls to share toilets with boys, especially if they lack provisions to dispose used sanitary napkins (Teshome, 2003:11).

The presence of gender bias in textbooks and teaching materials can affect females' participation in education. Many text books and teaching materials have pronouns of sex bias, which can discourage girls from thinking of themselves as good students or as suited to any job but a few traditional occupations. Often books portray men as intelligent and adventurous, seeking employment in new, exciting, and profitable fields. Women are depicted as passive, admiring, and suited only for traditional roles (World Bank, 1991:30). According to UNESCO (2003:146), in most countries of Africa and Asia, textbooks present different gender roles of women, predominantly undertaking domestic activities at home.

Girls' expectations of their school performance and career prospects play significant roles in their persistence at school. Odaga&Heneveld (1995) showed that both girls and boys have low expectations of female achievements in school and of career prospects. Diaw (2010) also pointed out that cultural barriers exert strong and adverse influence on girls' education by early marriage, teenage pregnancies, traditional values of patriarchal society, and gender based violence.

2.3. Conceptual Framework

The following figure shows the conceptual framework of this study and the researcher used the framework to analyze the primary data.

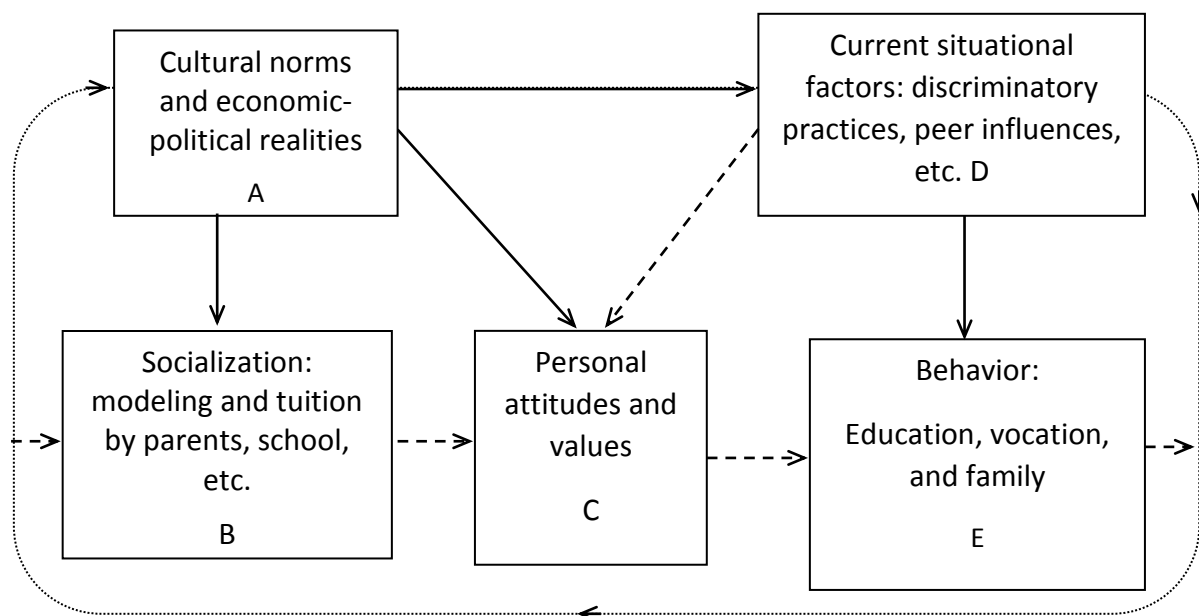


Figure1. Development and Expression of Sex-Role Related Behavior

Source: Parsons, Frieze and Rube (1976: 2; cited in Guday, 2002).

The above figure presents how various factors may interact to maintain traditional behaviors. Variable **A** and **B** represent the societal level. Cultural norms (**A**) provide the background against which one's choices are evaluated. Each culture has its own prescriptions of sex-role appropriate behavior. In the process of acculturation, we come to accept these prescriptions about the roles of men and women as fact; we evaluate ourselves and others in terms of these prescriptions; we raise our children to fit the designated patterns; and we punish deviations from the cultural norm. By providing the evaluative framework for oneself and others, these cultural stereotypes affect

men's and women's judgments and beliefs regarding the appropriateness of various roles (Parsons, Frieze and Rube 1976, cited in Guday, 2002).

By influencing the political realities of one's society, the cultural standards affect situational factors (**D**), such as the existence of institutions which can either facilitate or inhibit various role choices. Consequently, even if an individual aspires to a non-traditional role, the necessary support institutions are not always available. For instance, if women believe that facilitative institutions are available which can lessen the burden of childcare without harming the child, they may choose a non-traditional life style. However, if these institutions are not available or if women feel that existing childcare facilities are inadequate in quality, acceptance of the cultural stereotypic role should preclude a career (Parsons, Frieze, and Rube 1976; cited in Guday, 2002).

The bottom cluster of variables in the above figure concerns the processes involved in translating the cultural myths into personal attitudes and aspirations. Women acquire, through a process of socialization (**B**), a set of attitudes and beliefs (**C**) and choices and behaviors (**E**) which are consistent with sex-roles they are expected to play in society. Parents provide cues by their own examples as well as by their expressed expectations for and reinforcement of the child's current behaviors and future goals. These cues form the groundwork for differences evident in men and women which then perpetuate traditional stereotypic beliefs about the personalities and abilities of men and women (Parsons, Frieze, and Rube 1976; cited in Guday, 2002).

The sex-role belief system operates in at least two ways to restrict female life styles. First, given a thorough socialization experience, the women may never consider roles other than the traditional ones of wife and mother. Typically, socializing agents do not present alternative attitudinal-behavioral models nor do they require the child to question the validity of her beliefs. Therefore, this ideology is institutionalized by a woman non-consciously, as fact rather than opinion, and the restrictions it plays upon her self-development may be accepted as normal and irrefutable ([Bem and Bem 1970], in Parsons, Frieze, and Rube 1976; cited in Guday, 2002).

All in all, what must be realized from the above research studies and report is that there are more school-age girls who do not get opportunity to go to school.

CHAPTER THREE

Description of the Study Area and the People

3.1. Geographical Location

Gambella Region is one of among the nine regional states of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and it is one of the two administrative regions in western Ethiopia and located in the west extreme of the country (CSA, 2008).

The region is strategically bordered with South Sudan in the west and south west, South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) in the south east, and Oromia Region in the east and north east with some of its *woredas* having access to potential markets across the international boarder (Gambella Peoples' National Regional State, Bureau of Finance and Economic Development-GPNRS, BoFED, 2008).

The capital city of the region is Gambella town. Gambella town is located 777 km south west of Addis Ababa. It is located at an elevation of 526m. It is founded on the banks of the Baro River- Ethiopia's widest and only navigable river and has predominantly inhabited by the two Nilotic groups of Ethiopia — the Agnwa and the Nuer people. These people live along with Amhara, Oromo, Tigre and other settlers. The surrounding land is, however, settled by other Nilotic people too; whereas the Majang favored the tropical forests of the highland in the east (CSA, 2008).

This study was conducted mainly in Gambella town, but to strengthen the findings some data were also collected from Itang special *woreda* and Pugnido towns. Itang is a special *woreda* since different ethnic groups are living, that includes: Nuer, Agnwa and other highlanders and Pugnido is located in the Agnwa zone of Gambella region. The following figure shows the location map of the study area.



Figure 2. Location Map of Gambella Peoples' National Regional State (GNRGS, BoFED, 2008).

3.2. Demographic Characteristics

According to the 2007 census, Gambella Region has a total population of 306,916 (CSA, 2008) of which 229,038 (74.6%) live in rural areas and 48% are females and the projected population of the region for 2015 is 441,969. From the total population, the study population comprises: Nuer (46.65 %) and Agnwa (21.17%) (GPNRS, BoFED, 2008). With an estimated area of 29,782.82 square kilometers, the region has an estimated density of 9.57 people per square kilometer. The average household of the region is estimated to be 5. The main ethnic groups in the region are the Nuer (46.65%), the Agnwa (21.17%), Amhara (8.42%), Kafficho (5%), Oromo (4.83%), Kambaata (1.44%), Majang (4%), Shakacho (2.27%), Tigrean (1.32%) and other ethnic groups predominantly from southern Ethiopia were 4.9%. The region has recorded a peak population growth rate of 4.1 per annum (CSA, 2008).

The table below also shows the school age population of the region for different consecutive years for both secondary and preparatory schools. From the table we can understand that the gender gap for the school age population is very minimal.

Table 1:Secondary school age population

Year	School age population (15-16 years)			School age population (17-18 years)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2008/9	7857	7139(47.6%)	14996	7451	6899(48%)	14350
2009/10	8184	7436(47.6%)	15620	7763	7187(48%)	14950
2010/11	8525	7748(47.6%)	16273	8088	7486(48%)	15574
2011/12	8882	8072(47.6%)	16954	8426	7799(48%)	16225
2012/13	9254	8410(47.6%)	17664	8779	8126(48%)	16905

Source: Gambella Regional State Education Statistics Annual Abstract (2013/14)

3.3 Economic Activities

Gambella is relatively one of the emerging regions in the country. The economy is predominated by mixed farming among the Agnwa and Majang people and agro-pastoral among the Nuer people (GPNRS, BoFED, 2008). Most of the potentially rich agricultural land is untapped since the farming practice is mostly monoculture (CSA, 2008).

Agro-ecologically, the region is predominantly lowland (*kolla*) with a few midlands (*weynadega*). Recession riverside agriculture is common, particularly maize and sorghum, and widely practiced by Agnwa people along the Baro, Gilo and Akobo rivers. As the region is generally not cereal self-sufficient, alternative income sources such as fishing are important sources of food. Wild food consumption is part of the daily dietary intake given the still partly untouched bush land and natural forest resources (Abraham, 2002).

Moreover, since 75% of the population of the region is rural and most of the people are thus subsistence farmers, selling some of their produce on local markets is common. Other economic activities include coffee cultivation and exploration for gold (Dimma *Woreda*, which is one of the Agnwa Zone), and continued work on the remaining private farms (primarily cotton in

Alwero-Peno Woreda in Agnwa Zone). The Agnwa are mainly crop dependent people with fishing and hunting as their supplementary income sources, while the Nuer are largely livestock dependent. As elsewhere in the country, the pressure on land has increased due to the doubling of the population in the last quarter century as well as the resettlement in the Gambella region, of highland populations from other regions namely, Amhara, Tigray, and SNNPR. Population has increased, but farming techniques have not changed and the land that is used is believed to be overused (GPNRS, BoFED, 2008).

3.4 Socio-Cultural Values and Gender Norms

Although Gambella is a very small state in terms of its population size, its culture is unique since it varies from ethnic group to ethnic group. Hence, the Gambella culture could be categorized as a diverse due to different ethnic groups found in the region. Cultural similarities might be seen between the Nuer and Agnwa, but in a very minimal extent even though these two ethnic groups are from Nilotic group (GPNRS, BoFED, 2008). The Agnwa, have their own way of life and thinking in a variable degree from their Nuer counterparts. The same is also true to Opo and Majang people all of whom have various cultures different from one another (GPNRS, BoFED, 2008).

Like other ethnic groups in the Region, traditionally, marriage system is one of the ultimate goals in the life of the Nuer. That is marriage among Nuer is brought about through payment of bride price. For instance, the girl's family is given twenty-five head of cattle. Thus, a person who has no many cattle will find it difficult to have a wife. The Nuer people's marriage system is polygamous. That is, men often have several wives in different villages. However, if a woman is married, she is not expected to have sexual relation with another man. If she is seen with other men, it should be considered as adultery (Gambella Peoples' Regional Government State Council Annual Report, 2006).

The marriage in Nuer does not use to be so easy especially when a person does not have cattle which are paid as a bride price to the bride's family. Unlike scars on the forehead which has been abandoned, the notion of 'bride price' is not getting away easily even though the majority of the Nuer now believes that it is a culture which should also go. The good thing about it is that the amount of bride price has plummeted significantly. In Gambella today the Nuer especially those

in urban centers do not give a lot of fuss about Pride price. What they are mindful of is a genuine love and the ability that the couples would be able to look after themselves and their future children. However, in rural Gambella, the notion of bride price depends on the amount of cattle that is found in hand (Gambella Peoples' Regional Government State Council Annual Report, 2006).

In Nuer community gender roles have traditionally been well-defined. Men always tend to care for cattle and were the warriors fighting neighboring societies for land use, cattle, and out of a sense of pride in their ethnic group and abilities. While women managed the household and make most decisions regarding the rearing of children. The men play their role of war and war related concern in the field (Gambella Peoples' Regional Government State Council Annual Report, 2006).

On the other hand, the Agnwa society is communal. It is obligatory to share resources and assist one another in times of famine and disease. Similar to the Nuer community, the Agnwa community has a tradition related to marriage. The only custom linked to marriage is the payment of *demuy* (beads) and in cash payment as bride price. The *demuy* have become rare, so they are circulated and hence could even come back to the original owner in the course of several marriages (Gambella Peoples' Regional Government State Council Annual Report, 2006).

Like the Nuer community, in the Agnwa community the role of women is clearly defined. After they married, females are mostly engaged in home chore activities including rearing of children. Women's decision making power is very limited. In the Agnwa community like the Nuer polygamy and inheritance marriage is most common (Gambella Peoples' Regional Government State Council Annual Report, 2006).

Therefore, with in both ethnic groups the bride price to parents of the girl, upon her marriage. Parents do not believe that girls' education is useful and girls are employable. Once married, women will have no time and permission to go to school. Before marriage, young girls are also expected to share the work load of their mothers at home, taking care of their younger siblings and helping in household chores which lead to being absent regularly and later results in drop out from school. It is also indicated that any financial stress in the household will lead to pulling girls out of school to cut expenses or involve them in household maintenance. In most societies girls' main role is believed to be learning household activities, cooking, cleaning, rearing children and

taking care of the family as a whole, rather than going to school. It is believed that educating girls is not that useful as they are going to get married and assume their role soon anyway (UNFPA, 2008)

In both communities of Nuer and Agnwa, it is thought that letting women to go out and work for earning could be opening door for them to be unfaithful and disrespectful to their husbands as it involves interactions and some level of independence. Conforming to the culture and tradition husbands do not allow women to go out and work; otherwise they will be considered as deviators from the norm. In addition to this cultural barrier, for the uneducated poor women economic constraint makes it difficult to start even small scale income generating work. In many instances having many children coupled with the heavy daily workload at home to maintain the family does not leave much time to venture working outside. The cultural barriers preventing women from working to earn a living were strongly stated in Gambella region (UNFPA, 2008).

In both communities, there is high desire for more children. It is also believed that children will provide support to their parents at old age. In the studied communities, having many children, especially daughters, is desirable, as they may bring bride price money to parents and are, thus, sources of income (UNFPA, 2008).

Generally, with regard to the research area selection, I decided to conduct the study in Gambella because I am familiar with the area and have information about the low girls' participation in secondary education. Therefore, I was motivated to conduct the research to figure out the major social-cultural barriers which hinder the participation of girls in secondary education and recommend possible solutions to address those issues. Accordingly, I tried to present and analyze the major socio-cultural barriers that affected girls' secondary education in Gambella region in the following chapter (Chapter Four).

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents and discusses the gender gap in secondary education among the Nuer and Agnwa communities and the major socio-cultural factors affecting girls' participation in secondary education among the Nuer and Agnwa communities in Gambella region.

4.1. Gender Gap in Secondary Education among the Nuer and Agnwa Communities

The secondary school enrollment rate for girls specific to the Nuer and Agnwa ethnic community is low compared to boys. This happens mainly during the transition from primary to secondary school. This is due to the socio cultural barriers that prevailed among the studied community that contributed to low enrollment and high dropout rate. The below table clearly shows the gender gap in secondary education in different consecutive years.

Table 2: Secondary school enrollment rate in Gambella Region

Year	Enrollment grade 9-10			School age population (15-16 years)			GER (Grade 9-10)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2008/9	6157	2294	8078	7857	7139	14996	78.4	27	53.9
2009/10	6287	3053	8868	8184	7436	15620	76.8	34.7	56.8
2010/11	6388	4115	9441	8525	7748	16273	75	39.4	58
2011/12	7086	5161	11201	8882	8072	16954	79.8	51	66.1
2012/13	8980	5428	14141	9254	8410	17664	97	61.3	80

Source: MoE Annual abstract 2013

Table3: Preparatory school enrollment rate in Gambella Region

Year	Enrollment grade 11-12			School age population (17-18 years)			GER (Grade 11-12)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2008/9	525	22	547	7451	6899	14350	7.0	0.3	3.8
2009/10	409	44	431	7763	7187	14950	5.2	0.3	2.9
2010/11	600	158	644	8088	7486	15574	7.4	0.6	4.1
2011/12	979	261	1137	8426	7799	16225	11.6	2.0	7.0
2012/13	1167	796	1428	8779	8126	16905	13.2	3.2	8.4

Source: MoE Annual abstract 2013

The above two tables clearly show, though the participation of both boys and girls increased year after year, it also shows the prevalence of gender gap in secondary education including in the Nuer and Agnwa ethnic community. For example, according to the latest statistics of 2012/13 academic year the total number of secondary school (grade 9-10) age population (age 15 and 16) are 9254 boys and 8410 girls. However, those who are attending the secondary education are 8980 boys and 5161 girls (97% and 61% boys and girls respectively). In the same case, in the preparatory school, the school age population (age 17 and 18) are 8779 boys and 8126 girls and it is only 1167 boys and 261 girls (which is 13% and 3.2% boys and girls respectively) are attending the preparatory education. Therefore in the preparatory school level the gap between boys and girls are getting increased. The below table illustrates secondary school enrollment rate based on ethnic group.

Table 4:Indigenous ethnic group students’ enrollment rate

Indigenous	Grade 9-10			Grade 11-12		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Nuer	2605	2493	5098	630	386	1016
Agnwa	5397	2966	8363	1946	247	2193
Opo	38	15	53	2	1	3
Majang	332	143	475	14	1	15
Komo	5	10	15	2	1	3
Others	1493	1487	2980	752	365	1117
Total	9,870	7114	16984	3346	1001	4347

Source: Gambella Region Education bureau 2014/15 Report

According to the above table, though the participation of indigenous pupils both boys and girls decreased when it goes from secondary school to preparatory school, but the participation of girl students mainly in the Agnwa community has been getting much decreased compared to boys because of the different socio-cultural and other factors.

4.2 Major Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting Girls’ Secondary Education among the Nuer and Agnwa Communities

To investigate the major socio-cultural factors that affects girls’ participation in secondary education, different questions were asked for the secondary school students who participated in the focus group discussion (FGD) and for key informants both from Government and Non-Government organizations. For the FGD and key informants, different questions were posed and analyzed accordingly.

*At the place where you live, do boys and girls have equal chance to enter to secondary school?
If No who gets the better opportunity and who is not? Why?*

According to FGD participants (FGD 1 and 2) and key informants (KII 1, 5 and 6), girls both from Nuer and Agnwa communities don't have equal opportunity for secondary education like boys. It is mostly boys who have better opportunity for secondary education. Although, the girls are once enrolled, sometimes they drop out before completing the secondary school education due to the different socio-cultural barriers prevailed with in both communities.

The major socio-cultural factors that affect girls' participation in secondary education in the Nuer and Agnwa communities are: early marriage, gender role and expectation, son preference for secondary school education, and lack of educated female role model. Those factors are discussed as follows.

4.2.1. Early Marriage

One of the major socio-cultural factors that contributed to low girls' participation and high dropout from secondary education in the Nuer and Agnwa communities is early marriage. Early marriage has been given due attention both by Nuer and Agnwa communities since long time due to various reasons. Most of the time, girls marry at their early age of 14-16 years old. For the prevalence of early marriage different factors contributed their part. The economic motive is one of the major driving factors. This is because, early marriage is considered as source of wealth accumulation. Girls are considered as source of wealth among the Nuer and Agnwa communities since they bring bride price (paid in cattle among the Nuer and in money among the Agnwa) to their parents. The amount of bride price among the Nuer community varies from 25 to 40 head of cattle. The 25 head of cattle paid for the younger and uneducated girls from poor family; whereas 40 head of cattle paid for girls from wealthy family and/or for girls who completed tertiary education. However, considering the benefits they get through bride price, the community doesn't consider early marriage as a crime though it contradicts with the Federal as well as Regional law legislating against the marriage of girls under 18. This finding is in line with other studies which state that though early marriage is illegal, still it has been practiced in most parts of Ethiopia mainly in the rural areas due to socio-cultural factors (see Guday 2005).

In this study, early marriage is driven by bride price, which should be paid either in cattle among the Nuer community and in cash among the Agnwa community. Among the Nuer community, the bride price cattle will be shared by the bride's family group. In this case, it seems that a

person, who has no many cattle to be paid for the bride price, will find it difficult to have a wife. However, since the parents need their son to get married, as a culture they used to mobilize all their families/relatives to contribute cattle based on their capacity so that he can pay the bride price and marry a girl he wishes. In this case, a balanced reciprocity will be applied. That means in return they will also be obliged to contribute when one of their families/relative's son is ready to marry.

In the same manner, among the Agnwa community, for a boy/man to marry a girl, he should pay the bride price. In the previous times, the payment was either in kind or in cash. As per the payment in kind, the boy/man should pay an item called "*Dumuye*", which is a kind of nickels but now a day it is replaced by cash payment. In terms of cash, he should pay money ranging from 10,000 to 15,000 Ethiopian *birr*(ETB) depending on his financial capacity. That means once his financial capacity has been analyzed by the elders, he will pay the bride price in that range. However, this doesn't mean that it is the final payment. Sometimes, additional bride price payment might be requested by the girl's parent at any time after the marriage. All these payments go to the girl's family, but not to the girl and her husband.

According to the key informants (KII-12), the bride price payment has passed different processes. That is, in the Agnwa community, once the girl's family agreed for the marriage, based on the mediation of the local elders, initial payment will be conducted by the boys/man parents. The boys/man parents pay to the girl's family within a range of 2,500 to 3,000 ETB. This is to show the sign of consensus between the two parties for the marriage. This payment is locally known as "*Ojiej*". The second payment is a final payment for the marriage. In this case, the father of the groom will pay the amount decided by the elders having analyzed the economic status. This payment is locally called "*per*". Most of the time for the final payment, the Agnwa used to pay money ranging from 5,000-7,000ETB or "*Dimuye*" as a bride price. At this time, the groom's family should bring with them 2 sheep to be slaughtered at the bride's parents' house (one sheep for the male group and one sheep for the female group) and will have a feast and fix the marriage date.

Similarly, the marriage among Nuer community is arranged in a series of complicated ceremonies. The first one involves the presentation of bride wealth (five head of cattle) to the bride's family. These five head of cattle are taken by those who are younger to the bride's

family. They called this kind of ceremony “yoat”. The second is the one which is arranged after the fifty or seventy-five percent of the bride’s wealth is presented or is going to be presented to the bride’s family. This is locally called “puot kuen” (wedding day). This kind of ceremony is the main part of the marriage process. For instance, during that ceremony (wedding day), the groom’s group and the bride’s group can sit and discuss the issues of the remaining bride wealth/price. On that day, in the home of the bride’s family ‘wine’ (local drink) and foods are prepared and an ox is slaughtered for the groom’s group. At that time men and women play up to the night time. The last one is conducted after the whole bride wealth is given to the bride’s family. This is conducted in the home of the bride groom’s family. In this ceremony only the relatives of the bride who are female are going to the bride groom’s home. The bride groom can give full service to these females. This is called “muot”. Completing all of the above three stages does not mean that the man and his wife can have sexual intercourse though this culture is changed by the young generation. They should wait until the girl’s mother permits them to do it. Doing this, marriage is not considered as it is completed until the first child has been born, at which point the marriage has produce a child that connect the two couple. When the second child is born, the marriage is considered as it is stable.

Therefore, in the studied community, parents value children mainly girls for economic, social and cultural reasons. This is mainly linked to the bride price the parents get during marriage which has been used as a strategy and a means of wealth accumulation.

Within both communities there is a long time believe that, if an individual has get birth of a baby girl the community as well as the individual consider himself/ herself as rich since they will get pride price during her marriage(KII-6).

The other driving factor for early marriage with in the studied community is due to socio-cultural norms prevailed with in the studied community. That is parent’s fear of pregnancy before marriage and obliges their daughter to marry early even without her consensus.

The man asks the father to marry a girl and the father might accept the marriage. Then the father informs to his daughter that he likes the man and ready to marry him. In this case there is no option the girl will be forced to accept the offer (FGD 3).

This is because the girls might create love with their peers while they are in school and leads them to unsafe sex and pregnancy. Hence, because of this fear, parents forced their daughter to drop out and engage to marriage. Moreover, if the girl is engaged to unsafe pre-marital sex and become pregnant, according to the culture her peer will conduct the bride price payment and marry the girl according to the tradition and this also leads to early marriage.

In the Agnwa community culture, if the boy/man has started any sexual relation with the girl before marriage it will be considered as a curse. Accordingly the boy/man will be punished and effect the bride price payment to marry the girl according to the culture.

If a man has started pre-marital sex, in the Agnwa community, the girl's family and relatives tie the male's leg and beat him by a stick. They will beat the man until they become tired of beating him. In the end he will be forced to effect the bride price payment and will be forced to marry the girl which encourages early marriage (KII-13).

According to the key informant (KII-13), there is a new culture of drinking alcohol. "Children started drinking as early as fifteen; they freely create love relationship with school girls. This in turn leads them to face many problems, early pregnancy and dropping out. Specifically, in the Agnwa community there is a culture called in local dialect "Cangwat" which means "free day", which is commonly accepted as a culture since long time and even encouraged by some parents as well. In this case, girls and boys contribute money and provide to one of their peers to organize an event every month or in every two months. Everybody takes the lead by turn to organize the event. At the event; they eat, drink including alcohol and dance. This leads them to unsafe sex either with their peers or other than their peers and might lead to unwanted pregnancy. In this case if a girl becomes pregnant, her parents will inform the elders and the girl will be forced to marry the guy through traditional marriage process by effecting the bride price payment. This in the end will led her to drop out from school and become a house wife.

According to the FGD (FGD 1,2,3 and 4), revealed that adolescents fear that once a girl is pregnant her parent will force her to get married in order to get the bride price from her boyfriend and that is also perpetuating the practice of early marriage.

Therefore, due to the bride price payment and the social norms, most of the time parents need their daughters to marry at early stage instead of sending to attend their education and it leads to school dropout. The bride price payment has been practiced both by educated or uneducated people from both ethnic group. The Key Informant (KII 6), revealed that bride price and early marriage has even been practiced both by uneducated and educated people as well since they are influenced by the prevailed community attitude, perception and culture.

“I am recently asked by my wife’s father to pay additional 50, 000 ETB and 5 cattle though I paid initially for the marriage 8 000 ETB a year ago. The marriage was conducted according to the tradition and now I have one baby boy in common from my wife. However I am recently requested to pay additional payment as I started business and started getting additional income and her family realizes this. The surprised thing is that her father is a lawyer by profession and working for one of the UN agency. Therefore this culture imposed on all aspect of the community whether they are educated or not and have adequate income or not”(KII-6).

The bride price payment has been getting increased from time to time by some section of the community. This is because the diaspora community pays much to marry the girl they wish. This makes parents to force their daughters to marry so that they will get the bride price payment. This in turn leads to school dropout.

Now a days plenty of diasporas from both ethnic groups are living abroad and pays large amount of bride price for themselves and their relatives to marry a girl they wish. Hence, there is a competition of paying high bride price to marry a girl. As the result parents interested their daughters to get married than sending them to school so that they can get the bride price which is part of wealth accumulation. This leads to girls drop out from secondary education (KII-1).

Divorce is not uncommon among the studied communities of Nuer and Agnwa. Once the marriage has been done and the girl does not give birth, divorce will prevail and the girl’s father will be forced to return all the bride price that was paid earlier during marriage. On the other hand, for the interest of many children polygamy is prevailed both in the Agnwa and Nuer communities. That is, men often can have several wives in different villages. On the contrary,

once a woman is married, she is not expected to have sexual relation with another man. If she is seen with other men, it should be considered as adultery.

FGD with adolescent girls (FGD 4) revealed that, if you don't give birth after marriage mainly in the first year of marriage, you will be divorced and the girl's family will be forced to return the bride price paid earlier. A key informant (KII-6) added that there is a high level of divorce. Divorce usually leads to a girl returning to her family home and sometimes returning the cattle and other payments used to pay her bride price. Several community respondents, including government officials, noted that girls had no access to the resources and property distributed after or during divorce proceedings – including custody of the children.

The key informant (KII 6) explained that, though now a days the practice of polygamy has been getting decreased especially in urban areas and among some educated people it is still common in rural and in some urban areas and even among some educated people as well. This is because the community accepted it as a normal circumstance and adopted as a culture which is related to the value of having many children. Most of the time, polygamy is practiced from the interest of having many children. Based on the resource a man has to pay to the girl's family, he can marry 4 to 5 wives among the Agnwa and up to 9 wives among the Nuer community.

In addition to polygamy widow inheritance marriage is common among both communities. Widow inheritance marriage means the male may marry his father's wife (which is not his mother) whenever his father is passed away, he can also marry his uncle's wife if his uncle is passed away and his brother's wife if the same case is happened. The main purpose of the widow inheritance marriage is to take care of the children. This practice, though now a day's decreasing especially in the urban areas and among the educated people, but it has been practiced in most parts of the rural areas in which most population are residing. In addition to the widow inheritance marriage in the Nuer community there is a practice of Gift marriage. Gift marriage means, whenever, one of the family members (male) is infertile and unable to get a child, he will invite one of his close relatives (like his brother or the son of his brother) to have sexual relation with his wife and have baby. Once the baby is born the child will be named by the first husband instead of his/her biological father. Hence, according to the respondent, both inheritance marriage and gift marriage including polygamy are the major factors contributed for the prevalence of Gender based violence, subordination of women.

Therefore, high fertility for the interest of having many children is one of the driving forces for the practice of polygamy. These have affected girls to continue their education after marriage. However, now a days the practice of polygamy is getting decreased among the young generation.

From the above explanation we can understand that the subordinate positions of girls are existing both in the Nuer and Agnwa communities. Girls are considered as inferior and dependent since long time and have the possibility to pass from generation to generation since girls have limited education opportunity. This happened because; the fate of the girl is decided by the parents and the community, which is to get married instead of continuing education, due to the culture which prevailed within the studied community. Accordingly, because of the cultural domination, girls become desperate about their education and ready psychologically for marriage.

The other major factor for hindering girls' secondary education after marriage is the social structure. Both the Nuer and Agnwa communities are patriarchal and matrilineal. That is, once the girl is married she will be moved to her husband's village. She lives in the same village where her husband's families are living. All the resources are controlled by the husband and the wife has no any role on the resource including decision making. Her major role will be child bearing and child rearing, taking care of the children, cooking food for the husband and responsible for all home chore activities. All these hamper to continue her education once married due to the burden of work imposed on her and that leads to school dropout. Therefore, due to the limited resource control and decision making opportunity the husband doesn't allow her to continue her education once she gets married even if she has an interest. This is because; since the husband has more than one wife (polygamy), she afraid he might weaken his attachment with her and strengthen his attachment to the rest of his wives and leads to divorce. Moreover, as she is living in her husband's village she might face ignorance and discrimination by his families and relatives for violating the culture. Accordingly, she dropout from school and engages in managing home chore activities and taking care of the children and her husband.

Therefore, because of bride price Parents prefer girls to be involved in to marriage at their early age. According to both ethnic group cultures, girls are expected to marry at the age of 14 and 16 though according to the Ethiopian law the minimum marriage age is 18 years but the law enforcement mechanism in the region is very limited. Hence, early marriage is one of the factors that forced girls to drop out from secondary school. This age is the time when girls are expected

to be in secondary school (grade 9 and 10). This argument is in line with Guday (2005:51). The Ethiopian national and regional laws proclaimed that early marriage is illegal. That is marriage before the age of 18 is illegal. Though it is illegal still it has been practiced in most parts of Ethiopia mainly in the rural areas. This has been happened due to the socio-cultural factors.

On the other hand, once the girl married she become responsible to manage the house hold activities and become pregnant within the first year of her marriage, give birth and taking care of the children instead of continuing her education. Even the husband never allows her to continue her education but to give birth. This is because; according to the culture having many children is considered as a prestige. Most of the time girls are engage in to marriage while they reached from grade 8-10. This is because at these time girls reached to the puberty stage. This argument is supported with the below mentioned story of a girl from Nuer ethnic group.

Her name is Gnemoche. She is now 18 years old. She got married while she was 16 years old. She was attending her high school in Gambella senior secondary school residing with her uncle but her parents are living in Lare town. She enjoyed her education a lot, especially the knowledge she gets and the interaction and friendship she had with her friends. Her dream was to complete her education and graduate from university and to become a good teacher. In 2013, she was in grade 9 and she took the first semester examination and scored good result. But in the second semester, she couldn't continue her education. This was because her parents wanted her to marry. Even though she refused and wanted to continue her education, her parents never allowed her. She said "as per the culture I should not refuse my parents' order". Then she married a man and moved from Lare town to Gambella town. Although she was married she still needs to continue her education, but the husband refused and after one year of her marriage she became the mother of one baby girl and remained a house wife. She only engaged in managing household activities and taking care of her child. She said "I have no job, no income and dependent on my husband. My husband is a civil servant."

Generally, marriage is considered as a prestige, according to both Nuer and Agnwa culture, for both the daughter and the entire family especially if a girl married by keeping her virginity. It is also believed that if the girl's age becomes older (most of the respondents argued those more than 20 years) it is assumed that no one needs to marry her. Therefore, due to all these reason the girls are forced to marry at their early age as parents fear of gossip and at the same time not to lose the bride price. All these factors resulted girls drop out from school and limited participation in secondary education.

If the girl gets older without marrying, the parents will be affected by gossips from their neighbor during coffee ceremonies. "Your daughter is getting older before she gets married. How long will she stay with you and feed her?" (FGD 2 and 3).

The above findings strengthen the argument of Guday (2005:146) that "early marriage is a powerful deterrent to girls' access to and success in formal education. It blocks young girls' educational opportunities and other life choices and seriously hampers their personal and social development. The younger the age at the time of marriage is the lower the probability that girls will have acquired critical skills and developed their personal capacity to manage adverse situations that may affect their overall welfare and economic well-being. In short, early marriage diminishes girls' opportunity to acquire life skills, which will enable them to escape poverty related conditions"

According to some key informants (KII 1 and 6), however, since recent times there are some attitudinal changes in few members of the community mainly in the urban areas and some parts of the educated people though it is not go at the expected level. This change has been happened as the result of some awareness raising efforts done by some government actors and Non-Governmental organizations and the participation of girls in secondary education has been increased compared to the previous years. The below case study supports the above argument.

Mr. Obang is living in Gambella town and he is 65 years old. He is a respected elder in the village where he lives. He has six children (4 daughters and 2 sons). His two elder daughters are married in their early age of 16 and 17. But now, he said, "I have got awareness on the importance

of education through participating in different meetings, discussion and events organized by the government and non-governmental organizations.” Therefore, now two of my daughters are attending their education in Gambella secondary school. The one is 19 years old and she is in grade 10 and the other one is 17 years old and she is in grade 9”. I will closely follow and support them to complete their education until they get graduated from university. Because I benefited a lot by sending two of my sons to schools and universities. Both of them have been graduated from the Ethiopian Civil Service College. They do have their own jobs. They are independent, married and leading a good life and they are supporting me financially as well. Therefore, I wish the rest two of my daughters will get the same opportunity like my sons.

4.2.2. Gender Role Expectation

The other major contributing factor for low girls’ participation in secondary education and that led to school dropout is gender role expectation. Child labor and parent’s demand of girls’ labor which is indispensable to the survival of households and on the other hand schooling represents a high opportunity cost to them. This has been prevailed due to attitude, cultural norms and lack of recognition to girl’s education.

Therefore, due to socialization and cultural domination, the school attending girls are required to participate in different home chores before and after schooling including holidays and weekends. As the result, girls’ engagement in family work and lack of spare time to study interferes with their education. It often leaves girls so exhausted that they lack the energy to attend school or cannot study effectively when in class. Girls are considered as supporting labor for their overburdened mothers in their family. Therefore, once they enrolled in school they dropout as the demand of their labor increases with in the household. In general, in the study communities, most parents feel that children should work in order to develop skills useful in their future adult life, mainly ready for marriage, instead of taking advantage of a formal education. Therefore, due

to the cultural norms and the commonly prevailed community attitude, it is mostly girls who are engaged in house chore activities which hinders girls' participation in secondary education.

Girls are mainly engaging in in cooking, collecting fire woods, fetching water and taking care of their siblings. Childcare and other household activities, girls are more likely to be involved than boys, and mainly girls in the rural areas spend more time working than those in urban areas. Thus this is one of the major reasons for low girl's participation in secondary education and led drop out of girls in the study communities of Nuer and Agnwa(All FGD participants).

According to the Key informant(KII 2 and 5), the engagement of girls in child labor initially led them to irregular attendance, miss some examinations, poor academic performance and grade repetition and in the end this led them completely to drop out from school and stay at home supporting their parents in different home chore activities and ready for marriage. In this case even though the girls are interested to continue their education their parents discourage them due to attitudinal problems as most of the parents especially who are residing in the rural area are illiterate and don't have any awareness on the importance of girl's education. This supports the following argument. That is; the opportunity costs of girls' schooling are associated with resources/services lost to sending the child to school. Child labor is indispensable to the survival of many rural households in sub-Saharan Africa: agricultural work, domestic work (cooking, collecting fuel, and fetching water) marketing as well as child care services are required from children, with girls demanded more than boys (Odaga and Haneveld, 1995).

According to the key informant (KII6),girls in the research area and in fact in almost everywhere in rural areas of the region work more than boys, regardless of whether they are in school, and whether adult women are present and working in the household or not. This has implications, not only for costs but also for dropout and repetition rates, performance and achievement. This can affect girls' participation in education which in the end led them to drop out from school and engaged in marriage. This is because most of the parents believe that the ultimate goal of girls are to get married, live with their husbands and bearing and rearing of children. Because of this reason they are not much worried their daughters to continue their secondary education instead through engaging their daughters in home chore activities train them to become a wonderful wives, teaches how to manage their house hold activities and ready for

marriage. In this regard, they consider sending their daughters to school as an opportunity cost especially during their puberty stage instead prefer her to support in the household activities until she gets married. Although boys are engaged in some outside home activities for supporting their parents, like cattle keeping among the Nuer community, most of the time parents prefer sending boys to school compared to girls and they are not considering sending boys to school has any opportunity cost. For this reason parents engage their daughters in different home chore activities since their early age and on the other hand they encourage boys to go to school.

Polygamy also has impact for girls to continue their education after marriage. since there is polygamy in both communities the girl is expected to be in better position in managing household activities and taking care of both her husband and the children otherwise the husband may ignore her and increase his attachments with the rest of his wives (there is competition among the wives in taking care of the husband though all the wives are expected to give respect for the first wife) and which may this leads to divorce in which most of the parents not need. This is because if divorce happened the parents will be forced to pay back the bride price. Therefore, because of the above reasons parents are interested in engaging their daughters in doing home chore activities and making ready them for marriage so that they can become good wife since the ultimate goal of girls are marriage and live with their husband for the rest of their life rather than sending them to school. The perception of the benefit is that educating the daughters is less important than they benefit from what the girls do in the household and getting married and becoming a good wife. So the above facts show that parents often invest less on their daughters' education compared to their investment to boys. This strengthen the statement of Hirut (2004) which she argued that in Ethiopia, like the rest of women in Africa, socially constructed and culturally defined role expectation of women as wife and mother is one of the factors that contributed to the subordination of women. Women's role has been related child rearing and child bearing. Due to this reason, access to education for girls is limited; instead girls' becoming faithful wives and wonderful mothers is their role expected from the society and learn from their mother through socialization.

4.2.3. Son Preference for Secondary Education

The other major contributing factor that led to girls' low enrollment and high dropout in secondary education is due to son preference for secondary education which resulted from

patriarchal ideology and low value given for girls' role and contribution in education. These preferences are resulted due to the community perception about the direct and opportunity cost for schooling of girls and also most of the parents are illiterate and they lack awareness on the importance of girls' education.

Therefore, in relation to son preferences the factors affecting the participation of girls in secondary education in the studied communities are highlighted under two categories. That is home/family related factors and school related factors. The family/home related factors are basically focused on parents' economic and educational background and cultural factors. Opportunity costs for girls and early marriage are some of the other constraints affecting girls' participation in secondary education. In short the reason for the low participation rate for girls in secondary education include personal, cultural and economic problem that is lack of educational access, lack of understanding on the importance of girls education by parents and so on. When the family has the capacity to educate children, it is mostly the boys who get the opportunity for education. The reason why sons are preferred to daughters for education is that because the parents thought that sons will stay with their parents and eventually turn out to be assets to the family. On the other hand, daughters are meant to go to another family when they get married.

In relation to the school factor, according to the study result, since the secondary schools are located in dispersed area (mostly in the towns) girls who reside in the rural areas like the boys should travel to urban areas and rent a house in the town to continue their secondary education which the community believe that it has both direct and opportunity cost. This is because, in the research area of Nuer and Agnwa community, the parents perceived that young girls are not considered to be ready and strong for travel as early as young boys and continue their education. This is because the girls may be subjected to harassment and even when the trip is safe the opportunity costs may be high and the time lost traveling is more costly to girls' work than to that of boys. Therefore, the immediate reasons to hold back daughters from school were expressed to be that girls are weaker than boys and unable to walk long distance, fear of forced male harassment during the long travel to school because parents are fear of unwanted pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and lack of money to afford their house rent and food supply cost . Moreover, parents worry about their daughters' safety since they will get more payment during marriage in the form of bride price and get high social status and respect if she keeps her

virginity. This reveals that male dominance both at home and public in all sphere of life contributed a lot not attend for their secondary education.

This strongly supports the following argument by Teshome (2003:9), which strongly argued the school also affects the survival of girls and perpetuates the gender gap in education. The working environment, distance to school, teacher attitudes and teaching practice, gender bias in curricula and classroom culture all affect female attainment and persistence in schools.

On the other hand, some members of the community also perceived that sending girls to school has direct school cost since the secondary school are located in the dispersed areas. However, on the other hand they prefer sending boys to secondary school with the belief that sending boys to school doesn't have either direct or opportunity cost. The direct school cost is related to house rent, food supply cost, and stationery or material cost, house rents which are some of the factors that influence parents' willingness to educate their daughters. However, with their low financial capacity parents usually give priority for boys to go to school than girls. These are also some of the major reasons for low female participation in secondary education and high drop out in the study community of Nuer and Agnwa. This is mostly applicable for girls coming from the rural areas and who attends their education in the town.

All the above explanations are in line with the following argument by different researchers. Large number of studies in sub-Sahara Africa where it has been reported that the long distances girls (particularly rural girls) travel to school has two major problems: one relates to the length of time and energy children have to expend to cover the distance, often on an empty stomach, the other relates to the concern and apprehension parents have for the sexual safety of their daughters. The problem of distance from school also has implications for the motivation of girls to stay in school (Teshome, 2003:10).

In addition to the perception of direct and opportunity cost, son preference to secondary education has also been resulted due to the fact that most of the community members are illiterate. Because of the illiteracy Parents do not have much awareness on the benefits of girls' education. Accordingly, most of the parents want their children's labor, especially that of girls for household activities and they believe that the ultimate goal of girls is married and become a wonderful wife. This implies that poverty (financial constraint) , school distance, direct and

opportunity cost, illiteracy of parents and attitudinal problems are some of the major factors which negatively affect girls' access to and participation in education mainly in secondary education.

According to the findings of the study, admission or access to secondary schooling is a discriminatory factor between boys and girls because of attitude, perception and dominated by patriarchal ideology. Hence, there is no equal chance for girls to enter to school like boys but the boys have more chance to enroll in school and continue their education at the secondary education level. As the result, with the resource they have parents usually prefer their boys to go to school and on the other hand they encourage girls to remain at home and engage in home chore activities and ready for marriage. This is because some section of the community believes that there is no opportunity cost for sending boys to school as compared to girls.

The parents mostly want their daughters' labor more than their education. This demonstrates clearly that discrimination in access to schoolings is sharply concentrated on girls.

Parents mostly give priority for boys than girls. This is because parents believed that the ultimate goal of girls are getting married and they are always thinking about the payment they will get by engaging their daughter in to marriage in the form of bride price(FGD 3, 7 and 8).

Therefore, both in the Nuer and Agnwa communities' son preferences for secondary education which is directly linked direct and opportunity cost, school distance and community perception and attitude towards girls' education are among the major factors for low girls' participation in secondary education. Girls are more likely than boys to be held back or be withdrawn from school. In the research areas, according to the Regional bureau of Education statistics the overall enrollments of both boys and girls in secondary school is low and mainly the participation of girls is low compared to boys. So, direct costs and opportunity cost of schooling which is directly linked to attitude and perception towards girls' education are among the main factors for low girls participation and early dropout from secondary education.

4.2.4. Lack of Female Role Model

The other major contributing factor for low girls' participation in secondary education and high dropout is due to the fact that lack of role model mainly female teachers at the secondary school level from the Nuer and Agnwa ethnic community.

If female teachers were available they can give counseling service and advice and at the same time they can mobilize the community and create awareness on the importance of girls Education (all FGD participants)

The lack of female role model is resulted due to the deep rooted socio-cultural barriers imposed on girls for subordinate position and giving low value for girls' education. Though there are few female teachers, they are not from the native ethnic groups instead they are from the highlanders (people who are coming from other areas of Ethiopia). Those few educated women with in both native ethnic groups are assumed the political positions in the Regional government. Even some of educated women who assumed the government political position are also bind to the prevailed culture and social norms instead of struggling to change the prevailing scenario. This is because as they are living with their community they are expected to respect the culture otherwise they will face discrimination and neglect. Fearing all this they respect the prevailing socio-cultures.

The Key informant (KII 6) argued that: There are both male and female regional governments authorities bind with the culture. The male government officials practiced polygamy and the female officials also become second or third wife of their husband. The female's decision making is very limited in their common issues. Even the females give their whole monthly salary to their husband and it is the role of the husband to manage all the finances and the sole decision maker and who controlled the resources.

According to the finding though there are some females who are educated and assumed political position they are still in the subordinate position, the gender inequality is still there and they accepted the power in balance as natural and accepted male are superior and the ultimate decision maker. Therefore, from this we can understand that there is no role model for girls to continue their education and bring change on the prevailed socio-cultural norms. Hence, unless

the political commitment would be in place the subordination of women will going on and the participation of girls in education will not be enhanced.

With regard to availability female teacher role model, the table below shows the female teacher statistics for the secondary school in the region in different education level.

Table 5:Female teacher ratio in secondary school in Gambella Region

Year	2008/9			2009/10			2010/11			2011/12			2012/13		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Degree	98	3	101	136	13	149	218	23	241	287	25	312	340	28	368
Diploma	114	5	119	97	5	102	106	6	112	79	10	89	119	18	137
Total	212	8	220	233	18	251	324	29	353	366	35	401	459	46	505

Source: Regional Education Bureau Report 2014/15

According to the above table, though the number of female teachers increased from year after year, we can understand that the number of female teachers compared to male teachers is very low. Even those female teachers are not from the indigenous ethnic groups instead what the native called them as highlanders (those people who come from the other parts of Ethiopia). Therefore, the absence of female teachers for the secondary school from the indigenous ethnic group has negative impact for the participation and continuation of girls to secondary education and to tertiary education as well. The absence of female teacher as role model contributed for parents encouraging their daughters to drop out from school and to be engaged indifferent home chore activities to support their mother and get married since the community considered marriage as the ultimate goal for girls.

Therefore, if there were more female teachers' role models especially from the studied ethnic group, these teachers will conduct outreach activities in the community. They also conduct awareness rising activities by putting themselves as a front liner and role model. As the result the community will build trust and be well informed on the importance of girls' education and will send their daughters to school instead of engaging them in marriage and in different home chore activities.

According to a key informant (KII-1), some girls in the region including in the study area joined preparatory school according to affirmative action as the result of low academic performance for they are engaging in different labor activities and no regular tutorial classes has been organized to enhance their learning capacity. In addition to this though girls are joining to universities again based on affirmative action they most of the time withdraw from the university in the first year of their academic year since they would get unsatisfactory results. This leads to unavailability of role models for girls that encourage parents to send the girls and even for girls themselves to go to school.

4.3. Other Factors Affecting Girls' Secondary Education

The study found that there are other factors (such as lack of school facilities and expansion of agricultural investment in the study area) affecting girls' participation in secondary education.

In relation to the school facilities and extra-curricular activities the FGD participants (FGD 3 and 6) of secondary school students argued that the school facilities are not fully conducive for girls. According to the participant observation and FGD result (FGD 1, 2 and 3), though there are different school clubs including gender club, the participation of girls is very limited since they are dominated by the boys and girls consider themselves as inferior due to the attitude problem influenced by the social norms. According to the observation, there are separate latrines for boys and girls and gender clubs, to engage girls and discuss their different issues. This is true in the four secondary schools (2 secondary schools in Gambella town, 1 secondary school in Itang Special *Woreda* and 1 secondary school in Pugnido *Woreda*). However, except Gambella secondary schools, the gender clubs in the rest schools have no separate office and place to conduct discussion on different issues and there is no room to change sanitary pad in case of menstruation for female students. These have also contributed a lot for girls' irregular attendance, poor academic performance and dropout.

According to FGD participants (FGD 2, 6 and 8), they added that, since recent time due to the expansion of agricultural investment around the rural parts of Gambella town, there are many agricultural workers and daily laborers residing in Gambella town, Itang and Pugnido. There is high financial transaction, alcohol and *chat* selling. In this case, girls are involved in chewing *chat* and drinking alcohol and unsafe sex which leads them to dropout from school.

4.4. Possible Strategies Used to Address Factors Affecting Girls' Secondary Education

Different Governmental and Non-Governmental organizations are contributing their effort to address the socio-Cultural factors affecting girls' participation in secondary education both in the Nuer and Agnwa ethnic communities.

According to key informants (KII 1, 6 and 8), the different actors are putting their possible efforts to overcome the bottle necks that girl's students are facing. According to the above mentioned key informants, the major actors involved in addressing socio-cultural and other factors affecting the participation of girls in secondary education are: both the regional and federal government, the United Nation (UN) agencies and different Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) briefly discussed below.

Government and United Nation Agencies

A question was posed to the key informants both from the government sector offices and UN agencies: *what does the government and other actors are doing to address those bottle necks?* For this question the informants argued as follows:

The regional government has been playing its own part to increase girl's participation in secondary education. The government has started, though not still strong, and put in place systems that can tackle the socio-cultural factors which hampers girl's participation education. However, the effort that has been exerted by the regional government is not still adequate to tackle those barriers. Therefore, it needs to give great attention by different concerned actors mainly in establishing systems that can create a platform for increasing girl's participation in secondary education.

According to the Key informant (KII 1 and 6), the major government actors that are playing their great part to tackle those barriers are the Regional Bureau of Education (BoE) and Bureau of Women and Children Affairs (BoWCA) in collaboration with different UN agencies and International NGOs: United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nation Development Program (UNDP) and Plan International Ethiopia (PIE).

Gambella BoWCA, in collaboration with the regional BoE and with different UN agencies, has taken different action to increase the participation of girl's education and to decrease girl's drop out in secondary school and tertiary level as well. However, this action is not yet able to address all the issues and could not bring the expected result. Some of the actions taken by BoWCA and BoE are described below.

Gambella Regional Bureau of Women and Children Affairs

According to the key informant (KII-6),the Bureau has been conducting different regular activities to increase the participation of girls in secondary education, i.e. increase enrollment and decrease the dropout rate of girls. The major activities the Bureau have been conducted are:

- The Bureau is regularly providing support both in terms of financial and materials for those girls who are joining universities so that they will not be dropped out because of financial constraints and enable them to score good results.
- The Bureau works on Cash transfer for low income family members in collaboration with UNICEF so that families are able to engage in different Income Generation Activities (IGA). This support is aimed not to engage girls in different labor activities that affects the continuation of their education and leads to drop out mainly at the secondary school level. However, this cash transfer is not adequate and not able to address more households.
- The Bureau also works on a project called “Girls scholarship” with the financial support of UNDP. With this project, the Bureau arranges and organize scholarship program for those girls relatively have good entrance results to join universities.
- It also conducts regular community mobilization on the importance of girls' education and on the major socio-cultural barriers for the community so that they can send their children to school instead of engaging them in early marriage and in different child labor and home chore activities in collaboration with PIE. This is because one of the major factors for low participation of girls in education and drop out is due to low family awareness on the importance of education and early marriage.

Gambella Region Education Bureau

According to a key informant (KII 1), like BoWCA, the regional education bureau has been putting in place its effort to increase the participation of girls in secondary education though still it is not adequate. Some of the major activities that have been regularly done according to the respondent are:

- The Bureau implemented in all schools the strategy of organizing students in to 1:5 to bring back those drop out students and also the active learners are able to support the slow learners in their academic. In this case, special emphasis are also given for girls through organizing different tutorial classes though not adequate and regularly conducted.
- Organizing special tutorial class for slow learner students mainly for females to increase their academic performance and reduce drop out that has been resulted due to their low academic performance.
- Strengthening and coordinating parent teacher association and *kebele* level education training board so that they are able to work jointly. They are mainly engaging in mobilizing the community and conduct awareness creation activities so that the communities are able to send both girls and boys to schools. This approach, according to the key informant (KII 1),is called “back to school campaign”.
- Different Regional Cabinet members are also assigned in each *woreda* to conduct awareness raising activity for the community about the importance of education mainly on sending girls to school and on other socio-cultural barriers. However, this awareness raising activities with the engagement of the regional government officials has been conducted only once a year. It has been conducted only at the beginning of the academic year and it is not conducted on a regular basis. This might increase the girl’s enrollment rate at the beginning of the academic year but not prevent the prevalence of girls drop out due to parents’ demand of their daughter’s labor and early marriage.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary and Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Major Findings

The study tried to figure out the gender gap in secondary education among the Nuer and Agnwa communities through gender gap trend analysis for secondary education participation, identified the major socio-cultural factors that are affecting female participation in secondary education and the possible recommendation to address the major socio-cultural barriers, on how to increase girls' participation in secondary education among the studied Nuer and Agnwa communities. In order to achieve the intended purpose of the study, both secondary and primary data were collected, analysed and interpreted.

To collect the primary data, basic questions were raised for the different actors through focus group discussions and key informant interviews to dig out those factors affecting female participation in secondary education. As the result, eight focused group discussions were conducted with 60 secondary school students (both boys and girls) and 13 key informant interviews were held with Gambella Bureau of Education, Bureau of Women and Children Affairs, Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs, secondary school directors, school teachers, UN agencies, NGOs and elders.

For the secondary data collection to analyse the gender gap in secondary education different documents were reviewed and analysed. That includes: documents from the Ministry of Education, Gambella Regional Education Bureau and Central Statistics Authority were reviewed to gather information on the number of female students enrolled at national, regional, zonal and *woreda* levels, including the number of school age population in the study area and school drop outs. Moreover, the data obtained were analysed descriptively. Thus, the analysis made warrant the following major findings.

1. The regional education data shows that girls' participation in secondary education is low at different years compared to boys in the study communities of Nuer and Agnwa. The participation of girls in education is relatively higher in primary school, but it decreased when they move to secondary school and preparatory school. In other words, the

participation of girls in education decreases as the level of education advances from lower to higher levels. The variation in the participation of girls between primary and secondary levels of education is mainly due to socio-cultural factors.

2. Parents both in the Agnwa and Nuer communities prefer girls to go to marriage at their early age instead of sending them to attend their secondary education since they get bride price payment as a source of wealth accumulation and other social norms such as fear of pre-marital pregnancy. Hence, early marriage is one of the factors that forced girls to drop out from school. Girls are expected to marry at the age of 14 to 16 though, according to the Ethiopian as well as the regional law, the minimum marriage age is 18 years because the law enforcement mechanism in the region is not well practiced. This age is the time when girls are expected to be in secondary school (grade 9 and 10).
3. Lack of recognition to girls' role and contribution in education and son preference for education by the community is one of the major factors that contributed to low girls' participation in secondary education. Due to this, the community perceived that, the direct schooling cost and opportunity cost of parents, which are directly linked to cultural norms and community attitudes are the major factors that held back girl students from secondary education compared to boys. This is because, the communities believe that sending girls to school instead of engaging them in managing home chore activities have direct and opportunity cost, whereas sending boys to school doesn't have either direct or opportunity cost. Therefore, parents in both communities prefer sending boys to secondary school.
4. The patriarchal ideology, which is dominant in the studied communities, is also one of the factors that held back girls' participation in secondary education. Instead of sending to school parents prefer their daughters to be engaged in different home chore activities, which are mainly linked to early marriage arrangements. Since the community perceived that the ultimate goal of a girl is to get married, parents prefer their daughter to be engaged in managing home chore activities so that she will become a wonderful wife and capable of managing her own household activities properly once she gets married. All

these factors contributed to female students' dropout, repetition and low academic performance and achievement in education.

5. Lack of female role model and poor school facilities are also another factors contributed for the low participation of girls in secondary education. The study found that there is no female role model teacher for secondary school female students in the studied communities of Nuer and Agnwa. It is the major factor contributing to the low participation of girls' secondary education.

Therefore, though there are different actors, such as government and non-government organizations, put in place to increase girls' participation in secondary education, still they couldn't address all the issues and still the gender gap in secondary education is huge.

5.2. Concluding Remarks

The participation of Nuer and Agnwa girls in secondary education is low compared to boys. This has been happened mainly during the transition from primary education to secondary education. Even the participation of girls decreased when they move from secondary education to preparatory education. This has been understood through reviewing the Regional Education statistics for different years. The major contributing factors for this low participation of girls in secondary education are mainly due to the socio-cultural factors that prevailed in the studied communities. According to focus group participants and key informants, the most commonly socio-cultural factors that hamper girls' secondary education participation are: early marriage, son preference for secondary education, gender role expectation and lack of educated female role model and poor school facilities.

In the studied communities girls have no equal access to formal education as boys due to the different socio-cultural barriers that prevailed with in the community, gender socialization and the local custom and norms.

As the result of girls' illiteracy and drop out from school will have different negative consequences for girls themselves, their families, the communities, the generation and the country at large. It will have negative economic, psychological and health consequences. These consequences might have passed from generation to generation. This is because of the

prevalence of the commonly accepted socio-cultural barriers, it will might have the possibility of passing from generation to generation if action will not be taken to minimize and tackle those barriers and create conducive environment to increase the participation of girls in secondary education. Therefore, some of the consequence are analyzed and described below

Economic and decision-making

According to the key informants (KII 1,7 and 10), in the study area due to the different socio-cultural factors (early marriage, community attitude, child labor and other factors) most girls are drop out from school, their enrollment, attendance rate and academic performance in secondary and tertiary school is low compared to boys. Instead most of the community commonly accepted as a norm that the ultimate goal of the girl is to be engaged in to marriage. In the meantime, until she gets married, she will be engaged in supporting their parent in different home chore activities. Once they get married they moved to the husband's village, which is completely a new environment for her and her main roles are home management, child bearing and child rearing. Since the husband paid bride price to her parents either in kind or in cash to marry her, he considers her as his own personal property and divorce is considered as a curse. She can't control resources and has no any decision making opportunities and abilities instead all the decisions are made by the husband. Every resource is controlled by the husband and he is the only decision maker. She also becomes economically dependent on her husband since she doesn't get financial management opportunity. With this regard, she loses her self-confidence, self-esteem and has limited life skills.

Therefore, due to the prevalence of commonly accepted norms and culture, the low status of girls and women has a very great opportunity to pass to the next generation especially to their daughters through socialization. That means the poor and illiterate mothers pass the same thing to their children mainly to her daughters. This will have a negative economic implication for herself, the family, the society and the country at large. This has been strongly supported by the following argument; King and Hill (1993) also argued that education is very crucial for the national economic development and individual advancement as well. This has been clearly observed by analysing the link between the level of women participation in education and the economic development of the developing countries. In those countries, there is a clear gender gap in education and has showed its own implications to the national development.

Psychological Consequence

The key informants (KII 1, 8 and 9) argued that, due to the prevailed socio-cultural barriers girls are also drop out from school and engage to marriage. Once married she become under her husband control, has no any decision making power and this will result in loose of her self-confidence and self-reliance. The only role of the girl will be engaging in home chore activities (managing household activities) and her social interaction is very limited. Once she married she has limited opportunity to continue her education instead bearing and rearing of children and leads to Gender base violence (GBV). This leads her to depression, trauma and other psychological effects. This may result in reducing her production capacity. Once married she will have limited autonomy and decision-making skill and this will result in low opportunity and potential to develop positive psychological and social skills necessary to her future life for making strategic decisions and life choices.

Health consequence

The Key informant (KII 8 and 9) also argued that low girls' participation in school and drop out also bring negative health consequence on the girls. Due to early marriage, the girl will encounter complicated early pregnancy and limited skill for informed reproductive health choices and decisions. Since in both ethnic group are patriarchy and polygamous is common, in this case she might have low ability for informed decision making in family planning and she might be exposed to HIV/AIDS and other sexual transmitted infections and leads to high mortality and morbidity rate. This will lead to the vicious circle of poverty and this will pass to the next generation mainly to her daughters. This will result in very poor living condition for the family in particular and low development capacity to the society and the country in general. The low empowerment of girls is resulted due to lack of access to education and they become illiterate. This resulted in lack of making strategic decisions, poor employment opportunities and exposes them to HIV/AIDS and other psychological effects. These supports the following argument by Wudu and Yonas (2009), as schooling tends to improve a mother's knowledge and use of health practices, each additional year of schooling is estimated to decrease the mortality rate of children under the age of 5 by up to 10 percent. Moreover, it is estimated that one extra year of schooling reduces fertility by approximately 10 percent. Besides it has been believed that

women with schooling are more likely to send their own children, females in particular, to schools (Wudu and Yonas, 2009).

Finally, I want to suggest that there are also some issues that need to be further studied and researched. The bride price payment is a common culture among the studied communities which reinforces early marriage. This bride price payment in relation to early marriage is not thoroughly studied anthropologically. Therefore, I recommend the need for conducting an in-depth ethnographic research on this issue. Other factors that constraints female educations also need to be further studied (like institutional factors and expansion of agricultural investment in the region). Moreover, there are different kinds of marriage practices in the studied communities. Therefore, the marriage system and its future impact are one of the recommendable areas to be further studied.

Based on the above major findings the researcher suggests the following recommendations to address the major socio- cultural factors affecting girls secondary education and that enables to increase the participation of girls in secondary education among the studied community.

1. There is a need to conduct regular community awareness raising program on the importance of girls' education and the major socio-cultural barriers that affect girls' education. It can be done by organizing regular workshops, seminars to engage parents, religious leaders, and elders in order to make the society and parents aware of the benefits of girls' education so that the community gives recognition to girls' role and contribution in education. This can be done both by the Government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).
2. Since there are low female participation in secondary education and high dropout mainly due to the prevalence of early marriage, the different concerned actors need to thoroughly investigate issues related to early marriage in both Nuer and Agnwa communities and design appropriate and possible strategies to end early marriage and promote girls' access to secondary education. This can be done both by the government and NGOs and any concerned actors as well.
3. There is a need for creating awareness of the studied communities about the current family law legislating against early marriage since most of the communities have little

awareness about the law. Therefore, the formal Government structure starting from Regional Justice Bureau to the *Woreda* Justice Office should organize regular awareness raising event on the law against early marriage.

4. In order to reduce school environment related problems of female students, there should be a clear strategy by the regional government to empower and increase role model female teachers for secondary school from the studied communities of Nuer and Agnwa. This mainly happens if the regional government assigns some of the educated females as teachers.
5. There is a need to reduce the long distance to schools and the problem of house rental and food supply cost for female students from rural villages of Nuer and Agnwa communities, building secondary schools at reasonable distances or bringing girls to a place where the schools are available is crucial. In addition, looking for funds by the concerned actors to construct boarding house near secondary school will increase the participation of girls in secondary school.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Fieldwork Guiding Questions ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY POST GRADUATE PROGRAMME COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Hello! My name is _____ and I come from AAU and conducting research about Socio-Cultural factors that affect low participation of girls in secondary education. You are being asked to participate because of your important role as a member of this community. The purpose of the survey is to obtain information that will help me to prepare my MA thesis for the department of Social Anthropology.

The information you provide will be kept confidential and will not identify you or is not linked with your name in any way. I will ask you a series of questions that should take about 1 to 1: 30 hours. There is no risk to you or your family. But some questions may make you uncomfortable, you may choose not to answer any question or all of the questions. However, your answers are important and we hope that you will participate. At this time, do you want to ask any questions about the FGD? Do you agree to participate in the FGD now?

FGD QUESTION FOR BOTH BOYS AND GIRLS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

1. Background of students

a. Name of your school _____

b. Age of participants

1). 14 Years and below

2). 15_18 years

3). 19_22 years

4). 23 years and above

c. sex Male _____ Female _____

d. Education level _____

e. Marital status: married single divorced

f. Religion Orthodox Muslim protestant Traditional belief

2. At the place where you live, do boys and girls have equal chance to enter to school, mainly to secondary school? If No who gets the better opportunity and who is not?why?

Probe Questions: Economic factor, socio-cultural factors, school distance or any other factors

3. What are the major factors that led to girls drop out from school (especially from secondary school)?

4. What benefits do the parents get by making girls drop out from secondary education?

Probe: Why some of the parents need their girls go to school and some are not?

5. Does girls themselves also want to drop out from school? Why?

Probe: why some girls need to continue their education and some are not

6. At what age is a girl most of the time marry and what impact does it have on her?

7. What do you think the appropriate age for girls to get married?

Probe: What is the practice (usual age) in your respective communities?

8. Do most of the girls go to school here and attend their secondary education?

9. Until what age do girls attend school?

10. Do married girls go to school? If not why? If yes how is their performance?

11. From your experience and observations who has been engaged more in house hold chores? Why? On what kinds of activities are they mostly engage ? Does it have any impact on their education?

12. In your school are there female teachers? Do you think that the presence of female teachers in schools has positive effect on girls' enrolment and achievement? Why?

13. Which level of education do most girls complete? At what grade level drop out?

14. Does parents' religion/beliefs affect daughters schooling? How? Which religion/beliefs?

15. In your area, are there any actors (NGOs) that play role in promoting secondary education? If yes who are they?What activities do they implement?

16. In your opinion what measures should be taken to increase girls' participation in secondary education?Which actors should be involved and in what areas?

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY POST GRADUATE PROGRAMME

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Hello! My name is _____ and I come from AAU and conducting research about Socio-Cultural factors that affect low participation of girls in secondary education. You are being asked to participate because of your important role as a member of this community. The purpose of the study is to obtain information that will help me to prepare my MA thesis for the department of Social Anthropology.

The information you provide will be kept confidential and will not identify you or is not linked with your name in any way. I will ask you a series of questions that should take about 40 minutes. There is no risk to you or your family, but some questions may make you uncomfortable. You may choose not to answer any question or all of the questions. However, your answers are important and we hope that you will participate. At this time, do you want to ask any questions about the KII? Do you agree to participate in the KII now?

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW TOOLS FOR ELDERS

I. Personal Information

Name _____

Sex _____

Age _____

Ethnicity _____

Location _____

Number of children: Male _____ Female _____ Total _____

II. Interview question.

1. Do girls in your community attend school as of boys (secondary school)? If not why?

Probe: Socio-cultural factors, attitude family capacity, school distance, female labor.

2. In your opinion what are the major barrier for girl's participation in secondary education?
And why?

3. Do the parents force girls to drop out from school? If yes, why? And what benefits do they get?

1. Do girls themselves need to dropout from school? If yes. Why? And what benefits do they get?

2. In your community do girls marry at their early age? If yes, at what age and why?

3. In your opinion do you think that sending girls to school has benefit? And Why?

Probe: for themselves, their family and the community at large.

4. What do you suggest to overcome the problem and to send girls to school?

Probe: parent's role, the community and government role

5. To overcome the problems what do you think the role of elders and religious leaders?

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY POST GRADUATE PROGRAMME

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Hello! My name is _____, and I come from AAU and conducting research about Socio-Cultural factors that affect low participation of girls in secondary education. You are being asked to participate because of your important role player as part of government sector offices. The purpose of the survey is to obtain information that will help me to prepare my MA thesis for the department of Social Anthropology.

The information you provide will be kept confidential and will not identify you or is not linked with your name in any way. I will ask you a series of questions that should take about 40 minutes. There is no risk to you or your family, but some questions may make you uncomfortable. You may choose not to answer any question or all of the questions. However, your answers are important and we hope that you will participate. At this time, do you want to ask any questions about the KII? Do you agree to participate in the KII now?

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW TOOLS FOR GOVERNMENT SECTOR OFFICES

A. Background of the Informant

Name _____

Organization _____

Position: _____

Address: _____

B. Key Informant questions

1. Do boys and girls have equal chance to go to school? If no what are the factors?

Probe: cultural factors, Economic factors, school distance

2. Do girls attend secondary education equal to boys? If no what are the factors?

Probe: cultural factors, Economic factors, school distance

3. At what grade mostly girls drop out from school? And why?

4. In your opinion what are the major factors that lead girls drop out mainly at secondary education?

5. Do the parents force girls to drop out from school? If yes why?

6. In your opinion what are the major obstacles for female students in the school (school environment)?

7. Do you think that female students face specific problem in the school compared to their male counter parts? If yes what are they?

8. In your opinion what are the root causes for all these factors?

9. Do you think that those problems can be solved? If yes how? And who is supposed to solve?

10. What do you suggest to overcome those problems and increase girl's participation in secondary education?

11. In overcoming those problems what your organization did so far? What is the organization's next plan (If any)

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OBSERVATION CHECKLIST FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

1. Name of the school.
2. Location of the school/ is it far from the community
3. Is the compound fenced (for safety of female students).
4. Student class room ratio and sitting arrangements (is the class room conducive for female students).
5. Teachers giving equal encouragement for both boys and girls while teaching in the class room.
6. Girls interaction with boys in the school compound
7. Availability of sex segregated toilet
8. Availability of rooms to use the sanitary pad
9. Availability of female teachers and their position in the school
10. The availability of different clubs, female participation and the clubs' role in terms of encouraging girls' participation in education.
11. The gender sensitivity of the different teaching aids available in the school compound

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY POST GRADUATE PROGRAMME

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

CASE STUDY INFORMATION COLLECTION TOOL

I. Personal Information

Name_____

Age_____

Marital status_____

Number of children. Male_____, Female_____ Total_____

II. KII Questions

1. At what age you married your husband?

2. How did you meet your husband?

Probe: chosen by the family or yourself.

3. When you married your husband in what grade did you attend?

4. Why do you dropout and why didn't you continue your education once you married?

5. In what activities are you engaging in once you married?

6. Do you know girls that do have the same experience like you?

Probe: is the situation common in the area.

Appendix 2: Profile of Study Participants

FGD1. With Gambella Secondary School Nuer Female Students

Place: Gender Club office

Date: October 15, 2015

Time 10:00am-11:45am

S/N	Name	Age	Grade level	Fathers education	Mothers education	Parents Residence area	Remark
1.	Nyadihal Gat Louk	15	9	Illiterate	Illiterate	urban	
2.	Sara Chaunkoth	15	9	Literate	Illiterate	urban	
3.	Rebeca James	16	9	Literate	Illiterate	urban	
4.	Mary James	15	9	Illiterate	Illiterate	rural	
5.	Hanna peter	16	10	Illiterate	Illiterate	urban	
6.	Ariet Gatch	17	10	Illiterate	Illiterate	rural	
7.	Elliya Wantow	16	10	Illiterate	Illiterate	rural	
8.	Nyapal Olalla	17	10	Literate	Illiterate	urban	8

FGD2. With Gambella Secondary school Agnwa female students.

Place: Gender Club office

Date: October 16, 2015

Time 10:05am-11:35am

S/N	Name	Age	Grade level	Fathers education	Mothers education	Parents Residence area	Remark
1.	Diduma Okugni	16	9	Literate	Literate	urban	
2.	Akina Okello	15	9	Literate	Illiterate	urban	
3.	Ariet Simon	18	9	Literate	Illiterate	urban	
4.	Ariet Oballa	16	9	Illiterate	Illiterate	urban	
5.	Achuwa Gilo	16	10	Illiterate	Illiterate	urban	
6.	Adima Omod	16	10	Illiterate	Illiterate	Rural	
7.	Ajiwi Obang	15	10	Illiterate	Illiterate	Rural	

FGD3. With Gambella preparatory school Nuer female students

Place: Gender Club office

Date: October 20, 2015

Time 10:05am-11:35am

S/N	Name	Age	Grade level	Fathers education	Mothers education	Parents Residence area	Remark
1.	Mary Choul	17	11	Illiterate	Illiterate	urban	
2.	Nyaboul Wich	18	11	Illiterate	Illiterate	rural	
3.	Nyawock Beel	20	11	Illiterate	Illiterate	urban	
4.	Elliya Deng	18	11	Illiterate	Illiterate	urban	
5.	Marry Choul	19	12	Literate	Illiterate	urban	
6.	Amit peter	22	12	Literate	Illiterate	urban	
7.	Marry Gotch	18	12	Illiterate	Illiterate	urban	
8.	Achuya Odol	19	12	Literate	Illiterate	Urban	

FGD4. With Gambella Preparatory School Agnwa Female Students

Place: Gender Club Office

Date: October 21, 2015

Time 10:010am-11:40am

S/N	Name	Age	Grade level	Fathers education	Mothers education	Parents Residence area	Remark
1.	Adima ochan	19	11	Illiterate	Illiterate	rural	
2.	Zara Okugni	17	11	Illiterate	Illiterate	rural	
3.	Nikugn Obugni	18	11	Illiterate	Illiterate	urban	
4.	Nehamt Alero	18	11	Illiterate	Illiterate	urban	
5.	Ariet Adol	19	12	Literate	Literate	urban	
6.	Nikugn Omud	19	12	Literate	Illiterate	urban	
7.	Abugni Ochar	18	12	Illiterate	Illiterate	urban	

FGD5: With Gambella Preparatory School Nuer Male Students

Place: Gender Club office

Date: October 23, 2015

Time 4:00pm-5:30pm

S/N	Name	Age	Grade level	Fathers education	Mothers education	Parents Residence area	Remark
1.	Tut Kweth	18	11	Literate	Literate	urban	
2.	Phaul Keat	17	11	Illiterate	Illiterate	rural	
3.	Tuach Deng	17	11	Illiterate	Illiterate	rural	
4.	Okella Choul	17	11	Illiterate	Illiterate	rural	
5.	Akway peter	19	12	Literate	Illiterate	urban	
6.	Owman peter	18	12	Literate	Illiterate	rural	
7.	Tut Bithow	17	12	Illiterate	Illiterate	rural	
8.	Peter Okach	20	12	Illiterate	Illiterate	urban	

FGD6: With Gambella preparatory school Agnwa male students

Place: Gender Club office

Date: October 26, 2015

Time 4:00pm-5:30pm

S/N	Name	Age	Grade level	Fathers education	Mothers education	Parents Residence area	Remark
1.	AdongOjulu	18	11	Literate	Literate	urban	
2.	Obang Omod	17	11	Illiterate	Illiterate	rural	
3.	OchanUlok	19	11	Illiterate	Illiterate	rural	
4.	OcharUjulu	20	11	Illiterate	Illiterate	rural	
5.	Gilo Alero	28	12	Literate	Illiterate	urban	
6.	Samuel Omod	21	12	Literate	Illiterate	rural	
7.	CharaAkina	23	12	Illiterate	Illiterate	rural	

FGD 7: With Itang Secondary school Nuer Male Students

Place: in the field

Date: October 29, 2015

Time: 10:00am-11:35am

S/N	Name	Age	Grade level	Fathers education	Mothers education	Parents Residence area	Remark
1.	Kong Riet	16	9	Illiterate	Illiterate	Urban	
2.	ThiangYer	15	9	Literate	Illiterate	Urban	
3.	James Pur	15	9	Literate	Illiterate	Urban	
4.	Biljackok peter	15	9	Literate	Literate	Urban	
5.	PilwalGathlwak	18	10	Illiterate	Illiterate	Urban	
6.	Puldeng Tut	17	10	Illiterate	Illiterate	Rural	
7.	Kwoth peter	18	10	Illiterate	Illiterate	Rural	
8.	Deng Choul	16	10	Literate	Illiterate	Urban	

FGD 8: With Pugnido Gambella Secondary School Agnwa Male Students

Place: in the field

Date: November 5, 2015

Time: 10:00am-12:00am

S/N	Name	Age	Grade level	Fathers education	Mothers education	Parents Residence area	Remark
1.	Omod Ojulu	16	9	Literate	illiterate	urban	
2.	Oman Obang	16	9	Literate	illiterate	urban	
3.	Omod Ochar	15	9	Illiterate	illiterate	urban	
4.	AgwaOchan	16	9	Literate	illiterate	urban	
5.	Okello Akway	16	10	Illiterate	illiterate	rural	
6.	Opiew Omod	17	10	Illiterate	illiterate	rural	
7.	AballaOkow	16	10	Illiterate	illiterate	rural	

Profile of Key Informants

Code	Sex	Education level	Qualification	Organization	Position	Marital status	Ethnic background
KII-1	Male	BED	EDPM	REB	Planning and programming expert	Married	Nuer
KII-2	Female	BED	Biology	School	Teacher	Married	Amhara
KII-3	Female	BED	Geography	School	Teacher	Married	Amhara
KII-4	Male	BED	EDPM	School	School director	Married	Oromo
KII-5	Male	BED	EDPM	School	School director	Married	Amhara
KII-6	Male	BA	Economics	BoWCA	Child protection process owner	Married	Agnwa
KII-7	Male	BA	Sociology	BOLSA	Child protection expert	Married	Agnwa
KII-8	Female	BA	PSIR	UNICEF	Education officer	Single	Amhara
KII-9	Male	BSC	Public health	UNICEF	Health officer	Married	Nuer
KII-10	Male	BA	IT	Plan International	Information management officer	Single	Nuer
KII-11	Male	BA	Psychology	Plan International	Child protection officer	Single	Agnwa
KII-12	Female	Grade 9	-	-	-	Married	Nuer
KII-13	Male	Illiterate	-	-	Elder	Married	Agnwa

DECLARATION

The thesis is my original work, has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name_____

Signature_____

Place_____

Date of Submission_____