

Between herd and school desk

“A study to analyse what is leading to low girls attendance in primary schools in Harshin area, Ethiopia”



Bachelor Thesis

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------|--|
| ABE | Alternative Basic Education |
| EC | European Calendar |
| EDI | Education Development Index |
| EFA | Education For All |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| FGM | Female Genital Mutilation |
| GER | Gross Enrolment Rate |
| GPI | Gender Parity Index |
| IPAS | Institute for Pastoral and Agro pastoral studies |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goal |
| NER | Net Enrolment Rate |
| NGO | Non Governmental Organisation |
| PTA | Parent Teacher Association |
| RDI | Regional Development and Innovation |
| REB | Regional Education Bureau |
| SC-UK | Save the Children United Kingdom |
| SNRS | Somali National Regional State |
| SoRPARI | Somali Region Pastoral & Agro-pastoral Research Institute |
| TTI | Teacher Training Institute |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| WAB | Women Affairs Bureau Jijiga |
| WCEFA | World Conference on Education for All |
| WEF | World Education Forum |
| WFP | World Food Program |

GLOSSARY

GER: The gross enrolment rate is the number of pupils enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the theoretical age group for the same level of education.

NER: The net enrolment rate is the number of pupils of the theoretical school-age group for a given level of education, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age-group.

Local words:

| | |
|--------|---|
| birka | constructed water reservoirs (plural is berkad) |
| kebele | administrative sub-district in Ethiopia (Amharic) |
| woreda | administrative district in Ethiopia (Amharic) |

Seasons in Somali Region:

| | |
|-------|---|
| Deyr | short rains (October–December) |
| Gu' | long rains (April–June) |
| Karan | third rainy season (August–September) in northern Somali Region |

ABSTRACT

In Somali region, Ethiopia education is far behind the third millennium development goal: to achieve universal primary education in 2015. While rates of participation and completion of basic education for pastoralist boys are very low, the rates for girls are far lower.

Despite of high willingness and new policies Ethiopia is one of the countries which are most likely to be unable to reach the goals. Better information is needed to improve the current situation. With the information new interventions will help to provide primary education to rural and pastoral areas. This research is focussing on Harshin, a pastoral setting in Somali Region.

During this research mostly qualitative data is gathered from pastoralists parents, students, teachers, directors and other actors in education looking for the causes of the low rates. This was done by interactive methods like focus group discussions.

There is a serious lack of schools in Harshin keeping the majority of school age children out of school. The main reason for the even lower enrolment of girls is the awareness of parents. The girls often help in the household and look after sheep and goats. It is difficult to see the benefit of education, especial for girls there are no role models.

Problems found in this research are: availability of schools, travelling distance, poor and small families, tradition and safety, early marriage, marriage of girls, high workload and low awareness. These problems are discussed with a special focus on how this influence enrolment of girls.

First of all, the lack of schools need attention. Other possible improvements are better trained parent teacher associations and a program to educate local girls to become role models by being female teachers. If local communities are better informed about the possibilities they are more likely to engage in community activities. A better information flow will enable local initiatives to build their own schools.

The outcome of these findings will contribute in making policies and strategies of the educational projects. This will help to promote gender equity in education and to achieve the third millennium development goal.

KEYWORDS

Girls' education, primary education, enrolment rates, gender, pastoralism and agro pastoralism, rural area, Somali region, Ethiopia

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The Institute for Pastoral and Agro pastoral Studies (IPAS) is part of Haramaya University, Ethiopia. It is located about 510 kilometres from the capital city Addis Ababa in the Eastern Hararghe Zone. IPAS is established to undertake development-oriented research that captures multiplicity and diversity in knowledge, practices and interests of the pastoral and agro pastoral communities in Ethiopia and contributes to the development of sustainable livelihoods in these societies.

At this moment IPAS is conducting a baseline study on gender issues in Afar, Somali and Borena with special focus to pastoral and agro-pastoral communities. Part of this baseline study is related to gender and education. There is already research conducted by Women Affair Bureau (WAB) in 2008. The factor for not attending classes is explained as it is merely due to lack of facilities due to the marginalization of people. Factors such as culture and lack of interest or ignorance of the benefit of schooling are not dealt with in the report.

In order to design a sound education policy and deliver gender-equitable education, policy makers need to identify what motivates pastoralists to send their children to school, understand the expectations and motivations of girls and their families and then develop strategies that take account of their expectations. There is a lack of relevant data about pastoralists in general, and girls in particular.

1.2 Problem definition

While rates of participation and completion of primary education for pastoralist boys are very low, the rates for girls are far lower in Somali region.

There is a lack of gender disaggregated information about education in Somali pastoralist region. Baseline study is needed in order to fill this gap and get insights for improved policy making in education.

1.3 Research Objective

The objective of this research is to analyse what is leading to low girls attendance in primary schools in Harshin region.

1.4 Research Questions

Main question:

What causes can be found for girls for (not) attending primary school in Harshin district in Somali Region?

Sub questions:

1. What motivates parent to send their children, especially girls, to primary school?
2. What reasons do parents have for not sending their children, especially girls, to primary school?
3. How can primary schools contribute to higher attendance rates of girls in primary school?

4. How do girls themselves value primary education?

1.5 Outline of the Study

This report is organized into six main chapters. Chapter 1 offers the background of the study and describes the problem statement. Its further includes the formulated research questions that guided the study. Chapter 2 lays down literature concerning girls education and international agreements. It also explains the education system in Ethiopia. In Chapter 3 the report deals with the research methodology thereby elaborating the research area, tools used and the data analysis procedure. Chapter 4 consists of the empirical findings of the field research and the discussion of the results is covered in Chapter 5. The report ends with Chapter 6 which includes the conclusion and the recommendations of the study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter presents information from recent literature which will provide a background for this study.

First you will find information about the educational system in Ethiopia followed by international agreements and information about how Ethiopia is doing according to global monitoring reports. This will enable you to understand the local situation as it is now, and to place it into a national and global context.

After that the importance of girls education for rural development is explained. You will also find information about a common strategy: more female teachers. This information will rationale one of the recommendation found in chapter 6.2

The last part of this chapter gives an introduction to the study area and the local culture. It will explain the lifestyle and livelihood of the unique pastoral culture of the study area.

2.1 Educational System in Ethiopia

Government education policy

The educational system of Ethiopia has the following four major goals:

1. To produce good citizens, who understand, respect and defend the constitution; students who respect democratic values and human rights; develop attitude for research and work and capacity to solve problems, develop skills in various professions and with a sense of citizenship to participate in and contribute to the development of the community and the nation.
2. To realize the goal of achieving universal primary education through expanding access and coverage of primary education with equity and improved quality.
3. To meet the demand of manpower at all levels for the socio-economic development needs of the country, both qualitatively and quantitatively, through the vertical integration of the secondary, technical and vocational, and higher educational programs.
4. To build the capacity within the educational system for sustainable development of the system through organizational capacity building for the program implementation, continuous innovation, and quality leadership at various levels.

(Bulder, 2007)

The second major goal relates most to this research: To realize the goal of achieving universal primary education with equity.

A new Education and Training Policy was introduced in 1994 and it is being implemented through a series of Education sector development programs the third of which will commence as of September 2004/05. The main trust of Education Sector Development Program is to improve quality, relevance, and equity and expand access with special emphasis on primary education in rural and underserved areas, as well as the promotion of education of girls. To this end the country is committed to realize universal primary education by 2015.

Vast strides have been made and encouraging trends are observable as compared to the past. However; with a net enrolment rate of only 71%¹ percent universal primary education is a long way to go. Education is still not only undersized but is also not evenly distributed, putting at a disadvantage females and children from rural areas. With less qualified teachers

¹ <http://www.unesco.org/en/efareport/resources/statistics/statistical-tables/> accessed on 3rd June 2010

and high student-teacher and student- section ratios, quality is not to the desired level and it is more so in the rural areas. Internal efficiency is also low mainly as a result of high dropout rates. (Ministerial Seminar on Education for Rural People in Africa: Policy Lessons, Options and Priorities hosted by the Government of Ethiopia 7-9 September 2005, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia).

Building more schools is an obvious requirement in order to extend access to children who are currently out of school. It was however realized that it is difficult to attain universalization of primary education by 2015 under a highly standardized construction system. In a situation where there is low access and inequity in enrolments, and in the absence of significant improvements in efficiency and escalating costs of school construction, alternative strategies and models that help to increase access to education are required. The following approaches were reported to have been used by the regions:

- a) Low cost schools: This involves low cost designs and the use of local construction materials in some areas. It also includes one class school (one teacher school) in non-accessible villages.
- b) Boarding and mobile schools: These are being attempted in the pastoralist areas because mobility of the people, sparse population and harsh environmental conditions make it difficult to provide access to children in these areas only through systems that are designed for sedentary people. Curriculum and teacher training packages are adopted to suit the situation.
- c) Multi grade school system: This has been initiated for sparsely populated and scattered villages, and is currently in pilot stage in Oromia and Amhara regions.
- d) Alternative basic education center (ABE): While this caters for out of school children youths and adults; regional governments and NGOs have started implementing this complementary package.
- e) Adult and non-formal education for youths and adults.
- f) School expansion and renovation by local communities, government and NGOs.
- g) Community based school construction by community and NGOs.
- h) Expanding private provision of education: Private sector, non-government organizations schools can provide choices for schooling and help to increase access and quality.
- i) Increasing the availability of schools in rural areas. It was reported that about 85-90 percent of primary schools are constructed in rural areas.

(Ministerial Seminar on Education for Rural People in Africa: Policy Lessons, Options and Priorities hosted by the Government of Ethiopia 7-9 September 2005, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

Obviously, the government has ambitious plans. Unfortunately, when reading the approaches described above, the gender component is missing. All strategies are focusing on providing more schools. But, even when there are schools, not all girls will go to school. When there are schools, the majority of the boys will go to school. In contrast to the girls. Even when there are schools available, often they do not get the possibility to attend schools. Regrettably, none of the above mentioned approaches is focusing on girls.

In 2004 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees concluded: The EPRDF government has made a serious effort in the expansion of education, and the sectoral budget has risen from 9% to 13.75% over the decade. Impressive expansion of enrolment continues to be confronted by poor facilities and teaching, a deteriorating teacher-student ratio, and a

dramatic and increasing dropout rate. There remain marked disparities in the education system, regionally, and between the sexes. As the education system expands, increasing graduate unemployment is emerging as a new issue to be addressed. (Vaughan, 2004)

Obviously, there remain high differences in the educational system in Ethiopia. The development of the education system in various regions differ substantially from each other. To make the information more relevant for this research, below more is explained about education in the Somali region, on which this research is focussing.

2.2 Education in Somali region

Education is a particularly neglected area which has received only minimal investment in physical and human resources in the past. Quality of, and access to education in the Somali National Regional State (SNRS) is amongst the poorest in Ethiopia. The SNRS is the second lowest next to Afar in gross enrolment ratio in primary schools (1-8). The participation rate is less than 15 percent of the total school aged children. This means that 85 percent of school aged children are out of school. Many pastoral and agro-pastoral children cannot enjoy their right to education because there are no schools physically located near their homes and very few have the opportunity of moving to major towns to access an education. Physical access is a critical factor affecting enrolment and dropout rates as well as the ability of households to send and keep a child in school. (Devereux, 2006)

There is a significant problem of access to and participation of girls in education. The participation rate/gross enrolment rate of girls in primary schools is lower than the other regions and the national average (0.4). Fewer girls in the primary school age bracket are going to school in this region as compared to most other regions. Girls' enrolment in secondary school in the SNRS is also the lowest and is below the national average. Interviewees who participated in this assessment report that girls in their community are not sent to school, drop out of school, attend irregularly and perform poorly in school mainly due to parents', religious and community leaders' lack of value of girls' education and girls' household maintenance chores. The percentage of female teachers in the SNRS is also the lowest in the country, depriving girls of positive role models. (idem)

Children in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas carry huge workloads including herding animals in harsh conditions and conducting various household maintenance chores (especially girls) including looking after younger siblings, cooking, cleaning and fetching water and firewood. Due to heavy workloads, many children, especially girls, are not sent to school, while others are often absent or are unable to complete homework assignments. (Lagu, 2004)

Lack of formal education leaves rural Somalis with no option but to continue pursuing their parents' livestock- or crop-based livelihoods, no matter how vulnerable that livelihood strategy becomes. (Devereux 2006)

2.3 International agreements

In Ethiopia, the government has signed several international agreements. By doing so they confirmed their willingness in developing the educational sector. Several times again they did

not reach the goals. After breaking the made agreements, new agreements were signed. At this moment the millennium development goals are the current challenge of Ethiopia. By showing the agreements of the past, I will show that an agreement is not a guarantee for success. At this moment action is needed, otherwise, again, Ethiopia will fail to meet the goals.

2.3.1 1990: World Declaration on Education for all

In 1990, representatives from 155 countries and 150 organisations pledged to provide education for all by the year 2000 at the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) in Jomtien, Thailand organized by the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNDP. Organised in response to the widespread concern over the deterioration of education systems during the 1980s, the Conference concluded with the unanimous adoption of the "World Declaration on Education for All" and endorsed a "Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs." Through these two texts, the world community renewed its commitment to ensuring the rights of all people to education and knowledge. The objective was to universalize primary education and massively reduce illiteracy before the end of the decade.

2.3.2 2000: Dakar Framework for Action

Ten years later, the objectives were not met. Another important event took place: the World Education Forum in Dakar. By adopting the Dakar Framework for Action, the 1,100 participants of the Forum reaffirmed their commitment to achieving Education for All by the year 2015. Part of this framework states: *We hereby collectively commit ourselves to the attainment of the following goals: Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality; (...) Pay special attention to street and working children, nomadic communities, children in remote environments and areas of conflict, minority groups...* (Dakar Framework for Action)

2.3.3 2000: Millennium Development Goals

In the same magic year 2000, 189 countries unanimously adopted the Millennium Development Goals, which have been commonly accepted as a framework for measuring development progress. The second goal is to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. The third goal is asking attention for the ratio of boys and girls enrolled in primary education.

Indicators of MDG 2 and 3

Target 2a: Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling

- Net enrolment ratio in primary education
- Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary
- Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds, women and men

Target 3a: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015

- Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education
- Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
- Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

2.3.4 2010: statistics of Ethiopia

Now, in 2009, according to UNESCO, numerous countries, including Ethiopia are lacking behind and again, it is not likely that the millennium development goals will be reached. Below you can find actual statistics about Ethiopia. Statistics about Harshin can be find in chapter 4.1.

Ethiopia managed to double its net enrolment rate (NER) from 34% in 1999 to 71% in 2007. While the country still has a long way to go, it has made dramatic advances in improving access and tackling inequalities. An ambitious school construction programme in rural areas has been particularly instrumental in spurring demand for education by reducing distances to school and addressing security concerns for girls. Ethiopia's elimination of school tuition fees has also stimulated increased enrolment. (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009)

In Ethiopia, literacy rates range from 83% in the Addis Ababa region to 25% in the Amhara region. Pastoralists and nomads have lower literacy levels than other rural populations. In the Afar region of Ethiopia, for example, the literacy rate for adults was 25% in 1999, but in pastoralist areas it was only 8%. (Idem)

Each year the *Education for all* (EFA) Development Index (EDI) is published by UNESCO. The 2009 report supports us with the following statistics:

Total Primary net enrolment rate Ethiopia = 0.598

Gender-specific EFA index (GEI)= 0.667 F/M

Survival rate till grade 5= 0.723

Overall education development index=0.598

With this data a calculation is made in order to get a overall education development index. It goes beyond the scope of this report to explain this calculation. The overall education development index for Ethiopia in 2009 is 0.598. In the last report UNESCO has ranked 129 countries on basis of the overall education development index. Ethiopia stands on the 125th place and therefore belongs to the countries which are qualified to be 'far from EFA'.

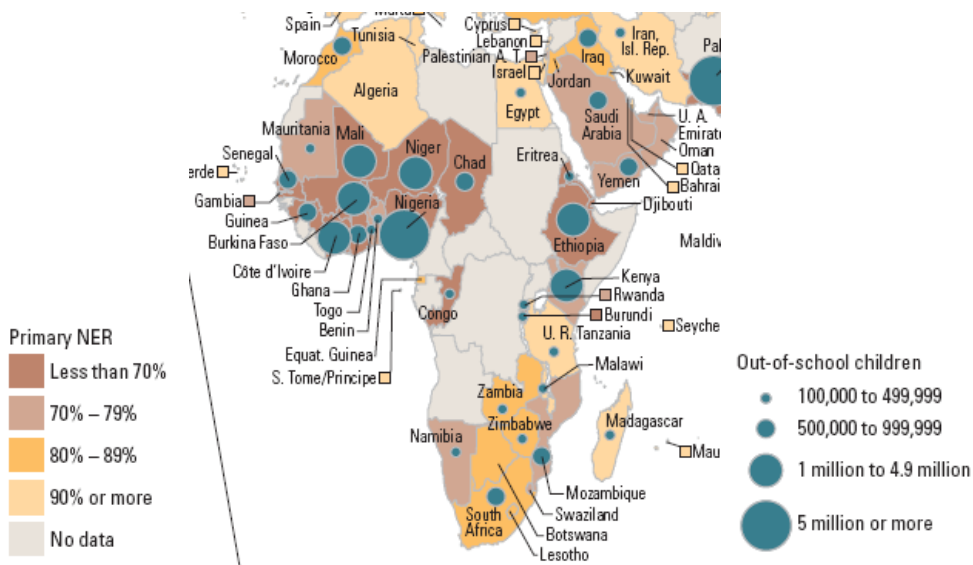


Figure 1: Primary education Net Enrolment Rate and out-of-school children, 2005
 For Ethiopia: NER is less than 70% and 1 million to 4.9 million out of school children at this moment.

Source: <http://www.unesco.org/education/gmr2008/maps/map2.2.pdf>

2.4 Gender parity, equality and equity defined

International consensus on education priorities give an important place to achieving gender parity, equality and equity. Therefore a you will find a definition and explanation of these terms below.

2.4.1 Parity

Gender parity is often used as a goal: achieving equal participation of girls and boys in all forms of education based on their proportion in the relevant age-groups in the population. The gender MDG focuses on the relative proportions of girls and boys in school by using the Gender Parity Index (GPI). Gender parity is a quantitative indicator. It can be used to measure the numerical gaps between female and male in relation to access to education. However, achieving gender parity in education does not guarantee high numbers in school, nor does it measure the quality of the schooling experience of girls. (Subrahmanian, 2005)

2.4.2 Equality

Gender equality is focussing on ensuring the educational equality between boys and girls, this is on both the equality of opportunity and equality of treatment. It recognizes that men and women or boys and girls start from a different position of advantage, and are constrained in different ways. Males and females have separate needs in education. Equality means access to education and having the same opportunities in educations. Achieving gender parity is just one step towards gender equality in and through education. (Subrahmanian, 2005)

2.4.3 Equity

Equity is used to indicate the type of redistributive policy approach that can redress discrimination and biases against investments in female schooling by states, societies and families. Equity includes both ideas of parity and equality, but also emphasizes on other forms of exclusion. It recognizes the gender injustice as operating within a wider sphere of social injustice, and the importance of the kind of education that could improve social justice. (UNESCO, 2005)

This research is focussing on enrolment rates of girls in order to achieve gender parity. The importance of equality and equity is recognized, but it goes beyond the scope of this research to analyse these concepts into detail in this research. As put above, achieving gender parity is one step towards gender equality. When more girls and women are enrolled in school, they may use the spaces which are offered to help push society towards greater gender-awareness and change.

2.5 Importance of girls education for (rural) development

According to human capital theory, the educational level of the agricultural labour force has an influence on agricultural productivity. This relationship may take three forms:

- education can improve the quality of farmers' labour by enabling them to produce more with their available stock of production factors (other than labour);
- education can increase the efficiency of resource allocation;
- education can help farmers to choose more effective means of production by adopting new techniques.

(Atchoarena and Gasperini, 2003)

The often cited literature review of Lockheed, Jamison and Lau (1980) reviews the results of 37 surveys conducted to demonstrate the relationship between education and agricultural productivity in 13 developing countries. All of these studies show that farmers' education has a positive impact on their productivity. According to these results, agricultural productivity is 7.4 per cent higher on average for a farmer with four years of elementary education. This effect is stronger in an environment undergoing modernization than in a traditional environment. Since pastoralists live in a traditional environment, the effects will be weaker in our study area.

The importance of education is obvious. Education is a fundamental right. No country has succeeded without educating its people. Education is the key to sustaining growth and reducing poverty (Wolfensohn, 2000). Education helps to improve security, health, prosperity and ecological balance in the world. It encourages social, economic and cultural progress, tolerance and international cooperation (UNESCO, 2005). Education is probably the single most effective means of curbing population growth, reducing child mortality, eradicating poverty and ensuring democracy, peace and sustainable development. Basic education is the foundation of lifelong learning and skills acquisition. It is the basis, the fundament, but not the ceiling of education. (Mayor, 1996)

Education is essential for every nation. Each nation prospers or declines depending upon the education of its children. Civil, religious, political, legislative, judicial and economic reforms

continue only through education. Education is not intellectual development alone that governs individual, national and global progress. It is unleashing of individual potential in all its varied manifestations that does so. The real education is unlocking of potential, and that potential can be released only as the school addresses that individual from that perspective of the whole person. That whole includes mental physical emotional social creative moral and spiritual dimensions of every child. The dimensions are not discrete. And within every individual some facets are more highly developed than others are. Development here is always individual. It is an ongoing life process. Foundations for the growth begin in the home and reinforced in the school. Growth beyond that continues only through individual initiative (Kelsey, 1993).

2.6 Why is literacy important?

Literacy is a human right, a tool of personal empowerment and a means for social and human development. Educational opportunities depend on literacy.

Literacy is at the heart of basic education for all, and essential for eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy. There are good reasons why literacy is at the core of Education for All (EFA).

A good quality basic education equips pupils with literacy skills for life and further learning; literate parents are more likely to send their children to school; literate people are better able to access continuing educational opportunities; and literate societies are better geared to meet pressing development. (UNESCO)

The costs of missing the EFA goals are now well known. For example, the Development Committee (2003a) report suggests that the costs of not meeting gender-parity commitments includes a missed opportunity to: (a) increase per capita growth by 0.1-0.3 percentage points; (b) lower fertility rates by 0.1-0.4 children per woman; (c) lower rates of under-5 mortality by 5.8 per 1,000 live births; and (d) ensure lower prevalence of underweight children under 5 by 2 percentage points. Such a computation of the costs of not meeting EFA targets on gender highlights the interlinkages between education and other MDGs. The EFA Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2003a) makes a strong case about interlinkages – not just from the point of view of beneficial effects of education, but also in terms of factors that contribute to persistent gender inequalities in education. Understanding and addressing the implications for girls' education of inequalities in access to labour and employment opportunities, poor health and nutrition, amongst others, is critical. Investments need to be nurtured for several years to come to ensure sustained change in girls' education, as well as the sustained impact of girls' education on other dimensions of development, such as child health. (UNESCO, 2005)

The analysis in this paper generally shows that female secondary education, family planning, and health programs all affect fertility and mortality, and the effect of female secondary education appears to be very strong. Moreover, our results suggest that family planning will reduce fertility more when combined with female education, especially in countries that now have low female secondary enrolment levels. (Subbarao and Raney, 1995)

Female education influences fertility and mortality through many pathways. For example, education affects desired family size by enhancing the opportunity cost of a woman's time in economic activities relative to child-bearing and by changing her aspirations, thus building

demand for family planning services. Maternal education promotes child health which in turn affects desired family size. Education also promotes more effective contraceptive use and more willingness to use modern contraceptive method (Subbarao and Raney, 1995)

2.7 Female teachers

During this research special attention is paid to the role of female teachers in addressing enrolment problems especially for girls. Therefore you will find some information from literature about this topic.

One of the most compelling arguments for increasing the number of women teachers in schools relates to the positive impact that doing so has on girls' education. There is evidence to show a correlation between the number of women teachers and girls' enrolment, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. In countries where there are more or less equal numbers of male and female primary teachers, there is close to gender parity in student intake. In contrast, in countries where women constitute only 20% of teachers, there are far more boys than girls entering school.

The relationship between women teachers and girls' enrolment is more than a simple cause and effect, as there are many factors that prevent girls from attending school some of which also impact on the number of women teachers. Increasing the number of women teachers has to be accompanied by other strategies to promote girls' education, such as ensuring that the timing of the school day fits with girls' domestic workloads, and ensuring a high quality of education in a safe and secure environment.

There are different reasons for the generally positive relationships between girls' enrolment and women teachers: In some conservative communities, parents will not allow their daughters to be taught by a male teacher. This is the case in some areas of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh and probably in Somali region too. The placement of a woman teacher, therefore, can have an immediate impact on access. Even where the presence of male teachers is not necessarily a barrier to girls' enrolment, parents may prefer women teachers over men. A study in Nepal, for example, indicates that mothers feel more comfortable talking about their children with a woman teacher, and in India - an environment where local politics is often considered to be about contacts, favours and inside-dealings - women teachers are considered "more sincere" because they are less likely to be involved in local politics.

The presence of women in schools can also impact positively on girls' retention in school and on their achievement. Studies have shown a positive impact from women teachers on girls' (and boys') achievement. A female role model can support and encourage girls to successfully complete their studies and maybe even continue studying to become teachers, themselves. She can also be there to listen to any problems and provide guidance when necessary. In schools where girls are in the minority, especially, the presence of one or more female teacher may also ensure protection for girls from unwanted attention from boys or male teachers, and even from sexual abuse and exploitation.

At the school policy level, women teachers may act as advocates for girls, representing their perspectives and needs, and promoting more girl-friendly learning. For example, women teachers may be able to advocate for better toilet and washing facilities. These are of

particular importance to adolescent girls who are menstruating, and whose active participation in school during their monthly periods may depend on access to clean toilets separate from those used by boys and a water supply. In terms of menstruation, puberty, sex and reproductive health education, women teachers have an important role to play in providing girls in school with accurate information about their own bodies and how to look after them.

Women teachers provide new and different role models for girls especially those in rural and conservative communities. They point to possibilities for women to be active outside the home and to be agents in community development. They play key roles in educating and socializing children beyond gender stereotypes, and so are crucial agents of change. (all paragraphs: Kirk, 2006)

2.8 Introduction to the Study Area

Pastoral areas cover 60% of Ethiopia and include 12-15% of the human population as well as very large numbers of livestock. Residents of pastoral areas have the lowest access in the country to education and human health services, and pastoral areas have the least developed infrastructure displaying their exclusion from mainstream development. Besides, the livelihoods of pastoral communities are severely threatened by animal disease, drought and unfavourable terms of trade (PICP, 2002).

Based on figures published by the Central Statistical Agency in 2008, Harshin has an estimated total population of 80,215, of whom 43,854 were men and 36,361 were women; 10% of its population are urban dwellers, which is less than the Zone average of 21.0%. Information is not available on the area of Harshin, so its density cannot be calculated. This woreda is primarily inhabited by the Arap and Habar Awal, sub-clans of the Somali Isaaq clan. The largest ethnic group reported in Harshin was the Somali people (99.89%).



Figure 2: Map of Ethiopia, arrow pointing to Harshin area.

2.8.1 Geographical features

- Harshin is one of the 47 woredas in the Somali Region of Ethiopia. The easternmost woreda of the Jijiga Zone, Harshin is bordered on the south by the Degehabur Zone, on the west by Kebri Beyah, and on the east by Somalia. The major town in Harshin is Harshin.
- Harshin is predominantly semi-arid lowland and is characterised by flat, treeless plateaus, few rivers and mountains; treeless plains are gradually increasing – a future environmental concern.
- The climate is generally hot and dry. Annual rainfall is 300 – 400mm, falling during two rainy seasons - Gu (Apr - Jun) and Deyr (Oct – Dec).
- The Gu rains are the most important for pastoralists. Sometimes Harshin receives Karan rains (Jul - Sep).
- Soil is mostly red and sandy with high water permeability
- Birkads and seasonal ponds are the main water sources; there are no permanent or seasonal wells.

2.8.2 Livelihood

Livelihoods: pastoralism: livestock production from shoats (sheep/goats; most important species), camel and cattle (latter declining). Wealth is determined by livestock and *birkad* ownership.

Land and water: land is owned by clans, but access to pasture/water is free. Water is mainly accessed through birkads (all year round; sold by better-off owners to poorer households) and seasonal ponds (communally shared). There are no permanent or seasonal wells.



Figure 3: House and camel with fence

Food, income and expenditure: food sources for all wealth groups are predominantly purchases of wheat, rice, flour, oil, sugar and maize, with their own dairy products; also gifts for poor households. Livestock sale is the main source of income; poor and middle households also sell milk, rich households get income from selling water from their *birkads*; and poor households may also receive financial gifts from relatives. All wealth groups spend most of their income on food; the rest goes on household items, clothes, social services and inputs. Poor and middle households also have to buy water.

Vulnerabilities and responses: main vulnerabilities are recurrent drought, extreme water shortage, livestock export restrictions and general market shocks, animal and human diseases, poor transport and communication infrastructure. Risk-minimizing strategies include livestock species diversification, water harvesting / conservation techniques, and saving money in good years. Coping strategies include extra livestock sale, migration, slaughtering livestock for household consumption, reducing/adjusting food consumption, wild food consumption, seeking support from relatives / sub-clan members, and seeking relief assistance.

Migration: migration tends to be within the zone in normal years, but may extend into neighbouring zones, even as far afield as the Highlands and Somalia in bad years.

Markets: the main external markets (livestock sale, cereal purchase, non-food) are Hargeisa, Buro', Baligubadle and Bosaso, all in Somalia. Harshin town provides the main internal markets, along with Hartasheik. Since the imposition of the livestock ban, livestock markets have slowed.

Social services: health services are poor: one health centre and a few clinics; they lack essential drugs and are poorly equipped and staffed. Physical infrastructure is poor: there are only seasonal feeder roads; the only communications are a single line telephone operator system and a Government HF radio in Harshin town.

Below you find the characteristics of different wealth groups. There are poor, middle and better of households. Wealth is determined by livestock holding.

| Wealth characteristics Harshin | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Wealth group % of HHs | Poor 30-35% | Middel 45-55% | Better of 15-20% |
| Household size | 5-7 | 7-9 | 8-10 |
| Livestock holdings: | | | |
| Shoats | 20-50 | 60-120 | 120-200 |
| Cattle | 0-3 | 0-10 | 0-10 |
| Camels | 0-5 | 10-30 | 30-50 |
| Donkeys | 1-3 | | |

Table 1: Different wealth groups and characteristics.

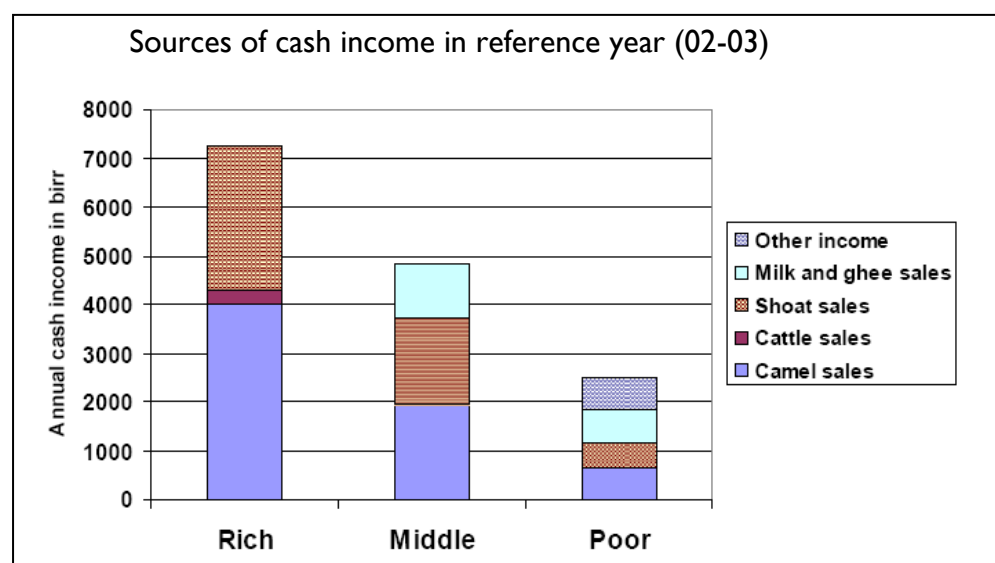


Table 2: Income sources for all wealth groups in Harshin

For this information the report Managing Risks and Opportunities was used. This research was an initiative of WFP, USAID, Safe the Children and ECHO. Together with Aware and Gashamo Harshin is included in the seventeenth livelihood zone. The above information is for Harshin only.

2.9 Somali culture

Somali pastoralist women have a marginalized position in the household. The Somali society is highly patriarchal. The women have less decision making power within the home. These women feel undervalued saying themselves as “the half of men”: ‘If a man is killed, his family has to be compensated with 100 camels. If a woman is killed, she is compensated with only 50 camels. So we are only treated as the half of men.’ (Devereux, 2006)



Figure 4: Woman with camel

Women's lives are embedded in their social, economic and religious contexts, so that many of the factors that disadvantage women are problems of poverty and underdevelopment, shared by their communities and the country as a whole. The stresses created by high levels of poverty across Ethiopian communities, however, are compounded by norms which allocate to women responsibility for three particularly onerous tasks: grinding grain, preparing food, and fetching water and fuel-wood. All are time consuming and physically demanding in ways which are, in themselves, sufficient seriously to curtail women's scope for participation in public or political life. Given the conventional basis of the double oppression Ethiopian women face, its eradication from a knowledge system, or culture, shared and internalized by both women and men, presents enormous obstacles. (Hammond, 1999)

3. CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Harshin as sample of Somali Region

For this thesis it was not possible to include all districts of Somali region. Due to safety reasons not all districts were suitable to visit. Moreover there was a clear time limit. To get a good impression of how factors are related with each other was more important than to get a lot of raw information without any understanding of the underlying reasons. Therefore it was concluded to visit only one district which was easily accessible and could give us comprehensive, in-depth information about primary education in that area.

Soon after this decision Harshin came forward as an easily accessible district. Also several other researchers use Harshin as a representative sample in Somali region. Harshin did have the characteristics which were needed like availability of several primary schools, both formal and informal. Moreover, for some settings in Harshin it is even possible to go to secondary school, so it was also possible to get more insight in how this influences school attendance.

This research does not assume Harshin is totally representative for Somali region. Harshin has its own characteristics which all other districts will have. Nevertheless, it is very likely that different factors will relate in the same way in Harshin and in other Somali districts. It should be noticed that Harshin is quite remote and far from Jijiga, major town of Jijiga. Harshin is a very rural area, and representative for most rural areas. It should be clear that Harshin is not representing Jijiga town.

In the past, there were several NGOs active in Harshin and focusing on education. These organisations were: Hope of the Horn, Oxfam Novib and Save the Children. By now, the projects on education are completed. Schools do not get any nongovernmental help any more. The NGOs only worked with selected villages/schools. Therefore in Harshin it was possible to look at the influence of former help from outside too.

On the other hand, due to the various interventions, Harshin is further developed than most of the other districts in Somali Region. This was not seen as a major problem since there are still several places in Harshin which did not get any help, so in that sense they are still representative for most of Somali Region. Nevertheless, during this research it has been taken into account whether NGOs had influenced the situation or not.

3.1 Methodology

The research data is collected from two sources. First is literature review, second is field work. There is limited information available about education in Somali Region. Both good quantitative and qualitative data is missing. Moreover, some information is contradictory. It was very hard to verify the information. Therefore, in some cases, different data from different sources is presented.

The research is focussing on the reasons for not attending primary school. This means the research is focussing on the story behind the statistics. Through this research information is gathered for improved policy making. In order to get this information we need limited qualitative information from literature and other statistics. However, the focus of this research

is on qualitative information to explain the quantitative findings. With this quantitative information it will be possible to explain the situation and to get insights for improved policy making. Therefore, fieldwork is the core of this research.

3.2 Literature review

For this research various forms of literature are used. These include research reports, books, reports from nongovernmental organisations like Save the Children and reports and statistics from governmental organisations like Women Affairs Bureau and Educational Bureau and internet.

Together this information provided a bigger picture of the state of education. The literature was critically reviewed and in some cases not included in this research due to poor quality.

3.3 Field work

During field visits more local data was gathered from local governments and agencies. These included primarily statistics about schools, number of classes, gender specific enrolment figures. Field work was used to check the obtained data and to get a more complete overview of the constraints in girls education in this specific area. During various field visits different methods were applied in order to get qualitative, reliable information. These methods include:

Semi Structured Interview of head of Education Bureau in Harshin; during this interview we tried to get more information about the local policies which were applied in Harshin. Further we got information about the different types of school, number of classes, teachers, male and female students per class.

- a. Meeting with several key informants from regional education office, bureau of statistics, women affairs office
- b. Interview of director of primary schools; Of one school the director was interviewed.
- c. Focus group discussion with male teachers; Of one school two teachers and the director participated.
- d. Interview of two female teachers; Of one school two female teacher were interviewed.
- e. Focus group discussions with parents in village with school; FGD in Lafa issa, Kabri Ahmed and Mada wain.
- f. Focus group discussion with mothers in village without school; 3 women participated
- g. Focus group discussion with fathers in village with only Coranic school; 8 fathers participated
- h. Seven interviews with parents (fathers and mothers separately) sending all/some/no children to school
- i. Focus group discussion with Parent Teacher Association (PTA); 7 members participated
- j. Interview of female members of PTA
- k. Interview with members of girls club; 13 girls were present.
- l. Meeting with group of students in Harshin; 4 students and 1 teacher were present

This research methods were used for different reasons. The available information is very limited. Therefore this research had to identify all issues which plays a role in decision

making about sending children, girls especially, to school. Therefore key informants were selected and different interviews are used to get the information.

In order to get information from the ground the methods used are participatory. After interviewing key informants also local people were involved in the research. Through focus group discussions with small groups information was checked. Moreover, since these meetings were as informal as possible, it was likely to get more reliable information, and it was avoided to get only political right answers.

During the fieldwork we tried to make the information gathering as easy as possible for the respondents. Otherwise they would not feel free to speak out. So, no formal questionnaires were used. Meetings were in their own village, and when possible at the home or school of the respondents. Given the fact that literacy is low in the area the respondents were only requested to talk to us, they did not have to read or write.

When possible female respondents were taken separately from other people, this is from men. This made them more talkative. Moreover, this made it more likely the given information is consistent with the reality. In most cases a female translator was used to make sure girls or women would not feel restricted to talk. In some cases only a male translator was able to do fieldwork, all those translators got instructions to facilitate the communication with girls and women.



Figure 5: Discussion with mothers

3.4 Sample selection

Initially the research was focusing on Somali Region as a whole. Later it was decided to concentrate on Harshin only due to limited resources. Harshin is seen as quite representative for Somali region and therefore selected in several researches. This is more detailed explained at the beginning of this chapter.

Since the baseline study wants to focus on pastoral and agro pastoral communities, research was done around Harshin, and not in Harshin town itself.

As mentioned, Harshin is popular by other researchers. Therefore it was tried to focus on communities which are left out in other research. This to prevent to bother local people again and again. This was very effective, shown by the following quote.

Till now, never somebody asked us these important questions. We are very willing to help you to get the required information. Director of primary school in Mada wain

During sample selection we had to adapt to local circumstances. It was not possible to find and interview different persons of same household separately. Since the parents are pastoralists the father, mother or both are out in the field during the days. Even when parents do not look after the cattle, you will not find them together. Men spend their time hanging around in the village, chewing chat, talking with other men. Women are at home doing household tasks. Therefore it is almost impossible to find parents together. So, different persons of different households were interviewed. Therefore the planned household interviews were more like personal interviews. Still, people from households in different situations were selected. These included: households with no available schools, households which were only able to send their children to primary school, households which sends some children to school, and keeps some home, households which send no children to school. Initial it was planned to also select the households on bases of the education of the parents. This was not possible since there were as good as none educated parents in the villages, apart from the teachers. So the vast majority of school age children do have parents with no education.

Different schools were visited to gather data about their specific situations. These include:

- school in rural area, with female teachers, which got help of SC-UK in past
- school in rural area, no female teachers, which got no extra help
- school in Harshin town (for comparison)
- Alternative Basic Education school

One school we wanted to visit was not reachable because the roads were too bad since it rained a lot, so another school was visited.

3.5 Analysis of results

During all field visits notes were made of the interviews and discussions. After the visits these notes were processed into a Microsoft Word document. When doing this also the learning points, interesting quotes and in some cases conclusions are added.

During this research the questions became more specific and more detailed information was gained. After all the fieldwork all outcomes were put together to analyse them in order to know what is leading to low girls attendance in primary schools in Harshin region. You will find the outcome in chapter 4 and 5.

3.6 Limitations

People are expecting help, especially when they see a foreigner. Some of the interviewees were exaggerating their experience expecting support. Therefore people will try to show the

needs they have. Once, during a meeting with a group of women, another woman came and told she was a traditional birth attendance and also doing Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). She told some gruesome details and said she would be happy to stop doing this if a NGO would give her another income generating job. Clearly, she was expecting help.

People tend to give social and political right answers. Especially when sensitive topics like HIV/Aids and FGM are discussed. A lot of information was gathered in group discussions, where it is difficult to give an unusual or different opinion. Even the personal interviews were done together with a colleague and a translator. Moreover, the study is done in collaboration with Haramaya university which is a governmental organisation. Therefore it might be not everybody was feeling freely to speak out personal views.

Wishful thinking. People answer how it would be in the ideal situation. They tell you how they would like it to be. They do not tell the real situation. For example: when asked grade 8 girls for their future plans, all were planning to go to university. Later they told that till now, no girls of that village had further education. There was no reason to think this would change in the near future. So most likely, after grade 8 they will look after the cattle, and get married.

The research is focussing on primary schools. The students who were part of the research were all very young. The youngest was 11 and the oldest 18 years old. Some questions were very difficult for them to answer. For example: how are you going to use the knowledge you gained in school in your future life? Most students were not able to give an answer to this question. It was not possible to talk to students separately. All the time a teacher was attending the meetings. It is likely that this restricted students to give critical answers.

In order to be polite, Somali people will always give you an answer to a question. Even if they do not know the answer. Therefore you often get wrong answers. Therefore crosschecking all the information was an important part of this research. Nevertheless, not all information could be checked by other sources.

The research is focussing on Harshin. It is not known whether this is a representative sample of the pastoralists since good information to make a appropriate sample is missing. Most research done on pastoralists include Harshin in there sample since it is relatively easy accessible and known by their pastoralist lifestyle.

It was very difficult to get reliable statistical information about Harshin. Even good information could be outdated in one month due to the high mobility of the pastoralists. Especially during the research, since the drought was worse in years. One school visited lost over 200 students in one month. Other functional schools were closed during the research since most students migrated with their families because of the drought.

The pastoralist lifestyle is very unique. There is hardly any literature available on any aspect of the lives of pastoralists in Ethiopia. Part of this research is literature study. This part therefore is limited. One should be aware of the fact that not all theories will apply to the research population in the way it does in other regions and cultures.

Most data is collected by interview and other interactive tools in order to get good quality information from the local people. All the time a translator was involved to translate questions

and answers. This did not make a direct conversation possible. Unfortunately, not all interpreters were experienced, which made not all interviews were going smoothly. That's why a small guide was used to make sure the interpreter was not hindering a good interview.

4. CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

In this chapter you will find the results of this research. It starts with an overview of local statistics and some explanation. (4.1) That part focuses on enrolment rates. Special attention is paid to the reliability of the acquired data. (4.2) After that you will find information about the motivation to send children to schools (4.3) and the role which food aid plays (4.4). Following are the reasons and explanation why parents do not send children, especially girls to school (4.5). Following is information about female teachers in this area (4.6). After that, there is a session about the role which the school itself can have to get more girls into school (4.7). Then, a paragraph focuses on the girls themselves, how do they value primary education? (4.8) This chapter is illustrated with a lot of quotes of key informants and interviewees and ends with a conclusion. (4.9)

4.1 Enrolment rates of boys and girls

This research wants to explain the reasons why children, especially girls do and do not go to school. Therefore this chapter starts with the statistics about children in Harshin. After that, the explanation will follow.

Different studies on this topic are done by other researchers. Sadly, the information differs to a large extent. The first research to mention is done by the Woman Affairs Bureau (WAB) in 2008. According to the WAB 84% of students in school are boys and 16% of the students are girls. As a reason for more males in schools than females they give household chores, early marriage, working as maid for middle class families.

In the survey of Devereux in 2006, fewer than one person in five over 15 years old can read and write, and in rural areas only 13 per cent are literate. Literacy is highly gendered – men are three times more likely to be literate than women. In rural districts, female literacy ranges from 7 per cent to just 1.2 per cent.

According to educational office in Harshin the gender gap is not that big. 54% of the students are boys, 46% girls. Of 24 schools, all schools have more boys enrolled. Percentage of girls varies from 49% in Abokor Ahmed to 14% in Kortimalai in school year 2008/2009.

It is not possible to say who is presenting the right data. The outcome of such a research highly depends on your sampling strategy. And more important, pastoral people do move around, changing the reality and the reliability of the numbers all the time. The educational office in Harshin does have direct links to the schools, and the most recent numbers, therefore these numbers are used in the research. See also below.

| | Schools name | No of class room | Teachers | | | Students | | | % girls |
|----|---------------|------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| | | | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | |
| 1 | Harshin | 8 | 13 | 4 | 17 | 250 | 219 | 469 | 47 |
| 2 | Lan kay | 6 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 174 | 80 | 254 | 31 |
| 3 | Kaam Hashin | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 204 | 193 | 397 | 49 |
| 4 | B/Gubadle | 4 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 214 | 189 | 405 | 47 |
| 5 | Kuda Ramole | 4 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 131 | 114 | 245 | 46 |
| 6 | Aran Aray | 4 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 95 | 55 | 150 | 37 |
| 7 | Mada wain | - | 5 | 0 | 5 | 197 | 157 | 354 | 44 |
| 8 | Shan ismad | 4 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 208 | 205 | 413 | 50 |
| 9 | Kaba Karai | 4 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 229 | 209 | 438 | 48 |
| 10 | Dabai waine | 6 | 9 | 2 | 11 | 220 | 213 | 433 | 49 |
| 11 | Bal wako | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 114 | 103 | 217 | 47 |
| 12 | Bali Abad | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 135 | 109 | 244 | 45 |
| 13 | Adad Lay | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 178 | 164 | 342 | 48 |
| 14 | Abokor Ahmed | 2 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 158 | 154 | 312 | 49 |
| 15 | Masajidka | 2 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 154 | 148 | 302 | 49 |
| 16 | Afuflai | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 149 | 138 | 287 | 36 |
| 17 | Lafa islamad | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 99 | 81 | 180 | 45 |
| 18 | Bali ase | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 27 | 18 | 45 | 40 |
| 19 | Elmi Hirsi | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 35 | 15 | 50 | 30 |
| 20 | Aladka | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 11 | 5 | 16 | 31 |
| 21 | Derbign | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 12 | 8 | 20 | 40 |
| 22 | Kortimalai | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 43 | 7 | 50 | 14 |
| 23 | Garabidan | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 55 | 28 | 83 | 34 |
| 24 | Gamad | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | - | - | - | - |
| | Totals | 72 | 89 | 6 | 95 | 3092 | 2612 | 5704 | 46 |

Table 3: Statistics of Harshin from Somali Region Education Bureau Harshin District 2001 EC (2008/2009)

4.2 Data in dynamic situations

During fieldwork it became clear that not all acquired information was up to date. Situations are changing very fast. During the research, pastoralists were saying to suffer from the worst drought in years. Pastoralists are very mobile people. Therefore this drought was influencing their lives and also this research. In the graph below you can see the differences in one school we visited in Mada wain. The education bureau of Harshin gave us the information found in table 3. This information was collected earlier that year. According to the director of the school, the last month, around 200 families moved to find pasture for their cattle. Most of those families took their children with them. This was leading to a high dropout as shown in the figure below.

| According to | No of class room | Teachers | | | Students | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|----------|----|-------|----------|------|-------|-----|
| | | ♂ | ♀ | Total | ♂ | ♀ | Total | % ♀ |
| Ed bureau Harshin | 6 | 9 | 2 | 11 | 220 | 213 | 433 | 49 |
| Director 19th May | 7 | 7 | 3 | 10 | 179 | 60 | 239 | 26 |
| Change | +1 | -2 | +1 | -1 | -41 | -153 | -204 | |

Table 4: Comparison of statistics

And again, the numbers changed. When I visited the same school three weeks later, the female teachers in Dabai waine had resigned, meaning that at that moment there was only one school with female teachers, the school in Harshin town. In the rural areas of Harshin where the remaining 23 schools are, there are no female teachers any more. (More about female teachers and the difficulties they face in the rural area can be find in chapter 4.6.)

When looking at table 4, most shocking is the change you see in the last row. First 49% is female, which means almost gender parity. But when the school was visited only 26% was female, and 74% of the students enrolled at school were boys. This study did not aim to prove the data, but this information shows it might give disappointing information. In the case of this example it is not clear whether the difference in numbers is totally caused by the changing circumstances due to the mobile lifestyle of pastoralists. It also might be that the statistics try to give a positive image. In that case the data is even unreliable.

This is one example about quantitative information in Harshin. Circumstances are changing all the time. Given statistics are only snap shots of a particular moment. Pastoralists are mobile people, thus also the students are moving to different areas and different schools. This makes it extremely difficult or even impossible to give steadfast numbers which make any sense.

Another point to consider when talking about enrolment numbers is the following. Being registered does not mean these students are attending school every school day. They might go to school only occasionally. About this it is even more difficult to give any figures.

4.3 What motivates parents

Almost all parents found it difficult to explain their motivation to send children to school. Most common answer was the fact they have seen other people being better off after education. In some cases parents were hoping for a secondary school to be build in the neighbourhood, which would increase possibilities for further education.

I have been to school, left at standard 4 because my parents died. Some of my classmates are minister now. So I see it is important. Father of 5 sons and 6 daughter of which 2 girls and 4 boys go to school

One parent told that the land for pastoralism was limited. Scarcity of land forces people to look for other job opportunities. In order to get another job they send the children to school.

A lot of parents are sending their children to school because they saw other parents doing this. This is especially the case for girls. In some places girls education became accepted only after one single girl was sent to school. Soon, other girls followed and a 'tradition' was broken.

In the villages visited during this research there were no examples of girls who got better jobs due to their education. In these villages parents were less motivated to send their children to school. But, in another villages they recently recruited girls from grade 8 to follow a six month training to become a health worker. This had a huge impact on the enrolment rates of girls. Finally people saw also girls working for the government, having a respected job. This example was mentioned by a lot of people which are from other villages.

Decision making depends on the knowledge of parents of education. I know it from my own mind. Others have seen others who have send children to school and become health worker (including females) or teacher (only male). By the will of God I hope my children will get good job too. Mother of 8 children, all go to school. Mother of 5 children, all go to school.

In families with children of a wide range of ages it was common to see the older ones being educated, the younger ones not any more. The older ones completed school and still could not find a better job. The parents lose their faith in the fact that education would improve their lives.

My children (boys) help me writing in my shop now. They are committed themselves to make development. Two are helping with registration for vaccination now. I am very sorry they are still here without a job. Mother of 10 children. Only one of the seven girls goes to school.

Also during a discussion with a group of teachers, they were not able to explain the benefits of education for those who would not continue their education. Which practically means they were saying that education was useless for most boys and all girls.

During this research the curriculum content was not discussed. Although it might be an important factor, it was beyond the scope of this research to take this into account.

4.4 Food aid

During this research it was difficult to get information of the influence of food-aid on the motivation of parents to send children to school. Other projects show an increase in enrolments when school related food-aid is started. During this research food-aid was not mentioned by any parents as a reason for sending their children to school. When asked for it, they were happy about the food-aid, although it was unreliable. During this research most parents said their own children convinced them of the worth of education after being enrolled for a while.

Before, parents were angry of advice. Now they have understood the value of education. Now they see children writing letters and teaching each other. FGD with PTA members

In one village the parents were stimulated to send their children to school by excluding them from any food aid as long as the children were not going to school. This was a local initiative initiated by the village leader. He told us he did this because education is very important. It was a chance they didn't have when they were young. By doing this he hoped the parents would send all children to school, in order to get food-aid.

The woreda administration now want to discourage families to let their children to cultivate the fields. They said there will be no food aid till all children go to school.

FGD with (only male) teachers, Dabai waine

The school feeding program does encourage to send children to school, but I need children for cattle. The PTA talked to me, but I do not see other possibilities. Father of 2 boys and 1 girl going to school and 2 boys and 4 girls not going to school

4.5 Reasons for not sending children to school

4.5.1 No school available

Reason number one for not sending children to school is because there is no school. Harshin has got 47 woredas with a estimated total population of 80,215. 43% of the population is 15 years or younger² which means about 34,000 children have the age for going to school. In total 5704 children were enrolled into the 24 primary schools in Harshin during this research. This means there is a school in 51% of the villages. These numbers do not allow to make exact calculations, but it is very clear that there are by far not enough schools in Harshin area.



Figure 6: Some houses far away from any social services

A lot of parents stated their interest in education and would happily send their children if there was a school. But there was no school so the possibilities are very limited. Only in the very rare case a relative could take care of a kid, they would have a chance to go to school. In that case, only one child, most often the eldest son was send to school.

² See also <http://www.globalhealthfacts.org/topic.jsp?i=82> last accessed at June 4th 2010

My oldest son has been to Somaliland to a relative. Now he is a teacher. All others don't go to school. The boys are here, the girls are married. They are here and have nothing. Others work as labourers for others. There is no school. We have been here for 20 years. Relatives can take one but no more. There is no school here. (repeated, repeated) Children are illiterate, do nothing. They will be how I am. Mother of 9 children, nearest school 1,5 hours walk

The quote above shows one example of a family who cannot send the children to school because there is no school available. It was not part of this research to find out for how many parents this situation is the case. This research was not using a representative sample in order to answer that question. Most places visited during this research did have a school at walking distance. This research wants to explain the gap between enrolment rates of girls and boys. It is not about enrolment rates in general.

Nearest school is in Harshin which is a 3,5 hour walk. Maybe only 1% of the people here has education. They have to go to relative. If there would be a school we would send our children there. Also the girls. Like now they also study the Koran together.
FGD with 8 male settled agro-pastoralists

Literature

The Ethiopian government has promised to provide equipment and teachers if a community builds its own school. But till now, communities in Harshin are not reacting to this in spite of their often high demand for a school. There are a number of changes that might encourage participation by marginalized members of communities. The conventional form of publicity in informing poor and marginalized communities is limited. Poor communities cannot afford expensive daily newspapers and have limited access to radios and television. Informing this population requires other, more effective and accessible means of communication, which might include rallies, flyers, door-to-door visits and so forth (Williams 2007). This lesson accords with the broader claim that in poor communities informal communication strategies (such as street theatre) can serve to conscientize and inform the marginalized about community issues and their rights vis-à-vis public institutions (Bratton and Alderfer 1999).

4.5.2 School is too far to convince parents

For people living in remote villages, having no public services, it is also difficult to see the benefits of education. One village we visited during the fieldwork was 1,5 hour walk from a primary school. Other examples show that it is possible for children to make this walk every day. Nevertheless, there was no awareness of education in this village, so the distance was seen as too far, the benefits too small.

One wife is here, one in other kebele. In that kebele there is no school. I want to send all my children to school. Education is important for both boys and girls. I brought some of far-away-without-school children here. Father of 2 girls and 4 boys going to school, 4 girls and 1 boy are not going to school

The problem of a far away school especially affects the enrolment of girls. Physically girls are weaker, thus less likely to be able to walk longer distances and to be fit enough to follow classes. It is not common to take food or drinks with you while travelling. Boys can visit a teashop when they arrive in the village where the school is situated. Traditionally girls do not go to tearooms, so it will be much harder for them to travel long distances then for boys.

In some places, which are far, only boys are send to school. These places are Jidhale, Dudumoder Habal Wayel. For them this is the nearest school. Boys can come to shop, drink something. Girls cannot do that, so cannot travel that far. Female PTA member

Awareness of education

In this report two definitions of *awareness* are used. One applied by the respondents and one applied by the author.

Respondents: Several teachers and members of the PTA stated there is no or not enough *awareness* for education. By this they mean parent do not send their children to school for various reasons. By no *awareness* they mean parents have other priorities, for them school is not that important. By using this term they suggest more information will lead to more *awareness* and thus more children will be send to school. Teachers used the term giving *orientation* as a solution for this lack of *awareness*. This means parents got information about why they should send both boys and girls to school.

Author: During the fieldwork there was no question about *awareness*, but it was conceptualized in other questions about perception of importance of education for the children and girls especially. No *awareness* means parent think education has no positive influences, is useless, only a loss of time and thus labour force. High *awareness* means parents value education very high. They believe education will bear fruits for their children and likely also their parents. They are willing to invest in the education of their children.

4.5.3 Poor and small families

Pure pastoralists need their children to look after the cattle. Most parent state that at least one of the children has to help with this. This means that the chance of being educated is bigger in a big family then in a small family. Only rich pastoralist are able to hire labourers, so all children could go to school, but most pastoralist are not in that position nowadays. Most of the time, the girl is preferred to look after the sheep's and goats, while boys look after the cows. Sheep's and goats are much more common, so girls stay home more often.

Some children in the village don't go to school. If a family has for example 3 children, one or two can go to school, other is herding. It is very difficult (but not impossible) for families to send all children to school. FGD with (only male) teachers, Daba waine

4.5.4 Parents are not educated, not encouraging

A lot of parents do send their children to school, but do not fully encourage their children. If the parents are tired of looking after cattle they easily come to school and take their kid out of

class, telling the teacher they do not need education for looking after the cattle. After a few days the kid will come back and attend classes again.

Children rarely get homework for the reason they won't make or learn it. Parents are not educated themselves, they cannot help their own children. And also, parents like their children to help them after school.

4.5.5 Tradition and safety

Safety was an issue which was not mentioned by any respondent in Harshin. When asked for it people said there was not a single problem regarding safety. Some admitted girls need more safety than boys. Even a Somali saying was issued. 'Girls are like cooked meat that can be eaten by everybody.' Nobody was able to recall a recent incident in the local area caused by poor safety.

Traditionally girls need more safety. If she leaves the family she might be harmed, will be in difficult situation. Somali saying: girls are like cooked meat that can be eaten by everybody. So parents are reluctant. FGD with PTA members, Daba wain

Talking about possibilities to continue after primary school the safety problem became clearer for girls. First reason mentioned for the fact girls do not continue education was tradition. When further asked, it became clear that safety is the main reason leading to this tradition. Repeatedly girls were said to be weak, vulnerable, and not able to look after themselves.

For girls further education is bit difficult, they are weak. Boys can move everywhere. Unless we find good place, we will not send children away. First to pass grade 8 is girl. When we find a good family she will go for secondary education. It is very difficult to find a good family. Whatever cost or risk, education is very important. We will try to send all to school, but might be difficult for a big family as we have. Mother of 8 children, all going to school

Boys and girls are equal. As a mother, I believe so, but I don't know about men. Mother of 8 children, all going to school

Females who reach grade eight cannot go to high school. Somali females cannot leave their homes. Reasons are culture, safety and security. Interview with head of Regional Education Bureau, Harshin

4.5.6 Early marriage

Early marriage is not a widespread reason for not sending children to school. Most parents want their children to finish primary school before marrying. This is something new. Earlier, when there was no school, this was no issue. Nowadays, when there is a possibility to go to school especially girls marry later. In one school there were three young women who came back to school after they married. They stated it would have been better if they were not married yet.

Girls marry at age of 15-20 years. If there is education girls can go to school and marry later. If there is no education she should get married. If you don't marry, you don't get

respect in community. With education you should be married before 30 years, without before 25 years. After that people will start talking and it is impossible to find a husband. Female PTA member

4.5.7 Marriage of girls

When a girl is married, she does not belong to her own family anymore. She will go to her husband's family. For that reason it is said parents don't like to invest in girls, they will leave the family, so they do not benefit from her education. During discussions with parents this was only partly confirmed. It was acknowledged that there might be some parents thinking like this, but I didn't meet anybody who admitted he or she was also thinking this way. All parents told me this was not a reason for them to leave their daughters uneducated.

Most people in area leave girls in house. I am wishing to send girls to school. I don't believe people saying girls go to other families. Even if they marry, they will help me. Father of 5 girls, one goes to school, others look after cattle and do household work



Figure 7: Mothers with young children

4.5.8 High workload and awareness.

Most pastoralist families cannot survive without the help of their children, and a lot of jobs are delegated to the girls. They have to help in the household and with income generating activities like looking after shoats, which is widely seen as a girls job. If a boy would do it, he is seen as being foolish by other people. Boys should be after cattle. But since there are much more shoats than cattle, the burden of work on boys is less.

People have pastoralist mode of life. They are moving to other places all the time. They rear mostly cheep which are easy to transfer in money. This is more done by girls. Girls know more as boys. This is traditionally. Boys looking after shoats are foolish, they should be after camel. FGD with PTA members, Daba wain

Nevertheless, the high workload is not a reason itself. Different interviews and discussions shows that the work can be done by other people, if the parents are convinced about the benefits of education. In general, primary schools have only a morning program. Children are at home in the afternoon for working. Well informed parents, who support education won't find it impossible to look after the cattle longer (this is: the whole morning) or to find hired labour, family members or somebody else to do so.

Sending all children to school is only possible if they do not have animals. If the family has a lot of cattle they will send no children to school. FGD with (only male) teachers, Daba waine

In the morning the parents look after the cattle. In the afternoon child looks after cattle and parents chew chat. Female PTA member

So, in most cases, it is not the workload of the children keeping them from education, but the awareness of the parents and based on that, the set of priorities by the parents.

We hire labour to look after cattle. In drought me and the hired labour is moving. Children stay in village and go to school. The grandmother is here, and we hire a maid to look after the kids. Mother of 5 children, all go to school.

4.5.9 No better future for educated children

In the rural areas of Harshin the variety of available jobs is very limited. The available jobs are all suitable for uneducated people. Therefore it is very difficult to get a job other then looking after cattle, even when you are educated. Having an education does not give a benefit on the job market.

2 children have completed grade 8. We were not able to send them to other school. They are her now and have nothing to do. Mother of 10 children, 1 of the 7 girls goes to school

Most parents are not able to send their children for secondary education. In Harshin education does not go further than grade eight. The most nearby secondary school is in Hartesjeik. This city is too far to travel to each day. There are no means for adequate transportation. For secondary school relatives nearby the school are needed to take the children in the home and look after them. There is no boarding school. Even if there was one, parents do not have the financial means for this.

We have no relatives and no finances to send children to secondary school. Our main income is from shop and some sheep. If I had more livestock I would send children to school. Mother of 10 children, 1 of the 7 girls goes to school

It would be better if secondary school was here. We do not have relatives in Hartesjeik, so cannot go. There are no boarding schools. Group of girls, grade 7 and 8, Daba waine

The fact that even educated young people cannot find further education nor a job is very demotivating for parents. It shows them education is good for nothing, only costing time and money. Very few students can follow further education to a job in another city.

After grade 8 it is very difficult to continue. (mentioned again by others) Others are here, playing football, nothing to do. That is the biggest challenge. It is demoralizing parents, students and teachers. FGD with members of PTA, Daba waine

For girls, this is not any better. For them, the possibilities after primary school are most limited. Apart from the villages with recently got their female health worker, in the villages visited during the research there is not a single example of a girl, who continued education, and is now having a respected job.

After completing we will be here, looking after cattle or getting married and have children. We are demoralised now. We want to continue but we see others, so also we will have no other possibilities. Group of girls, grade 7 and 8, Daba waine

Till now, only girls who got support from outside of the community have continued after grade 8. FGD with (only male) teachers, Dabai waine

Parent are more concerned about girls for safety reasons. About this you find more earlier this chapter. Also girls themselves don't think they will be able to live in town. Even if there is the possibility, parents rather send boys to secondary school then girls for this reason.

Boys are not the same. Boys go to Jijiga, rent a house. Financially girls cannot rent a house. We are weak. We cannot take care of ourselves. Our need is much more. Boys can live in harsh circumstances. Group of girls, grade 7 and 8, Daba waine.

4.6 Female teachers

Literature suggest a strong positive influence of female teachers on girls education. See chapter 2.7 In Harshin, out of 24, there are only two schools with female teachers. One of them in Harshin town, one in Dabai waine.

The strong positive influence of female teachers on girls was not acknowledged in Dabai waine. In some cases parents saw the female teachers as examples for their girls, but this was not common. This was mostly because of the fact that the female teacher came from another area.

Female teacher is not from this kebele, so the inspiration for girls is less. Focus group discussion with PTA

Even the female teacher themselves didn't see their role model function. In contrast to the male teachers, they did not have an active role in the PTA either. The low attention of parents paid to girls education was new to them. It was not their own choice to teach in this remote area, and they didn't like it. They even quit their job during the research period.

Girls are first to leave school They don't have a role model. They have less self esteem. The female teachers we have are not from this kebele, so inspiration is less. FGD with members of PTA, Daba waine

In Kabri Ahmed it was admitted it would be better if there were female teachers. But they added that female teachers –which would have to come from town- would not be able to live there due to the harsh circumstances. In this village only males continued education in Jijiga. So, also in future, there will be only male teachers. This limited availability of female teachers is one of the main reasons why there are so limited female teachers in rural areas. Even if a school wants to employ more female teachers, it is difficult to find them.

Female teachers have come from other places, but don't like to be here. So they stay 1-3 years, ask for replacement. FGD with members of PTA

In all schools, teachers acknowledged it would be ideal if the ration male and female teachers was 50/50. In none of the schools this was the case. See also table 3 (paragraaf 4.1) For schools it is very difficult to find female teachers. Especially in the areas outside Harshin town, it is very hard to live for young female teachers. There are not female teachers which are from that area. So, when there are female teachers, they don't have family and, as a stranger, they do not get respect from the local people. So primary schools in rural areas cannot find female teachers.

Country side is very difficult for us. There are no good facilities. We cannot buy everything we need. Local people see us as strangers. Interview with two female teachers in rural area

Those female teachers, who came to Harshin for teaching were not familiar with the situation as it is in Harshin. They came from an area where all girls got education. For them it was normal to go to school and even become a teacher. This made it difficult for them to cope with the situation.

People in my area are aware of (girls) education. We are from an area where all females graduated. What I do see here is something new to me. Interview with two female teachers in rural area

If a rural school wants to attract a female teacher, the environment has to be friendly for female teachers. In the schools there are no sanitary facilities for female teachers.

Girls prefer to work in town. The female teachers who we have are complaining now. They want to go to town, are not happy in village. FGD with members of PTA, Daba waine

4.7 How can primary schools contribute to higher attendance rates of girls in primary school?

Most schools which got help from NGO's in the past have a Parent Teacher Association (PTA). This association is very powerful in increasing enrolment rates. As mentioned earlier, when there is a school, the awareness of parents is the limiting factor, keeping children and

especially girls from getting enrolled into school. The PTA can play a leading role in awareness raising. According to the PTA's themselves they are highly successful.

Function of PTA

TPA is doing 3 things:

1. Orientation to parents bringing all children to school
2. Supervising school. How many teachers do come? How are things in school?
3. PTA helps with salary of teacher.

And any other necessity like safety in area or sanitation.

Focus group discussion with 7 members of the PTA in Dabai Waine

Box 4: Function of PTA

However, in most villages the capacity of the PTA is very low. Not all PTA's have regular meetings, not all members to attend meetings, there is a very limited budget and members are not trained. It is very difficult for the PTA's to analyze their own situation and local possibilities for improvement. For example: in one village there was a shortage of classrooms. For that reason they had to send children home. In the past this village had the same problem and with outside help they started shifting timetables with also an afternoon class. In the meanwhile a new classroom was build. In one place with a shortage of classrooms the PTA had not thought about this yet, not suggested to start afternoon classes again and there were no plans yet to build a new classroom. This PTA did not have the capacity to solve this problem. Children were send home when the room was full. Most of them are girls since they are shy and do not compete to get into class. Moreover, as usual, boys go first. The PTA had not identified this situation as being a problem, there was no improvement coming up.



Figure 8: Focus group discussion with (only male) PTA members. Right on the picture, in the front is the Kebele leader.

4.8 How do girls themselves value primary education?

This was a very difficult question to answer. This research was focussing on primary school. Girls attending primary school are 6-21 years old. Being part of the Somali culture, the girls were very shy to answer. Most open ended questions were not answered by themselves. They only answered short, clear and straightforward and closed questions. It was very difficult for them to say something about how they appreciate education.

Traditionally girls are more shy. Her mother tells her to keep silent, not discuss. This is a religious issue. The Koran says: do not talk as much as boys. If girls talk more we say: she does not fit. We tell her: keep silent, you are a female, not a male. Interview with two female teachers in rural area

Girls do like to go to school. They learn how to read and write. Their parents are illiterate, so they can help them reading letters and making notes. It makes parents proud of their children, and gives confidence to them. School going children get more attention of parents. This is very visible in families with both school going and not school going children. In some families a girl goes to school but has a home staying sister. In that case the girls going to school will get more clothes and the possibility to rest after school. The girl who is not going to school has to help in the household the whole day and will get less clothes.



Figure 9: Female students in school

Students discuss with the parents the importance of education. They tell them to send them to school as much as possible. They also like school much more than the alternative: looking after cattle.

Apart from these reasons, primary school girls are not able to formulate how education will help them to get a better life. First they told they would go to secondary school and university. Later they told this is not likely at all. Not a single girls from that area had done this. It is very likely they will have the same lives as their mothers. Eventually, their primary education will not give a (for them visible) difference.

One difference will be the age of marriage. Most girls do not marry as long as they go to school. Traditionally girls marry at an age of around fifteen years old. But girls do go to primary school even up to 21 years old until they complete grade eight. This makes that girls with education will marry at a later age than girls who did go to school.

4.9 Conclusion/summary

It is not clear how many children are enrolled into school in Harshin. The percentage of girls in class vary from 14% to 50%. The available data is not always reliable as explained in paragraph 4.2.

In Harshin parents are not always able to send their children to school. Most important reason is the lack of schools. If there is no school available at walking distance, children do not go to school. Those parents who live nearby schools have to decide to send their sons and daughters to school or not. Parents do make their decisions about education on basis of the possibilities and available information. Parents weigh the benefits of education, look whether it is worth the (opportunity) costs. Parents follow other parents in sending children to school. So some are only half-convinced and therefore not very encouraging.

The most important reason for parents to send their children to school is the hope for a better future. Parents were able to give example of boys having more possibilities. Nevertheless, for girls they could not explain how education might help them to improve their lives. School going children convince their parents of the worth of education after being enrolled for a while.

Workload at home as such is not a major problem. When parents know the benefits of education they find ways to send their children to school. At this moment it are especially children from poor and small families who cannot go to school but have to work. This is affecting girls more than boys since they are preferred to look after the sheep's and goats.

Tradition, safety and (early) marriage are not mentioned as having a notable influence on the enrolment of girls. The views of parents and society on these topics are not static but changeable. Therefore these topics do not constrain girls in going to school (any more).

Parents send children to school in the hope for a better future. However, primary education does not automatically lead to a better future. There are former students who did not profit from their education in a visible way. This is very demoralizing. Especially for those parents who were doubtful already.

Sadly, this is especially the case for girls. For them it is (nearly) impossible to continue education after primary school. There are no examples available to encourage girls to develop themselves. The few female teachers are not able to be a role model for the local girls because they do not come from the same area.

In schools teachers acknowledged it would be good if there were more female teachers. But they do not actively recruit female teachers. Even if they would do so, there are no female

teachers who come from Harshin. Female teachers who come from other areas find it very hard to work and live in rural Harshin.

The parent teachers association are most involved in encouraging parents to send children and especially also the girls to school. Nevertheless, their number and capacity is very limited.

Girls themselves were not able to explain what education was doing to them. They said they like going to school, it would help them in the future. But they did not know how and why.

5. CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Female teachers

In chapter two, a strong positive influence of female teachers on girls education is suggested. During this research this was not confirmed. In Harshin, there were two schools with female teachers, one in Harshin town, one in Dabai waine. Harshin town is not representative for the rural area, so only in Dabai waine it was possible to get information about the influence of female teachers. These female teachers did not see themselves as an example for other girls. Main reason is the fact they come from another region. A role model had to be from the same area, and preferably from the same kebele in order to be able to be a role model for the local girls. Another relevant example; in a village two girls from grade eight were selected to follow a 6 months training to become a health worker. This gave an enormous boost to girls education, now the parents saw that also for girls education can help to get a better life. These girls were an excellent example for girls.

So, girls with further education can play a role model, and female teachers can play a role model to, if they are from the same area.

Therefore, it is very likely that female teachers from the same area will be an excellent role model. So, if there are female teachers from the same area in future, they very likely will be successful promoters of girls' education, leading to higher enrolment rates for girls. She also can support and encourage girls to successfully complete their studies and maybe even continue studying to become teachers, themselves.

5.2 Benefit of education

In chapter two, several benefits of education are mentioned. Among others, most important were the economic benefits of better practices leading to higher agricultural productivity and sustainable development, and the health related benefits for children, and lower fertility rates. During this research the local teachers, parents and children did not mention any concrete example of these benefits. Most of them thought education would make them better off, but parents did not know in which way. This was especially the case for the girls. The benefit of education was they now can read and write, but they do not know for what purpose. The only example they could give were the (now well known) girls who got the six months health training.

Only those parents which were able to send children (read: boys) to secondary school were able to explain the benefit of education. These boys could get education, work in the city or become teacher.

When asked for it, girls told they were more respected because they are literate now, unlike their parents. Though this is a benefit, for parents this is not really counting as a reason to send girls to school.

5.3 Safety

In several other reports on girls enrolment rates safety was mentioned as an important reason for not sending girls to school. In this research this was not mentioned by anybody in relation

to primary education. It seems that, at this moment, safety is not a major problem (any more) for sending girls to primary school.

However, for secondary school, this is different. Parents prefer to send boys for further education, rather than girls. This is for many reasons under which safety. The fact that further education is not possible might discourage parents to send girls to primary school. But all together, safety this is not a main reason at all.

5.4 Early marriage

Also early marriage is not a major problem anymore. In places with good functioning schools habits around marrying ages have changed and are still changing. Girls start school when they are around seven years old. They do marry not younger than fifteen years old. In that sense it is not a constrain of getting enrolled at school. It might be a limiting factor for finalizing school. But, the more girls go the school, the more likely it is they will finish the school. For that reason, there are even some married girls which still go to school. But for most girls it is accepted now to marry later and first finish school. For secondary school this will be different.

5.5 High workload

In available research reports high workload of girls is repeatedly mentioned as main reason for not attending school. This statement is partly confirmed during this research. Some opinions about the workload were contradictive. Parents were saying they needed their children to look after cattle, teachers were saying parents were able but unwilling to do it themselves in the morning. Other teachers said it should be possible to keep the cattle in the fence in the morning. (There are only morning classes.) Some families were using hired labour to look after cattle. Others parents could not pay this, or wanted to spend their money differently.

All together, are several possibilities for parents to find solutions to get the work done, if they want. A lot of parents do not change anything, for them school is not seen as important enough. This attitude can change when the benefit of education is more clear, or when more parents send children to school. Other parents do not want to stay behind. In that case parents find a way to get the work done. It is not the high workload which keeps girls at home, but the reason behind it: education is not seen as important enough. This makes that parents say they keep children, especially girls at home to work. But, after getting orientation from teachers, a lot of parent will be able to find a solution.

5.6 Awareness of education

The awareness of education was the most heard answer from interviews with teachers and other key-persons. They say parents don't send children and especially girls to school because they are not aware. Parents themselves didn't use these words. For them, education was not important enough, the benefits too low, the cost (substitution of labour) too high. It is not the awareness of education, but the lack of visible benefits.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

The most common reason for parents to not send their children to school is because there is no school available where they are living. However, this does not explain why there are even less girls enrolled. The main reason her fore is that traditionally more roles are described to girls. Therefore opportunity costs of sending girls to school are higher. Moreover, the perspective of girls is far less then for boys. This discourages parents, students and teachers.

What is leading to low girls attendance in primary schools in Harshin region? There is no straightforward answer for this question. Seen from different dimensions, there are some varying opinions about this topic. These are explained below.

Literature versus daily life in Harshin

First of all, the plans of the government and several international agreements would suggest that schools are widely available and all school aged children are going to school. Sadly, this is not the case at all. In Harshin there is a lack of schools. And in spite of the international agreements most school aged children are not going to school.

Further, literature suggest a high influence of education to improve the quality of lives. Educated people will have a higher income, and a healthier life. Daily life in Harshin does not show this benefits. Local people are doubtful about the benefit of education. The fact that even educated young people cannot find further education nor job is very demotivating for parents. It shows them education is good for nothing, only costing time and money. Respondents could not see the benefits of education as explained in chapter 2. This is especially true for girls. Their lives will be the same as their mothers who did not go to school.

Parents versus girls

For parents, sending their children to school is an investment. This is especially true for girls, traditionally more roles are described to them. If they go to school, others have to do this work. Girls love to go to school. They prefer it above working for their parents. It gives them hope for the future. But, those girls who are not going to school are not able to convince their parents.

Teachers versus parents

Almost all parents did not get education themselves. They are pastoralist and do need any education. In the future, their children will also be pastoralist, and they do not need education therefore. Education might give the children more possibilities to generate income, but education is quite an investment. If not going to school, children are helping the parents. Especially the girls have a lot of tasks.

Teachers on the other hand are educated. They know how important education is. They know, from own experience, how education can give you a job for the government. In their eyes parents are reluctant to invest in education.

In some places enthusiast parents and teachers have a Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Although those PTAs are not very strong at this moment, they an enormous potential to take away the gap, and to make sure all children are going to school.

6.2 Recommendations

More schools and better transport are needed to limit the amount of families which have no school at walking distance. Children have their rights, agreements are made, so feasibility is no excuse of the government. Small villages need better information about the possibilities they have. When a local community builds a school building, the government will provide teachers and material needed. This is not known in all villages. Some villages already have gathered the material, but do not know what to do next.

In places with a school trained Parent Teachers Associations (PTA) can help to address local needs. Regular capacity building training can help them to analyse their own situation and to find creative solutions. The PTA can find local solutions for little problems. To help the PTA functioning it would be very good if a handbook was developed and spread to all schools. In this handbook they can discuss the structure of the association, how to arrange meetings, how to find local problems, and how to solve these. In this handbook extra attention should be paid to girls education. Preferably, each school should have a good functioning PTA.

When there are schools available, the motivation of parents is the bottleneck. A role school can play is to show parents the benefit of education by employing local persons and former students as teachers. Then it will be visible that education will give you the possibility to get a respected job with a good salary. Then the parents can see how education can change and improve lives.

More research is needed on alternative education. At this moment Alternative Basic Education schools are introduced in the region. More research is needed on these ABE schools. How successful are they? Do they solve problems formal schools have? Does the alternative education contribute to the future livelihoods of the students?

Coranic schools are widely available. Both boys and girls are going to Coranic schools. More research is needed on the role these schools can have in decreasing literacy rates by broadening their curriculum. It might be possible to train Coranic teachers so they can also teach the basics of reading and writing.

More local female teachers are needed. These teachers can show girls also benefit from education. It will encourage parents to send their girls to school too. Only female teachers from the same area and clan will be respected by students and parents. Therefore local girls need to get education to become teachers. This can be done by selecting two bright girls from grade eight from each school and give them the possibility to follow secondary school and the Teacher Training. After completing school they can come back to their home area for teaching. These local female teachers will not face the problems which are faced by female teachers from other areas. If they return to their home area they will not be neglected for being from another tribe. By offering education in form of a loan to be repaid by working several years in the home area, it is not possible for the girls to spoil the investment by staying in the town.

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8. APPENDIX

8.1 Article

The following article about this report was published by wardheernews.com a Somali news and opinion website. This article is available at:

http://wardheernews.com/Articles_10/June/05_agents_change_fieneke.html

Local female teachers as agents of change

By Fieneke de Jong

June 05, 2010

With only five years left until the 2015 deadline to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, it is still a long way to go for Ethiopia. Part of the third goal, to eliminate gender disparity in primary education, is not yet reached. Only one third of the students are female. And about 30% of the school age population is not going to school. Especially in the pastoralists areas education is lacking behind. For my Bachelor thesis at Van Hall Larenstein university Wageningen in The Netherlands, I did fieldwork in **Harshin** region. I researched why a lot of girls are still not going to school. As a solution I promote to educate local girls to become teachers.

For this research I came to Ethiopia to do three months of fieldwork. Together with the Institute for Pastoral and Agro pastoral Studies of Haramaya University, I gathered information about education and gender in pastoral areas. The fieldwork is done in Harshin, Somali Region and is focussing on the rural area.



Somali region

In this region about 90% is pastoralist. Their pastoral way of life makes it difficult for the government to supply them with facilities like education. Therefore the government is pushing the population to settle down. Till now, this has not been successful.

Somali Region is one of the least developed regions in Ethiopia. At this moment only 1% of the rural population is literate. Recent improvements in education makes that at this moment a growing number of children is able to go to school. However, much more boys than girls are going to primary school. To explain this difference and to come up with possible solution this research was set up.

There are several reasons why girls do not go to school. Most important is the limited awareness of the parents. They do not see the benefits which education will give, especially for girls. Therefore parents prefer the girls to stay home and do various tasks like looking after the goats. Moreover, the shortage of schools is a disadvantage for girls. Physically, boys are stronger. Girls cannot travel as far as boys every day.

There are also other reasons which play a role. The climate inside school is not very favourite for girls. In most places there are only male teachers, no female teachers. Often separate sanitary facilities for girls are missing. Furthermore it is difficult for girls to participate as good as boys. The Somali culture tells girls to be silent, which makes them more shy in class.

The biggest obstacle is the lack of role models in society. Parents do not see women who did benefit through their education. Therefore they do not think education will help their

daughters to get a better life. Girls themselves love going to school. They like it much more than working for their parents. Moreover, their parents are proud of them if they can read a letter for them. But girls who are not going to school are not able to convince the parents.

Possible solutions have to show to the parents the impact which education can have on the lives of their children. They also have to provide good education with the attention which girls need. These requirements can be combined by educating local girls to become teachers in their home area. That would show parents how education can give you a respected job and improve your life. In addition, these female teachers can create the special attention for girls which they lack at this moment. For parents and students these female teachers would be role models. It will show that also girls benefit from education. So that parent will send all their boys and girls to school. And all boys and all girls will be able to have a good time at school.

It will take time to educate girls to become teachers. This solution as such will not be sufficient to reach the development goals before 2015. It does not solve the lack of schools. But it will absolutely help to reach gender parity in education. It will inspire boys but especially girls and their parents. In this way, local girls will become agents of change.

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Opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of WardheerNews

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