



Empathy for Life Integrated Development Association

**Assessment on Barriers and Gap Analysis on Girls' Education in Dessie Zuria
Woreda and Tehuledere Woreda, South Wollo Zone, Amhara Region**

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Disclaimer

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Executive Summary

This study examined the obstacles and gaps in secondary education for girls in Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere Woredas of South Wollo Zone, Amhara region, Ethiopia.

Major findings

- In both woredas, secondary school enrollment for girls has plummeted drastically over the last few academic years. In Dessie Zuria, enrollment dropped from a peak of 1,753 in 2022/23 to 1,155 in 2024/25. In Tehuledere, enrollment declined from a peak of 2,855 in 2021/22 down to a low of 1,068 in 2024/25, representing a steep loss of over 60% within just three years.
- There is a severe dropout bottleneck between Grades 9 and 10. Grade 9 enrollments have consistently declined since peaking in 2021/22, indicating weak transition mechanisms and poor retention at the lower secondary level.
- Major secondary schools suffer from extreme grade-repetition issues. For example, Haiq Secondary School consistently recorded a high volume of repeaters (peaking at 613 girls in 2022/23), which correlates directly with alarmingly low promotion rates (dropping to just 26.14% that same year).
- Deeply ingrained patriarchal norms firmly prioritize boys' education and direct girls toward submissiveness and domesticity. Survey data reveals that 80% of girls have experienced gender-based cultural discrimination, and over 55% of girls have internalized these values, believing boys deserve educational priority.
- A staggering 92% of girls take on heavy domestic duties (cooking, fetching water, looking after siblings, and intensive seasonal farm work). This division of labor causes extreme exhaustion, frequent tardiness, and chronic absenteeism, forcing many girls to completely fall behind or leave school entirely.
- Menstruation remains a heavily stigmatized, hidden barrier. 90% of girls surveyed stated their families view the topic as too taboo to discuss. Furthermore, 85% of schools lack private, clean sanitation facilities with running water or soap, forcing girls to miss between 3 to 5 days of school every month during their cycles.
- Customary practices override legal protections, with age 15 often acting as a social cutoff for girls to marry to preserve family honor. 90% of surveyed girls reported facing familial

pressure, attempted marriages, or completed marriages during adolescence, and schools heavily lack re-entry policies to support young or pregnant mothers.

- Poverty acts as a primary catalyst for 87% of school dropouts. Families struggle to afford essential direct costs like uniforms and learning materials, and 83.5% of respondents confirmed that when finances are constrained, families actively prioritize the education of boys over girls.
- 80% of girls describe their school environments as unsafe. Girls routinely face tracking, verbal harassment, and attempted sexual assault during long 3-to-6-kilometer walks to school. Additionally, school surroundings have increasingly become informal hubs for substance abuse (such as khat chewing and alcohol consumption), placing unmonitored girls at greater risk.
- The ongoing armed conflict and militia activity in the Amhara region have devastated educational continuity. Over 75% of female students missed school due to security threats over the past academic year, and nearly 40% of schools in Dessie Zuria were forced to temporarily close.
- Driven by economic desperation and unpredictable school closures, a pervasive ‘culture of migration’ has emerged. Over 60% of surveyed households had at least one school-age girl withdraw from school to enter domestic labor in domestic cities or seek domestic work under the *Kafala* system in Gulf countries (supported by 94% of the survey). Financial remittances have culturally surpassed educational achievement as the localized symbol of success, leading to a slow, systematic erosion of classroom attendance.

Conclusion

Therefore, based on the key findings from the assessment, it is concluded that-

- Adolescent girls in the Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere Woredas continue to face significant ongoing challenges in education, despite global initiatives aimed at addressing gender disparities.
- Across Sub-Saharan Africa, a concerning trend remains where only 42% of adolescent girls successfully complete their secondary education.
- Deeply entrenched cultural and societal norms continue to hinder the educational aspirations and career opportunities of women, particularly in low-income areas.

- While initial initiatives promoting school enrollment show some progress, systemic obstacles at the household, community, and school levels still prevent girls from achieving true educational success, growth, and retention.
- The challenges represent a complex intersection of poverty and patriarchal norms. Entrenched patriarchal attitudes drive early marriages, heavy domestic responsibilities, and the belief that education is primarily for boys, which severely limits girls' independence. Financial difficulties further compel families to favor boys' education or rely on girls for labor and risky migration remittances.
- Girls face widespread gender-based violence and harassment on their way to and within schools, resulting in psychological trauma and high absenteeism. This is compounded by a lack of female role models, inadequate reporting mechanisms, and insufficient infrastructure—such as safe transportation and gender-sensitive menstrual hygiene facilities.
- Ongoing violent conflict and displacement in the Amhara region have severely disrupted educational continuity. These crises distract families from long-term educational engagement and heighten girls' vulnerability to child labor, violence, and early marriage. Thus, without urgent, coordinated, and multi-sectoral interventions, the downward trend in school retention and poor transition to higher education will persist, jeopardizing regional development and the broader goals of gender equality.

Recommendations

Finally, the following key recommendations are suggested to respond to and improve the situation-

- Implement context-specific public awareness campaigns using local media (radio, television, social media), community gatherings, market days, and religious meetings to emphasize the value of girls' education and challenge gender stereotypes.
- Engage elders, faith leaders, and traditional authorities in structured dialogue sessions and advocacy workshops so they can publicly reject early marriage and support girls' right to secondary schooling.

- Establish and fund safe spaces within schools focused on leadership training, mentorship, and peer support to build self-confidence and resilience against peer pressure, stigma, and harassment.
- Provide parental education and counseling, and conduct targeted workshops and home visits, especially for fathers, to demonstrate how heavy household chore burdens harm academic outcomes and to highlight the long-term economic benefits of the girls.
- Provide critical menstrual hygiene management (MHM) supports by partnering with NGOs and health authorities to distribute free or subsidized sanitary pads, and train girls to create reusable pads within vocational school clubs.
- Build girls-friendly sanitation facilities to ensure that schools have clean, gender-segregated, and lockable toilets equipped with adequate running water and soap to prevent monthly absenteeism during menstruation.
- Establish safe hygiene corners, and set up private changing areas within schools to combat menstrual stigma and break down the culture of silence through sensitive reproductive health discussions with both male students and teachers.
- Develop clear, comprehensive, anti-bullying and anti-harassment frameworks with input from parents, teachers, and students, integrating them directly into school orientations (enforce zero-tolerance to harassment policy).
- Create confidential reporting mechanisms and designate welcoming points of contact, such as trained female teachers or counselors, and set up anonymous complaint boxes to handle harassment reports swiftly and safely.
- Hire trained social workers or counselors to deploy psychosocial counseling services to deliver confidential, trauma-informed mental health support to girls suffering from the psychological distress of armed conflict, displacement, or loss.
- Collaborate with local authorities and guardians to secure safe travel routes and protect girls on their long commutes by organizing walking groups, bicycle initiatives, community escorts, or gender-sensitive school transportation.
- Invest in upgrading physical school safety and protective physical measures for school grounds, including boundary fences, adequate lighting, and trained security personnel.

- Integrate gender-sensitive materials into the school curriculum and explicitly highlight female role models, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields.
- Train teachers in gender-responsive pedagogy by equipping frontline educators with specialized training to eliminate unconscious biases during classroom interactions and ensure equal attention is given to female learners.
- Promote female leadership by actively recruiting and advancing female educators and administrators to provide strong role models and foster a more inclusive educational environment.
- Mandate stricter local enforcement of statutory laws against early marriage and teenage pregnancy, while implementing flexible, emergency education models (like mobile classrooms) to preserve learning during conflict.
- Introduce material and financial support systems, such as scholarships, small financial stipends, school feeding schemes, and conditional cash transfers to help poor families afford uniforms and educational materials.
- Build school-to-work transition frameworks such as practical entrepreneurship modules, digital literacy, and job-readiness skills into secondary education to bridge the gap between school and formal employment.
- Provide workplace and practical training incentives through partnership with companies and vocational schools to offer targeted internships and apprenticeships for young women, and provide tax benefits or grants to businesses that hire them.
- Implement strict legal and local awareness initiatives to inform families of the extreme risks of child labor and exploitative international migration (such as domestic work under the Kafala system), promoting local education as a more viable alternative.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

Starting in the latter half of the 20th century, numerous countries made progress in establishing legal and social rights for women through constitutional safeguards. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights emphasized the importance of gender equality. These reforms included the introduction of equal voting rights and enhanced access to education at all levels. (Rossie & Vaughan, 2016). Gender is deep-rooted in sociocultural, economic, and political structures that closely tie gender equality to every development agenda, ranging from the elimination of poverty to the promotion of peace and democratic rights (Minister Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, 2024 and Ministry of Education, 2014).

Education is a fundamental right and a powerful tool for human development and societal progress (UNESCO, 2014). It is a major contributor to national economic growth, self-sufficiency, and cultural reawakening. (Bangura & Mambo, 2023). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as an independent goal (UNESCO, 2025). UNESCO (2025) states that 15 million girls and 10 million boys never enter a classroom. Refugee girls are only half as likely to be in secondary school compared to their male peers. Of the 750 million illiterate adults, two-thirds are women. Additionally, 650 million girls and women are married before the age of 18, commonly resulting in an abrupt halt to their education. Every year, 246 million children face gender-based violence in and around schools. At the end of lower secondary education, 290 million girls do not meet minimum proficiency levels in reading. Almost 1 billion girls and women lack the necessary skills to thrive in rapidly evolving job markets. Women comprise only 35% of students in higher education.

Gender disparities in education continue to persist in many African countries, including Ethiopia. A complex interplay of sociocultural, economic, and systemic factors hinders educational access and equity. These disparities perpetuate social inequalities, hindering economic growth and sustainable development. In Ethiopia, the gender gap in education is particularly pronounced,

with girls facing numerous barriers to accessing quality education. According to Bangura and Mambo (2023), economic disparities, cultural norms, discriminatory attitudes, early marriages, and teenage pregnancy contribute to the inability of females to access education equally as their male counterparts.

As noted by Ambreen and Mohyuddin (2014), sociocultural barriers such as patriarchy and gender norms, which mean deep-rooted patriarchal values and practices, limit girls' educational opportunities by prioritizing domestic roles over education (Ambreen & Mohyuddin, 2014). Cultural perceptions of many parents made them reluctant to send their daughters to school, which affected their educational investment in girls (Ministry of Education, 2023). Poverty is also an economic constraint and a significant barrier, with families prioritizing immediate economic survival over the long run impact of education. School also predominantly affects girls' education in developing countries, including Ethiopia (Hussen & Workie, 2023). Diamond (2022) and King and Winthrop (2015), identify a lack of resources, gender-insensitive environments, and gender bias in school materials as barriers to girls' education. Moreover, school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV), which can be defined as acts or threats of sexual, physical, or psychological violence occurring in and around schools, perpetrated as a result of gender norms and stereotypes and enforced by unequal power dynamics, is a significant issue that hinders girls' education.

Girls' education in Africa faces significant barriers and gaps, primarily influenced by sociocultural, economic, and institutional factors. Despite some progress, the challenges remain profound, necessitating targeted interventions to promote gender equality in education. In many African countries, the completion rate for girls does not exceed five percent. Girls' education in sub-Saharan Africa is characterized by low enrollment and high wastage rates due to high dropout rates, absenteeism, low achievement, and low retention and completion rates.

Research findings on girls' education in Ethiopia reveal that the lack of appropriate sanitation facilities to manage menstrual hygiene affects girls' attendance and contributes to high levels of absenteeism. Moreover, sexual assault, rape, and harassment in schools and on their way to and

from school, perpetrated by fellow students, teachers, and men in the community, also contribute to the increasing dropout rate among girls.

The study also notes that household and community-level constraints and expectations limit girls' educational attainment. Gendered stereotypes surrounding domestic work, for instance, lead to girls being withdrawn from school to contribute to household chores and agricultural tasks. In rural communities of Ethiopia, parents and community members continue to emphasize preserving traditional gender roles, which often reduces the time girls can dedicate to their education. Deviation from these roles, particularly for girls, is often met with backlash from the community.

Practices such as child marriage, the disproportionate burden of household labor, early pregnancy, and social isolation continue to undermine the participation of female students in education in Ethiopia. To address these barriers, several intervention mechanisms have been proposed, including the creation of safe spaces for girls, the establishment of sanitary corners to support menstrual hygiene management, and sustained efforts to transform community attitudes toward girls' education. These measures are intended not only to improve girls' access to schooling but also to create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment that fosters their retention and success (Girls' Education Challenge UKaid, 2024).

In many rural areas of Wollo, prevailing cultural norms consider it morally inappropriate for women to postpone marriage in order to pursue further education or a professional career. Such perceptions significantly restrict girls' educational opportunities. Empirical evidence from Asrese and Abebe (2014) indicates that approximately 83% of females and 17% of males in South Wollo had experienced early marriage, underscoring the gendered nature of this practice. Nationally, data from the Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) reveal that while some progress has been made in reducing the number of out-of-school children and improving gender parity, both indicators have deteriorated since 2016. Recent statistics show that school dropout rates are disproportionately higher among girls compared to boys, reflecting persistent structural inequities. Similarly, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) for secondary education (Grades 9–12) has declined from 0.91 to 0.87 (Bolton, 2019), further illustrating the widening gap in

educational attainment. The evidence suggests that early marriage, entrenched patriarchal norms, cultural attitudes toward the role of women and girls, and gender-insensitive school environments remain critical barriers to achieving gender equity in education in Ethiopia.

The existing unequal gender norms often intensify during conflict, exacerbating gender disparities in education (Diamond, 2022). This can increase girls' risk of sexual and gender-based violence and abuse. In the study area, insecurity and displacement may affect girls' access to school and increase demand for child labor, early marriage, and unplanned pregnancy. Insufficient water and sanitation facilities in schools exacerbated discrimination towards girls with disabilities, and a heightened risk of violence means that girls are more likely to be confined to the home and excluded from education in conflict and crises. The Amhara region, and particularly South Wollo, faces complex humanitarian challenges, including food insecurity, conflict and instability, internal and international displacement, and the impact of climate change, where schoolgirls are among the victims. Humanitarian emergencies also particularly impact girls' access to and quality of education in the region.

1.2. Gaps and Problem Statement

Millions of girls around the world are barred from entering and completing their education due to various factors, including social norms about gender roles (McCleary-Sills et al., 2015). Globally, girls are 1.5 times more likely than boys to miss out on education, and this disparity increases to 2.5 times in countries experiencing fragility and conflict like Ethiopia. The most disadvantaged girls encounter the most severe obstacles, which intensify as education levels rise (Education Global Partnership, 2018). Despite a global effort to ensure equal access to education, girls and women face difficulties accessing quality education, especially in African countries (Bangura & Mambo, 2023). Girls' education in Sub-Saharan Africa is characterized by low enrolment, high rates of wastage due to high dropout, repetition, and absenteeism, and low achievement, retention, and completion rates.

Many African people are still reluctant to send their daughters to school (Williams & Health, 2014). Gender equity in education is a cornerstone for fostering social empowerment and advancing towards a more inclusive society (Kevin Namiro Kuteesa et al., 2024). Despite

progress in female literacy rates, significant disparities persist, particularly among marginalized groups and at school and higher educational levels. Addressing these barriers requires a multifaceted approach considering cultural norms, economic constraints, and systemic inadequacies. Despite efforts to promote girls' education in Ethiopia, significant barriers impede their access to quality learning opportunities. These barriers are multifaceted, rooted in socio-cultural, economic, and infrastructural challenges that disproportionately affect girls. Firstly, socio-cultural factors remain a formidable barrier. In rural Ethiopia, many families view education as less critical for girls, who are frequently expected to marry early and assume domestic responsibilities. This cultural norm and patriarchal culture not only limits girls' educational opportunities but also perpetuates cycles of poverty and gender inequality. The financial burden of education can be overwhelming. Families often face difficult choices, prioritizing limited resources for boys over girls. The absence of financial support systems, such as scholarships or conditional cash transfers, means that many girls are forced to leave school to contribute to household income and to be sent to Arab countries. This economic reality reinforces the notion that education is a luxury rather than a right for girls. The current instability in the study area further exacerbates the situation.

According to Minister Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (2024), Ethiopia is far from achieving gender parity in education, with significant differences between urban and rural areas and by region due to many challenges in retention, graduation rates, and significant gender disparities in secondary, tertiary, and upper TVET. More than 23 percent of schoolgirls have experienced physical violence, and 10 percent have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime. According to a report by (Gender Equity Unit, 2023) Despite positive advancements, half of Ethiopian women lack access to education, and in rural communities, women spend more time than men on unpaid work. Some of the challenges identified include a lack of clean and separate sanitation facilities for girls, an unsafe school environment (including gender-based violence), and poor provision and utilization of ICT facilities in almost all primary schools (Minister Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, 2024).

Climate change is recognized as a critical factor that adversely affects girls' education in Ethiopia, leading to increased occurrences of severe droughts, floods, and crop failures. These climate-related disasters disproportionately impact women and girls, making them more

susceptible to displacement and presenting significant obstacles in accessing food, water, shelter, and healthcare. Furthermore, women experience greater hardship as natural resources diminish, as they are the primary providers of water, firewood, and medicinal plants. Despite facing the most significant challenges, Ethiopian women are rarely included in discussions and decision-making forums concerning climate change.

The ongoing conflict in northern Ethiopia has had a detrimental impact on access to resources, education, job opportunities, essential health services, and the protection of fundamental human rights. Additionally, women have been subjected to violence and harmful traditional practices. Although they bear a significant burden during these conflicts, women are largely left out of the current peace negotiations in Ethiopia. (Minister Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, 2024). Sub-Saharan Africa has achieved a gender parity score of 68.4%, marking an increase of 5.6 percentage points since 2006. Economic Participation and Opportunity is at 68.1%, reflecting improvements in labor force involvement and gains in technical and professional sectors. With a score of 88.9%, the region ranks lowest in Educational Attainment, indicating the most significant gap to address. Health and Survival reach 97.1%, while Political Empowerment shows progress at 22.6%, with significant advancements in ministerial and parliamentary roles, especially in Mozambique and South Africa (World Economic Forum, 2024).

Ethiopia's entrenched patriarchal norms and structures restrict women's access to decision-making, resources, and opportunities. Although women appear to be excluded mainly from national peacebuilding processes and negotiation forums, they are assuming a more significant role in UN peacekeeping operations.

Ethiopia struggles to ensure sufficient access to secondary education for all students, but girls remain particularly disadvantaged, achieving only 40.3 percent participation in 2021 compared to boys (Minister Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, 2024). In Ethiopia, 13% of adolescent girls aged 15–19 are either mothers or pregnant with their first child, and 38% of women have given birth by age 18. The majority of women have their first child within 2.1 years of marriage, resulting in a median age of childbirth (The World Bank, 2019). As noted by Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI) [Ethiopia] and ICF, (2024), 40% of women lack formal education. Six

percent have finished primary school, and only 1% have completed secondary education. Additionally, 6% of women possess education beyond secondary school.

Teenage mothers are at a greater risk of discontinuing their education. Throughout their years of bearing children, women face ongoing challenges in making choices regarding fertility, parenting, and employment, particularly in the Tehuledere and Dessie Zuriya woredas, as well as other regions.

In the Tehuledere and Dessie Zuriya woredas and other parts of the region, studies are often limited in scope and have become outdated. Many of the existing research efforts fail to capture the current realities faced by girls in these areas, particularly in light of recent developments such as recurrent conflicts, forced migration, and the impacts of climate change. The emergence of conflicts in the region has profoundly disrupted educational access and quality, yet these critical issues have not been adequately studied or addressed. As a result, there is a significant gap in understanding how such conflicts specifically affect girls' education, including their enrollment, retention, and overall academic performance. Current literature often overlooks the unique challenges that girls face during and after conflicts, such as increased risks of gender-based violence, early marriage, and socio-economic pressures that prioritize boys' education over girls. This study aims to fill these gaps by comprehensively analyzing the barriers affecting girls' education in the study area. The research will provide a nuanced understanding of girls' challenges in accessing education in Tehuledere and Dessie Zuriya Woredas using a mixed-methods approach, including qualitative and quantitative data collection. The study will investigate various factors, such as sociocultural norms, economic constraints, and the physical safety of girls traveling to and from schools. Furthermore, this research will explore the systemic issues that contribute to educational inequities, including the adequacy of existing educational policies and their implementation at the local level. The findings will not only highlight the barriers but will also focus on identifying potential gaps in support services and resources available to girls. Based on the insights gained from this comprehensive analysis, the study will propose durable solutions and intervention mechanisms tailored to the unique context of Tehuledere and Dessie Zuriya.

This research, therefore, seeks to contribute to a more informed understanding of the challenges facing girls in these regions. It enables stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, and community leaders in general and ELiDA in particular, to develop targeted interventions that can effectively enhance educational opportunities for girls. By addressing the current gaps and barriers, this study aims to foster an environment where girls can thrive academically and realize their full potential, thereby contributing to the broader goal of gender equality in education.

1.3. Objectives of the survey

The primary objective of this study is to undertake a detailed analysis of the challenges and barriers that hinder girls' education in Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere Woreda. These include socio-economic constraints, psychosocial issues, cultural and attitudinal factors, inadequate infrastructure, and gender-based violence. The analysis is intended to provide a solid foundation for effectively prioritizing targeted interventions to address these barriers.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Assesses girls' education trends and current status in Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere Woredas.
- Identify the underlying factors that hinder girls' education in Dessie Zuria and Tehulederie Woredas
- Prioritize the challenges and barriers to girls' education based on their severity and impact so that proper measures can be taken to address the most critical issues.
- Provide relevant data that supports the development of targeted interventions to improve access, equity, and quality of education for girls in the region.
- Identify key areas for policy intervention that is necessary to support girls' education effectively.

1.4. Research Questions

To achieve the above-stated objectives, the following research questions were raised:

- What are girls' education trends and current status in Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere Woredas?

- What factors hinder girls' education in Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere Woredas?
- Which factors are most pressing in disrupting girls' education?
- What possible measures can be taken in order to tackle the barriers to girls' education?
- Which areas need policy interventions with regard to girls' education?

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study could be valuable in that:

- It will provide valuable learning opportunities for girls, as they can receive support from various actors and develop their resilience to remain engaged in school.
- It will allow teachers and other stakeholders to better understand the contemporary challenges of girls' education and respond accordingly.
- It will inform NGOs and other relevant stakeholders about the areas where they can intervene meaningfully.
- It will update educational administrative bodies at various levels regarding the issues in selected woredas and schools so they can take action to resolve them.
- It can be used as a reference for future research on girls' education.

1.6. Delimitation of the study

This study assesses the trends and current status of girls' education. It identifies gaps and the underlying barriers to girls' education. Geographically, it is delimited to Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere Woredas secondary schools. Conceptually, the study addresses participation trends in girls' education, including enrolment, dropout, and repetition rates, as well as the major factors contributing to poor performance in the two woreda.

2. Methodology

The study will employ a mixed approach, generating both quantitative and qualitative data, including both primary and secondary data.

2.1 Types of Data

Quantitative Data

Both primary and secondary quantitative data were used in the study. Primary data were collected using questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed to female students. The questionnaire aims to identify the underlying barriers to girls' education. The secondary quantitative data were also gathered from the yearly abstract reports of the South Wollo Zone education department and the selected schools' annual reports. These types of data inform us of the trends of girls' enrolment, rate of completion, and promotion to the next grade level, and the gender disparity/gaps in the schools.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data were collected through open-ended questionnaires, FGD, and in-depth interviews to enrich the quantitative data and provide a detailed understanding of barriers to girls' education.

2.2. Participants of the Study

The study participants include female students, teachers, education officials, school administrators, and PTSA members in the selected schools, cluster supervisors, as well as religious officials.

2.3. Scope of the Study

The study focused on the secondary schools of the two woredas (Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere Woreda). The total population includes all female students currently enrolled in the secondary schools, school officials, parents, and community leaders from both woredas for the 2024/25 academic year. Four secondary schools (two from each woreda) were purposively selected as sample schools based on accessibility, student population, and the project's focus. The sampling technique used for the students was stratified proportional random sampling. Female students

were stratified according to their grade levels (9-12), which helped the study accommodate variations among different grade levels.

2.4. Sample and sampling techniques of the study

Samples were collected using proportional random sampling techniques. For teachers, simple random sampling methods were applied. Purposive sampling was used to select participants for focus group discussions (FGD) and in-depth interviews due to their unique roles in the issue under investigation. Accordingly, education experts, school principals, cluster supervisors, members of PTAs, and coordinators of girls' clubs were purposively selected for the FGD and in-depth interviews.

56 stakeholders, representing diverse roles within the education system, engaged in the qualitative phase of the study based on data saturation. Regarding quantitative data, the total population was 1199. The sample was derived from the population as follows:

Step 1: Decide on the Parameters

Common choices are:

- Confidence level: 95% ($Z = 1.96$)
- Margin of error (e): 5% = 0.05
- Population proportion (p): 50% = 0.5 (maximum variability is safest if unknown)

Step 2: Use the Sample Size Formula for Finite Population

The general formula is:

$$n = \frac{N \cdot Z^2 \cdot p(1 - p)}{e^2(N - 1) + Z^2 \cdot p(1 - p)}$$

Where:

- n = required sample size
- N = population size = 1,199
- Z = Z-score (1.96 for 95% confidence)
- p = estimated proportion = 0.5

Step 3: Plug in the Numbers

$$\begin{aligned}n &= \frac{1199 \cdot (1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot 0.5}{(0.05)^2 \cdot (1199 - 1) + (1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot 0.5} \\n &= \frac{1199 \cdot 3.8416 \cdot 0.25}{0.0025 \cdot 1198 + 0.9604} \\n &= \frac{1199 \cdot 0.9604}{2.995 + 0.9604} = \frac{1151.876}{3.9554} \approx \boxed{291}\end{aligned}$$

Accordingly, a total of 291 respondents were selected from a population of 1,199, based on a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Of these, 200 questionnaires were properly completed and deemed valid for analysis, yielding a response rate of approximately 68.7%. While this figure is generally considered acceptable within social science research, it falls short of the commonly recommended threshold of 80% for minimizing non-response bias. The relatively lower return rate can be attributed to the timing of data collection, which coincided with final and national examinations. During this period, both students and teachers were preoccupied with academic preparations, which limited their ability to fully engage with and appropriately complete the questionnaires.

2.5. Data Collection Tool

Multiple data-gathering tools were utilized for this study. Specifically, the study employed the following data-gathering methods: Document Review: Reviewing existing school records and zonal education department reports helps identify trends in enrollment and performance among girls. Thus, reports from the South Wollo Zone education department from the last five years (2020/21-2024/25) were obtained for analysis. This helps us understand the enrollment, dropout, and completion rates trends for girls over previous years and their resilience in education post-COVID-19, along with the conflicts that followed the pandemic. Moreover, the current data help shape the research's focus areas. Questionnaire: The questionnaires were used to gather data from female students, identifying significant barriers to girls' education in the study areas. The items in the questionnaire encompass significant barriers identified in the literature and previous studies to obtain relevant information regarding the most preventable barriers experienced in the

study areas. The questionnaires consist of both open and closed item types. Additionally, to ensure comprehension, the questionnaires were translated into Amharic. In-depth Interview: To understand systemic and policy-level barriers, in-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, such as education officials, school administrators, cluster supervisors, girls' club chairs, girls, community members, and student representatives. The interviews continue until data saturation occurs. FGD: FGDs were used to gather data from members of girls' clubs and PTSAs. There were two FGDs, with each group consisting of eight members.

2.6. Method of data analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 25). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were employed to identify patterns in enrollment, dropout, and repetition rates, while cross-tabulations allowed for the comparison of key variables across groups. In parallel, the qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis, which involved coding interview transcripts, focus group discussions, and open-ended survey responses into categories that reflected recurring themes, meanings, and patterns related to barriers to girls' education. The integration of these two strands of analysis followed a mixed-methods approach, whereby the quantitative results provided measurable trends and generalizable insights, while the qualitative findings added depth and contextual understanding to these patterns. Both datasets were analyzed concurrently, with each complementing and validating the other. This parallel triangulation strategy ensured that the quantitative evidence was enriched by the lived experiences and perspectives captured qualitatively, thereby enhancing the overall rigor, reliability, and comprehensiveness of the study's findings.

2.7. Ethical Considerations

Data was collected with proper clearance and consent from the parties involved. Generally, the ethical codes of scientific research were rigorously followed when collecting data from the research participants. During the qualitative data collection process, proper care was taken to maintain the accuracy of information taken from the participants.

3. Results, Discussion and Findings

3.1. Overview of Informant Categories and Numbers

Table 1: Details of Informants of Qualitative Data

Category	Number of Informants	Role in the Education Ecosystem
School Principals	4	School-level leadership is responsible for administration and policy implementation.
Cluster Supervisors	3	Mid-level education officials oversee multiple schools and ensure educational quality and coordination.
Zonal Expert	1	Higher-level education policy/strategy expert at zonal level.
Teachers	8	Frontline educators provide insights into classroom realities and student-teacher dynamics.
Parents	20	Key stakeholders represent household-level perspectives, cultural beliefs, and economic realities.
Female Students	20	Primary beneficiaries and subjects of the study provide firsthand experiences and challenges.

A total of 56 stakeholders engaged in the qualitative phase of the study, representing diverse roles within the education system. These participants were purposefully selected to ensure a thorough understanding of educational realities, capturing insights from institutional actors, frontline educators, and community members. Among the participants, 8 individuals (14.3%) were from the institutional level, which included school principals, cluster supervisors, and a zonal expert. Their contributions provided valuable insights into administrative leadership, policy implementation, and strategic planning within different layers of the educational bureaucracy. Another 8 participants (14.3%) were teachers, who directly interact with students and influence the classroom environment. Their perspectives offered deep insights into the practical aspects of teaching and learning, the effectiveness of educational policies, and the

obstacles faced in actual classroom situations. The remaining 40 participants (71.4%) came from the community, primarily parents and female students, making this group the largest segment of informants, highlighting an intentional effort to capture grassroots viewpoints. Parents shared critical insights regarding household dynamics, cultural beliefs, and economic factors that impact education. Female students, as key beneficiaries of the educational system, provided firsthand accounts of their experiences, aspirations, and the challenges they face, particularly concerning gender norms and socio-cultural barriers. This diverse participant pool holds significant potential for qualitative insights. The combination of leadership, supervisory, teaching, and beneficiary perspectives enables a triangulated analysis, yielding a comprehensive 360-degree view of the education system. The prominence of female student and parent voices underscores a strong emphasis on beneficiaries, especially in addressing gender-related issues and encouraging community engagement in education. Additionally, including actors from various levels—from zonal policy experts to students—facilitates a critical investigation into the relationship between policy and practice. This design allows for evaluating how educational strategies are interpreted, implemented, and experienced, aiding in identifying effective practices and potential discrepancies between policy intentions and real-life experiences.

3.2. Data on Students' Enrollment and Attrition Rate

The following table is a comprehensive Trend Analysis and Gaps Summary derived from the enrollment statistics of girls in the Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere woredas, covering a five-year timeframe from 2020/21 to 2024/25.

Table 2: Female Students' Enrolment of the two woredas (2020/21-2024/25)

Wereda	Academic Year	Total No.
<i>Dessie Zuria</i>	2020/21	1350
	2021/22	1557
	2022/23	1753
	2023/24	1475
	2024/25	1155
<i>Tehulederie</i>	2020/21	2360
	2021/22	2855
	2022/23	2594
	2023/24	1577
	2024/25	1068
<i>Woredas</i>	Academic Year	Enrollment of Girls by Grade Level

<i>Dessie Zuria</i>		9	10	11	12
	2020/21	698	294	234	124
	2021/22	746	442	170	199
	2022/23	723	511	355	164
	2023/24	436	395	346	298
	2024/25	381	240	241	293
<i>Tehulederie</i>	2020/21	906	854	322	278
	2021/22	1223	492	607	533
	2022/23	1121	552	388	533
	2023/24	453	574	287	263
	2024/25	347	231	301	189

The assessment of girls' enrollment trends in Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere Woredas indicates an alarming pattern in secondary education participation over the last five academic years. In Dessie Zuria, girls' enrollment rose consistently from 1,350 in 2020/21, reaching a peak of 1,753 in 2022/23. This growth reflects progress in access and participation, suggesting that early efforts to enhance girls' education were effective. However, the trend reversed dramatically in the following years, with enrollment falling to 1,475 in 2023/24 and dropping further to 1,155 in 2024/25. This notable decline signifies a regression likely caused by ongoing barriers, including school dropout rates, increasing household economic pressures, early marriage, and other systemic challenges that disproportionately hinder girls' educational persistence.

A similar decline is noted in the Tehuledere Woreda. Here, girls' enrollment peaked at 2,855 in 2021/22, then decreased to 2,594 in 2022/23, 1,577 in 2023/24, culminating at a low of 1,068 in 2024/25. This represents more than a 60% loss of enrolled girls within just three years, highlighting severe disruptions in educational continuity. The steepness of this decline strongly indicates that structural and societal barriers, including poverty, gender-based violence, inadequate infrastructure, and limited family support, have worsened in recent years.

A look at the data by grade level reveals additional patterns. In both Woredas, Grade 9 enrollments peaked in 2021/22 and have consistently declined since then. Grades 10 and 11 experienced some growth up until 2022/23 but have faced downturns thereafter. Notably, Grade 12 enrollment has remained relatively stable, with slight increases over the five years, even amidst a general drop in total enrollment. This suggests a significant dropout bottleneck between Grades 9 and 10, where many students, especially girls, exit the education system. The

enrollment decrease from lower to upper secondary indicates weak transition mechanisms and inadequate support during this critical educational stage.

The relative stability in Grade 12 enrollment may suggest that once girls reach the final stage of secondary education, their persistence increases, likely due to a mix of internal motivation, family support, and targeted interventions for senior students. This potentially indicates that those who manage to overcome earlier obstacles are more resilient and better equipped to finish their secondary education. However, this resilience applies to only a small percentage of students, as overall participation continues to decline.

The ongoing decrease across both Woredas, particularly after 2022/23, suggests that existing barriers have intensified or new issues have arisen. These challenges include socio-economic instability, conflict and displacement, cultural practices such as early marriage, and a lack of gender-responsive school environments. The difficulties in transitioning, especially the high dropout rates between grades, highlight the vulnerability of the achievements made in girls' education, which require sustained and deliberate investment and policy focus.

Consequently, the data underscores an urgent need for intervention. A significant gap exists regarding retention, completion, and transition in girls' secondary education. Addressing this gap mandates a multifaceted strategy: enhancing economic support for underprivileged families, improving gender-sensitive school facilities, raising awareness of the significance of girls' education, and establishing legal and community protections against early marriage and gender-based discrimination. Without coordinated efforts, the risk of further decline in girls' education will remain high, jeopardizing broader objectives of gender equality and sustainable development in the region.

Fig.1. Girls' Enrolment rates for the last five years

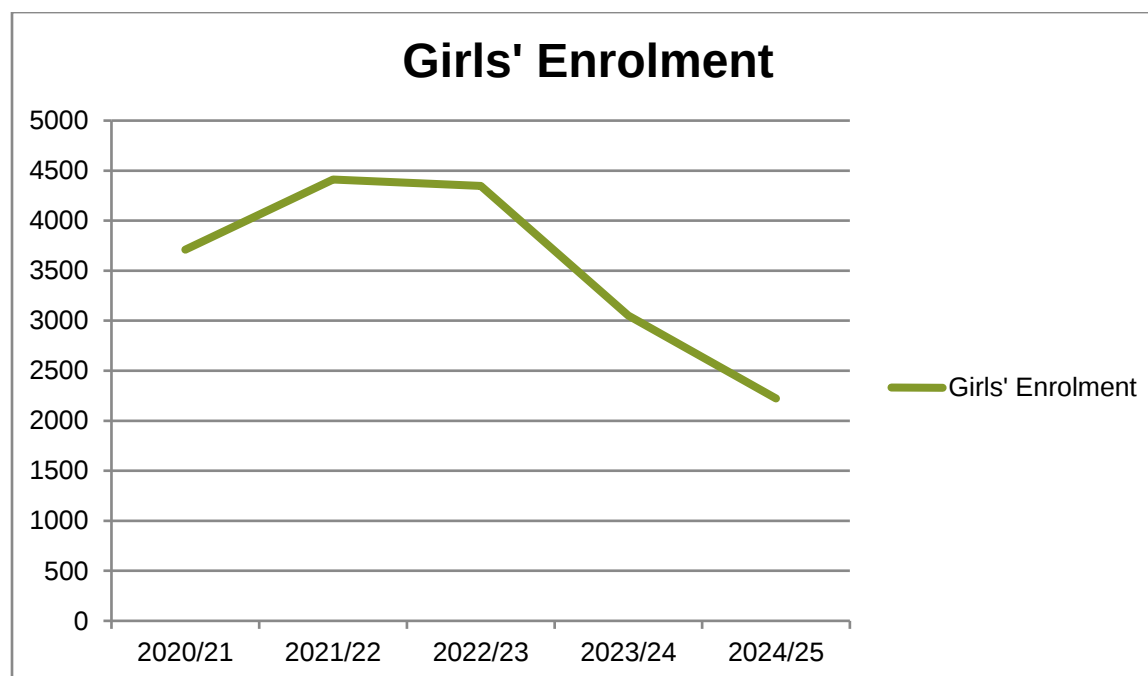


Table 3: Enrolment, drop out, and promotion of girls in the four secondary schools (from 2020/21-2024/25 E.C)

<i>Enrolment</i>		Enrolment	No Dropout Students	Students are set for the Exam	Number of Students Repeat Class	No of students Promoted	Promotion Rate (%)
<i>Haiq Secondary School</i>	2020/21	814	26	788	467	321	40.73604
	2021/22	888	43	845	440	405	47.92899
	2022/23	880	50	830	613	217	26.14458
	2023/24	508	46	462	238	224	48.48485
	2024/25	393	37	356	356	-----	-----
<i>Sulula Secondary School</i>	2020/21	383	38	345	105	240	69.56522
	2021/22	498	26	472	359	113	23.94068
	2022/23	525	30	495	295	200	40.40404
	2023/24	324	48	276	136	140	50.72464
	2024/25	215	12	203	203	-----	0-----
<i>Chirecha</i>	2020/21	566	23	543	0	543	100

Secondary	2021/22	527	45	482	0	482	100
	2022/23	600	62	538	0	538	100
	2023/24	582	70	512	0	512	100
	2024/25	382	4	378	378	----	-----
Getera Secondary	2020/21	165	18	147	147	---	-----
	2021/22	369	21	348	100	248	71.26437
	2022/23	354	17	337	3	334	99.10979
	2023/24	273	13	260	0	260	100
	2024/25	274	12	262	262	----	-----

Source: Data obtained from the schools' reports.

As shown in Table 3, the data from four secondary schools over the academic years 2020/21 to 2024/25 reveal significant trends regarding girls' enrolment, dropout, repetition, and promotion rates. These trends offer important insights into girls' education challenges in the respective woredas.

To begin with, enrolment data reveals a notable decrease in the number of girls attending secondary schools, especially in the final years of the study, specifically 2023/24 and 2024/25. This downward trend is evident in most schools, except Chirecha Secondary School, which shows relative stability or a more moderate decline in student numbers. Although schools like Haiq and Sulula boast higher overall enrolment figures, they also face significant reductions as the period progresses. In contrast, Chirecha and Getera secondary schools show lower enrolment rates, which appear to correlate with higher promotion rates. This indicates that smaller student groups may receive more targeted academic assistance and experience less strain on resources, ultimately improving student outcomes.

Secondly, the data reveals a significant number of girls repeating grades, indicating persistent academic challenges or failure to fulfill promotion criteria. Specifically, Haiq Secondary School consistently reports a high volume of repeaters, peaking at 613 girls in 2022/23. These statistics highlight ongoing retention issues and possible systemic obstacles to academic achievement. In contrast, Chirecha and Getera secondary schools have reported no repeaters in several years, which may suggest more effective academic support, stricter promotion policies, or variations in recording practices. While generally low relative to total enrolment, dropout rates also fluctuate

over time and remain considerable. The number of girls not advancing to the same grade level indicates attrition that extends beyond formal dropout statistics, potentially encompassing transfers, migration, or unrecorded dropouts.

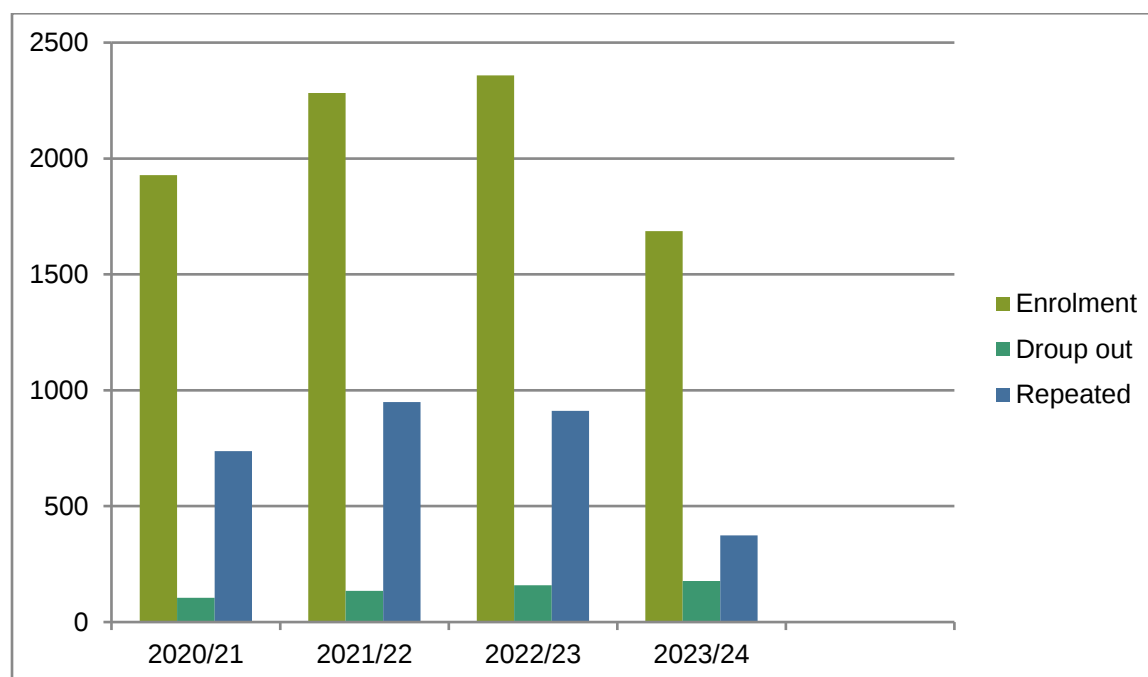
Promotion rates among these schools exhibit considerable variation. Haiq Secondary School has alarmingly low promotion rates, dropping to only 26.14% in the 2022/23 academic year. This figure reveals that merely one-quarter of the enrolled girls advanced to the next grade. Similarly, Sulula Secondary School shows persistently low promotion rates over the years, with rates of 23.94% in 2021/22, 40.4% in 2022/23, and 50.72% in 2023/24. In contrast, Chirecha and Getera secondary schools attain high promotion rates, regularly nearing 100%, despite their smaller student populations. This stark contrast implies that although enrollment numbers are lower at these schools, the enrolled girls experience environments that foster academic achievement, possibly due to increased student engagement or nurturing educational settings.

Interpreting these findings reveals that the decline in enrollment, along with the high repetition rates at Haiq and Sulula secondary schools, indicates systemic issues hindering girls' educational advancement. These issues may stem from academic challenges, socio-economic barriers, early marriage, household responsibilities, or inadequate academic support. The low promotion rates in larger schools could be worsened by issues such as overcrowded classrooms and poor teacher-to-student ratios. In contrast, the higher promotion rates at smaller schools like Chirecha and Getera may result from more conducive learning environments or selective retention strategies. Overall, these trends highlight a concerning pattern of high attrition and low progression for girls in many schools, closely linked to the documented high dropout rates in the woredas. This situation ultimately jeopardizes the continuity and completion of girls' secondary education.

To summarize, there is an overall decline in girls' enrollment, particularly during the 2023/24 and 2024/25 years, except for Chirecha Secondary School, which shows relative stability. High repetition rates remain a significant issue, especially in Haiq and Sulula secondary schools, leading to low promotion rates that often fall below 50%. In contrast, Chirecha and Getera secondary schools have higher promotion rates, though they have smaller student populations. The evidence highlights the need for targeted interventions to tackle the issues of repetition,

dropout, and promotion—especially in larger schools with high enrollment—to enhance girls’ educational outcomes and ensure consistent academic advancement.

Fig.2 Girls Enrolment, Dropout, and Class repeat for the last four years



The graph above vividly shows the high rate of girls repeating the same grade. This puts girls in a bad condition as they are not encouraged to attend school in the same grade, and neither their parents support them.

3.4. Major Barriers to Girls’ Education in Dessie Zurie and Tehuledre Woredas

Table 4: Survey Results of Barriers to Girls' Education (N= 200)

S.N.	Item	5	4	3	2	1
	Sociocultural Barriers like Patriarchy and Gender Norms					
1.	Patriarchal norms limit girls' educational aspirations in my community.	150(75%)	50(25%)			
2.	In my woreda, Girls are expected to prioritize domestic roles over education.	160 (80%)	25(12.5%)	15(7.5%)		

3.	Traditional gender norms discourage girls from pursuing Secondary education.	170(85%)	25(12.5%)	5 (2.5%)		
4.	Girls face more obstacles than boys in accessing education due to cultural expectations	180(90%)	15 (7.5%)	5(2.5%)		
	Cultural Perceptions/Attitudes of Many Parents Towards Girls' Education					
5.	Most parents in my community believe that girls' education is important.	20 (10%)	10(5%)		160 (80%)	10 (5%)
6.	Cultural beliefs in my community often devalue the education of girls	100(50%)	85(42.5%)	5(2.5%)		
7.	Some parents view girls' education as unnecessary beyond primary school.	90(45%)	95(47.5%)	2(1%)	3 (1.5%)	
	School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV), Sexual Assault, Rape, and Harassment					
8.	Girls face gender-based violence on their way to or from school.	65 (32.5%)	100(50%)	15(7.5%)	20 (10%)	
9.	Sexual harassment is a problem within my school environment.	74(37%)	98(49%)	20(10%)	8(4%)	
10.	Girls are afraid to report incidents of harassment or violence at school.	195 (97.5%)	5(2.5%)			
11.	Our School does not have adequate measures in place to prevent or address SRGBV.	97(48.5%)	94(47%)	9(4.5%)		
	Inconvenient School Environments					
12.	Poor school infrastructure (e.g., classrooms, toilets) makes learning difficult for girls.	112(56%)	88(44%)			
13.	Schools are located far from home, which discourages girls from attending.	50(25%)	90(45%)	25 (12.5%)	35 (17.5%)	
14.	My school has a private and clean room for girls to change menstrual hygiene materials.		30(15%)		170 (85%)	
	Poverty					
15.	Poverty limits girls' ability to pursue education in my community.	55 (27.5%)	99(49.5%)	20(10%)	26 (13%)	

16.	Families often prioritize boys' education over girls' due to financial constraints.	110 (55%)	57(28.5%)	10(5%)	23(11.5%)	
17.	Financial hardship leads to girls dropping out of school early.	172(86%)	18(9%)	10(5%)		
18.	The lack of proper sanitation facilities discourages girls from attending school during menstruation.	180(90%)	17(8.6%)	3(1.5%)		
	Peer Pressure					
19.	Peer pressure influences girls to skip school or focus less on academics.	175 (87.5%)	25(12.5%)			
20.	Positive peer relationships can motivate girls to succeed academically.	190(95%)	10(5%)			
	Migration, Security and Stability					
21.	Migrations to Arab countries have disrupted the educational continuity of girls in our area.	97(48.5%)	91(45.5%)	12(6%)		
22.	The current conflicts affect girls education in our school.	87(43.5%)	90(45%)	23(11.5%)		
23.	The current conflicts in the Amhara region prevent many girls from attending school regularly.	96(48%)	104(52%)			
24.	The perception of school as an unsafe place deters parents from sending girls to school.	70(35%)	123(61.5%)	7(3.5%)		
	Early Marriage and Teen Pregnancy					
25.	Early marriage is a major barrier to girls' education in this area.	77(38.5%)	88(44%)	24(12%)	11(5.5%)	
26.	Teen pregnancy often leads to school dropout among girls.	68(34%)	126(63%)	6(3%)		
27.	Families sometimes marry off girls early due to financial or social pressures.	77(38.5%)	89(44.5%)	20(10%)	14(7%)	

This study identifies the following significant barriers to girls' education in the secondary schools of Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere woredas:

Patriarchal Social Systems and Gender Stereotypes

In the semi-urban areas of Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere Woredas, the unseen restraints of patriarchy have been shaping the futures of girls long before they enter a classroom. In this context, the household functions not only as a physical setting but also as a melting pot of deeply rooted gender norms, where boys are prepared for leadership and education, while girls are subtly, yet firmly, directed towards domestic roles and submissiveness.

This study reveals that 80% of girls have experienced gender-based cultural discrimination that negatively impacts their educational paths. These experiences are not merely isolated cases; they are woven into the community's social fabric. During household interviews, over 55% of the girls expressed a belief that boys deserved educational priority, indicating the internalization of patriarchal values. This internalized inequality highlights how cultural dominance perpetuates itself through not just imposition but also silent acceptance and resignation.

Parents, serving as the primary gatekeepers of their children's educational opportunities, often uphold this perspective. The notion that a girl's future lies in marriage and domestic responsibilities is widespread. Focus group discussions indicated that in both Woredas, the expected timeline for a girl's life culminates at primary school—at which moment she is considered prepared for marriage and childbirth. Conversely, boys are imagined as future providers and thus encouraged to seek further education, engage in public life, and take on leadership positions within the household and community.

Schools also reflect these socio-cultural dynamics. In the classrooms of Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere, teachers—often unknowingly—tend to provide more attention and encouragement to boys, while girls are seen as marginal learners. Female students often report feeling disregarded, unsupported, or even deterred from participating in class. These classroom situations are further exacerbated by a lack of female role models—many rural schools have few female teachers, and male leaders dominate local positions. Consequently, girls grow up witnessing few examples of women in powerful or intellectual roles, reinforcing the belief that ambition is reserved for their brothers rather than themselves.

Furthermore, girls' mobility is frequently curtailed, often masked as a way to protect family honor or personal safety, limiting their involvement in extracurricular activities, access to educational resources, or even consistent school attendance. The onset of puberty often serves as a turning point—a silent signal for parents to withdraw their daughters from school. In such cases, education is not merely interrupted but often discontinued altogether.

The patriarchal grip on education is not exclusive to these woredas. Comparative studies from Oromia and other areas of the Amhara region reveal similar trends, where patriarchal attitudes restrict both the aspirations and opportunities presented to girls. However, in Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere, the confluence of poverty, tradition, and institutional indifference exacerbates the issue.

Nevertheless, amidst these struggles, progress is slowly taking root. In Tehuledere, organizations such as ELiDA and various community-focused NGOs have initiated targeted programs—from gender-sensitive awareness campaigns to school-based conditional cash transfer initiatives. These efforts are gradually changing perceptions. Some faith leaders are now reinterpreting religious teachings to endorse girls' education, while local advocates push for girls to stay in school, particularly during the important secondary education phase.

Initial assessments of these programs in schools like Werebabo and Tehuledere demonstrate encouraging outcomes: declining rates of early marriage, improved attendance for girls, and enhanced parental backing for secondary education. Although these success stories are localized, they provide strong evidence that while cultural norms are powerful, they can be changed. With ongoing community involvement, legal backing, and inclusive educational policies, traditional views can be challenged.

In summary, the triangulated data from this study, encompassing surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions, confirms that entrenched sociocultural barriers grounded in patriarchal norms remain a significant obstacle to girls' access and achievement in secondary education in Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere. The prevailing mindset places boys on the path to progress while binding girls to the past. This limits individual potential and perpetuates cycles of inequality, poverty,

and disempowerment. Addressing these barriers will necessitate more than policies; it will demand a cultural awakening that reimagines girls as future leaders rather than future wives.

Household Chores as a Barrier to Girls' Education

In the rural and semi-rural areas of Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere Woredas, home is not merely a resting place but also a workplace, particularly for girls. Findings from surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions reveal how entrenched gender norms trap young girls in a relentless cycle of domestic duties. From a young age, girls are expected to contribute to household chores as soon as they can carry a pot or wield a broom. They become vital helpers at home, rising before dawn to tidy the yard, prepare meals, collect water from distant streams, gather firewood from nearby hills, look after younger siblings, and work on the farmlands.

Survey data indicate that 92% of girls take on significant household chores, such as cooking, fetching water, and caring for siblings. During busy agricultural seasons, this responsibility grows to encompass demanding farm tasks like weeding, harvesting, and tending to animals. Meanwhile, boys enjoy greater freedom to prioritize education, social activities, or recreational time, leading to a stark disparity in how time and energy are distributed between the sexes.

Interviews with students uncovered narratives of silent struggle. Numerous girls recounted rising well before dawn to finish household chores before their strenuous trek to school. This early exhaustion frequently results in tardiness, lower focus, and decreased engagement in class. When household demands escalate on market days or public holidays, some girls must completely leave school. One participant expressed, “When the market is near, my books stay closed. I am needed more in the kitchen than in the classroom.” This disproportionate burden on girls diminishes the educational success for those who attend school.

This immense domestic burden has led to what educators and researchers call “time poverty”, a persistent lack of time for academic study, relaxation, or personal growth. Teachers frequently noted that female students seemed more exhausted, less focused, and were more often absent than their male counterparts. These trends result in a notable drop in academic performance, long-term disengagement, and, ultimately, increased dropout rates among girls.

The issue is further exacerbated by the common belief that a girl's education is less important than her domestic responsibilities. In many families, especially those struggling with poverty or raising multiple children, parents often prioritize immediate labor contributions over their daughters' long-term educational aspirations (92.5%). One mother articulated in a focus group, "If she doesn't help me, who will? School won't cook our food." These views illustrate a deeply ingrained bias that considers girls' education unnecessary when contrasted with the demands of daily survival and running a household.

The study's cumulative evidence shows that household responsibilities are not just a background issue—they are a fundamental and systemic obstacle to girls' education in Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere. The unequal division of labor at home, heavily influenced by cultural norms and economic needs, consistently puts girls at a disadvantage and limits their educational prospects. Unless specific interventions are implemented to tackle both the practical demands and societal views of girls' domestic roles, the goal of achieving educational equity in these regions will persist as a distant aspiration.

Menstrual Stigma as an Invisible Barrier to Girls' Education

Among the various barriers that girls face in their pursuit of education in Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere, menstruation stands out as one of the most unrecognized yet significant challenges. Surrounded by layers of stigma, silence, and shame, menstruation becomes a recurring crisis that often sidelines girls from their educational journeys.

The findings of this study reveal a troubling truth: 90% of the interviewed girls stated that their families were entirely unaware of their menstrual situation, and most felt it was too taboo to discuss menstruation at home. In these communities, menstruation transcends its biological nature and becomes a source of cultural unease, avoided in daily conversations, particularly among family members. Furthermore, the onset of menstruation before marriage is often viewed as a cultural blemish, a premature indicator of womanhood that elicits shame instead of support. As a result, many girls experience this transition in isolation.

In both Woredas, girls shared experiences of being unprepared for their first menstrual cycle without any guidance from family or educational institutions. Lacking access to sanitary pads,

due to their unavailability, high cost, or being deemed unnecessary luxuries, many girls resorted to using old clothes or other unsafe substitutes. This approach is not only uncomfortable and unsanitary; it also increases the risk of infection and amplifies feelings of shame and anxiety during school hours.

Moreover, schools themselves are ill-equipped to assist menstruating students. The study noted that most schools provide inadequate private sanitation facilities, with many lacking designated changing areas (85%), running water, or even soap. In some instances, girls are compelled to use restrooms shared with boys or rudimentary latrines that provide little privacy, leaving them anxious about potential leaks or public embarrassment.

As articulated by a girl from a rural Kebele secondary school in a focus group: *“When I bleed, I stay home. I would rather miss lessons than be laughed at.”* This fear is valid. Girls frequently encounter teasing or mockery from male peers who, lacking proper understanding, view menstruation as either a source of humor or an unwelcome mystery. These experiences not only drive girls away from school physically but also establish emotional obstacles.

The repercussions of this monthly disruption are starting: most girls miss between 3 and 5 school days each month due to menstruation-related obstacles. Over time, this results in notable absenteeism, learning gaps, decreased classroom participation, and a growing sense of disconnection from their education. Teachers and school administrators have observed that affected girls tend to fall behind in their studies, lose confidence in their abilities, and face an increased risk of dropping out of school.

The emotional impact is equally profound. Girls expressed feelings of shame, isolation, and helplessness. Without proper education on menstrual hygiene management (MHM) or emotional support from teachers or parents, menstruation becomes not only a physical challenge but also an ongoing emotional burden. This internalized shame gradually erodes girls’ self-esteem, creating yet another invisible barrier to their educational aspirations.

These challenges are deeply rooted in broader sociocultural frameworks. Patriarchal views, rigid gender roles, and widespread misinformation converge to create an unwelcoming environment for adolescent girls, especially regarding their bodily health. In Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere, like

in many regions of Ethiopia, menstrual stigma mirrors a larger system of gender-based exclusion, positioning natural female biology as incompatible with the requirements of formal education.

Nevertheless, the findings also indicate potential avenues for intervention. Some local initiatives have begun emerging, striving to dismantle the silence surrounding menstruation. Initiatives include pilot MHM education sessions led by female health workers, efforts to distribute reusable sanitary pads, and training teachers - especially female educators - to provide empathetic and confidential support. However, these initiatives are still sporadic and have limited outreach.

In conclusion, menstruation is not merely a private concern, it is a public issue with significant ramifications for girls' education. The evidence from Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere demonstrates clearly: without creating safe, inclusive, and responsive environments for the menstrual needs of adolescent girls, education will remain unstable and unwelcoming for many. Addressing menstrual stigma requires more than just facilities, it necessitates a cultural transformation that normalizes discussions about menstruation, empowers girls to manage their periods with dignity, and encourages boys and adults to act as allies rather than perpetrators of silence.

Early Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy as Barriers to Girls' Education

Schools become victims of early marriage in the rural and semi-urban peripheries of Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere Woredas. This study's findings reveal that widespread early marriage and teenage pregnancy significantly hinder girls' ability to remain in school and succeed academically.

Data from interviews, surveys (82.5%), and focus group discussions indicate that early marriage and teenage pregnancy lead to high dropout rates among girls. Ninety percent of the girls surveyed reported personal experiences with early marriage - whether it was completed, attempted, or ended - or faced overt pressure from their families to marry during adolescence. Many described being abruptly pulled out of school with little notice as marriage arrangements commenced. A notable number also shared that divorces following child marriage were common, leaving them stigmatized and educationally displaced at an early age.

These accounts are prevalent. Throughout various kebeles, educators, school leaders, and local officials acknowledged that early marriage continues to be a significant factor in female dropouts at the secondary level. Although the legal marriage age in Ethiopia is 18, customary practices in these regions often take precedence over statutory protections. Comprehensive interviews with parents consistently revealed a common rationale: the belief that keeping girls in school increases the risk of pregnancy, while early marriage is viewed as a way to maintain family honor.

In numerous communities in Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere, age fifteen is viewed as the social cutoff for girls to marry. Staying single beyond this age not only casts doubt on a girl's 'marriageability' but also leads to various forms of social marginalization, both covert and overt. These beliefs exert significant pressure on families to facilitate early marriages, frequently without the girls' informed consent. A principal from a school in one kebele of Tehuledere expressed:

"We are losing too many bright girls—not because they lack capability, but because their worth is evaluated based on their readiness for marriage instead of their academic performance."

An even more concerning issue is the connection between early marriage and teenage pregnancy. In the study regions, pregnancies that occur outside of marriage carry a significant stigma, which often leads to coercive early marriages, either with the child's father or another potential partner. Girls who become pregnant, regardless of whether it is due to consensual relationships, coercion, or child marriage, are often pushed out of school and typically face barriers to returning after giving birth. Many schools lack formal re-entry policies, and the stigma from peers, parents, and teachers further complicates the reintegration process significantly.

The psychosocial effects of early marriage or pregnancy are also challenging. Girls who face early marriage or pregnancy often endure a dual burden: the physical consequences of childbirth and household responsibilities, alongside the emotional toll of lost dreams, strained friendships, and educational obstacles. Focus group discussions revealed a common theme of shattered

ambitions, as girls expressed their feelings of regret about missed opportunities, interrupted education, and restricted futures.

The data also indicate that these experiences have intergenerational effects. Girls who miss out on education due to early marriage are more likely to face poverty, dependency, and restricted decision-making power within their households. Consequently, their daughters often find themselves trapped in the same cycle, perpetuating ingrained gender inequalities.

Nevertheless, the research also uncovered signs of resilience and hope. Some schools in Tehuledere are beginning to collaborate with local NGOs, women's affairs offices, and faith-based organizations to combat early marriage through awareness initiatives, school-community dialogues, and mentorship programs for adolescents. Several mothers' associations have taken a stand against early marriages for their daughters, emphasizing education as essential to long-term family well-being. Encouragingly, a few instances were documented of girls returning to school after giving birth, supported by compassionate teachers and innovative administrators.

The empirical evidence from Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere indicates that early marriage and pregnancy are significant barriers to girls' education and require intervention. These practices obstruct the educational paths of many girls. Without intervention, these issues will persist, hindering generations of young women from exercising their right to learn, grow, and actively participate in their communities. The findings emphasize the need for immediate, context-sensitive, and multi-sectoral efforts to break the cycle of early marriage, adolescent motherhood, and educational exclusion.

Economic Barriers to Girls' Education

In the secondary schools of Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere, poverty is more than just a backdrop; it actively influences the daily lives and futures of students, particularly girls. Data from surveys, interviews, and discussions clearly show that economic hardship acts as a systemic barrier, restricting girls' access to education, mobility, and dignity.

Around 87% of respondents cited economic struggle as a primary reason for girls dropping out of school. For many families, expenses like uniforms, exercise books, pens, transport, fees, and

meals are overwhelming. In households already facing financial strain, every birr matters, often pushing daughters' educational dreams to the bottom of the priority list. As an interviewee from Dessie Zuria expressed: *“When the choice is between feeding the family or buying a uniform for my daughter, the decision is painful—but it is made.”*

Beyond these visible costs lies a hidden economy of gender-specific needs that disproportionately impacts girls. Adolescent girls require sanitary pads, undergarments, soap, lotion, hair oil, and other hygiene products that are essential for health and social acceptance at school. The lack of these necessities during menstruation often results in shame, discomfort, and regular absenteeism, causing girls to miss 3–5 days of school each month. In the long run, this leads to significant learning gaps and, for many, eventual dropout. A girl from Tehuledere shared: *“It’s not that I don’t want to learn—I just don’t have what I need to be presentable. When I go without pads or soap, I stay home.”*

The study also revealed that when families are forced to choose who continues in school, boys are typically favored, as confirmed by 83.5% respondents. The prevailing belief that girls are ‘temporary members’ of their birth families, destined for marriage and to support another household, diminishes the perceived value of investing in their education. These decisions stem not only from financial considerations but also from deep-rooted gender ideologies that undervalue girls’ potential and future prospects.

Peer Pressure and Sexual Harassment as Barriers to Girls’ Education

While poverty restricts access, the school environment can also become a battleground where girls' emotional, physical, and psychological health is at risk. This study demonstrates that sexual harassment and peer pressure are common and damaging forces that undermine girls' self-esteem, safety, and commitment to their education.

Qualitative findings show that 80% of the interviewed girls faced some form of sexual harassment, ranging from inappropriate remarks and suggestive gestures to physical contact and coercion. It is also supported by 86% of the responses to the survey. These incidents occurred not only on school premises but also on the way to school and, alarmingly, sometimes within

classrooms by male teachers. A 16-year-old student from Dessie Zuria emotionally recalled her experiences:

“I began arriving late to evade the teacher who scrutinized me and posed personal inquiries. My concentration waned in class, and I felt embarrassed. I ceased raising my hand.”

This creates an unsafe and toxic learning environment, where girls are continually on guard, distracted by fear, and reluctant to engage. Such experiences gradually diminish their academic involvement, often leading to frequent absenteeism or complete withdrawal from school.

Additionally, peer pressure significantly impacts girls, especially during adolescence. Approximately 70% of respondents reported feeling pressured by their peers to neglect their studies. Girls are encouraged to participate in khat chewing, drink alcohol, use drugs, or pursue early romantic relationships—activities that often lead to academic decline or disciplinary actions.

Girls who resist these influences often face ridicule, bullying, or exclusion instead of recognition for their self-control. This isolation, intensified by harassment, creates a toxic atmosphere that weakens their resilience. One girl shared: *“They call me ‘the teacher’s girl’ because I don’t socialize with boys. But I feel alone all the time. Sometimes I wonder if it’s worth staying in school.”*

Even more troubling is the inappropriate conduct displayed by some male teachers, who should serve as mentors and protectors. The absence of trained school counselors, effective reporting systems, and a culture of impunity allows both students and staff to act without fear of consequences. In numerous schools, reports of sexual harassment are often met with no formal action, resulting in increased victim-blaming and silence.

Inconvenient School Environment

In Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere districts, the quest for education among many adolescent girls is a challenging experience filled with endurance, fear, and exclusion. Field research across

secondary schools in both areas shows that inconvenient and unsafe school conditions significantly hinder girls' educational participation and advancement.

An alarming 80% of the interviewed girls described their school environments as “unfavorable” or “unsafe,” highlighting two main concerns: (1) the challenging and arduous journey to school and (2) the lack of gender-sensitive infrastructure within school grounds.

The Journey to School: A Route of Risk and Resilience

For many girls in the scattered highland villages of Dessie Zuria and the steep slopes of Tehuledere, the path to school represents more than mere distance, it is fraught with isolation and danger. To attend class, girls frequently walk 3 to 6 kilometers each way, traversing steep hills, deep ravines, dense eucalyptus forests, and uninhabited farmland, often alone and unprotected.

Through individual interviews and focus group discussions, girls recounted regular experiences of verbal harassment, stalking, attempted sexual assaults, and even abduction attempts during their journeys. One girl from a village near Kutaber shared: *“I leave home before sunrise. If I walk alone, I get followed or insulted. My parents worry every day, but they can’t afford transportation.”*

Parents, particularly mothers, expressed their anxieties in separate interviews, noting that the risk of violence often overshadows the importance of education, compelling families to keep their daughters out of school for their safety and dignity. For those attempting to avoid the long walk by using transportation, the financial burden of daily minibuses fares, often unavailable or unreliable in rural areas—adds another layer of economic hardship on top of the security risks.

Gender-Insensitive School Facilities: Exclusionary Spaces

Even when girls successfully arrive at school, the environment often fails to be welcoming or accommodating, particularly regarding their health and safety needs. Observations and interviews across various school sites confirmed toilet facilities' inadequacy and unsanitary conditions, which were frequently shared between boys and girls without partitions or doors. In

many instances, the toilets were situated far from classrooms, further discouraging girls from utilizing them.

The absence of gender-sensitive WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) infrastructure becomes particularly pronounced during menstruation. Girls reported that the lack of private, clean changing facilities and the unavailability of water and soap resulted in them missing school for several days each month. One respondent explained: *“I don’t come to school when I’m on my period. The toilets are dirty and open. If there is an accident, everyone laughs. I would rather stay home.”*

These recurring absences due to menstrual stigma and inadequate infrastructure contribute to widening learning gaps and diminish girls’ academic self-esteem. Despite national policy pledges for gender equity in education, most schools in the study areas lack structured catch-up or remedial programs for girls who miss classes because of health or domestic obligations.

Proximity to Substance Abuse: A Hidden Danger to School Safety

Compounding the challenges posed by the school environment is a less recognized but equally disturbing issue: the easy access to addictive substances near school premises. Multiple respondents, including students, teachers, and community leaders, revealed that several school surroundings in both districts act as informal hubs for khat chewing, alcohol consumption, and, occasionally, cannabis use. These informal markets, often operated by older boys or young adults without jobs, frequently entice or pressure girls into risky situations.

One teacher from Tehuledere commented:

“The girls know who sells what. Some boys use khat to lure them. Once they start, the girls lose focus and then drop out. The community does not speak about this openly, but it’s real.”

The absence of monitoring, school security, or student counseling services leaves girls particularly at risk. Those who get involved with such peer groups often face stigmatization or

disciplinary actions instead of receiving supportive rehabilitation, further distancing them from the school community.

To conclude, the findings from Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere depict a stark reality of an educational environment that is structurally and socially ill-equipped to support girls. The school journey, marked by geographic isolation, physical risks, and moral dilemmas, tests the resilience of many girls, not due to a lack of determination or capability but because of conditions outside their control. Once at school, they encounter a lack of privacy, dignity, and protection, reinforcing their exclusion.

Political Instability and Armed Conflict as Barriers to Girls' Education

In recent years, the educational aspirations of adolescent girls in Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere have increasingly been overshadowed by a worsening crisis of political and security instability. The once-routine act of attending school has transformed into a dangerous gamble, as the region becomes caught up in armed confrontations, militia activity, and widespread civil unrest. Field data gathered during this study vividly illustrate the education sector as one of the silent casualties of the conflict, with girls suffering the most from its effects.

A Landscape of Fear and Displacement

Interviews with students, parents, teachers, and school officials indicated that over 75% of students, predominantly girls, in the study areas missed school due to security-related interruptions during the past academic year. Many reported living in a constant state of anxiety, with gunfire, military convoys, and roadblocks becoming embedded in their daily routines. Girls are particularly affected by this instability, seen as more vulnerable under the patriarchal notion that they need protection, which often leads to their removal from school.

A 16-year-old student from a village in Tehuledere painfully stated:

“When the fighting started near our town, my parents told me to stop going to school. They feared I might be taken or hurt on the way. It’s not safe for girls anymore.”

Indeed, the threat of sexual violence, abduction, and intimidation by armed actors has become a major concern among families. Several respondents cited rumors and confirmed incidents of militia members targeting schools with threats and propaganda, pressuring youth to abandon their studies in protest against perceived injustices by state authorities.

Forced Absenteeism and School Closures

The security situation has led to a fragmented educational experience, with schools opening and closing based on the ebb and flow of conflict. In Dessie Zuria, nearly 40% of schools were reported closed for several weeks during recent clashes, while others operated with minimal staff and attendance. Even in schools that remain technically open, student turnout has dropped by over 60%, according to local education officials and teachers interviewed.

This disruption impacts girls disproportionately, who are often the first to be withdrawn from classrooms when families must choose between protecting children and educating them. Unlike their male counterparts, who may be sent to seek informal work or join militia groups, girls are typically confined to household roles or pressured into early marriage or migration, effectively ending their educational journeys.

Psychosocial Trauma and Educational Disengagement

The impact of the conflict extends beyond physical disruption. Many girls have reported experiencing emotional and psychological distress, including nightmares, anxiety, and feelings of hopelessness. Teachers have noted that even when girls do attend school, they appear distracted, emotionally withdrawn, and academically disengaged. The traumatic effects of conflict—witnessing violence, losing loved ones, displacement, or facing continuous fear—create a silent mental health crisis that further undermines educational motivation and performance.

School counselors and social workers (where available) are overwhelmed or altogether absent. In both woredas, there are no formal psychosocial support systems to help students process trauma, and mental health remains a taboo topic within most families.

Generally, the ongoing instability in Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere has fundamentally altered the meaning of education for adolescent girls. Once regarded as a vehicle for empowerment, schooling has now become a source of anxiety, danger, and disillusionment. Girls are faced with heartbreaking choices: stay home in fear, work in servitude, migrate to uncertain futures, or risk attending school under the threat of violence. Unless comprehensive emergency education interventions are implemented, such as mobile classrooms, community-based learning spaces, psychosocial support services, and security guarantees for teachers and students, the dream of universal education for girls in these areas will become an increasingly distant memory. Education in conflict zones requires more than just books and classrooms; it demands protection, empathy, and investment in resilience.

Migration and Gendered Survival Strategies as barriers to Girls' education

Families have turned to desperate coping mechanisms in response to the crumbling educational infrastructure and mounting economic pressure. Girls are increasingly sent to work as domestic laborers in Dessie, Kombolcha, or even Addis Ababa, often under exploitative conditions. In some cases, families have arranged for daughters to migrate to Gulf countries, driven by economic desperation and the belief that school is no longer a viable pathway for their future (supported by 94% of the survey).

One mother shared:

“We sent our daughter to Saudi Arabia. The schools here open and close. Militias threaten teachers. How can she learn in fear? At least abroad, she might earn something.”

This gendered economic migration, however, exposes girls to additional layers of exploitation, trauma, and isolation, which can have lifelong consequences.

In the secondary schools of Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere, opportunities for adolescent girls are slowly diminishing, not through violence, but through a pervasive sense of hopelessness. In a region where conflict silences educational prospects and poverty serves as a stern instructor, education has shifted from an assured right to a privilege reliant on survival. For numerous

families, the pursuit of education is abandoned in favor of migration, with schoolbags exchanged for domestic responsibilities.

Over 60% of the surveyed households had at least one school-age girl withdraw from school to engage in labor activities, with the majority sent to Dessie, Kombolcha, or Addis Ababa. Focus group participants described this pattern not as individual deviations but as a collective adaptation, a survival strategy that has become normalized under structural pressure. “*Now, girls are not raised to dream; they’re raised to earn,*” said one FGD participant in Dessie Zuria.

These girls work in invisible, unpaid, and unprotected spaces, predominantly as domestic workers in private homes. Though framed by families as a temporary economic cushion, the experience is often anything but temporary, and rarely without harm. Girls spoke of long hours, verbal humiliation, physical punishment, and sexual harassment. Many also noted feelings of isolation, fear, and longing for the classroom they once sat in.

A 22-year-old returnee from Dessie Zuria stated:

“I became the house. I woke before dawn to sweep, wash, and cook. My name was ‘girl.’ No one calls me by my real name anymore. Sometimes I dreamed of my school desk—but dreams don’t cook dinner.”

Cultural shifts are occurring regarding educational aspirations, remittances through migration, and the commercialization of girls. Among the most shocking revelations is the growing normalization of international migration as an “educational alternative.” In interviews with families, over two-thirds reported sending their daughters to Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the UAE, for domestic work. This shift represents an economic strategy and a cultural realignment, where migration is valued and education is devalued. In Tehuledere and Dessie Zuria, parents indicated that having a daughter working abroad and sending remittances has become a status symbol. Some girls in school now aspire more to join their peers in the Arab states than to become doctors or engineers, a shift driven by peer influence and community narratives that celebrate economic gain over educational achievement.

One mother explained:

“We sent our daughter because school is unpredictable. The school opens today and closes tomorrow because of the fighting. She was losing time. At least now, she sends money.”

In Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere, a profound cultural shift transforms education for adolescent girls. A growing “culture of migration” has sparked competition among families—not for academic success, but for visas, remittances, and external indicators of success abroad. Interviews with parents, educators, and community leaders revealed a consistent theme: remittances now surpass educational success in importance. Parents whose daughters have migrated to the Gulf States express pride—not because their daughters are pursuing education overseas, but because they are sending money home. In this context, economic support symbolizes success more tangibly than academic achievements.

“One father in Tehuledere proudly stated, ‘My daughter in Dubai sends us 10,000 birrs every month.’ He added, ‘What good is a girl with a diploma if she still depends on us?’”

This mindset influences the educational atmosphere. Focus group discussions with female students revealed a shift in their academic motivation; they are no longer inspired by the pursuit of intellectual growth or traditional career aspirations like becoming a doctor, engineer, or teacher. Instead, they are more focused on migrating and seeking to “make money” while in class. Female students prioritize visa processing times over their exam results, with conversations among peers increasingly revolving around brokers, passport photos, and international opportunities.

Even temporarily, those who return home from the Gulf become status symbols in their communities. Items like gold earrings, smartphones, and new clothing act as status markers, visually overshadowing the academic awards earned by students who stayed behind. These returnees serve as unspoken ambassadors of the migration pathway, emphasizing the belief that true success lies beyond academic environments.

A Grade 10 student in Dessie Zuria remarked, ‘When I score high, my classmates say ‘congrats,’ but when my cousin returned from Kuwait, the entire neighborhood welcomed her.’ She

continued, *“She gifted her father a smartphone and bought clothes for her brothers. Who wouldn’t want to emulate her?”*

Educators across both woredas expressed deep concerns that aspirations for migration are overshadowing classroom objectives, fueled by the heavy burden of poverty, ongoing instability, and disillusionment with an ineffective educational system. Teachers noted that once-promising students abruptly drop out after a broker's visit or upon hearing success stories from returnees. A school principal in Dessie Zuria reflected:

It resembles slow erosion. One girl vanishes, then another. They are not shying away from learning but chasing what they believe to be better. Nevertheless, beneath the allure of remittances and returns lies a troubling undercurrent. Participants in the study reported numerous instances where the migration journey ended not in success but in abuse, trauma, or tragedy. Girls who went abroad often faced harsh working conditions, including confinement, low pay, and emotional or sexual mistreatment under the Kafala system.

One mother wept as she recalled, *“My daughter stopped calling after six months. The broker said she changed employers. However, we have not heard from her in over a year.”*

Despite these harsh realities, the allure of migration remains captivating, overshadowing both classrooms and the promise of education. The migration pathway has shifted from merely a survival strategy to a social narrative into which young girls are woven from an early age, with remittances marking success and loss.

An official from the South Wollo Education Department complains that migration of school-age girls is the most serious obstacle that does not get the proper attention.

Unless this story is disrupted, the classrooms of Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere will continue resonating with the absence of students and the hope that once made education a worthwhile pursuit. Participants shared stories of girls returning with emotional trauma, pregnancy, or abuse—or those who never returned at all. Nonetheless, many families remain entranced by the prospects of remittances, turning a blind eye to the grim realities of domestic work under the Kafala system.

Not all girls cross borders. Some are sent to various Ethiopian cities—such as Bahir Dar and Addis Ababa—to work in informal sectors. Here, the trend is also accelerating. According to interviews conducted with local school directors, internal migration now rivals early marriage as the primary cause of school dropout among girls.

A school administrator in Dessie Zuria described the situation as follows:

"It begins with a few missed classes. Then weeks pass. Eventually, the seat stays empty. When we investigate, we find out she's either working in a salon or selling khat somewhere."

Girls migrating internally frequently find themselves in exploitative labor markets. Whether mopping floors or serving in khat houses, these girls seldom experience a return to education. There are no institutional pathways for re-entry, no catch-up classes, and no systems of community support. Their names are erased from school records and often from collective memory.

Every girl who withdraws carries an unseen wound, a narrative that is all too often left untold. Interviews with returning girls and teachers have uncovered pervasive psychosocial trauma—including depression, anxiety, nightmares, and social isolation. Some girls who returned have attempted to reintegrate into school; however, many ultimately drop out again, unable to manage the emotional and academic upheaval. A teacher in Tehuledere shared her thoughts:

"Even when they come back, they seem like ghosts. They sit in class without participating. They appear older than their age. Sometimes they cry; other times, they don't speak at all."

Unfortunately, the school systems don't have the tools needed to provide support. Mental health services are nonexistent, and teachers lack training in trauma-informed care. In a culture where discussing mental health can be a challenge, girls often withdraw into silence, facing their pain alone.

Overall, findings from Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere indicate not merely a decline in education but a complete disintegration of it. Girls are not merely being withdrawn for temporary reasons—they are systematically removed, exchanged for income, and ultimately forgotten. The classroom, once a beacon of future potential, has transformed into a luxury where survival takes precedence over education. Child labor and migration are not isolated incidents; they constitute the framework of a survival economy, in which girls serve as both currency and collateral. With each girl who departs, a prospective nurse, teacher, or leader vanishes from the national narrative.

4. Conclusion, Recommendations and Implications

4.1. Conclusion

Analyzing girls' education in the Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere Woredas reveals significant ongoing challenges despite global efforts to address gender disparities. While adolescent girls' enrollment rates have improved, a concerning 42% complete secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa. Cultural and societal norms continue to hinder women's educational aspirations and career opportunities, especially in low-income areas. This study outlines several complex, deeply rooted barriers affecting girls' education in these regions.

Although initiatives promoting enrollment indicate progress, systemic obstacles still prevent girls from achieving educational success and growth. The findings highlight various interconnected barriers that obstruct girls' education in Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere Woredas. Entrenched patriarchal attitudes contribute to early marriages, domestic responsibilities, and the viewpoint that education is mainly for boys, limiting girls' independence and school attendance. Economic challenges exacerbate these issues, as families facing financial difficulties often prioritize boys' education, relying on girls for labor or remittances under exploitative conditions.

Moreover, girls face widespread gender-based violence and harassment in and around schools, leading to psychological trauma and increased absenteeism, with limited options for recourse due to inadequate reporting systems and a lack of female role models. Insufficient infrastructure—such as gender-sensitive toilets, menstrual hygiene products, and safe transportation—further obstructs girls' ability to attend and stay in school. Finally, ongoing conflict and displacement in

the Amhara region have severely disrupted educational continuity, heightening girls' vulnerability to early marriages, child labor, and violence, while distracting families from sustained educational engagement.

Despite growing global and national commitments to gender equity in education, girls in Dessie Zuria and Tehulederie face considerable barriers that hinder their access, retention, and success within the education system. These challenges are both structural and cultural, showcasing the intersection of poverty and patriarchal norms, systemic neglect, and emerging concerns like conflict and migration.

4.2. Research Implications and Intervention Strategies

The findings reveal that the ongoing impact of negative gender stereotypes and ineffective school-to-work transition mechanisms hinders girls' educational and professional paths. In the classroom, girls are often seen as less capable than their male peers. This belief, commonly internalized by both students and teachers, undermines girls' confidence, limits their classroom participation, and stifles their long-term academic and career aspirations. These obstacles are exacerbated by biased teaching practices and the shortage of female educators and administrators, which further entrench existing gender hierarchies within entrenched societal norms.

Even when girls complete secondary education, their journey toward employment remains obstructed by structural and cultural barriers. There is a significant lack of clear, supportive transition pathways into the labor market, particularly in technical and male-dominated fields. Deep-rooted societal norms discourage young women from entering the formal workforce, while the absence of mentorship, internships, and job placement programs worsens their marginalization. As a result, many young women continue to be economically dependent, underemployed, or trapped in informal labor sectors. These issues have profound implications for both policy and practice. They reflect the broader structural inequalities embedded within Ethiopia's education and employment systems and demand urgent, gender-sensitive reforms. Failing to address these systemic barriers not only jeopardize the futures of individual girls but also undermine the broader goals of social equity, economic development, and national progress.

To address these challenges and promote meaningful outcomes for girls, a variety of strategic, multi-sectoral interventions is needed. The following strategies are recommended for implementation by NGOs, government agencies, educational institutions, and other stakeholders operating in the Ethiopian context.

A coordinated, multi-sectoral approach is crucial for effectively addressing the complex barriers to girls' education in Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere Woredas. To achieve this, various intervention strategies are proposed for implementation by NGOs, government entities, educational institutions, and community stakeholders. Firstly, it is vital to challenge societal norms and patriarchal structures; this includes ongoing awareness campaigns for parents, community leaders, and students to highlight the significance of girls' education and to inform parents about how household chores negatively impact academic opportunities for girls.

Additionally, initiatives should be established to fight early marriage and teenage pregnancy through community training programs and the enforcement of laws against these practices, along with providing education on reproductive health. Economic obstacles must be addressed through material and financial support programs for female students, such as cash incentives and necessary supplies like sanitary products and educational materials. Furthermore, it is essential to tackle peer pressure and sexual harassment; implementing safe reporting mechanisms and conducting consent awareness programs can help create a safer school atmosphere.

Enhancements to school facilities are needed, with provisions for girls' menstrual hygiene and educational packages designed to boost attendance. Given the context of instability and armed conflict, raising awareness about the value of education and advocating for the protection of schools is critical. To confront migration issues, awareness initiatives should inform families about the long-term benefits of education, while legislative measures should discourage the migration of girls for employment.

Additionally, reforms to the curriculum that incorporate gender-sensitive materials, structured mentorship programs that connect girls with female professionals, and employment transition frameworks to integrate job skills into education are essential. Changes in social norms through media campaigns, community engagement, and girls' clubs can further bolster these initiatives.

Ultimately, community-focused interventions, school-based health and hygiene services, and protective measures against gender-based violence will create a comprehensive support system, enhancing girls' education and promoting more equitable outcomes in the region.

4.3. Strategic Intervention Framework to Enhance Girls' Education

A unified, multi-sector approach is vital to addressing the intricate challenges facing girls' education in Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere Woredas. The following targeted intervention strategies are suggested for implementation by NGOs, governmental bodies, educational institutions, and community stakeholders.

Social Norm Change through Awareness Creation and Community Engagement

In Dessie Zuria and Tehuledere Woredas, deeply entrenched patriarchal social norms and cultural attitudes significantly hinder girls' education by undervaluing it and limiting their public involvement. These norms perpetuate across generations, influencing family choices, community beliefs, and institutional behaviors. As a result, girls frequently find themselves expected to fulfill roles associated with domestic work, early marriage, and caregiving, with education often regarded as an afterthought or unnecessary for their futures.

To tackle this longstanding issue, a transformative strategy for changing social norms is crucial—one that integrates extensive media outreach with local community engagement. The following interventions are suggested:

Public Awareness Campaigns

Both face-to-face awareness programs and mass media, such as radio, television, and social media platforms, should be effectively utilized to spread positive messages about the importance of girls' education. Campaigns ought to emphasize the individual, family, and societal advantages of educating girls while actively confronting prevalent gender stereotypes. Showcasing stories of successful women, especially those who have triumphantly faced challenges, can provide compelling role models for both girls and their families. The content must be contextually appropriate, translated into local languages, and designed to resonate with audiences in both urban and rural areas.

Engagement of Religious and Traditional Leaders

Considering the significant influence of elders, religious leaders, and traditional authorities in shaping community values and decision-making, engaging them is essential for changing harmful norms. These leaders ought to participate in structured dialogue sessions, advocacy workshops, and community meetings to enhance their understanding of the importance of girls' education and their potential as change agents in the study areas. When these respected figures publicly support girls' right to education and criticize early marriage or discriminatory practices, it can greatly transform community attitudes.

Establishment of Girls' Clubs and Peer Support Networks

School-based girls' clubs should be established and supported as safe spaces for empowerment, leadership development, and peer solidarity. These clubs can help girls build self-confidence, strengthen their voice within the school and community, and foster resilience against peer pressure, stigma, and harassment. Activities may include mentorship programs, debate and leadership training, awareness raising, and collaborative problem-solving initiatives. Trained facilitators should guide these clubs to ensure they are inclusive, participatory, and aligned with broader educational and protection goals.

By targeting the underlying cultural beliefs that inhibit girls' access to and participation in education, these interventions can serve as a foundation for broader social transformation. Changing norms is not a short-term undertaking—it requires sustained commitment, consistent messaging, and the mobilization of multiple actors at every level of society. However, once these norms begin to shift, the ripple effects can be profound: enabling not just access to education, but dignity, choice, and opportunity for generations of girls to come.

Community and Family-Focused Interventions

- **Community Awareness Initiatives Campaigns:** Initiate awareness campaigns specific to local contexts through community gatherings, school events, market occasions, and religious meetings to highlight the significance of girls' education. These initiatives should confront existing norms that justify early marriage, favor boys' education, and primarily link girls to domestic roles.

- **Use of Local Media:** Collaborate with local radio stations, *Idir* and *iqub* associations' meetings, and respected figures to disseminate messages that celebrate the achievements of educated women, address misconceptions about female education, and highlight the long-term benefits for families and communities.
- **Community Dialogues and Forums:** Organize regular community discussions involving parents, elderly figures, educators, and young girls to explore educational barriers, share experiences, and form collective solutions. The focus should be building community agreement to postpone marriage and prioritize educational attainment.
- **Training for Community Leaders:** Provide gender-sensitive training to religious and traditional leaders to empower them as advocates for girls' education, challenge harmful customs, and use their influence to promote change.
- **Parental Education and Counseling:** Organize workshops and home visits to educate parents—especially fathers—regarding the social and economic benefits of educating daughters. These sessions can challenge misconceptions that diminish the importance of female education and boost parental confidence in their academic support for daughters.
- **School-Based Health, Hygiene, and Protection:** Academic institutions are required to establish a safe, nurturing, and health-centered learning environment to support the continuous engagement and success of female students within educational settings. This compilation of strategic interventions is designed to directly address the physical, emotional, and safety-related challenges that girls face, particularly during crucial life stages such as adolescence, displacement, or periods of social instability.
- **Menstrual Hygiene Support:** Build collaborative partnerships with NGOs, health authorities, and women-led businesses to provide free or subsidized sanitary pads regularly. When possible, establish training programs for schoolgirls where they can create reusable pads through peer mentorship or vocational clubs. Develop and ensure gender-segregated, lockable sanitation facilities with adequate water and soap. Create hygiene corners or changing areas in schools to maintain privacy and dignity. Offer training for male students and teachers to sensitively discuss menstrual issues, helping to break down the culture of silence and stigma. Encourage peer discussions in girls' clubs that promote body awareness and menstrual literacy.

- **Psychosocial and Counseling Services:** Employ trained counselors or social workers (even on a part-time basis) to deliver confidential, trauma-informed support to girls facing violence, loss of parental figures, forced displacement, or psychological distress.
- **Protection from Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Anti-Harassment School Policies:** With input from teachers, students, and parents, develop concise and comprehensive anti-harassment and anti-bullying policies. Make these policies publicly accessible and incorporate them into school assemblies and student orientations.
- **Establish Confidential Reporting Mechanisms:** Create welcoming points of contact, like designated female teachers or school counselors, where students feel comfortable reporting harassment. There could also be anonymous complaint submission boxes to ensure that all reports are taken seriously and handled promptly. Work together with local authorities, guardians, and community members to establish safe travel routes to schools, such as organizing walking groups, cycling initiatives, or community escorts. When possible, advocate for school transportation services that are sensitive to gender needs. Improve school safety by installing boundary fences, ensuring there's plenty of lighting, and hiring trained security staff whenever feasible. It's important to provide regular training for educators and school staff on gender sensitivity, child safeguarding, and their legal responsibilities related to GBV. Maintain a zero-tolerance approach towards any teacher-student sexual misconduct, ensuring there are clear consequences and legal accountability in place.
- **Establish Confidential Reporting Mechanisms:** Create welcoming points of contact, like designated female teachers or school counselors, where students feel comfortable reporting harassment. There could also be anonymous complaint submission boxes to ensure that all reports are taken seriously and handled promptly. Work together with local authorities, guardians, and community members to establish safe travel routes to schools, such as organizing walking groups, cycling initiatives, or community escorts. When possible, advocate for school transportation services that are sensitive to gender needs. Improve school safety by installing boundary fences, ensuring there's plenty of lighting, and hiring trained security staff whenever feasible. It's important to provide regular training for educators and school staff on gender sensitivity, child safeguarding, and their legal responsibilities related to GBV. Maintain a zero-tolerance approach towards any

teacher-student sexual misconduct, ensuring there are clear consequences and legal accountability in place.

- **Curriculum and Pedagogical Reform**

- **Revise Educational Content:** Incorporate gender-sensitive materials and highlight female role models, particularly in STEM fields, to combat stereotypes and broaden aspirations.
- **Gender-Responsive Pedagogy:** Equip teachers with training to implement inclusive teaching practices and minimize unconscious biases during classroom interactions.
- **Promote Female Leadership:** Enhance recruitment and advancement opportunities for female educators and administrators to cultivate inclusive role models and equitable school environments.

- **Mentorship and Career Development:** Structured Mentorship Initiatives: Link secondary school girls with women professionals for guidance, especially in technical and vocational sectors.

- **Career Preparation Assistance:** Organize career fairs, site visits, and counseling to educate girls about various educational and career options.
- **Collaborations with Workplaces:** Collaborate with vocational schools and companies to develop internship and apprenticeship opportunities designed for youth women.

- **Employment Opportunities and Economic Empowerment**

- **School-to-Work Transition Frameworks:** Integrate entrepreneurship, digital skills, and job readiness modules into the curriculum to connect education with employment.
- **Inclusive Employment Incentives:** Provide subsidies or tax breaks to companies that train and employ young women, particularly those from rural regions.
- **Legal and Workplace Reform:** Promote gender-equitable labor regulations, workplace safety measures, and flexible working arrangements for women.

5. Intervention Priority Quadrant Matrix

Quadrant	Urgency	Importance	Strategic Focus and Interventions
<i>Immediate Action Required</i> Creating a Conducive School Environment & Direct Support	High	High	- Offer counseling services that are psychosocial and trauma-informed for girls impacted by conflict and violence. - Enhance protection systems for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). - Create girls' clubs and peer support networks to promote solidarity and boost self-confidence. - Provide menstrual hygiene kits, essential cosmetic supplies, and small financial stipends to alleviate absenteeism and economic pressure. - Ensure the availability of safe, girl-friendly WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) facilities in schools.
<i>Strategic, Long-Term Impact</i> Community and Family-Focused Interventions	Low	High	- Raise awareness among parents to reduce household burdens on girls, support menstrual health needs, and challenge patriarchal norms. - Train religious, cultural, and community leaders to advocate for girls' education. - Launch campaigns to discourage unsafe migration and promote local education opportunities.
<i>Opportunity-Oriented</i> Job Creation & Economic Empowerment	High	Low	- Develop school-to-work transition frameworks, integrating entrepreneurship, digital literacy, and job-readiness skills. - Introduce incentives (e.g., tax benefits, grants) for companies that train and employ young women, especially from rural areas. - Promote gender-sensitive labor policies and workplace reforms to support women's participation and safety in the workforce.

<i>Foundational, System-Level Reform Curriculum and Pedagogical Change</i>	Low	Low	- Revise curriculum to include gender-sensitive content and highlight female role models, especially in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). - Train teachers in gender-responsive pedagogy to foster inclusive and equitable classrooms. - Promote women's leadership in the education sector to serve as role models and decision-makers.
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Annex

Questions to Guide Interviews and Survey Instruments

Interview Guiding Questions

1. Poverty
 - a. How does poverty restrict educational opportunities for girls in Dessie Zuria and Tehulederie?
 - b. In what ways do financial limitations influence parents' decisions about girls' education?
2. Lack of Appropriate Sanitation Facilities to Address Menstrual Hygiene
 - a. How do inadequate sanitation facilities impact girls' school attendance during their menstrual periods?
 - b. What measures do schools take to support the menstrual hygiene needs of female students?
3. Security and Stability
 - a. How does the perception of safety in and around schools influence girls' enrollment and attendance?
 - b. What specific security concerns do girls face in Dessie Zuria and Tehulederie?
4. Early Marriage and Teen Pregnancy
 - a. How common are early marriage and teen pregnancy among girls in these Woredas, and what effects do they have on education?
 - b. What strategies do families use to address the challenges posed by early marriage and its impact on girls' schooling?
5. Sociocultural Barriers like Patriarchy and Gender Norms
 - a. In what ways do dominant patriarchal norms affect the educational ambitions and accomplishments of girls?
 - b. How do community attitudes either reinforce or challenge gender norms associated with education?
6. Cultural Perceptions/Attitudes of Many Parents Towards Girls' Education
 - a. What is the attitude of parents towards girls' education?
 - b. How do parental views on girls' education differ across various socio-economic backgrounds?
 - c. Which cultural beliefs impede parents from supporting their daughters' education?
7. School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV), Sexual Assault, Rape, and Harassment,
 - a. Do girls experience Gender-Based Violence (SRGB) in schools, on the way to school, and around the school?
8. Migration
 - a. How do internal and international migration affect girls' access to education in Dessie Zuria and Tehulederie?
 - b. What experiences do migrant families have regarding girls' education in these region

በሴት ተማሪዎች የሚሞላ መጠይቅ

የዚህ መጠይቅ ዋና ዓላማ በደሴ ዙርያና ተሁለደሬ ወረዳ በሚገኙ 2ኛ ደረጃ ት/ቤት በሴት ተማሪዎች የትምህርት ተሳትፎ መጠንና እንቅፋት የሆኑ ጉዳዮች ለመለየት ለሚደረገው የዳሰሳ ጥናት መረጃ ለመሰብሰብ ነው። ለጥያቄዎቹ የምትሰጡት ትክክለኛ መልስ የጥናቱን ዓላማ ለማሳካት ከፍተኛ አስተዋጽኦ አለው። በመሆኑም ጥያቄዎቹን በትክክል በመረዳት ትክክለኛውን መረጃ እንድትሰጡ እንጠይቃለን። ከዚህ መጠይቅ የሚገኘው መረጃ ሚስጥራዊነቱ የተጠበቀ እና ለምርምር ስራ ብቻ ይወላል። መጠይቁን የምትሞሉት በፈቃደኝነት ብቻ ይሆናል። ስም መጻፍ አያስፈልግም። ለትብብራችሁ በቅድሚያ እናመሰግናለን።

መመሪያ: ከታች ለቀረቡት ግለሰባዊ መረጃዎችን በመሙላት መልሱ።

ከፍል አንድ መሰረታዊ መረጃዎች

የት/ቤት ስም_____ ዕድሜ_____ የክፍል ደረጃ_____ ቀበሌ_____

የጋብቻ ሁኔታ አግባብተኛል አወ _____ አይደለም _____ የወላጅ ስራ _____

መመሪያ: ከታች በሰንጠረዥ የቀረቡትን ዐረፍተ ነገሮች ካነበባችሁ በኋላ ከ1-5 ከቀረቡት አማራጮች ውስጥ የስምምነት ደረጃችሁን የሚያሳየውን X ምልክት በማድረግ መልሱ።

አማራጮቹ የሚወክሉት: በጣም አልስማማም (1); አልስማማም (2) ፤ አልወሰንኩም (3) ፤ እስማማለሁ (4) እና በጣም እስማማለሁ (5)።

ከፍል ሁለት: የተማሪዎችን አስተያየት የሚለኩ ጥያቄዎች

ተቁ	ዐረፍተ ነገር	5	4	3	2	1
1.	የትምህርት ቁሳቁስ ወጭ በሴት ተማሪዎች የትምህርት ተሳትፎ ላይ አሉታዊ ተጽዕኖ አሳድሯል።					
2.	የወላጆች ዝቅተኛ የኢኮኖሚ ሁኔታ የሴት ተማሪዎችን የትምህርት ተሳትፎ አቃወሳል/ጎድቶል።					
3.	የትምህርት ቤት የኔፎርም ወጭ ሴት ተማሪዎች ወደ ት/ቤት እንዳይመጡ አድርጓል።					
4.	ከት/ቤት ወደ ቤት ለመሄድ የሚያስፈልገው ወጭ የሴት ተማሪዎችን ወደ ት/ቤት መምጣጥ ቀንሷል።					
5.	ሴት ተማሪዎች በቤት ውስጥ ለጉልበት ስራ ስለሚፈለጉ ት/ቤት እንዳይመጡ አድርጓቸዋል።					
6.	ሴት ተማሪዎች አብዛኛውን ጊዜያቸውን በቤት ውስጥ ስራ ስለሚያሳልፉ ለትምህርት የሚሆን ጊዜ አያገኙም					
7.	ወላጆች ገቢ ለማግኘት ሴት ተማሪዎችን (ልጆቻቸውን) ወደ ወጭ አገር ይልካሉ።					
8.	ወላጆች ሴት ልጆች በትምህርት ውጤታማ ይሆናሉ ብለው አያምኑም።					
9.	ማህበረሰቡ የሴት ልጆች መማር አዎንታዊ አመለካከት አለው።					
10.	ት/ቤታችን ለሴት ተማሪዎች የተለየ መጻዳጃ ቤት አለው።					
11.	በት/ቤታችን ለሴት ተማሪዎች የምክር አገልግሎት ይሰጣል።					
12.	መምህራን ለወንድና ሴት ተማሪዎች እኩል ግምት ይሰጣሉ።					
13.	በት/ቤታችን ሴት ተማሪዎች ጾታዊ ጥቃት ይደርስባቸዋል።					
14.	የአቻ ግፊት ሴት ተማሪዎች ትምህርት እንዳቋርጡ አድርጓል።					
15.	ቀድሞ ማግባት የሴት ተማሪዎች ከት/ቤት ማቋረጥ ዋነኛ መንስኤ ነው።					
16.	ልማዳዊዉ የጾታ ስርዓት ሴቶች በትምህርት እንዳይገፉ አድርጓል።					
17.	የማህበረሰቡ ባህላዊ እምነት የሴት ተማሪዎችን የትምህርት ጠቀሜታ አሳንሶ ያሳያል።					
18.	አንዳንድ ወላጆች የሴት ተማሪዎች ከአንደኛ ደረጃ በላይ መማር አስፈላጊ ነው ብለው አያምኑም።					
19.	ሴት ተማሪዎች ከቤት ወደ ትምህርት ቤት ሲመለሱ ጾታዊ ጥቃት ይደርስባቸዋል።					
20.	ሴት ተማሪዎች በት/ቤት የሚፈጸሙ ጾታዊ ጥቃቶችን ሪፖርት ለማድረግ ይፈራሉ።					
21.	ት/ቤታችን ጾታዊ ጥቃትን ለመከላከል የሚያስችል በቂ ስልት የለውም።					
22.	ት/ቤቱ ከተማሪዎች መኖሪያ ሩቅ መሆኑ የሴት ተማሪዎችን መማር አያበረታታም።					
23.	ት/ቤታችን ለሴት ተማሪዎች የወር አበባ መጠበቂያ መቀየሪያ ንጹህና የተለየ ክፍል አለው።					
24.	አስፈላጊ የሆነ የንጽህና መጠበቂያ ቁሳቁስ አለመኖር ሴት ተማሪዎች በወር አበባ ጊዜ ከት/ቤት እንድቀሩ ምክንያት ሆኗል።					
25.	ወቅታዊዉ ግጭቱ በት/ቤታችን የሴቶችን ትምህርት ተሳትፎ እየጎዳ ነው።					
26.	በወቅታዊዉ ግጭቱ ምክንያት ት/ቤቶች ደህንነታቸው የተጠበቀ አይደለም የሚለው የወላጆች እሳቤ ሴት ተማሪዎች ወደ ት/ቤት እንዳይሄዱ አድርጓል።					

27.	በአካባቢያችን ያለ እድሜ ጋብቻ ለሴት ተማሪዎች ትምህርት ማቋረጥ ዋነኛ መንስኤ ነው።					
28.	የህጻናት እርግዝና ሴት ተማሪዎች ከት/ቤት እንድወጡ እያደረገ ነው።					

ክፍል ሶስት፡ አጭር መልስ ስጡ።

29. ወላጆች ለሴት ልጆች ትምህርት መማር አወንታዊ አመለካከት አላቸው ብለሽ ታምኒያለሽ?

30. ማህበረሰቡ የሴትን ልጅ መማር ይደግፋል / አብራሩ/።

31. በአካባቢሽ ትምህርት የማይማሩ ልጃገረዶች ታወቁያለሽ ፡ ስንት ይሆናሉ?

32. የሴት ተማሪዎችን መማር ሂደት እንቅፋት የሆኑ ተግዳሮቶችን ዘርዝሩ።

33. የሴት ተማሪዎችን የመማር ሂደት ለማጠናከር ምን ቢደረግ ይሻላል ትላላችሁ

በ2ኛ ደረጃ ት/ቤት መምህራን የሚሞላ መጠይቅ

የዚህ መጠይቅ ዋና ዓላማ በደሴ ዙርያና ተሁለደሬ ወረዳ በሚገኙ 2ኛ ደረጃ ት/ቤት በሴት ተማሪዎች የትምህርት ተሳትፎ መጠንና በሚያጋጥሙና እንቅፋት የሆኑ ጉዳዮችን ለመለየት ለሚደረገው የዳሰሳ ጥናት መረጃ ለመሰብሰብ ነው። ለጥያቄዎቹ የምትሰጡት ትክክለኛ መልስ የጥናቱን ዓላማ ለማሳካት ከፍተኛ አስተዋጽኦ አለው። በመሆኑም ጥያቄዎቹን በትክክል በመረዳት ትክክለኛውን መረጃ እንድትሰጡ እንጠይቃለን። ከዚህ መጠይቅ የሚገኘው መረጃ ሚስጥራዊነቱ የተጠበቀ እና ለምርምር ስራ ብቻ ይውላል። መጠይቁን የምትሞሉት በፈቃደኝነት ብቻ ይሆናል። ስም መጻፍ አያስፈልግም። ለትብብራችሁ በቅድሚያ እናመሰግናለን።

መመሪያ: ከታች ለቀረቡት ግለሰባዊ መረጃዎችን በመሙላት መልሱ።

ክፍል አንድ መሰረታዊ መረጃዎች

የት/ቤት ስም----- የምታስተምረው/ሪው የክፍል ደረጃ-----

የአገልግሎት ዘመን (ዓመት)----- የምታስተምረው/ሪው የት/ት ዓይነት-----

መመሪያ: ከታች በሰንጠረዥ የቀረቡትን ዐረፍተ ነገሮች ካነበባችሁ በኋላ ከ1-5 ከቀረቡት አማራጮች ውስጥ የስምምነት ደረጃችሁን የሚያሳየውን X ምልክት በማድረግ መልሱ።

አማራጮቹ የሚወክሉት: በጣም አልስማማም (1); አልስማማም (2); አልወሰንኩም (3); እስማማለሁ (4) እና በጣም እስማማለሁ (5)።

ክፍል ሁለት: የመምህራንን አስተያየት የሚለኩ ጥያቄዎች

ተቁ	ዐረፍተ ነገር	5	4	3	2	1
1.	የትምህርት ቁሳቁስ ወጭ በሴት ተማሪዎች የትምህርት ተሳትፎ ላይ አሉታዊ ተጽዕኖ አሳድሯል።					
2.	የወላጆች ዝቅተኛ የኢኮኖሚ ሁኔታ የሴት ተማሪዎችን የትምህርት ተሳትፎ አቃወሳል/ጎድቶታል።					
3.	የትምህርት ቤት ዩኒፎርም ወጭ ሴት ተማሪዎች ወደ ት/ቤት እንዳይመጡ አድርጓል።					
4.	ከት/ቤት ወደ ቤት ለመሄድ የሚያስፈልገው ወጭ የሴት ተማሪዎችን ወደ ት/ቤት መምጣጥ ቀንሷል።					
5.	ሴት ተማሪዎች በቤት ውስጥ ለጉልበት ስራ ስለሚፈለጉ ት/ቤት እንዳይመጡ አድርጓቸዋል።					
6.	ሴት ተማሪዎች አብዛኛውን ጊዜያቸውን በቤት ውስጥ ስራ ስለሚያሳልፉ ለትምህርት የሚሆን ጊዜ አያገኙም					
7.	ወላጆች ገቢ ለማግኘት ሴት ተማሪዎችን (ልጆቻቸውን) ወደ ወጭ አገር ይልካሉ።					
8.	ወላጆች ሴት ልጆች በትምህርት ውጤታማ ይሆናሉ ብለው አያምኑም።					
9.	ማህበረሰቡ የሴት ልጆች መማር አዎንታዊ አመለካከት አለው።					
10.	ት/ቤታችን ለሴት ተማሪዎች የተለየ መጻዳጃ ቤት አለው።					
11.	በት/ቤታችን ለሴት ተማሪዎች የምክር አገልግሎት ይሰጣል።					
12.	መምህራን ለወንድና ሴት ተማሪዎች እኩል ግምት ይሰጣሉ።					
13.	በት/ቤታችን ሴት ተማሪዎች ጾታዊ ጥቃት ይደርስባቸዋል።					
14.	የአቻ ግፊት ሴት ተማሪዎች ትምህርት እንዳቋርጡ አድርጓል።					
15.	ቀድሞ ማግባት የሴት ተማሪዎች ከት/ቤት ማቋረጥ ዋነኛ መንስኤ ነው።					
16.	ልማዳዊ ወጪ የጾታ ስርዓት ሴቶች በትምህርት እንዳይገፉ አድርጓል።					
17.	የማህበረሰቡ ባህላዊ እምነት የሴት ተማሪዎችን የትምህርት ጠቀሜታ አሳንሶ ያሳያል።					
18.	አንዳንድ ወላጆች የሴት ተማሪዎች ከአንደኛ ደረጃ በላይ መማር አስፈላጊ ነው ብለው አያምኑም።					
19.	ሴት ተማሪዎች ከቤት ወደ ትምህርት ቤት ሲመላለሱ ጾታዊ ጥቃት ይደርስባቸዋል።					
20.	ሴት ተማሪዎች በት/ቤት የሚፈጸሙ ጾታዊ ጥቃቶችን ሪፖርት ለማድረግ ይፈራሉ።					
21.	ት/ቤታችን ጾታዊ ጥቃትን ለመከላከል የሚያስችል በቂ ስልት የለውም።					
22.	ት/ቤቱ ከተማሪዎች መኖሪያ ሩቅ መሆኑ የሴት ተማሪዎችን መማር አያበረታታም።					
23.	ት/ቤታችን ለሴት ተማሪዎች የወር አበባ መጠበቂያ መቀየሪያ ንጹህና የተለየ ክፍል አለው።					

24.	አስፈላጊ የሆነ የንጽህና መጠበቂያ ቁሳቁስ አለመኖር ሴት ተማሪዎች በወር አበባ ጊዜ ከት/ቤት እንድቀሩ ምክንያት ሆኗል።					
25.	ወቅታዊው ግጭቱ በት/ቤታችን የሴቶችን ትምህርት ተሳትፎ እየጎዳ ነው።					
26.	በወቅታዊው ግጭቱ ምክንያት ት/ቤቶች ደህንነታቸው የተጠበቀ አይደለም የሚለው የወላጆች እሳቤ ሴት ተማሪዎች ወደ ት/ቤት እንዳይሄዱ አድርጓል።					
27.	በአካባቢያችን ያለ እድሜ ጋብቻ ለሴት ተማሪዎች ትምህርት ማቋረጥ ዋነኛ መንስኤ ነው።					
28.	የህጻናት እርግዝና ሴት ተማሪዎች ከት/ቤት እንድወጡ እያደረገ ነው።					

ክፍል ሶስት፡ አጭር መልስ ሰጡ።

29. ወላጆች ለሴት ልጆች ትምህርት መማር አወንታዊ አመለካከት አላቸው ብላችሁ ታምናላችሁ?

30. ማህበረሰቡ የሴትን ልጅ መማር ይደግፋል / አብራሩ/።

31. በአካባቢያችሁ ትምህርት የማይማሩ ልጃገረዶች ታወቃላችሁ ፡ ስንት ይሆናሉ?

32. የሴት ተማሪዎችን መማር ሂደት እንቅፋት የሆኑ ተግዳሮቶችን ዘርዝሩ።

33. የሴት ተማሪዎችን የመማር ሂደት ለማጠናከር ምን ቢደረግ ይሻላል ትላላችሁ

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