

## **INFLUENCE OF EARLY MARRIAGES ON STUDENTS' PROGRESSION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NDHIWA SUB-COUNTY, HOMABAY COUNTY, KENYA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Statement of the Problem:** Students' progression in secondary schools is key to the realization of educational objectives. However, in Ndhiwa Sub-county, the situation is different due to low students' progression rates. Many students drop out of secondary schools just a few years after enrollment due to a number of socio-economic dynamics such as early marriages.

**Purpose of the Study:** Thus, the purpose of this was to study to assess the influence of early marriages on students' progression in public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county, Homabay County, Kenya.

**Methodology:** This research adopted mixed methodology and applied concurrent triangulation research design. Target population was 1263 respondents which comprised 65 principals, 678 secondary school teachers and 520 parents' representatives from which 305 respondents were sampled using Yamane's Formula. Stratified sampling was applied to create five strata based on the number of zones in Ndhiwa Sub-county. From each zone, five principals and five parents' representatives were sampled purposively. However, from each zone, simple random sampling was applied to select 51 teachers. This procedure realized a sample size of 25 principals, 25 parents' representatives and 255 teachers. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically based on the objectives and presented in narrative forms. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages and inferentially using multiple linear regression model in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23) and presented using tables.

**Findings:** The study established that students' progression has been low with many students who get enrolled in Form I not able to complete their secondary education. This is attributed to cases of early marriages as a socio-economic dynamic.

**Recommendations:** The study recommends that the Ministry of Education, Chiefs and Public Benefits Organizations (PBOs) should continue with their sensitization efforts to eradicate incidences of early marriages among school-going children.

**Keywords:** *Early marriages, students' progression, public secondary schools.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Every child has a right to education and this has seen great expansion in the implementation of different curricula and education systems worldwide. Muralidharan and Prakash (2013) assert that such demands have seen the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) whose main pillar is to see countries work towards the realization of universal primary and secondary education by 2030. Cognizant of this fact, Muralidharan and Prakash (2013) posit that education systems have developed different initiatives to ensure that secondary schools realize high students' participation rates through improved effective students' progression in secondary schools. Bishop (2014) posits that students' progression entails students' enrollment, attendance, transition, completion and ensuring that students perform in their internal and national examinations. However, in many instances, this has not been the case, with the progression of students from enrollment to completion being on a declining trend. In other words, these noble expectations have not been achieved in situations where the efficiency of the education system is questionable and leads to wastage.

In Mexico, for example, Cisneros-Chernour, Cisneros and Moreno (2013) assert that, despite the expansion of education systems and introduction of education curriculum geared towards ensuring the realization of Education For All, the number of students who enroll and complete their secondary education is still, alarmingly, low at 23.9%. In Colombia, the rate of flow of students in secondary schools has been on the decline. For example, a report by Woessmann (2020) shows that, in 2015, students' participation rates in secondary schools in Austria stood at 67.9%, in 2016, it dropped to 64.9%, in 2017, it was 59.4%, in 2018, it was 57.8% whereas, in 2019, the rate stood at 55.1%. This points to the fact that the issue of students' progression in secondary schools is a global problem confronting the education industry around the world as countries seek to stem inefficiency which leads to wastage. Despite all these observations,

the extent to which early marriages as a socio-economic dynamic, influence students' progression in secondary schools is yet to be fully explored.

Early marriage is a form of a marriage or similar union, formal or informal, between an adult and a child under a certain age, typically age eighteen. Parsons, Edmeades, Kes, Petroni, Sexton and Wodon (2015) assert that the child can be a girl or a boy, but the large majority of child marriages are between a girl and a man and are rooted in gender inequality. In the United States of America, Henshaw (2012) avers that, although the age of majority (legal adulthood) and marriageable age are usually designated at age 18, both vary across countries and therefore the marriageable age may be older or younger in a given country.

According to Henshaw (2012), even where the age is set at 18 years, cultural traditions may override legislation and many jurisdictions permit earlier marriage with parental consent or in special circumstances, such as teenage pregnancy. In the education context, early marriage violates the rights of children and has widespread and long-term consequences on academic career progression. In a study carried out in the Netherlands, Eyrich-Garg (2014) established that, in addition to mental health issues and adverse health effects, early marriage has deleterious effects on a child's access to education and career opportunities as a result of early pregnancy. Eyrich-Garg (2014) further revealed that early marriages have effects on boys including being ill-prepared for certain responsibilities such as providing for the family, early fatherhood, and lack of access to education and career opportunities. This indicates that early marriage is a hindrance to the students' progression in secondary schools. In other words, child victims of early marriages do not progress academically and, in most cases, drop out of school.

To support this, Manlove, Ikramullah, Mincieli, Holcombe and Danish (2014) carried out a study in Haiti which revealed that early marriage has contributed to girls being forcibly excluded from school leading to higher school dropout rates since they are expected to assume their responsibilities as wives and as child bearers. Manlove et al (2014) assert that early marriage limits or can even eliminate a girl's education options and affects her future economic independence. This implies that early marriage often ends a girl's education, particularly in impoverished countries where child marriages are common. In many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, early marriage has become a common phenomenon with a negative net effect on the secondary education of girls and boys.

A report on early marriages and teenage pregnancy by Noll and Jennie (2013) shows that African countries lead the world in early marriages and teen pregnancies with Niger on the top

list of 203.604 births per 100,000 teenage mothers. Noll and Jennie (2013) indicate that Mali follows with 175.4438, Angola (166.6028), Mozambique (142.5334), Guinea (141.6722), Chad (137.173), Malawi (136.972), and Cote d'Ivoire (135.464). This points to the fact that the problem of early marriages is widespread in different parts of the world with deleterious consequences of students' participation in academic activities. For example, a study conducted in Nigeria by Envulada, Agbo and Ohize (2014) revealed that close to 39.6% of girls drop out of secondary schools due to early marriage. According to Envulada et al (2014), early marriages jeopardize girls' rights such as the right to education, because new brides are usually forced to drop out of school to bear children and to provide household labor. Besides, married girls have few social connections, restricted mobility, limited control over resources and little or no power in their new households and are thus especially vulnerable to domestic violence. This corroborates the assertions of Mutanana and Mutara (2015) that girls who are married as children are unlikely to be in school, are often treated as adult women and are generally burdened with the roles and responsibilities of adults regardless of their age. In other words, they are more likely to become pregnant early, to be subject to violence and abuse and to be denied education, with potentially life-threatening consequences. In Ethiopia, Guday (2016) asserts that children of young, uneducated mothers are less likely to have a good start to their education, do well in class or continue beyond the minimum schooling. Their daughters especially are likely to drop out, marry young and begin the cycle again.

In Uganda, Atuyambe, Mirembe, Johansson, Kirumira and Faxelid (2015) posit that many girls attend schools, however, the majority are forced to drop out because they get married early. As a result, these young girls cannot take advantage of economic opportunities including those stemming from development assistance programs and their health also is at risk because of early sexual activity and childbearing. According to Atuyambe et al (2015), 30.0% of Ugandan children enrolled in school fail to complete seven years of primary education, while in secondary schools, the drop-out rate is 20.0%. Atuyambe et al (2015) further assert that, when young women marry early, their formal education often terminates, which prevents them from acquiring knowledge and skills that determine their prospects for employment opportunities. This indicates that early marriage creates fewer chances of participation in decision-making, greater risks of being subjected to violence, isolation from school, friends and workplaces and therefore lack social support which is critical for their emotional wellbeing and economic opportunities.

In Kenya, the scenario is the same with students’ progression in secondary schools being regarded as the key to economic success in accordance with the international convention on human rights, Education for All and Vision 2030 (Onsomu, Mungai, Oulai, Sankale & Mujidi, 2014). According to the Ministry of Education (2020), students’ enrollment into secondary schools have increased tremendously courtesy of the government’s 100.0% transition policy as shown in Table 1:

**Table 1: Students’ Progression Rates in Kenya from 2015 to 2019**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Students’ Enrollment Rates (%)</b>
2015	68.1
2016	70.9
2017	76.2
2018	81.5
2019	89.3

**Source: Ministry of Education (2023)**

However, in Ndhiwa Sub-county, a study carried out by Onyango (2017) established that students’ progression in secondary schools has had numerous challenges. According to Onyango (2017), of all the students enrolled in secondary school in Ndhiwa Sub-county, only 16.9% complete their secondary school education. In other words, the dropout rates among students in Ndhiwa Sub-county are high at 48.1%. Another study carried by Adero (2018) revealed that, in 2015, 4567 students were enrolled in secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county. Despite this, those who completed their education were only 24.8% with those who completed registering low academic grades in the national examination. On the same note, a report by the Ministry of Education (2020) shows that public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county have registered a decreasing trend in students’ progression with regard to enrollment and eventual completion of their secondary education as shown in Table 2:

**Table 2: Students’ Progression Rates in Ndhiwa Sub-county from 2015 to 2019**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Students’ Enrollment Rates (%)</b>	<b>Students’ Dropout Rates (%)</b>
2015	58.3	13.9
2016	60.7	15.3
2017	69.4	17.5
2018	73.7	19.8
2019	77.9	24.8

**Source: Ministry of Education (2023)**

Table 2 shows that there is an increase in the number of students who drop out of secondary school despite the increase in enrollment. This has been attributed to a number of socio-

economic dynamics including early marriages. A report by Tabither, Lincie, Maryse and Anke van der (2016) shows that 18% of young women aged 15-19 years have already begun childbearing; 15% are mothers and an additional 3% are pregnant with their first child. In Ndhiwa Sub-county, Achieng' (2018) posits that secondary schools are grappling with the increase in the incidences of teenage pregnancies and early marriages. An empirical assessment by Taffa, Omollo and Matthews (2018) shows that cases of early marriages and teenage pregnancy stand at a preferred rate of 37.4% among students in secondary schools. However, Taffa et al (2018) as well as other empirical studies have not interrogated the extent to which different forms of early marriage influence students' progression in secondary schools, thus, the study.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Students' progression in secondary schools is key to the realization of educational objectives. However, in Ndhiwa Sub-county, the situation is quite different with students' progression in secondary schools facing numerous challenges. As noted earlier, Onyango (2017) revealed that, of all the students enrolled in secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county, only 16.9% complete their secondary school education with high cases of school dropouts at 48.1%. Adero (2018) also noted that, in 2015, 4567 students were enrolled in secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county. However, those who completed their form four were only 24.8% and with low academic grades in the national examination. As indicated in Table 2, MoE (2020) also noted that public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county have registered a decreasing trend in students' progression with regard to enrollment and eventual completion of their secondary education. Efforts to mitigate these challenges such as recruitment of new teachers and transfers of principals have not yielded much remarkable progress. Despite this state of affairs, few empirical studies have interrogated the extent to which early marriages influence students' progression in secondary schools, hence the need for this study.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- i. To assess the status of students' progression in public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county.
- ii. To evaluate the influence of early marriages on students' progression in secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The study was guided by the socio-economic theory which was postulated by Palkovitz (2010). This theory holds that socioeconomic status (SES) or dynamics encompasses not just income but also educational attainment, financial security, and subjective perceptions of social status and social class. In the context of this study, this theory associates diverse inputs affecting a student's learning and participation in school academic activities with socio-economic dynamics such as early marriages with measured outputs including subsequent transit from one level of education to the next, class attendance, graduation rates and standardized examination results. Thus, the relevance of socio-economic theory in this study is that it underscores the fact that children who are subjected to or are victims of early marriage fail to accomplish their academic activities. This implies that early marriages are major determinants of students' dropout rates from secondary schools. This study was also guided by the theory of student participation by Tinto and Cullen (1993) and the central idea to it is that of integration. It claims that whether a student persists or drops out is quite strongly predicted by their degree of academic integration and social integration. These evolve, as integration and commitment interact, with dropouts depending on commitment at the time of the decision. Tinto and Cullen (1993) have categorized students' education theories into three types: psychological, environmental, and interactional. In this study, students' access to educational opportunities and eventual progression in secondary schools depends largely on how the effects of early marriages are addressed.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study applied mixed methodology and thus adopted concurrent triangulation design. Target population was 1263 respondents which comprised 65 principals, 678 secondary school teachers and 520 parents' representatives from which 305 respondents were sampled using Yamane's Formula. Stratified sampling was applied to create five strata based on the number of zones in Ndhiwa Sub-county. From each zone, five principals and five parents' representatives were sampled purposively. However, from each zone, simple random sampling was applied to select 51 teachers. This procedure realized a sample size of 25 principals, 25 parents' representatives and 255 teachers. Questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers and interview guides from principals and parents' representatives. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically based on the objectives and presented in narrative forms. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages



and inferentially using multiple linear regression model in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23) and presented using tables and charts.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This section presents the findings of the study based on the objective. It also outlines the methods of presentation of the study findings and discussions.

**RESPONSE RATE**

In this study, 255 questionnaires were administered to teachers and, in return, 239 questionnaires were filled and returned. The researcher also interviewed 21 principals and 23 parents’ representatives. This yielded response rates shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Response Rate**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Sampled Respondents</b>	<b>Those Who Participated</b>	<b>Achieved Return Rate (%)</b>
Principals	25	21	84.0
Teachers	255	239	93.7
Parents’ representatives	25	23	92.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>92.8</b>

**Source: Field Data (2023)**

Table 3 shows that principals registered a response rate of 84.0%, teachers registered 93.7% whereas parents’ representatives registered a response rate of 92.0%. This yielded an average response rate of 92.8%, which is consistent with the assertions of Creswell (2014) that a response rate above 75.0% is adequate. This information was important since it allowed the researcher to generalize the study outcomes to the target population.

**Status of Students’ Progression in Public Secondary Schools**

The study sought to assess the status of students’ progression in public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county. This was measured by taking stock of the number of students who were enrolled between 2016 and 2019, those who completed their secondary education and those who dropped out. The findings are presented in Table 4.



**Table 4: Status of Students’ Progression in Public Secondary Schools**

Academic Year	Status of Students’ Progression		
	Number of Students Enrolled in Form I	Number of Students who Complete Form IV	Number of Students who Dropped Out of School
2016	2199	1642(2016-2019 Cohort)	557 (25.3%)
2017	2303	1612(2017-2020 Cohort)	691 (30.0%)
2018	2511	1834(2018-2021 Cohort)	677 (27.0%)
2019	3009	2306(2019-2022 Cohort)	703 (23.4%)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10022</b>	<b>7394</b>	<b>2628 (26.2%)</b>

**Source: Field Data (2023)**

Table 4 shows that the number of students enrolled in Form I in public secondary schools has been on the increase since 2016 to 2019 due to the 100.0% transition policy by the government. However, after four years upon enrollment, the number of students who complete their secondary education is low. These findings corroborate the findings of a study conducted in Ndhiwa Sub-county by Onyango (2017) which revealed that, of all the students enrolled in secondary schools, only 16.9% complete their secondary school education with high cases of school dropouts at 48.1%. A report by the Ministry of Education (2020) also shows that public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county have registered a decreasing trend in students’ progression with regard to enrollment and eventual completion of their secondary education. These findings underscore the fact that students are enrolled into secondary schools, however, not all progress to completion of their secondary education. Despite the concerted efforts by the government and other stakeholders in secondary education, the number of students who drop out has been consistently between 20.0-30.0%. This affirms the fact that the noble expectations of education have not been achieved in situations where the students’ progression has been low and thus, leads to wastage. In other words, students’ progression in secondary schools has been and continues to be a critical issue confronting education system in most developing countries.

**Early Marriages and Students’ Progression in Public Secondary Schools**

The study sought to examine how early marriages influences students’ progression in public secondary schools. Descriptive data were collected and results are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: Teachers’ Views on the Influence of Early Marriages on Students’ Progression in Public Secondary Schools**

Test Items	Ratings				
	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %
In public secondary schools, cases of girls getting married at a young age have increased dropout rates thus affecting students’ progression	51.9	11.3	5.4	5.4	26.0
Public secondary schools have registered cases where young boys leave school to go and marry	53.6	14.6	5.4	11.3	15.1
Public secondary schools have had many cases of early marriages which have lowered students’ progression rates	57.3	9.2	7.5	9.2	16.8
In public secondary schools, students’ progression from enrollment to completion has been interfered with due to many cases of early marriages	25.1	8.4	5.4	44.4	16.7
Students’ progression in public secondary schools has been ineffective owing to numerous cases of early marriages	66.5	11.3	3.3	5.4	13.5

Table 5 shows that 124(51.9%) of teachers strongly agreed with the view that, in public secondary schools, cases of girls getting married at a young age have increased dropout rates thus affecting students’ progression as did 27(11.3%) who agreed. However, 13(5.4%) were undecided, 13(5.4%) disagreed whereas 62(26.0%) strongly disagreed. Slightly more than half, 128(53.6%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that public secondary schools have registered cases where young boys leave school to go and marry while 35(14.6%) agreed. However, 13(5.4%) were undecided, 27(11.3%) disagreed whereas 36(15.1%) strongly disagreed. These findings support those of a study carried out in Nigeria by Envulada et al (2014) which revealed that close to 39.6% of girls drop out of secondary schools due to early marriage.

According to Envulada et al (2014), early marriages jeopardize girls’ rights such as the right to education, because new brides are usually forced to drop out of school to bear children and to provide household labor. Besides, married girls have few social connections, restricted mobility, limited control over resources and little or no power in their new households and are thus especially vulnerable to domestic violence. Mutanana and Mutara (2015) also found that

girls who are married as children are unlikely to be in school, are often treated as adult women and are generally burdened with the roles and responsibilities of adults regardless of their age. In other words, they are more likely to become pregnant early, to be subject to violence and abuse and to be denied education, with potentially life-threatening consequences.

Most, 137(57.3%), of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that public secondary schools have had many cases of early marriages which have lowered students' progression rates. On the same breath, 22(9.2%) agreed. However, 18(7.5%) were undecided, 22(9.2%) disagreed whereas 40(16.8%) strongly disagreed. The study further revealed that 60(25.1%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that, in public secondary schools, students' progression from enrollment to completion has been interfered with due to many cases of early marriages whereas 20(8.4%) agreed, 13(5.4%) were undecided, 106(44.4%) disagreed whereas 40(16.8%) strongly disagreed. These findings are consistent with the findings of a study carried out in Haiti in which Manlove et al (2014) established that early marriage has contributed to girls being forcibly excluded from school leading to higher school dropout rates since they are expected to assume their responsibilities as wives and as child bearers. Manlove et al (2014) found that early marriage limits or can even eliminate a girl's education options and affects her future economic independence. This implies that early marriage often ends a girl's education, particularly in impoverished countries where child marriages are common.

Majority, 159(66.5%), of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that students' progression in public secondary schools has been ineffective owing to numerous cases of early marriages whereas a paltry 27(11.3%) agreed, 8(3.3%) were undecided, 13(5.4%) disagreed whereas 32(13.5%) strongly disagreed. The above findings lend credence to the findings of a study carried out in the Netherlands in which Eyrich-Garg (2014) established that early marriage has negatively affected a child's access to education and career opportunities because of early pregnancy. Eyrich-Garg (2014) further revealed that early marriages have effects on boys including being ill prepared for certain responsibilities such as providing for the family, early fatherhood, and lack of access to education and career opportunities.

A study conducted in Ndhiwa Sub-county by Achieng' (2018) also established that secondary schools are grappling with the increase in the incidences of teenage pregnancies and early marriages. In the same token, an empirical assessment by Taffa et al (2018) shows that cases of early marriages and teenage pregnancy stand at a preferred rate of 37.4% among students in secondary schools. In summary, these findings are indicative of the fact that early marriage is a major hindrance to the students' progression in secondary schools. Many learners, especially

girls, attend schools; however, the majority are forced to drop out due to early marriage. Hence, these young girls cannot take advantage of education opportunities including those stemming from development assistance programs and their health also is at risk because of early sexual activity and childbearing. In other words, child victims of early marriages do not progress academically and, in most cases, drop out of school.

**Inferential Analysis**

To verify the influence of early marriages on students’ progression in public secondary schools, data were collected on the cumulative number of cases of early marriages in the 21 sampled public secondary schools and the number of students who dropped out of public secondary schools between 2017 and 2021. The results are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Number of Cases of Early Marriages and the Number of Students who dropped Out of Public Secondary Schools (2017-2021)**

<b>Number of Cases of Early Marriages</b>	<b>Number of Students who Dropped Out of Public secondary Schools</b>
17	140
10	139
9	114
14	138
11	136
21	179
8	130
14	123
15	71
20	115
7	106
10	69
10	61
13	125
12	71
18	146
15	113
16	143
17	135
17	138
10	72

**Source: Field Data (2022)**

Table 6 shows that cases of early marriage have become a common phenomenon in secondary schools and occur annually, though numbers differ from one school to another. This has had an influence on the number of students who drop out. It is evident that that the number of cases of early marriages affect the number of students who complete their secondary education. The

results in Table 6 were subjected to Linear Regression Analysis and the results are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7: Relationship between Early Marriages and Students’ Progression in Public Secondary Schools**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	62.838	22.126		2.840	.010
	Cases of Early Marriages	4.030	1.572	.507	2.563	.019

a. Dependent Variable: Number of Students who Drop out of Public Secondary Schools

Table 7 shows linear regression analysis which generated a linear model of the form; **Number of students who drop out of public secondary schools = 62.838 + 0.507 Number of cases of early marriages.** These results from the linear regression equation indicates that the coefficient for number of students who drop out of public secondary schools attributed to the number of cases of early marriages is 0.507. This implies that for every increase in the number of cases of early marriages, the number of students who drop out of public secondary schools is expected to decrease by a factor of 0.507 (positive coefficient). The value 62.838 indicates that the number of students who drop out of public secondary schools is not only dependent on early marriages, but a multiplicity of other inherent factors such as students’ attitude and poverty levels. In other words, early marriage is just, but, an additional factor to already existing cases of dropout among students. Table 7 also shows that the p-value, 0.019 is less than 0.05, that is, a low p-value (0.019 < 0.05), which further indicate that there is significant influence of early marriage on students’ progression right from enrollment to the number of students who drop out of public secondary schools.

**Thematic Analysis**

During the interviews with principals and parents’ representatives, the interviewees also responded in favour of the view that cases of early marriages with girls getting married at a young age have increased thus affecting students’ progression. Principal, P1, stated;

*In my secondary school, the main reason why students’ progression from form I to form IV has been low is early marriage. Many students desert school mid-way to go and get married either due to poverty or other dynamics. Though the government has initiated readmission policy, many do not come back even after giving birth.*

Parents' representatives also corroborated the views expressed by the principals. They stated that many students, especially girls, drop out of school to become wives at a very tender age.

Parents' representative, PR1, noted;

*In my school, we have had cases of early marriage where students just abandon school activities to get married.*

Just as established quantitative findings, these verbatim further affirm the fact that early marriage is a major cause of low students' progression in public secondary schools. This indicates that early marriages cannot be ignored as a cause of low students' progression rates. This implies that, despite the efforts by the government to ensure that all students are enrolled in form I has ensured many children gain access to secondary education, quite a number of them do not complete their secondary education due to early marriage. They get married at a young age hence abandon their schooling.

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

From the study findings, it is evident that students' progression in many public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county has been on a downward trend with cases of dropouts being on the rise. After four years after enrollment, the number of students who complete their secondary education is low, that is, not all enrolled students complete their secondary education due to early marriages. From the study findings, it is evident that instances of early marriages have been on the rise and continue to be a frequent occurrence in Ndhiwa Sub-county being no exception. Many young girls get married or boys marry at a tender age and this has had negative effect on their progression in secondary schools. Education of parents is also key and has a lot of influence on how their children progress academically in secondary schools.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The study recommends that the Ministry of Education, Chiefs and Public Benefits Organizations (PBOs) should continue with their sensitization efforts to eradicate incidences of early marriages among school-going children.

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