

## **Investigating on How Maasai Parents' Experiences on Secondary Education Influence Their Provision of Teaching and Learning Resources to Their Children in Longido and Monduli Districts-Tanzania**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study investigates the engagement of Maasai parents in providing teaching and learning resources to facilitate formal education in the Longido and Monduli districts. Guided by the participatory model of development, which emphasizes collaboration and open communication channels among stakeholders, the study adopts a phenomenological research design, aligning with qualitative research principles. This approach enables the exploration of Maasai parents' lived experiences of formal education within the context of their culture. The study focuses on Maasai parents in the two districts, employing a purposive sampling technique to select a sample of 72 parents. Twelve focused group discussions were conducted, with six groups from Longido and six from Monduli. Additionally, snowball sampling was utilized to identify and include 10 Maasai traditional leaders from both districts. Data collection involved the use of an interview guide, and the collected data were transcribed and analyzed to identify emerging themes, which were supported by verbatim quotations. The findings of the study indicate a gradual shift in Maasai parents' attitudes towards formal education. In recent years, there has been an increased awareness among Maasai parents regarding the importance of formal education. The provision of school necessities for their children is comparatively satisfactory, and there is a willingness to utilize household resources to support their children's education. Moreover, the study reveals a fair degree of gender sensitivity among Maasai parents in resource provision. Despite the challenges of poverty, cultural constraints, and a harsh environment, Maasai parents are cognizant of their responsibility to meet their children's educational needs. Based on the study's conclusions, it is recommended that the central government, local government authorities, education stakeholders, and the general public continue to sensitize Maasai parents about the significance of active participation in their children's education. By doing so, it is anticipated that the quality of education offered in Maasai schools can be enhanced.*

**KEY WORDS:** Maasai parents' engagement, formal education, secondary school and household learning resource

### **INTRODUCTION**

Adequate teaching and learning resources are essential for the provision of quality education in schools. However, studies reveal a significant gap between the resources available in schools

and the actual requirements. For example, in Indonesia, Shaturaev (2021) highlighted a significant lack of teaching and learning resources in public schools, which negatively impacted the curriculum implementation process. Similarly, there is a widespread concern about insufficient resources in schools across African countries, including Tanzania (Maepa & Mhinga, 2021; Michael, 2020; Lyanga & Chen, 2020). Nsengimana et al. (2020) found that many schools in Southern Sahara Africa have limited teaching and learning resources, leading to a negative impact on the delivery of quality education. The lack of adequate resources in schools can be attributed, in part, to limited budget allocations to the education sector (Lyanga & Chen, 2020).

In countries where governments lack the capacity to supply teaching and learning resources, it becomes vital for the local community to support these efforts to ensure that every student has access to the necessary resources. Research suggests that parents' active involvement in education matters and their participation in providing teaching and learning resources contribute to high-quality education in certain countries (Lyengar, 2021). Conversely, in societies where parents are unwilling to participate in resource provision, the quality of education tends to be low, and children from such communities often face significant educational challenges (Aslan, 2020). Therefore, active community engagement in the provision of teaching and learning resources is necessary to enhance the quality of education offered in schools.

Rural communities, such as the Maasai communities in Kenya and Tanzania, face a severe lack of teaching and learning resources. Reports indicate that schools in these communities are particularly affected, with limited access to such resources. For example, in Maasai communities in Kenya, it has been observed that schools lack essential teaching and learning resources, although some tourist companies have stepped in to provide support in this regard (Oduor, 2020). Similarly, a study conducted by Pesambili and Novell (2021) highlighted the inadequate availability of teaching and learning resources in schools within the Maasai communities of Tanzania. Woodhouse and McCabe (2018) further assert that the lack of these resources in Maasai schools contributes to a sense of disadvantage among the Maasai communities in comparison to other communities.

The Maasai communities primarily rely on pastoralism as their main economic activity, which significantly influences their perspectives on formal education and their engagement in providing teaching and learning resources. Their cultural background plays a role in shaping their attitudes towards education. Scholars have highlighted a disparity between the content taught in schools and the practical experiences of pastoralists. Baughn (2018) points out that formal education often fails to address the nomadic culture and lifestyle of pastoralist communities. The lack of teaching and learning resources is also prevalent in schools within the Maasai communities of Monduli and Longido. However, there is a lack of comprehensive research examining the involvement of parents in these communities concerning the provision of teaching and learning resources, despite the existing discrepancies. This qualitative study aims to bridge this research gap by exploring and understanding the role of parents in addressing the resource gaps in Maasai schools.

### **Statement of the Problem and Context**

Formal education attainment in Maasai communities still falls considerably below desired levels. Analysis of national form four examination results spanning four years (2015-2018) reveals a persistently low performance, with over 66% of students scoring between division four and zero (NECTA, 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018). Despite the Tanzanian government's concerted efforts, facilitated by the Ministry of Education Science and Technology, to ensure the provision of quality education to all citizens, the average academic performance among Maasai communities remains below the national average (Nkedianye et al., 2020; Kimaro, 2021). Available literature suggested a reciprocal relationship between culture and education, wherein culture influences education and, in turn, education influences the culture of a given location (Bhowmick, 2021). Researchers have reported both positive and negative perceptions of formal education within the Maasai community (Pesambili, Bisong & Ekanem, 2020).

Due to the significant influence of culture on educational attainments, it is crucial for educational interventions to consider cultural aspects to ensure effective implementation. In the case of Maasai communities, the delivery of formal education has been impacted by the mismatch between Western culture, supported by formal education, and indigenous Maasai culture (Pesambili & Novelli, 2021; Raymond, 2021; Pesambili, 2021; Mtey, 2021). While existing literature highlights the influence of Maasai culture on formal education, little attention has been given to the engagement of Maasai parents in the provision of formal education. Consequently, this study aimed to address this research gap by assessing the experiences and engagement of Maasai parents in public secondary schools within the Monduli and Longido districts.

### **Research Question**

**This study was guided by the following research question:** How does Maasai parents' experiences on secondary education influence their provision of teaching and learning resources to their children?

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was conducted within the framework of the participatory model of development. The Participatory Development paradigm recognizes the agency of individuals in identifying their own needs and aspirations in a way that is meaningful to them. It emphasizes continuous engagement with communities, where they can express and critically analyze their lived realities and circumstances. The paradigm also involves autonomous planning of actions, as well as monitoring and evaluating outcomes, in collaboration with various stakeholders.

Prominent advocate Chambers (1997) highlights the importance of participatory development, which fosters collaboration and open communication channels among stakeholders, including Maasai parents, educators, policymakers, and community leaders. Through this collaborative approach, valuable information is shared, mutual understanding is achieved, and joint decision-making is facilitated. By actively involving Maasai parents in dialogues and platforms that value their voices, the participatory approach can help bridge the gap between Maasai cultural practices and the formal education system. It encourages the exchange of ideas, perspectives,

and aspirations, leading to the development of more effective and inclusive educational policies and practices that address the specific needs of Maasai children and their families.

The concept of participation is surrounded by complexity and differing perspectives regarding its true nature and the actors involved. Mikkelsen (2005) highlights the diverse conceptual interpretations of participation, suggesting that it can be reduced to a mere buzzword lacking substantial content. As a result, participation has faced significant criticism, with Parnwell (2008) arguing that it often remains confined to rhetoric rather than being effectively implemented in practice.

The criticism directed towards participation arises from the perception that its implementation often falls short of its idealistic principles. Critics argue that while participation is advocated and emphasized in policy and program documents, it may not genuinely materialize on the ground. This disconnection between rhetoric and implementation undermines the transformative potential of participation in development processes. It raises concerns that the true power and impact of participation may not be realized due to its limited practical application.

To address the concerns and bridge the gap between theory and practice, it is imperative to go beyond superficial engagement and embrace a more inclusive and authentic form of participation. This entails recognizing and valuing diverse perspectives, fostering genuine dialogue, and empowering marginalized communities to actively contribute to decision-making processes. By acknowledging the agency and knowledge of local communities, participatory development can be transformed into a meaningful and empowering approach that effectively addresses their needs and aspirations.

In conclusion, while the Participatory Development paradigm highlights the importance of community involvement and self-determination, the existence of diverse conceptual interpretations has led to skepticism and criticism. To overcome these challenges, it is crucial to move beyond tokenistic participation and strive for genuine inclusion and empowerment of marginalized communities. Only through such transformative efforts can participation truly become a powerful force for sustainable and equitable development.

### **Conceptual Framework**

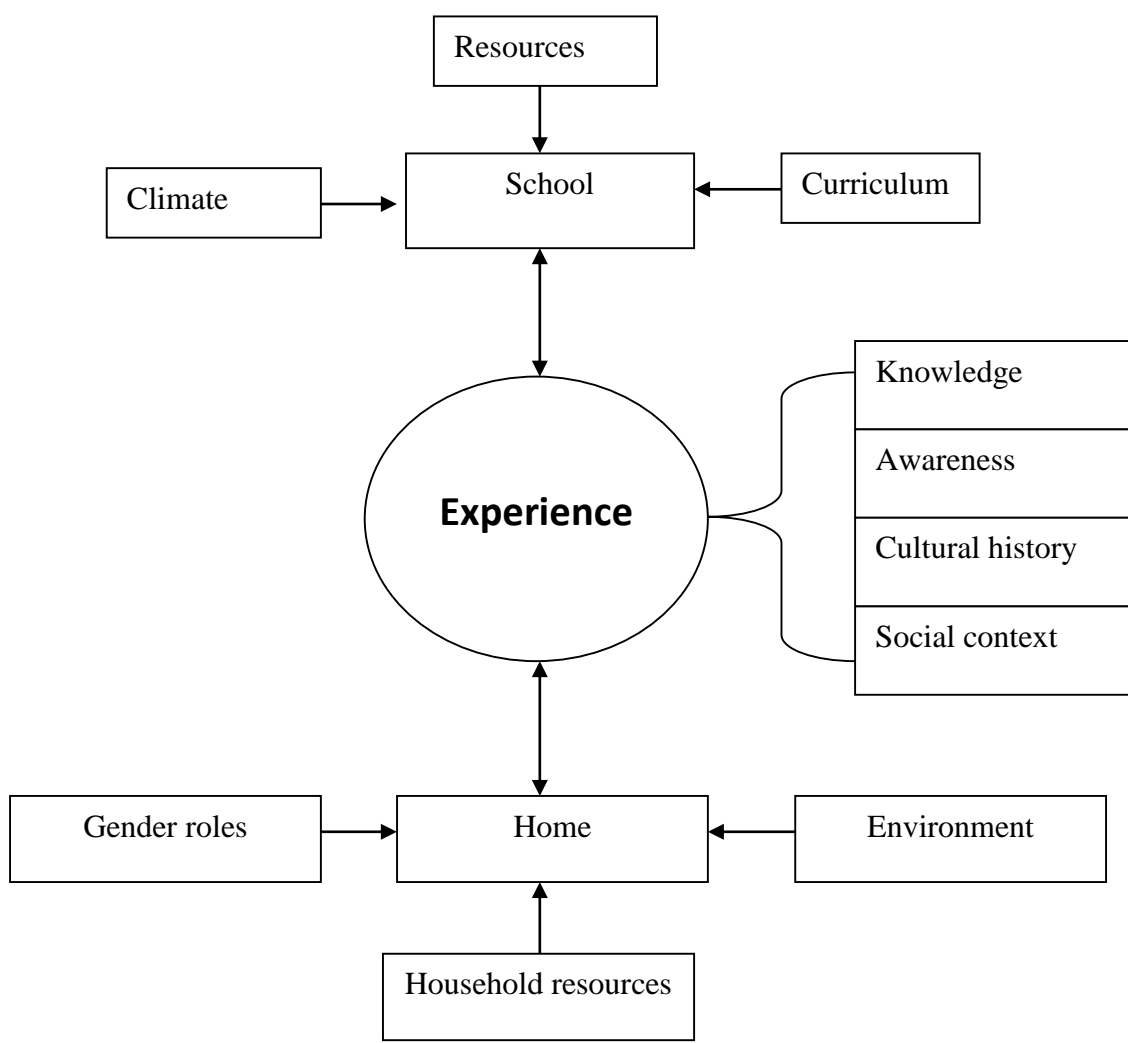
A conceptual framework is a visual representation that illustrates the interrelationships among variables being studied. In this study, the variables of interest are centered on parents' experiences with formal education and their involvement in providing education. Figure 1 presents a graphical depiction of these variables, highlighting their connections within the research context.

Figure 1 demonstrates a reciprocal relationship between parents' experiences with formal education and their engagement in meeting their children's educational needs. The diagram emphasizes the influential role of the home environment, which includes household resources and gender roles, in shaping parents' experiences. Simultaneously, the school environment,

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encompassing the curriculum, available resources, and the overall learning climate, also affects parents' experiences with formal education. Both the home and school environments significantly impact the experiences of Maasai parents, particularly in terms of their knowledge and awareness of formal education. Furthermore, cultural history and social context play vital roles in determining the experiences and level of engagement of Maasai parents in the realm of formal education.

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher, (2022)

Figure 1.1 illustrates a reciprocal relationship between parents' experiences with formal education and their participation in meeting the formal education needs of their children. The diagram highlights the influence of the home environment, encompassing household resources and gender roles, on shaping parents' experiences. Simultaneously, the school environment,

including the curriculum, available resources, and the learning climate, also plays a role in shaping parents' experiences with formal education. Both the school and home environments have an impact on the experiences of Maasai parents regarding their knowledge and awareness of formal education. Additionally, cultural history and social context are significant factors in determining the experiences and level of engagement of Maasai parents in the realm of formal education.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Teaching and learning resources play a crucial role in the effective implementation of the curriculum. However, a study conducted by Nsengimana et al. (2020) found that many schools in the Southern Sahara Africa region have limited access to such resources. This situation has had a negative impact on the delivery of quality education. Given that the government in most African countries may not be able to adequately supply teaching and learning resources, it becomes important for the local community to support these efforts.

An empirical study conducted in Ghana, India, and New Zealand by Lyengar (2021) revealed that parents in these countries are highly involved in their children's education goals and actively contribute to the provision of teaching and learning resources, especially in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it is worth noting that the data for this study were collected during the pandemic when schools were closed, and students were learning from home. Under these circumstances, parents were readily able to provide resources since their children were not physically attending school. Therefore, there is a need for a study to be conducted specifically in the Maasai communities of Monduli and Longido districts to gather data on how parents support the availability of teaching and learning resources when their children are either attending school or learning from home.

A study conducted by Aslan (2020) in Indonesia revealed that some parents, particularly in rural areas, do not readily send their children to school as they prioritize their involvement in activities that support the survival of their families. Another study by Shaturaev (2021), also in Indonesia, highlighted the lack of materials and equipment in many public schools, hindering the proper implementation of the curriculum. These studies recommended community involvement in supplying resources to bridge the gaps left by the government.

An analytical study conducted in Greece by Anastasiou and Papagianni (2020) found that both teachers and school administrators considered the involvement of parents in providing teaching and learning resources to be crucial for improving the quality of education in public schools. These studies collectively indicate the lack of essential teaching and learning resources in schools, particularly public ones, and emphasize the need for parents and communities at large to contribute to the provision of these resources.

However, there is limited information available on the extent to which communities, especially rural communities like pastoralists, are involved in supplying teaching and learning resources. Therefore, this study aimed to address this gap by assessing the involvement of the Maasai

community in the provision of teaching and learning resources in public secondary schools within the Longido and Monduli districts. By examining the specific context of the Maasai community, this study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of community engagement in resource provision and its impact on education within these districts.

A study conducted by Oduor (2020) among the Maasai communities in Kenya highlighted the significant role played by tourists in providing schools with necessary facilities to support teaching and learning. Similarly, a study conducted in the Maasai communities in Tanzania by Pesambili and Novell (2021) revealed that most schools in these communities lack sufficient resources, leading parents to step in and provide basic school needs. Another study conducted in the Tanzanian context by Woodhouse and McCabe (2018) shed light on the perception of disadvantage felt by men in the Maasai communities due to a lack of education compared to other groups. Insufficient teaching and learning resources in schools within the Maasai communities were identified as one of the factors contributing to poor educational outcomes.

These studies collectively demonstrate that schools within both the Maasai communities of Kenya and Tanzania suffer from a lack of adequate teaching and learning resources. The involvement of tourists in supporting schools in Kenya and parents' role in providing basic needs in Tanzania highlight the efforts made to bridge this resource gap. However, the overall picture indicates a need for increased attention and investment in addressing the resource deficiencies faced by schools within the Maasai communities in both countries. However, there is still a need to explore how the communities are engaged in providing the necessary teaching and learning resources. Specifically, in Monduli and Longido districts, there is community involvement in supplying teaching and learning resources to support the delivery of education in these areas.

A study conducted by Maepa and Mhinga (2021) in South Africa revealed that only 33% of learners in the Limpopo province had access to library services. This low percentage has been identified as one of the factors contributing to poor academic performance compared to other provinces. In the Tanzanian context, a study by Michael (2020) on the role of instructional supervision in academic achievement found that many schools in Ukerewe district lacked necessary teaching and learning resources. Similarly, a study by Lyanga and Chen (2020) highlighted that despite the introduction of free education policies increasing enrollment rates, most schools in Tanzania, especially in rural areas, still lack adequate resources. The insufficiency of teaching and learning resources has been identified as a key factor contributing to poor performance in national examinations.

These studies underscore the importance of having sufficient teaching and learning resources for the effective implementation of the curriculum. They also reveal a common trend across African countries where schools face limitations in accessing necessary resources. However, these studies have not provided detailed information on how communities participate in ensuring adequate resources for schools. Therefore, further studies are needed to investigate the extent to which Maasai communities, among the education-disadvantaged communities in

Tanzania, are engaged in providing the teaching and learning resources necessary for the effective delivery of formal education in Longido and Monduli districts.

In a previous study conducted by John (2015), a qualitative case study focused on community involvement in planning and decision making in secondary school affairs in Bagamoyo district, Tanzania. The study involved a sample of 92 participants, including the district education officer, school heads, parents, school board members, and students. The findings revealed a negative perception among parents regarding community involvement in education planning and decision making, primarily due to a lack of knowledge and skills in these areas. This study provided valuable insights into the challenges faced in community engagement.

While John's study examined community involvement in one district, it differs from the current study in several aspects. Firstly, the present study investigates Maasai community involvement in the implementation of the curriculum in secondary schools in both Monduli and Longido districts, located in the Arusha region of Tanzania. This expands the geographical scope and provides a broader perspective. Additionally, John's study did not address the specific research questions raised in the current study. Furthermore, there are differences in sample size and research tools used, further distinguishing the two studies.

The study conducted by Olemong'i (2014) aimed to explore the specific contribution of Maasai circumcision culture to formal education among Maasai male students in the Arusha region. The study focused on Maasai male students from three universities: Mount Meru, Tumaini Makumira, and the University of Arusha. It utilized a mixed research design and employed questionnaires as the data collection tool. The sample size consisted of 90 students.

The findings of the study recommended several measures to improve Maasai community participation in formal education. Firstly, the government was advised to provide relevant curriculum content that aligns with the Maasai community's needs and interests, aiming to enhance their engagement and support in education. Additionally, it was suggested that young men who dropped out from primary and secondary school should be given a second opportunity through special education programs focused on vocational skills, enabling them to develop essential life skills.

Furthermore, the study proposed scheduling Maasai boys' circumcision season during holiday periods such as June and December to prevent male students from missing regular classes, as is currently observed in various parts of Maasai land. The government was encouraged to formulate by-laws and policies to restrict circumcision activities during regular school timetables. Based on the context and findings of the previous study, the current research aims to understand the extent of pastoralist community involvement in providing learning resources for curriculum implementation in secondary schools within the Monduli and Longido districts of the Arusha region.

The study conducted by Kikoti (2018) examined parents' participation in improving students' academic performance in Sumbawanga municipal community secondary schools in Tanzania. The study employed a mixed approach, utilizing a descriptive survey design. Purposive and



simple random sampling techniques were used to select participants. Multiple data collection methods, including interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions, and documentary searches, were employed.

The findings of the study indicated minimal parental participation in their children's education, which contributed to poor academic performance among students. The challenges faced by parents in enhancing their children's performance included poverty, poor communication between parents and teachers, lack of education, and inadequate communication between parents and their children.

The study recommended that the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, along with relevant authorities at the national, regional, district, and school levels, should provide more knowledge and resources to parents and the community at large. This would enable them to actively participate in the development and improvement of their schools. Specific suggestions included parents engaging directly in activities such as encouraging their children to complete homework, monitoring their activities both at home and outside, and providing coaching services to enhance learning in various subjects.

Distinguishing from the previous study, the current research aims to bridge the gap by investigating the level of community involvement in supporting learning resources for the educational development of children. Furthermore, the previous study focused on parents' participation in improving students' academic performance, while the present study focuses on parental engagement in providing school needs.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design. Phenomenological studies aim to describe the meaning of lived experiences related to a specific concept or phenomenon for multiple individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2007). The research focused on Maasai parents and traditional leaders in the districts of Longido and Monduli, considering their children's educational status—whether attending school, completed school, or without formal education. Quota sampling was used to select 72 Maasai parents for participation, while snowball sampling was utilized to select 10 traditional leaders. The selection of parents was deliberate, considering the age-set groups within the Maasai communities. Three villages from each district were sampled.

Data collection involved the use of focus group discussions and interviews as research instruments. Participants were divided into gender-based groups (male and female) in each village, as Maasai cultural norms restrict females from speaking in the presence of males (husbands, fathers, and brothers). This separation allowed female parents to express their views freely. A trained moderator facilitated the discussions, while the researcher recorded the participants' perspectives on their experiences with formal education. Since the researcher is fluent in the Maasai language, the discussions were conducted in Maasai.

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the collected data. The recorded discussions were transcribed with the assistance of a research assistant. The researcher compared their transcripts with those of the assistant to ensure consistency, enhancing validity and reliability. The transcripts were then translated into English by language experts and translating software. The researcher familiarized themselves with the transcripts through multiple readings to gain a comprehensive understanding of the parents' intentions. Emerging themes were generated from the information within the transcripts, and the data were subsequently coded according to these themes. Verbatim quotations were used to support the presentation of data.

## **FINDINGS**

This study aimed to examine the extent of Maasai parents' involvement in the provision of teaching and learning resources. Through focus group discussions and interviews with Maasai parents and traditional leaders, various perspectives were gathered and organized into four main themes: parents' awareness of their children's school requirements, contributions towards teaching and learning resources, provision of necessary materials for schools, and gender sensitivity in the provision of teaching and learning resources.

### **Awareness of the Parents**

Awareness of the various teaching and learning resources required by students is a crucial factor that can influence the level of community engagement in providing such resources. In the focus group discussions with parents, opinions were divided regarding the extent to which parents were aware of the specific teaching and learning resources needed by students. Some parents expressed their knowledge and understanding of several resources and emphasized the significance of providing them. However, it was also observed that some parents lacked awareness in this regard. Among the parents who demonstrated awareness of the required resources, some were able to provide specific examples. For instance, during the discussions, Participant "D" from the female group in village two shared the following insights:

...of course I know the needs of the child when he goes to school, he should have the relevant school uniforms, exercise books, pens and books, and I always ask him if he has them all. I am ready to buy for my son everything he needs for his education (12<sup>th</sup> April, 2022).

Also, Interview guides from one of traditional leader indicated that;

Yes, I know the needs of a school child, a parent should take care of and raise his child and must meet all his necessary needs when he goes to school, I have sold a lot of cows and goats for school children. Look, I have not even been able to continue with the construction of my houses because of the school children who I had to pay for them all the time. For a year I can selling up to 10 goats and four cows, I buy the needs such as notebooks, pens, school uniforms, school bags, and food so that he can eat well while at school (Traditional leader 2, Monduli, 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2022).

Furthermore, from the interview another traditional leader said that;

I know the needs of secondary school children, there are school uniforms, notebooks, pens, shoes, bags and many other things that many parents buy for our children when we send them to school, I can sell up to four cows and six goats for a year (Traditional leader 3, Monduli 18th July, 2022).

The focus group discussions and interviews revealed that the parents not only possessed awareness of the essential requirements for their child's educational success but also exhibited a willingness to actively seek out and provide such materials. This awareness and provision of necessary resources play a vital role in improving access to education. When children have access to the required resources, it can enhance their school attendance and subsequently contribute to improved academic performance.

This argument aligns with the findings of Olekambaine (2013), who emphasized the significance of parents' awareness of the value of education. When parents comprehend the importance of education, they are more likely to provide the necessary resources to facilitate their children's educational pursuits. Hence, it is crucial for parents to be aware of the specific needs and demonstrate readiness to provide them in order to empower their children with appropriate teaching and learning resources.

Parents also expressed their awareness regarding the requirements for students to attend secondary education. They highlighted a noticeable difference in the cost of primary school needs compared to secondary school needs, with the latter being considered slightly more expensive. One parent specifically mentioned this difference, stating:

In the case of secondary school, children have many other needs, ranging from shoes, socks, lotions, school uniforms, sports clothes, pajamas, notebooks and textbooks, so I am quite aware of it. I have a child in secondary school, some have three children in schools they may sell up to three cows and still the money could not be enough. It is very expensive to provide resources for secondary school children (14<sup>th</sup> April, 2022).

This reflected from the interview guides from traditional leader who said; "I know the needs of a school child, there are school uniforms, notebooks and many other things, in a year I can sell up to two cows and I also sell several goats" (Traditional leader 4, Monduli 18th July, 2022).

Also, from interview one traditional leader said that;

Yes, I know the needs of a school child when he is at school, he needs school clothes, notebooks, pens and soap as well as his treatment because if he gets sick, I am the one responsible for helping him when he is sick; Many parents here have a very good awareness about various school donations, the other day we donated twelve thousand and we also donated another thirteen thousand for school chairs and beds for our secondary school children (Traditional 5, Monduli 18th July, 2022).

The parent's response suggests that while formal education, particularly secondary education, is perceived as costly, some parents are making significant efforts to ensure they provide their children with the necessary resources for learning. However, it is evident from the responses that despite their awareness of the school requirements, some parents are unable to afford all of them due to the relatively high costs involved. This was further emphasized by one parent during the focus group discussion, as she expressed the following sentiment:

Most parents know the required resources and it is their responsibility to provide them. I myself know my responsibilities to my children but many parents are overwhelmed by the problem of poverty, because poor people will not be able to meet their children's basic needs, not as that they do not know (12<sup>th</sup> April, 2022).

Despite the high cost involved, many Maasai parents firmly believe that it is their duty to provide teaching and learning resources for both their male and female children, enabling them to attend school without any limitations. This viewpoint is reinforced by the research of Anastasiou and Papagianni (2020), who emphasize the importance of parental involvement in the provision of teaching and learning resources as a means of enhancing the quality of education.

It is crucial for parents to become aware of the specific needs of the schools and then take responsibility for providing the necessary resources. This is particularly significant because many schools within the Maasai communities in Tanzania are reported to lack sufficient teaching and learning resources (Pesambili & Novell, 2021). In some Maasai communities in Kenya, the deficiency of resources has led to tourists stepping in to assist schools with the required teaching and learning materials (Oduor, 2020). This highlights the inadequacy of teaching and learning resources in schools across Maasai communities in both Kenya and Tanzania, underscoring the need for parents to consider the provision of such resources as their own responsibility.

It was truly inspiring to witness some Maasai parents acknowledging and embracing their responsibility in providing teaching and learning resources for their children. One parent expressed their unwavering commitment by stating, "I never get tired of doing so because it is the parent's responsibility to ensure their daily needs are met so they can study peacefully" (13th April, 2022). Another parent shared their perspective, saying, "Whenever I visit my son at school, I make sure to bring him the required resources. It is my responsibility, and education is his right" (12th April, 2022). Similarly, another parent affirmed their awareness of their child's needs, stating, "Yes, I am aware of the needs of my school-going child. They require a pen, ruler, notebook, school clothes, shoes, and more. We understand their needs, and we are the ones actively seeking out these resources" (15th April, 2022).

Again, from the interview guide one traditional leader supported this by saying that;

Yes, many Maasai have already known the needs of school children, first of all, as a parent, you must donate food for your children while they are at school, even if you have ten children, you must donate one bag of maize, beans and give ten thousand

shillings for each child, so many parents in fact they already know (Traditional 8, Longido 20th July, 2022)

But again, there are some mixed feelings on the awareness of Maasai parents on the formal education as one traditional leader said that;

The Maasai have not yet understood the responsibility towards their children, they are still pushed to provide for their children's needs when they are at school, because if you know your responsibility to your child why do you wait until you are pushed to provide? Furthermore, he said that their response is still very low in education because they value livestock more than all things so education is nothing to them (Traditional Leader; 10, Longido, 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2022).

This argument finds support in the research of Ndibalema (2022), who highlights that some parent's exhibit limited involvement in their children's education due to a lack of recognition of the value of formal education. Additionally, Danovska (2018) adds that parents in pastoral communities, including the Maasai, often hold negative attitudes towards schooling and prioritize their traditional cultural values. Consequently, it implies that Maasai parents still have limited awareness regarding the significance of formal education for their children, particularly in terms of providing the necessary school resources. This lack of awareness is primarily influenced by factors such as illiteracy, cultural values, and the traditional economy prevalent among the Maasai community, particularly among the adult population.

The responses from these parents suggest that certain Maasai parents are conscious of the fact that education is a fundamental right for their children. As a result, they perceive it as their responsibility to provide teaching and learning resources, ensuring their children have access to quality education. Alongside material resources, some parents also recognize the importance of providing their children with a certain amount of money to meet immediate needs that may arise without having to rely on daily requests. One parent exemplified this understanding during the focused group discussion, stating:

I know the needs of the my son at school, he needs bath soap, lotion, school uniforms, a mattress and a small amount of money while he is at school, and all these things parents have to take care of their children not to miss when they go to school ( 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2022).

The response from this parent indicates that some Maasai parents are gradually becoming more self-aware of the significance of providing various resources to support their children's learning. These parents understand the importance of ensuring their children have access to stationery, school uniforms, and even pocket money to prevent them from missing school. This growing awareness regarding the needs of school children was further emphasized by another parent who stated:

Yes, I know the needs of the school child are pens, notebooks, school bills, spending money and other necessities; I try very hard so that my child does not

miss these needs so that he can find peace in studying and pursuing his studies well (13<sup>th</sup> April,2022).

These findings suggest that increased parental involvement in providing teaching and learning resources can have a significant positive impact on the quality of education, leading to improved performance by students in both internal and external examinations. This observation is consistent with the research conducted by Ngonge (2020), who noted that in regions such as Kilimanjaro and Kagera in Tanzania, where parental involvement is higher, student performance is also higher.

Maasai parents further recognized a positive shift in the awareness of school needs within their community. They acknowledged that, to some extent, there has been improvement compared to the past. This sentiment was exemplified by one parent during an interview, who expressed the following:

In the past when we went to school our parents were not fully aware of the needs of the school child but now, we know that there are school uniforms, books, pens, food, notebooks and so on and that is why we are now working hard to improve livestock to earn enough money to buy our children school requirements (13th April, 2022).

The responses from this parent demonstrate that the Maasai community is now becoming increasingly aware of the needs of students compared to the past. Parents are also recognizing their responsibility in providing these needs to their children. In the past, approximately thirty years ago, Maasai parents viewed the sale of livestock to support their children's education as a wastage of resources. However, there has been a noticeable shift in mindset, with a growing realization that investing in education and providing all the necessary school requirements is crucial for ensuring quality education.

This newfound awareness among parents regarding the needs of their school children is a positive step towards improving both access to and the quality of education. This viewpoint is supported by the research of Olemako (2005), who emphasizes that raising community awareness on the importance of education not only improves access but also increases the enrollment of children in schools.

As Mtey (2021), further argues that *pastoral communities' parents are aware of the global development trends such as globalization, the spread of new technologies and rapid urbanization, which have influenced their attitude toward formal education, such that they aspire to receive it in order to develop their capabilities to cope with these changes (Kratli and Dyer, 2009; Siele, et al, 2011). Kaunga (2008).* On the contrast, low awareness of the community on the importance of formal education negatively affects child's education (Andiema, 2021; Njoroge, 2013).

### **Provision of School Needs**

The second theme that emerged from the discussions was related to the methods employed by parents in providing teaching and learning resources for their children. Through the focal group discussions and interviews, it was revealed that parents, as well as traditional leaders, employ various approaches to ensure their children have access to the necessary resources for quality education. Parents mentioned their contributions in terms of both financial and material resources, aimed at supporting their children's educational endeavors in schools. One parent specifically highlighted their involvement by stating:

My own child is going to start standard one and I will buy the necessities like school uniforms, notebooks, and all the other necessities. We also contribute to the school if the teachers say they need support, we donate foods like maize, beans and so on. We parents listen to what the school leadership has to say about school contributions, but sometimes we ourselves see the needs of the children and as parents we sit in meetings to find what to do (12th April, 2022).

This argument is also supported by one traditional leader during interview guide said that; We give a lot of donations for the construction of schools and various donations when they are in need, for example here in our secondary school in Nanja they have a shortage of things like desks, beds, dormitories, classrooms we as parents call each other and give those donations all that is needed at that time (Traditional leader 2, Monduli 18th July, 2022).

Furthermore, another traditional added that;

In our ward of Esilalei, many parents are working hard to make contributions to the development of education for them, that is, they send their children to school for a fee ranging from one to two million shillings per year (Traditional leader 3, Monduli 18th July, 2022).

The responses from this parent and traditional leader indicate that Maasai parents are increasingly taking an active role in providing teaching and learning materials, as well as other necessary school requirements, in order to enhance the quality of education in primary and secondary schools. Parents are actively listening to the guidance of school management and collaborating closely with teachers and administrators to ensure the availability of essential resources. Furthermore, Maasai parents are organizing themselves and establishing regulations to mobilize contributions for school development. This was exemplified by one parent during the group discussion, who expressed the following sentiment:

In addition to the needs of our children, we know there are also developmental contributions including the construction of classrooms for our children. We contribute to the construction of classrooms, offices, toilets and teachers' houses and the public awareness is very great no one is forced (12th April, 2022).

Also, this is supported by another traditional leader said that;

I myself have sold cows in the process of building a school in Endepesi, I remember I have given two hundred and fifty thousand shillings and others have given more than five hundred thousand shillings as a contribution to the construction of that school (Traditional leader 4, Monduli, 18th July, 2022).

The responses indicate that Maasai parents are actively taking measures to ensure the creation of conducive school environments for their children's education. They are willing to participate in the construction of classrooms, toilets, and teachers' houses to facilitate a smooth teaching and learning process. Recognizing the significance of contributing to education provision, Maasai parents have established by-laws to enforce these contributions. In fact, those few parents who hesitate to contribute are held accountable, as expressed by one parent who stated, "We also contribute to the construction of school buildings, and everyone is expected to give. Otherwise, they are reported to the village office" (12th April, 2022).

Therefore, it is evident that Maasai parents are taking their responsibility seriously when it comes to providing teaching and learning resources for their children to obtain quality education.

#### **Readiness to use households' resources for children's education**

During the focus group discussions and interviews, it was evident that Maasai parents are increasingly recognizing the importance of education and are willing to allocate household resources towards meeting the educational needs of their children. As pastoralists, the Maasai demonstrated their readiness to sell their livestock in order to provide for their children's educational requirements. This commitment to education was exemplified by one parent who shared the following perspective:

I can sell more than ten goats a year to take care of my children and as they continue with their higher education, I can sell more than two cows because they have so many needs, because we Maasai have no bank to make more money than selling our cattle (14<sup>th</sup> April, 2022).

The above argument is also supported by traditional leader said;

I sell a lot of livestock in a year because I have children in primary school and others in secondary school, all of them need school expenses, for example, I can sell four cows and ten goats for my school children..., additionally said, many parents sell a lot of their livestock to buy their children's school need (Traditional leader 6, Longido 20th July, 2022).

Also, another tradition leader from Longido added that;

in fact The Maasai here sell a lot of livestock for the needs of their children, I have sold cows for my daughter to go to study, the fee was two million shillings per year, so for the average Maasai they sell up to one to two cows a year, in the case of goats and sheep, he can even sell ten to twenty per year, in fact they sell (Traditional 8, Longido, 20th July, 2022).



The responses from this parent and traditional leader highlight that livestock keeping is the primary economic activity within the Maasai communities of Monduli and Longido districts. As a result, parents rely on selling their cows, sheep, or goats to obtain the necessary funds to send their children to school and provide for their basic educational requirements. This shift in perspective indicates that Maasai parents now recognize the importance of investing in education, as they are willing to part with their most valuable assets (livestock) to ensure their children receive an education. Another parent further emphasized this notion of selling livestock to support their children's education by stating the following:

It is true that we sell a lot of livestock for the needs of our children because we will not be able to do anything more in the education of these children without using these cows and that is our only capital (13<sup>th</sup> April, 2022).

Additionally, another traditional leader said;

This generation of Korianga is actually the one who leads by sending their children to school; they sell a lot of their livestock to invest in education for their children. And I can sell up to ten cows per year for the needs of my children, it is really expensive. (Traditional leader 9, Longido, 20th July, 2022)

The responses from this parent and traditional leader reveal that while livestock holds significant importance for the survival and identity of Maasai communities, parents are recognizing the value of selling some of their animals to generate funds for their children's school expenses. This shift in perspective reflects the growing understanding among Maasai parents in Monduli and Longido districts of the importance of educating their children. Consequently, they are becoming actively involved in providing teaching and learning resources to ensure their children receive a quality education.

Education has become a top priority within the Maasai community, with parents recognizing the significance of selling their livestock to acquire the necessary school supplies for their children, instead of using the funds for other family-related expenses. This shift in mindset was exemplified by one parent during the focus group discussion, who expressed the following sentiment:

At the moment, the cattle we sell to our primary and secondary school children are more than the ones we use to take care of our families at home, with people not seeing the benefits of education at the moment but largely Maasai are working hard to sell their cattle and investing in education for their children ( 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2022).

This is also supported by one traditional leader who said;

Many parents of the Maasai community are really trying hard to provide for the needs of their children when they are in school, but when schools are about to open, many parents go to auctions to sell their livestock to buy school supplies, this is the time when the Maasai sell a lot of their livestock for their children, even those who are going in boarding school (Traditional 3, Monduli, 18th July, 2022)

The responses from this parent and traditional leader indicate that, despite the numerous needs within their families, educational needs for the children are being prioritized. A significant portion of the funds acquired from selling livestock is allocated towards the education of their children. However, it is important to acknowledge that not all parents have fully grasped the importance of sending their children to school and providing them with the necessary resources and facilities. Nevertheless, there is a positive shift in attitude compared to the past when these parents were themselves young boys and girls. This suggests that although not all parents have become aware of the significance of educating their children, there is an encouraging trend towards increased awareness and understanding.

In addition to selling livestock to meet their children's educational needs, Maasai parents have shown a strong determination to do whatever it takes to ensure their children have access to necessary resources and attend school regularly. This commitment was exemplified by one parent who mentioned selling farm produce as a means to generate money for her children's education. She expressed this dedication by stating:

I can use from four hundred thousand or six hundred thousand per year as part of my school children's spending or even more than four goats per year to cover their school needs, sometimes we sell farm produce to meet my children's school needs (12th April, 2022).

Despite livestock being the primary economic activity among Maasai parents, they are increasingly recognizing the importance of seeking alternative means to finance their children's education. This situation demonstrates that Maasai parents are becoming more aware of the significance of educating their children. They are no longer solely dependent on livestock as their sole source of income, but are also engaging in other activities such as farming. The farm produce serves as a source of food for the family, and a portion of it is sold to generate the necessary funds to cover school expenses for their children.

Maasai parents are displaying a willingness to sell their livestock not only to finance their children's education and purchase necessary school supplies but also to contribute to the construction of classrooms, teachers' houses, and dormitories. This was evident during a focus group discussion, where one parent participant expressed the following sentiment:

The school contributions are there and we are working hard to pay. We only sell cattle to contribute to the school, this is our primary school and we are the ones, who built it on our own efforts because of the importance of education for the lives of our children (13th April, 2022).

The responses from this parent indicate that parents within the Maasai communities in Monduli and Longido are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of education. They not only provide teaching and learning resources for their children but also utilize their family income and manpower to construct schools. By actively participating in building schools and ensuring the availability of educational resources for their children, the enrollment of children from

Maasai communities in schools is expected to increase, thereby enhancing the overall literacy level within these communities.

### **Gender Sensitivity on the Provision of Resources**

During the focus group discussion involving both male and female parents, as well as the interview guide with traditional leaders, it became evident that parents were attentive to the distinct needs of boys and girls when it came to education. Many parents acknowledged that girls had additional requirements compared to boys. For example, one parent exemplified this perspective by stating the following:

The needs of a girl and a boy are very different when it comes to going to school; girls have other needs ranging from towels that they have to change every month. But here in our area, most parents do not know that a girl has more needs than the male counterpart. Few parents who know this strive to buy their daughters things like female towels so that they do not get embarrassed when they are in the menstrual cycle (14<sup>th</sup> April, 2022).

The above argument is supported by traditional leader from Monduli said;

For the needs of the school, it is the female child who has more needs than the male child when they are in school, when the female child is in school, she needs a lot of things and has to be bought, not the same as a male child (Traditional leader 1, Monduli, 16th July, 2022), additionally another traditional leader emphasized that; girls have more needs than boys and I often try hard to provide for their needs so that they don't get stuck in their needs when they are at school (Traditional leader 3, Monduli, 18th July, 2022).

The response implies that the needs of girl children differ from those of boys. While some Maasai parents are aware of these distinct needs, there are still others who treat boys and girls similarly when it comes to providing them with the necessary resources for effective schooling. The few parents who recognize the specific needs of their daughters make an effort to provide them with the resources required, ensuring that their daughters receive a quality education without being hindered by biological factors. According to Maasai tradition, female children are perceived as less courageous compared to their male counterparts. As a result, girls may feel hesitant to ask for assistance from their peers when they lack necessary resources, unlike boys. Therefore, parents are making efforts to ensure that their daughters have everything they need for school. This sentiment was echoed by one parent during the focus group discussion, who expressed the following viewpoint:

For me, the demand for a girl is more than a boy, for example I have both girls and boys in secondary school, but I remember when my daughter started form one her needs were over seven hundred thousand Tanzania shillings but a boy is like only five hundred thousand, so it is completely different. It is true that I know that I have to add to a girl's needs because she is a coward even with her classmates but a boy

is not a coward he can even ask his classmates when he runs out of needs at school ( 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2022).

Again, this argument is supported by traditional leader said;

A female child is very expensive compared to a male child, for example, for me, most of my children that I gave birth to at the beginning are female and they are in school, in fact it is very expensive to care for, so I spent them more than male children, for example, you can have a child A male child spends 300,000 shillings for school expenses, but a female child spends more than 600,000 shillings. so it is very expensive, and many Maasai people here know that a female child needs more than a male child and in fact for those who send these children to school try hard to

The responses from this parent and traditional leader indicate that female children may lack the courage to ask for various items from their peers, necessitating parental provision of such needs. For example, it may be difficult for a female child to ask her classmates for menstrual pads due to feelings of shyness. If a student does not have access to these necessary supplies, it can create challenges in their schooling life for three to five days each month, potentially leading to truancy or even dropping out of school.

Maasai parents are increasingly recognizing the importance of educating their daughters, as they believe that educated daughters can provide valuable assistance to their parents. This shift in perception reflects a change from the past, when educating a girl child was considered a waste of resources. Presently, parents view their educated daughters as capable helpers, surpassing the contributions of their sons. This sentiment was emphasized by one parent during an interview, who expressed the following viewpoint:

I also know that a girl child has a lot of more needs than a boy, and often when I go to buy their needs, I add money for a girl child, a girl child is the one who benefits the most because she always remembers her parents and siblings than the boy child, the boy is somehow slow and does not love as a girl child so we are happy to even give the girl child her school needs so that she can study hard and succeed ( 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2022).

Additionally, one traditional leader said;

The Maasai people know that female children have more needs than their male children, so those who are knowledgeable are trying hard to help with that, I am the one who sends my three female children to secondary school, so I know that they have more important needs than boys and I am also trying very hard to be fulfilled so that they do not get stuck (Traditional leader 10, Longido, 20th July, 2022).

The implication of this argument is that a significant number of Maasai parents are well aware of the specific needs of their female children, particularly as they reach the age of attending secondary school. These parents are prepared to support their daughters in meeting these needs while they pursue their education. Historically, the Maasai society has been male-

dominated, with traditional elders and family leaders being exclusively men (Zakayo & Lekule, 2022). This has resulted in women and girls having limited agency and decision-making power, particularly regarding their well-being and education, due to gender preferences. However, there is a gradual shift in the mindset of Maasai parents, particularly those with less education, towards valuing formal education for their female children. The findings from the focus group discussions suggest that Maasai parents are actively supporting their daughters' education by providing necessary school supplies and demonstrating sensitivity to gender issues when enrolling them in secondary school. One parent further emphasized this shift in mindset by stating:

The needs of a girl and a boy are very different when it comes to going to school, girls have other needs ranging from underwear that they have to change every month, but here in our area, most parents do not know that a girl has more needs than their male counterpart. But there are a few who know and strive to buy their daughters things like female towels so that they do not get embarrassed when they are in the menstrual cycle (14<sup>th</sup> April, 2022).

The above argument is supported by one traditional leader who said:

I know very well that the needs of a female child are many, first of all there are other things that she cannot explain to you like her father, sometimes I give her more money so that she can buy her own needs especially when she is at school, when I give her the needs to go to school, to the female child I can give her about fifty thousand shillings and a son I give him like twenty thousand or even thirty thousand shillings less than one my daughter (Traditional leader 1, Monduli, 16th July, 2022).

The implication of this is that Maasai parents are gradually changing their attitudes towards formal education for their daughters, and some parents are willing to support their daughters by providing basic school necessities while they attend school. This shift in mindset is supported by a study conducted by Keiper and Rugira (2013), where young interviewees from academically successful pastoralist communities recognized that education served as a safety net, protecting them from the challenges of traditional lifestyles. These challenges included enduring long hours of herding, bravely facing and surviving natural elements and wild animals, as well as escaping female circumcision (Gimbo et al., 2015).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the study findings, it can be concluded that Maasai parents in Monduli and Longido districts are now aware of the educational needs of their children and consider it their responsibility to provide these resources. There has been a noticeable shift in their attitudes towards supporting their children's education compared to the past, when Maasai parents had limited awareness of these needs and provided minimal resources. Presently, they are even willing to utilize household resources such as livestock and farm produce to ensure that their

children receive a formal education. However, despite the contributions and active involvement of parents in providing teaching and learning resources, the schools in these areas still face disadvantages in terms of resource availability. This calls for additional efforts to meet the requirements and adequately support the schools in these communities.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the study's conclusion, it is recommended that the central government, local government, education stakeholders, and the general public continue to raise awareness among Maasai parents about the importance of their involvement in education, particularly in providing teaching and learning resources. This ongoing sensitization is crucial to ensure that students and schools have sufficient resources, thereby enhancing the quality of education offered in these schools.

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