

# The Girl Child in Tanzania

**TODAY'S GIRL TOMORROW'S WOMAN**

## A Research Report (1995)

compiled by Richard Mabala and S.R. Kamazima



United Nations Children's Fund  
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This report is the product of so many hands and voices that it is almost impossible to give due credit where credit is due. Firstly, without the critical realisation by UNICEF that the girl child had been marginalised and even forgotten in the development process, this research would never have taken place. However, such a policy of bringing the girl child back into the process depends on the foresight and commitment of those who have to implement the policy. In this, UNICEF, Tanzania are particularly fortunate in having a Representative, Dr Agnes Akosua Aidoo, who is strongly committed to the girl child and who has given every support and encouragement throughout the research process.

The process itself was initiated, nurtured, supported, developed and brought to fruition by the unique vision and commitment of Ms Asseny Muro, the gender specialist of UNICEF Tanzania. It was she who agreed that it was no good taking specific actions in support of the girl child without being very clear first of the current position of the girl child. She then conceptualised the research, identified the researchers and gave constant support throughout, both in terms of logistics and of advice, guidance and critical thinking. Without her, this report would never have been written. We only hope it is worthy of all the time and effort she gave to making it happen.

Our thanks must also go to the District and Regional authorities in the seven districts where this research was carried out (Hai in Kilimanjaro Region, Iringa Rural in Iringa, Kondoa in Dodoma, Mbeya Rural in Mbeya, Muleba in Kagera, Tarime in Mara and Tunduru in Ruvuma). As often happens in field research, the arrival of a team of researchers caused some problems for the local authorities, but they provided their full support, attended the preliminary and feedback workshops and ensured that all obstacles were removed. They also permitted the District researchers to join the team and benefit from the shared experience.

The same process was repeated at the level of Division and Ward which in many ways were even more involved as they communicated with the researchers on a day to day basis. Once again, their crucial support enabled the researchers to live and work happily within the communities.

Sadly, the overwhelming majority of those who deserve our total thanks are the ones who cannot read this report in its current form. Our hundreds of respondents, members of village governments and school committees, primary school teachers, parents, school children, young men and women in and out of school, traditional healers, birth attendants and initiation experts, hospital staff and village health workers, extension officers, elders and guardians of traditions, religious leaders and retired officers must have looked at us with some degree of suspicion when we first arrived but they gave themselves wholeheartedly to the research. They are the ones who gave this report whatever flavour and originality it has. Once again, we only hope that it has been able to express in some small measure the richness of the information and knowledge they imparted so freely.



Finally we have not thanked our fellow researchers at national, district and ward level because we regard them as integral members of our team. It has been a privilege to work with such a diverse, dispersed but totally committed team in the 21 villages where the research was carried out and we regard ourselves as merely the mouthpieces of what they have found out. We hope that this report will encourage people to go back to the district and village reports which convey in more detail and probably more vividness what we have tried to summarise here.

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## FOREWORD

This report is based on participatory research carried out in 21 villages in 7 districts of Mainland Tanzania. The innovative research process is described in full in Appendix One of the report. In brief, the seven districts were chosen to represent as wide a diversity of ethnic groups, religions and social and economic systems as possible. However, they are specific to the areas involved and, although the research shows wide areas of convergence, the distinctive characteristics of each village and district are also very important in understanding the issues.

Although it is the fashion to provide an executive summary for the busy reader, we would urge anyone interested in the subject to go through this report despite its length. It is the details, the individual testimonies and arguments and the discussions in families and communities that make sense of the bare bones of a summary and might well lead the reader to come up with better or more concrete recommendations than the ones made in the report. However, for the very busy reader who really has no time, the last chapter, Chapter 5 on Critical Issues and Recommendations, provides a summary of the main points in the report with some further evidence. The report also provides a matrix showing how the recommendations can be applied at household, community, district and national levels.

Since the aim is to develop this research report into a book on the girl child in Tanzania, we hope that the readers of this report will be active ones and will provide us with their ideas and comments as to how to improve it. One thing is already clear. The methodology of studying the issues affecting children through a life cycle approach has been an excellent one in ensuring that every aspect of the life of the girl child is covered. However, it has led inevitably to some repetitions as issues overlap from one age range to the next. It is thus suggested that when this is developed into a book, the life cycle approach should be retained, but within chapters on each specific issue such as Health, Socialisation, Education, etc. We welcome your comments.

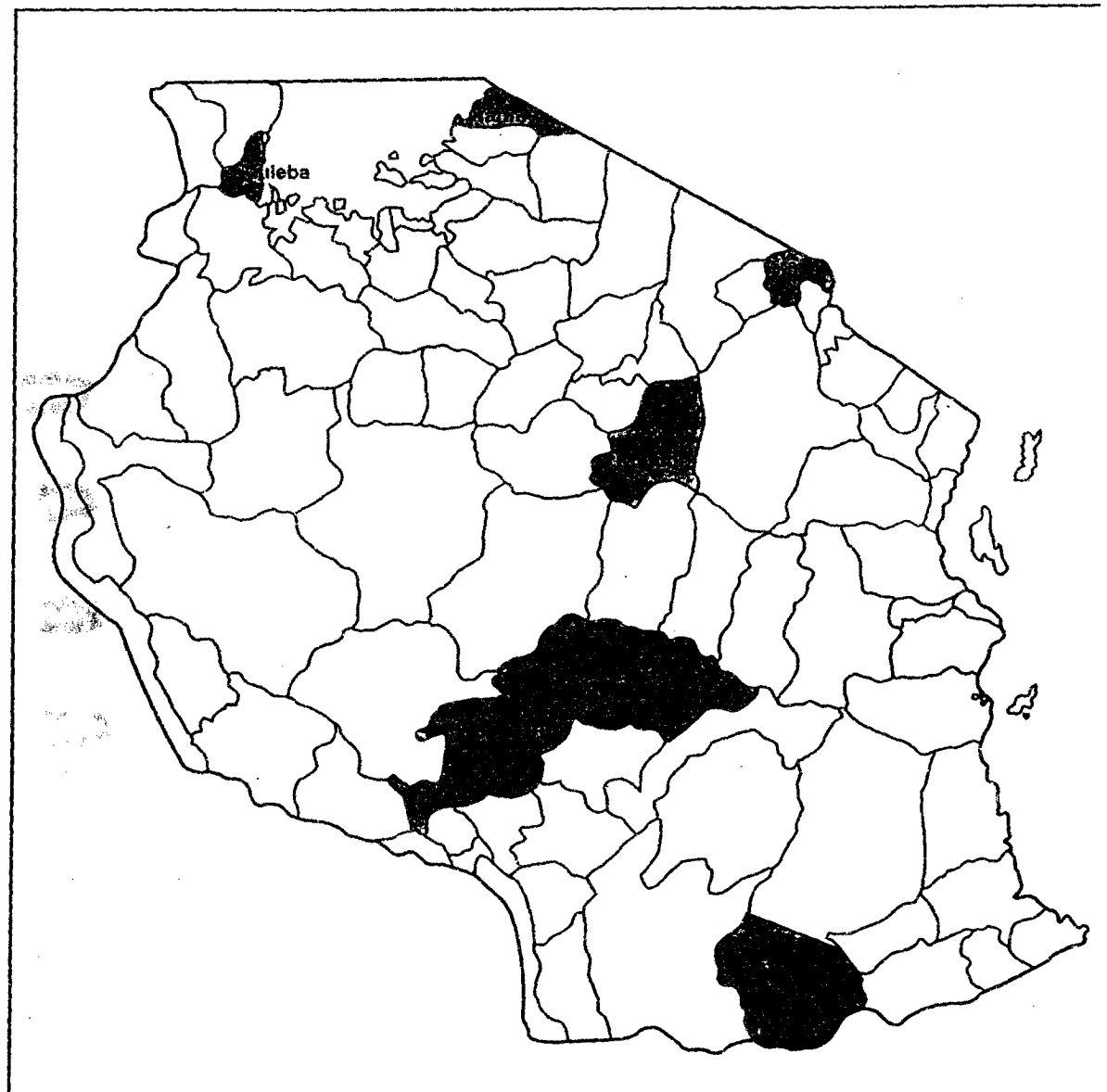
This report has brought home to us many important lessons. It re-affirmed that what we see of the adult woman of today is very much a product of the socialization process and lack of opportunities that faced her as a girl child since the day of her birth. The report describes some discriminatory practices against the girl child in education, nutrition, daily chores, in games and leisure and in traditions and cultural practices which, if left unattended, may slow the anticipated development and progress for the women and girls of Tanzania.

The girl child has to be taken as a development priority, safeguarding her basic human rights; ending discrimination against her; and investing in her development in all aspects, with particular focus on education. This report makes very sound and practical recommendations which provide an opportunity for actions starting at the household and continued, as appropriate, through to the national level. These actions need to be integrated in the overall national effort to advance women and girls. It bears repeating that today's girl is tomorrow's woman, a vital human resource! Let us invest in the girl children now for Tanzania's better future.



Dr. Agnes Akosua Aidoo  
UNICEF Representative  
Dar es Salaam, 25 April 1996

**MAP SHOWING RESEARCH AREAS  
IN TANZANIA**



## Villages and Ethnic Groups According to District

<b>District</b>	<b>Villages</b>	<b>Ethnic Groups</b>
<b>Hai</b>	Longoi Sanya Station Usari	Wachagga Wapare Maasai
<b>Iringa Rural</b>	Lumuli Msosa Ugwachanya	Wahehe Wabena Wakinga Wapangwa
<b>Kondoa</b>	Goima Mondo Mongoroma	Warangi Sandawe Waburunge Barbaig
<b>Mbeya Rural</b>	Igurusi Iwindi Nsongwi Mantanji	Wanyakyusa Wasafwa Wasangu
<b>Muleba</b>	Karambi Kimbugu Omurunazi	Wahaya
<b>Tarime</b>	Gwitiryo Kyariko Nyanduga	Wakurya Luo Wakine
<b>Tunduru</b>	Chilundundu Mindu Nampungu	Wamakua Wayao

*A girl is like a pumpkin that will grow up and bear its fruits in another field*  
(Kondoa proverb)

*Thank God I was not born a woman. I would not like to be one ... they have a lot of work to do ... they get married ... yet the community really controls their lives ... We men are lucky and free.*

(Standard Seven boy - Chilundundu, Tunduru<sup>1</sup>)

## INTRODUCTION

In this report we will talk of girls and boys and the relationship between them; we will talk of girls and boys and the relationship between them and their elders, and their teachers, and the society in which they live; we will talk of girls and boys from different backgrounds in different economic circumstances; and we will see that the majority of girls and boys of this country are suffering under fearsome handicaps; we will see that the potential of our youth is as yet unharnessed, untapped, even unrecognised so that they are left crying bitterly in the wilderness; and above all we will look for solutions that will allow our girls and boys to play a full role in the lives of their families, and communities and nation and thereby find fulfilment.

Above all we will talk of the girl child for she is the most handicapped. We will use the life cycle approach so that we can see her at every stage of her development. But here, in the introduction, we must ask ourselves several questions.

a) Where does one start in the life of a girl child when, for so many of them, the life cycle is in fact a vicious circle which started with their mothers and, unless serious steps are taken will be continued in their children. The girl child is born of a woman who, in many cases, was herself still a girl child<sup>2</sup>. In many cases, she, or her brother, already bear the marks of the problems faced by her mother. If her mother was still young, and in difficult circumstances, the baby girl was born with a low birth weight and may well be prone to disease, malnutrition and stunting which will affect her for the whole of her life. Her mother may still have great difficulties bringing her up because she too has not reached maturity.

Once she survives the immediate life threatening aspects of birth and early childhood, the girl child begins to face those handicaps which are peculiar to her as a girl. She is socialised from a very early age, starting with the name she is given and the first songs sung to her, through the treatment she receives and the training inculcated into her, she is socialised (above all by her mother who was socialised in the same manner) into a belief that she is somehow inferior,

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<sup>1</sup> In July/August 1994, a research was carried out in seven districts, Hai (Kilimanjaro), Iringa Rural, Kondoa (Dodoma), Mbeya Rural, Muleba (Kagera), Tarime (Mara) and Tunduru (Ruvuma). With one or two exceptions, therefore, all the examples given in the report will come from these seven districts.

<sup>2</sup> In this report, we use the United Nations definition of childhood as being from birth to eighteen years.

that her position, and her chances and opportunities in life, can never be the same as that of her brother. And the very nature of the work she has to do and the hours that it increasingly comes to consume, ensures that, even if she is not predisposed to accept a lesser position in society, she will find it very difficult to make the time and the space to keep up with her brother.

Thus, while, theoretically, we live in an open society where the sky is the limit, where hard work and talent can prevail through the opportunities that exist, the wings of the girl child are already clipped so that she can never soar towards the sky. Of course, the same is true also of many boy children whose wings are clipped by the economic position of their families, but for the girl child, except maybe for the very small minority who are waited upon by their less fortunate sisters, in whatever circumstances she is born into, the nature of the training given and the unequal division of labour will hold her back throughout her life.

b) How does a girl child come to fulfil her talents and aspirations in a society that does not accept her as an equal human being? There are many men who seriously claim that:

The source of the whole problem (what is seen as the breakdown of society) is the national Constitution because it states that women are equal (Middle aged man, Tarime)

As long as the girl child, despite the influences of schooling, her own observations of the world, the media, other role models etc., accepts her traditional role as wife and mother, building up the family into which she is never fully accepted, there is no problem. But once she moves outside that traditional role, once she has aspirations to serve herself, and her community and her nation in a different manner, in many cases she is regarded as a serious problem. As another man in Muleba stated, the Constitution and other national and international documents may state that all human beings are equal, but the implementation is very far away.

c) How does one talk of a girl child having independence of thought and action when, as is stated in the Muleba report, the girl child lives in a state of perpetual dependence throughout her life? When she is a girl, she is under the control of her father (and mother) until she gets married. When she is married, she is under the control of her husband. In Hai and Tarime it was seen that, in order to ensure that no independent existence is possible, she goes to her husband with nothing, no property of her own.

Then, if it happens that her marriage breaks up, she is still under the control of her husband until she, or her parents can refund the bride price. In Tarime, any children she might bear after leaving her husband still belong to her husband until the bride price is repaid. Even if it is refunded, unless she leaves that community altogether, she is then under the control of her brother (and the conditional acceptance of her sister in law). If she becomes a widow, especially in her old age, she is under the control of her sons, especially the son(s) who inherited the family property. Even in death, she has no choice of where she is buried. Her (ex) husband will still have the last word unless that bride price has been refunded.

This is the reality and it is one which men interviewed during the research did not see as a problem at all because it is part of the natural laws of existence.

d) How does one start to address the problems facing the girl child when any actions taken are regarded with deep (and often justified) suspicion. Everywhere where the research was carried out, many men and women, even young men and women see words such as development, change, education, civilisation, as very ambivalent terms. Theoretically, they accept them and they see some of the material benefits that they bring, but they see the effects of such things on the certainties of their past lives as nothing short of disastrous. Life has not changed (for the better); it has gone rotten. The very fabric of society as they see it is falling to pieces under the pressure of changes that they see as being destructive. And, for the majority of men, and some women, the most destructive changes of all are those which give women a higher status and independence in society. Thus, any further changes imposed from outside are likely to meet with fierce resistance from male dominated communities which are tired of such impositions.

e) Above all, where does a girl child belong? Where does she find her own identity when, wherever she is, she is not regarded as a full member? In the family into which she is born, she is regarded as a transient who does not deserve to be given equal opportunities because she has no place, eventually, lies with another family and clan to whom she will move in marriage. In Hai, if she dies while still living with her parents, she is buried to one side of the farm rather than in the farm. Even in death she is not accepted as a full member. As the Kondoa proverb quoted at the beginning says, a girl is like a pumpkin. She may grow in the field of the man who planted her but she will benefit someone else, not the planter.

At the same time, even in the family into which she is married, she is never regarded as fully belonging either, which is why she has little power to make decisions and no right to any property even after the death of her husband. Girls, and women, can rightly ask themselves, **where do I belong?** and they can answer themselves that **no home is their home**, or, in even stronger terms, they are **orphans for life**.

## CHAPTER ONE

### A CHILD IS BORN

#### 1.1 IN THE MOTHER'S WOMB

From the moment she is conceived, the life of the girl child to be (along with that of her brother) is already being moulded.

##### (a) The health of the mother affects the health of the baby to be born

The growing foetus (whether boy or girl) has to compete for what are often insufficient energy resources of the mother. In almost every area where the research was carried out, the mother, despite her pregnancy, was supposed to continue with a very heavy workload and was given no extra or special food.

This seems to have been particularly true in Hai District. One common saying was that **pregnancy is not a disease** and hence no special consideration needed to be taken. Thus the Chagga women of Narumu cultivated, cut and carried grass for the cattle, fed the animals, and cooked for and fed her family as usual. Her only slight chance of building up her energy reserves, as long as she had undergone genital mutilation, was that after marriage, she was kept in the house and looked after by her mother in law until she got pregnant.

The Pare women even increased their workload as, in addition to all their normal activities, they had to collect the firewood for use after giving birth.

In the case of the Maasai, the woman continued with her normal workload. However, when the pregnancy was six months old, she was deprived of foods with a lot of fat and made to vomit every morning with the aim of ensuring that the child to be born was not too big, thereby causing the death of either the mother or the child. A similar case could be found in Iringa where pregnant (and lactating) mothers were not allowed to eat eggs and chicken in the belief that she would be so fat that she would have problems in delivering. Here, we can see that the community is aware of potential problems of delivery although the solutions in fact might only contribute to the problems .

In Iringa also, it is believed that chicken will spoil the mother's milk. In addition, pregnant women were also forbidden some other foods, depending on the customs of her husband, such as liver, rats, and dead animals whose head had not been seen by the husband.

However, in Tarime, Iringa and Mbeya, it was claimed that women were relieved of some of their duties and in Tarime mothers were given some special attention and medicine to make the child in the womb healthy and strong.



Thus, we can see that dangers exist from the beginning which contribute to the child being still born or above all born with a low birth weight. They also contribute greatly to the possibility of the mother dying in child birth. Insufficient consideration for the mother places her and her child at risk.

**(b) Early motherhood**

Such risks are even more prevalent in the cases where girls become pregnant before reaching the age of 18. Both in and out of marriage, this was found to be a common occurrence with girls frequently becoming pregnant as early as 13 or 14. Thus they are neither physically nor mentally equipped to cope with the pregnancy, especially when, as is frequently the case, she becomes pregnant before getting married and receives no support from the father and is often mistreated by her own family who regard her as shaming them.

**(c) Attempts to predict the sex of the child and its consequences**

"Once I realise she is pregnant with a female child, I become angry and temporarily abandon her". (Man - Mbeya)

In Mbeya and Iringa, and maybe elsewhere, family members and relatives try to predict the sex of the child to be born. It is interesting to note that, even in the prediction, sexual stereotyping also comes into play. For example in Mbeya, if the pregnant mother becomes especially interested in household chores and happily goes to look for firewood, then the baby will be a girl, whereas if she shows great enthusiasm for digging and carrying heavy loads, then it will be a boy.

Then, as the quotation from the Mbeya father shows, discrimination starts from the time the baby is still in the womb. The purported girl child is already further handicapped.

Similarly, if a mother has already given birth to several girls in a row, she is in danger of mistreatment. A Tarime man whose wife had already given birth to three girls and no boy, totally neglected his wife and even when she was in hospital waiting to deliver, he did not visit her or take her food.<sup>3</sup>

**(d) Marriage before birth**

In several areas, the child to be born is already betrothed. Among the Maasai, a man will slip a ring on the pregnant mother, which means that if the child to be born is a girl, she will be his wife, and if the child is a boy, he will be his friend. The same custom prevails among the Barbaig. There is no ring but the prospective in laws will take care of the girl's needs until she reaches the age of puberty after which she is married. In Tunduru (and also Mtwara), they

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<sup>3</sup> Ironically, the baby turned out to be a boy, after which he lavished attention on the mother, but, in some sense it was too late. The point of the story is not the ironic twist at the end but the systematic disregard for the girl child to be born.

have the custom of **kutomela** (which means getting there first, or storing up for later). The child to be is booked for marriage, (or friendship if it happens to be a man) and it is the task of the husband to be to take care of his baby/child wife. The same custom can also apply to newly born baby girls and in Tunduru, the custom has largely changed to booking a primary school girl. However, the uncertainty that the girl will eventually abide by such an arrangement over which she was never consulted has led, at least in Tunduru, to a considerable decrease in the frequency of such bookings.

## **1.2 "ALL CHILDREN ARE EQUAL, BUT ..."**

In general, societies believe that the purpose of marriage is to have children and therefore all babies, boys and girls, are welcomed and their coming is celebrated. For the Barbaig in Kondoa and the Wakurya, Wakine and Luo in Tarime, all babies are a blessing, and in Kondoa, there are so many large families because of the belief that children are wealth. Therefore, the more children that are born, the greater the wealth and happiness.

At the same time, the safe birth of any child is welcomed with joy because, as was said in Tarime, people are celebrating the safe delivery of the mother as someone who has come back from the dead.

In Tarime, no effort was spared to increase the number of children

\* Apart from polygamy, which was common in every research area, the Luo (and neighbouring people who had been affected by their culture) took a very relaxed view on marital fidelity. The principal aim was to expand the clan, not to restrict it. Therefore a husband could know that his wife had another lover, but took no action as long as she remained respectful and hardworking. Similarly, any baby born was welcomed as a 'child of the bed' whatever its resemblance to another man.

The origin of this custom probably lay in situations where a mother failed to become pregnant even after several years of marriage. She was then encouraged to sleep with other brothers-in-law (sometimes selected by the husband and sometimes not) and the man who succeeded in making her pregnant was highly respected by the husband.

\*One of the main reasons for the inheritance of widows was the desire to increase the number of children. If a widow was still of childbearing age, she could continue to expand the clan.

\*Nyumba Mbhoke is a Kurya custom which was spread to the neighbouring ethnic groups. It will be explained in detail in the next box.

This view of children was most clearly expressed in Tarime where no effort was spared to increase the number of children. Apart from polygamy, which was common in every research area, the Luo (and neighbouring peoples who had been affected by their culture) took a very relaxed view on marital fidelity. Husbands knew their wives had lovers but took no action as long as she remained a hard working and respectful wife. It was explained that the aim was

to expand the clan, not restrict it, and any baby born, whatever its resemblance to another man, was welcomed as a 'child of the bed'. It was also explained that the origin of this custom probably lay in situations where the mother remained childless after several years of marriage. She was then encouraged to sleep with one of her brothers in law (sometimes selected by her husband and sometimes not) in order to get a child, especially a boy child, and the man who made her pregnant was greatly respected by the husband.

Again in Tarime, this was one of the main reasons for one of the men in the clan inheriting the widow of a man who died. If she was still of childbearing age, she could continue to expand the clan.

Finally, in Tarime, there is the Kurya custom, which has also spread to neighbouring ethnic groups, called Nyumba Mbhoke. More will be said of this in a later section as it is connected mainly with the search for boy children, but, briefly, a married woman with means but no (male) children is allowed to 'marry' a girl by paying dowry for her and then any children the girl may deliver 'belong' to the woman who married her.

However, even in Tarime, the view that children are necessarily wealth is being thrown into doubt by the behaviour of their children when they begin to grow up. Parents are increasingly uncertain whether their children will actually increase their material wealth or look after them in their old age. Is it possible that such uncertainties contribute to a declining birth rate as much as a rising standard of living? In the context of a changing society, children become a burden rather than a profit.

### 1.3 ".....SOME CHILDREN ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS!"

A woman is a woman. When they grow up and get married and move to their husband's house, who will recognise that you ever gave birth to children? (Old man - Tarime)

Almost everywhere in the research areas, boys were more valued. When some people in the feedback workshop in Kyariko, Tarime, tried to argue that girls were just as welcome, the same old man just laughed and commented:

"Even if your wife gives birth in the dark, you will go and feel the baby in order to know if it is a boy or a girl. If it is a boy, you are happier."

He was supported by a village leader who said that he had recently lost his wife in childbirth. The baby survived and when people came to express their commiserations with him, they all asked him if the child was a boy or a girl. When he said it was a boy, they sighed with relief and said that at least he had that consolation. When, however, for some reason, he fooled someone that it was a girl, the comment was:

"Ah, what a pity! If only she had left you a boy!"

Boys are more valued above all because they are the permanent members of the family. They do not move to another clan but are rather the 'unshakable pillar' (Tarime) around which the clan consolidates and perpetuates itself. Thus, the baby boy is valued as the heir (Tarime, Mbeya), the bearer of the clan name (Muleba, Mbeya, Tarime) and the defender of the clan (Tarime). He is the prospective head of the household (Muleba, Hai). In Hai, the Wapare ululate longer for the birth of the baby boy because the future head of a household has been born. Finally, the baby boy will, in future provide support to his ageing parents and to his other siblings (Mbeya). This will partly be achieved by marrying and therefore bringing into the house a woman who will look after his parents and other relatives (Tarime).

By contrast, the girl is a transient; she does not belong; she will move to another clan and bear them children and look after them in their old age. As was said in Iringa, girls are nothing special because they will eventually leave.

This explains why the girl is regarded as moveable property, an investment which should be used to the full before she moves on. In Hai, the Wachagga of Narumu ululate longer for the birth of a baby girl because, according to the focus group discussions, a girl is labour power while she remains with them, and a source of wealth through the bride price. In Mbeya also, a few women expressed that they would like a baby girl because she would relieve them of the household chores (although they still preferred to have a baby boy).

The idea of a woman as an investment was expressed most strongly in the Muleba report:



In the past, an uncle or an aunt, or any other member of the family who is entitled to a share of the bride price would welcome a newly born baby girl with the words 'nyegera malwa gange' which means 'welcome my calabash of local beer (which they would get from the bride price)'

The same idea that girls were a source of wealth was also expressed in Mbeya (by the few who expressed a preference for girls), Iringa and Tarime.

However, on this issue, there are signs of change, both positive and negative. On the negative side, in Muleba, some parents are not happy about a girl child because they are afraid she will

become a prostitute. Similarly, in Tarime, the value of a girl child has gone down because the bride price has gone down as a result of the harsh economic conditions in which they live. Even worse, from their point of view, so many girls get pregnant and/or elope with their lover that the certainty of making any profit at all has greatly decreased.

On a more positive note, there was a general feeling in many areas, that even if girls did move to another clan, they still remembered and helped their families, often even more than the boys. This was expressed most forcefully by an old man in Tarime:

"In the past, if you got a daughter, you cried because you knew that you had suffered a loss. People wanted boys because they were the builders but these days, a girl does more than a boy. If a boy marries, he thinks only of his wife. He doesn't provide any help at all."

At the same time, it was said that in Kondoa that while fathers preferred boys, mothers preferred girls, and that the high prevalence of large families was partly a result of a search for both boys and girls in one family.

However, the general feeling was still that a girl must be utilised to the full before she moves away. Thus, while in Muleba there were a large number of parents (50% in one village) who said that they preferred both boys and girls, and that a marriage with no boy children has no problems, the reality shows a big difference in attitudes. As 63% of the villagers of Kimbugu stated, a marriage with no boy children would face serious problems and even the possibility of a break up.

Thus one can argue that the parents expressed preference for both boys and girls in Karambi and Omurunazi is a sign of growing awareness on the issue of girl children, and maybe even a little guilt that they should still prefer boys, but the gut preference remains the same. Boy children are more valued, above all because they are seen to be the permanent family members. This is shown by the differences in attitude and tradition in relation to a woman who does not give birth to boy children by contrast with one who does not give birth to girl children.

Among the Wachagga in Hai, especially after the birth of the third girl (kekue) without a boy, the mother of the newly born child might not be given some of the presents due to her and the marriage can also either weaken or break up.

Similarly, in Muleba, the girl bearing mother is looked upon askance and they wonder if she is not on some clan termination assignment. They begin to wonder and fear who will inherit the father's property, regardless of whether he has property or not, or whether the property was actually acquired through the wife's efforts.

#### a) In search of a boy

In this situation, society members try to persuade the man to marry another wife, even if he is a Christian. It is interesting that this argument was expressed more forcefully by sisters and

mothers in law to the husband. The husband was often quite prepared to accept whatever children he had been given.

The reason for such vehemence of the female members of the family (what might be part of a *wifi* syndrome) is the socialisation process they too have been through from a very early age right into their own marriages. They themselves have had to validate their presence in their husbands' households by giving birth to boys and therefore demand the same from their sister in law, not realising that such harassment degrades them all and leads to marital problems.

Traditionally, the search for a boy was carried out through a system known as *ebibisi* whereby a man wanting a baby, particularly a baby boy, would struggle to ensure that he was the first to have sexual relations with a woman who has given birth (not his own wife). By being the first, he books the next baby for himself. Such sexual relations could also be symbolic, provided that the woman accepted that the 'booking' had taken place. This tradition is now dying out.

In Kondo, if a woman gives birth to three consecutive girls, she will in some cases breastfeed the third one for a shorter space of time so that she can resume the quest for a baby boy as soon as possible. The same can happen if her first born is a girl.

In Tarime, more drastic action could be taken. If a wife fails to produce children, especially girl children, then the brother in law, (or any other man) can be called in to try to make her pregnant. He is often (some claim usually) known to the husband and if he succeeds, he is highly respected by the husband who can even leave the way clear for his surrogate to sleep with his wife in his house.

The Warangi have a similar custom whereby the woman is advised to take a lover, while the man is advised to marry a second wife. Alternatively, after a woman has given birth to three successive baby girls, there is a ritual whereby the placenta is placed under a particular tree. If it is found missing the following day, it is believed that the next child will be a boy. There is no evidence of the efficacy of such a ritual which seems to be more a form of wish fulfilment and anxiety reduction until the next child is born.

In Tarime, women in such a situation are given certain herbs and charms. These are still popular today, despite concerted Christian campaigns against them. Members of the village government in Kyariko claimed that they are very effective.

Finally, in Tarime, there is the unique tradition of *nyumba mbhoke* which is mainly found among the Wakurya and other Bantu groups of Tarime but has now been adopted even by some of the Luo. (see box) The original purpose was to increase the number of boy children in the family and, for the wife who had not given birth to any boy children, to validate her place in the household although it was still regarded as an inferior form of union.

These days, it is still common and some girls claimed that they prefer such an arrangement because the older women-husbands will not be as harsh as a man husband and any man they choose to have a relationship with will not be able to dominate or mistreat them.

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## **Nyumba Ntobhu**

The different names given show the attitudes of the society concerned to both this kind of marriage and to children and women in general in society.

- i) **Nyumba Ntobhu** which means 'a poor house with no means at all (because there are no children, above all no male children).
- ii) **Nyumba Nsino** which means 'a house with no male children.
- iii) **Nyumba Mbhoke** which means 'to raise up something which was going to sink completely'

All these names suggest that such a marriage is regarded as inferior and in fact in the past it was carried out in secret to the extent that a young girl 'married' in this way might not even know until her children are circumcised at the age of puberty because they would not be allowed to return to the house through main gate of the compound.

There are several kinds of **Nyumba Mbhoke**.

- i) If a wife gives birth only to girls, the bride price from her daughters is used by one of the sons of another wife to get married. His wife is known as the **mkamwana** of the first wife of his father and children of that marriage belong to her.
- ii) If a wife has no children but has property, she can decide to use that property to choose a wife for any young man of her choice. That wife lives with her as her **mkamwana** and any children she has by that man belong to her.
- iii) The childless woman takes a girl to live with. The girl is free to have a relationship with any man she wants and the children belong to the older woman.

These days it is no secret any more. The chairperson of Gwitiryo was unable to attend the feedback workshop in the village because on that day, his wife was receiving her **mkamwana**. Also these days, the predominant type is that in which the younger woman is free to choose her own lover(s), or if she quarrels with her original husband, she runs to the older woman, after which she is free to have any lovers she likes.

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Other women who are likely to enter such a relationship are those who failed to get married, those who already have had children and the disabled.

Since the most common form of **Nyumba Mbhoke** today is that in which the girl is free to choose any and as many lovers as she wishes, there is a lot of concern being expressed about it in the current situation. The Doctor in Charge of Shirati Hospital calls the custom:

" Culturally accepted prostitution"

It is of particular concern to him, and society, because of the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases and the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS in the area.

## **b) Announcement of the newly born child**

Each ethnic group has its own way of announcing the birth of a child to the community. In

some cases there is no significant distinction for boys and girls. Thus the Wachagga of Longoi or Sanya Station give the same ululation for every child. In Tunduru, they announce the boy with the cry of 'Mmmmh' and the girl by ululation. Sometimes, however, ululation also expresses difference. The Wachagga of Narumu ululate four times for a girl and three times for a boy, thereby expressing their greater happiness at the birth of a girl who will be a labourer and source of wealth. By contrast the Wapare ululate four times for a boy and three times for a girl because the head of the household has been born.

Attitudes to boy and girl children are also shown in the words used in announcing the birth. Among the Warangi in Kondoa, if it is a girl, they say a porter has been born, and if it is a boy, a carpenter. Among the Barbaig, if it is a girl, a housemate has been born and if it is a boy, the mother parades with a bow. In Mbeya, a boy is announced as a taxpayer (from the colonial poll tax) and a girl as a flour miller. Similarly in Iwindi a bowl is thrown into the house of the in laws to signify a girl (meaning food preparation and maybe also an expression of a woman's sexual nature as recipient) and an arrow to signify a boy (meaning defence of the society and maybe also a phallic symbol for the man's sexual nature). The stereotyping inherent in all these announcements is obvious and express the expectations of society concerning their boy and girl children.

#### **c) Gifts to the mother and child**

The same is true of the gifts given to the mother and child. In Kondoa, while the mother is given khangas and money after her 40 day confinement, baby girls are given chickens (because it is commonly accepted that chickens belong to women) while a boy child is given goats and cattle. Among the Barbaig, a boy child has to be given cattle when he begins to teeth, even if his father has no cattle.

In Mbeya, the presents brought by the in laws clearly represent the roles expected of the children later in life. For the girl, they bring a hen, together with a wooden spoon, a bowl, a kata (calabash) and firewood, thereby showing her domestic nature. For the boy, they bring a cock, together with a spear, an arrow, a stick for the protector of society, as well as musical instruments.

However, in Nsongwi Mantanji in Mbeya, they have a unique custom whereby the girl child is also given a piece of land, which belongs to her whatever happens. No one could explain the origin of this custom.

#### **d) Names**

Names are another way of expressing expectations for and the identity of the new born child. In some cases there is no gender distinction such as in Tunduru and among the Barbaig where the children are named after events or in Iringa the prefixes **mwa-** for a boy and **se-** for a girl express difference and no more. However, in Muleba, the names given to boys depict bravery, strength, wisdom and success. Some also express rescue, particularly if the family has had to wait a long time for a boy child. By contrast, girls' names express softness and dependence. In Tarime, boy children are given the names of ancestors who were famous for



their bravery, or hunting prowess etc so that as they grow up they are told stories of that ancestor in the expectation that they will emulate the man after whom they have been named.

Among the Sandawe, children are given the name of the tree under which their umbilical cord has been buried. The cords of boys are buried under very big or hardwood trees thus their names express toughness and virility whereas the cords of girls are buried under rainmaking or fruit trees which means that their names imply tenderness and productivity.

#### e) Celebrations

It seems that the most important determinant everywhere of the nature of the celebration for the birth of a child is the economic standing of the family. Among the Barbaig of Kondoa, and also in Tarime animals are slaughtered to compensate the mother for loss of blood during delivery. If the family has the means, a gender difference is seen in that a cow is slaughtered for the boy and a goat for the girl, but if the family has little or no means, the mother will be lucky to get any meat at all.

### 1.4 RITUALS

The celebrations are often connected with rituals. Thus there is *inkondeki* among the Wamaasai whereby blood is taken from a bull for a baby boy and from a cow for a baby girl. In Tarime, the celebration is connected with the naming ceremony where a baby girl is brought out of the house on the fourth day and a baby boy on the fifth day and shown to the sun, and the baby is named.

Other rituals concern protection of the new born baby, of either sex. In Mbeya, *mbondyana* is placed underneath where the baby is laid to protect it from the evil eye. In Tunduru, there is *ngupu* to protect the baby from being harmed by any visitor who carries it. In Hai, the umbilical cord is buried because it is seen as a dangerous poison.

Some of these protective rituals also have a gender significance. For example, in Narumu, Hai, all baby children wear goatskin on their fingers as a way of sanctioning the child before the spirits, in case the child was actually conceived of a man who was not the husband of the woman. By contrast, in Tunduru, there is *Likambuku* to protect the baby from harm in case the husband commits adultery in the first forty days after the baby is born.

It would seem that, from their point of view, such protection is very necessary as there is another ritual known as *Litiwo* among the Wayao or *Ntara* among the Wamakua whereby the mother or *mwali ndembo*, either during her first pregnancy or immediately after delivery is placed at a crossroads and surrounded by women who sing and dance all night. She is given many gifts, especially *khangas* (which is regarded as the main motivation for any girl to undergo this ritual). Above all, as in *unyago*, she is taught through words and songs on issues such as personal cleanliness and that of the baby; general good manners as a wife and mother; and not to be jealous of her husband as she can never satisfy him sexually. Therefore the husband will naturally go to other women. At the same time she is not supposed to have sexual desire for any other man.

The third aspect of ritual concerns the return of the woman to her normal life after the trials and celebrations of delivery. Thus, in Mbeya, the hair of the mother and the new born baby, together with the umbilical cord are all buried together, after which the mother is expected to resume work again. In Tunduru, after forty days there is the ritual of **kumkalisha mtoto** (sitting up the baby) after which the mother is allowed to have sexual relations with her husband again. In Muslim communities also, there is **maulid** after 40 days which is a celebration.

The final ritual is that of female genital mutilation which among the Wapare and a few Wachagga in Longoi is carried out at birth for fear that the baby will get **lawalawa**. The issue of female genital mutilation will be dealt with later on in this report.

## **1.5 HEALTH OF THE MOTHER**

It would seem that the large majority of mothers give birth with the assistance of traditional birth attendants (TBAs), rather than at a health centre. 90% of Maasai mothers are assisted by TBAs and in Chilundundu, Tunduru, where there is a dispensary, the figure is more than 60%. Thus the training of TBAs is a highly significant issue.

Wherever the mother delivers, the Maternal Mortality Rate is a serious issue. In Tarime it is and observations by the researchers showed that many children had no mother. One man had lost four wives. In Tunduru, the MMR for 1994 stands at 252/100,000, largely as a result of early pregnancies, stunting of the mother as a result of malnutrition when they were children and poor health facilities.

The recuperation period allowed mothers depends on the area. As seen above, Mbeya women were given one week, in which time the husband was not allowed to see his wife because she was considered to be unclean. This may have deterred any sexual advances by the husband but it also deprived the mother of psychological support. In Tunduru, the woman was given 40 days.

### **a) Family planning**

Every community and ethnic group had its own methods of family planning and child spacing, which had largely been eroded by changes in society and the advent of 'modern' (and often less acceptable) methods.

The major method was the prohibition on sexual relations while the mother was still breastfeeding. In Kondoa, the mother was expected to breastfeed for 2 years and was laughed at and scorned if she didn't (although if the first born was a girl, she might wean the child earlier). In Tarime, the mother was expected to breastfeed for about a year, or until the child could walk out of the house.

Also in Tarime, if the mother gave birth to a stillborn child, or if she had problems in delivering or if she got pregnant very quickly after giving birth, several methods were used:

- i) She was sent to stay with her relatives until the previous child could walk out of the house.
- ii) The husband was told by the old women of the community to build his own house so that the mother could stay on her own until the child could walk
- iii) If the husband was unable to control himself, the mother was given some medicine to prevent her getting pregnant temporarily until the child could walk. This medicine is also still widely used.

Apart from the fact that these customs show how traditionally communities were concerned with child spacing and the health of the mother, some of these customs, together with those of Mbeya and Tunduru show a very strong awareness and acceptance of the sexual weakness of men. They are probably quite incapable of controlling themselves.

Modern methods of contraception are regarded with widespread suspicion, especially by the men. In Tarime, it is believed that 'modern medicine' causes sickness. In Longoi, Hai, there is a belief that if a woman is left with mbegu za uzazi, she will be very ill and in Tunduru the men claim that contraception is against both the Koran and tradition. One man in Tunduru said:

If I discover my wife is using contraceptives, I will beat her and return her to her father.

Although some men cited health complications as the reason for their opposition, it seems that the real reason is a deep rooted fear that contraception will allow the woman to be as free with sex as the man feels he has the right to be. They frequently complain, without any evidence, that the women will become 'prostitutes'.

The arguments of both tradition and religion do not seem to hold water either since traditionally, both customs and medicines were used to encourage child spacing and according to many sheikhs, the Koran actually discourages or prohibits having too many children which means that they cannot be given the love and care they require as creations of God.

Women are much more in favour of modern methods of family planning, because they are aware of the consequences to their health of their husbands continually demanding their 'rights'. Thus, despite male opposition in Tunduru, 66 women in Mindu, 37 in Chilundundu and 40 in Nampungu are using family planning services. The most popular method is that of injection because it is not easy to detect and has less side effects. In many cases, the husband is aware that his wife is using contraceptives but sometimes the wife comes to the clinic in secret.

## CHAPTER TWO

### INFANCY (0-5 YEARS)

#### 2.1 NUTRITION

##### a) Breastfeeding

In all the research areas, breastfeeding is universal, although exclusive breastfeeding for the first few months is not. For example in Mbeya, children are given porridge immediately after the umbilical cord has been detached. In Iringa the colostrum (**lidifu**) is poured away because it is seen to be dirty. In Kondoa, the child is breastfed for two years and in Tarime, one year. However, if despite all the precautions, the woman does get pregnant before that time, in Tarime and Iringa, the baby is weaned.

In general, there is no discrimination between boys and girls in breastfeeding. However, among the Wapare, the mother of a baby boy is fed more, thereby increasing the milk she produces and in Kondoa, girls are in danger of being breastfed for a shorter period of time because the quest for a boy must be resumed as soon as possible.

##### b) Weaning

In Iringa, babies are given porridge as early as 2 weeks (without sugar or salt). It is believed that sugar will cause **degedege**. Otherwise children generally begin to be weaned around three to four months. In Hai it was noted that boys are weaned earlier and fed more frequently in some places. According to the mothers, this is because boys cry for more food earlier and more often than girls. As one mother at the clinic in Usari said:



"These boys really eat. They even suck your milk until you feel dizzy."

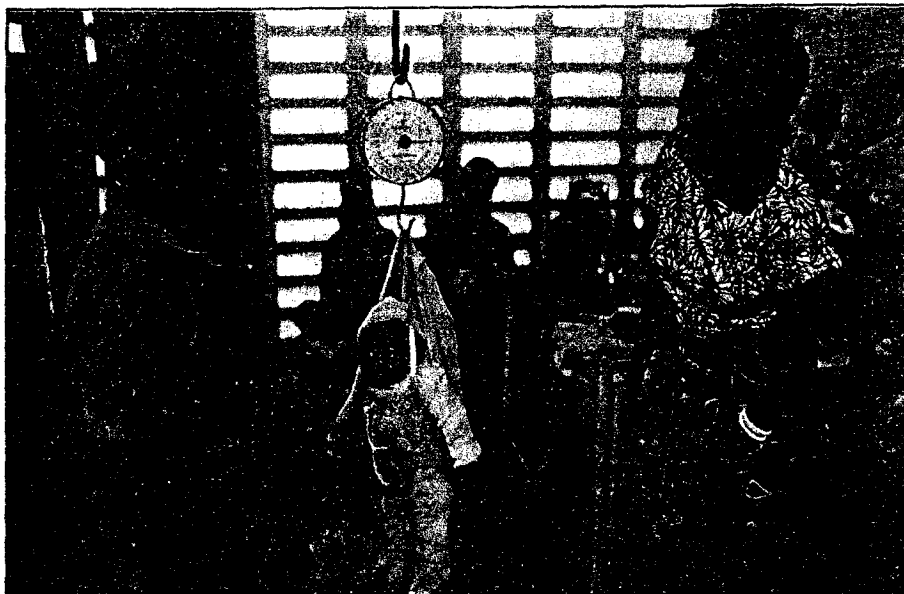
Some of the nutrition statistics tend to show that baby boys are, on average, heavier than baby girls. However, this issue needs more research as the sample was very small and other variables were not controlled. It could also be that mothers, consciously or unconsciously, pamper their baby boys more than their baby girls from the outset.

### c) Feeding habits

In general, it seems that there is no intentional discrimination in the way boys and girls are fed (Iringa, Hai, Tunduru, Tarime). In Muleba, in fact, all children eat from the same plate in order to prepare them for life outside the home and particularly at school. The major difference in feeding habits is a product of differences in economic status. Both the weaning foods used (Tunduru) and the feeding frequency for children is determined by the ability of the family to provide food. Thus in many families in Iringa, children were fed only once or twice a day, in Tunduru twice a day, in Tarime, especially towards Lake Victoria where there is a semi permanent drought, twice a day etc.

This has led to serious problems of malnutrition which not only cause many children to die but can have serious effects on the children who survive for the rest of their lives. In Tarime in June, 1994, of the 82.6% of children who attended the Village Health Days to be weighed, 26.6% (more than one quarter) were suffering from moderate malnutrition and 1.6% from severe malnutrition. In Tunduru, the situation was even worse. Although, in Chilundundu severe malnutrition had been brought down from 10% in 1990 to 3% in 1994, the district figures for this year show that 40% have moderate and 3% severe malnutrition. In Kondo, it was estimated that around 75% of the children under 5 are not properly fed.

The situation is better in Hai where severe malnutrition is below 1% but still in Usari, in 1992, roughly one third of the children had moderate malnutrition. However, even these statistics have problems. Taking Tarime District as an example, 82.6% of the children attended. That means 17.4% did



not attend, and it is not unreasonable to assume that those who did not attend had a more than average likelihood of being malnourished. In Kyariko, where the research was carried out,

in the last weighing only 59% of the children were weighed, and this is an area of semi permanent drought. In the nearby village of Raranya, where there had been a large number of child deaths, many district officers had descended on the village in order to see what the problem was. As a result at the next weighing, they declared that 98% of all the children were not suffering from malnutrition at all, a highly unlikely figure. In other places where the research was carried out, such as Nyanduga, the figures were not clear. Finally, the non-payment of Village Health Workers by their communities might well encourage them to fudge the statistics.

The reason for questioning these statistics is that many more girl and boy children may be in danger than we think from the official statistics.

Another problem connected with malnutrition but which does not necessarily show up in the statistics is that of stunting. In Tunduru, it was observed that girls and young women were actually shorter than the older women. In Tarime also, observation of the primary school children showed widespread stunting. This has particularly serious implications for girl children when they reach the age of giving birth themselves.

Finally, despite progress that has been made, there are still an inordinate number of deaths. In Tunduru, the IMR stands at 131/1000 and the U5MR at 222/1000. In Kyariko, Tarime, 25 children died of high fever alone between 1991 and 1993. In the Highlands, 21 children died in just one village near Gwitiryo of an epidemic of high fever which was later diagnosed as malaria. In Tarime District as a whole, there were 519 deaths of children in 3 months.

#### **d) The role of the father**

However, while insufficient means was the overriding factor in malnutrition of all children, it is not the only one. In Kondoa it was noted that large families, particularly in polygamous households also contributed to malnutrition and stunting as well as the fact that fathers controlled the use and sale of resources and produce in the household; in Iringa polygamy and paternal irresponsibility (expressed in drunkenness) also contributed; in Tarime, similar paternal irresponsibility was noted.

In Muleba, women are not allowed to cut down bananas for cooking without the prior consent of their husbands. Even if the husband was not around, and the children were hungry, they were fed on potatoes and cassava etc to quell their hunger while they waited for the bananas which were the 'real food'. In addition, women cannot serve food from the same pot that contains the husband's share if the husband is not there or has not given prior consent. Therefore, even if the food is ready, the family have to wait. Some men would never allow their families to call them but if a husband had had the goodness to let them know where he could be called, a small child was sent to call him. Even then, while he might sympathise with his children, he has to maintain his status as a wielder of unquestionable power and authority. Rushing home for a meal would be a sign of weakness and other men might laugh at him for being afraid of his wife. Therefore, he may well decide to stay for some time even after being called.

**e) Division of eating**

While there may not be so much intentional discrimination against girl children with regard to food, they still suffer from household division of eating, whereby girls eat with their mothers and boys with their fathers. Since most traditions tend to favour the fathers in terms of food, it stands to reason that the boys are also better fed. This is especially true in Kondoa where women are only allowed to eat after the men have had their fill but the same is true in Iringa where the men (and therefore the boys) are given more and better food, and in Tarime, especially in times of famine when the mother tends to choose the best food for her husband. However in Tarime, and maybe elsewhere, this division of eating depends on the father actually being present which, in many households, is a rare occurrence nowadays. If he is not there, then the boys also eat with their mother.

**f) Gender differences in food**

These were observed in two places. In Iringa, only the men and boys eat beef and goat meat. The husband often actually counts the number of pieces of meat before they are cooked. No reason was given for this by the villagers except the selfishness of the husband. This tradition is also diminishing because of health education at school.

In Tarime, the following divisions were observed:

<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
brisket	kidney
tongue	tripe
head of the fish	tail of the fish

**g) Orphans and children of stepmothers**

These children, both boys and girls, tend to be particularly disadvantaged. In Mbeya, teenage mothers leave their small babies with their mothers and elope to town, regardless of whether their mothers have the means and the energy to look after them. In Muleba, where this has become a very serious issue because of HIV/AIDS, orphans often get a very raw deal. They are fed less, less well looked after and made to do all or most of the household work. This needs to be addressed by those agencies which are working for the welfare of the orphans or providing food to the families which are looking after them.

## **2.2 HEALTH**

Health facilities are a problem in many areas. In Iringa, the people of Lumuli have to walk 9 miles to the nearest health facility and in Ugwachanya 15 miles. In Kondoa, the villagers have to go 25 miles to the nearest health facility. In Muleba, Karambi is 7 kilometres from a health centre, Omurunazi has a small and ill equipped dispensary and when necessary they have to face a 6-8 hour walk to Rubya Hospital in one direction or 45 kilometres to Ndolaga in the other.

Quite apart from the distance, the cost is also prohibitive. In Kimbugu, the bus fare to Ndolaga hospital is 700/-. Kyariko village is close to Shirati Hospital which is very well equipped. The clinic is also free but still the people are afraid to go because they cannot afford costs for any other problems that might arise or be identified. The number of people attending Shirati Hospital has dropped drastically in the last few years as a result of rising costs. It has reached the point where the hospital used to confiscate the bicycles of those who brought sick people who had to be admitted unless they paid the deposit but the people soon got wise to this and transported their sick people on the bicycle to within a few hundred metres of the hospital before leaving the bicycle with a friend or outside a shop and carrying the sick person on their backs for the rest of the way.

In such a situation, the treatment of diseases can be haphazard, a fact which is compounded by traditional beliefs. In Tunduru, they explained that there are three kinds of diseases, all of which have different treatments.

- i) Those that were brought by evil spirits or devils, for example convulsions in small children and cerebral malaria in adults. These have to be treated by traditional healers.
- ii) Those that came from God, such as fevers, headaches etc. These could be treated in dispensaries.
- iii) Those that were caused by a person's behaviour. For example adultery of either the father or the mother leads to ill health of the child.

Therefore the treatment was determined by the perceived cause which has led to the loss of many lives because children were not taken to hospital in time. Similarly in Iringa, because of similar beliefs and the distance from health facilities, most people went to traditional healers and four deaths occurred in the hands of the traditional healers within the 14 days of the field research.

In Tarime, the cost of health services has led to many mothers treating the children at home. For example, if their child has a fever, they buy it aspirin. The fever will abate but the malaria will continue as a result of which there is what might be called an epidemic of anaemia among children in Tarime and many deaths have occurred.

Similarly in Kondoa, poor family and personal hygiene has led to eye and skin diseases including what they call 'lawalawa' which ends in female genital mutilation

In Iringa, an interesting form of gender typing in disease was noted. If a child had convulsions, medicine was mixed with the pubic hair of the parents, the father's for a boy child and the mother's for a girl child.

All the above examples show the importance of continuing contact between medical personnel and the community in order that proper assessment and analysis can be made leading to the appropriate action. Such contact is increasingly threatened by current policies. Maybe because children die in silence in remote areas, it rarely becomes an issue.



The final health problem noted as a result of changing policies is the question of immunisation. In many places children are immunised at government health facilities. However, if the government facility has no medicine or equipment, parents are forced to go to private clinics which feel they are under no compulsion to ensure that the children have been immunised.

## **2.3   SOCIALISATION**

It is extremely difficult to assess the effects of socialisation or whether any changes that might be taking place in the socialisation of girl and boy children because the problem is that the person who socialises has herself been socialised in a similar manner when she was young. As stated in the Muleba report:

Not all parents discriminate against their girls consciously. They just drift into the system into which they were born and brought up

This is particularly significant in that the mother is the prime socialiser of her children and she is the one who maintains the same gender biases which have consigned her to an unequal place in society. The attitudes which have been enshrined in the teachings and oral traditions of the people are very deep rooted.

Some aspects of socialisation are not gender specific such as greetings, respect for elders, receiving with both hands, saying thank you etc. In Muleba also, all children are taught not to accept food from outside the family.

However, much of the socialisation emphasises not only gender difference but also superiority of the boy and inferiority of the girl. This leads to the boy internalising his superiority and the girl internalising her inferiority. In Tunduru, mothers sang songs to their children which reflected man as superior. Similarly in Kondoa, boys were soothed with songs portraying fame, courage and virility. For example the Barbaig sang thus to their boys:

I wish you the best of luck  
good health and courage,  
so that when you are grown up  
you will herd our cattle  
and besides  
you will recover our stolen cattle from Manyoni  
Or once you grow up  
you will kill a lion  
and be honoured with lots of cattle as gifts  
in order to replace those stolen

By contrast, they sang to the girls:

Once grown up  
Avoid being lazy

lest you be like the daughter of so and so  
who was not allowed to join the ngoma  
because of her laziness.

Not a very soothing lullaby.

In Tarime, the lullabies also showed the different roles of boys and girls:

Boys

Keep quiet my child  
You will build for me  
You will protect me

Girls

Keep quiet my child  
You will grind for me  
You will bring me water and firewood  
You will cook for me.

However, not all lullabies were gender specific in this way. Many also expressed the mother's frustrations such as in Hai where the mother expressed the fact that excessive work meant that she has no time to look after her children

Child go to sleep  
So that mother can do her work

Or in Mbeya:

Stop crying Ulingula  
I was to go to collect firewood in the bush  
It is me your grandmother  
Stop crying Ulingula

Another song in Mbeya protests about the behaviour of men:

Stop crying baby stop crying  
Your father does not take care of me  
He is loitering about  
My baby if I was a loose woman  
I would go elsewhere so that we get food

Others showed more of a class awareness as in Tunduru

Don't cry baby  
This country doesn't belong to you  
It belongs to Chief Mtalika

Or

A white man's baby does not cry  
Once it cries  
The mother will quickly give help

Stories were another part of socialisation, although in some places such as Kondoa, it was noted that this tradition is dying out. However, in Tarime, boys were given tales of male courage, although it was interesting that in Kyariko the researcher was also given tales of women saving their communities by their bravery. However, in both cases the girl had to take on the characteristics, and even the disguise of a man in order to succeed. Such stories however need to be encouraged.

Proverbs are another form of socialisation. For example in Kondoa, attitudes to women and their lack of a permanent place in society were expressed by the proverb:

*A woman is like a walking stick which is always replaceable*

or boys who had a habit of accusing their brothers on insignificant matters was told:

*Stop lying like a lactating mother.*

All these verbal forms of communication were meant to teach a woman her place, and they were backed up by specific actions. In Muleba, girls who try to emulate boys are regarded as unnatural and boys who act girlish are a positive disgrace. Girls are not allowed to whistle, climb trees, listen to man's talk. They are also not allowed to talk loudly in front of men, a point noted also in Mbeya and Kondoa. By contrast boys are not allowed in the kitchen.

Boys were trained to be tough from an early age whereas girls were allowed or even encouraged to be softer and more dependent. Boys in Kondoa are beaten a lot while girls are not. In Muleba, boys are discouraged from sitting in people's laps. They are told that they are big boys now while the girls are encouraged and petted when they sit in the lap. Girls are taught to sit 'properly' while boys can sit as they like. When receiving something, girls must kneel but boys continue to stand. In Tunduru girls are encouraged to plait their hair, wear nail polish and earrings from a very early age thereby encouraging them to perceive themselves and their role as that of beautiful objects.

Even in their toys, the differences are encouraged from the start. In Tunduru, mothers give dolls to their daughters as well as coconut shells (for cooking pots) while the boys are given bows and arrows.



As they grow up, girls are restricted from playing and visiting their friends so that there is more time for socialising them into their future role, but boys are free. Even the division of eating was meant to serve a second purpose. Boys and girls were taught by their respective parents while eating with them (Tunduru, Tarime, Mbeya)

However, such teaching depends on the actual presence of the father. In Tarime and Mbeya, he is often not there, for reasons which will be examined later. Thus the boy children get no chance to be oriented towards the male stereotype.

**a) The effects of differential treatment**

The effects are seen in two main ways:

**a) Attitudes**

Boys look down on their own sisters. As one boy exclaimed scornfully in Hai:

"Girls are only good for housework!"

Girls become dependent on their brothers. For example in Muleba, a girl wanting to go to the latrine during the night will wake up a younger brother rather than an elder sister to escort her.

**b) Games**

In Muleba, girls playact as brides and mothers, as well as beautifully dressed people while boys act as mechanics, herders, masons, lawyers and teachers. If they play with a banana fruit, the girl shapes it into a woman carrying a baby while the boy shapes it into a cow with horns, or a boat or a bus. If they play with large thorns, the girl uses them to sew dresses for their home made dolls while the boy becomes a doctor and uses them as a needle for injecting people.

In Tunduru, girls play at cooking, washing, pounding or imitate **Litiwo** while boys build model houses and cars or hunt for birds.

**b) Children born 'at home'**

There is a special problem for children born out of marriage. The father is often not there; the mother can often leave them with their mothers; if the mother gets married, they may not be accepted by their stepfathers. For example, among the Kurya and Luo, the man who pays the bride price to marry the girl also takes any children she has had. However, among the Luo, boy children of a man who is not the husband are discriminated against especially because it is believed that he will bring both misfortune and the undesirable characteristics of his unknown father into the household.

## **2.4 DIVISION OF LABOUR**

Division of labour, especially at this age, is above all, an integral part of the socialisation process whereby both boys and girls are prepared for their future roles. In Tarime, as early as the age of 3-4, boys are given a small club and encouraged to participate in herding the animals. The girls are given a small pot and encouraged to accompany their elders in the search for water and firewood. In Hai also, the boys are given a stick and begin to herd small animals near the home, under the supervision of their elder brothers. Similar examples can be found throughout the research areas, but the question of division of labour will be dealt with in more detail in the next chapter when it becomes a very big issue.

## **2.5 CHILD CARE**

At this age, child care is almost exclusively the concern of the mother. Even the process of the boys joining their fathers for meals takes place towards the end of this time, around the ages of 4-5.

However, even if the father is not directly responsible for the care of the children at this age, in a way he is supposed to be later on, the question of his role and the way he plays it is a major issue.

What seems to have happened, throughout the research areas, is a general abdication, by fathers, of even those traditional roles they played. Large numbers of them seem to have washed their hands altogether of any child rearing role.

- i) The father is often not even physically present (Mbeya, Tarime) especially in those cases where girls have given birth outside marriage. Alternatively, he is present in name only because he is rarely seen (Tarime, Mbeya). One boy child of a polygamous marriage in Tarime said that he sees his father once a month. Again, even if the father is present, his presence may be counter productive such as when he begins to provide moral teaching to his children while he is drunk (Tarime). The direct effects of this is seen more later on in the children's lives.
- ii) More fundamentally, there are complaints everywhere of fathers misusing family resources for their own benefit. He controls the produce of the household and all decisions as to how to use it. He can sell both food and cash crops and uses the larger amount of the family income for his own personal enjoyment. In Mbeya, a primary school child complained that his father spent all the family's money on drink and women. In Tarime, a child being escorted by his mother happened to walk past bar. He exclaimed:

"Mmmh. This place stinks like dad."

Similar complaints of husbands drinking the family resources could be found throughout the research area. Whatever money is not spent on drink, is spent on casual sex with other women (Tarime, Mbeya, Iringa). There is not even the

stabilising effect of the other women becoming a part of the household through polygamy.

- iii) Men shirk even those duties which, by tradition, should be done by them. According to tradition in Muleba, it is the men who fetch the firewood and also prune the banana trees (which then allows the mother to cultivate). If he does not do so, then the mother (and her children) are forced to do it. As usual the women accept such a responsibility since if they refuse to cook due to lack of firewood, it is the children who will suffer.

The situation is compounded today by the fact that men eat out. In the past it was scandalous for any man to eat in public but now men and young men eat at **mama ntiles**, especially on village market days and after receiving the money for the sale of their coffee. Thus, they are even less likely to be concerned whether there is firewood at home or not.

Similarly in Tarime, the father, traditionally, always had a shamba of his own which was supposed to act as a kind of insurance in times of drought. Thus, even if the women did the lion's share of the cultivating which was done by the women, the children knew that their father at least had some responsibility for their welfare. Nowadays, the father is no longer concerned even with that.

Men, of course, do not take kindly to such accusations. In Tarime, some fathers claimed that they were being unfairly criticised since the problem is that children do not recognise the overall responsibility of their fathers. All the property, including the land, belongs to them and so if the mother cultivates on the father's shamba, the father is contributing. The mother came to father's house in marriage with nothing. Thus:

The mother's role in bringing up the children is just the cooking which is a product of her husband's wealth. The mother is the household worker.

However, such spurious claims were supported neither by the women, nor by the majority of men.

As a result of the partial or total abdication of real responsibility by the father, even in terms of providing for the family, the mother is often so overloaded with work that she has no time for child care (as expressed by the lullaby of the mother in Hai. Women are often so concerned with cultivating and other income generating activities in order to feed the family, especially the children, that they have no time to feed the children (Ugwachanya among other places) let alone care for them. Children are left to their own devices from a very early age, and it is a common sight to see a very young girl left with the responsibility of looking after her younger brothers and sisters. This one sided parenting has also had serious effects on the growth and development of the children.

- i) The father has become largely superfluous, a fact which he himself recognises and tries to overcome with displays of arrogant malehood. He is not even a role model, or a guide for his boy children. Instead of being a key actor in the family, he has become

a spectator who spends all the time blaming the mother for bringing up the children badly.

- ii) All the children, boys and girls, tend to bond with their mother because they recognise and appreciate the efforts of their mother.
- iii) At the same time, the mother is often very frustrated and bitter about the way her husband has burdened her with all the responsibilities while he squanders the family resources, including on other women who just eat the money without contributing in any way to the welfare of the family.

Thus it is very easy for mothers to turn children against their father, something which fathers complained about bitterly (Tarime). Households turn into war zones with fathers and mothers bitterly accusing one another.

At the same time, due to lack of parental care, the children can easily run wild. When the parents wake up to this, especially just before and during adolescence, it is too late. The Kiswahili proverb

*Samaki mkunje angali mbichi* (Fold the fish while it is still fresh)

has been forgotten or disregarded. In Muleba and Tarime a growing generation gap, particularly between children and their fathers, was noted.

This is a crucial issue, how to put the father back into family, which will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter. However, limited resources are also a serious issue. There are still many fathers who are concerned about the welfare of their children and who do not squander all the family resources on unnecessary expenses. However, they too are constrained by insufficient means, which means that both fathers and mothers have to devote themselves to the search for additional sources of income, which, in turn, means that they have no time to care for their children. Wherever the family is under severe economic threat, the parents inevitably will concentrate on the family's immediate needs, with the result that the long term needs of their children in terms of care, training, love are neglected. Thus, especially as the year of the family draws to a close, what can be done to support families to enable them to devote more time to the child caring role.

## 2.6 RITUALS

Apart from a few cases of female genital mutilation in Kondoa and Hai as a result of the fear of lawalawa, no particular rituals associated with infancy were noted.

## CHAPTER THREE

### CHILDHOOD (5-12 YEARS)

#### 3.1 CHILD CARE

*Generally parental care depends on the ability of the family although the less the ability, the more the boy becomes privileged (Kondoa)*

These are the years when children become increasingly articulate and wish to discuss with and learn from both parents. They are the years when the lasting relationship between parents and their children is cemented. However, it was noted that such close relationships were often not present. In Kyariko, small children of 10 years roamed the streets into the night, selling groundnuts even in the bars. In Msosa, children came home even after 10.00 pm, claiming that they were attending **madrassa**. Elsewhere also, children indulged in petty trade.

Two points are can be gained from the quotation which heads this chapter. Firstly, the economic status of the family is a very important factor in the quality of child care. The lower the family's economic status, the less time they have for child care because the parents have to devote their time to searching for the income needed to feed and clothe the family. Then, secondly, in a situation where resources are limited, it is the boy rather than the girl who will be sent to school, or given new clothes etc while the girl becomes a surrogate mother for her younger brothers and sisters. It is a common sight to see young girls aged 5-7 walking around all day carrying a baby on their back, while the mother is in the shamba or conducting her petty trade.

It is still the mother who bears the overall burden for caring for the children, as well as providing their basic needs. In Iringa, Mbeya, Kondoa and Tarime it was noted that the mother is the one who pays the school fees and buys the uniforms and exercise books required. In Kyariko, more than half of the school children interviewed said that their mother paid for all their requirements. A few said both parents pay and a very few said that the father pays.

Ironically in Muleba (and maybe elsewhere), while many women buy the uniforms for their children and shoulder the economic burden of keeping their children at school, it is the man who is acknowledged as caring for the children, even if he is a total drunkard.

It was also noted that elder brothers, and sisters who have got jobs or married, often contribute economically to the family. In Kyariko, one quarter of the schoolchildren interviewed said that their sisters and brothers contributed to the school expenses.

#### 3.2 THE ROLE OF THE FATHER

What seems to have happened, throughout the research areas, is a general abdication by fathers of even those traditional roles they played. Large numbers of them have washed their hands altogether of any child rearing role.



a) The father is often not even physically present (Mbeya, Tarime) especially in those cases where girls have given birth outside marriage. Alternatively, he is present in name only because he is rarely seen (Tarime, Mbeya). One boy child of a polygamous marriage in Tarime said that he sees his father once a month. Again, even if the father is present, his presence may be counter productive such as when he begins to provide moral teaching to his children while he is drunk (Tarime). The direct effects of this is seen more later on in the children's lives.

b) More fundamentally, there are complaints everywhere of fathers misusing family resources for their own benefit. He controls the produce of the household and all decisions as to how to use it. He can sell both food and cash crops and uses the larger amount of the family income for his own personal enjoyment. In Mbeya, a primary school child complained that his father spent all the family's money on drink and women. In Tarime, a child passing a bar exclaimed to his mother, 'Mmmh. This place stinks like dad'.

Similar complaints of husbands drinking the family resources could be found throughout the research area. Whatever money is not spent on drink, is spent on casual sex with other women (Tarime, Mbeya, Iringa). There is not even the stabilising effect of the other women becoming a part of the household through polygamy.

c) Men shirk even those duties which, by tradition, are their responsibility. According to tradition in Muleba, it is the men who fetch the firewood and also prune the banana trees (which then allows the mother to cultivate). If he does not do so, then the mother (and her children) are forced to do it. As usual the women accept such a responsibility since, if they refuse to cook due to lack of firewood, it is the children who will suffer.

The situation is compounded today by the fact that men eat out. In the past it was scandalous for any man to eat in public but now men and young men eat at **mama ntilies**, especially on village market days and after receiving the money for the sale of their coffee. Thus, they are even less likely to be concerned whether there is firewood at home or not.

Similarly in Tarime, the father, traditionally, always had a shamba of his own which was supposed to act as a kind of insurance in times of drought. Thus, even if the women did the lion's share of the cultivating, the children knew that their father at least had some responsibility for their welfare. Nowadays, the father is no longer concerned even with that.

This partial or total abdication of real responsibility by the father, even in terms of providing for the family leads to the overburdening of the mother. She is often so overloaded with work that she has no time for child care (as expressed by the lullaby of the mother in Hai).

This one sided parenting has also had serious effects on the growth and development of the children.

i) The father has become largely superfluous, a fact which he himself recognises and tries to overcome with displays of arrogant malehood. He is not even a role model, or a guide for his boy children. Instead of being a key actor in the family, he has become a spectator who spends all the time blaming the mother for bringing up the children badly.

- ii) All the children, boys and girls, tend to bond with their mother because they recognise and appreciate the efforts of their mother.
- iii) At the same time, the mother is often very frustrated and bitter about the way her husband has burdened her with all the responsibilities while he squanders the family resources, including on other women who just eat the money without contributing in any way to the welfare of the family.

Thus it is very easy for mothers to turn children against their father, something which fathers were very resentful about (Tarime). Households turn into war zones with fathers and mothers bitterly accusing one another.

At the same time, due to lack of parental care, the children can easily run wild. When the parents wake up to this, especially just before and during adolescence, it is too late. The Kiswahili proverb *Samaki mkunje angali mbichi* (Fold the fish while it is still fresh) has been forgotten or disregarded. In Muleba and Tarime a growing generation gap, particularly between children and their fathers, was noted.

How to put the father back into family is a crucial issue which will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter. However, one must reiterate that limited resources are the most serious issue. There are still many fathers who are concerned about the welfare of their children and who do not squander all the family resources on unnecessary expenses. However, they too are constrained by insufficient means, which means that both fathers and mothers have to devote themselves to the search for additional sources of income, which, in turn, means that they have no time to care for their children. Wherever the family is under severe economic threat, the parents inevitably will concentrate on the family's immediate needs, with the result that the long term needs of their children in terms of care, training, love are neglected.

### 3.3 HEALTH

Even more so than with education, it is the mother who looks after the health of the children, takes them to the health facility and looks for the money required to pay for the medicines.

In Mbeya, the perception is that boys get prompter treatment from their parents and are sent more willingly to a health facility because they are the heirs to the family and their labour is needed.

On the other hand, when a girl says she is sick, it is often claimed that she is malingering. This claim is not without substance since girls admit to malingering as the only way to get any leisure time at all.

### 3.4 SOCIALISATION

The process described in the previous chapter is consolidated and expanded during these years. It is seen in two main ways.

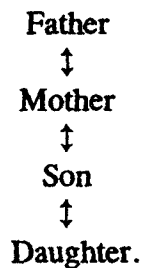
**a) Segregation**

In Tunduru, because of Islamic beliefs children are separated in class and in the games they play. In Kondoa also, tradition discourages girls from holding conversation with boys, which contributes to their low self confidence. They are also not supposed to play with boys because of the fear of sexual relations.

**b) Superiority**

This was seen most clearly in Muleba. A mother will request her son to do something (thereby giving him the option of refusing) whereas she will order her daughter (even if she is not feeling well). A boy is justified in asking his older sister (who is doing another task) why his food is late, while he himself has been doing nothing at all.

Thus, the girl child in Muleba grows up knowing that she is at the bottom of a four tiered system.



Thus she is supposed to take orders from all those above her. Unfortunately, some mothers even raise their sons to second place in the hierarchy. They go on their knees to serve their own sons and cater to all their whims.

The result of such treatment can be catastrophic. Sons have been known to deny respect to their mothers or, once they have inherited the family property, even kick them out altogether. In the feedback workshops such behaviour was linked to other social evils such as drug abuse, but no one was able to see that it is a direct consequence of the nature of the socialisation given boys and girls.

Similarly, they are socialised to believe that women cannot and should not do anything independent of their men. In Kimbugu, 43% of the schoolchildren interviewed said that a major problem in the village is that women go to drink unaccompanied by their husbands which causes divorce. No one mentioned men going to drink unaccompanied. In the feedback workshop men supported this idea and said the problem is that some women nowadays have independent sources of income, which means they no longer have the respect for the husband that they used to do when he controlled all the family resources.

In Tarime, girls are taught that their brothers are superior. Even their intelligence is not equal to that of their brothers. Thus, in a discussion at Kowak (Girls) Secondary School, many girls still accepted and believed that their brother had more right to tuition in the holidays

while they continued with the household work. Even when asked their aim in going to secondary school, many claimed (though maybe partly because they thought it was the 'right answer') that it was so that they could be better wives and mothers. Getting a job was of much lesser importance..

### **3.5 DIVISION OF LABOUR**

As can be seen from the responses of the Kowak girls, household division of labour is an integral part of the socialisation process because, especially for the girls, it is preparing them for their future lives as wives and mothers (Mbeya).

Thus, the division of labour in the household was very similar throughout all the research areas. Girls did all the work inside and around the house such as preparing the food, cooking, sweeping, washing the dishes, caring for their younger brothers and sisters and looking after the calves. They also did the jobs connected with cooking and housework such as fetching water and firewood and going to the milling machine.

In addition to all these tasks girls also did the work in the shamba, digging, planting, weeding, harvesting, transporting the harvest home and storing it. In Muleba, they also cut and carried the grass for sitting on inside the house, while in Hai they cut the grass for the cows.

The shamba work was sometimes shared by the boys particularly the digging, weeding and harvesting. In Mbeya the boys also washed their own clothes. Otherwise, the boys were mainly concerned with activities outside the house, such as building (houses, latrines, stores), herding, making beehives and collecting honey (in Kondoa especially), hunting and in Muleba, pruning the banana trees.

From conversation with different community members in the research areas, it also seemed that the workload of the girl is actually increasing rather than decreasing for several reasons:

- a) In the past, many of the responsibilities in the family were shared by other women in the extended family, such as grandmothers, aunts etc. Nowadays the extended family is in many places falling apart, leaving all the tasks to the young girl
- b) This is further exacerbated by the growing involvement of women in additional income generating activities to feed the family and also acquire an independent source of income. The girl child is left to look after the younger siblings together with all the other family responsibilities.
- c) The tendency noted earlier for men to shirk even those responsibilities assigned to them by tradition. Thus, unlike in other areas, fetching firewood is the domain of the man but, increasingly, this task is also being handed over to the girl children.
- d) The tendency, by parents to shoulder girls with heavy responsibilities at a tender age. Thus in Muleba, girls start with light chores at the age of 5 and by the age of 10-11 they can be doing all the cooking and looking after their younger sisters and brothers. In addition,

wherever you go in Tanzania, you can only marvel at the heavy loads (of water, grass or firewood) that are being carried even by very young girls. Boys, on the other hand, in Muleba, start collecting firewood around the ages of 6-7 but otherwise are free until the age of 12-14.

It was also noted (Tunduru, Tarime, Muleba, Kondo) that while there was an allocation of tasks to both boys and girls, the tasks of the girls were full time and more energy consuming over time whereas the boys' tasks were irregular and seasonal, demanding short bursts of physical activity, interspersed with long periods of rest. The only exception to this could be those boys who are involved in herding full time, but even then, while it is a full time occupation, it does not, in general, require a lot of physical energy in the way that fetching water or firewood over long distances does. In Iringa a speaker in the discussion called women 'A small tractor in the family'.



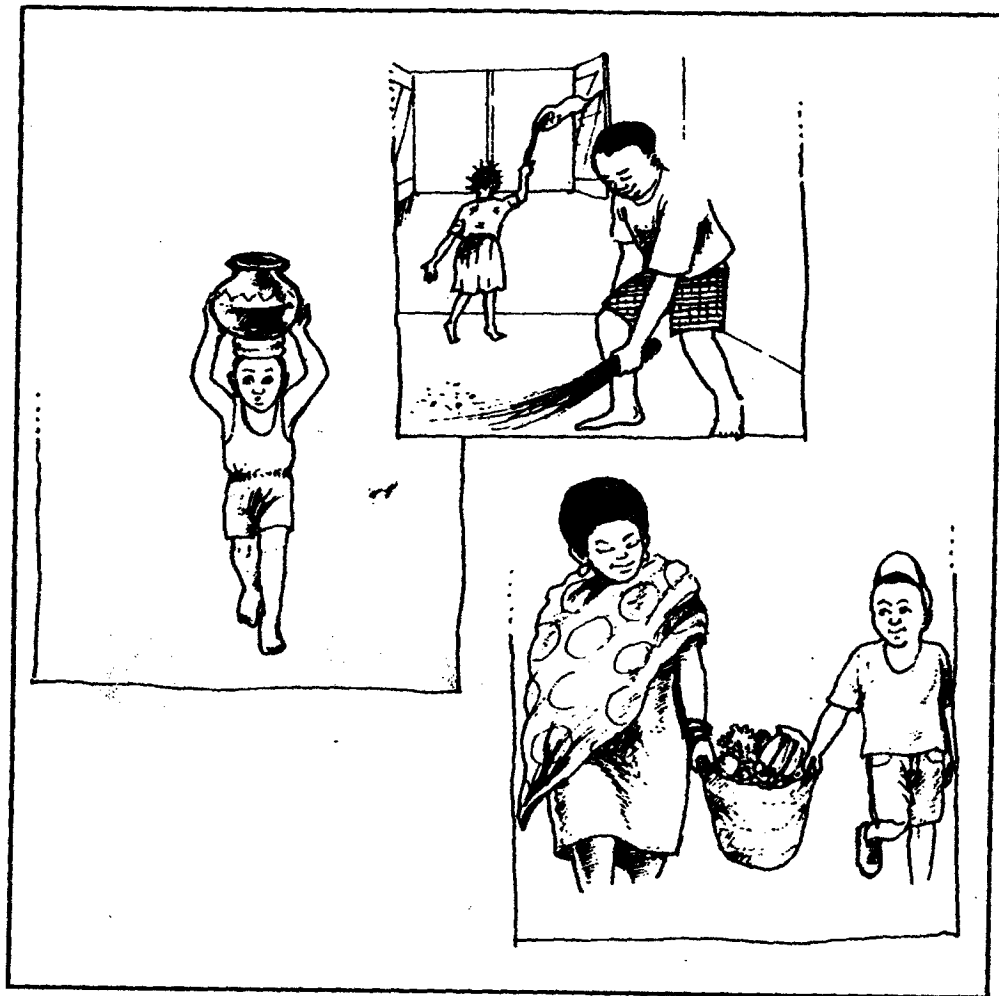
In connection with this it was noted that the tasks of the girls tended to be those which were immediate and could not be shirked in the daily struggle for survival, whereas the activities of the boys (with the exception of fetching firewood) tended to be not so essential. Herding could also be claimed to be essential but, in many areas where herding was not necessarily part of the daily life, such as Muleba, not every family had animals to herd.

As a result of the above, girls had no leisure time at all. It is a sad comment that in Mbeya, the only way they could get a little of the leisure time to which they are entitled in their childhood is by deliberately malingering.

However, it would be wrong to assume that this household division of labour is rigid and fossilised. Maybe also because of the breakdown of the extended family and the involvement of the mother in other income generating activities, even boys are becoming involved in tasks which they would not otherwise have contemplated and this is leading to a possible rethinking of the meaning of the traditional divisions.

In some areas, there are certain activities which are almost taboo for men to do. Waburunge men are not allowed to prepare food or drinking water. Elsewhere, men are not allowed to thresh millet but the distinctions are becoming blurred.

In Muleba, 71% of adults interviewed in two villages said that there are no jobs which are specifically for girls. Men can do any job, even cook bananas. The only exception is peeling the bananas which is almost a taboo. Otherwise, traditionally cleaning the house and sweeping the wide path leading up to the house (*kwelela eilembo*) was taken to be a female activity since it was a reflection of a girl's cleanliness but nowadays even small boys are doing these tasks. Similarly, it is the task of the girls to cut grass but at schools boys also do it and can turn up with bigger bundles than the girls. Finally while grinding millet is a female task because the millet is for domestic consumption, boys grind the sorghum because it is used for brewing beer. Therefore, the actual activity of grinding is not necessarily a female task at all.



In Tarime, boys who have no sisters now do almost everything, including fetching water and firewood. The only two taboo activities are cooking and serving food, which are also connected with the fact that a boy is not allowed into the kitchen in order to ensure that he will not interfere with his wife's domain when he grows up and marries. Thus it was claimed that the current division of labour, is not a matter of tradition but rather a caution to boys (*si Mila ni onyo*) as one old man put it.

While there may be some self justification in this explanation, it shows that the roots of traditional division of labour have weakened and cracks have appeared. Thus, community work

aimed at widening these cracks might well be an important area of activity. Otherwise, girls will never have equal opportunities because they never have any time for self study.

This is not to underestimate the deeply entrenched attitudes. In feedback discussions in Usari, it was impossible to reach a compromise. Men willingly agreed that women work harder than donkeys, but the idea of men and boys work sharing by carrying grass was still seen to be an insult.

However, a solution was also put forward in terms of increased wealth in the household and available technology. The chairperson of the village commented:

"I can't make my wife and children carry grass for our six cows.  
I will use a vehicle."

Similarly, while men and boys are not prepared to carry grass on their heads, it was observed that they were prepared to transport anything with wheelbarrows. Thus technology does not only contribute to reducing the workload of the women and girls. It also validates changes in community behaviour which would not be possible otherwise.

**a) The effects of division of labour at home and school**

*Girls do not have spare time for leisure. They are occupied from morning to sunset. This results in poor performance in schools (Female teacher in Kondoa)*

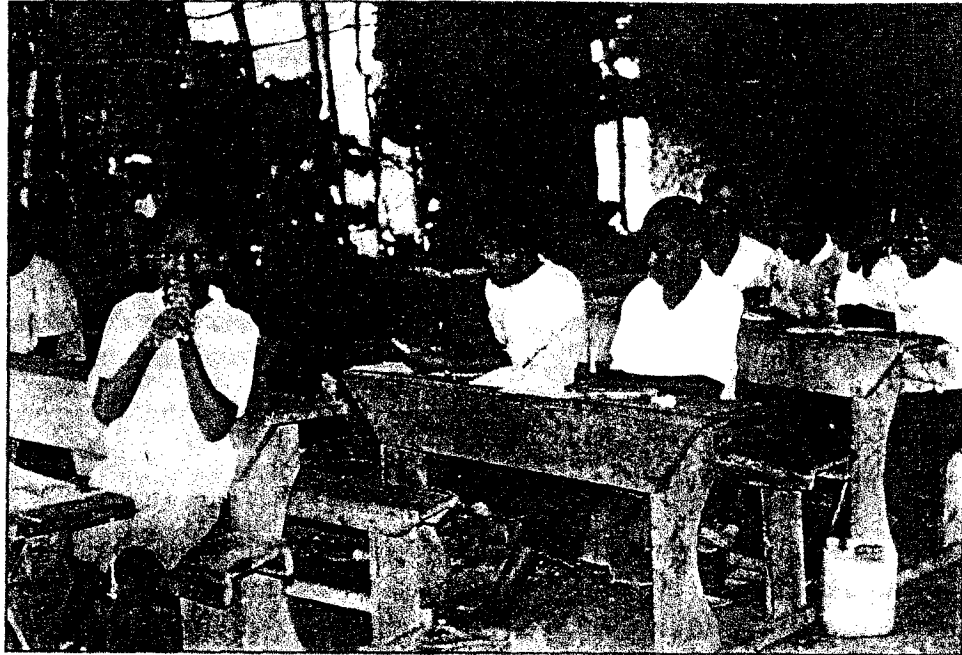
This observation was borne out everywhere in the research areas. In Gwitiryo, Tarime, even the schoolchildren commented that 'girls like education more than boys but they have no time to study'.

In Hai, the girls cook and clean before going to school while in Tarime they fetch the water and sweep the compound. As will be seen later, they do many of the same domestic tasks while at school and, in the evening, they do all the household activities such as fetching water and firewood, cooking, weeding the garden etc. Only in Muleba did 78% of the boys interviewed fetch firewood. Thus, inevitably, girls face far greater obstacles in developing and utilising their educational and intellectual capabilities.

### **3.6 FORMAL EDUCATION**

*Education has brought ignorance (Parent: Tarime)*

Education is a key area in the lives of all children, boys and girls. It is recognised as such by the community who allow their children to spend the larger part of their days in educational institutions for at least seven years of their life. They entrust their children to caretakers and educators trained and funded by the government. They recognise that education has the potential to bring good ideas and knowledge, and the life skills required for their children to prosper in a changing world.



Even in the best of circumstances, such a situation places a heavy responsibility upon the educators and demands the development of real trust between them and the parents. Unfortunately, however, education and the caretakers/educators are often regarded with great suspicion. This is because education has contributed to major changes in the behaviour of the community.

- a) School has taken over a large part of the lives of the children. Since they are at school for many hours a day for at least seven years at a formative time in their life, school has, to a large extent, supplanted the parents in the task of bringing up the child. This would not necessarily worry the parents, as long as the school really does play the role of *in loco parentis* but, as will be seen later, the teachers often do not fulfil their duties as guardians. Therefore the children fail to get a proper upbringing both at school and at home.
- b) Since school is against some of the traditions and taboos of society, it has taught the children to go against their parents. This is the reason given why many parents (especially fathers) have abdicated all responsibilities.
- c) Because children of all different kinds intermingle at school, it is easy for children to pick up the behaviour of their fellows, regardless of the standards and morals of their parents. Peer group influence predominates, and parents have no control over the peer group.
- d) Those who succeed in education often move to other parts of the country and marry there. They reject the authority of their parents; they refuse to return home and they marry people from other ethnic groups.
- e) School consolidates class divisions in society. The haves are the ones who go on to further education, sometimes by corrupt methods, while the majority of have nots remain in the community resentful and frustrated.



Thus, in many places, but particularly Kondoa, Tunduru and Tarime, school is seen as an alien institution outside the jurisdiction of the community although their children go to learn there. A system of control does exist, through the school committees, but the community has not been able to use this system in the way they wish.

The situation has deteriorated greatly since the introduction of Universal Primary Education. UPE had excellent intentions and brought very high expectations among parents. But these intentions and expectations have dwindled to nothing in the face of a poor educational environment, inadequate training of the teachers and inadequate follow up.

In their analysis, the parents said that Universal Primary Education (UPE) was the root cause of the collapse of education. Before then, schools were good and those who went to school really acquired up to date knowledge and skills which enabled them to get a good life. Even the intentions of UPE were good, to give all children that up to date knowledge and skills.

However, according to the parents, especially in Tarime, UPE has failed completely therefore the children who go to school get nothing at all. There is no difference between someone who went to school and someone who didn't and because those who went to school

- a) had expectations which have not been fulfilled
- b) just sit in school with nothing to do for long stretches of time

in the end, they resort to smoking bhang, theft and sex.

As a result, many parents have turned to cursing the very programme which they welcomed with open arms just a few years ago. As one parent in Nyanduga said:

"I blame everyone, from the Minister down to the teachers for the decline in education."

and another in Kyariko:

"The present education is not one to develop a person but rather a cunning way for some of the Ministry of Education workers to benefit themselves. The basic purpose of education is to provide light so that a person can get a good life. But nowadays nearly half the teachers are absent. They are out indulging in smuggling. The remainder are there at school taking it in turns to use the children as cheap labour."

Many others claimed that education is only for the rich. For the person who has nothing, education has nothing to offer at all.

These are very serious allegations which are encapsulated in the quotation at the beginning of this section. Wherever we went the parents, and the students, expressed themselves

with great bitterness. By contrast, as will be seen later, teachers also complain bitterly about the behaviour of many parents. This then, is an area of critical concern for all children, boys and girls, which must be considered before we come to consider the specific disadvantages faced by girls in the system. Since, however, most of these problems are well known, they will be touched upon briefly.

### **3.6.1 Pre School**

Except for Hai District, where there are preschools in each of the villages involved in the research, preschools did not seem to be a priority in the community. However in Tunduru, Kondoa and Iringa, Islamic madrasa also played a role in pre school education.

In the preschools, there was a definite tendency to favour boys over girls. In Mbeya, boys were enrolled first, because the girl was involved in taking care of her younger siblings. Among the Maasai in Hai, very few girls were registered and although boys were registered early (aged 5-6), priority was given to those who were regarded as less valuable to society, because they were unable to tell the markings on the cattle. Even these were withdrawn from school if the one who could tell happened to die or be otherwise incapacitated. On the other hand, the Wachagga and Wapare sent both boys and girls to preschool with little distinction, though some girls were kept back to look after their younger siblings.

### **3.6.2 Primary school**

#### **a) The learning environment**

In almost all the schools in the research area, the environment is not one that will encourage children to enjoy learning or even go to school.

- i) There are insufficient classrooms. According to current policy, the community are often blamed for this because they do not participate sufficiently in self-help activities. The Wabarbaig for example take no part in building schools and in Omurunazi, it is only recently that parents have begun to take an interest in education.

Parental involvement however presupposes parental conviction that their labour is for a worthwhile cause, and in areas where parents either are not convinced that school education is good for their children, or have lost faith in the kind of schools they have, it is not surprising that they are reluctant to work.

Girls have to 'sit properly' as required by tradition, and at the same time 'write properly', as required by education. Alternatively children fight over broken bricks as chairs and perch precariously, two or three at a time on one of them.

- ii) Toilet facilities are highly inadequate which is an especial problem to girls who have reached the age of puberty. In Gwitiryo there are only 4 toilets for 379 pupils and in Gitagasembe, there is just one, for 234 pupils.

- iii) There is also a serious shortage of desks. Children sit on the sand or grass (Muleba) because there is no proper floor or fight over broken bricks as chairs and perch precariously on them, two or three at a time.
- iv) Food is another serious issue, which is later mentioned as one of the reasons for children dropping out of school, especially when one considers that in many areas they go to school without eating or drinking anything first, and that girls have already done several tasks before going to school. In Lumuli, Iringa, school meals were offered but not throughout the year. In this case, it was a question of agreeing with the parents the nature of the contributions required to ensure that children got food all the year round, but in less advantaged areas, such as in the Lake Basin and Kondoa, hunger is an integral part of the school day.
- v) Books are usually in very short supply although they seemed to be well looked after by the teachers. Because they are so scarce, they are locked away in the staff room and only produced during a lesson. This is an excellent security measure to preserve scarce resources, but it means that the children only get exposure to the books during class time.
- vi) The curriculum was also severely criticised. In Kondoa, parents complained that the curriculum was not functionally oriented in that it did not give the children the life skills they require to make a living after school. They were not prepared for self-employment in agriculture, pastoralism, small scale businesses, mechanics etc.

In Tarime, parents also complained of the teaching methodology whereby lecture method and rote learning are the order of the day.

#### **b) Education for self reliance**

One important part of the curriculum where, theoretically, pupils were supposed to learn life skills was education for self reliance. Parents now reject this theory completely because it has just turned into another form of cheap labour.. In Kyariko and Nyanduga, for example, the pupils are supposed to bring long grass for thatching on Mondays (unless there is a glut in the market) which is then sold. Any child not bringing the grass is beaten. They also carry bricks and weed shambas for the villagers who pay for their labour into the school fund. In both Tarime and Tunduru, excessive self reliance activities were cited as reasons for dropping out of school.

A related problem is that neither the parents nor the children know how much money these activities realise. Maybe with the best of intentions, teachers have turned to income generating projects as a way of paying the school contributions, sending teachers to seminars, feeding any visitors and other small day to day expenses, etc. One head teacher said that pupils had to do this in order to get the contributions. For example, head teachers had been threatened that if their school did not send the contribution for UMISHUMTA, their salaries would be cut. However, parents complain that they have no access to the school accounts. This was obviously a serious problem in a school like Ngasaro where large amounts of building materials had disappeared. However in Kyariko, the headteacher complained that, after he

was told to produce the accounts, he prepared them early this year, but he has been unable even to present them to the school committee because both times a meeting has been called there has been no quorum.

One obvious bone of contention is that the headteachers often keep the school funds themselves without banking them. This inevitably gives rise to complaints of misuse.

**c) Working conditions for the teachers**

The teachers also suffer from working under very difficult conditions.

**i) Housing**

Almost everywhere, there are insufficient houses. In some such as Msosa there are no houses at all as well as Ngote primary school in Karambi (where the lack of accommodation combined with the remoteness of the area means that there is a permanent shortage of teachers as some refuse to go there, and even those who do try to negotiate a transfer).

**ii) Terms of Service**

The teachers also have multiple problems concerned with making ends meet. Although other extension workers claim that teachers get extra allowances, the salary is still too small for them to live on. Even that small salary is unpredictable since, in many districts, there is no fixed day on which it is paid, and the actual day in the month is always late and erratic. At the time the research was being carried out in Tarime, a group of primary school teachers threatened to demonstrate outside the District Headquarters having waited several days in vain to be paid their salaries. We were informed that this was not an uncommon occurrence there. As one teacher put it:

"Since when did workers lend money to the government, which is what we are doing by working without a salary."

Remoteness is another aspect of working conditions which is not often considered. In some areas, teachers have to walk huge distances, just to receive their salaries. Where this is coupled with lack of other facilities such as Ngote primary school, the result is a teacher exodus which only increases the burden on those who remain. Such remoteness often affects women teachers more.

**iii) Community Hostility**

Many members of the community have little or no faith in the ability of the teachers of their children. This is a highly contentious issue. The majority of teachers are those trained by the Distant Learning programme at the outset of UPE, which is why they are known as 'UPE teachers', however much the authorities dislike and discourage such a term. In general the parents have no faith in these 'UPE teachers'. They do not see how a person who failed to go to secondary school can successfully educate another child to go. As one member of the Kyariko village government said:

"All these UPE teachers - if the government thinks they are so good, then they should be given another job, but they should not teach."

However, a few other parents said that while it is true that the majority of UPE teachers are no good, a few are good and there is no guarantee that the Form Four leavers who become teachers will be any better since they went to secondary school through favouritism anyway, did not do well in the Form Four exams and ended up in teaching because there was nothing else for them to do.

Parental indifference also plays a major part in discouraging the teachers from giving their all to their pupils. For example, in Muleba, teachers complained strongly about a lack of parental interest. They did not follow up the performance of their children and therefore children were able to play truant without the parents even realising it. Then parents are shocked when their children are rusticated or terminated and claim that their children have been treated unfairly.

Such attitudes are, in one sense, very ironic since the participants in the village workshops all wanted their children to get jobs such as teacher, doctor, minister, politician etc, but they were not doing anything themselves to turn it into a reality. Once their children have been entrusted to the teachers, that is the end of the matter.

In Kondoa, many of the Wabarbaig and Waburunge only send their children to school in order to comply with the Education Act and they are not prepared to contribute to any improvement in the school environment. They claim that the schools do not teach their children relevant life skills. Similarly the Maasai in Hai send their children to school, especially boys, because of the compulsory enrolment requirement. In Tunduru, and in some cases, Tarime, parents do not contribute to schools, complaining that they have lost faith in them. At the same time, the teachers in Tarime claimed that parents were stubborn, don't care about education, don't follow up the progress of their children at school and cause truancy themselves by taking children out of school to work at home, indulge in trade and even get married.

Threats of violence and actual violence have also been recorded against teachers. The worst case was in Tarime, where a parent went to the teacher asking that he record that his girl had been transferred to another school as a way of covering up the fact that he had taken her out of school to get married. The teacher refused, despite the offer of substantial amounts of money, and 2 cows thrown in when he continued to refuse. That same night, people attacked the house of the teacher and severely wounded him in the head. He is now physically and mentally maimed for life.

In Msosa, Iringa, primary school girls openly sleep with their lovers and when they are taken to task for this by the teachers, they do not understand, as the whole community supports such behaviour. Teachers are afraid to take any action because of the threat of community action against them.

#### **d) Professional Behaviour**

While in no way condoning the violence and threats which teachers have to face, it is also true to say that other teachers have contributed to the hostility to them. However much they may be justified in the erosion of their professional ethics as a result of neglect and their precarious

financial position, abuse by many teachers of their professional position is widespread and very serious.

The major complaint of the parents is that:

“The children have been turned into instruments of labour for the teachers.”

This affected the girls particularly as we shall see. The researchers in Tarime were given countless examples of this both by the children and by the parents, and the teachers did not dispute that they used the children to do certain jobs for them. They only disputed the extent of the practice. Children were used both to increase the income of the teacher and to do the household chores for him.

With regard to increasing the income, both boys and girls are involved. We were told that at Ngasaro, each teacher has his own group of pupils who work for him. In addition, since they are near the urban centre, the teachers bring foodstuffs to the school to sell. When a pupil also brought foodstuffs to sell, one teacher forced him to eat his money as a punishment for daring to compete with his teacher.

In the more rural settings, pupils cultivate and weed for the teachers, and even stay in their shamba chasing away the monkeys, or dig up anthills to get food for the teachers' chickens.

With regard to doing the household chores, the parents hate this practice because they regard it as highly exploitative.

"She peels the cassava and she is not even given a piece of soap, not even food."

The children are also given work which is beyond their age, for example young girls carrying loads which are too heavy for them.

Finally all this work detracts from the classroom and contributes to the lack of progress in school. This is seen even more clearly in the household chores which affect only the girls. The parents claim that they recognise the teachers as 'second parents' and are willing to provide them some support. For example, the Kyariko school committee agreed that water should be fetched for the teachers, once a day, in the evening when other pupils are doing other activities of education for self reliance. However, the teachers do not want to follow such a programme. Therefore the girls fetch water for them twice a day, in the morning and evening, fetch firewood, dig up, peel and pound the cassava, cook and wash the dishes. We actually saw some pupils doing this work in the evening.

Although this work is done on a rota basis, it has serious implications for the educational development of the girls.

- They are the only ones who do all this work while, at least theoretically, their brothers can devote more time to studying.
- It retards their educational development especially bearing in mind the household

division of labour. The girl has already fetched water at home before coming to do the same at school. The girls we interviewed did not like the practice at all.

At the same time, this system whereby the girls do the housework for male teachers directly encourages other forms of relationship. Parents of *Nyanduga* and *Kyariko* claim that the teachers are seducing their children at school, and in *Nyanduga* it reached the stage that parents demanded the removal of all the teachers for exploiting the children's labour and seducing them. In *Kyariko*, three quarters of the Standard 6 and 7 girls interviewed said that some of the teachers try to seduce the pupils. If a girl refuses, she is beaten, or threatened, or punished, or coaxed or offered money (for example one girl said that a teacher had promised her 500 shillings at the end of the month if she agreed to sleep with him).

Also, in *Kyariko*, it was claimed that this problem was more serious up to 1992 when the head teacher, after pressure from the parents, forbade older girls to cook for the teachers. However, even if this were the case, the workload of the girls is still being increased unnecessarily. Why should any of them cook for the teacher in the first place? And, in fact, the older girls are still cooking for the teachers. A member of the school committee said, 'The teachers choose those whose breasts have already developed'. This was supported by observation of the researchers. The only Standard Four girl interviewed who said that she had not been sent to cook for one of the teachers still had undeveloped breasts. According to the girls themselves, some teachers are still trying to seduce them. Several girls interviewed gave the names of the teachers and, although interviewed individually, they gave the same names.

This was not confined to Tarime alone. Researchers in Mindu, Tunduru also found one teacher who had been nicknamed by the *kutikulila bodi* by the community (which means moving your body/buttocks). This was a bitterly satirical comment on his well known behaviour of seducing his pupils.

#### e) Negligence

In several villages, the parents also complained about the teachers' negligence. Many classes are not being taught. The teachers stay at home and concentrate on their own projects. When the end of the month comes round, they take it in turns to go to the district headquarters until they get their delayed salaries.

The parents also complain that their children are not given any homework, which is why they don't progress. This complaint was supported by the pupils.

#### f) Lack of accountability

While, in the district feedback workshop in Tarime, the district education authorities claimed that there was no crisis in education since the policies of the Ministry of Education were clear and the district was working towards the fulfilment of these policies, parents complained, and it was clearly obvious that teachers had let themselves go because:

- i) There was inadequate follow up from the district. This is in no way blaming them as there are only 4 inspectors for nearly 200 schools and they have no transport.

- ii) In the absence of follow up from the district, the teachers also did not feel accountable to the communities in which they serve. One major cause of this is the weakness of the school committee. Even if, as argued by the Tarime education authorities in the feedback workshop, parents have extensive legal powers to control the behaviour of the teachers they don't know them and in reality it is easy for the teachers just to ignore the parents unless the parents too have direct access to the district authorities. The teachers know they are accountable vertically to their employer rather than horizontally to the community in which they are working. Until the school community is given real power in practice (maybe even including the right to hire and fire) through the school committee, there is little that can be done. As they said in Kyariko,

"We complain to the head teacher day after day but he has no power." The teachers can do what they like.

A related problem is that the head teacher is the secretary to the school committee. Although there are probably very good reasons for this, unscrupulous head teachers can manipulate their position by just not writing the minutes of the meeting, or not sending the minutes to the village government, or just not calling a meeting despite public demand. Thus, in Ngasaro, the committee is demanding a meeting but the head teacher is refusing to call it because, the parents claim, he knows the parents have serious and justified complaints about the school fund and the treatment of the teachers.

The need for change is urgent. Another parent said:

"Parents are very tolerant and sympathetic. If they decided to be hostile and record everything in writing, the teachers would be sacked."

From the above, it is clear that education is a very sensitive subject. There is a great rift between society and the schools and in the struggle between the two sides, it is the children who suffer.

### 3.6.3 The girl child in school

#### a) Parental attitudes

Researchers in Muleba asked parents who would they educate in a case where funds were insufficient to educate all of their children. The answers were as follows:

Village	Send boy	Send girl	Send both
Karambi	61 %	7 % (all women)	26 %
Omurunazi	30 %	-	35 %
Kimbugu	30 %	-	37 %



However, the researcher felt that the percentages in Omurunazi and Kimbugu for favouring both were unrealistic since the respondents were not actually answering the question asked, but rather, out of an awareness that they should also support girls' education, were trying to demonstrate impartiality. More realistic probably were those who said that they would educate each child as they reached the school going age (26% in *Omurunazi* and 4% in *Kimbugu*), although this would be tested more at secondary school level. Interestingly also, 22% of parents in Kimbugu said that, in such a situation, they would send neither, which shows how unimportant education is to them on their scale of priorities.

The Omurunazi and Kimbugu strategy of dealing with each child as s/he reached school going age was echoed by many of the Wachagga of Narumu. In general, the Wachagga used to prefer sending boys but this has now changed and they send both. As one Usari woman said in group discussion:

"It just depends on which child is bright and the main constraint is the money required."

This was borne out by the fact that Usari parents showed no gender bias in which children they sent to private school.

These parents in Hai were, however, exceptional. In almost all other circumstances, there was a definite preference expressed for boys. In Kondoa, in general, parents feel it is useless to send girl children to school because, once they are married, their resources will be controlled by their husbands, as the opening proverb of this report showed.

Looking at the different ethnic groups, the Waburunge and the Wasandawe send all their children to primary school but not beyond. For the Wasandawe, the problem is largely financial but the Waburunge force their girls to get married for fear that they will get pregnant, which will mean a loss of dowry. The Warangi girls go to primary school, but 60% of them get married immediately after finishing primary education, for the same reason. In some cases, the father makes sure that the girl child does not get the necessary school requirements so that she loses heart and accepts her lot as a bride to be immediately she finishes primary school.

Discussions with parents and members of the community showed that the major obstacle to girls continuing with their education was the father who considers that his contract with the state to educate his girl child ends at Standard Seven. Many of the schoolgirls expressed a wish to continue with their education and many mothers would also like their girl to continue with school so that she gets employment which will enable her to give support to her parents. In some cases, when the mother disagrees with the father's decision to marry off his daughter, she has been divorced for disobedience. There have also been cases of girls absconding from home or committing suicide because of the father's action.

However, there have also been cases, especially where the children have been almost all girls, and there happened to have been one member of the family who did receive further education, that the younger sisters have been educated. For example, a man was educated through the assistance of his sister. He has now committed himself to educating his own daughters.

The Wabarbaig are a special case because they do not want to send any children, boys or girls, to school since they regard school as completely irrelevant to their lives as pastoralists. Therefore, in Mongoroma primary school which has a total of 420 pupils in an area where many Barbaig live, there are only 8 Barbaig boys and not a single Barbaig girl. Even the boys who are there belong to poor families who, because they do not own cattle, have settled permanently.

They are particularly adamant about girl children. One Barbaig man said that girls should not be sent to school because they are stupid will get married to other ethnic groups far from home. This fear that girls will have the temerity to choose their own fiances is a common theme. The Maasai do not send their girls to school because, if they get education, they will make their own decisions, which includes deciding on their marriage partners. The same fear was expressed in Tarime.

In Iringa also, girls were not encouraged to continue with education for the same fears that she will not complete her secondary education, and the family will lose out on the bride price. In Tarime, the Wakurya had a similar attitude but that is now changing, and many day secondary schools are being built. In focus group discussions in Mbeya, both adolescents and parents reckoned that boys were given priority (because boys benefitted from education more than girls). This was, however, not borne out by the enrolment statistics.

#### **b) Age of enrolment**

With the possible exception of the Wachagga of Usari, Hai, very few children are enrolled at the age of 7. There is also a tendency for girls to be enrolled later than boys. Thus according to the statistics in Hai, boys are registered at the age of 7-8, and the girls when they are 8-9. This is because, as one father said:

"Many girls are sent to school later than the boys because they stay at home to do the housework."

In Tunduru, the average age is 7-9, for both boys and girls while in Kondoa, many enrol as late as the age of 10-11. Similarly, in Tarime, discussions with the Standard Seven and Six pupils revealed that many of them were aged 16-18 which means that many were also enrolled at the age of 9-11. Maasai boys were enrolled at the age of 8-10.

This late age of enrolment has serious repercussions for girls in particular. When they reach the age of puberty, they feel out of place, too old to continue in school, which is why many of them drop out. In Kondoa, many of the children wanted to enrol earlier, but they were held back by the parents to do the household chores.

#### **c) The contribution of school to gender perceptions**

As society continues to change, schools should be in the forefront of advocacy for those changes which lead to greater opportunities and rights for children, especially girl children, for the benefit of society as a whole. However, the reverse is usually the case. Especially on issues of gender, school is even clinging to those customs which society has dropped.

i) In Kyariko and Nyanduga in Tarime, if a teacher or visitor comes to the school or into the classroom, all the boys salute and the girls go down on their knees and touch the ground. This practice reinforces the differences between boys and girls and the inferiority of the girls. While the boys are given a military form of salute (which is not even a tradition since, according to the district workshop, it came from the Young Pioneers) the girls are supposed to show by their actions that they are inferior. This is not even a tradition of the Wakurya and the Luo who are the major ethnic groups in these villages. It has been imported from the Wajita.

ii) The division of labour at school exactly mirrors the traditional one. Therefore, in Tarime, girls do all the work for the male teachers - from fetching water and firewood to washing the dishes. The boys just do a little weeding. Similarly, in Hai, school mirrors the household division of labour. Girls fetch water and scrub the floors while boys do the weeding. In Kondoa boys will do the building while girls will clean the offices of the teachers. Also during the harvest, girls will clean and sift the grain. Furthermore, even during their leisure time, girls will be withdrawn to make tea, fetch water for the teachers and clean their offices. Sometimes they are sent to the market or into the garden to look for vegetables.

The teachers defended this situation by saying that they cannot go against the customs of that area and cause a conflict, or as one teacher from Hai euphemistically put it, 'we usually give them the work to which they are accustomed.' Such arguments are spurious since:

- In other aspects, such as greetings, they have already gone against the traditions. In addition, girls have been forced to do work which was traditionally and still is assigned to men and boys at home. In Tarime, girls are not supposed to cut long grass for thatching because they are not allowed to get on to the roof of a house (presumably because the elevated position of the roof might give a woman the wrong ideas!). But the major school project in Kyariko is the sale of grass for thatching. All pupils, including the girls, are periodically supposed to bring a bundle of grass to school for sale.
- Several parents said that school is a completely different space from home. School has already gone against many other customs and traditions anyway. Therefore it is not necessary to follow traditional division of labour in the school.

Therefore, while it is not being recommended that school can start a frontal attack on any tradition they don't like, the timidity shown just seems to be an excuse to maintain the unequal division of labour for their own benefit. As the Tunduru report comments, school work reflects the traditional division of labour out of a misunderstood idea that the school is a passive, unreflective part of the community. It is surprising, especially when one considers that many teachers have been through National Service where artificial divisions of labour were taboo. One wonders why they cannot transfer such experiences of equality to the school environment over which they preside.

A welcome contrast is the situation in Kagera, where, traditionally, the girls carry the grass for sitting on, but in the schools, even the boys carry it.

iii) If there is are visitors to the school or any activity which requires cooking, it will always be the girls who are called out to do it. This is connected to the Domestic Science syndrome which will be considered later.

iv) In Tarime, when a parent asks for permission for their daughter to stay at home and do all the housework, this permission is given almost automatically. This shows that the teachers, as the guardians, are continuing and consolidating traditional gender attitudes.

A further problem is the shortage of women teachers who might act as a break on such continuing inequalities, and also provide a role model for the girl children. Especially in remoter areas, there are almost no women teachers at all. In Tunduru, there was only one female teacher (out of 8) in Chilundundu, one (out of 7) in Nampungu and none (out of 9) in Mindu. Similarly in Kyariko, there was only one woman teacher.

Even when they are present they become (willing?) perpetrators of the same system. In Mbeya the female teachers continue to follow the traditional division of labour. They will teach domestic science and sew and cook for the visitors. In Nsongwi Mantanji, female teachers said that they did not believe that they could teach science and mathematics. Thus, alternative role models are distinctly lacking.

#### d) Curriculum

The curriculum also plays its part in contributing to gender bias. Although the Institute of Education claims to have made a thorough overhaul of its textbooks to eradicate gender bias and stereotyped roles, the Kondo report shows that some of the books, such as PET 1 and 3 and *Tujifunze Lugha Yetu 3* do reinforce stereotypes, for example the story of Kinogo (a girl) learning to cook. The science books also show more boys than girls.

Here, the curriculum and textbooks reinforce the conscious or unconscious gender biases of the teachers, such as those in Hai who claimed that the fact that science books do not show girls does not have any adverse effect on the attitudes of the children.



**e) Leisure**

During leisure time, boys and girls, at least theoretically, were equal but different since each group played with members of its own sex. However, we have already seen that girls are withdrawn to work for the teachers, or do other 'household' activities around the school. In addition, boys were definitely given priority as regards school equipment. In every school visited in Kondoa, there were footballs but no netballs. Similarly in Usari, while the boys played football, the girls had neither a netball nor a playing field.

By contrast, in Usari, girls were very prominent in 'cultural' activities such as choir, ngonjera etc. Some teachers claimed that this is because boys are not attracted to such activities but conversation with the pupils revealed that no effort had been made to encourage them to take part. The researcher commented:

"The idea that women are a source of entertainment or pleasure starts with young girls when they are at school."

Once again, we see school reinforcing, rather than challenging gender stereotypes.

**f) Children's attitudes**

In Mbeya, both teachers and parents claimed that boys have a greater understanding of the importance of education. However, the pupils in Gwitiryo said that girls liked education more than boys, only they had no time to study, a complaint echoed by the girls in Kondoa and Hai.

In Mbeya it was also noted that girls were equally competitive as boys until they reach the age of puberty. Maybe girls sense that, once they have reached the age of puberty, their chances of completing education decline, which is why the girls in Kondoa want to start primary education earlier.

In response to why they wanted education in the first place, both boys and girls in Kondoa said that they wanted to play a full role in society. They hoped that school would enable them to get a job, or failing that, set up a petty business. Many girls also, especially in Tarime, saw school as a place where they would learn to be better mothers and wives.

Children's attitudes to one another were also interesting. Everywhere, boys and girls tended to prefer sitting apart, though, at least in Tarime, this was not always the case. Both complained about the other. For example in Hai, the boys said that:

"We normally don't like sitting with girls at our desks because they sit as if they are selling *mchicha* at the market." (Boy - Narumu)

which says much about the way boys view the girls' role in life. They are also afraid of being 'debayed', the final insult in their eyes.

When girls sit in our desks or even talk to us, they are laughed at by their peers and told that they have a bad character and the boy who sat with the girl is told by his fellow boys that he has got a wife (Boy - Narumu)

The awareness of gender difference and the awakening of sexual feeling is very strong !  
By contrast the girls complain:

The boys provoke us and sometimes insult us. They are also big thieves (Girl - Longoi)

#### **g) Subject preference**

Science was the preferred subject of most boys in Kondoa, Muleba and Narumu, but girls also showed great interest in it, particularly in Muleba and Narumu. However, questioning in Usari showed that the girls lacked the practical experience. Whereas nearly all boys had made a light with a battery etc, and one Standard IV boy drew a correct circuit on the board, not a single girl had done the experiment. When challenged as to why, one girl said:

“We girls don't have time to play around with such things because we have a lot of work waiting for us at home when we return from school.”

Once again the division of labour, both at home and at school, severely disadvantages the girl.

#### **h) The Domestic Science syndrome**

Despite concerted efforts to present domestic science in a different light, all the boys interviewed disliked it. The best comment was by a boy in Hai who said that he hated domestic science although he did well in the subject. The reason for this was that ‘it deals with household matters’.

No male teacher was found teaching the subject and therefore it is still intimately connected in the minds of the boys with the household tasks that belong to the girl. Even girls themselves were ambivalent about it. In Kondoa, they liked it but in Hai, while they did not say they disliked it, they preferred science. It is a matter of speculation that maybe they were ashamed to say openly that they disliked it because that would mean denying the only role that society has officially left to them. It would be like denying your own self.

Therefore, it is no use for the exponents of Domestic Science to try and explain away such deep rooted feelings as misunderstanding the real nature of Domestic Science. The feelings are there and need to be confronted.

Finally, in Kondoa, boys interpreted handcraft as carpentry, whereas girls interpreted it as making decorations.

### **3.7 RITUALS**

Three important rituals in three different districts were noted for this age group.

**a) Unyago, msondo and jando**

In Tunduru, **unyago** or **msondo** for girls and **jando** for boys take place at the age of 6-9. In **msondo**, the girls are trained in the following:

- i) good manners, hard work, respect for the elders etc
- ii) the way their body works, in particular menstruation and how to care for themselves in this situation
- iii) sex education, particularly on how to satisfy their male partners

The last one is the most important.

The training lasts for 3-7 days and is conducted by a teacher known as **Nyakanga** (an old and respected woman). The girl going for training is known as **mwali** and has a guardian (**mkamusi**) who sees that the girl is properly fed and absorbs all the training. The training is mainly done through songs which are full of explicit sexual imagery. It is also said that the **Nyakanga** deflowers the young girls.

**Jando** for the boys is conducted in the bush and lasts for 1-2 months. An old man known as the **Mlombwe** is responsible for supervising and administering the training and circumcision is done by another known as the **Ngariba**. As with the girls, training is carried out through songs which very explicit sexual imagery.

The boys and girls pass out at the same time. The boys return to the village the night before passing out. Singing and dancing go on throughout the night, and the next day, which is also marked by the giving of presents to the boys and girls who are now considered to be adults and their names are now prefixed by **Che** which means an adult who has passed through the initiation training. From this time on, the **Ches** are expected to practise sex as a sign of their maturity.

Thus in Chilundundu, boys aged 9-12 said that they had girlfriends. They give them 5-10/- to have sex with them but during the cashew nut season, they can give as much as 200/-.

The first question of any outside observer is why the boys and girls are exposed to such training, which lead to sexual activity at a very early age, when they are so young. The answer to this question shows the limitations of any form of imposed or top down initiative, however well intentioned. The community are not stupid; they are fully aware that the children are too young and the Sheikh in Nampungu commented:

"We have legitimised the illegitimate, and vice versa."

Traditionally this initiation training was carried out when the boys and girls were already adolescents. However, since it meant withdrawing the children from school, the authorities cracked down on anyone who did so. Because such training was regarded as essential to all members of the society, they decided to lower the age in order to ensure that everyone

received the training, before they went to school, without any disturbance from the authorities. They succeeded in that objective, but the side effects of early sexual behaviour and indiscipline among the young are out of control.

**b) Lubulu**

In Hai, the Maasai also have a tradition which introduces girls to sex at a very young age. This is called **lubulu** or **orpuru** and is usually the time when the **moran** (young warriors) have been given a cow to go and eat with their friends. Girls as young as six years are taken to this feast by the **moran**, which also entails all night dancing. Among other things, the girls are introduced to sex. It is said that mothers themselves prepare their daughters for this by deflowering them with their fingers and they are very proud, and receive gifts, when their daughter has her first sexual experience.

**c) Circumcision**

In Kondoa, circumcision for boys and genital mutilation for girls are usually carried out when the children are aged 8-12 (if they have not already been circumcised because of the fear of **lawalawa**). It is believed that female genital mutilation is essential because a girl who does not go through with it won't get married and even if she does, she will not have children, and if she does have children, they will not survive beyond the age of two.

Boys are usually circumcised in health centres whereas girls are taken to the **Ngariba**. Among the **Waburunge**, FGM is one part of the rites of passage to adulthood. After the operation, the girl goes through the ritual of confinement for a period of a year or more. This means that she is also discontinued from school for fear that she will get pregnant.

While she is confined she is trained in all the customs, traditions and taboos as well as how to raise a family and manage a husband. She also has to go through various ordeals such as bathing in mud up to the neck after which she sleeps on sand and periodically uses her own urine to wash away the mud. She is not allowed to do any work, nor talk loudly, nor meet her father and she walks around naked from the waist upwards. For the first three days, she is fed like a baby by her aunt. Afterwards, her only feeding utensil is a plate made of pumpkin.

On the last day of her confinement she bathes in water and is greased in **samli** after which she is ushered out into the open with dancing and celebrations continue until the following morning. As will be seen in the next chapter on adolescence, a girl who has been through such initiation rites is expected to get married as soon as possible, usually within one week.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### ADOLESCENCE (12-18 YEARS)

#### 4.1 PUBERTY

In the life cycle of the girl child, the onset of puberty is one of the critical points of transition, when she begins to move from childhood to adulthood. That is why many traditional communities regard the age of puberty as the end of childhood. They, therefore, find it difficult to understand or accept the international definition of girlhood as being age 0-18. While the international community bases their analysis of girlhood on the idea that the girl is still growing and developing until the age of 18, for many ethnic groups, there is only one significant development and once the girl has reached that, she is already a woman.

This explains why the age of puberty in most of the areas where the research was carried out is the moment when the community changes radically in the way it sees its daughters. If the girl has already become a woman, at least potentially, then she should get married, since marriage is the most important milestone of a woman's life. Thus, in Tearoom, girls were married as early as age 12, in Lumuli, Iringa, 13, among the Wabarbaig immediately after puberty and among the Waburunge and Wasandawe immediately after puberty and *unyago*. In Tunduru also, girls were expected to marry very early.

Many communities believe also in the necessity of a rite of passage between childhood and adulthood. In some cases, this merely implies confinement and training in how to fulfil one's adult duties, such as in Tunduru, but in most areas where the research was carried out, this goes together with the ordeal of female genital mutilation (FGM).

Other reasons are also put forward for marriage immediately after puberty.

a) Once they have reached this stage, girls are capable not only of sexual relations but also getting pregnant, a matter which was a shame to all the ethnic groups if it happened outside marriage. The longer the marriage was delayed, the greater the chance of incurring shame, not only to the girl concerned, but also her family.

b) In addition to being shameful, premarital pregnancy also means that the bride price that is expected for the girl will either decrease or not be paid at all. Thus the parents regard this as a severe economic loss, as do the brothers very often who depend on the bride price paid for their sisters to find their own wife.

c) In many cases, such expectations of bride price were exacerbated by the greed of the parents, especially the father, as shown in Muleba, Tarime and Kondoa. Some men in Kondoa insist that their daughters get married because they have found a rich suitor. Such greed is also implied by the complaint of some men in Tarime that their daughters are corrupt because, instead of fighting for a higher bride price for the benefit of their father, they try and coax their father into reducing the bride price on the 'pretext' that their fiancée cannot afford it.

d) As a result of high bride prices, many boys and girls decide to elope without their parents' consent (Hai, Tarime). This benefits the boy who, in most cases, will still pay the bride price but in instalments, at his own speed, and probably at a lesser rate. Very often the girl agrees to elope with the boy for this very reason. However, traditionally among the Wakurya, such a tactic did not work as the relatives of the girl follow up the couple and confiscate the cattle of the boy. If he cannot pay the bride price agreed upon, the girl is forcibly returned to her father's home.

e) In some cases, parents are also afraid of intermarriage with other ethnic groups (Kondoa, Tarime and among the Maasai). There is the fear that their daughter is marrying into a family about which nothing is known. This is also one of the reasons why the Barbaig and the Maasai do not like sending their girl children to school.

## 4.2 FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

The reasons given for female genital mutilation (FGM) refer to training and social control.

a) In most cases, it goes hand in hand with confinement (for anything between a few days and two years). The isolation of confinement makes the person confined highly susceptible to suggestion (as even oppressive regimes know, hence their use of solitary confinement). Thus, when they are given intensive training the girls will not only listen but fully absorb the lessons they are given. In Kondoa and Hai, the girls are confined in the home whereas in Iringa, they are taken to the forest where they are both taught and mutilated. A girl who has reached the age of puberty in Iringa is not even allowed to meet her father until the mutilation has been carried out.

b) The ordeal of mutilation becomes a rite of passage into the desired status of womanhood, when the girl acquires a new status in her society. Such an ordeal imprints itself on the consciousness of the girl and influences her for the rest of her life.

c) The actual mutilation itself is carried out to control the later behaviour of the girl. Training by itself cannot control sexual desires, therefore all those parts which bring about sexual arousal must be removed. Thus the Wakurya and Wakine remove all the outer genitalia, and in Hai, traditionally, it was *ile kali* which means the same thing.

Thus, in societies where it is accepted as a natural law that men and women are expected to have different standards of behaviour, FGM becomes the key element in making women conform to those prescribed standards. The leader of the TBAs among the Maasai said:

"If a girl is not circumcised, she will not live in a good way with her husband. She will be jumping from one man to another and will finally be divorced."

Such sentiments were expressed everywhere and the old people, men and women, and the guardians of the traditions (in Tarime) considered that one of the primary causes of the breakdown of society was the weakening of this custom of FGM.

Girls are inculcated to accept this custom and to believe that without being mutilated, they cannot become full women, a rather ironic circumstance that removal leads to wholeness. This is achieved above all by pressure from society, and even the peer group. Thus in Hai, a girl who has not had FGM is despised and called *sambura* by girls of her age group. In other words she knows nothing and is like a small child even if she goes on to have children of her own. Among the Maasai, a woman who is not circumcised can never be called 'mother' even if she has children. Among the Wakurya in Tarime, girls who are not mutilated will be laughed at and scorned by their peers, for example when they go to bathe. Such social and psychological pressure for girls who will continue to live in their society is very effective. Girls (in Tarime) are also afraid that they won't get married without FGM.

The other reason for girls to accept willingly such mutilation is prestige in the community. She is showered with presents and the day of her coming out is a huge celebration with her at the centre, one of the few times a girl or woman will ever be the centre of attraction and the guest of honour at her own celebration (the other one is marriage). Thus in Kondoa, there is a big *ngoma* to signal the end of the confinement and the girl is clothed in leather and beads from the waist downward and offered many presents. Among the Wapare (and a few Wachagga living in Longoi) where the child has been mutilated at birth, she is given two days *unyago* training after completing primary school and is then dressed in beads around the waist, neck and head, while her breasts are left exposed. She is taken to the market where she is given presents in accordance with the way she dances. Celebrations mark the coming out of the girl, wherever FGM is carried out.

Thus, if there is to be any change in attitude towards FGM, it must involve educating the girls themselves. As one parent said in a village feedback workshop in Hai:

"We parents have no objection. It is the girls themselves who want it."

While there may be some element of self-justification, or defence in what the parent said, it is true that many girls look forward to the process as being a significant part of their lives. In Tarime, cases were cited of daughters who ran away from home to join their peers because their parents were against FGM for religious reasons.

Maybe this is because the girls never know what the experience will be like until they have been through it, by which time it is too late. It is obviously an extremely painful and traumatic experience although it was not possible to do any detailed follow up on this in the short space of the research. In Narumu, Hai, it was compounded by the fact that after mutilation the girl has to dance until the blood stops flowing. It was also reported in Tarime that FGM caused serious problems when giving birth, especially rupture and excessive bleeding. Several children said they did not want to go through FGM for precisely this reason.

However, as with so many traditions, FGM in the society is not a rigid, static custom. It is an area of change and struggle within the communities themselves, quite apart from any external influences and pressures.

a) The extent of the mutilation has greatly decreased. Nowadays, the most common form is *mkato wa CCM* (the CCM incision, a name which recognises the part played by political

campaigns in bringing about a change of attitude) whereby the **ngariba** or circumciser just draws blood slightly without removing anything. This can happen because the mother bribes the **ngariba** or because the girls themselves refuse anything more. The same is true in Hai, where **ile kali** has been replaced by a minor mutilation. Thus, there is a possibility that female genital mutilation is gradually becoming ritualised, whereby the shell of tradition is observed without any specific mutilation. This, of course, is not denying that the girl still has to undergo the traumatic and unnecessary pain of being cut in her private parts, however slightly.

b) Many girls are beginning to refuse point blank to be mutilated. In Gwitiryo, examples were given of 6 girls who refused in 1992 and were still accepted in the community. Another girl is now studying in Tabora Teaching College. Tarime Secondary School has also played a significant role in this. Girls who don't want to be mutilated (about 3-5 girls every year) request the school authorities to be allowed to stay at school during the holidays. Then, when parents come to request that their daughters be allowed to come home, they are unable to give the real reason, therefore it is easy for the school to refuse them, on the grounds that, if the girls had been studying in another region, they could not have returned home, and cite school regulations. Similarly, if girls request to go home during term time because it is **unyago** time, they are refused. There are no cases of girls running away from school to be mutilated.

c) Such resistance is possible because even the ideas of many of the grown ups are changing. It was argued that because many Kurya men have travelled extensively, especially in the army, they have seen and had relationships with and in some cases married women who have not been mutilated. Thus, they have seen that women who are not mutilated are no threat at all. On the contrary, it often leads to a more fulfilling relationship. Similarly, in Hai, many of the parents are no longer keen on the custom.

d) In some areas religious denominations have carried out a concerted campaign against the custom. Thus, in Tarime, the Seventh Day Adventists, who are very strong in the area, ostracise the family of any girl who has been mutilated. The Catholic Church has also campaigned strongly against it in Tarime, although in Hai, it seems to have been quiescent and acquiescent.

The change in attitude is reflected in Gwitiryo primary school where, when the children were asked, in a group to give their attitudes to FGM, all the boys were against the practice. Among the girls, 13 said they supported the practice, and 7 rejected it on the grounds that God was against it, some girls died in the process, and it led to a severe loss of blood. It is quite possible that if the girls had been interviewed individually, more would have expressed opposition to the practice, because there is still a fear of being rejected by their peers.

Therefore significant changes are taking place on the question of FGM. It is, currently a site of struggle since the **wazee wa mila** (the guardians of the tradition) have declared that the root cause of the breakdown of society is the fact that many women have not been properly circumcised or not circumcised at all. In order to stem the tide, they have decreed that all women should be circumcised a second time. However, despite the awe in which the **wazee wa mila** are held and the fear of their supernatural powers, women are openly opposing such an idea, and it has made no headway at all.

### 4.3 OTHER FORMS OF SOCIAL CONTROL

FGM and **unyago** are the most systematic and comprehensive forms of social control but, since all societies strongly discouraged premarital pregnancies, they did everything in their power to ensure that it did not happen.

#### a) Ostracism

The most common form was social opprobrium, and even ostracism. Whereas today, we tend to focus on the victim and look for ways of alleviating the problem, in the past, they were regarded as offenders whose punishment would act as an example to deter any other would be offenders. The most ferocious punishment was that of the Wachagga. It was not even necessary to get pregnant. Any boy and girl caught making love were placed in the same love making position at the crossroads and a wooden stake driven through them.

Similarly, the stress on virginity and marriage and the host of customs associated with shaming the girl who was found not to be a virgin also acted as a strong form of social control on girls. If, a girl did get pregnant, she was banished by the Wakurya and Wakine and then treated as if she didn't exist. No relative was allowed to visit her and even if she did give birth and, later, get married, no bride price for her was accepted. The Luo were a little more lenient. The girl was banished to her aunt for the time of her pregnancy and even if a man came forward to marry her, no bride price was accepted while she was still pregnant. However, after that, she was allowed to continue in society, although the stigma never left her. There are cases being cited now of old women coming back to their societies for the first time because they have been afraid of the stigma all their lives. In Kondoia also, the girl was scorned and the boy forced to pay a fine.

Similarly in Muleba, although the girl was only temporarily banished to her uncle's house since it was taboo to give birth in her father's house, the stigma lasted for life. Even when the woman grew up to be a grandmother, people still pointed at her and told the observer that she had conceived her first child out of wedlock. She was often forced to marry an older man and the stigma affected even her children, especially if her first born was a son. Traditionally on his wedding day, the son sings the praises of his clan and his mother who 'did not get married while already pregnant'.

#### b) Close supervision

Girls were closely supervised, not only by the parents but, in Tarime, more so by the grandmother (who was responsible for the upbringing of the child and who would be the one to be praised if the girl was still a virgin on her marriage day), and the brothers (who stood to gain from the their sister's chastity). One old Mwine said that, if there were no brothers, the girl was forced to sleep in the loft above her father's bed whereby she had to climb up on her father's bed in order to reach the loft. She even took a calabash into the loft with her in case she was taken short during the night.

#### **4.4 EARLY MARRIAGE**

This can also be regarded as a form of social control in that the girl was obliged to get married as early as possible in order to protect the family's status and investment. This was already a custom in many ethnic groups but in Hai and Tarime, and to a lesser extent Muleba, where the age of marriage was at least 18, the average age of marriage has decreased significantly as a way of getting the girl off to a husband before anything else happens. Usually the girl has little say in the matter.

The fact that the parents have turned to early marriage, despite knowing, according to their own traditions, that a girl is neither physically nor mentally prepared enough for marriage shows that early marriage is more a practice with a certain aim in mind than a God given tradition.

In Kondoa and Tarime, some girls are even taken out of primary school in order to get married. The decision to take the girl out of school was the father's. Because of a general fear of the long arm of the law, two main strategies are used.

a) With the collusion of the school, it is announced that the girl has been transferred. This was said to be a common practice in Tarime and Kondoa. The head teacher is given something, maybe a cow or two, for his compliance and the school register is marked that the girl has moved to some distant place. We have already told the story of the head teacher who was maimed for life for refusing to comply.

b) Also in Kondoa, the parents might announce that their daughter had died. Maybe in some sense this was accurate since she had died to them because in their eyes she was now a member of another clan.

The Maasai also marry off their girls of school going age whether they go to school or not (although the majority do not go to school).

However, the majority of girls are married immediately after they complete primary school. In Kondoa, nearly all the Wasandawe and 60% of the Warangi got married immediately after completion of primary school (sometimes without waiting to see the outcome of the examination results). The majority of fathers consider that their obligations to the government system are fulfilled provided that the girl has completed primary school. In Mbeya, Tunduru, Tarime, and Hai (among the Wachagga and Wapare) such early marriages are common, although, in the case of the Wachagga, the girl usually got married only if there was no opportunity for further education.

#### **4.5 PREMARITAL PREGNANCY**

Despite all the strategies mentioned above, premarital pregnancy is an increasing phenomenon and one which is causing serious concern in every community. In Longoi, 65% of girls get pregnant before marriage, and in Kyariko, an elder commented that:

"Girls who go to their husbands without a previous pregnancy are very few, or they have had an abortion."

In the statistics for the clinic at Shirati Hospital, there were 18 girls aged 13-14 who registered during the first six months of last year, and this year, although the records are not easy to follow, at least 15 girls aged 13-15 have registered. Of course some of these are married but the majority are not. In Mbeya, such pregnancies are so prevalent that the old women of Nsongwi Mantanji have suggested that girls be given sex education because they are overwhelmed with the task of looking after their grandchildren, and in one village the men now impose a 10,000/- fine on the father of any girl who gives birth to a child outside marriage who then dies.

Why has such a situation come about?

a) **First sexual experience**

Everywhere the research was carried out, it was discovered that children experience sex for the first time at an early age. In Kondoa, it was estimated that the age of first sexual experience was, on average, 10-13 for girls and 15 for boys while in Tarime, it was 11-12 for girls and 13-14 for boys. In Hai, the schoolchildren interviewed were asked to write on an anonymous piece of paper when they had their first experience. The average age was 12.

In some cases, the first sexual experience is even earlier, such as the case of **lubulu** among the Maasai and **unyago** (at the age of 6-9) in Tunduru after which the **Ches** were not supposed to say no to any man requesting to have sex.

Adolescents in Mbeya gave the following reasons for this.

Reason	Number of respondents according to village			
	Twindi	Igurusi	Nsongwi Mantanji	Total
Greed for money	41	27	42	80
Sexual attraction	10	27		37
Pleasure		2	11	13
Lack of parental support for basic necessities	18	40	15	73
Male sexual exploration		1	7	8
Lack of education	1			1

As can be seen from the table above, out of 207 adolescents interviewed, 151 gave reasons connected with the economic position of the family and the girl's need/desire for money (which is often caused by lack of parental support), while 55 cited sexual attraction and exploration. It is worth looking at these two reasons in more detail.

#### i) Money

Poverty contributes to premarital pregnancies in many ways. In Longoi, it was stated that the 65% of girls who got pregnant did so because there was no other way of making money to get the basic necessities they required. This is exacerbated by the rapid class divisions taking place in society. Girls see things belonging to their fellows, not necessarily very luxurious things, just a nice dress or shoes and a pair of earrings and they would like to look nice in the same way.

In Tarime, the girl is not only supposed to meet her own needs. Firstly, when she approaches her mother and asks for certain necessities such as Vaseline or a new dress, she is told to go and look for such things herself.

"Look at so and so. Do you think she disturbs her mother with such requests?  
She knows how to find them herself."

Of course so and so, who comes from a similarly resource weak household only knows one way of meeting her needs. Worse still, poor households come to depend on their daughters and they don't want to know how their daughters got the money. As one young man commented in Kyariko:

"When she comes back from the **chiro** (market) with a large fish, who will ask her how she got the fish?"

Therefore mothers either close their eyes to their daughter's behaviour or actually encourage her to get a boyfriend. And it is not only the mothers. Cases were given of grandmothers and brothers closing their eyes to the daughter slipping out of the house having been slipped a **khang** or a little money by the boyfriend.

However, as one woman commented, 'parents with enough means could never condone such behaviour', because the morality, health, future life and status of their daughter are all at stake. Thus, it is the girls who have nothing who go to the **disco vumbi** (local disco) which will be examined later as an integral part of the life of the young people around Shirati.

Similarly, in Mbeya, the majority believe that if girls had their own income generating activities, such behaviour would be greatly reduced since the impetus of necessity would not be there (although of course sexual desire and the desire for more goods would still play a role).

In this context, it was stressed that the parents, both father and mother, have an important role to play by being responsive to their daughters' needs as far as possible within the economic constraints that affect most families.



## **ii) Sexual attraction**

This is not something that can or necessarily need be controlled. However, what is essential here is family life education so that girls (and boys) know the consequences of whatever actions they take and how to control their own desires. Although this was particularly stressed in Mbeya it applies throughout the whole research area.

The problem as explained in the Mbeya report is that there is a need to educate young girls on the problems of early child bearing and provide them with the skills of pregnancy prevention (if they choose to be sexually active) including the skill of postponing sexual activity. There are no traditions to tell them how their bodies function reproductively and they are often very ignorant, such as the adolescent who claimed that a girl who has two sexual partners cannot get pregnant because the sperms from the two different men would be too busy fighting each other.

Parents have an important role to play in this as well but when asked where they learned about reproductive matters, the adolescents cited friends, siblings, church, booklets and posters but never their parents.

One would think that, particularly with the added threat of AIDS which will be analysed later, such education was self evident but there are still large numbers of men who claim that such education would lead to the behaviour they castigate as immoral. Thus, in Nsongwi Mantanji, the men claimed that MCH/FP clinics had already led to sexual misconduct by girls in the bars and that 'with young girls it will be worse. They thus refuse to face up to the fact that such behaviour is all around them and that maybe education by bringing such issues into the open will contribute to at least more informed behaviour, if not an actual change.

Three further reasons can be given.

## **iii) The lack of other opportunities**

When girls reach the age of puberty and begin to assess their future life, they see no future in front of them. Most of them have little or no hope of going to secondary school, they have no right to property, no independence in deciding how to build their own lives, no land or ability to set up their own income generating activity. Therefore it is hardly surprising in Mbeya, that while boys aim for higher education, girls dream of becoming sexually attractive, especially if they come from a poor family. By contrast, many girls in Tarime and Kondoa said that they had high hopes of continuing with their education, but they must know that such chances are so slim as to be almost non-existent.

## **iv) Socialisation**

This also plays an important part in the way the girl sees herself and how she can find a good life for herself. When asked about their expectations in life in Mbeya, the boys talked of getting education and a job and becoming somebody in society. Marriage and building a home were very subsidiary. By contrast the girls only thought of marriage or getting a partner.

Similarly in Tunduru, boys talked of getting a job, or becoming a business man while girls thought of marriage, becoming a housegirl or travelling to visit friends and relatives in Dar es Salaam and elsewhere.

Significantly, in those two areas, premarital pregnancies were very common, whereas in Narumu where girls are encouraged to study as the road to a better life, the incidence of premarital pregnancies was very low.

**v) Rebellion**

This was not a very serious cause of premarital pregnancy but at least one girl said that there were so many restrictions placed on her movements that whenever she did get the chance to escape, she went wild, as a result of which she got pregnant.

**b) Effects of this situation**

**i) Health of the mother**

Since nearly all these premarital pregnancies were conceived at an early age, the health of the girl was often seriously affected. Giving birth was a problem and rupture, anaemia and caesarian section were all mentioned. This is often compounded by the fact that the man who made her pregnant is nowhere to be seen, and she does not necessarily receive sufficient parental support. Sometimes she is no longer living at home and even if she is parental disapproval can have a serious effect.

A related issue is that of abortion. It was not possible in so short a space of time to do any research into this, but the Deputy Headmaster of Tarime Secondary School estimated that secret abortions by girls in the school could be as many as 10-20 a year. 3 girls have died of abortions in the last 16 years. Recent research as a part of the Safe Motherhood Initiative in Mufindi has shown that as many as 20% of all maternal deaths are caused by attempted abortion.

**ii) Life of the child**

Even if the baby is born safely, s/he is often not very welcome. In Mbeya girls leave them with their mothers and disappear. In Iringa and elsewhere they are often undernourished, in poor health, not cared for sufficiently, denied of equal chances to education. Thus, quite apart from the effects on this particular child, a vicious circle is set up whereby such children, when they grow up, will repeat the behaviour of their mothers. In Tarime, most of the children with severe malnutrition are children of young mothers whose fathers have no idea where the money for feeding their child comes from.

**iii) Incomplete education**

Pregnant girls have to leave school before completion. As will be discussed later, the numbers in primary schools are sometimes exaggerated, but significant numbers also drop out in secondary school.

#### iv) Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)

Gonorrhoea and syphilis, and what in Tarime is called **guruneti** (lymphogranuloma) are very prevalent among young people, especially in Tarime and Tunduru and among the Maasai. At the Gwitiryo dispensary, there were 6 new cases of syphilis during the first three months of this year. In Utegi, there have been 197 cases of STDs up to July (75 men and 122 women). In Tunduru, people don't like going to the health facility because they are told to bring their partner so they often (under)dose themselves or go to the Traditional Healer. One such healer in Chilundundu said that he treats about 10 people a month. The number of cases increases greatly during the cashewnut season when there is more money around and there are traders from outside (both men and women). This is similar to the **chiro** in Tarime which is held in a different centre on each day of the week. The **chiro** day is both market and festival and the guest houses are full on such days. One researcher sat in the guest house on the day of the **chiro** and watched a series of young girls going in and out with different men. Several men took more than one girl at a time.

Such STDs have many side effects. If not treated promptly, they can lead to barrenness, which, according to Shirati hospital is now a rapidly increasing problem. Barrenness in turn can lead to the breakup of marriages contracted later, or a search for children through other partners which only leads to more cases of STDs and/or HIV/AIDS. It is also common knowledge that a person with an STD is more susceptible to being infected with the HIV virus.

#### 4.6 HIV/AIDS

While it is not only connected with premarital pregnancies, HIV/AIDS is certainly connected with sexual activity, especially among young girls. In Shirati Hospital, where they have facilities for testing for HIV, the age difference between men and women is glaringly obvious.

Age	No of Girls	No of Boys
15-18	12	1
19-25	45	34

The girl child is therefore at serious risk. In Kyariko, the research village closest to Shirati Hospital, there are already 31 confirmed cases of HIV+. In Muleba, of course, HIV is very prevalent but in other areas it was still regarded as a town disease, since the only cases they saw were those of their sons and daughters who were brought home from the city either dead or dying. In Usari, they had buried a series of people in this way. They also mentioned one woman who had died recently. She was infected by her husband who previously stayed in Dar es Salaam for four years without coming home.

The fact that there were no actual cases in other places, such as among the Maasai, or in Tunduru, has led to disregard for the disease, even while the incidence of STDs shows that such societies are ripe for an explosion of HIV in their midst. In Tunduru, children can buy condoms for 1/- or 10 cashewnuts and use them as balloons. Most adults interviewed said that

they did not use condoms and many believed that condoms could remain in the womb of the woman or cause infertility. In Tarime, both boys and girls said that if a boy started to put on a condom, the girl is likely to exclaim 'oh, so you don't love me'.

Such attitudes and behaviour show that, although people are aware of the existence of HIV and even how it is transmitted, they know little else. In Muleba, education about HIV/AIDS is a part of the school curriculum but even there it seems to be insufficient. In Ngote primary school, for example, where there have only been two lessons, most of the children seemed to think that the diseases is mainly contracted by sharing pins for removing jiggers. Then there were many who knew that it was caused by *uasherati* (loose sexual behaviour) without being able to explain what *uasherati* actually means (though this could partly be shyness about using explicit sexual terminology). In Omurunazi, there had still been no lessons and the children did not know really what HIV was all about. Finally, many girls said they did not like the classes about this. If they are taught in the same unimaginative way as many other topics are, this would be hardly surprising and it is not difficult to predict that formal HIV/AIDS education will have little effect.

Still, such education is better than nothing and up to the time this research was being carried out, the School AIDS programme was still not operational in the schools themselves, although in several areas teachers had been trained. Children in Mbeya said they learnt about AIDS mainly from pamphlets and some teaching in church and elsewhere, together with the GTZ project. There was still a lot of ignorance. Thus a girl in Kyariko said that, provided the man did not have sores on his body and was not thin, there was no problem. Another boy said that before marriage both he and his partner would go to be tested but he admitted that he already had one sexual partner and neither of them had been tested.

The other form of teaching was directed at the specific target group of barmaids and hotel workers along trunk routes. Shirati was also included in this and while the researcher was very happy to see that such education was being done, it did not seem to be the major priority. During the three weeks of the research, two different groups of health educators came all the way to Shirati to talk to the barmaids and hotel workers, who cannot have numbered more than about 20, while the sexual activities of the vast majority, especially on the day of the *chiro* went completely unaddressed. This is even more the case since it seems that barmaids are the most likely to know the importance of and demand the use of the condom, unless economic circumstances force them to submit to a man anyhow. Thus, it would seem to be a case of preaching to the converted, while the unconverted, who are the vast majority and may be as sexually active, continue in their pristine ignorance.

In conclusion, there seems to be, at least up until the time of the research, very little systematic and imaginative targetting of young people who are the most sexually active and who, as we have seen already, start sexual activity at a very early age. Once again, it is difficult to understand the reluctance of senior members of society to start an open campaign on such issues under the pretext that it will encourage loose behaviour. One almost feels that they regard HIV as a scourge which is striking down anyone who indulges in sexual behaviour and therefore it is only right that they should remain ignorant unto death. Even in *unyago*, girl children are taught how to please their husbands, particularly sexually, and even traditional methods of birth control, but nothing is said about safe sex. This is a sign that

parents too need education on the issue of AIDS itself and how to approach it with their children.

There have however, been some changes in behaviour. In Kondoa it was reported that the incidence of premarital pregnancies had decreased since people were afraid of the disease and that more men were using condoms.

In Muleba, also, the incidence of old men marrying or seeking sexual relations with young women or girls has greatly decreased because of the stigma attached to an old man who would then contract HIV. His relatives will say, especially if he abandoned his older wife in favour of a younger one that 'he courted disaster himself by wanting a young wife. So let him take care of himself'.

There are two unfortunate ironies about this situation.

- i) In many cases, the old, or not so old man, has been encouraged by his socialisation, if not actively spurred by his relatives into doing everything within his power to make sure that he produces as many babies, especially boys, to ensure the posterity of the clan. Yet the very ones who spurred him the most are the first to abandon him if he becomes ensnared in the process of fulfilling their wishes.
- ii) If an older man contracts HIV after marrying a young wife, it is always the young wife who is blamed. No one thinks of the previous sexual activity of the old man. Thus the young woman is frequently demonised by society as being the cause of the spread of HIV, quite forgetting that in every circumstance, it takes two fingers to squash the louse.

#### **4.7 COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS CAUSED BY EARLY SEXUAL ACTIVITY**

##### **a) Early marriage**

As seen earlier in this chapter, there has been a tendency for parents to convince or force their girl children to get married early, even in those areas where, traditionally, girls did not get married until they were at least 18 for the very good reason that they were not ready for marriage. In some cases, this also applies to boy children. For example, among the Wakurya where cattle rustling is endemic, if the daughter gets married and the bride price is received, the son is prevailed upon to get married as soon as possible so that he can pay the bride price before the cattle accruing to the family through the bride price for the girl are stolen. Sometimes, the boys are even withdrawn from school for this purpose.

However, while this solution may at least spare the family a little embarrassment and ensure that at least the father gets hold of the bride price, in terms of the welfare of the girl children and society as a whole, this solution has been about as effective as digging one hole to fill in another. As one parent said:

"They get married before their time. They have not been given any training. Their breasts have still not appeared."

Therefore:

- i) If she becomes pregnant quickly, she gets problems in delivering.
- ii) Conflict and physical violence have greatly increased. Both the husband and wife are still immature as a result of which there is permanent friction. Then the husband beats the wife. Alternatively, the wife sees marriage as torture. One Standard Seven girl in Kyariko said she didn't want to get married because:

"Your husband marries you and leaves you on your own. All my sisters have got problems. They do all the work. All the husband does is eat the food which has grown cold because he was not there at meal time and go to sleep."

Because she is still immature, the wife also gets problems with her mother in law. Traditionally they are supposed to share the same cooking pot but she often fails to get on well with her. In such conflicts the husband wavers between supporting his wife and his mother. In one case study from a village neighbouring Kyariko, the husband, out of love and concern for his wife, actually advised her to go to her home temporarily, to escape harassment from her mother in law.

- iii) Many of these marriages end in divorce. Therefore the intention of the parents to make their children marry early in order to have a secure life, backfires. After divorce, at an age when, in earlier times, she would not even have got married, the woman is now on her own, and probably with several children to look after. If she does not get married again, she is, according to tradition, completely free. For example one woman in Kyariko got married at 16, had three children and was divorced at the age of 20. She has no chance of getting a job or starting her own project. Life has nothing to offer her.

When other young wives grow up they no longer want their husbands. And

These days if your wife wrongs you she does not run back to her parents but rather to another man because he will give her the money for all her requirements

The above is clearly shown in the records of the Ward Tribunal in Mkoma Ward. Early marriage, either because the girl was forced, or because it was an escape from the poverty of her own home, together with lack of sexual fulfilment (due to the partner having other lovers) were the two main causes of marital conflict and divorce. In Tunduru, it was estimated that most early marriages break up within one year.

Alternatively, as in Kondoa, attempts to marry off girls earlier has led to suicide (attempts), which was also noted in Tarime, and abscondment and migration to town

(a phenomenon also noted in Mbeya). Most girls and boys said they did not want early marriage because they felt that they were not yet ready for the business of looking after a household.

The situation is compounded when, for example, girls with children are married off to anyone, as a way of getting rid of the problem, such as becoming the second wife, as used to happen in Hai, or to an old man in search of (boy) children in Muleba, or **nyumba mbhoke** in Tarime, which is a refuge for the girl who already has children.

#### **b) Paternal strictness**

When girls reach the age of puberty, many fathers (and mothers) begin to be very strict about the movements of their daughters. They are not allowed to go out of the house, even for legitimate activities such as singing in the church choir. Such strictness does not seem to work, as shown by the girl who, in her own words, ran wild every time she managed to get out of the house. This is especially true in situations where the father (and sometimes the mother) had not been concerned in any way about the upbringing and behaviour of their children. Thus this sudden attempt at paternal authority is neither understood nor accepted by the daughter who just sees it as unjustifiable interference by a semi-alien. It is at this point that the irresponsible father reaps what he sowed when the girl was still small.

The shock of discovery about the behaviour of their children often leads to serious over reaction when the father might beat his child with blind fury, thereby injuring the child so badly that s/he has to be taken to hospital. The hospital refuses to treat the injured child until a report has been given to the police, as a result of which the father is hauled in for questioning and sometimes imprisoned overnight. He returns home full of resentment and the domestic arena becomes even more of a battlefield, or the father decides to wash his hands of the whole painful business once and for all.

In Mbeya, fathers even suggested that girls be subjected to virginity tests, a suggestion as impracticable as it is inequitable. Similarly, the fathers of daughters who gave birth outside marriage and whose children subsequently died were fined 10,000/-. This practice has, however, not succeeded in reducing the number of pregnancies. In fact it has led to increased allegations of evil spirits being used to kill the babies so that those who are paid the fines benefit. It is an income generating activity. The other solution is to force the boy to marry the girl, if he is foolish enough to stay around, and such unions rarely last very long.

#### **c) Permissiveness**

Other parents choose exactly the opposite path and allow their children to do whatever they like based on the principle 'what the eye doesn't see the heart doesn't grieve'. They won't ask their children where they spent the whole of the previous night (Tarime, Kondoa, Iringa). In Msosa they allow even primary school girls to sleep with their boyfriends and go to school from their boyfriend's house. When the teacher tries to at least reprimand the girl on this she replies, 'I only slept with him yesterday', as if it was the most natural thing in the world. Similarly, they make no effort to find out the kinds of videos their young girls and boys are watching or the other leisure activities they are engaged in. In Tarime where there is a

particular kind of disco where it is well known that girls are auctioned to the highest bidder, parents do not want to go to the disco to see what happens because, they claim, they know they will get shocked. Finally, whenever evidence is produced of their child's behaviour, they will cover up for their child instead of bringing up the matter with them.

Such permissiveness, which, it must be added, is only a continuation of the earlier abdication of responsibility, has contributed to other social evils as well. In Muleba and Tarime, drug abuse is widespread among adolescents; in Mbeya, the young people said that a major cause of migration to the cities was parental lack of concern; in Lumuli, and the disco vumbi of Tarime, rape is not an uncommon occurrence.

It seems that many parents, waking up too late to what is happening to their children, are at a complete loss as to how to react to what seem to be aliens in their own households and therefore resort to washing their hands. Once again, parents reap what they sowed at an earlier age when they did not build up a close relationship with their children. In Muleba, when the researchers presented the list of problems faced by young people identified by the adolescents they talked to, such as drug abuse for boys and girls, parents could not believe it. Many were openly surprised and a few were shocked.

This is especially true of fathers who often complain that the mothers are turning their children against them. They are traditionally the disciplinarians of the family but when they take on this role at this age it is too late, and it is no use blaming the mother who at least maintained a relationship with her children.

However, not all community members have given up by any means. First of all, there are many concerned parents, mothers and fathers who have been very committed to bringing up their children in the best possible manner since they were born and who continue to do so during the difficult years of adolescence. There are many also who recognise that there is no returning to the certainties of the old days and the old ways and that new solutions have to be found.

#### **d) Family Life Education**

The women of Nsongwi Mantanji suggested that pregnancy prevention programmes should be introduced for young girls because they were tired of being left to take care of unwanted grandchildren. The suggestion was rejected by the men but similar suggestions were also made in Tarime. The point is that such education is not teaching the girls any new behaviours, but rather how to control them. Frequently the girl who gets pregnant is the one who is the more innocent. The cunning ones knew about such things a long time ago and know how to take care of themselves. So even from a position of punishment for the crime, it is the wrong ones who are being punished with a life sentence and, in the case of HIV/AIDS, with the death penalty.

#### **e) Acceptance and Counselling**

The time when a young girl discovers that she is pregnant can be a very traumatic one. She has no idea how to deal with the situation; she is afraid of what everyone will say and do to



her, from her boyfriend to her parents to the rest of society; her body is going through changes she probably does not understand; frequently the stress is increased when the father to be rejects the pregnancy, and of course if her parents also reject her. This is why, whatever one's stand on the issue, there is a need for showing the girl that she has not been cast out by society and that pregnancy is not the end of the world so that she can turn her gaze to the future instead of futile regrets and often hasty decisions such as abscondment, suicide or unsafe abortions.

Parental acceptance is now fairly widespread and tales of girls being kicked out of the home and totally disowned by their parents are on the decrease. However, there is a need to increase counselling services, above all for the girl but also for her parents as they come to terms with a situation which they probably abhor.

## **4.8 SCHOOL**

Schooling is another solution to the situation since, by turning the eyes of the young people to the future benefits of hard work and sacrifice, it enables them to put aside the temptations of the present. While this may be a cliché, it is borne out by the significantly fewer pregnancies in those areas where schooling for girls is stressed, such as Usari.

The problem is, particularly in these days where parents and communities are expected to shoulder ever increasing costs for education without a corresponding increase in their incomes, the solution of schooling is not a viable one for most, unless a concerted effort is made to give support to the whole educational system. This is by no means a strange or extravagant suggestion since the social costs of dropouts, ignorance, early pregnancies and marriages, and antisocial behaviour caused by frustration are far greater than what is required to reestablish the education system which once gave hope to so many.

### **4.8.1 Attendance**

Throughout the research area, there is no clear pattern concerning the attendance of boys and girls, although it seems that in Mbeya (except Nsongwi Mantanji), Hai, and Tunduru more boys than girls play truant and drop out. The one thing that is absolutely clear is that both boys and girls are playing truant and dropping out at every increasing rates. Thus in Katoke primary school an average of 49 children drop out every year, 26 girls and 23 boys. In Kyariko, only 69% of the pupils who registered in Standard One have made it to Standard Seven this year.

In addition, the real rate of drop outs is hidden by the policy of the Ministry of Education which requires a very long process before it is finally declared that a child has been struck off the register. Thus, while there may not be so many official dropouts, there are very large numbers of permanent truants. For example, in Gitagasembe primary school in Tarime, the average daily attendance is 50-52% only. In Nyanduga primary school for the month of April, 62 boys and 36 girls were serious truants.

**a) Pregnancy**

However, it is worth, at this stage, pointing out that despite popular perceptions, pregnancy is not the overriding reason for girls dropping out. It is important to stress this because, while it is a serious issue, it should not be one that occupies all our attention, especially considering that the major reasons for truancy and dropping out are precisely the ones that contribute also to pregnancy in schools. Thus, even in Tunduru where, as we have seen, sexual activity starts very early, on average one girl a year gets pregnant in Chilundundu and Nampungu and one girl every three years in Mindu. Similarly in Usari the rate is one girl every three years. In Nyanduga it is one a year and in Kyariko, two girls got pregnant before reaching Standard Seven.

**b) Reasons for dropping out**

From responses given by the children themselves in the research areas, three major reasons were given:

**i) Poor parental attitudes**

This was expressed in Tunduru, Muleba, Mbeya and Tarime and manifests itself in several different ways. It is a product of both ignorance about school and disillusion with the nature of the school.

- Household labour. Girls are registered later for school and even when at school are frequently withdrawn from school to look after younger siblings, fill in the gap left by the mother if she is sick or away travelling, run errands (even boys) and deal with any other emergency at home, such as a death in the family (Muleba, Tarime, Kondoa, Hai, Mbeya)

Alternatively, girls arrive at school late because they have to do the household chores first (Hai, Tarime).

- No support, in terms of providing the necessities for school such as uniform, exercise books etc (Mbeya, Tarime). In Kyariko, there were several children who had had to pay for their own education all the way through, by making and selling charcoal, cultivating peoples' shambas etc. The father of one of these is one of the richest people in the village.

In Kondoa, it was said that the problem was particularly acute for those with stepfathers and mothers, a fact which applies also to the many orphans in Muleba. In the school of Kimbugu alone, there are 62 orphans, 36 without a father, 13 without a mother, 11 with neither mother nor father and 2 with no relatives at all.

- Late enrolment means that the girls feel out of place in the higher forms after reaching the age of puberty (Hai, Kondoa)
- Marriage (Tarime, Kondoa, Mbeya, Muleba)

- Family problems, including divorce, problems of polygamy and the foul language of the parents (Mbeya)
- Local customs such as **lubulu** and **msondo**

ii) Poor school environment

The school does not provide an environment which attracts the children to continue attending or see any point or relevance in attending.

- Lack of equipment such as desks and textbooks (Kondoa, Mbeya, Muleba, Tarime)
- Excessive time devoted to self reliance activities (Tunduru, Tarime)
- No meals at school, especially taking into consideration that, in most cases, they ate nothing before going to school, and in the case of the girls, they had already done several household chores demanding a lot of energy such as fetching water or cleaning out the kraal before they went to school (Tunduru, Kondoa). The children of Kondoa also mentioned that many of them cannot go home to eat during the midday break because their homes are too far away.
- Distance from home (Tunduru, Kondoa)
- Shortage of teachers (Muleba) and even the ones that are there don't necessarily come to class (Tarime)
- Poor academic performance (Kondoa)

iii) Economic pressures

Boys and girls, but mainly boys, dropped out of school to devote themselves to family or individual income generating activities such as herding (Longoi, Tarime, Kondoa), fishing (Tunduru, Muleba, Tarime), paddy farming (Longoi) and hunting (Tunduru, Kondoa). Many others devoted themselves to petty business (Hai, Tunduru, Mbeya, Kondoa, Tarime). In Usari, Hai, boys were particularly encouraged to do this by the well known examples of men who had been very successful in business without any education, and in Tarime the business was devoted particularly to the border trade.

Thus it can be seen that, given the dilapidated state of the primary schools and the inadequate chances of further education, and the impossible costs that further education will entail, large numbers of both parents and children regard the short term gains from income generating activities as being far more important than hypothetical long term gains.

It should also be noted that the major reason for boys dropping out was an involvement in economic activities from which they would benefit personally, while girls were withdrawn to do the household chores, from which she would not benefit in any way, even financially.

Other reasons mentioned for truancy and dropping out were peer pressure and drug abuse (Mbeya).

#### 4.8.2 Performance

With the exception of one or two schools in the villages studied the performance for both boys and girls is dismal. There is no Standard Five in Gitagasembe primary school this year because only two children passed the Standard Four examination last year.

Many children also leave schools semi or completely illiterate. In Nampungu, Tunduru, the number of illiterate Standard Seven leavers was as follows.

Year	Boys		Girls	
	Number	%	Number	%
1992	2/16	12.5	7/3	33.3
1993	2/24	8.3	5/16	31.25
1994	1/26	3.8	4/7	57.1

It is also worth noting that, not only is the percentage of girl illiterates substantially higher but also that far fewer of the girls even complete primary school, which means that the number of young illiterates, especially girls, in the community must be increasing very rapidly.

In Tarime also, parents made a similar claim that children leave school not even able to write a letter. When the researchers tried to verify this by asking Standard Seven children in Kyariko to write a letter, out of 12 letters, 2 were almost illegible and one was almost incomprehensible. However, they were not able to verify how much this is due to truancy and other factors, rather than inadequate teaching, which was of course the assumption of the parents.

Performance is also measured by the numbers of children going to secondary school. For the majority of the parents this is the most important measure of all. Thus, when in the whole of the division of Nyancha only 12 children are selected for secondary school, or in Nampungu and Chilundundu no children have been selected in 10 years, it is very easy for parents to castigate the performance of the schools and their children and lose faith in education altogether. A vicious circle is created whereby children are discouraged by the poor results of their elders, apply themselves less to their studies, are less supported by their parents and do even worse than their predecessors thereby further discouraging the next batch.



The situation was hardly better in many other schools. In Mindu, on average, one child a year goes to secondary school, in Longoi and Kyariko only 2 have gone to secondary school in the last ten years.

The reasons are not hard to come by. Although many parents may believe (with some justification) that town children are preferred over village children, and that the rich and powerful can use their money and influence to further their children's studies, there are built in handicaps to most village children going to school. Their primary schools tend to be less well equipped and the more dynamic teachers tend to gravitate to the town schools. Then, while the village child uses the time after school to work for the teachers, or in the schools self-reliance activities to pay for the multiple **michango**, or at home in the household chores or income generating activities to pay for school necessities, the town child goes home and prepares him/herself for tuition. Tuition is unheard of in many village schools and it is precisely these extra hours, where the town teacher works even harder in order to maintain her/his reputation and therefore supplementary income that town children gain an edge over their village counterparts. This is quite apart from the home environment where books and the light to read them by are available in many homes.

#### a) Performance of the girls

The general perception of teachers (Hai, Tunduru, Tarime) is that girls often start well and

lead in the early classes but lose ground at the age of puberty when, while their brothers decide to knuckle down to study, they turn their attention to other issues.

This, however, is not always supported by the facts. In Usari, girls were top of the class all the way through to Standard Seven in 1993 and more went to secondary school (10 girls and 6 boys). This year also, girls are leading in Standards Six and Seven. In Longoi, boys are leading in Standards One to Four while higher up it is the girls who are leading and if it happens that any child is selected for secondary school it has always been a girl.

Similarly in Kyariko, the only two who have gone to secondary school in the last 10 years have both been girls. This shows that there is also a class issue involved. Leaving aside for a moment the important issue of the amount of time lost by girls in household activities, the economic status of the parent or guardian may matter more than the gender of the child.

In Nyanduga, however, out of 17 children who have gone to secondary school in the last 3 years, 16 have been boys and only one has been a girl.

In conclusion, therefore, the major factor working against girls is that their performance is inevitably influenced by the multiple demands on them, at home and at school which only perpetuates and strengthens the home divisions (Hai, Tarime). Not only do the girls have less or no time to study, but they have no time for leisure activities to play, and experiment and meditate (Hai, Kondoia).

They are also strongly influenced by the sexual roles they have to play, particularly in Tunduru and among the Maasai, and by the low expectations of the community. As one teacher commented in Kondoia:

"It once happened that a girl performed better than boys at Mongoroma primary school and was selected for secondary education. This became an issue for the whole village since it was unthinkable."

Year	Candidates		Selected for secondary school	
	boys	girls	boys	girls
1980	2174	2176	24	89
1990	2242	2342	129	90
1991	3746	4140	140	101
1992	2447	2616	122	96
1993	3715	3749	129	96

Government policy also reflects an awareness of the multiple handicaps faced by girls, which explains why there is a lower pass mark for girls to enter coeducational schools to allow more

of them to enter. However, parity is still not achieved as the statistics for Kondoa district show.

While there were more girls than boys sitting for the examination, far fewer were selected to go to secondary school.

Similarly, while parents in Tarime recognised and supported government preferential treatment, they also commented that unless the structural issues which force a girl to perform less well are addressed, such actions will not create any meaningful change as she will only fail at a higher level. Such an observation is borne out by the facts, as will be shown later in this chapter.

## 4.9 OPPORTUNITIES AFTER PRIMARY SCHOOL

*We see nothing but total darkness in front of us. You have forgotten us (Boy - church choir leader - Tarime)*

Once again, the situation facing boys and girls after school is a very bleak one. There are very few educational opportunities, and very few employment opportunities. Very few have the skills and the capital to set up their own business. Hence the despairing cry of the boy above.

### 4.9.1 Further education

#### a) Secondary education

For the majority of young people, the major hope of education was government secondary schools. However, in many areas, this applies only to a very small percentage. Thus in the whole of Kondoa district last year only 124 boys (4%) and 96 girls (2.56%) were selected to go to secondary school. In Nyancha division, Tarime, a mere 12 children were selected. In many schools, not a single child gets the chance of secondary education for years on end. And nowadays selection does not necessarily mean that you will go. Just the expenses outlined in the joining instructions are prohibitive, let alone the fees.

Of course, they can always be sent to private secondary schools, but again in areas where subsistence farming means just that, such an option belongs to the land of the imagination. One boy in Kyariko, whose mother had struggled with petty trading in order to keep him at primary school confidently told us that she would be able to pay for his secondary education but unfortunately he had not been able to take the entrance examination form because they did not have the 500/= required. In Kondoa, Kurio secondary school reserves 15 places every year for Sandawe girls, but only 5 are filled. This is partly a question of parental commitment but largely one of financial constraints.

Thus, in order to continue with secondary education, children are dependent on the financial ability and the commitment of their parents and other relatives. In some villages, such as Usari, Nsongwi Mantanji, Gwitiryo and Ugwachanya, many parents might have the financial means owing to a fairly well developed village economy but in other places it is only a very small minority who can afford the expenses.

In terms of commitment, it is only Usari where it is seen that parents place a high priority on secondary education for their children, both girls and boys, and this is reflected in the number who actually go to secondary school (16 last year). Elsewhere, a whole series of constraints appear.

**i) Fear of bewitchment**

Parents in Iwindi (Mbeya) and Longoi (Hai) said that they were afraid of sending their children (especially girls) to secondary school because they will be bewitched.

**ii) Fear of pregnancy**

This has already been dealt with earlier. In Kondoa, the Warangi marry off 60% of their girls, even before the results are out. The Kondoa report calls such fears unfounded, but, unfortunately, this is not entirely the case. Unlike primary school, at least in some areas where the research was done, significant numbers of girls got pregnant. In Masonga secondary school near Kyariko, out of 35 girls in Forms 1 and 2, 6 had already got pregnant.

This question of pregnancy is, of course, contributed to by other factors. When the researcher probed as to the reason for such a high number, it was usually connected with insufficient means. The parents have often just managed to scrape together the school fees but have nothing else. Thus the girls walk to school hungry and walk back hungry; they have no money for other necessities or even to keep up with their colleagues in terms of dress etc; they are affected by the same culture that prevails in the area that girls should look for their own necessities. Several boys have also dropped out of the same school for the same financial reasons.

**iii) Fear of rebellion**

In many of the research areas, parents were strongly opposed to intermarriage with other ethnic groups, or marriage without their consent. They felt that secondary school took their children away from them even more, and the end result was rebellion and the loss of their children. This was particularly relevant to girls. If they married far away, how would the parents get the bride price?

Thus, while very many of the boys and girls interviewed expressed a strong desire to continue with education, such desires were unlikely to be fulfilled in the majority of cases.

**iv) Academic performance**

In many places also, even with the strongest of parental support and the maximum desire on the part of the children, the possibility of continuing with education is almost non-existent. As said in an earlier section, a child who misses many of his/her classes because the teacher is not present, is involved in self-reliance activities instead of tuition, has few books even in the classroom let alone at home faces multiple obstacles to being able to compete with more fortunate children, especially those in town. Even if there are day secondary schools in the village such schools are also well known in many areas for a desperate shortage of staff and



equipment so that the possibility of even getting a certificate after four years of secondary education is low.

Parents are very aware of this and complain bitterly about the entrenchment of the class system that the present policies are encouraging.

**b) Other educational opportunities**

These are almost non-existent in all the research areas. Teacher Training for primary school leavers has been phased out; technical education hardly exists; adult education programmes or evening classes are very rare, or confined to urban areas. Thus wherever they look, the children, who are well aware that they lack the knowledge and skills to confront life, see no opportunities at all.

**4.9.2 Employment**

**a) Formal employment**

In Kondoa, almost all the boys and girls felt it was important to secure a job after school but once again, the opportunities open to a primary school graduate in the formal sector are minimal except, maybe, as labourers. Thus many boys in Mbeya look for work with MECCO or on plantations and boys in Usari who have no capital of their own try to get it by working as labourers for other villagers. Also, in Mbeya, Tarime, Kondoa and Iringa, girls who migrate to town in search of employment end up as domestic workers or barmaids.

**b) Self employment**

*Overall, no young man is prepared just to stay at home without having his own income generating activity (Hai report)*

Boys, however, were not to be defeated by the lack of educational and employment opportunities. They set out to find their own way of making a living.

**i) Agriculture**

In Msosa, boys did not migrate to town because agricultural projects are viable and they were able to make a reasonable living. Similarly, in Longoi, boys rented farms and in Gwitiryo there were several youth agricultural groups.

However in other areas agriculture was not an attractive proposition. In Mbeya, some boys tried but the constraints of unpredictable and inclement weather, a lack of land, a lack of capital for the necessary inputs, delays in paying the coffee money and theft all discouraged them.

In Kyariko and Nyanduga, semi permanent drought similarly discouraged young people. While it is fashionable to blame young people for leaving the villages, it is hardly surprising that they are reluctant to accept the subsistence, and in other places, sub-subsistence existence

of their parents and look for other alternatives even if those alternatives end in failure for many of them.

ii) Pastoralism

Among pastoralist groups such as the Maasai, Barbaig and Wakurya, boys automatically continued with the pastoralism of their fathers. In fact Barbaig boys are forbidden to take part in trading as it might distract them from looking after the cattle.

iii) Trade

In border areas, such as Tarime, many boys take part in the legal/illegal border trade and some get a lot of money in the process. However, for the vast majority of boys everywhere, as well as the girls in those areas where they are allowed to trade, such trade can only be called subsistence trading. They make a small amount of money to meet their immediate needs and no more.

Thus, in the majority of cases, subsistence agriculture and business are highly precarious activities. That is why the feedback workshops, while recommending that self-employment should be the goal for young people, it cannot be achieved unless the government, in collaboration with the communities, lay down an infrastructure of training, access to capital (through loans etc) and land.

c) Dependence

There is one significant difference between the trade of the boys and the girls, as noted in Hai. While whatever money the boys might make or property/goods they might acquire belong to them, the money made by girls is usually absorbed into the family income. In Hai also, on the day she goes to her husband, a girl has to leave behind every scrap of property she has managed to acquire.

However, as noted in Muleba, even the boys are often not free, especially when they continue their to live in their parents home. They have to follow their father's wishes and, even if they have an independent income of their own, they cannot question their father's decisions or contribute their own views to the best way of improving the family's welfare.

In Muleba, the solution was seen to be to bring the post primary school children together into agricultural groups so that they could become more independent. However, the young people were not entirely happy with this either. Most of them thought that change should come from the boys and girls themselves, that is, they should decide on their own.

In Tarime, this was seen from the opposite perspective where fathers complained that, once their children got an independent source of income, they no longer respected their fathers. There is probably some truth in these allegations and many examples were given of young people using their money on drinks and drugs, but part of it is caused by the children having different views from their parents.

#### **d) Migration**

When such dependence became too constricting, abscondment and migration to towns were seen to be the only answer. Originally, in Muleba, it was only boys but now even girls are running away from home in the search for an independent life. In Mbeya it was stated that young men flock to town to escape from mistreatment by their parents, especially harsh conditions imposed by unstable or broken marriages of their parents.

#### **4.9.3 Opportunities for girls**

If opportunities for boys are few and far between, the boys still live in a land of light by comparison with the darkness facing the girls. If they stay at home, in most cases they will continue with the household chores they have been doing all their lives. While boys go outside the home to seek an income, large numbers of girls in Kondoa, Muleba, Mbeya, Tarime etc are expected to stay at home and work with their mothers until they are married. Their labour is not recognised but just taken for granted and any aspirations to a different life are dismissed.

In some cases, they are allowed to participate in trading, again usually in support of their mothers, as for example among the Waburunge. The Barbaig allow their girls to trade in soda ash, leather clothing and milk, as long as it is within their community. The Warangi, Sandawe and Wanyaturu do allow their women and girls to engage in trade, especially as the economic constraints force them to supplement the family income. In Usari, a few girls were also allowed to engage in petty trade in items such as tomatoes, onions, soap and kerosene but, as we have noted before, none of what she acquires belongs to her.

Above all, girls are expected to remain at home and wait for marriage to usher her into a "new world of independence" in her own home. The reality of that will be examined in the next section.

Increasingly girls are not prepared to accept such an option and are migrating to towns in search of a better life. In Mbeya, one of the main reasons for girls' migration was to escape from near slavery conditions at home whereby they do all the domestic labour. They may do so by eloping with their boyfriend in the belief that they will develop a permanent relationship, only to be abandoned once they reach town. Others will go to stay with relatives. For the majority, the only jobs open to them are as domestic workers for others (whereby they often end up in a similar near slavery situation) or barmaids and commercial sex workers. It should be stressed that this was not an option they desired and even when they cannot escape it, they regard it as a temporary option until they have managed to save up enough money to set up a different activity (Iringa, Mbeya, Tarime, Kondoa, Muleba).

Parents, of course are not happy about such a situation, especially when the only time they see their daughter is when she brings home another grandchild. Many of the girls (and boys) in whatever circumstances they find themselves struggle valiantly to send help home to their parents, but this is usually intermittent and as the parents said in Mbeya, it cannot make up for the loss of labour power.

"Though it is beneficial, the assistance is periodic. All the children have

migrated and so there is no manpower. I am overburdened." (Mother - Mbeya)

Such migrations also lead to the very social evils that fathers tried to avoid by denying education to their girl children. They get pregnant before marriage; they marry men from other ethnic groups; they are infected with HIV; they come home with 'cooked' hair, wearing trousers or shorts.

The answer, therefore lies in attacking the problem at its root by providing girls with the opportunities, educational or otherwise, which will make such migrations unnecessary.

#### **4.10 LEISURE**

There are few organised leisure activities for adolescents, who, as in other spheres, are left to their own devices. Religious denominations do have youth groups and activities such as choir etc. One or two religious leaders also provide other activities such as the Shirati Mennonite pastor who has provided sports equipment for both boys and girls and also brings videos for entertainment and discussion.

However, in general, leisure activities are those that have been commercialised, such as discos, videos and films. The Luo in Tarime have a particular version of this.

The record player has become a major income generating activity for a few young men. The man who owns a player bicycles from place to place with his player on his back and provides a disco. These discos are very popular among young people in Luo areas such as Nyanduga and Kyariko, although they are strongly denounced by the older generation because they are unsupervised night time events which are often extremely wild and undisciplined.

Furthermore, such discos degrade and endanger the girls because of a system of auctioning the girls. In the disco there is a referee with a whistle (which is why the discos are called 'Thirrrr' from the sound of the whistle). While the music is going on, a boy can stop the music and give some money to the disc jockey (the owner of the record player) so that the girl of his choice comes to dance in front of him. Another boy can give more money. The girl dances before the one who has given the most money to the disc jockey.

In addition, the referee can stop the music by blowing his whistle and order all the girls to come into the middle and dance. This is where they are auctioned (*kupigwa thenge*) since the boys compete with each other for a girl to dance before them. The loser of the auction does not have his money returned, while the winner dances with the girl and then takes her to one side where they talk. From this, they can agree to leave together but the girl has the right to say no. Meanwhile the referee can blow the whistle again and the whole process is repeated. Every girl is forced to dance, even by being beaten with a stick.

Although it is not entirely clear, it would seem that this custom began in the time of the accordion and the guitar when boys used to give money to the player of the instrument to play a certain song. In this way the artist was paid, or congratulated for his artistry. Now, in the era of the record player it has turned into a way for the owner of the player to make more

money. He comes to an agreement with the referee because all the money collected in the auction goes to him.

Although many people tried to insist that in this custom the girl is still completely free to say no without any compulsion being placed on her, it is obviously a degrading exercise, even if some of the girls might agree to it.

i) The girl is forced to dance and be auctioned whether she likes it or not. She is already a commodity. Similarly she is forced to dance with whoever pays the most money to the disc jockey.

ii) The chances of using force, and even serious violence are very high.

- The lover of the girl can get angry when he sees another boy paying more money to dance with 'his' girl
- The person who paid all that money can get angry when the girl still refuses him.

As a result, fights are common, and the incidence of rape after these discos is high as the frustrated boys wait outside. It is not easy to know how many cases of rape there are but all respondents said that it was a common feature.

The poverty mentioned earlier is also a contributory factor to these discos. As one secondary school boy commented, 'The ones who go to be auctioned at the discos are the daughters of the *walalahoi*'. This was corroborated by two better off young women who said that people with means went to the properly organised discos (with an entrance fee) where such auctioning did not take place.

The second major leisure activity in Tarime and elsewhere is video. This is a new thing in society which has become very popular very fast. It is also another income generating activity for those who have the video. Films are shown in private halls with an entrance fee of 100/- shillings. Films of music and X films are also shown until very late in the night with no form of control. This system was also strongly attacked by the older generation because it was seriously affecting the young people. Quite apart from the sex aspect of the films, they also showed a form of high living and indulgence in pleasure which tempts the young people, especially the girls to look for any way of getting some money so that they can taste a little of the same life, even if it is just buying some of the clothes they see. They are no longer satisfied with the life of the village.

While this report would not recommend the kind of ban proposed by the older generation for their young people, it is still true to say that such uncontrolled showing of videos, which is against the law of the land does contribute to some of the other problems such as indiscriminate sexual activity, premarital pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. While the *disco vumbi* may be a specifically Tarime phenomenon, the uncontrolled nature of discos and videos which are spreading rapidly throughout Tanzania is not.

However, in general, girls have less leisure time than boys because of all their home activities.

#### 4.11 MARRIAGE

*I don't want to get married because your husband marries you and leaves you on your own. All my sisters have got problems. They do all the work. All the husband does is eat the food which has grown cold because he was not there and go to sleep (Standard Seven girl - Tarime)*

In the Hai report, the researchers state:

*Of all the stages of a girl's life cycle, the marriage stage is the one in which a girl suffers from myriads of gender disparities. Above all, she loses her identity as a human being, an individual with the right to think and take responsibility for her own destiny. Both the parents and the in laws see the girl as a piece of property to be used for their own ends. Since the girl is property herself, she cannot own any property. The parents see the girl in the light of economic gain through payment of dowry by the in laws. The husband and the in laws see the girl as an instrument of labour and an object of pleasure. The girl is reduced to a thing, an object rather than a subject!*

This is a very strong statement and one might add that marriage in one sense completes the life cycle of the girl child, even if that marriage takes place after the age of 18. Marriage is the moment when all those expectations mentioned in Chapter One of this report are supposed to be fulfilled. The alien being moves out of the family (preferably for a price) and becomes an alien being, albeit valuable, who has to justify to her new owners the price that was paid for her. The predominant form of marriage, whereby the girl moves to her husband's home, and clan, and land is the keystone to the attitudes towards girl children.

##### 4.11.1 Getting married

###### a) Bride price

While there has been a lot of argument concerning which is the right term to use, dowry, bride price, bride wealth etc, bride price has been deliberately used in this report because it reflects the element of transaction which permeated all discussions on this issue. In ga there is a saying:

Nene ndi muvike hela which means 'I have just been placed under a man through money', and this aspect is prevalent throughout. In Kondoa, people in the discussions said that the father often looks for a rich fiancé so that

- i) He gets a big bride price
- ii) He is assured of assistance from his prospective son in law.

Among the Barbaig, bride price is 3 debes of honey and one cow (or one bull instead of the honey). In addition, upon marriage the girl is given 6-10 cattle as recognition for services rendered to the family before marriage. Among the Sandawe, the price is 4-6 cattle and the

Wakurya, 10-12 (depending of course, on the means of the families).

Most of the middle-aged or older prostitutes turned to the trade after an unhappy marriage. Prostitution as a trade spread fast in the region because the returned prostitutes from urban centres like Dar es Salaam, Mombasa, Nairobi, Kampala and Entebbe went back to their villages with indicators of wealth such as good clothes and shoes, radios and other assets. They had also acquired funds with which they purchased banana plantations, built good houses, sent their children to school and generally lived comfortably.

Above all they were free, not under any man's control and thus became honorary males in their villages. They are known as 'kyeyombekeile' which literally means a woman who has built a house for herself, as opposed to a married woman who lives in the house built by her husband or any other man. The man who lives with such a woman is 'kumutabilila' or the intruder into her private life.

The material wealth gained by prostitutes, their self-confidence and sense of general well-being and sophistication were a real attraction to battered wives who escaped from their husbands to avoid being traced and forcibly returned and went to do their business in distant towns. As a result many lost contact with their families, especially young children, until they are reunited when the children start looking for their mothers.

The oppressive nature of bride price is shown most clearly in Muleba where, if a woman chooses to run away from an oppressive marriage, her decision has no validity or force unless she returns the bride price to the husband's family. This means that she has to purchase her freedom. If her father cannot pay, she is forced to find other means. This is given as the explanation for the prevalence of Haya women in commercial sex activities at one time. Similarly, in Hai, the bride price is so essential for the Wapare and Wachagga that it must even be paid for a corpse. The researcher heard of three cases this year. One old man from Longoi said:

"The payment of bride price is very important for a girl who gets married. My daughter got married and died without the bride price being paid, therefore I had to stop her being buried until I was given some goats."

This system whereby the commodity has to be paid for can even cause civil disturbance, as shown by the box.

In some places the girl is also given something when she is married, such as the Barbaig as shown above. Among the Sandawe, her parents give her a goat which they retain and care for on her behalf. All the offspring of the goat belong to her. She is also given domestic utensils, as is the case in Tunduru.

However, among the Wachagga and the Maasai, the girl goes with nothing, no property of her own. Thus she is completely dependent on her husband, as is also pointed out by the Wakurya. She came to her husband with nothing, therefore if she has produced things, it is only with her husband's property.

## **b) Betrothal**

In many areas, the girl still does not decide herself. Among the Waburunge, the father's decision is final and the girl is whipped if she rejects her father's choice. In Tunduru, there is the custom of **kutomela** (booking) although nowadays it is done more with primary school children, and is dying out because the man may incur a lot of expenses only for the girl to refuse point blank later. By contrast, the Maasai tradition of booking is still very strong. The girl has her husband chosen just before or after being born and she too is tied to a tree and beaten with a stick if she dares to suggest an alternative suitor. In these situations, the girl has no freedom because the bride price is already being eaten while she is even too young to know about it.

However, many communities have changed their stand on this issue. Among the Luo, and increasingly the Wakurya and others, the girl is given the chance to accept or reject the man's offer, often after meeting the boy. Among the Wakurya also, the girl can, traditionally, run away to a relative if she does not accept her father's choice.

Betrothal is usually accompanied with the offer of gifts to the parents of the girl. The Waburunge offer goats and beads to the girl. If she accepts, the betrothal is confirmed. In Tunduru, the boy introduces himself with a letter or **Hodi** which contains some money, usually about 2000-5000/= depending on the means of his family.

Among the Barbaig, the man moves to live with the parents of the prospective partner for 6 months and helps with the herding, farming, and construction activities. Presumably this is the time when the parents can also assess the character of their future in law. In Tarime, the husband to be does not move in, but the process of paying bride price is deliberately a protracted one, and is paid in several instalments to allow both sides to investigate the other.

## **c) Abduction and elopement**

Another way of getting married was by abducting the girl you loved. The young man would send his fellows to capture the girl, at the market, or in the fields, and carry her off to his home, whether she agreed or not. When she was brought to his home, the man was, according to tradition, not allowed to use force and if the girl refused him for three days, she was returned home. In some cases, it was not abduction, but elopement since the man and the woman had already agreed.



Augustine is our youngest brother. He married Hellen in 1992. Both her parents died before she was five years.

Hellen died on July 6th, 1994 at Mawenzi Hospital, Moshi from excessive bleeding after giving birth to Augustine's son the previous evening. We had not yet paid the bride price for her.

Friday 8th July was the day of burial at Shiri Mgungani. Relatives from both sides and neighbours by their hundreds were present to pay their last respects to Hellen and attend the burial service. When the casket arrived from the hospital, the body was put to rest for a few hours inside her room before being placed in the compound for people to pay their last respects.

Just before the casket was carried out of the house, Hellen's people (mainly brothers) and other close relatives, blocked the door insisting that Hellen was not to be buried before the bride price was paid - a heifer and a baby goat/lamb.

A scuffle ensued with shouting and crying. The brothers were virtually begged to be reasonable and leave the matter until after the burial, if not after the third day. No! It was unthinkable to let Hellen go to her grave with the bride price outstanding. The whole situation was unbearable. Some of the relatives were crying, and wailing, lamenting NOT for the poor departed soul of Hellen but that she should go with her price unpaid. Hellen had a price tag on her and they would not budge an inch since they had no way of guaranteeing the payment after burial.

Eventually after two or three hours, I had to call in the local militia because we had a legal document to take the body of poor Hellen from the mortuary, transport it and eventually bury it together with the Burial Certificate.

On seeing the militia, Hellen's people relented on condition that their demands be put in writing. No burial without a promissory note committed to paper - before the village government.

I will be excused if my temper flared but Hellen was waiting. Her people had refused to bury her after we had left them for nearly 3 hours. Now they were subjecting us to further conditions. Addressing the multitude I directed that we give Hellen a respectable burial. The multitude of HUNGRY IN LAWS booed and booed.

They did not participate in the prayers or the ceremony. They did not even come near the grave. Some did not wait for the ceremony to come to a close. They did not come to pay their last respects to their daughter. They just came to collect. They came because Hellen was a girl. They did not even think of the surviving child who is now at Upendo home in Moshi.

Hellen had, and still has a price tag around her neck - yes, a price, like an article - a price even unto death. The same as all her sex (Narrated by Hellen's brother in law)

However, some of the elders interviewed agreed that in the process of abduction it was easy to use compulsion of different kinds, especially bearing in mind that the girl was alone, in a strange place, with no help at all and no doubt force could be used to make her claim that no force had been used.

Such abductions or elopements often take place because the young man is unable to pay the bride price. In the past they were not so common but, nowadays, as one old man in Kyariko commented 'in the past, they got married from home. These days they get married from the market place', by which he meant that a girl meets her lover on market day and they elope together.

There were different views on this issue. The elders saw this as another sign of societal disintegration. Although this practice existed, even in their days, it has now become too much. On the other hand, the young people claimed that they are forced to elope because the fathers are too greedy for bride price, especially in the current harsh economic climate. They cannot afford it therefore the only answer is to elope after which they can pay the bride price in instalments. This practice seems to be particularly common in Tarime but was mentioned also in other districts. It should not be confused with a boy and a girl just running away to town for a temporary affair because it was accepted in the community's customs as another, albeit not so acceptable because it affected the all important bride price, way of getting married.

#### **d) Virginity**

The virginity of the bride was, especially in the past, a very important aspect. In Iwindi, Mbeya, if the bride was found not to be a virgin, the parents and relatives of the bridegroom would display a live chicken with its behind feathers plucked out or a khangha with a hole in the middle, whereas if she was a virgin, they would display a whole khangha. In Tarime, there was a similar tradition. If the girl was still a virgin, she was highly honoured. Her grandmother was given a new sheet and money in notes and the girls who escorted her return singing and celebrating. However, if it was discovered that she was not a virgin, her escorts returned in silence and the grandmother was given a blanket with a hole in the middle and small coins.

Such traditions are common and are obviously discriminative because often the same society that demands virginity in the bride also demands that growing boys be sexually active and is very concerned if they are not actively chasing the girls. The girl is subjected to a very traumatic ordeal and the results of it affect her status for life.

However, such a tradition should not be surprising in the light of all that has been said before. If you are buying a product, you want a new one, not second hand and used. Thus, the virginity test is just another sign of how the woman is regarded as property.

#### **e) Intermarriage**

*I am the result of marriage between a Burunge mother and a Rangi father.*

*This has meant that I went to school and involved myself in business and even politics. I look like an outcast to the Burunge because their traditions are very conservative ... But I am happy my children don't have to go through the traditions (UWT leader in Kondoa)*

Traditionally intermarriage was strongly discouraged by almost every community and was one of the major reasons for depriving the girl child of education or exposure to life outside the home. However, it is gradually becoming more accepted and, as is shown by the above quotation, the children or intermarriages often get more chances since both partners feel not so bound by some of the traditions from which they came.

#### **f) The wedding day**

The day of the wedding (like the day of FGM) is one of the few days in the life of a girl child or woman when she is indisputably the centre of attraction and is treated with special care and attention. It is therefore hardly surprising that it is one of the days that girls look forward to most. It is impossible to go through all the different customs related to the manner in which the groom's relatives come for the bride, but they all reflect the element of transition, that the girl is now leaving the house where she grew up, to a new house and a new clan to which henceforth she is expected to show her total allegiance.

#### **4.11.2 Life after the wedding**

The girl may have been the centre of attraction on the wedding day but, with the exception maybe of the times when she has delivered a boy, it is probably the last time. Among the Maasai, when a man returns home from a journey he asks after the condition of his animals first, then his children and then, finally, his wives. A woman is not allowed to speak in men's meetings, or even approach them.

Thus, almost everywhere, the woman is the producer but nothing more. An old man in Tarime commented:

"The wife is the most important implement in the house. You are supposed to use it intelligently and wisely."

This was meant to show how much women are valued, though of course it only bears out the comment from the Hai report that women are objects, not subjects. The way the implement is used is shown in the household division of labour which has been touched upon throughout the report. Not only does the woman do the greatest amount of the work; even those activities which traditionally did not belong to her, such as collecting firewood in Muleba, are now being heaped upon her, and the traditional support of the extended family is severely eroded. Therefore, instead of life improving for many of these women, it is actually getting worse.

#### **a) Violence**

This is still a serious problem also. In Tarime, men regard the beating of their wives as an essential part of their marriage. Thus, many men complained bitterly that the source of all the

rottenness in society is the interference by the government in the family jurisdiction. In the past, the patriarch of the compound was able to discipline his wives and children without any ill effects at all. As one Kyariko elder put it:

"Today you beat her, tomorrow you are laughing together as usual."

Now the law says that it is a criminal offence to beat your wife and the men constantly regaled us with stories of how a 'little' beating led to the wife taking her husband to the police. The wives have become arrogant and can do what they like.

"Women these days have a say. Mrema has given them freedom. If she is slapped just once, she runs to the courts and you end up being jailed."

From the frequency with which the men talked about this, it was obviously a very real fear and frustration in their lives. However in following up their claims, by talking to the local police, and magistrate and members of the Ward Tribunal, it became clear that:

i) Although it is true that some cases of wife beating and child beating have been taken to the police station, and sometimes the offending man has been put in prison overnight, nearly all these cases end up at the Ward Tribunal or being returned to the local ten cell leader. Therefore the claim that the courts are jailing a lot of men is an exaggeration resulting from their fears. A few men even claimed that the source of the whole problem was the National Constitution because it stated that everyone is equal, even women.

ii) It is not true that women rush to the police every time. More commonly, after she, or her child has been injured by the beating, they have to go to hospital. The hospital then refuses to treat them until they have been to the police and filled in the P3 form. In fact, in Gwitiryo there was one case of a woman who had been seriously injured by her husband with a panga. When she went to hospital she claimed that the panga had fallen off the roof and cut her arm. It was only when the hospital refused to treat her for a very deep wound in the arm that she told the truth. Therefore once again the stories of the men, with the ideas that women put coconut juice on the wounds to make them look worse etc seem to be exaggerations caused by deep rooted fears.

iii) At least twice, women have been beaten so severely by their husbands that they have been permanently disabled.

Therefore what is apparent here is a conflict between the traditional patriarchal authority of the household and the clan and the authority of the state backed up by its instruments such as the police and the courts. What the old men are complaining about (frequently supported by the old women) is that their traditional authority has been interfered with and weakened which is why they now fail to exert their authority to protect morality in their homes and society.

Such complaints are of course, of little consolation to the woman who has been beaten and who has little redress wherever she turns.

**b) Extramarital relations**

*I clear the bush on my own  
I dig on my own  
The man has left  
He is feeding other men's children  
I will board a train and dismiss my heart  
I will not look back  
I will disappear completely (Song in Mbeya)*

In most cases, men having extramarital relations with other women is accepted as the natural order of things. In Tunduru, they even sang songs to the **mwali ndembo** about not being jealous of their husbands.

Such extramarital relationships however often have serious consequences in society, as shown by the song from Mbeya. The woman is left to fend for herself with no support from her husband. In the case of the song, it leads to the woman also seeking a new life, though such a song is probably wish fulfilment in many cases since the woman is actually singing it to her child while she remains in her husband's house.

Among the Luo, men are similarly promiscuous but there is far less stigma, if any attached to a woman who has other lovers, especially in a polygamous household. The aim of marriage is to get a lot of children. Thus, a wife was allowed to have another lover, especially if she had not got pregnant by her husband. As long as the wife continued to live in the compound of her husband, any child she gave birth to was 'a child of the bed' and fully accepted. This was not supposed to cause any conflict, although sometimes the wife came to feel more love for the man who gave her children and despise her husband.

Jealousy, therefore, was not acceptable. It was a taboo to catch your wife making love to another man and it was believed that a man who did that would not live long. The aim was to *expand the clan* not *squeeze* it. So, when a man approached home in the evening, or after a long journey, he began to sing or whistle in order to alert any visitors of his wives so that they could leave before he arrived.

However, the implications of such behaviour in the current situation of the AIDS pandemic are very dangerous, especially since, within the context of marriage, the idea of any protective measures is unthinkable, particularly to men.

**4.11.3 Widowhood**

In Tunduru, widows are encouraged by tradition and religion to marry again. However, the major problem in all areas is how much the widow is allowed to inherit, which, in most cases, is precisely nothing. In fact, they are often inherited themselves. In Tarime, if the husband dies, the woman is inherited by a relative of the dead man for the following reasons:

- a) To keep the dead man's property within the clan

- i) If village funds are not kept properly, it is impossible to set up any projects for young people.
- ii) In the village feedback workshop, it was unanimously agreed that the village can have its own strategies to improve the life of girl children. But, in such a situation, no one will be prepared to make a contribution.
- iii) The required buildings for the schools will never be completed.

However, another problem is that the people, even the members of the village government do not know how to use the legal powers they actually have. They need to be educated and given the confidence to use those powers. If they do, many of these problems caused by a few corrupt individuals can be solved.

The same applies to the school and health committees of the village. In regard to health, there is now a chronic problem of communities not paying their Village Health Workers, even in villages where there are sufficient funds. This inevitably affects their work performance. The village health days may not be so carefully organised and little follow up done. With regard to education, parents' willingness to contribute to the school must depend on their belief in the system.

At a higher level, the smooth running of social services will also depend on what priority is given to them.

#### c) National commitment

The last few years have witnessed frequent expressions of commitment to social services to the people but little action and declining resources, to the extent that many communities question the government's will to do anything about their situation. Cost sharing is not a new policy since communities have always cost shared. *Cost transference* is however a new policy and one which puts too great a burden on already overburdened communities. Positive action to address the issues of the girl child will depend upon a national commitment which goes beyond the lips. It is no good holding national summits and making resolutions if they are not followed up.

Any positive action is also dependent on the national economy paying its servants a meaningful and living wage instead of a sub-subsistence one. Once again in the course of our research we met many highly committed community workers, but the vast majority were committed and frustrated at the same time since questions of survival inevitably took up most of their time.

This is an element of sustainability that is often forgotten. Sustainability does not only depend on material resources but also the maximum utilisation of human resources, which can only be achieved when the right people are doing the right job and have the means to do it right. Once again, any initiatives for the girl child depend on the initiators being able to do it.

**d) The law**

This is a particularly sensitive area. On the one hand, many people blamed the law for being inactive in defending women's rights for example on inheritance while on the other, many men blamed the legal system for contributing to the destruction of society. This revolves around the thin line between the law pioneering a fight against injustice, and the law being so far from community beliefs that it is unacceptable and therefore unworkable. As the lawyers say, an unenforceable law is a bad one.

Thus, although many villages and districts in the feedback workshop proposed the making of national or local by laws on issues such as FGM, enrolment in schools, punishment for the boy who made a girl pregnant etc, these can only work if there is a real political will in the community to ensure that they work. For example, a village where FGM was almost universal proposed a law against FGM. Since the very implementors of the law within the village government continue with such a practice, the passing of a law becomes a camouflage for doing nothing.

Secondly, in other feedback workshops, for example, Tarime, it was felt that the enactment of legislation with all the coercive paraphernalia that go with it, could well have the opposite effect of the one intended in that the practice would go underground and would in fact greater resistance to change.

However, the judicious use of the law, backed by full government support is an important contributory factor.

**e) Other actors**

**i) Religious institutions**

These are very prominent in almost every community in Tanzania. They give moral direction; they provide health and educational services; they provide also training and even institute income generating activities. They are therefore an essential element of any programme for the girl child.

Their influence has, however, been mixed. In some areas, such as Tarime and Longoi, they have been in the forefront of campaigns against such traditions as FGM, the inheritance of widows etc. as well as the harmful influence of uncontrolled discos and videos. In other areas they seem to have played a more quiescent role such as the church in Usari and Islam in Tunduru where they recognise the dangers of certain practices but take no specific action against it.

The effect of the moral teaching of religious denominations also seems to be limited. There is no religious denomination which accepts premarital pregnancy and much of their teaching is devoted to issues of the proper use of sexuality but it does not seem to have had the desired effect.

In addition, religious denominations also contribute to the disadvantaged position of the girl child. They often stress and reinforce the traditional division of labour and attitudes to the place of girls and women in society. Even in the courses offered, girls will only be given a chance to do Domestic Science (or at the most nursing) rather than being offered career oriented courses. Their participation in religious activities is also often stereotyped. They will cook for and serve the religious men rather than play a full role.

**ii) Non governmental organisations (NGO's)**

These are not very evident as yet in most communities, although many districts now have Trust Funds which are concerned above all with education and the setting up of community income generating activities. Their potential has not been explored and utilised and in general, the girl child is not one of their priorities.

**iii) Donor agencies**

Since these play an increasingly dominant role in our society, from national right down to community level, they have the potential to influence strongly any action that might be taken. In the context of this report, the major donor is, of course, UNICEF who sponsored the research as part of the Child Survival, Protection and Development Programme (CSPD) and the research was carried out in those districts where CSPD is operating. Firstly, CSPD, by catering for all children, particularly from the age of 0-5 is also contributing to the greater health and well being of girl children. In addition the emphasis on mothers has contributed both to the better health of mothers and their children. Secondly, UNICEF is committed to two major initiatives:

- Community based education in an effort to promote pre schools and revive the primary education sector in CSPD areas. This will also lead to better education for girl children
- The increasing incorporation of gender issues into all its programmes and projects as well as a specific initiative for the girl child.

Thus UNICEF has the potential to make a substantial contribution.

Other donors also have gender policies, although we did not see them at work so much in the areas where the research was carried out.

### **5.1.3 CULTURAL FACTORS**

In the introduction to the report, it was stated that the basic issue is that of a girl's or woman's position in her family and community. Because of the primacy of marriage in all communities and the deeply held belief that a woman, by marrying a man from another family, is actually transferred to her husband's family for good, then her position in the family into which she is born and in which she grows to adulthood is only a temporary one. We have already seen



the Kondoa proverb of the pumpkin. In Muleba, a similar attitude is shown by the names.

Man:	<i>Nkashangwaho</i>	<i>I have always been here</i>
Woman:	<i>Nkaijaho</i>	<i>I came here from somewhere</i>
Boy:	<i>Ndi waho</i>	<i>I belong here</i>
Girl:	<i>(There is no word, but of course she will later be a woman who 'came here from somewhere')</i>	

In modern parlance, they say in Muleba that 'a woman has no address'.

This affects every aspect of her life. When she is born, she is not welcomed as much as a boy because she is a transient; as she grows up, there is no reason why she should have the same access to services and resources as her brother because she will only benefit someone else's clan; there is no reason to educate her as much as her brother for the same reason; there is certainly no reason why she should inherit any property, or even be given some resources to set up her own projects because all that she will be given will go to her husband rather than remaining within the confines of her natal family.

At the same time, it encourages a mercenary attitude to girl children. Since a daughter is only a temporary resident, then she should be made to contribute as much as possible to the family both before she goes, through her contribution to family labour and in the moment of her going, through bride price. This, in turn, explains the wish to marry off the girl as soon as possible because her value will decrease if anything gives the picture that she is a used article, second hand goods.

Therefore the primary area of action is to confront this deep seated belief, which is both based on and contributes to a fundamental inequality. It should also be remembered that this is not just an issue of tradition but one that is enhanced by the imagery of both major religions, Christianity and Islam.

However, the reality of a changing world is contributing to a reevaluation. Increasingly, parents are realising that their 'transient' daughters are actually contributing more to their welfare, even after marriage, than their 'permanent' sons. This change of perception is also being translated into action in many areas, whereby girls are sent to school along with the boys and, in some places, even given preference over boys if it is seen that the girl is more likely to benefit from and succeed in education. With the exception of still largely closed societies such as the Maasai and the Barbaig, almost every community now has at least one girl who has 'made it' and given much to her family after doing so.

## 5.2 PRIORITY AREAS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It must be stressed that, while this report is looking above all at the girl child, she cannot be separated from her brother, and therefore many of the recommendations must inevitably refer to them both. There are many Tanzanian communities when nearly every child is disadvantaged regardless of gender, and meaningful strategies must be directed at both boys and girls, with added strategies to address those handicaps specific to the girl child.

### **5.2.1 BEFORE BIRTH**

When a woman is pregnant, any form of stress or overwork is a potential threat to her child. She will not gain the extra weight she is required to do for the child to grow properly in her womb. Her mental and emotional state also affect the growing child. However, at present, this is not seen as a problem by the majority of communities who say 'pregnancy is not a disease'.

The problem is compounded when the mother of the child to be is still a child herself, since she has not reached the age of 18. She herself is still growing and developing mentally and physically and therefore needs even greater support, which she may not get, particularly if her husband is also a child or if she has no husband and has to depend on her family who might regard her as having shamed them.

It is therefore recommended that:

- i) A concentrated advocacy campaign be carried out on the effects and dangers of pregnancy if not properly cared for, and how to look after a pregnant woman. Rather than using the clinic to tell women the importance of eating more and resting, this campaign should be directed particularly at men, through the use of mass and traditional media and revived adult education classes. This could be connected with the fact that in many places, such as Hai, the woman is given a protracted rest after giving birth and special foods to help her regain her strength. In areas such as Tarime, Mbeya and Iringa, where it was claimed that some consideration was given to the pregnant woman, such traditions should be highlighted and consolidated.
- ii) In the light of the fact that many men know what should be done, but cannot accept to do certain jobs which are 'women's work', while advocacy continues against such artificial distinctions, villages, community organisations, religious institutions and NGOs should facilitate the introduction of labour saving technologies into the community. It has been observed in Hai, and elsewhere, that where certain technologies are introduced, men are willing to do the very tasks that they previously rejected. They will carry water on the back of a bicycle but not on the head.
- iii) The current programme of training Traditional Birth Attendants should continue. Together with the stress on recognising danger signals during pregnancy and hygienic practices during delivery, TBAs should also be incorporated more fully into the health education programme. This is particularly important in areas such as among the Maasai where women are deprived of certain foods and even made to vomit. The analysis of the problem is correct - that the baby may be too big for the mother to handle, but the solution is not.
- iv) In the light of increasing numbers of early pregnancies, both inside and outside marriage, a special programme should be set up to reach these young mothers and give them support and advice. In cases where they have to bear the burden alone, psychological counselling services should also be set up, both for her, and for her parents if she is living with them. This is an area where religious and non governmental organisations can play an important role.

- v) All practices which lead to the mistreatment of women who are thought to be carrying or who actually give birth to girl children must be exposed and eradicated.

### 5.2.2 CARE FOR THE BABY

Breastfeeding is almost universal, though not exclusive for the first four months. The major problems start when the children are weaned as the feeding frequency rarely exceeds 2-3 times a day. This does not only have immediate implications for the health of the baby but also in the long term, especially for girl children since stunting will later endanger their lives when it is their time to have babies. Stunting seems to be an under studied form of malnutrition, maybe because, given genetic factors, it is not easy to prepare standard measurements. However, the observation in Tunduru that young women and girls are actually shorter than older women and the small size of very many children in primary school suggest that greater attention needs to be paid to this.

A major issue is the cost of health services. Although the clinic, even in private hospitals such as Shirati, is free, all related services are not. This has very serious implications for the health of the babies.

a) Parents will resort to home remedies (either herbs, or aspirin which calms the fever without treating the cause) with the result that in many cases the child will not get better and by the time s/he is seen by a health specialist, it is too late.

b) If mothers do not take their children to the clinic, especially in those areas where immunisation is carried out in the clinic, then the current high rates of immunisation will not be sustainable.

c) In areas like Hai and Kondoa the supposed symptoms of 'lawalawa' will continue and provide a community justification for early FGM.

Finally, a way has to be found to involve fathers in the process of caring for the health of their babies, if only to remove superstitions and misplaced beliefs concerning the clinic. For example, in Tunduru, an old man claimed that:

Women have become lazy, probably due to immunisation since birth. That is why we do not encourage the habit of reporting to the dispensary for every health problem

This is a good example of a displaced fear. The men know that the clinic encourages pregnant women to rest and not overwork themselves. Thus it is the teaching and not the immunisation that encourages women to be 'lazy'. Similarly, unfounded fears concerning tetanus injections etc could be allayed if men were part of the process.

Therefore it is recommended that:

- i) Communities, religious organisations, NGOs, donors, and the district and national

government must address more squarely the problem of the costs of health care. While the tug of war continues as to who should pay, it is the children who are suffering and dying. It is not true that everyone can pay.

- ii) Hand in hand with this, a debate should be initiated within all communities concerning the role and importance of village health workers. They are the closest to the community, yet in many cases, the community does not want to pay them. In view of the almost universal reluctance to pay them, there is a need to find out why and on that basis look again at how best to maintain community health workers.
- iii) Regulations should be laid down and implemented concerning immunisation services, even in private facilities to ensure that all children are immunised.
- iv) More research should be carried out on the prevalence of stunting and its effects, so that stunting should also be included in routine nutrition surveillance programmes
- v) Research should also be carried out into differential feeding for boys and girls, whether intentionally as noted rarely in the research, or in response to the perception that boys eat more than girls at a young age, as noted in Hai.
- vi) While the likelihood of men attending the clinic in large numbers is rather small, community health programmes through village health days, neighbourhood meetings etc should concentrate on the aspects of early child care and discussing the role of fathers.

### **5.2.3 SOCIALISATION**

This is an area where the girl child suffers most directly since the differences in socialisation affect her for life. It is also one of the most difficult areas to address because it lies within the very cultural fabric of society. The socialisers have themselves been socialised, and not just by traditions but also religion to accept a different place and role for boys and girls. Thus, it is not possible to make any dramatic intervention into this, but rather challenge the cultural majority with views of the minority. In Tarime, many of the stories told also emphasised the courage of girls; almost every community has examples, either past or present, of prominent women who played important roles in their societies; both major religions also have many similar examples. Even if they are the minority view, they can be foregrounded in order to provide alternative role models for growing girls, and boys.

Similarly, the more aware parents become of how, even subconsciously they differentiate between boys and girls from a very early age, such as pushing the boy child off the lap while encouraging the girl child, punishing boys and girls in different ways etc, the more likely they are to accept a change.

One of the most critical times of socialisation is during **msondo** or **unyago** and **jando**. Although much of what is taught remains a secret, it is clear that the teaching emphasises traditional sex roles and the submission of the woman to her husband. However, as in all

other areas, communities are not necessarily static on these issues. The obduracy of the trainer elders arises out of the perception that their world view is disregarded. A dialogue and exchange of views could lead to some rethinking.

It is therefore recommended that:

- i) Major research with a gender perspective is carried out into the stories, songs and histories of communities with a view to identifying those aspects which advocate for or reinforce greater equality. These can then be used as advocacy tools in both oral and written forms such as performances by art groups etc.
- ii) Parenting discussions should be initiated by communities, religious organisations, NGOs etc where the question of gender stereotyping and how it is manifested would be a major topic.
- iii) A dialogue and sharing of ideas should be initiated with the **ngaribas** and **nyakangas** on how best to prepare young girls for their roles in the context of a changing society, and how **msondo** and **unyago** can be used in this.

#### **5.2.4 UPBRINGING**

Maybe the most common observation in all the research areas is the lack of guidance and direction given to young children, especially at an early age. Whether because of the exigencies of economic necessity or plain neglect, children are left to their own devices most of the time. This is compounded by the decline of the extended family which means that alternative care takers who contribute to bringing up the children are not there. Then, when the children approach and reach adolescence the parents often wake up to undesirable characteristics in their children but it is too late because the character has already been formed.

Secondly, while many parents tended to blame their children, many others also admitted that the example given by parents was a serious contributory factor to the behaviour of their children.

It is therefore recommended that:

- i) The question of parenting, should become the topic of a major national debate at all levels, with an emphasis on the moral, emotional and intellectual aspects. It could be sponsored by the Ministry of Community Development, Women's Affairs and Children (MCDWAC) and involve religious and non governmental organisations
- ii) More support structures are set up, such as community based child feeding posts, day care centres etc. The Ministry of Education and Culture should drop its emphasis on Grade A teachers to staff such centres but should rather concentrate on preparing day care attendants, maybe in collaboration with Folk Development Colleges

### 5.2.5 THE ROLE OF THE FATHER

What this research has witnessed in many areas is that, while the patriarchal structures remain largely intact, the role of the father has been seriously undermined, often correctly, by a combined onslaught of the law, the school system, religion, politics etc. The traditional certainties of his authority have all been questioned and in some cases punished. While this onslaught may have been correct (for example in taking action against beating of wife or children, ensuring that children remain in school etc) it has had the effect also of fathers

a) Clinging to the shell of their authority while

b) Abdicating all responsibility, even those responsibilities assigned to him by tradition such as providing guidance to their sons, collecting firewood (Muleba), cultivating a shamba as a food reserve (Tarime), together with providing the needs of children such as for school. Instead, they indulge in antisocial activities such as using the family resources for their own benefit. As one mother of 6 children in Tunduru said:

Most of the men use the money obtained for the sale of cashewnuts, to marry additional wives, buy beer, or bicycles which they use themselves. Very few of them make a budget with their wives ... a good husband will buy clothes for his wife and children, pay school contributions, buy enough food for the family, and have a balance for an emergency.

As a result, they have become largely superfluous in the family and the children are left only with a bad example and the bitterness of their mother, and themselves at the way they are neglected.

From the research, it was clear that, while such antisocial behaviour has always existed, these almost universal excesses of irresponsibility were not there. Fathers were very patriarchal, but at least they worked for the good of the family. There is now a need to put the *fa* of the *father* into the *family*. As an old man in Tarime said during the village feedback workshop, after an acrimonious debate on how children do not respect their fathers:

The father must rectify his own behaviour first. He should be seen at home so that the children know who their father is. The father should be approached by his children for clothes and other basic needs

It is therefore recommended that:

- i) The debate on parenting should place particular emphasis on the role of the father, drawing upon the traditions that exist(ed) which gave responsibility to the father. This should avoid a return to the highly patriarchal society of the past but should rather look at how the father can/should play his part within the changing society. Alternative models of how fathers can maintain their authority without patriarchy should be developed.

- ii) The community should take steps against irresponsible fathers who misuse household resources to the detriment of their families. In order to achieve this, community structures such as the neighbourhood baraza and clan baraza should be revived and strengthened.

### 5.2.6 DIVISION OF LABOUR

This is undoubtedly one of the major factors limiting the chances of a girl to develop. It starts more as a form of socialisation whereby from as early as 3-4 years, the girl is introduced, in the form of play, to the roles she will be expected to play later. By the time she is 6-7, she is already playing a very large role in doing the household tasks fetching water and firewood, cooking and looking after her younger siblings, especially if the mother is away or has her own activities to look to.

As a result, she has little or no time for leisure (unless she deliberately malingers), has little or no time for play which is an essential element of intellectual formation, such as playing around and experimenting with materials (as shown by the Hai report), may miss preschool altogether or will be enrolled later than her brother. She may also be enrolled later in primary school, will do the household chores before going to school and after returning home, and be often kept back from school whenever she is needed to do the household chores or look after her younger siblings. She will have no time to study out of school. If, despite all these handicaps, she manages to go to secondary school, the same inequitable division of labour will continue to hold her back so that while her brother goes to tuition, she will cook the meal for him when he returns, and woe betide her if she is late with the meal!

In one aspect this situation is getting worse, not better, because the traditional support of the extended family has greatly declined, and the likelihood of the mother having other activities to supplement the family income is much greater. On the other hand, society is changing, however slightly, and is open to change. As the majority of parents stated in Muleba, there is no job (or very few indeed) that is specifically for women. This supports the view given in Tarime that the division of labour is not a fixed tradition but rather a direction or a warning. There is therefore a need to work on and expand those areas where there is no firm division while at the same time confronting the whole issue of stereotyped roles for girls and boys.

It is therefore recommended that:

- i) Extension workers, religious organisations, non governmental organisations, artistic groups, schools etc conduct a campaign on this issue, based on the specific conditions and traditions in a certain area. Schools have a particularly important role to play, both in involving both boys and girls in all the school activities and in not granting automatic permission to any parent who wants to withdraw his/her girl from school for domestic reasons. In addition, religious organisations and other community groups need to show an example by breaking away from stereotyped roles such as always assigning the women the task of cooking for and serving the visitors.
- ii) Appropriate and simple technology be introduced which will both reduce the workload

of the girls and encourage the boys to share the load.

- iii) Advocacy should be carried out on how this division of labour places a severe handicap on the girl ever succeeding in school. This may not work everywhere, but in those areas where parents are keen that their children should succeed, it will have an effect.

### 5.2.7 EDUCATION

Formal education has always been an area where, for better or worse, new knowledge, ideas, theories, practices have been introduced. It has been recognised, both by the rulers of society and the communities themselves as a key element in improving their lives. At the time of Universal Primary Education, parents almost everywhere embraced the chance of sending their children to school in the belief/hope that it will lead to a better life for their children. Yet now, 17 years later, many of these parents are bitterly disillusioned and attack the very system they embraced so enthusiastically in the first place.

There are many reasons for this.

Under funding of primary schools has led to a situation where all that exists is a building with little inside it, very few books and a group of teachers who are demoralised and often poorly trained. It is therefore hardly surprising that the children get very little out of school.

The dilapidation of the schools goes hand in hand and interacts with parental attitudes. While, on the one hand, parents embraced school as the path to a new life, they were also often suspicious of what school can or should do. School deprived them of their children for the most active parts of the day at a time when, traditionally, children could begin to play a role in the family economy. They were prepared to make that sacrifice in the hope of future gains, but as these future gains receded into the world of dreams, parents became increasingly less prepared to send their children to school, particularly as this coincided with increasing economic hardship and the need to utilise family labour to the maximum.

At an early age, the girl child was usually the victim of such a situation as she was expected to do the household chores and look after the other children. However, boys were also affected, particularly in pastoralist communities, and as they grew to adolescence they were often expected to contribute directly to the family economy through agriculture or, increasingly, petty trading. Thus the drastic increases in drop out rates are a vote of no confidence by the parents (and often their children) in the school system.

In addition, parents feel increasingly bitter about what has become to them an alien institution in their midst, over which they have no control. If the school is poor, or the teachers are not doing their task, or actively corrupting their children, they have no redress, except through a long bureaucratic process.

On the other hand, teachers are also bitter and frustrated with the education system. They are not provided with a living wage for the important work that they do and even the little they are paid is often paid late. They feel they are not given support in terms of the provision of



essential equipment and of training opportunities to improve their performance. Changes are made in the educational system with little or no reference to them. At the same time, they feel bitter with parents and communities who, in their opinion, do not recognise how much they are doing and accomplishing in very difficult circumstances. Sometimes the communities are directly hostile.

Thus, the primary education system is in a state of deep crisis which, if not addressed, will have disastrous consequences not only for girl children, but for all children and the nation as a whole.

Within the system, the girl child faces greater problems. She is a victim of unequal division of labour, not only at home but also at school; the curriculum, the school texts and the teachers are often not gender sensitive; their leisure time is often encroached upon by other chores and even if it is not, they are not provided with the same facilities as the boys (eg netballs) and in the worst cases, they are subjected to sexual harassment by the very people who are supposed to be their guardians or second parents.

It is therefore recommended that:

- i) The national government reconsider its priorities and allocate a higher percentage of the national budget to education. There should be a minimum percentage for education. The government must recognise that shifting the whole burden to the community is unjust and impractical and only causes further problems in the future with an increasing number of school leavers with minimal literacy and no life skills.
- ii) Donors, national and local NGOs, religious organisations and community organisations should recognise that the primary education system has reached a point where a massive concentration of resources is required to pull it out of its dilapidated state to a point where it can contribute once more to the development of the nation through the education of all its people rather than the few who can afford private education and tuition. This requires major funding.
- iii) Schools must be placed once more, in practice as well as in theory, in the hands of the community through the school committee. The school committee must have the powers not only to mobilise support for the school but also to control the teachers if they misbehave in any way, without continual bureaucratic delay. Thus:
  - The Education Act should be amended to give statutory powers to the school committee in certain situations (such as sexual harassment, neglect of duties etc) to fire, or expel a teacher
  - The Head teacher should no longer be the secretary of the school committee since he can use that position to delay or frustrate the working of the school committee by not writing the minutes, not forwarding them to the village government etc.

- The UPE contributions should remain in the school, under the supervision of the school committee, rather than being sent to the district.
- iv) At the same time, the school committee must be made more accountable to the parents as a whole, especially on the issue of transparency with regard to the use of school funds. It should work hand in hand with the teachers to restore the faith of parents in their school and take a firm stand against those parents who try to disrupt the school through withdrawing their children for spurious reasons, demanding fake transfers, threatening the teachers who do their job etc.
- v) In order to achieve the above, there should be a national programme of joint workshops for school committees, teachers and village governments to bring into the open grievances and complaints from whatever side, with a view to preparing a joint plan of action for the school in which all are involved.
- vi) These joint workshops should include a gender component with specific emphasis on the local conditions which militate against the girl child participating fully in school.
- vii) Child labour, or the use of school children to work for the teachers in their homes or income generating activities, must be banned and be known to be banned throughout the country. In exceptional circumstances, with the express permission of the school committees, children might be allowed to do small jobs for the teachers under the supervision of the committee, but it must be known that this is an exceptional favour, not a rule. Teachers and head teachers contravening this should have disciplinary action taken against them.
- viii) All forms of sexual harassment of girl children in school by a teacher must be punished by immediate termination of employment, and prosecution for rape, rather than transfer to another school where he can repeat the same behaviour. Any complaint of this nature from individual parents or the school committee should be treated as an urgent priority.
- ix) Education for self reliance in the schools should not be interpreted as a way of making money only. It should be controlled and the funds it realises should be seen to be used directly for the benefit of the children. It should not interfere with the academic side of the school.
- x) Within education for self-reliance activities and all other school activities, the school should return to its original role as a pioneer for change, especially in regard to the division of labour. In many places, traditions which barred women from doing certain activities have been disregarded, thereby increasing the workload of girl children. Now, in consultation with school committees, work should be allocated equitably to boys and girls. This is already done in many secondary schools.
- xi) All other activities and behaviours which encourage superiority in boys and inferiority in girls, such as differential forms of greeting (whereby the girl has to go on her knees) must be eradicated.

- xii) The current review of curricula and text books to **eliminate** all gender bias should continue and be supported by a programme of training **for the teachers** in gender. This review should apply particularly to domestic science **which is still seen as a 'girl's subject', taught by women to prepare girls for their future role as homemakers.** It is rejected by the boys and often not popular with the girls **either.** **More emphasis** should be put on science (which could then include health and **nutrition which are currently taught by domestic science).** Debates on gender differences should be included in the Civics curriculum.
- xiii) Parallel with review of the curriculum, teaching methodologies should also be reviewed, as well as the role of the teacher as parent. At present the method of discipline is brutal and authoritarian, and the teaching methodology in class is teacher centred and top down. This encourages macho attitudes among the boys and does not facilitate participation and the growth of self confidence and self esteem, especially among the girls.
- xiv) There should be a national debate on the issue of the age of enrolment bearing in mind that:
  - Many communities are opposed to their children starting at the age of seven because they are too small to go to school, a perception that goes hand in hand with the widespread stunting mentioned above
  - Girls are often sent to school later than boys, with the result that they are more likely to drop out after reaching puberty because they feel too old and out of place
  - Many boys also drop out when they feel they are old enough to start their own little businesses, go fishing etc.

However, it is not enough just to decree that all children should be sent to school at the age of 7, unless there is also a concerted campaign to improve the nutritional status of children from an early age.

- xv) The primary emphasis should be on the improvement of the school environment with adequate facilities and equipment and well trained and motivated teachers. Only then can any campaign for a return to near universal enrolment and attendance make any sense. There is no point in forcing the child into an empty classroom where she sits on the floor, hungry, without books and often without a teacher. While some of these inputs have to come from outside, the community, through the school committee, can look at ways of providing food and some materials for children at school.
- xvi) There should be a special programme initiated for the children of pastoralists, such as the Barbaig and the Maasai, which starts with a dialogue with the community on the kind of education they feel their children require and the preparation of materials suited to their requirements.
- xvii) In conjunction with the improvement of the learning environment, the school committee, supported by the village government and the teachers should begin a

campaign to get children back into school. In particular, by laws should be made to deal with any parent who keeps their child away from school, for whatever reason.

- xviii) Teachers should be retrained or given refresher courses, especially on the job training. All Grade C teachers should be compelled to undergo compulsory upgrading. This retraining would include introduction to new curricula and methodology as well as a gender component. Once they return to school, their performance should be monitored, not only by the inspectorate, but also the community as a whole.

### **5.2.8 SEXUALITY**

In all the research areas it was discovered that children begin sexual activity at an early age, on average 12 years for a girl and 13 years for a boy, in other words when they are still at primary school. In Tunduru and among the Maasai sexual activity begins even earlier.

This has very serious implications for the way teaching about sexuality is approached. Until the recent past, even the idea of family life education has been severely criticised on the grounds that it is teaching children about things they know nothing. This research reveals that, while they may not know everything, they still practise it, which is even more dangerous.

- a) Large numbers of girls are getting pregnant as early as 13-14 years
- b) Sexually transmitted diseases are rampant and yet the girls know nothing about them, how to detect them or what to do, so that further complications will easily arise such as subsequent barrenness.
- c) The prevalence of HIV/AIDS among young girls is alarming. Girl children are in much more danger of contracting the disease at a young age, since their lovers tend to be older than them.

It is thus imperative that girls know about their bodies and how they work so that they can make decisions, including the decision to abstain, on the basis of full knowledge. To deny them this knowledge is in fact condemning them to a life sentence (looking after a child they did not want) if not a death sentence.

It is also essential to remember that, for the majority of children interviewed, the most compelling reason to start sexual activity for girls is financial. Since she perceives that she can get her basic requirements in no other way, she turns to a husband or a boyfriend to provide those things for her.

Finally, the prevalence of casual sex can be associated directly with the lack of opportunities for girl children either when they are in primary school because it has nothing to offer them, or after primary school. In those areas where more opportunities exist, particularly of secondary education, the number of early pregnancies is significantly less.

It is therefore recommended that:

- i) Family Life Education be promoted vigorously in schools as early as Standard Four. This should include teaching on how to avoid pregnancy. The same applies to the School AIDS programme which is only just starting but needs to be implemented as fast as possible.
- ii) School programmes should be supplemented with out of school programmes, both for those young people who do not go to school and for those who are less attracted by formal programmes. These out of school programmes should include materials written in the idiom of the young people themselves, peer group counselling and be as imaginative as possible. Dialogue should also be intensified with traditional trainers of youth such as the *ngariba* and the *nyakanga*, as well as traditional birth attendants on how they can contribute.
- iii) While AMREF and other organisations should be commended for their work along truck routes directed at truck drivers, commercial sex workers, bar girls and guest house attendants, it should be remembered that they are not the only group, they probably have less need of education than other young people, and they may not even be the most sexually active. The techniques used on the trucking routes should be directed at all young people through the places where they are likely to meet such as the *chiro* in Tarime where popular theatre could have an immediate impact.
- iv) Given that one of the most common causes of maternal deaths is unsafe abortions, religious organisations and NGOs should set up pregnancy counselling services for girl children, and their parents.
- v) Parents and communities should recognise that girl children have legitimate aspirations and requirements, and do as much as possible, withing their limited resources, to satisfy these.
- vi) Above all, parents and communities, together with other organisations should provide opportunities for self development for girls so that they see a reason for postponing sexual activity until such time that they are of an age and in a position to know how to cope with it.

### 5.2.9 RITUALS OF INITIATION

Most communities and ethnic groups have their own traditional methods of preparing their girl children for adulthood, through *unyago* and/or female genital mutilation. There is an urgent need to eradicate some of these traditions but they are very strong and frontal attacks on them using the coercive force of the law have not been very successful, as is shown by the Tunduru case where the only effect of the law has been to move initiation and above all teaching about sexual activity etc to a ridiculously young age when boys and girls are not ready for it. Even the excessive secrecy surrounding them is a sign of resistance to any attempt to take action against such traditions.

However, as was seen above all in Hai and Tarime, such traditions are not static and continuing campaigns against them, both by religious organisations and political leaders (hence *mkato wa CCM*) have had some effect. The community is divided on the value of such traditions and this is expressed in a lessening of the severity of the mutilation, and the sanctions against those who refuse.

While they may not be connected with initiation, there are also other traditions such as *lubulu* among the Maasai which encourage sexual activity at a very early age.

It is therefore recommended that:

- i) In areas such as Tunduru where previous campaigns have led to the imparting of information about sexual activity and marriage at an age when the children are not ready for it, dialogue should be opened with the community on how best to rectify the situation, especially bearing in mind that many community members themselves know that the present system is wrong.
- ii) In areas where FGM continues, a multi pronged community based approach is required. While religious organisations, health officials and others should be encouraged to step up the campaign, at the same time, dialogue should be sought with the *wazee wa mila* and the *ngariba* to encourage consensus on the issue.
- iii) The question of FGM and its effect on health should be included in health education in schools, particularly as some of the most eager supporters of the tradition are sometimes the girls themselves.

#### **5.2.10 VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS**

There is a serious increase in the incidence of violence against girls, particularly sexual violence. In Tarime it was noted that the *disco vumbi* encouraged rape, and in Lumuli rape was also prevalent. Similarly, whenever a teacher takes advantage of his position to have sex with his young pupil, it can also be classified as rape, as can abduction when the girl is taken away by force by the young man who claims he wants to marry her.

Sexual violence, however, is not the only form. Girls are subjected to beating when they refuse to marry the suitor chosen for them, sometimes even before they are born (Hai, Tunduru) and any attempt to break out of her traditional role assigned to her by her gender is immediately punished. In particular girls are often taken out of school or denied further education so that they get married.

It is therefore recommended that:

- i) All forms of sexual violence against girl (and boy) children should be punished by automatic imprisonment of not less than a certain number of years.
- ii) Communities should be educated on the issue of children's rights, especially the right

of the girl child to choose who she wishes to marry and when. Community organisations should be set up to ensure that the girl children are able to fulfil their wishes and campaign against any condoning of any form of sexual violence or harassment.

### **5.2.11 MARRIAGE**

Ordinarily this section would not come into a report on the girl child but early marriage is still very prevalent and is in fact becoming even more so, such as in Tarime when the age of marriage has dropped from 18+ to much younger. This is because of the legitimate fears of the parents that the girl might get pregnant before marriage, which are, however, expressed in the fear that they will lose the bride price. This, in turn, is connected with the belief mentioned at the outset that the girl is an alien being in the family who should be transferred to another with as much profit as possible, hence the stress on virginity as evidence of unspoiled goods, the primacy of bride price (even for a corpse) and the denial of any form of inheritance or property.

Early marriages themselves have also proved to be an unsuccessful community strategy as, in a large number of cases, they end in early divorce, leaving the girl child still a child herself and with a child or children of her own to support and no visible means of doing so.

Finally, in some areas, such as among the Luo, the practice of inheriting widows continues.

It is therefore recommended that:

- i) The primary issue of the role and status of girl children in their own families be addressed through public debate and education. Without this, other issues such as inheritance and bride price will be insoluble.
- ii) Continuing efforts should be made at community level to discourage the bride price, especially in its present form as a financial transaction. The girl has been commoditised by the bride price.
- iii) The practice of inheriting widows should be campaigned against, particularly in the light of the spread of AIDS. As one old Luo said, 'in time of war, traditions are set aside, and we are in a war against AIDS'.
- iv) Early marriages should be discouraged. Above all the provision of opportunities for girls would greatly reduce the necessity or attraction of early marriage because they would have the chance to develop themselves first.
- v) In the event of early marriage, community counselling and support needs to be strengthened.

### **5.2.12 OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

At present, with the possible exception of Hai, very few opportunities exist, especially for secondary education. Even if the places are there, such as those reserved for the Sandawe in Kurio secondary school, many girls will not have the academic background they require because of a poor grounding at primary school and/or, excessive labour during school, or their families will not have the means or the will to pay for their further education.

Other opportunities such as training or (self)-employment are also very few. Thus the girls are left with nothing to do other than work for their parents with no chance of getting anything for themselves or looking for husbands/boyfriends.

It is therefore recommended that:

- i) Society, from the national government to the household level, should prioritise opportunities for young people. At present there are a few haphazard initiatives but nothing more. More places should be provided for girls, scholarship schemes should be set up, at community level for richer communities, or through Trust Funds at district, NGO or national level to pay for the education of girls whose families cannot afford it; more training opportunities provided even if only evening classes through a revived adult education programme, more resources set aside for young people by households and communities and more consultation with the girl and boy children on the kind of opportunities they require.

### **5.2.13 LEISURE**

Leisure is an important part of the lives of everyone, but society has the right to regulate the kind of leisure offered to its young people. At present, while no meaningful opportunities of self advancement are offered young people, they are pacified by the sop of unregulated leisure activities such as any kind of video, drinking in bars and dances and discos. There is a need for society to take responsibility once more for its children by providing direction through by laws which are strictly followed up.

It is therefore recommended that:

- i) Leisure activities be monitored by the community with a view to ensuring that they are suitable to the age of those participating. Therefore, children below the age of 18 should not be allowed to view adult movies, and legal action should be taken against anyone trying to make a profit out of such showings. It is quite possible to show videos for young people earlier in the evening and retain the adult videos for later. Similarly discos should be regulated concerning the days and hours and parents should accept that it is their responsibility that the discos are conducted in a decent manner. Children, whether selling groundnuts or whatever, should be banned from bars or drinking places until they reach the age of 18.



#### 5.2.14 EMPOWERMENT

This refers to empowerment both of communities and of the girl children themselves.

At community level, village governments and other community organisations need to be given greater control over their own lives and those of the communities they represent. At present, all that exists is *vertical* accountability whereby the extension worker or executive officer is accountable to his/her superior and employer. They are not accountable to the communities they are supposed to serve. In the current expansion of democratic activity in the country, this is the fundamental democratic practice which needs to be encouraged and enshrined in law.

Secondly the girl child also needs to be empowered. She has been marginalised and disregarded and no one has been prepared to offer her what she wants to achieve her own goals.

Therefore it is recommended that:

- i) Laws concerning the powers of village governments and community organisations be reviewed to ensure that all those working with or for the community are accountable to them.
- ii) All plans and programmes for the girl child should involve the girl children themselves from the outset. They should be the ones to plan for their own futures on the basis of their aspirations. In order to achieve this, girls should be represented on all relevant committees and boards..

#### 5.2.15 ORPHANS

One major aspect that emerged during the research is the number of orphans, or children who are living with stepfathers or mothers or grandparents that exist (and not just those orphaned by AIDS). Both boys and girls are often disregarded and do not receive the same opportunities.

It is therefore recommended that:

- i) A major research is carried out into the extent of the problem (which is not only referring to those orphaned by AIDS), the effects of it on girls and boys, and what strategies can be prepared to address the problem.
- ii) Donor agencies and NGOs working with orphans and their guardians should pay particular attention to how the orphans are actually being looked after.

### 5.3 SUMMARY TABLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Topic	Household	Community and CBOs	District and
<b>Pregnancy and birth</b>	Care for mother Father work share	Advocacy campaigns using local media, Village Health Days, etc  Prioritise supportive traditions  Counselling for young pregnant mothers (and their parents)  Promote labour saving technologies	Train TBAs at general health programmes  Counselling of young pregnant  Dissemination of labour saving
<b>Infancy</b>	Support for the mother Work share	Find solutions to health care costs, especially for those in need  Find the best way of providing primary health care. If it is Village Health Workers, then institute a system of remunerating them  Follow up on malnourished children  Use neighbourhood meetings, VHDs etc for advocacy concerning father's role in child care	Ensure provision of services and c  Follow up CS ensure that sta accurate and t problems are  Advocate excl for first four r

Topic	Household	Community and CBOs	District and
Upbringing and socialisation of children	Give all children equal chance	<p>Initiate parenting discussions with emphasis on gender stereotyping</p> <p>Set up more support systems such as feeding posts, day care centres, nursery schools</p> <p>Take steps against irresponsible fathers using revived community structures such as neighbourhood and clan barazas</p>	<p>Advocacy concerning responsibilities and father.</p> <p>Special emphasis on father, using practices that exist</p> <p>Dialogue with traditional healers such as ngariba or initiation teachers in improving status</p>
Division of labour	<p>Assign work equally to boys and girls</p> <p>Encourage work sharing among children</p>	<p>Religious and community groups show example by breaking from stereotyped roles eg when receiving visitors</p> <p>Popularise technologies which are both labour saving and encourage boys to share the work</p> <p>Advocacy concerning the effect of unequal division of labour on a girl's education</p>	<p>Show example of division of labour</p> <p>Disseminate information on labour saving technologies</p> <p>Advocacy concerning division of labour</p>

Topic	Household	Community and CBOs	District and
<b>Marriage</b>	Provide opportunities for girls to develop before marriage	Counselling and support for girls  Action against those who insist on early marriage	Advocacy co marriage, tra marriage etc
<b>Opportunities for young people</b>	Provision of resources for further development of children, especially girl children as household priority  Listen to preferences of the children	Provision of training opportunities (evening classes, apprenticeship etc)  Support for girl children with ability but no financial resources (village/CBO scholarship scheme etc)	District needs concerning a) the aspiratio b) viable eco make training  Advocacy co of opportunit Post primary priority of di District Trus for girls Individual scl system
<b>Leisure</b>	While allowing participation, monitor leisure activities	By laws to protect young people eg concerning screening of videos, frequency of discos etc, and age of entering drinking places  Provision of leisure activities within a supportive environment	Legal action of youth in le showing of a  Advocacy co responsibility

Topic	Household	Community and CBOs	District and
Children in especially difficult circumstances		Monitoring orphans and children living with those other than their parents	Follow up of orphans to see being treated in

## 5.4 CONCLUSION

It is difficult to know how to write a conclusion to all the critical issues and recommendations that have arisen from this research. However, maybe one can conclude by stressing that the situation of all children in Tanzania, and particularly girl children cannot be addressed by welfare approaches which only touch the surface. There have to be structural changes in society in terms of household allocation of resources to young people, democratisation of the household and the school, reassessment of the very position of the girl child in the family and equity in distribution of labour.

At the same time there has to be a radical reappraisal of the role of young people in our society, which, in turn demands a reallocation of resources to them as the majority in society, even if they are a majority who, as yet, have no voice. This implies a far greater prioritisation of education, followed up by the provision of opportunities and resources to them.

Above all, for girl children, cosmetic changes, or compensatory mechanisms will not succeed in altering her role. In the community, preferential seats for women have often meant that those who won those seats are not accepted in the same way as others who are elected and it has also deprived women of challenging men directly. Similarly, preferential treatment for girls entering secondary school will not alter their status if issues of division of labour and her place in the family are not addressed. She will only fail at a higher level.

In order to push for structural changes in society, there is a need for a strong non-governmental organisation which will devote itself to the fight for children's rights, especially those of girl children. A few such NGOs do exist but they need to be supported and strengthened and the girl children themselves need to become involved to understand and fight for their own rights. They may be girls today but they are tomorrow's women.

## **APPENDIX ONE**

### **THE RESEARCH PROCESS**

#### **1.0 Introduction:**

The question of the girl child is increasingly becoming a global UNICEF priority. Girls are frequently disadvantaged from birth and the cycle of disadvantage they face makes it very difficult to talk of any meaningful change in the lives of millions of women, unless some specific intervention is made to change the situation.

This situation is of particular concern to UNICEF for two reasons:

- a) The girl child should have equal access to all the rights of the child, including the right to health, education, advancement etc. However, her disadvantaged position has often been 'invisible' not identified and addressed as a specific problem.
- b) The disadvantage of the girl child has a direct influence on the survival and development of adult women and of future generations. Physically weak, and/or very young mothers will have great difficulty in child-bearing; uneducated mothers will not be able to bring up their children or change the economic status of the family; women socialized to accept an inferior position will not be able to struggle for their own rights and the rights of their children etc.

However, one major problem, especially here in Tanzania, is the lack of reliable information on the current status of the girl child. It is easy to pick on the superficial aspects, reflected in religion and tradition, but society is dynamic and attitudes, behaviours, practices are continually changing as the environment also changes. Thus, without up to dated information, it is easy to start prescribing strategies which no longer address the current situation. It is also important to know how the position of the girl child differs according to different ethnic groups, regions, economic and educational status etc. Hence the need for this study.

#### **Location:**

The research was carried out in 7 districts in Tanzania. In each district particular issues concerning the girl child had already been identified but the aim was to get an overall picture for each district.

The districts chosen were: Hai, Iringa Rural, Kondoa, Mbeya Rural, Muleba, Tarime and Tunduru. In each district, three villages were chosen. In the choice of districts and villages, the aim also was to ensure maximum diversity in ethnic groups, religious belief, tradition, economic activity and status, exposure to external influence etc.

#### **1.0 Approach**

Based on the assumption that communities were changing faster and more fundamentally than

we were aware, even on the question of women and girl children, the research was designed as a participatory one. Researchers would live in the villages and, starting with a workshop with village leaders, interact with the villagers in general while learning about the lives of the girls in society. At the end of the three weeks, the researchers then held a feedback workshop with village leaders to present and discuss the findings as well as what action could be taken on the basis of the findings. The same was done at district level as the three researchers came together and presented their findings to the district leadership for comment and strategies for action.

## **2.0 Purpose of the Study:**

### **2.1 General Objectives:**

1. To carry out a wide ranging study into the current position and role of girl children in seven districts of Tanzania.
2. Through the use of participatory research methodologies, to interact with the communities where the research is being carried out in order to highlight the position of girl children and possible strategies for change.
3. To produce a report of the findings which can act as a base for more wide ranging interventions at local and national level aimed at transforming the position of the girl child in the society.

### **2.2 Specific Objectives:**

1. To document traditional practices, beliefs and customs related to every aspect of the life cycle of the girl child, from birth to womanhood among different ethnic groups, religions, economic and social groups.
2. To examine how these practices, beliefs and customs affect:
  - a) Community perceptions towards their girl children;
  - b) The attitudes of the girls themselves towards their own lives, status and place of society.
3. To study how schooling has affected the position of the girl child as well as her own self perception, through the curricula, text books, teacher attitudes, classroom and peer group interaction.
4. To evaluate how economic and social changes in society both at national and local level are affecting perceptions and attitudes both towards the girl child and of the girl child herself.
5. To identify and consolidate those traditional aspects, as well as the changes in attitude and perception which are promoting greater equity for girl children.



6. To identify and expose those areas which deny the girl child of her rights to survive and develop as an equal member of her society.
7. To share the research findings with the community in which it was carried out as the basis for discussion on their girl children and the identification of community strategies to address the situation.
8. To compile the findings from the seven districts into one national report which will be presented to national institutions so that it can be used as the basis for advocacy for the girl child as well as specific interventions to change her position.

### **3.0 Issues to be Researched and Discussed with the Community:**

The research was carried out by looking at the life cycle of the girl child.

a) *Birth:*

Attitudes to birth of girl or boy child. Customs related to their birth, presents given, naming some preference etc.

b) *Babyhood:*

Feeding practices. Customs. Lullabies and songs sung to them, equality in nutrition.

c) *Infanthood:*

Early socialization - relationship with different members of the family, division of labour, treatment by parents etc. Stories, proverbs, songs for and about girl and boy children. Feeding practices.

d) *Childhood:*

Access to education (preschool and primary school). Attitudes to education (girl vs boy). Continuing socialization, at home and in the wider community, influence of religion, customs and traditions, stories, proverbs, songs. Leisure. Influence of peer groups.

e) *Schooling and its influence:*

Attitudes of girls and their parents to schooling Curricula, text books and their interpretation in the school; staying in school etc. Teachers perception on gender in theory and in classroom practice. Classroom interaction. Division of labour - girls' workload. Games, leisure, and peer group interaction. Drop outs and why (by comparison with boys) Community involvement in school.

f) *Adolescence:*

Place in community, effect on attitudes to schooling; opportunity for development, business etc. Early marriage; prevalence, and support given. Sexual attitudes and practices - sex before marriage, birth control, pregnancy (including family attitudes to it). Girl's health, access to health care. Attitude to girls illness - quickness in seeking medical attention; perception of certain signs and symptoms (girls are often seen as malingerers if they complain of illness). HIV/AIDS and STD prevention.

- g) *Customs and traditions* governing the rights of the girl child. Property and land, inheritance, decision making, place in the family.

- h) *Girl's (and boy's) self perception.*

Self esteem, place in the community, future life, awareness of how to achieve aims and the obstacles facing them - peer interaction, role models, relationship with the opposite sex, marriage.

- i) *Community institutions with influence.*

Religious institutions, elders and influential people in the community.

- j) *Relationship between gender and other aspects.*

Economic and educational status of the family (especially the mother) - ethnic group, (including mixed marriages), religion - migration to new areas - size of family.

- k) *Changes in perception and attitudes* over the last generation, for example, towards marriage, pregnancy outside marriage, status and education girl, opportunities, migration to cities etc.

- of girls
- of their parents and the community.

These are just guidelines in order to show the breadth and depth of the subject. The researchers were able to identify many other areas, or be more precise in specific areas according to the first information gathered.