

Dropouts in Cameroonian Schools: Causes and Consequences

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Abstract

The school system in Cameroon consists of three main stages: Primary, Secondary-High school and University or Higher Education. This study has been carried out within the framework of Cameroon Government's policy on poverty alleviation, which is based on the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), and it is the benchmark for cooperation with partners on poverty reduction. It is assumed that since women form the larger proportion of the population, if their economic situation is improved through education, poverty will be substantially reduced in the society. This strategy is primordial in the quest for growth and the distribution of the fruits of this growth right to the most vulnerable strata of the population. The article is a qualitative study exploring the phenomenon of academic dropouts among the womenfolk from the viewpoint of the victims. It looks at the causes as well as psychological and economic impact of their semi-literacy both on their persons as individuals and on the society in general. It argues that in order for government to achieve its Millennium Development Goal of blending a new generation of economies and social policies which will ensure a coherent set for accelerating growth and fighting poverty in a sustainable manner, the education of both the young girls and the women dropouts in Cameroon have to be reconsidered. The study was carried out in the North West Region of the Republic of Cameroon and it analyzed samples selected from three villages. In all, a total of 25 women were selected using the snow ball sampling technique and information was mainly obtained using a prepared interview schedule. The data collected was compiled and analyzed. The results show that victims blame their inability to continue school on parental reluctance, early marriages, early parenthood and negative socio-cultural socialization in which the woman is considered as not worthy to spend too much money on.

Key words

Women, dropouts, cultural factors, causes, consequences.

Introduction

The phenomenon of women dropouts in Cameroon is rampant, as we find it in every stratum of the society and its effects are felt in diverse social and economic aspects of life. This paper exploits data from a set of twenty-five respondents, to postulate that victims blame their inability to have a full education on their male partner. A dropout can be defined as any student who is unable to complete his/her education to the level of securing a Diploma that can enable him/her to obtain a job. In most societies, dropping out of school is associated with juvenile delinquency, financial difficulties, low performance, and the use of drugs. This research points to culturally related factors as the major impediments to girls' continuing education.

Though this situation is gradually changing in Cameroon, especially with sensitization campaigns carried out by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Family, it is still interesting to realize that many dropouts of working age range between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five years of age. They therefore form a non-negligible component of the society and can still be helped to utilize their optimum potential. In this way they can contribute to a better economic outcome and therefore to the building of a fully developed nation. Even though there is a growing interest worldwide in the phenomenon expressed especially by researchers, policy makers and educationists, very few studies have been carried out in Africa on this subject and in Cameroon, no concrete research has been carried out to identify the areas most affected by the phenomenon of women dropouts from schools. This research therefore aims to fill that gap. It is based on the hypothetical assumption that, in Cameroon, the major cause of school drop out for girls revolves around the socio-cultural framework in which the women experience their existence in patriarchal societies. Aspects of this framework include parents' reluctance to sponsor girl children, early marriages, and parenthood and gender discrimination.

In Tanzania, the experts at IRIN, a Non Governmental Organization, have recently been concerned with the growing rate of school dropouts in the country. In a 2007 report, entitled: "IRIN/ Africa concern over school drop-out rate," they blame this phenomenon on pregnancy, teenage marriage, child labor and truancy.

Frances Hunt recognizes the multiplicity and simultaneity of reasons for dropping out, but locates the major causes on both the parents of the children and the society: “First there is no single cause of drop out. Drop out is often a process rather than the result of one single event” (2008:52). Hunt also finds that the prevailing economic situation of poor societies influences both the family by making households unable to afford school fees and other costs associated with schooling needs, as well as the children themselves who very early in life have to fend for themselves or succumb to the pressure of working to earn income for the household. Stressing this point further, Christopher Colclough, Pauline Rose, & Mercy Tembon, (2000) found that poverty was a stronger reason for dropping out of school than gender because in countries where gendered differences mattered, the differences between boys and girls were not as large as the differences between children from rich and poor households.

Ndidhi Kotwal, Neelima and Sheetal Rani (2007), found out that in India, one of the major reasons for children being kept out of school was the lack of education of the parents. Quoting the Public Report on Basic Education, (PROBE), which investigated the phenomenon in five states: (Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar), they found that parent’s attitude towards education has a big effect on children’s education. They thus posit that “when either of the parents is literate or especially when women are literate, they are more willing to send their children, especially girls, to school” (57).

Subscribing to this view, Leonie Taylor posits that parents’ lack of education contributes to much more than to deemphasizing the importance of education. It actually keeps girls unaware of basic rules of sanitation and causes embarrassment with natural body phenomena like menstruation. In an article published on the net, she writes:

UNICEF reports that “in countries where menstrual hygiene is taboo, girls in puberty are typically absent for 20% of the school year.” Most girls drop out at around 11 to 12-years-old, and miss school not simply because they fear being teased by their classmates if they show stains from their period, but also because they are not educated about their periods, and their need for safe and clean facilities is not prioritized.

But Horn (1992), finds that it does not suffice to merely have a literate parent: the degree and nature of family support are determined by factors such as a stressful and unstable family life, socio-economic status, minority membership, siblings' completion of High School, single parent household, poor education of parents and primary language other than English. This latter view is a better reflection of the causes of dropping out of school for Cameroonian girls in the sense, that girls are more often than not, considered as not belonging permanently to their nuclear families since they will soon be given into marriage. Educating them is therefore considered a wasteful venture.

Ruth B. Ekstrom, Margaret E. Goertz, Judith M. Pollock, and Donald A. Rock (1986), differ slightly from this view and believe that "kids who had been suspended, or who had trouble with the police were much more likely to drop out"(21). They posit, however, that the typical student with high grades was a female student whose family provided strong educational support.

In Cameroon, a combination of factors influences the drop out phenomenon. These factors include long distances to school and no motorized transport, teenage pregnancies, and in some parts, religious beliefs and practices. However, the most crucial factors are socio-cultural, and they stress the relative uselessness of education to the girl child. Sometimes children stay out of school because of all or a majority of these reasons.

Research Methodology

Data for this research was collected in three semi-urban localities in the North West Region as follows: Bali -- ten respondents, Santa -- eight respondents, and Kom-- seven respondents. The process consisted of the principal investigator giving presentations to Women Groups in these localities about the importance of education, especially for the women, and then with the help of their Group Leaders, recruiting those who were willing to share their experiences regarding their education or half-education with the investigator. The samples were obtained using the snow ball sampling technique. Information was collected using a schedule of interview questions and a tape recorder.

Apart from stressing the importance of education, the presentations

included other topics as follows: a description of the present study and its purpose, identity confidentiality, interview topics and a brief question and answer session. The women ranged from 18-35 years of age and were all married mothers involved in professional activities as diverse as their numbers. The vast majority were petty traders, while some were housewives, and a few had white-collar jobs of some kind. Upon completing the interview, respondents were given a token honorarium of one thousands francs each. The language of the interview was either English or Pidgin. After all the interviews were done, the tapes were transcribed into Standard English and then analyzed.

Method

The research proper began with the gathering of the equipment, which included a Tape Recorder, a set of interview questions and telephone numbers of important contact and resource persons. This step was followed by a sample of the population to be used. Three social groups (Country Meetings) were chosen as follows: the Bali women's wing of the Bali "Country Meeting," the Santa Women's wing of the Santa Manjong "Country Meeting," and the Kom women's wing of the Kom "Country meeting." Because Kom is quite far from Bamenda town, this researcher used the Women's wing of the Kom meeting of people resident in Bamenda town. These groups were preferred to others following discussions with the Resource Persons and especially because the latter could link the researcher up with the women leaders of the various groups.

On the first day, the women group leaders as well as the contact and resource persons were called up by phone for a "lunch" in the house of the Investigator. During this lunch, an overview of the research as well as its aims was presented to the leaders. Appointments were also taken to attend the women's social group meetings on the various days on which the different groups held their meetings in order to have a feel of the interactions and to determine the educational levels and the degree of consciousness of the women. During these meetings, the objectives of the research were presented to the entire group and some volunteers were recruited to participate in the research as "respondents" for an honorarium. Also appointments were made with the various

women recruited. A convenient location was chosen by each respondent for the administration of the interview questions.

Interview Questions

The questions varied slightly with regards to the educational levels of the respondents as well as their level of awareness that predisposed them for understanding the questions appropriately. However, the most uniform questions are listed below:

- 1) What is your Name?
- 2) How old are you?
- 3) Are you married?
- 4) How many children do you have?
- 5) What are their ages?
- 6) What do you do in life?
- 7) What does your husband do?
- 8) Do you have any school certificates? What are they?
- 9) Are your certificates helping you to earn a living? Why or why not?
- 10) Are you satisfied with your educational level?
- 11) Are they any members of your extended family who are more educated than you?
- 12) What do you think is responsible for your present educational level?
- 13) What do you think can be done to improve your present situation, that is, your educational level, job situation and family life?
- 14) Is your husband supportive of you if you decide to further your education?
- 15) Did you continue school after your marriage?
- 16) Did you decide together as a couple on the number of children to have?
- 17) What advice can you give to your girl child concerning her status in life?
- 18) If you were to begin your life all over, what are the things that you would like to do and what are the things that you would not like to do?

Case Study Interview Corpus

(Standard English Translation of one respondent's story).

Investigator (Invest): Welcome Madam. Please sit down and introduce yourself.

Respondent (resp): My name is Juliana. I was born in Lebialem in the South West Region in 1977 but grew up with my uncle in Bamenda in the North West Region where I went to live from the age of eight and went to primary school.

Invest: Are you married?

Resp: I will say yes and no. "Yes" because I got into a marriage relationship and "no" because it did not go well as a marriage is supposed to go.

Invest: Did you have children in the marriage? How old are thy now?

Resp: Yes, I have three children. My first child is 21 years old. His follower is 19 and this second one has a follower who is like her twin because the difference between them is not much. But if it was a good marriage I would have liked to have more children. After-all, some of my age mates have up to seven children.

Invest: I see! But why did you not have more? Was it because of school?

Resp: No! Not really, because even my classmates who went to school normally already have many children.

Invest: What do you mean by go to school normally? Where did you go to secondary school?

Resp: I did not go to a regular secondary school. When I finished class seven¹ I was one of the most intelligent students in my class. At the end of that year, that is 1989, I waited in vain for my uncle to discuss my going to college. When my classmates excitedly discussed the interviews for college which they were having, I usually had nothing to say and always felt very alone and out of place. So one day, I gathered courage and asked my uncle to tell me the college I should apply to.

¹ « Class Seven » refers to the end of Elementary School. It is also at this level that pupils write an entrance examination into Secondary Schools.

Invest: What did he say?

Resp: He said I did not need to apply to any, because I was not going to secondary school. When I asked him “why not?” He said because my parents had asked him to send me to the village in order that I might get married. I was shocked, in fact insulted, not because it was not common but because at that same time, my parents were sponsoring my cousin, Emmanuel, who was in secondary school, so I thought that they knew the value of education. My mind went back to the insults that my teachers used to insult the big girls who usually made noise in class when they called them “Sewers of uniforms for students to wear to secondary schools.” To not go to secondary school made me feel worse than those big girls who would become seamstresses. The thought infuriated me and I decided to go and see my parents in the village. My father was adamant that I should not go to secondary school because to him, education had no value for women as they all ended up in marriage. My mother could not oppose my father and in total disappointment, I returned to beg my uncle to help me. But before I reached Bamenda, my parents had sent word that I should be sent to Nkongsamba in the Littoral Region.

Invest: And did you go?

Resp: Yes, I was happy to go. I thought my parents had changed their minds and decided to send me to school after-all, but this time in Nkongsamba. But when I reached there I realized that I was just being treated as a commodity which has been taken to a market. There I was being made more visible so that young businessmen from my village who were trading in that town could propose marriage to me. I decided to kill myself but did not know what to do. So I locked myself up in the room where I slept and refused both food and water for two consecutive days. My aunt to whom I had been sent became alarmed and called for my mother to come and take me back to the village. So I was taken back to Bamenda.

Invest: Did you give up then?

Resp: Give up? No I didn’t. Yet I did not know what to do. I stayed in Bamenda for a whole year doing nothing and became very

frustrated especially when I saw my former classmates going to and from school. And then the worst thing happened.

Invest: What was that?

Resp: A polygamist, about whom I knew nothing, told a friend of his that he would like to marry me. When this word got to my uncle, he returned home one evening in frenzy and insulted me until I became “red in the face”². He later on gave me an ultimatum never to meet with the man. He said I was a fool to want to marry a polygamist in Bamenda instead of staying in Nkongsamba and marrying a young vibrant businessman there. I was shocked and infuriated because I had received no such marriage proposal. But a week later, the man showed up and I decided that it was time to take my revenge against my entire family for refusing to send me to secondary school. After having explained to the man that all I wanted was to go to school even after I have married him, and after having secured his promise to send me to school, I eloped with him.

Invest: Eloped? Where to?

Resp: To Bali where he owned a house.

Invest: And did you start school immediately?

Resp: H’m it’s a long story.

Invest: Tell me about it.

Resp: O.K. The man who then became my husband though we did not sign any legal document to that effect, already had two wives who lived in different towns, but I was ignorant of this. He was a nurse but preferred to do business. So he traded between Nigeria and Cameroon. He bought large quantities of medicines from Nigeria which he dispensed to informal traders and owners of medicine stores in Cameroon. I got pregnant a few months after we got to Bali, but I was prepared to go to any school even in my state. But he said it would be better to have the baby first. When the baby was a year old, I reminded him of my desire to

² To “become red in the face” is to feel a terrible and intense mixture of shame, guilt and anger.

go to school, and he said he would think about it. Since I had no notion about contraceptives, I got pregnant again shortly afterwards. After the delivery of this second child, I said I was not going to have sex with him again until I was registered in a school. He became very angry and said he knew about the natural contraceptive method and that he was going to be careful so that I do not conceive again even if we had sex. But six months after the delivery of this second child, I was pregnant again. When I became furious, my husband just abandoned me and all the children plus the pregnancy and went to his other wives. He only visited us again several months after the delivery of this third child. I told him that I was still ready to go to school and he said he did not consider it proper to send me to school as he himself was not very educated because he thinks that if I became a university graduate for example, I would find it difficult to respect him. He said moreover, I would neglect the children and since he is a businessman, the children will have no parents to look after them if I went to school. When he left after this visit, I packed all my babies' clothes and my personal belongings and returned to my uncle's house in Bamenda. I told him that I just needed a place to stay with the children and that I was going to struggle to pay for my school fees but I must go to school. I then appealed to my cousin, Emmanuel whom my parents had sponsored, to pay just my fees and I would take care of the rest. He paid for three years and sometimes I did informal trading to take care of our nutrition.

Invest: What kind of trading did you do that did not interfere with your education?

Resp: I bought unripe bananas cheaply, kept them in a way as for them to ripen and then I retailed the ripe bananas. But after three years my cousin, who had become a teacher, got a scholarship to South Africa and I never heard from him again. The financial situation became very hard and it was difficult for me to continue. But when I heard of an Entrance Examination to a Private Nursing School, I applied for it. I gained admission into the school but needed a hundred thousands francs for tuition.

Invest: Do you mean to say that all the while that you were registered in secondary school, your husband did not give any financial assistance?

Resp: Not directly. He took care of the children by registering them in nursery school and paying their fees but not mine.

Invest: What about your uncle?

Resp: My uncle was still angry with me for revolting against him to marry my husband. He just decided to let me bear the consequences.

Invest: So where did you get the money to pay for the Nursing School education?

Resp: I appealed again to my husband. I begged him to help. He told me that he believed my aim was to challenge him and that for that reason, if he had to help me, I had to change my birth certificate in such a way that my maiden name was replaced by his surname. This meant that I had to register into the Nursing School using his surname instead of my maiden name. Since I was already very desperate, I agreed.

Invest: You mean you changed the names on your birth certificate?

Resp: Yes. It was my husband who went and did it and then used it to pay my fees into the Nursing School. So when I graduated, my End of Course certificate carried his names.

Invest: How has this been helpful to you?

Resp: It hasn't been helpful at all. On the contrary, it has posed terrible problems. When I graduated from that school, I later on got a job in a Private community based Health Centre. But when the government decided to integrate workers of my category into the Public Service, my documents were eliminated because the names on my documents did not conform: My First School Leaving Certificate was in my maiden name while my Nursing School Certificate and my Birth certificate were in my husband's surname and because of this confusion, my case was rejected. You see so I can never aspire for a better life because my husband decided to control my life as he liked.

Invest: Have you tried to let your husband see the problems that this has brought into your life?

Resp: He knows all about them and I believe he is the happier. The worst stance is that of my uncle. When I tried to get him intervene, he simply asked me whether it was proper for a herdsman to sell a cow and then follow the buyer to give instructions to the butcher about how the cow should be slain.

Invest: So how do you feel towards your husband?

Resp: I cannot even call him my husband anymore. A few years ago, he came back to the house where I was living with the children, threw us out and sold the house. So I don't think there is any marriage between us any more.

Invest: What do you intend to do now? Remarry?

Resp: Me? No. I will like to go back to school and have my Ordinary Levels if I have the chance. My children are now big but I feel bad that the eldest was sacrificed for the ups and downs of my life and marriage.

Invest: How do you mean?

Resp: He could not go to secondary school because that was when we were thrown out of the house and I could not take care of both the rents and his education at the same time with the meager salary of a nurse in Private Health Centre.

Invest: Thank you very much, Madam, and I wish you good luck for your future plans.

Resp: Thank you.

Results and Discussion

Dropping out of school is generally defined as leaving school without an end of course certificate and for reasons other than death. This can happen at any stage of the academic ladder. According to Ricardo Sabates, Kwame Akyeampong, Jo Westbrook, and Frances Hunt (2010), policies to improve school progression and reduce the numbers of children dropping out of school are critical if Universal Primary Education (UPE) is to be achieved. As can be seen from this research's findings, more school dropouts were from the Primary school level than from any other level

Table 1 shows the percentage of women school dropouts at the various levels of their education.

Table 1
Levels of Drop out for Various Women

LEVELS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGES
Primary School	13	52%
Secondary School	08	32%
High School	04	16%
Total	25	100%

In the corpus of all the participants interviewed (25 participants in all), 52%, that is 13 out of 25 women, were school dropouts from the primary school level, which means they had an average education of seven years; 32%, that is 8 out of 25, went to secondary school but did not quite complete it; while 16%, that is 4 out of 25, went through secondary school but did not have the minimum pass to proceed to high school. It would be appropriate to explore the reasons that influenced this situation.

Table 2
*Summary of Causes of Drop out according to the Victims**

	REASONS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGES
1	Early Marriages	18	72%
2	Girls' involvement in Domestic Chores	15	60%
3	Financial Constraints	13	52%
4	Early Parenthood	17	68%
5	Teenage Pregnancy	8	32%
6	Reluctance of Parents	20	80%
7	Poor Academic Performance	01	4%
8	Religious beliefs and practices	03	12%

* Most dropouts had multiple reasons for having dropped out

From the data analysis, and as can be read from Table 2, it is clear that a large proportion of the drop outs blamed their predicament on their parents’ reluctance to spend money on their daughters’ education. Most often the parents believed that the girls were meant for marriage and reproduction. This is why 72% of girls were ushered into early marriages. 60% of girls were involved in domestic chores like baby-sitting for their younger siblings, farming, procurement of wood and procurement and preparation of food for the family. While 52% of girls found themselves in financially constraining circumstances, 32% of them, maybe for the foregoing reason, got pregnant while unmarried. Only 4%, that is one of the women, believed that she was academically deficient and therefore not good for school and 12% blamed the religious practices and beliefs of their communities.

This situation has devastating consequences not only on the individual women but also on their eventual families and the society at large. This can be seen from the Data in Table 3.

Table 3
*Consequences of Dropping out of School**

	CONSEQUENCES	NUMBER OF REpondENTS	PERCENTAGES
1	Financial Deprivation	20	80%
2	Inability to help children with School Work	17	68%
3	Poor Health	18	72%
4	Low Self Esteem	20	80%
5	Unemployment	15	60%
6	Anger at Disempowerment	20	80%

* Respondents had multiple effects of their predicament

Due to their inability to go through school, 80% of women from the sample interviewed found it difficult to have finances of their own. They mostly depended on their husbands who supplied their needs and sometimes those of their children, depending on their whims and caprices. This same percentage of women, 80% were unemployed and resulting from these, entertained feelings of a low self-esteem. They fear that their feelings may have an impact on their children’s emotional

stability. 72% women have problems with their health and believe that their inability to read and clearly follow health programs and instructions on medicines is partly responsible for their poor health. Because of this, 60% of them feel anger at the disempowerment that they experience because of their low educational status.

Asked about what they think can be done to remedy their condition, the women answered variously. Their responses are represented on Table 4.

Table 4
Remediation Possibilities and Attempts

	REASONS AND ATTEMPTS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGES
1	FEAR OF HUSBAND'S REPRISAL	03	12%
2	HAVE TRIED BUT LACK ADEQUATE MEANS	09	36%
3	WILL TRY BUT NEED ADEQUATE MEANS	12	48%
4	NOT INTERESTED	01	4%
	TOTAL	25	100%

84% of the women believe that their lot can be improved if structures are put in place to foster a pseudo-professional knowledge acquisition in order to insert them into the job market. They prefer to learn trades like hair dressing, seamstressing and hotel and restaurant management, if these possibilities are brought nearer to them and would not be capital intensive. 12% of the women, that is 3 out of the 25, were of the opinion that their husbands would not be ready to spend money to allow them further their education. A large part of the comments of these women point to a fear, in the men, of an onset of competition between the sexes, if the women were educated more than their present levels. However, 4%, that is, one woman out of the 25, was simply despondent.

Implications for those Involved with Policies for Women in Cameroon

What the above analysis reveals among other things is that psycho-

logical violence meted on women by a patriarchal set-up is enough to destabilize not only the woman but her entire family and the society at large. Some of the goals of gender mainstreaming in Cameroon, as expressed in the PRSP paper chapter 3 Section 373, include:

- The enhancing of structures and institutional mechanisms that promote women.
- Improving gender equality and equity in all sectors of national life.
- Strengthening women's economic power (especially Rural and Urban poor women).
- Building the capacities of female development professionals.
- Establishing an autonomous body for the collection, pooling, analysis, and distribution of data on the situation of women.

Education dropouts in Cameroon are classified among the urban poor of the society. They are also considered victims of social, psychological, and economic violence from the society and male patriarchal family set-ups. Even if most of them were born and bred in a rural setting, they eventually find themselves in urban and semi-urban environments, where they are unable to carry out large-scale farming and yet are expected to fend for themselves. Whether in the urban or rural settings, women in Cameroon are socialized to believe in their inherent inferiority as opposed to the superiority of men. This in itself is a kind of psychological violence in the sense in which it makes women to go about with a negative self-esteem. The society is basically patriarchal and the women are conditioned to remain ignorant and to be subservient: first to their parents and then to their husbands during marriage and even to their sons in widowhood. Because of this, women keep reproducing the iconoclastic values of domesticity such as marriage and motherhood, while men handle decision-making, even when these decisions have to do with the destiny of women. Even though professionalism and decision-making are laudable duties, the findings of this research point to the fact that women are eager to be equipped in order to participate in the process. Also, in order to achieve the government's goals as listed in the PRSP, the re-education of women in the rural and semi-rural areas is a prime mover. This will ensure that women's socio-economic and legal rights are protected thereby giving women a better sense of

dignity which is a condition *sine qua non* for women's involvement in nation building, national growth, and sustainable development.

In fact, the violence on women as discerned from the research is so strong that Juliana is not even given the opportunity to experience wifehood and motherhood. Her husband was neither truthful to her about his intentions of having an ignorant uneducated housewife and not an educated wife nor did he let her know that their "marriage" was going to be a polygamous one. He never really lived with her and she never had the opportunity of relating filially with and loving her children whom she now sees as another bane that kept her from going through with her cherished dreams to have an education and contribute meaningfully in the building of her life and those of her children. So she is neither a wife nor a mother but simply a sex object for the gratification of male sexual desire and a machine for the rapid production of children, in fact, three in two years. She accepted all of this because she was uneducated and therefore unaware of how to space out her deliveries. Also, she was unaware of the legal provisions on the right and duties of women.

The victimhood mentality that Juliana has carried with her all through life due to the discrimination she experienced between the genders (especially as her male cousin was educated by her own parents and she herself had no one to depend on), generally characterizes most educational dropouts and naturally affects their psychology and their entire social interactional pattern. Generally, this bleak outlook on life is transferred to their off spring, who face life with truncated psyches linked to their mothers' status and characteristic of their oppression and marginalization. Juliana is therefore a depiction of the violent and stifling limitations placed on the selfhood of women who are refused the right to education at any age or level. Because of the phenomenon of an incomplete education, fostered by a patriarchal system which considers men as the norm and women as the "other," women go through untold emotional, psychological, social, and economic violence, which scalds their psyches and leads to such vices as women on women violence, suicide, madness, and the over-all backwardness of society (Mutia 2006).

However, the most important finding of this research is the fact that most of the school dropouts would like to transcend their frustration

and do something outside of marriage and wifehood that can place them in the job market. But women need the support of the entire super-structure of the government. As can be read from our example in the research presented above, women who individually tend to revolt against the commodification of their lives by the patriarchal society face terrible and violent consequences.

If structures are put in place not only to encourage girl children to go to school but also to encourage dropouts to continue their education, productivity in society will increase as many more hands will be on deck to ensure the development of the nation. A proper education will enhance the socio-legal status of women, improve women's living conditions, improve gender equality and equity in all sectors of national life, and enhance structures and institutional mechanisms that promote women, for the growth and development of the nation as a whole.

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