

## ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES OF GIRLS LEAVING SCHOOL: A CASE FROM CHITAMBO PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MILANGE DISTRICT - ZAMBÉZIA PROVINCE, MOZAMBIQUE

ANÁLISIS DE LAS CAUSAS DEL ABANDONO DE LA ESCUELA DE LAS NIÑAS: UN  
CASO DE LA ESCUELA PRIMARIA DE CHITAMBO EN EL DISTRITO DE MILANGE -  
PROVINCIA DE ZAMBÉZIA, MOZAMBIQUE

ANÁLISE DAS CAUSAS DO ABANDONO ESCOLAR DA RAPARIGA NA ESCOLA  
PRIMÁRIA COMPLETA DE CHITAMBO DISTRITO DE MILANGE - PROVÍNCIA DE  
ZAMBÉZIA

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### Abstract

The impetus of this study is to analyze the causes of girls dropping out based on the case of Chitambo Primary School in Milange District, in the central region of Mozambique. In the search for answers to the research questions, the study applied a mixed-method approach eliciting the experiences of the school director, deputy pedagogical director, teachers, and students. The results reveal that the main causes of school dropout are the lack of interest in school and early pregnancy. Moreover, they also reveal that a low level of education is understood to be one of the consequences that school dropout brings to society. However, the school leadership posits that some work has been done to overcome the problem of girls dropping out of school. This refers, for instance, to raising awareness among girls about the importance of school and class meetings that are held with parents to inform them about the benefits to their children.

**Keywords:** School; Girls; School Dropout.

### Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio es analizar las causas de la deserción escolar de las niñas a partir del caso de la escuela primaria de Chitambo en el distrito de Milange, en la región central de Mozambique. En la búsqueda de respuestas a las preguntas de investigación, el estudio aplicó un enfoque de métodos mixtos que recogió las experiencias del director de la escuela, el subdirector pedagógico, profesores y estudiantes. Los resultados revelan que las principales causas del abandono escolar son la falta de interés por la escuela y el embarazo precoz. Además, también revelan que se entiende que un bajo nivel educativo es una de las consecuencias que trae el abandono escolar a la sociedad. Sin embargo, la dirección escolar

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afirma que se ha trabajado algo para superar el problema del abandono escolar de las niñas. Esto se refiere, por ejemplo, a concienciar a las niñas sobre la importancia de las reuniones escolares y de clase que se celebran con los padres para informarles sobre los beneficios para sus hijos.

**Palabras clave:** Escuela; Niñas; Abandono de escuela.

### Resumo

O objetivo deste artigo é analisar as causas do abandono escolar da rapariga na escola primária completa. Na busca de respostas às perguntas de pesquisa colocadas, durante a realização deste estudo, recorreu-se uma combinação das abordagens qualitativa e uma componente quantitativa que foram tratados com base em procedimentos percentuais para evidenciar de forma objectiva os factores ou causas do abandono escolar, mediante o uso de técnicas de recolha de dados como entrevista e do inquérito por questionário. Com efeito, as entrevistas foram administradas ao director de escola, director adjunto-pedagógico, ao passo que os questionários foram aplicados aos professores e alunas. Os resultados do estudo apontaram que as principais causas do abandono escolar são a falta de interesse pela escola e a gravidez precoce, no que diz respeito as consequências que o abandono escolar trás para a sociedade, o estudo constatou que o baixo nível de escolaridade surge como consequência. A direcção da escola assumiu que tem feito alguns trabalhos com vista a contornar o problema do abandono escolar da rapariga, dentre as acções feitas destacam-se a sensibilização as raparigas sobre a importância da escola e reuniões de turma que são feitas com os pais para informar sobre o aproveitamento dos seus filhos.

**Palavras-chave:** Escola; Rapariga; Abandono Escolar.

### Introduction

Education is a right and duty of all citizens, an instrument for affirmation and integration of the individual into social, economic, and political life, and is essential for the country's development and the fight against poverty (Education Strategic Plan 2012- 2016).

Nevertheless, we have currently seen disparities in the level of integration and permanence in school between girls and boys, with girls remaining in school less than boys, a more common situation in rural areas. A study carried out by UNESCO in 2012, in different rural areas of Mozambique, within the scope of the child-friendly education study, estimates that approximately 1.2 million (or 23%) of primary and secondary school-age children are out of school due to factors related to poverty and sociocultural norms: premature marriage, early pregnancy, distance from home to school, lack of safe school spaces, overcrowded classrooms and lack of an adequate number of quality teachers UNICEF (2019).

Girls face many barriers to completing schooling in Mozambique, of which the main ones are linked to gender roles such as domestic tasks, taking care of siblings; poverty, parents' inability to pay school fees, need to work in the field; pregnancy and early marriage; and sexual harassment (ActionAid, 2013).

The United Nations Educational and Cultural Organization (2019) posits that environment Schooling is not always safe or inclusive, so it is the responsibility of governments, schools, teachers, and students to build a safe school environment, free from violence and discrimination and that promotes good quality and gender-sensitive education. Salvi (2018) talks about Order 39/GM/2003 revoked by Order no. 435/GM/MINRDH/2018 approved by the World Bank 2011, a repeal that permitted all pregnant girls to attend school during the night shift.

Such a measure was acknowledged by civil society organizations and, on the other hand, by Mozambican activists which constituted a highway for school dropouts although it formally acted as a strategy to return to academic life.

It is understood in this way that school dropout is a reality in Mozambique and the girls have shown a high rate of dropouts, a fact connected to several factors from gender, school integration, and failure at school.

Among several problems that exist in education, girls dropping out of school is one of them that occurs most often, a phenomenon that presents itself in several aspects, from girls' poor access to school and the significant reduction in the number of girls in school. Thus, the problem of this research focuses on the gap between the real situation, which is that of school dropout, and the desired situation, which is the retention of students in primary schools until the completion of compulsory education throughout the country, which constitutes a case of our study built from Chitambo primary school.

The Government's perspective Five-Year Plan (2015 – 2019), states that basic school education is essential to continue the construction of a Mozambican society, based on the ideals of freedom, democracy, and social justice and also as the main instrument for training and preparing youth for their effective participation on building the country.

For the education sector in Mozambique, the documents that serve as a basis for Gender equality interventions are the Strategic Education Plan (2012-2016) and the Education for All Objectives of the 2000 World Education Forum. The Education Strategic Plan (PEE 2012-2016) advocates integration into existing programs and specific interventions aimed at cross-cutting areas such as HIV and AIDS, gender, and others. The Dakar 2000 World Education Fund, among the six goals of "Education for All" is the achievement of gender parity and equality in the Sector of Education. Despite the implementation of these policies, there are signs of persistent gender inequality in the sector, which is reflected due to the disparity in access and retention in schools between boys and girls, especially in rural areas.

As UNESCO (2015) reports, in Mozambique there have been advances in terms of school entry, but the challenge of retaining children annually remains, as 350,000 drop out of school.

Data from the newspaper O País 2018 reveals that close to three thousand girls dropped out of school in 2017, overall totaling 500 thousand who abandoned it the same year, a situation that has worried the sector of education.

On the other hand, the MINEHD School Achievement Balance (2018) reveals that in the 5<sup>th</sup> class, in 2018, the dropout rate was (9.6%), representing 69,495 students, although access to 2nd-grade primary education had an increasing trend, as 722,494 students entered the system. In the 7th grade, the dropout rate stood at 6.0% and, in absolute terms, corresponds to 56,955 students who dropped out of school out of a total of 954,554 enrolled.

The author above highlights that in 2019 in the province of Zambézia, particularly in the 5th grade, the rate of dropout rate was 7.0%, which concerns 3,726 students out of the 53,233 enrolled. In the 7th grade, the dropout rate stood at 21.0% according to 2019 education sector statistics, and in absolute terms represents 18,892 students who dropped out of the 89,962 enrolled.

In turn, the PARPA Action and Absolute Poverty Reduction Plan (2000-2004), in view of this reality provides special attention to girls in ensuring access to school and maintaining it within the educational system by raising awareness among parents and guardians and the educational community about the benefits of school.

Data from the complete primary school of Chitambo, show that school dropout is checked with greater vigor in the 6th and 7th classes. In 2020 the school enrolled 105 girls in the 6th and 7th grades and 17 students dropped out of school. In 2021 it enrolled 109 girls, 9 students dropped out of school, and in 2022 it enrolled 95 girls and 7 girls dropped out. The same data points out that the main cause is the lack of interest on the part of parents in the schooling of their daughters and early pregnancy.

Based on the information referenced above, everything leads us to believe that the problem of students dropping out of school is common in Mozambican schools, especially those located in rural areas. Therefore, the Chitambo primary school located in the rural area of Milange district in the central part of Mozambique also faces school dropout problems. Given this scenario, the following starting question arises: What are the causes of girls dropping out of primary school in Chitambo?

Taking into account the theme, the research purposes, the problem, and the advanced starting question, this research aims to analyze the causes of girls dropping out of primary school in Chitambo. This aim is unfolded into the following goals: a) To identify the main causes of girls dropping out of primary school in Chitambo; b) To describe and evaluate the consequences that a girl's school dropout brings to society; c) To verify actions taken to retain girls in Chitambo primary school.

Therefore, for the present work the following research questions are identified: What are the causes of girls dropping out at Chitambo primary school? What are the consequences that a girl's school dropout brings to society? What actions are taken to retain the girl in Chitambo primary school?

The main reason that led to the choice of this topic lies in the fact that the researcher had noted the existence of a large number of girls outside the education system and without any power within the family and society, an action that comes from several factors – cultural, discrimination, beliefs meaning the violation of their rights, social justice. According to the Strategic Education Plan - PEE (2020-2029), schools in the country have seen students drop out every year. This phenomenon has

occurred more prominently at the end of the school year, especially among girls because it is assumed that during this period girls are taken for initiation rites, sowing in the field which is often far from the school, and are subject to premature marriages. among other factors that prevent them from continuing to attend school.

This study plays a pivotal role at a social level and its main contribution to knowledge lies in the fact that it brings to the fore empirical findings on the causes that lead to the occurrence of girls dropping out of school and measures to minimize the phenomenon, from a barely researched context. Furthermore, it is also important to note that this topic is relevant as it raises awareness about the society of the various factors that may prevent school-age students from dropping out.

In the academic context, the results could serve as strategies to be applied by schools that face student dropout and will help in reflections on the subject, eliciting resolutions relating to the problem under study.

It will also draw attention to governments about new measures that can be taken aimed at reducing girls' school dropout rates and will provide an effort and a challenging outlook when prioritizing educational policies. It may allow the community, parents, and guardians to assist the child with regards to the girl's education, and in this way, she can be engaged in school teaching as the family is the main driver and motivator in overcoming school dropout.

From a personal point of view, the study is important because it brings back the reality and issues related to education and social justice and the reality of the country and the province of Zambézia in particular, we hope in this way that this, helping the school as well as the relatives in the village of Milange, start to look at the problem, as something to overcome in the teaching and learning process from the family to school.

## Literature review

- School dropout

To better understand the phenomenon of school dropout, it is necessary to know its concept. However, it is not easy to find a consensual definition.



However, according to Fonseca (2015), the term abandonment refers to the action of leaving a thing, a person, a function, a place... oblivion, *renounce*. Therefore, in the school context, the term abandonment means “stopping *attend school, study, forget or get rid of school, be it transfer or death*”.

From the perspective of Palme (1992), “abandonment occurs at the end of the academic year due to various reasons other than transfer or death while withdrawal occurs elsewhere during the year”.

The aforementioned authors ensure that the term in reference applies to situations in which the student stops attending school without having completed the mandatory course and/or reached the legal age to do so, to dedicate themselves to other activities of individual interest or collective.

In all concepts, it was found that school dropout refers to the moment in which students stop attending school before completing the required educational level, in order to dedicate others activities.

The notion of school dropout is generally identified with the interruption of attendance in the education system for a period considered sufficient for this absence to become a practically irreversible separation. However, this broad definition is generally framed by the character of compulsory education and the legal consequences of non-compliance (Wild,2002).

In this perspective, school dropout related to prolonged interruption of schooling mandatory and the definitive exit from the education system without having completed it tends to constitute as illicit, regardless of the sanctioning effectiveness or the greater or lesser social recrimination associated with it.

Santos (2010), in his study “A Look at School Dropout in the Municipality of Trofa”, concluded that school dropout is a problem within the domain of an individual's conduct and translates into the decision to leave school without completing the desired level of education. Adds also that this is not a sudden decision, but the product of a long process of tensions, maladjustments, failures, and lack of interest in school. The researcher also states that the early departure from school calls into question the instrumental value of the school, as a participant in the

personal development and preparation for active life that the student refuses to recognize. On the other hand, the dropping out student is largely rejected by the school that does not manage to motivate him for training, the consequences of which are often his premature launch into active life, idleness, or even marginality.

Still in this line of investigation, we highlight the studies that are in agreement regarding the fact that students who leave school early are students who, generally, live in disadvantaged areas, in dysfunctional family environments, and with weak ambitions schoolchildren. It is therefore important to seek to understand the roles of social inequalities and school exclusion when dropping out of school (Vendelbo, 1999).

Other studies, however, including those by Benavente (1994), are unanimous in stating that more determining than the family's economic standard of living and its cultural level, as it is a very important conditioner in the student's academic career. In the last decades retired from school acting in the construction of identities. Your role as an agent of socialization prevails, but young people no longer identify with the concepts that society wants to teach them (Caetano, 2013).

After reviewing the basic concepts that guided the research, the concept of abandonment school addressed by Santos (2010), is what identifies the researcher because, in addition to constituting the central theme of the research, it addresses abandonment as a process that goes through several phases until it is completed or materialized by the individual on their student journey.

- The main causes of girls dropping out of school

According to CMI-Chr Michelsen Institute Tvdtten et al (2009), the report on the actions of the Mozambican government in the education sector has had a positive impact on levels of school attendance, but there are still differences in terms of dropout or dropout girls' school.

Fernandes (1991) states that for some years now, numerous researchers have also been dedicated to the study of school dropouts, trying to understand who these children are, adolescents and young people who leave school early, what reasons lead them to take this decision and what consequences it has, at an individual, social and economic level.



We list the main causes or factors that motivate the occurrence of school dropouts below:

a) Economic factors

Poverty is the main determinant when it comes to economic issues in Mozambique, which in turn encourages the occurrence of early marriages. Some parents support the idea of their younger daughters no longer attending primary school mandatory, to generally marry an adult in expectation to get an income for their family. It means having someone who will alleviate your expenses and let them from going to school to assuming their social roles as wives (Siteo, 2017).

Siteo (2017) further explains that the fact parents or guardians accept premature marriage, they hope to reduce the affective at home and amortize the family's expenses, this is often not what happens instead reducing expenses increase since such marriages often culminate in precocious pregnancy and the author runs away from his responsibilities feeling trapped in poverty, abandoning the teenage mother with her youngest child.

When we talk about school dropout, several questions inevitably arise related to problems, such as social inequalities and school exclusion (Azevedo 2013). Adds Tavares (1990), who are students from the least favored economic strata, socially and culturally that increase the statistics of repetition and school dropout.

In this way, it is understood that Nunes, in his explanation, strengthens the idea of the existence of social inequalities at school considered by Monteiro, as almost always, poverty or those who have little financial power are those who are associated with academic failure or school dropout. But it's not quite like that, because not only are the least educated students disadvantaged people who increase school dropout statistics but there are several internal components to the student such as their interest in school, monitoring their studies by parents, etc.

b) Cultural factors

Talking about these factors studies by UNICEF (2016), and Siteo (2017), prove that in Mozambique there are more early marriages in rural areas than in urban. This may be related to the policies to combat this practice outlined by the Mozambican government may not be publicized with the same frequency in rural regions.

Concerning socio-cultural factors (initiation rites), Pinto (2017, p.23) highlights that initiation rites are a practice that predominates where the school is located and constitutes “the set of certain individual or collective behaviors with repetitive character and strong symbolic burden for the participants and witnesses”. The communities of Mozambican women who practice this tradition understand this act as a passage from the child to adulthood. Their husbands are arranged by their parents or people who care for them. They are deprived of the freedom to refuse to drop out of school motivated by premature marriage and consequently freedom of expression provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique in 2004.

Still, in the same study, it is observed that orphanhood is one of the determinants that leaves girls vulnerable to early marriages in Mozambique, as they face many difficulties in caring for their younger siblings after the death of their parents, even worse when the parents die in rented houses because the children are left without shelter, choose to marry someone to help with expenses (UNICEF, 2016).

c) Social Factors

The other cause of school dropout is related to the failure to introduce Bilingual, students with limited knowledge of the Portuguese language find themselves often at risk of educational failure due to the challenges they face in the classroom classes, particularly when bilingual programs are not readily available and the Portuguese as a second language.

Another factor that influences the particular form in which girls drop out of school is harassment or sexual abuse carried out not only by teachers but also by colleagues, and parents do not see school as a safe place for their daughters to spend most of the day. Lack of teachers in primary education, especially in rural areas means that girls do not see what they can gain from school.

It is also observed that, due to the lack of nearby schools, girls are forced to walk long distances to school, this situation is highlighted as another driving factor of school dropout. For example, primary education goes up to 7th grade after completing this level and to continue, students are forced to undertake extensive distances, in many cases parents and guardians are unable to support the teaching of their daughters. This problem affects regular attendance in classes.

#### d) Family factors

Regarding family factors, Brandão, Baeta and Rocha (1983), in his research on abandonment school points to the family as determining the child's academic failure, whether due to monitoring the child's school activities or the living conditions that the family offers the child.

Lopez and Menezes, (2002, p.47) have added other features that are influential in the context of school dropout, such as family size and type, the existence of other evasion within the family, family education at a socio-economic level from parents, Matsinhe (2010) completes that more permissive parents with little ambition Education are also important factors for school dropout.

Hence, as argued by Bourdieu (2002), family is a decisive element of personal protection proximity and creates a common space and values based on a condition of sharing. On the other hand, the author explains that the fact that the family institution is in deep reorganization increases vulnerability in social relationships and presents us with young people without future trajectories, with a bad relationship with work (casual jobs and unemployment) and involvement in a family with nothing to transmit towards a path of integration.

All this characterizes and builds the identity of young people: low academic performance, lack of occupational qualifications, the feeling of being a stranger to socio-cultural institutions, unions, and local political institutions, and permanent conflict with representatives of the law and of the order. Therefore, for this author, it is up to the family to guarantee care, affection, and values appropriate standards, as well as standards of conduct that together will allow the student to achieve higher benefits.

Dropping out of school is perceived as a phenomenon that does not happen by chance, which demonstrates the possibility of intervention and even prevention (Benavente, 1994).

- Consequences that a girl's school dropout brings to society

Dropping out of school has a major impact on human capital, as it negatively affects the lives of these individuals reaching all spheres. It is a serious problem for society as a whole and for the school in particular and it is therefore considered important to quantify and the analysis of its consequences. According to Natriello, cited by Lemmer (2001, p.83), dropping out of school has cognitive, social, economic, and educational consequences.

i) Cognitive – in this field the author says that the cognitive abilities of young people who remained in school were better than those who dropped out of school, as they did not mental or physical capacity to hold a stable, well-paid job making it difficult to escape poverty.

ii) Social – Girls outside the educational system are part of groups of unemployed and socially excluded in society and many are not welcomed in other Institutions, which makes them go down bad paths that do nothing to dignify them such as drugs, alcohol, and prostitution where they are susceptible to sexually transmitted diseases as an early onset of sexual life. Furthermore, they may be part of groups of criminals and violence, increasing social inequality that generates a lack of integration between individuals.

iii) Economic – A decrease in the development of the economy is observed, because it has as a result less success in the job market, young people who abandoned school are not only more likely to be unemployed, but also they will likely earn less when they are employed.

iv) Educational - this phenomenon is a constant concern for the Ministry of Education and Human Development, this is a phenomenon that brings harm to the educational system since children who do not complete the minimum level of education will increase the list of illiteracy and will reduce the list of those who complete schooling thus contributing to academic failure, compromising their well-being familiar.

In view of these phenomena, it is observed that early school leaving is seen as an obstacle to the development of people and the region. It is important to understand what the implications are for this phenomenon for the job market, as the level of education is crucial which strongly affects the prospects of professional life (Chiziane, 2012).

According to Lemmer (2006), “almost everyone agrees that people who abandon school prematurely are at a greater disadvantage in the job market as women's economies develop”.

Therefore, these consequences do not have anything positive for young people who drop out of school, if not losses in all spheres of their lives. Based on the authors' explanation mentioned above, it was found that these consequences can be felt at an individual level, family, school, and even social.

ActionAid (2013) says that, in Mozambique, millions of girls do not have protection for their rights and well-being. And as a consequence of the girl dropping out of school, she refers to the absence of competitiveness in the job market that leads to girls becoming workers domestic workers, early mothers, sex trafficked workers, and those more exposed to being victims of abuse. For many, childhood and adolescence end with poor education, poor health, and decision-making power in their own lives or their communities. Every girl married before the age of 18 promotes an individual and collective tragedy, says UNICEF (2016), and early pregnancies can cause serious illnesses and lead to death in girls who hardly continue their studies because of assuming their new role Social.

Vasconcelos (2014) says that the high dropout rates in primary schools result in poverty, disgrace, and non-progression. That is, when girls drop out of school are vulnerable to poverty, as with low education it is difficult to They can get a job which leads to misfortune.

MINED (2015, p.12) states that students who do not complete the basic level are prohibited from continuing at subsequent levels, thereby being excluded from my technological as well as the employment market, thus complicating their participation in individual and country development activities.

However, school dropout has many implications or consequences for society with these explanations above, it can be seen that when girls leave school, the country or community loses a workforce to the labor market which makes the equality of opportunities between men and women far from happening. Furthermore, it affects the girl psychologically because she loses her voice in society or decision-making power, which makes her subject to situations of violence in society.

- Actions taken to retain and complete girls at school

According to Lemmer (2006,p.84), many researchers including Smith and Martin (1997,p.16) support the notion that successful programs can reduce school dropout as long as they include seven components: a) Timely identification and intervention; b) Intensive individualized care; c) Training in personal and social skills that could include actions on self-esteem, dealing with stress, self-responsibility and relationships with others; d) Pay attention to training that includes specific assistance on certain subjects, as well as issues such as problem-solving and decision-making skills; e) Peer engagement where at-risk youth learn to teach activities of self-esteem, for example, for younger students; f) Parental involvement where parents and children are given opportunities to communicate and parents learn life techniques and ways that allow them to support their children; g) Connection to the world of work. In rural areas, for example, where parents are busy with agriculture and livestock and have only their children to help them is difficult to see fulfilled.



It is worth noting that the fulfillment of the above actions would be valuable in reducing school dropouts. To fight against school dropout, the Civil Society Forum for Children's Rights (ROSC 2019), argues that girls must be equipped with information to protect and fight for their rights. These actions must be carried out: in schools, communities, and churches so that girls have full awareness of their rights, as well as assimilating them and knowing how to act in the face of the violence of these rights. Likewise, parents and guardians must be provided with education so that they understand and send their children to school. Teachers in turn must be agents for monitoring and retaining the girl at school.

ActionAid (2013) created a dynamic to increase retention and make progress in gender parity and as actions recommend the following: a) Work with parents to engage them with various school stakeholders to ensure recognition of girls' rights education, protection, and respect for these rights at home, at school and in the community; b) Cycles of reflection to support the return and retention of girls in school; c) Work with boys and girls through the creation of clubs to educate children about their rights and bring about positive changes in communities, supporting their peers outside of school to return to their studies; d) Friendly peer persuasion consisting of encouraging peers to understand the value of teaching, delay marriage and motherhood; e) Strengthen community structures to promote long-term support for girls' education.

These actions demonstrate the importance of the effective involvement of school stakeholders, the community, parents, school management committees, local authorities, and girls themselves in combating school dropout.

With regard to ensuring Inclusion and equity in access, participation, and retention of girls at school the Strategic Education Plan 2020-2029 will introduce concrete solutions and pragmatic approaches to solving them, carrying out:

- ✓ The gradual expansion, in partnership with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Action Social, access and participation in Pre-school Education (EPE), with a specific component of child nutrition and health, prioritizing the youngest children vulnerable;

✓The increase in equitable completion and retention rates in Primary Education, with attention to reducing student absenteeism and the student-teacher ratio. Reducing student absenteeism will require improving internal and external efficiency, educational supply, and the introduction of incentives to demand education.

✓The improvement of school environments, in terms of infrastructure and equipment, including water, sanitation, and suitable furniture for all children. To this respect, it will be necessary to continue the Accelerated Construction and Maintenance, which also takes into account the infrastructures affected by natural and other disasters;

✓The exercise of leadership in the implementation of the Gender Strategy of the sector of Education, ensuring its appropriation, financing, and monitoring by the different subsectors. This priority requires duplication of efforts to reduce school dropout rates among girls, including due to early pregnancy and early marriage, and support their reintegration into school.


### **Methodological procedures**



This study applied a mixed-method approach (qualitative and quantitative) for the treatment of data. According to Silva & Menezes (2001), qualitative research is one in which there is an inseparable link between the objective world and the subjectivity of the subject, which cannot be translated into numbers. Therefore, the interpretation of phenomena and the attribution of meanings are basic in research processes. As for nature, descriptive research was chosen. According to (Gil, 2015), descriptive research is concerned with analyzing and recording characteristics of a certain population or phenomenon. This work, from the point of view of method, followed a phenomenological approach, because it sought to understand the causes of girls dropping out at Chitambo Primary School.

During the phenomenological interpretation, the researchers try to understand the meanings expressed in the statements and translate them according to their perception, remaining, however, faithful to the ideas of the statement as a whole (Carmo and Ferreira, 2008).

The research involved 42 elements of which 2 represent the body of the management, mainly the School Director and Deputy Director. These participants were interviewed, on the other hand, (10) teachers and (30) students were administered a questionnaire. The rationale behind the choice of this representative number for the sample is due to the fact of having the ideal characteristics for the case under study and the participation of community members falls within the scope of participatory management, as the school does not work in isolation.

**Figure 1:** image of the research moments at the school selected for the research.

Image	Image
	
<p>1- The image illustrates the sign of the researched school, which is located 2 kilometers from the village of Milange</p>	<p>2- The image illustrates the researcher with some students after a game</p>
	
<p>3- The image illustrates one of the rooms in the researched school where there is a complete absence of girls due to school dropouts.</p>	<p>4- The image shows the researcher attending one of the classes where the total absence of girls is also noted</p>
	
<p>5- The image shows the researcher talking to two students who dropped out of school due to early marriages</p>	<p>6- The image illustrates the researcher interviewing teachers at the Chitambo school</p>

	
<p>7- The image illustrates the researcher interviewing the director and deputy director of the Chitambo school</p>	<p>8- The image shows the researcher selecting the students</p>

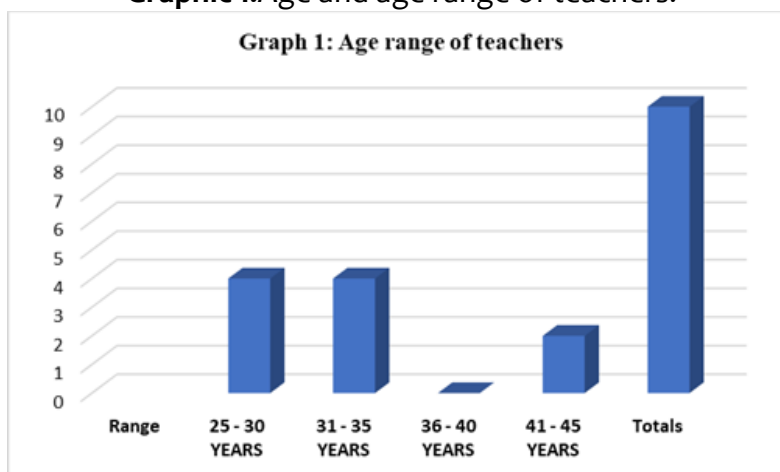
**Source:** Researchers.

### Data presentation, analysis and discussion

In this section the data obtained from the research are presented and discussed. The presentation and discussion of these data were made in light of the goals and the research questions that The work was proposed in order to obtain answers to the formulated problem. In this way, it addresses to the features of the sample to be studied, namely age and sex. Then they will be the results obtained from the questionnaire administered to teachers and students, interviews with director from school, director deputy - pedagogical, document analysis carried out at the school.

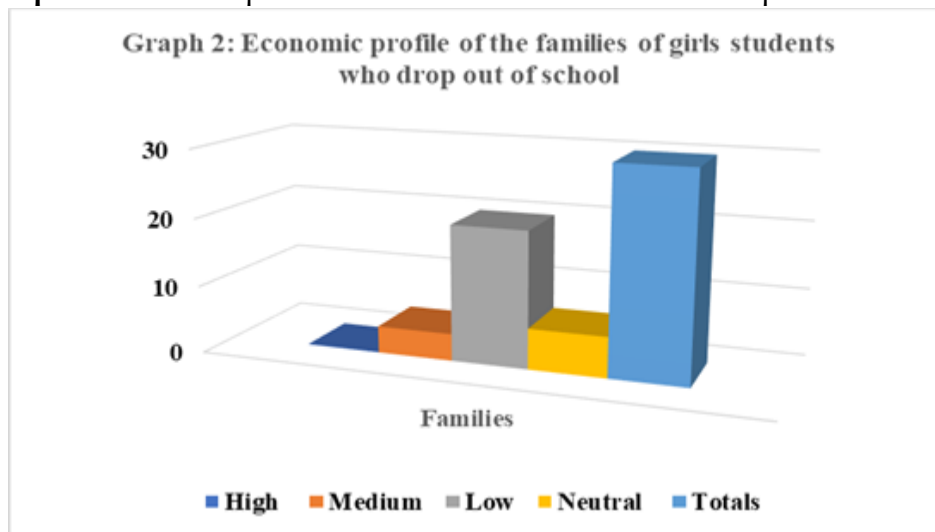
- Characterization Sample

**Graphic 1:** Age and age range of teachers.



According to graph 1, The age of the teachers reveals that 40% of teachers aged 25 to 35 are women who responded out of four. From 31 years old to 35 years old we have responses from four teachers of both sexes corresponding to 20% of each sex. And from 40 to 45 years old, only two male teachers responded that they are equivalent to 20% of the total population.

**Graph 2:** Economic profile of families of students who drop out of school.

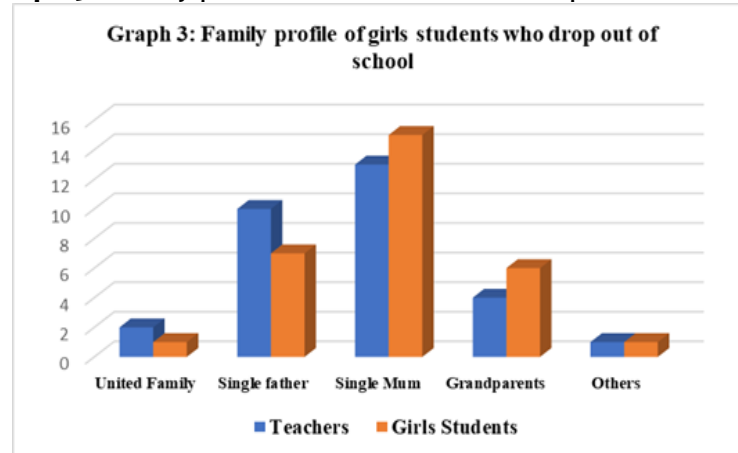


As illustrated in graph 2 above, 7 teachers, equivalent to 70%, said that the students' families were from a low class and 3 teachers, equivalent to 30%, considered them to be middle class and 3 did not respond to the questionnaire. And no teacher considered that the students were from an upper class.

The 22 students, which is equivalent to 73.33%, consider that the students who leave school are from the low class and 2, which is equivalent to 6.7%, stated that they are from the middle class. And 6 students did not respond to the survey, representing 20%.

The situation presented above is in line with Smith & Haddad (2000) when stating that the percentage of students who drop out of school is worrying and puts them in a vulnerable situation in terms of professional and economic choices as girls with more social capital can aspire to a professional life and greater economic independence unlike lower class who have few choices.

**Graph 3:** Family profile of students who drop out of school.



Regarding the family profile of students who do not drop out of school, graph 3 illustrates that the teachers responded in a number of 6 which is equivalent to 60% united family, and none of the teachers responded in the field of single parents, one teacher which is equivalent to 10% responded that the students live with single mothers and 3 teachers, equivalent to 30%, responded positively.

50% of the students, that is, 15 students said that the students who do not drop out of school are from a joint family and none responded regarding the single father, but as for those who live with single mothers, 2 students which is equivalent to 6.6%, 12 students which is equivalent to 43.4% of students responded that they live with grandparents.

It is in this sense that Menezes (2012), agreeing with Béliveau, states that the family plays a preponderant role in the lives of students, it contributes to stimulating solidarity and the school's responsibility in the construction of its educational project, emerging as a major conniver in the training of students, their entire education, transmission of values and attitudes, inserted in a social reality that involves them. Therefore, the lack of interaction between family and school leads to school dropout, indiscipline and violence at school.

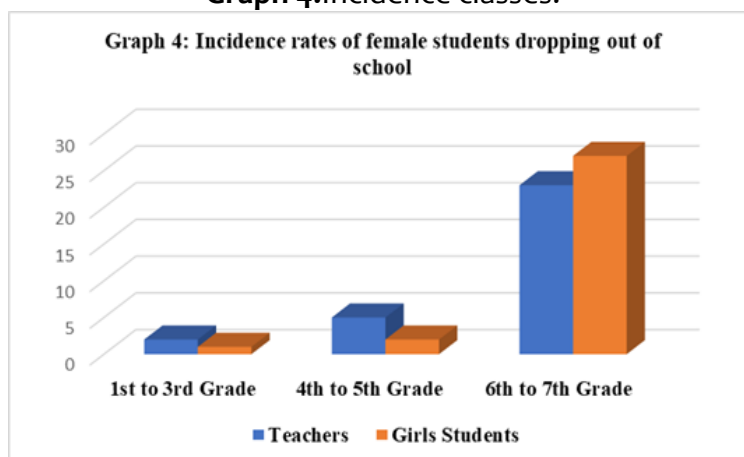
However, Lopez and Menezes (2002), in a complementary way, point out that the size and type of family, the existence of other dropouts within the family and the education and socioeconomic level of the parents influence the behavior of children and their conception of the importance from school.



In turn, 10 female students, equivalent to 33.3%, responded that boys were targets and 15 female students, equivalent to 50%, considered that girls were targets and 5 female students, equivalent to 16.7%, did not answer the question.

Therefore, it is observed that a greater number of teachers and students state that the target group is the girl, and that she is not enjoying her rights, especially with regard to the child's development on an intellectual level, contained in the Declaration of the Rights of Child – The child must benefit from special protection and must be given possibilities and facilities, through the law and other means, in order to have the chance to develop in a healthy and normal way on the physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual and social, in conditions of freedom and dignity.

**Graph 4: Incidence classes.**



The data collected from teachers reveals that from the 1st to 3rd classes there are no cases of school dropout, but from the 4th to 5th classes, 3 teachers responded that there were cases of dropout equivalent to 30%, from the 6th and 7th classes, 6 teachers responded that they did part of the incidence classes thus equivalent to 60%, 1 teacher did not respond equivalent to 10% of the sample.

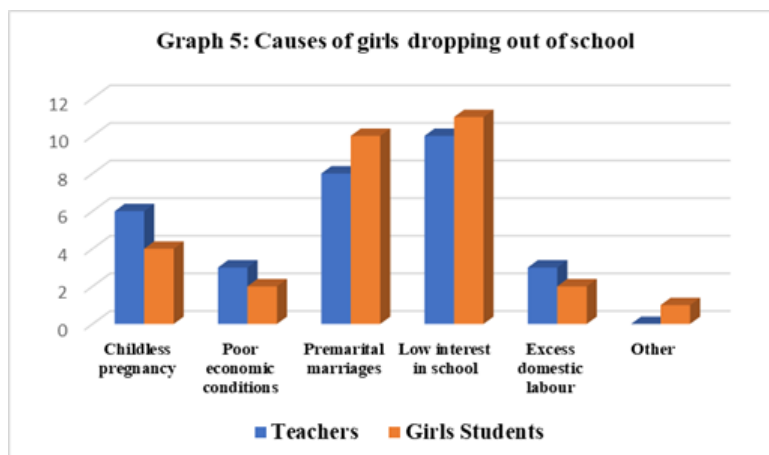
When we administered the questionnaires to the students, they responded that in the 1st to 3rd classes there were cases of dropout, being (3.33%) equivalent to one student who answered the question, however, in the 3rd and 4th classes, no student responded, meaning that she is not part of the incident classes. in your opinion. 6th and 7th classes 19 students responded positively, equivalent to 63.3% of the sample. And 33.3% did not participate in the survey.

According to the concept of adolescence revealed by author Erikson (2004, p.354), it is a stage of exploration in which young people need to have various experiences that will help them to trace their project and your identity. This experience can carry certain risks, but it is necessary, in this sense, appropriate supervision by adults in order to avoid excessive risks of conflicts.

Bagnol, De Souza, Fernandes and Cabral (2015) say that school dropout in the first grades is due to the fact that from the 5th grade onwards, girls enter menarche and often begin their sexual life, which later becomes pregnant and gets married. whether formally or through a civil union and ruin the possibility of returning to school.

- Causes of school dropout

**Graph 5: Causes of school dropout.**



Regarding the causes of school dropout, 3 teachers, equivalent to 30%, responded that early pregnancy was one of the causes, 4 teachers, equivalent to 40%, responded that it was a lack of interest in school, 1 teacher, equivalent to 10%, responded which was the lack of economic conditions, and 1 teacher equivalent to 10% responded that domestic work was one of the causes. Regarding early marriages, no teacher responded, and 1 teacher equivalent to 10% did not respond to the questionnaire.

A total of 3 students, equivalent to 10%, considered that early pregnancy was part of the causes, 19 students said that the cause of abandonment was a lack of interest, 63.3%. another 3 students equivalent to 10% stated that the lack of economic conditions was the cause of school dropout and did not answer about early marriages and domestic work, which in their opinion are not part of the causes. And 1 student did not respond to the questionnaire, equivalent to 3.3% of the sample.

Regarding the causes that influence girls dropping out of Chitambo Primary School, it appears that the lack of interest in their daughters' school occupies a larger portion of the graph, it also appears that early pregnancy is the second determining factor for school dropout. According to order no. 39/GM72003 from the Ministry of Education, pregnant students must be compulsorily transferred to the course nocturnal They are not always able to balance pregnancy and studies at that time, not to mention the dangers they face on the way from home to school and vice versa. Domestic work and early marriage are few determining causes of girls dropping out of school.

However, it is noted that the two most influential causes intersect at a single point, that is, the parents' lack of interest in their daughters' education means that they do not provide the necessary support as they spend more time in South Africa and they end up diverting to bad paths causing early pregnancy.

- Consequences that school dropout brings to society

According to the school director, the consequences of girls dropping out of school mean that they do not have the possibility of obtaining a formal and dignified job due to low education, poverty and rurality, with low education they are more likely to get married prematurely and This causes them to drop out of school, the consequences are as follows: increase in the illiteracy rate, increase in the number of girls in activities housework, low self-esteem and increased depression, deprivation of knowledge and certificates as well as involvement with drugs and alcohol.

The vision of director of school has been reinforced by some authors such as Benavente et al, (1994) cited by Vicêncio et al (2004, p. 17) who consider school dropout not only to be a problem of the school and of individuals in particular, but

also, of a social problem with consequences for the development of the country. Recent reflections and studies on social inequalities and the role of education in overcoming them highlight the economic, civic cultural and personal consequences of the low levels of education and knowledge of many citizens, it must also be taken into account that some of the students who leave they do so to ensure their survival and that of their family, which is normally also poorly qualified. On the other hand, failure in the schooling experience constitutes a memory of frustration that may come to influence the generations that follow, to the extent that Parents' bad experience can mean less involvement in their children's schooling.

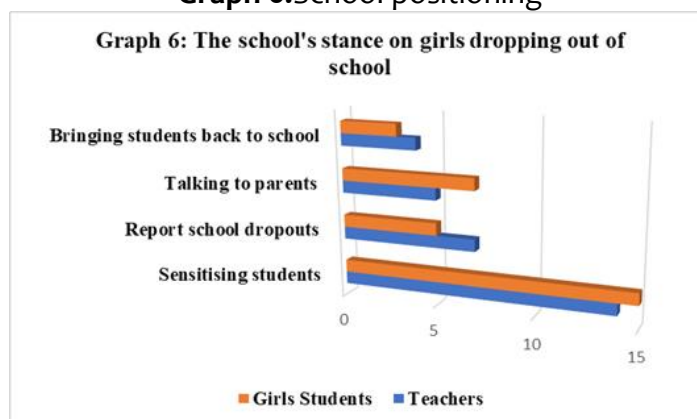
Today, in a society with an admittedly technological nature, dropping out of school is interpreted as a sign of social maladjustment and inability to invest in the future (Simões et al, 2008, p 135).

It means that there are several consequences that range from individual aspects to the more global development of the country and that necessarily mean a vast set of challenges for the school and for school social intervention today and in the future.

It can be concluded that parental involvement with the school is fundamental to the teaching-learning process and the success of students. In this context, it is not enough for parents and guardians to know that their daughter goes to all classes and performs school tasks, they need guidance and motivation, regardless of their performance.

- Actions taken to retain girls in Chitambo complete primary school

**Graph 6: School positioning**



The school has an important role in the formation of man, considering that data was collected on their position regarding school dropout, graph 7 reveals that 50% of teachers responded that the school raises awareness among students, and did not answer the questions regarding reporting acts of school abandonment and the school's non-reaction regarding school abandonment. However, 4 teachers responded unanimously that there is awareness among students and reports of school dropouts.

Regarding the school's positioning Taborda (2014) reiterates that school managers, who are involved directly in educational action, they have not been able to deal with this issue of school dropout and show unpreparedness and lack of knowledge about the subject and in the attempt to alleviate the problem, a failure is observed and the performance of the activities developed in the school environment.

The total of 20 students stated that there was awareness, representing 66.6% of the sample, 3 students, equivalent to 10%, responded that there was awareness and reports of dropout cases and 16.6% did not respond to the survey.

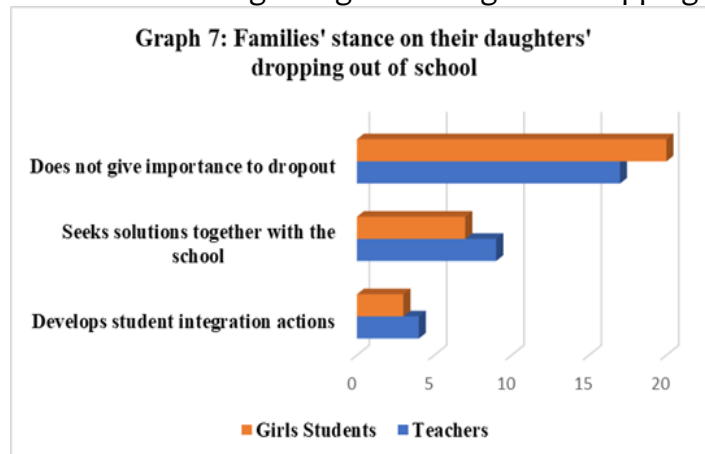
Based on the results presented, there is a positive positioning of the school in combating this situation, the school management stated that it has carried out certain actions to reduce school dropout rates at the complete primary school in Chitambo, such as: a) raising awareness among parents and guardians about the importance of schooling; b) promotion of lectures on the importance of girls remaining at school; c) dialogue with the girls about the benefits of school and d) holding class meetings where parents are informed about their students' achievements.

From this perspective, the family and school must establish an open and clear relationship, as their collaboration is essential for educational success. The school is a reflection of society, that is, it constitutes a social microsystem that produces the macro system (Lima, 2002).

It is also important not to forget that the role of the teacher is not limited to the simple transmission of knowledge based on the intellectual. The teacher must also create situations that develop students' attitudes and behaviors, and must try at all costs to link teaching with possible day-to-day situations (Almeida, 2015).

In this way, the authors remind us to understand the school as a whole in which everyone involved must take on various roles so that learning occurs in all directions without dropping out or dropping out of school.

**Graph 7:** Position of families regarding their daughters dropping out of school.



As graph 7 above illustrates, teachers, when asked about the position of families, stated that they did not care about integrating students, that is, no one answered the question, however, eight teachers, equivalent to 80%, responded that parents simply do not care, and 1 equivalent to 10% responded that they are trying to solve the problem. And so many teachers and students didn't mark the answer because they thought it was a good decision.

The students responded that parents are concerned about integrating students into school, with 3.3 % which corresponds to only one student, 27 students (90%) stated that their parents do not care, and did not answer the item about finding a solution and considering it a good decision on the part of the student and 2 students did not respond to the survey, 6.6%.

An important fact that deserves analysis in the graph is the fact that parents in charge of education do not give importance to their students' studies or even reintegrate them when they are in a situation of abandonment, as pointed out. Pereira (1998) “the family is a group of individuals linked together by blood, marriage or adoption that forms an economic unit, in which the adult members are responsible for the education of children”.



Parents' attitude towards education is a relevant issue for their children's education, as pointed out by Swan (2015), that more permissive parents with little educational ambition are a direct influence on school dropout.

- Interview data analysis

In this section, we present the results obtained through content analysis of the literature consulted and interviews carried out with the school director, deputy pedagogical director responsible for the education of students who drop out of school. During the process of presenting the findings resulting from the responses of our interviewees, the following codifications were made (School Director "DR"; Teacher, Deputy pedagogical director "DAP").

- School director and deputy pedagogical director

Records of interviews directed to the director from the school and deputy pedagogical director involved three themes, namely: a) causes of girls abandoning school; B) consequences of the girls dropping out of school, and c) the strategies used by the school to identify cases of abandonment from girl to school.

a) Perception of the school director and assistant pedagogical director on the causes of girls leaving school

In order to gather information from participants about the causes of girls dropping out of school, question number one was raised: "What are the causes of girls dropping out of school?"

For this question, our interviewees, specifically DR, DAP, said that the causes are varied, as shown below:

Most of the girls who go through the rites want to practice what they learned and get pregnant knowing that they have a boy from the community to marry; This has consequences such as cesarean section and even death (DR).

Girls who give up studying, because they have passed the initiation rites, due to pregnancy, complicated births, fistulas and even cesarean sections, is an irreparable loss, firstly for school, because there are now a very small number of girls attending school. Secondly, because they are girls who could be nurses, doctors, engineers, teachers, agronomists (DAP).

Analysis of data from interviewees (DR and DAP) clearly shows that initiation rites have incalculable consequences in our perception, because early pregnancy can evolve into a complicated birth, given that the girl's body is still developing, there are no conditions to face motherhood, a fact that leads to trauma to the birth canal, i.e., fistula, cesarean sections and can culminate in maternal and child mortality, which becomes an irreparable loss for the family. This situation contributes to an increase in social inequalities between men and women due to their lack of decent integration within the community due to lack of education, associated with this scenario being poverty and the lack of mental or physical capacity to make their own decisions.

- b) Perception of the school director and assistant pedagogical director on the consequences of the girl dropping out of school

With respect to the consequences of the girls dropping out of school, question number two was raised: “What are the *consequences of the girls dropping out of school?*”

Regarding this issue, our interviewees, specifically DR, DAP, said that the consequences are varied, ranging from social and health issues, as some reports attest:

The consequences of girls dropping out of school are devastating if we do not see an increase in the illiteracy rate, an increase in the number of girls in domestic activities, low self-esteem and an increase in depression, deprivation of knowledge as well and involvement with drugs and alcohol. (DR)

The consequences of girls dropping out of school mean that they do not have the possibility of obtaining a formal and dignified job due to low education, poverty, and rurality, with low education they are more likely to get married prematurely and have consequences such as cesarean section and even death and this causes them to drop out of school not only but in terms of health. Some girls become pregnant and suffer during childbirth, there are tears in the vagina, others have fistulas. (DAP)

Unanimously with the findings of the school director and his deputy, their speech corroborates Cassanga (2017) reiterates that the high dropout rate in primary schools results in poverty, disgrace, and non-progression. In other words, when girls leave school they are vulnerable to poverty, as with low education they can hardly get a job, which leads to misfortune.

UNICEF (2016) in turn says that every girl married before the age of 18 promotes an individual and collective tragedy, and early pregnancies can cause serious illnesses and lead to the death of girls who find it difficult to continue their studies because of assuming their new social role.

c) Perceptions about the strategies that the school uses to identify dropout cases

With the purpose of gathering information from participants about the strategies that the school uses to identify dropout cases, question number three was raised: “*What strategy that the school uses to identify dropout cases from the girl to school?*”

For this question, our interviewees, specifically, DR, DAP, said that they have used several strategies as some reports attest:

Attendance is monitored daily and when a student accumulates five absences in a week it constitutes a warning, not only do we also raise awareness and search for students who dropped out of school to reinstate them. (DR)

Inquiries are made with the school community to find out why students are absent and the school creates mechanisms to make them return, motivating them by showing the importance of education for their future lives. (DAP)

Given the testimonies of the interviewees (DR and DAP), the implications associated with the girl's school dropout resulting from the practices of initiation rites are assumed: premature marriages, which encourage early pregnancy, thus leading to the girl's school dropout, and in The moment of birth can develop complications due to the precocity of age since the girl's body is still developing, there are no conditions to face motherhood, and which often culminates in

lacerations or trauma to the vaginal canal, fistula, cesarean section and in cases more serious maternal and child death, which becomes an irreparable loss for the family, community and school, which starts to register an increase in girls dropping out.

These problems are also associated with the lack of proper integration into the within the community combined with education, poverty, lack of mental capacity or physics to make decisions about right and wrong, these situations contribute to the increased gender inequalities at school.

In fact, when a girl drops out of school, according to Silva (2009), it has a great impact on Mozambican human capital if we take into account that more than 50% of the Mozambican population is made up of women. This order of ideas affects negatively social processes, economic and political in terms of projecting the development of Mozambique as a country.

The ideas presented above by the interviewees (DR and DAP) are also in line with Camargo, Oliveira and Paulo (2020, p.79) when they say that: It is known that teenage pregnancy is a public health problem, which has been arousing interest among authorities, the media and public policies, as it emphasizes the social problem of the phenomenon, with biological, psychological and social consequences. Unwanted teenage pregnancy can have impacts on health, and education and can become an obstacle to developing your full potential. The big challenge is to create support networks that can reduce rates, and guide and educate young people about prevention and the problems arising from teenage pregnancy.

## Conclusions

According to the first purpose, which was to identify the main causes of school dropout in girls at Chitambo Primary School, the study concludes that the causes of abandonment are: lack of interest in school on the part of parents and students, lack of economic conditions, separation of parents and unemployment. Early marriages and early pregnancy are also causes of school dropout at the Chitambo Primary School. Emphasizing that the Girls who mostly drop out of school are the ones who reach the 6th and 7th grades.

According to the second study purpose, the consequences that abandonment of girls' schooling brings to society, it was found that there was an increase in the rate of illiteracy, an increase in the number of girls in domestic activities, deprivation of knowledge and certificates as well as involvement in drugs and alcohol.

According to the last purpose that highlights the actions taken to retain the girls at Chitambo Primary School in the district of Milage in the Province of Zambézia in Mozambique, it is concluded that the school, by raising awareness and going behind girls who drop out of school, there is less effort to retain the girl in school, as awareness and dialogue with the school community as well as the fine do not constitute enough to reintegrate girls into school, however, the school management in collaboration with the community, they join forces to draw attention society to the problem of school dropout through the development of raising awareness for the girl's return to school.

According to the results, it is concluded that parents have not given due attention to their children and also not adequately monitoring their progress. Bearing in mind that the school has a very important role in combating girls' school dropout, it is worth noting that the school leadership, different stakeholders, and the entire school community must be actively involved in children's education.

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