Girls' and Women's Education in Kenya

Gender Perspectives and Trends

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February 2006

The production of this publication has benefited significantly from the financial support of UNESCO

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAWORD	Association of African Women for Research and Development
ACTS	African Centre for Technology Studies
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ASAL	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
B Ed	Bachelor of Education
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa
CPE	Certificate of Primary Education
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DIT	Directorate of Industrial Training
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EFA	Education For All
ERNIKE	Educational Research Network in Kenya
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FTC	Full Technician Certificate
GAD	Gender and Development
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GoK	Government of Kenya
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HITs	Harambee Institutes of Technology
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICCPR	International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
IDA	International Development Association
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPAR	Institute of Policy Analysis and Research
JKUAT	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KCE	Kenya Certificate of Education
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KERA	Kenya Education Research Awards
KIE	Kenya Institute of Education

KJSE	Kenya Junior Secondary Examination
KNA	Kenya National Archives
KNEC	Kenya National Examinations Council
KNUT	Kenya National Union of Teachers
KSTC	Kenya Science Teachers' College
KTTC	Kenya Technical Training College
KUPPET	Kenya Union of Post Primary Education Teachers
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NCCK	National Council of Churches in Kenya
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NYS	National Youth Service
ODA	Overseas Development Agency
P1	Primary Teacher One
P2	Primary Teacher Two
P3	Primary Teacher Three
REFLECT	Regenerated Freirean Literacy and Community Empowering Technique
S1	Secondary Teacher One
SIDA	Swedish International Development Authority
SMT	Science, Mathematics and Technology
SRDP	Special Rural Development Programme
SWAp	Sector Wide Approach
ToTs	Trainer of Trainers
TSC	Teachers7Service Commission
TTIs	Technical Training Institutes
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
WCOTP	World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession
WID	Women in Development
YPs	Youth Polytechnics
WERK	Women Education Researchers of Kenya

Acknowledgements

A study of this magnitude on the topical subject of 'Gender and Education' cannot be successfully accomplished without the support and assistance of many individuals and institutions. What makes the support of some of the individuals and institutions appreciable and most commendable is the fact that the study was undertaken within a context of very limited financial resources, with much of the contribution coming from the key researchers themselves.

In this regard, we wish to first and foremost, thank some of our postgraduate students and colleagues who contributed in one way or another in the exercise of data collection. In particular, we extend our gratitude and appreciation to Dr Ibrahim Ogachi Oanda and Mr. Francis Likoye of the Department of Educational Foundations, Kenyatta University for their tireless efforts in the collection of field data.

Second, we wish to thank the staff of the Kenyatta University Library for their efforts in searching and making available unpublished and published works on the subject of gender and education. We, especially wish to acknowledge the immense contribution of the late Ms Alice Bulogosi, without whom the study would probably have failed. Her knowledge on trends in the development of this subject proved to be a very valuable asset.

With regard to technical support, we would like to express our thanks to Dr Okwach Abagi of OWN and Associates, Centre Research and Development for his incisive comments and suggestions that went a long way to shape the nature of this study. As pioneer and leading scholar in the area of gender studies, the book enormously benefited from his expertise, not to mention his expressive foreword to this publication.

Without the prompt and timely assistance of the UNESCO Office in Nairobi, the study would have remained as one of the many unpublished works with limited circulation in the 'ivory towers' of the university libraries. In this regard, we wish to express our profound gratitude and appreciation to Dr Susan Nkinyangi, senior regional education adviser, UNESCO Nairobi Office, for taking a personal and professional interest in the study and to have it published for wider readership. Her criticisms and suggestions greatly helped in shaping this work into its current form. We also wish to extend our sincere appreciation to Mr David Aduda, an editor and education specialist, who meticulously edited the text. Also, we appreciate and acknowledge the CEDRES Africa team, who proofread the book. Last, but not least, we wish to thank Mrs Pamela Ombech for typing the first draft of the manuscript.

However, the individuals and institutions mentioned are not responsible for the views expressed in this book, as those remain with the authors alone.

Foreword

Until the mid 90s, there was little debate on gender issues focusing on equity and equality in education. Even where researchers recognised the poor state of girls' and women's education compared to that of boys and men, the focus remained on girls' and women's education in isolation, thus missing out on the very essence of issues of gender, which requires analysis of relations of social processes, including education. Consequently, when there were studies by academics and postgraduate students, the focus was mainly on girls' and women's education. This was often reinforced by rhetoric by some policy makers and practitioners, leading to a mix-up of the concept of gender with issues of sex education or women studies *per se*. In some cases, there was open resistance to issues on girls' and women's education. Most remarkable expressions of ignorance of, and resistance to gender issues in Kenya were displayed after the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995) when issues of 'gender and education' or 'girls' and women's and education' would be mentioned, only to receive unwelcome remarks from colleagues in the academia who reacted and retorted as follows:

> *"Not another women talk again! What do they want to say this time; there are more serious issues to focus on."*
>
> *"Gender equality. The women lib staff. They want to take over after Beijing."*
>
> *"Girl-child education! What is the problem? No body prevents the girls and women from going to school and excelling."*

Such responses reflected the common suspicion and misconception of gender as in issue in education in the country.

Despite scepticism and opposition, consistent gender responsive educational scholarship has over the years provided a setting within which studies on equity issues in education and the status of the girl-child has grown and has developed its own paradigm. Such studies have stimulated in unprecedented way a broad range of scholars, who are interested and committed to re-assessing past performance and chart a new development agenda to redress gender gaps in society, empower the girl-child and restore the dignity of African women and men.

Against this background, Chege and Sifuna's book is timely and welcome addition to the growing literature and interest in Kenya on gender issues in education in general and girls' and women's education in particular. It builds on the works of gender researchers in the country (Abagi, 1997; 1999; Bennaars, 1995; Eshiwani, 1984; Obura, 1991; Wamahiu, 1992; Wamahiu and Chege, 1996; Chege, 2001 among others). As distinguished educationists and gender-responsive researchers, whose careers span many years including considerable service at Kenyatta University's Faculty of Education, Chege and Sifuna have endeavoured to analyse the participation of girls and women as well as boys and men in education in a peculiar manner. They bring to the fore the underlying reasons for the persistent gender gaps in education in Kenya. Notably, they have done so through a gender analysis, using feminist and historical perspectives.

From a gender perspective, Chege and Sifuna seek to shed light on the role of gender as a key variable in national development, especially in education. The authors start their analysis by presenting the context (conceptual and theoretical framework) under which girls'/women's and boys'/men's participation in education could be explained and understood. In a clear version, they explain the feminist and historical perspective and analyse the trends of girls' and women's and boys' and men's participation in education in various levels of education, including early childhood care, primary education, secondary education, adult literacy, university education, technical and vocational education, teacher education, and informal sector training

and employment. They examine the specific initiatives aimed at addressing gender gaps in education as well as the role of the government, civil society, development partners, the private sector and communities in this respect.

I am encouraged by the authors' use of both feminist/gender perspective and historical framework to analyse the participation of girls and women and boys and men in education in Kenya. It should be noted that feminist thought has a long history in the Western world, and it has meant different things to different people at different times. But common themes also emerge. Above all, feminism insists on the importance of gender. It should be clear that gender is a social construct (socially defined), fundamental to the ways we (girls and boys; men and women) interact with each other, to the ways development issues and initiatives are planned for and implemented. Its significance is evident almost in every sub-sector of the country's education system, as has ably been presented in this publication.

Feminist studies, just like gender-responsive studies, are aimed at exposing and eliminating sex differences in education, thus make education gender responsive. In other words, it seeks to make education blind to gender and replacing sex roles with androgyny. This is because "sex-appropriate roles" are stereotypes and "sex role socialisation" is discriminative. That is why, in our societies, there is a general misplaced perception that girls have to be socialised to be wives, home-makers, dependants, and secretaries, while boys are to be husbands, bread-winners, defenders and pilots. Thus, the argument goes that the boy has to be exposed to a different 'curriculum' than the girl. It is this kind of argument that postulate that you do not need a degree in engineering or medicine to be a good wife. Such thinking has percolated into the curriculum, textbooks and teaching-learning approaches in schools and universities. Obura (1991) provides a reminder of the influence of gendered thinking in education materials and practice. The gender gaps presented in this text is as a result of the gender stereotypes in both the society and school. Generally, there is a tendency to perceive gender equity as a woman's issue. This publication assumes a broader and accurate perspective. It documents the participation of girls/women in education as compared to boys/men. Besides, it is based on the principle that although the research documents the significant and damaging impact of sex bias and discrimination on girls, sex stereotyping also harms boys, as well as women and men. The publication is significant in the sense that it is a 'report card', indicating the cost of gender bias in our education system. It reflects the loss that both girls and boys suffer because of sex bias in society and in our schools. If one has experienced being on the receiving end of a poor report card, then one may recall the fear and remorse when facing parents to explain the unsatisfactory grades. Perhaps the only effective weapon is the promise to amend one's ways, and to promise to do better next time. The same response can also be offered to this publication. As grim and as wide as the gender gaps are, they are not etched in stone. The situation can be changed, and thus enhance gender equity and equality in education. This can only be done if both the out-of and in-school factors and problems behind this poor report card are holistically identified and systematically tackled.

The most recent response by the government and various stakeholders, including the civil society organisations, to these awesome gender gaps and challenges should be good news to us all, especially to girls and women. For in many instances, such responses are aimed at creating an enabling environment in communities and in schools. The good news in this book is that such dedication is evident and broadening, although major challenges still lie ahead. However, it should be noted that there is currently much more awareness of and commitment to the need for enlightened, honest, and systematic interventions by the government and other partners. Gender sensitive

studies and publication, like this one, should be used as a tool for advocacy and lobbying various stakeholders in order to develop education system, which is gender responsive, thus empowers both girls and boys.

Perhaps nothing in this study is more revealing to researchers and Kenyans in general than the clear message conveyed in every chapter, that since independence in 1963, levels of gender gap between boys and girls in education have been consistent and appear in every sub-system of education. Besides, it has also demonstrated that education stands out as an important field of study for feminism. This is because education is a field that consciously links theory to practice. Research in education is carried out to improve the way we educate students. Like feminist scholarship, it is directed towards changing practice, towards producing conditions where all students learn more, and have more control over their lives. Like feminist scholarship, it ultimately involves judgments about what is just and desirable. The reader will find a gender analysis in this book enriching and providing the impetus to do more of gender/feminist scholarship in education. In their own words, the authors remind us that:

> *The most often-heard complaint of policy makers and practitioners as well as researchers on gender initiatives is the paucity and unavailability of African materials for some necessary action. It cannot be over emphasised that research must provide policy makers and planners with timely and accurate information on what the issues are and how these can be tackled.*

The ball is in our courts. Chege and Sifuna have painstakingly distilled, compared and synthesised gender gaps in education from independence to date. Their book is rich in analysis and conclusions. It should be a welcome reading material to researchers and policy makers, who are committed to narrowing, if not bridging gender gaps in our entire education and training system. One of the EFA goals is the "elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender quality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality". Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) also articulate gender equality in education. This publication has indicated to us where we are and what we should do to achieve those goals.

Dr Okwach Abagi
Director and senior partner
OWN & Associates: Center for Research & Development.

Preface

As the world settles into the 21st Century and beyond, gender disparity and inequality in education is a glaring reminder of the failed objectives and missed targets in regard to equal access to education as expressed by the international conferences, conventions and declarations, which many countries, including Kenya have ratified. Specifically, the Dakar World Education Forum (2000) and the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) of 2000 spelt out international commitments to guide the achievement of positive results for gender parity by 2005 and gender equality by 2015 in primary and secondary; as well as in tertiary levels. As we embrace the hope of new beginnings and the promises of commitments to national development issues by governments of the day, it is imperative that we 'take stock' of gender issues in the education sector as a key step towards strategic and forward planning for the nation.

In Kenya, as in many developing countries, a long history that dates right from the colonial period and possibly even earlier, present trends of gender inequality, not only in education but also in the labour market, political leadership and social and economic spheres. Since education is a key factor in determining development trends, particularly in contemporary world, national governments have embraced the idea of equal education for all as a matter of priority. Even as nations continue to grapple with the need to provide equal education for all, it is important to understand that their struggles are located within a broader historical and cultural context that explain discrepancies in the development of women's education relative to men's. Of great relevance is the development of education from traditional contexts, through the era of missionaries, the colonial times, to the post-colonial period whereby the construction of gender, gender identities and relations, based on patriarchal ideologies, have resulted in fewer women and girls benefiting from education.

In a few African countries, which include Madagascar, Botswana, and Mauritius, the use of research-based evidence in mainstreaming and institutionalising gender issues has been accepted as a practice. However, in countries like Kenya, where gender issues have been given a lip service for a long time, accelerating girls education has remained a mirage that continues to pose serious challenges as is demonstrated in this book. In addition, historical factors that are often sidelined in gender research and scholarship is emerging as crucial in explaining and strategising for interventions meant to address gender inequalities in education, not only within but also across geographical regions. In the absence of evidence-based interventions that target specific regions and cultural settings, a vicious circle has ensued whereby, communities continue to reproduce uneducated women, who in turn bring forth generations of uneducated girls, who also reproduce the roles of their mothers. It is, therefore, an accepted fact that to be successful in improving girls' and women's education relative to that of males, development efforts must be supported by gender-sensitive research, relevant knowledge and skills that are responsive of the educational needs of girls/women and boys/men at the individual, social, political and economic levels.

As will be demonstrated in the various chapters of this book, Kenya has, over the past few decades, made remarkable achievements in increasing access to education, especially in regions that were historically favoured by the colonial educational, economic and political policies. However, partly because of the outright discrimination of selected regions, and partly because of the colonial gender ideology, the country has yet to record gender parity in all the regions. Obstacles to female education that are often region-specific seem to hinge on various factors that include perceived irrelevance and opportunity costs linked to educating girls and cultural beliefs and practices that portray girls education as an unwelcome challenge to male hegemony. Others are school

cultures whose hidden curriculum serve to alienate girls, disempower them and eventually push them out of the system. Also formal curriculum perpetuates traditional gender boundaries and employment opportunities that do not favour female labour. Moreover, there are socio-cultural attitudes, expectations and definitions that characterise successful womanhood in terms of feminine qualities of subservience and domestic roles. These are among the issues highlighted in this book.

Interestingly, despite the growing body of knowledge on the importance of female education and the complexities involved, Kenya continues to struggle with challenge of putting into place mechanisms that work to promote girls' and women's education for greater gender equality. This can be explained by lack of political will and commitment on the part of the governments and the fact that research on girls' education avoids the gender perspective while policy dialogues has continued to marginalise debates on gender and the educational system. This book demonstrates that while striving to position gender as a key defining factor in the provision of 'equal education' for all, factors outside the education system, including politics, economics, culture, religion and others, need to be addressed from a gender perspective. Hence, gender mainstreaming ought to become the way of conducting institutional and organisational business of whatever nature, if Kenya is to achieve the goal of eliminating gender disparities and the targets of gender equality by 2015 as stated in the Dakar and Millennium Development Goals. Clearly, the 2005 gender goals for EFA have proved elusive.

In view of the foregoing, this book seeks to, first, provide a general understanding of the gender perspectives that have shaped the education system in Kenya from a historical perspective. Second, stimulate and inspire scholars and researchers to generate research-based evidence that can guide government policy, educationalists and non-governmental organisations in designing gender responsive strategies and initiatives that are girls-friendly and supportive of female education. This should be done within a human rights perspective that advocates for an equal education for girls and boys. Third, although the various analyses and interpretations presented here rely heavily on secondary data, efforts have been made to ensure that each chapter captures and presents an overview of the apparent gender disparities focusing on the key areas of access (enrolment at each educational level), retention (participation and transition), as well as performance (educational success, attainment and graduation) within the different education sub-sectors. Although quality in education is often elusive in most quantitative analyses, it is a significant cross-cutting issue that will be interwoven into discussions and linked to data and information that is illustrated herein.

This book is organised in a sequence of chapters presented as follows: education policies within gender and feminist frameworks; women's education in colonial period in Kenya; early childhood care and primary education; Secondary education; adult literacy; university education; vocational and technical education; Informal sector training and employment; teacher education and the teaching profession.

CHAPTER ONE

ARTICULATING EDUCATION POLICIES WITHIN GENDER AND FEMINIST FRAMEWORKS

Gender issues have continued to play a key role in the formulation of public policy, not least in the education sector, where the gender gap in many developing countries remains a challenge. Since the purpose of policies is to guide action towards some identified practical goals, policies lose meaning when they remain unimplemented. Moreover, it is important to understand the process of policy formulation because it is crucial to the final outcomes. In contemporary educational theory and practice, feminist thought provides invaluable direction on gender policies that seek to enhance inclusiveness and equality in education - so that it does not discriminate against girls and women or any minority groups. The following sections of this chapter will, therefore, provide an overview of gender theorising, feminist theoretical frameworks and perspectives, as well as policy orientations in education in Kenya.

Theorising gender in the context of education policy and practice

Gender perspectives and frameworks

Generally, a 'perspective' is a point of view from which certain decisions are made and/or conclusions are derived. A gender perspective, therefore, is a worldview that requires particular sensitivity in deducing socially constructed meanings and their implications for the reality of the relations between human beings, who are characterised as either feminine or masculine. The ability to capture gender perspectives within social reality provides the foundation for greater understanding of the complexities that characterise gender issues. In this sense, gender perspectives prompt us to always ask the question 'how does this action, decision, outcome or benefit affect women vis-à-vis men or girls vis-à-vis boys?' It thus helps us to always locate femininity and masculinity as relational concepts and to critique how a decision that is gender blind can affect females and males in different ways.

A framework provides analytical structures within which to position particular forms of arguments to provide clarity and avoid misconceptions. It offers a platform for addressing and resolving conceptual and practical issues. Gender frameworks would, therefore, entail analytical structures that enable us to expose discrimination against one gender in terms of division of labour, resource allocation (be it education, economic, or material or non-material benefits), decision-making, cultural expectations, and other socially defined or engineered activities and privileges.

According to Griffin (1985), gender is the socially ascribed characteristics and behaviours associated with being female or male. The concept entails dominant ideas about what women and men should be like and thus defines what it is to be feminine or masculine. Consequently, gender plays a major role in structuring every aspect of social life, thus constituting one of the most basic and often unquestioned frameworks by which society locates women *vis-à-vis* men (Humm, 1995). In this way, gender functions like a conceptual tool that helps to organise the social, cultural, and psychological dimensions of humanity based fundamentally on biological sexual differences. The use of biological sex to rationalise and operationalise the psychosocial and cultural constructs of femininity and masculinity often results in mystification of what women and men *actually do naturally as biological beings*, with assumptions about what women and men *ought to do as social beings* (Showalter, 1997: 67).

However, it is crucial that a clear distinction is drawn consistently between sex as an innate definition of our sexual being and gender, which is a fluid and changeable social construct experienced and practised with variations within and over time as well as within and across cultures. Although gender and sexual relations have often been misconstrued to be synonymous, theorists and researchers have demonstrated, quite convincingly, that being woman or man (as

opposed to being female or male) is the result of social interaction, often directed by the interests of men and from men's position of domination over women. In this way:

> two types of persons are created: man and woman. Man and woman are posited as exclusionary categories. (…). The actual content of being a man or a woman and the rigidity of the categories themselves are (however) highly variable across cultures and time. Nevertheless, gender relations (…) have been (more or less) relations of domination. That is, gender relations have been (more) defined and (imperfectly) controlled by one of their interrelated aspects - the man (Flax, 1997:175).

In this creation of woman and man, the interaction between social institutions, mainly the school and family, help to reinforce and perpetuate a legendary polarity between the feminine and the masculine, thus creating gender boundaries that are justified through myths and related social stereotypes. According to Connell, *et al,* (1983), the school, family, and the workplace help to legitimise a system of polarised gender relations that has remained one of the most powerful social structures and has continued to survive on unequal power relations between the sexes. Since power is at the core of gender relations, sex-role theory has been criticised in contemporary scholarship mainly because it tends to ignore gender power relations as the essence of gender inequality in society. In the recent past, many Kenyan and African studies on gender have leaned more on the sex-role theory, whose analytical approach stresses more the differences between the sexes rather than the relationships between them (see for example Obura, 1991; Prah, 1991; Kibera, 1992; Namuddu, 1992; Nangurai, 1994; Wamahiu, 1996). Feminists of different orientations contend that such a dichotomy which stresses differences has resulted in the politicisation of gender relations, thus creating artificially rigid dissimilarities between female and male and, consequently, between women and men. By focusing on the dichotomy of biological sex differences, the sex-role theory tends to obscure the reality of latent and explicit power relationships that are a key source of various conflicts between the sexes. Connell (1987*;* 49) observes that through role learning, the feminine character is produced by socialising individuals into social roles allocated to the female while the masculine character is fitted into what are defined as male roles.

This dichotomy serves to label non-conforming males and females as deviants or failures in the gender construction of their identities. Hence, a girl or woman who adopts assumed masculine qualities such as competitiveness, assertiveness is portrayed as lacking the 'correct' identity and is stigmatised by being categorised as a 'tomboy' (implying that she has more male and less female traits). In comparison, when a boy or man embraces presumed feminine qualities such as sensitivity, humility, intuition and compassion, he is ostracised by being referred to as less of a male. This social labelling has tended to hamper the nurturing of human potentialities in oppressive and exploitative ways. Hence, girls and boys are made to feel obliged to fit into a pre-determined stereotypical model of women and men of their communities. By becoming such women and men, communities have succeeded in creating rigid gender boundaries, thus helping to fulfil the prophesy that man is the opposite of woman, hence, by equating sex differences with gender differences, 'maleness' becomes the opposite of 'femaleness', and 'masculinity' becomes the opposite of 'femininity'.

However, in contemporary theories on gender, post-structuralism comes in handy as it rejects such polarisation of the feminine and the masculine. In particular, post-structuralist feminists argue that the assumed gender boundaries are so blurred that their distinguishing function is no longer meaningful in modern day thinking whereby an individual's potential is best achieved by allowing people to traverse gender boundaries. For many communities where the gender divide is a reality of social life, post-structuralist thinking can be a liberating tool in dismantling gender boundaries that hamper equality in development.

While post-structuralism has its roots in structuralism, it differs fundamentally in its recogni-

tion of the fluidity of social constructions and social relations, thus challenging the possibility of social permanence (Saussure, 1974; Marx, 1976) in the allocation of social constructs such as femininity and masculinity. Post-structuralism exposes the reality of women and men as subjects and agents in the social construction of gender who are capable of embracing or rejecting their positions in society. This position is different from structuralism, which emphasises the centrality of structures and the role of constitutive forces of discourse that create such structures, thus alienating the place of agency that also helps shape structures. In this context, post-structuralism goes 'beyond' structuralism's faith that systems and structures can be measured in isolation from the power systems that control them.

Based on its theoretical position with regard to human agency, post-structuralism shares with modern feminism an interest in the reality of the shifting of social boundaries and the undoing of binary oppositions as exemplified in the different forms of femininities and masculinities that are evident in different cultures as demonstrated in various studies (Mead, 1935; Chege, 2001). Thus, post-structuralism offers 'deconstructive' frameworks for gender analysis even within the area of education. From this perspective, post-structural feminists have continued to argue that human beings are not passive objects but active agents and hence, are not just 'socialised' into becoming one gender or the other; they continually and variably contest and position themselves as subjects, actors and creators of their own identities (and those of others) in a fluid, rather than a fixed manner. Hence, it is insincere to even expect that the human agency, if left free to interact with the various social structures, including those of education, would produce polar opposites; rather, they would share in a continuum of gendered traits that are arbitrarily characterised as feminine or masculine.

Feminisms and feminist theoretical frameworks: Contextualising gender and education

Some feminist positions

When addressing gender issues in education, the role of feminist thinking in shaping the theory of equality and equity cannot be ignored. In Africa and indeed in many other parts of the world, there is a misconception that feminism is a fairly recent and foreign phenomenon. However, according to Weiner (1994), feminist thought has a relatively long history even though the term feminism has a fairly recent origin. It derives from the Latin word *femina*, which means woman and was used in the context of sexual equality in the 1890s (Weiner, 1994: 51). The 19th Century interest in the question of the condition of women became the genesis of what is referred to as the 'pre-feminist consciousness', which was different from the conventional understanding of feminism as a political movement. Feminist historians like Spender (1983) have revealed that there has always been a women's movement in every era where feminists have complained of the oppression of women in relation to their male contemporaries. Weiner (1994) observes that right from Sappo in the 17th Century BC, through to the modern times, distinctive feminist presence is evident. However, different strands of feminism have tended to prioritise different aspects of the women's condition and struggle against oppressive forces.

Observations show that, in recent times, scholars and theorists have tended to categorise feminism according to its particular ideological source to demonstrate the difference within feminism as well as the shared commitment to women's advancement (Weiner, 1994: 52). In this context, Weiner (1994) distinguishes traditional from modern feminism and defines the latter as the concern with issues affecting women (and by implication, girls), but with an emphasis on:

> the need for 'feminist consciousness': that is, the concern to understand what has caused women's subordination in order to campaign and struggle against it (p. 52, original emphasis).

Arguably then,

> If feminism is a concern with issues affecting women, a concern to advance women's interests, (…) any one who shares this concern is a feminist, whether they acknowledge it or not, then (the) range of feminism is general and its meaning is diffuse (Mitchell, 1986: 12)

Generally, feminists comprise scholars, theorists, researchers and activists whose common denominator is an interest in the interrogation of women's inequality and subordination to men. Feminists of various orientations have, over time, made considerable contribution to the politics of gender conscientisation and empowerment, as well as the issues of equal opportunities and access to resources such as property, wealth and education. Liberal, radical and Marxist/socialist feminisms, which shaped human thinking considerably, are part of a broad body of theoretical frameworks and approaches to the study of gender. Hence, each approach tends to prioritise different aspects of women's struggles against oppression (Weiner, 1994:52) and provides unique analytical structures for investigating and explaining gender relations. Considering the various types of feminist positions available, it is important for scholars and other professionals who are committed to gender issues to be well-grounded in the key feminist theoretical frameworks that guide arguments and activities directed at improving the status of women and girls to make it comparable to that of men and boys.

Feminist perspectives and theoretical frameworks

Since, in scholarship, a framework provides analytical structures within which to locate particular forms of arguments to provide clarity and avoid misconceptions, feminist theoretical frameworks constitute theorisation of the causes of women's oppression and subordination, hinged within ideological positions and/or existing theories such as Marxism, post-structuralism or even post-modernism. In feminist studies some of the longstanding and dominant theoretical frameworks are Marxist feminism as well as liberal, post-structuralist, and post-modernist feminism. Also commonly used in contemporary scholarship are black feminism and radical feminism, especially in addressing issues of race and sexual orientation as they interact with gender. The scope of this book, however, only allows us to address some selected dominant frameworks from which other strands of feminisms could be derived.

Liberal feminism of the 18th and early 19th centuries has its basis in the ideas about natural justice, human rights and democracy. Hence, it focuses mainly on issues of equal opportunity in access to resources for women and men, especially in education and employment. Thus, it supports affirmative action as a compensatory strategy for redressing past inequalities, particularly against women and girls. However, by emphasising democratic reforms outside the arena of national politics, economics and cultural life, liberal feminism exposes itself to serious criticism. For example, this framework has been accused of blatant lack of analytic value through which to investigate and expose the basis of gender inequalities, which, according to Weiler (1988), lies in power relations within a complex interaction of class, gender and race; both within and outside the school, family, and the employment sector. Weiner (1994) suggests that it is because of 'avoiding rocking the boat' by de-politicising gender inequalities that, for a relatively long time, liberal feminism has gained tolerance in many parts of the world. Instructively, other more radical feminist perspectives have not been embraced easily.

Radical feminism, which gained its momentum with the onset of the American Civil Rights Movement and the so-called Women's Liberation Movement of the early 1960s, created alternative means of defining society in terms of sex and gender. This feminist thought, which harbours strong Marxist undertones that

combine the analysis of class in the context of patriarchy, is also highly radical and revolutionary. Compared with liberal feminism, radical feminist thinking is less likely to appeal strongly to male-dominated organisational structures because it challenges the core of male domination that is perpetuated via patriarchal ideologies of male hegemonic tendencies. These, in turn, tend to harbour oppressive tendencies towards women, denying them autonomy and agency. Accordingly, patriarchy is accused of defining characteristics of society based on all forms of oppression that are extensions of male supremacy (Humm, 1995: 210). Because of this perception, radical feminists tend to focus on dismantling the foundation upon which patriarchal structures are anchored. Understandably, this mission to dislodge male hegemony is bound to cause discomfort, conflict and disaffection towards the ideals of feminism.

By exposing patriarchy as the main factor that contributes to the universal oppression of women and as a prototype of all other forms of oppression, radical feminists portrayed men as oppressors of women so that logically, all women are categorised as an oppressed underclass regardless of their social positioning or material circumstances. Hence, it is argued that women, as a class, are oppressed because men have power over them - sexually and materially - and that changing the situation of women means contesting, and eventually breaking this power. To enhance this contestation, radical feminists clearly advocated new epistemologies that would include woman-centred education, whose core concern begins with the accommodation of the perspectives and experiences of women's worlds as they perceive them within the various social contexts of the family, school and the workplace (Weiner, 1994: 54-6, Shulman, 1980). Accordingly, radical feminism offers five elements that are crucial in favourably reconstructing women's position through education:

> knowledge of the outside world, decision-making in the family, mobility in the workplace, emotional autonomy away from kin towards the nuclear family, and self-reliance socially and economically (Heward, 1999: 6).

While some radical feminists have argued that patriarchy and capitalism are separate forms of oppression and that chronologically patriarchy precedes capitalism (Harvey, 1990: 111), Marxist/Socialist feminists spring from this position and proceed to interrogate capitalist structures and the role of women in productive as well as reproductive activities within the family and the workplace. They question the role of education in perpetuating class structures through capitalist ideologies.

Marxist/Socialist feminist perspectives and theoretical frameworks are rightfully located within Marxist economic thought whereby the interface between production and reproduction, ownership of means of production and the modes of exchanging labour are key factors of analysis. Within this framework, socialist feminists critique the role of women in production (that is, the labour market), reproduction (sexual division of labour and socialisation in the family), and sexuality (women as sex objects) as part of reproductive labour (see Weiner, 1994; Griffin, 1985). Marxist/Socialist feminists take issue with traditional Marxism for completely ignoring the role of sexual division of labour in the family and the centrality of women in production and reproduction. By so doing, Socialist feminists have made a notable conceptual leap from liberal feminism by offering an alternative analytical framework by which to theorise the politics of capitalist production based not only on the exploitation of class relations, but also on gender, in ways that have a considerable impact not only on the sociology of the family, but also of education (Dillabough and Arnot, 2000). In this context, Socialist feminists argue that men have:

> specific material interest in the domination of women and that, men construct a variety of institutional arrangements to perpetuate this domination (Humm, 1995: 270).

It is important to take cognisance of the social significance and impact of education and how it links with the labour market and social stratification to offer:

> an understanding of education as the site for the preparation (and reproduction) of a hierar-

chically stratified gendered work force, with women being prepared for lower status or marginalised positions in the 'secondary labour market' or the home-based 'reserve army of labour' (Dillabough and Arnot, 2000: 9-10).

The foregoing theoretical perspectives are key to the understanding of the gender dynamics in education and the formulation of its policies. They provide the basis for interrogating structural formulations of social order that are responsible for influencing educational outcomes that portray girls and women as low achievers and less motivated to learn than their male counterparts. As we address issues of policy in the ensuing sections of this chapter, it is imperative to bear in mind the underlying thinking and practices that help to explain current trends in gender and education in contemporary Kenya.

It is common knowledge that the achievement of independence in Africa in the 1960s did not result in revolutionary changes either in the gender division of labour or in gender equality in the provision of education. This is despite the fact that after independence, there was dramatic increase in the number of men and women who received formal education and increased their chances of entry into the formal employment sector. Notably, even though the Kenya government, like many others in the region, has been appointing women to political positions since independence, the numbers were conspicuously low, often below six per cent. Things only changed in 2002 when the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) ascended to power. This situation undoubtedly sent a strong message about the place of women in political leadership with the obvious conclusion that they were unequal to the men in the public arena.

A new political dispensation ushered in December 2002 portrayed comparatively less resistance and intimidation towards the support of gender equality and indeed, it had more women in political leadership than ever witnessed in recent memory. The effects of the new trend of women in leadership positions would most likely have a positive influence fostering decision-making that is not hostile to women and girls in the areas of education, health and property rights, and providing positive role models for the girls. Indeed, the establishment of a Gender Commission of Kenya that was supported overwhelmingly by the new Parliament would also go along way in ensuring that gender issues are given the priority they deserve in all sectors of government. However, the performance and productivity of the Gender Commission of Kenya would be tested at the practical levels whereby education and other practitioners would be executing day-to-day decisions aimed at improving gender equality in the country.

Nonetheless, even with the above-noted positive directions towards addressing gender issues, the increased participation of women in national politics and in the formal sector employment *per se* may not be enough to dismantle the colonial legacy of male oppressive tendencies towards women. This is mainly because without educational policies that are clear about gender and without political commitment that supports and encourages gender sensitivity and responsiveness in society, the dream to change the culture of male privilege over women is bound to remain a mirage.

In the next section, we address the genesis of gender and education policy in Kenya which is often linked to the gender awareness that the United Nations First Decade for Women (1976-85) created by highlighting and publicising the important, but often invisible, role of women in the economic and social development of their nations and communities.

Gender issues and education in Kenya: Some new beginnings?

WID and GAD

Until the First United Nations Conference on Women (1975), the role of gender as a key variable in national development issues did not seem important in many developing countries, including Kenya. It is during this first UN Decade for Women that national governments agreed to recognise women clearly as the 'missing link' in national development and economic success within the human capital invest-

ment framework. During this period, questions emerged regarding gender equity and equality of education akin to those raised by 18th Century English feminists such as May Wollstonecraft in her works *Thoughts on the Education of Women (1787)* and *A Vindication of the Rights of Women (1789)* in which she argued for a transformation of educational and socialisation processes that were responsible for stunting women's intellect by teaching them to be subordinate to men. Such questions continued to attract attention even from male critics, including philosophers. For example, in England, John Stewart Mill in his *Subjection of Women* (1869) pursued the theme of women's education, arguing that unless the interest of men in sustaining gender boundaries within which women remained relegated to the domestic arena was challenged, women would continue to be discriminated against in education and in public life, contrary to the utilitarian ethics of the greatest good for the greatest number of people, regardless of their sex.

More than a century later, countries like Kenya found themselves rising to the international awakening of the United Nations General Assembly declaration of 1975 as the International Women's Year followed by the declaration of 1975-1985 as the First UN Decade for Women. Governments started to redefine women as significant actors in national development and their role as crucial in development planning. Clearly, there was no way of giving this new definition an operational framework without locating formal education at the centre of women's empowerment and their full integration into national development endeavours.

A major government response in this regard was the Women in Development (WID) strategy. Despite the good intentions of 'integrating' women in the processes of development, WID was bound to fail, mainly because its efforts were directed to women only, exclusive of men: the crucial gender dimension was lacking. Research reveals that in order to address gender inequalities effectively and with reasonable results, women's concerns and their roles in both the public and private spheres need to be located in relation to those of men. Further, the educational benefits and the accruing socio-economic and political advantages (or disadvantages) of women need to be analysed and interpreted *vis-à-vis* those of the men.

As an integrative strategy, the WID approach addressed only the practical needs of women, totally ignoring their strategic needs that would enable them to challenge the patriarchal structures that served to discriminate against women and lock them out of the development agenda. WID was the easy way out for governments that worked to ensure that women 'fitted' within male frameworks that were, in the first place, designed to 'lock out' women. Thus, WID became a strategy in futility. It failed miserably in challenging the subordination of women. Instead it ensured that Kenyan women, like many others in the developing world, spent much more of their time perfecting their traditional roles within and outside the domestic arena. An improvement of the WID was the Gender and Development (GAD) strategy that helped not only to integrate women in development, but also aimed at empowering women and men to challenge unequal power relations that ensue from unequal processes of cultural socialisation, including education.

In terms of research, however, WID generated considerable data and publications on a wide range of issues affecting women. Even then, many of these failed to explain the historical context that influenced post-colonial governments as they struggled with gender issues, particularly in education. Also, education historians failed to address gender issues in their research and publications, thus denying government, educationalists, and gender activists the crucial knowledge base upon which to address the persistent gender inequalities. Nonetheless, African scholars, mainly women, continued to advocate for girls' and women's education, as well as policies that supported improved education access, retention, performance, and transition of girls to higher levels.

Strengthening the focus on gender and education

Following the declaration of the First Decade for Women, there was a notable shift in the focus of both the academic researchers and policy makers with regard to gender issues. Gradually, researchers tended to move away from a pre-occupation with the role of women within the family towards an understanding of the problems in women's employment. Because this kind of focus ignored the role of men in society and in relation to women, it was bound to fail as institutions continued to marginalise the bulk of the women. What was lacking in these mind-shifts was the will and ability to scrutinise the fundamental causes of women's subordination, particularly in the family and at the workplace, as well as the role of education in perpetuating gender inequalities.

Educational research in Kenya concentrated on the liberal front, whose main objective was to expose gender inequalities within schooling without necessarily addressing the deep social structures that supported and, often, glorified such inequalities. Government perceived the provision of 'equal opportunity' in education as a viable panacea for the glaring gender inequalities in society. Historical evidence portrays the central mission or the politics of 'equal opportunity' as the pursuit of legislation that would ensure that women were accorded an equal chance to enter the labour market through the provision of equal access to education. However, the intricacies that hinder 'equal education' for girls and women, thus leading to inequalities in other life chances, can hardly be addressed through access *per se*. Without quality of education that ensures good performance for both girls and boys, it would be difficult to eradicate inequalities in future life chances. For this reason, education policies that are founded on liberal feminist perspectives of 'equal opportunities' have been criticised for addressing gender issues in education outside the realm of the sexual division of labour in the family and in the workplace (reproduction and production). As microcosms of the state, educational institutions find themselves at a crossroads in the provision of equal educational chances and in the questioning of women's exclusion from the realms of power (Weiner, 1994).

Academia's response to gender and women studies

The introduction of women studies courses, gender studies departments, institutes, related centres and units, as well as cross-cutting programmes that emerged in various universities in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s was an important move towards legitimising gender studies within academia. For example, in 1991, Makerere University started a Women and Gender Studies Department in the Faculty of Social Sciences. The department has remained strong and continues to attract participants from Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Ahfad University, a private institution for Women in Sudan, also established a Women's Studies Unit.

Notably, however, it is in South Africa where academia seems to have embraced gender issues in education. This is demonstrated by the establishment of various gender courses, centres, institutes and departments such as the African Gender Institute (University of Cape Town), Honours/MA in Gender Politics (University of Durban-Westville), Centre for Gender Studies (University of Natal), Institute for Gender Studies, (University of South Africa) and Centre for Gender Studies (University of Pretoria). In Kenya, Kenyatta University established its Centre for Gender Studies in 2001. Notably, this centre was started 10 years after Makerere's due to what was perceived as a reflection of the attitude by the political leadership of the time, which openly dismissed women and gender issues with disdain. However, even after raising much hope regarding the rising status of gender issues in the country, the Centre for Gender Studies at Kenyatta University was disbanded in 2004, and its functions transferred to the Department of Sociology during a university-wide restructuring.

The dawn of the 21st Century has witnessed considerable political will, positive response and support for gender-related studies in many African educational institutions, including universities. However, it seems that Kenya has continued to 'limp' in this regard, perhaps because of the lack of a comprehensive and functional national framework that would guide the education sector in designing strategies for achieving gender equity and equality as outlined in the MDGs. With the establishment of the Gender Commission of Kenya, educational institutions would expect more focused guidance and support as they strive to mainstream gender in their operations.

Contextualising gender theorisation in education

Within the framework of liberal feminism, policy makers have tended to shift their focus from a universal concern with family-centred reproductive programmes, which assumed motherhood as the core role for women in development processes, to the productive role of women. The fact that women were an untapped resource in the economic sense resulted in women being treated as appendices to existing development programmes, which were initially not designed in the interest of women as a social group or even from a gender perspective. Since this approach failed to locate women within the reality of their social relationship with men (that is, the gender dimension), it continued to camouflage the process that shapes unequal gender relations in favour of men and how it contributed to the disempowerment of women. Even with their income-generating activities, therefore, women's productive activities were systematically hampered by the unofficial and private domestic responsibilities that competed for women's labour in terms of time and energy, not to mention the increase in their workload and working hours.

It is with notable reluctance that national development plans, in the late 1990s, started to recognise gender as an important factor in economic and social growth. Because of this, male domination has remained a major feature of concern in most development programmes and institutional structures whereby gender mainstreaming has been stressed. Even with the wealth of literature on feminist theoretical frameworks that help expose constructions of traditional masculinities as a major impediment in women's participation in development ventures, many researchers, scholars and educationists have continued to give lip service to gender issues. Notably, changing traditional mindsets, particularly on gender issues, is perceived as a threat to male hegemony and hence elicits explicit resistance from all its beneficiaries regardless of their sex. A genuine step forward, therefore, lies in enlisting girls and women, as well as boys and men, in strategic partnerships, whose objective is to jointly challenge human inequalities, including those that are founded on gender stereotypes.

Whereas the social returns of female education are often estimated in terms of the impact of girls' schooling and aspects such as health, fertility and children's learning, the strategic approach of engaging men in supporting female education is relatively weak in the education sector as in other development sectors. Observation reveals that while it is assumed that education, in itself, would influence positively, women's attitudes towards confronting their own oppression, especially in the domestic arena and in the workplace (Mincer, 1962), there are real difficulties in trying to educate men on how to confront their oppressive behaviour towards women. This tends to create gender a gap between what women and girls learn vis-à-vis their male counterparts, thus presenting space for possible conflicts between the sexes.

Various studies have attempted to demonstrate a direct relationship between education and advancement in the production processes for both women and men, whereby primary education, for example, is linked to increases in farm productivity. Examples show that literate farmers (most often men) tend to produce higher yields per acre because they have more access to agricultural and co-operative training, seek more contact with agricultural extension work-

ers, and are better placed to implement new ideas and to use modern technology (Floro and Wolf, 1990). However, one of the most salient aspects of women's education in Africa is their exclusion from agricultural education, even though they undertake most of the agricultural activities. Such exclusions have to be understood within a broader context of a culture of female exclusion from the education mainstream that has its foundation right from the formative phase of girlhood. By implication, therefore, the low economic participation of women in agriculture, the lack of competitive skills for entry into the labour market, and an unsupportive environment for the female potential have resulted in the low status of women that has remained largely unchallenged and unaltered (Robertson, 1986).

Further, research suggests that there is a strong link between primary education and non-formal training programmes that broaden participants' horizons, raising their aspirations and familiarising them with relevant modern concepts and institutional frameworks (Floro and Wolf, 1990). For example, Callaway (1980) found that one of the primary impacts of education for girls in Nigeria, was the increased contact outside the confines of their households and the opportunity to find social reinforcement for positive construction of a self with enhanced aspirations. However, gender dimensions in education continue to face serious challenges from low rates of female participation, transition, performance and educational achievement. Because of this, men have continued to benefit more in productive ventures as women remain in reproductive activities that link them directly to the traditional feminisation of the domestic arena.

Consequently, women farmers have tended to have less access than the men farmers to, for instance, information, technology, farm inputs, and markets. Thus, women have remained restricted to low productivity and low-paying jobs (World Bank, 1989), a condition for which, paradoxically, they are often blamed. In addition to the impact of female education in improving primary healthcare, research shows that women's education, compared with that of men, is linked directly to the delay in marriage age, lower fertility rates, the desire for fewer children, and the increased practice of effective methods of contraception. This, in turn, leads to smaller and healthier families so that in almost every country studied in recent years, educated women have fewer children than uneducated ones. According to Herze (1991:21), the relationship is stronger as women's education increases. Thus, secondary education bears greater impact on girls' life chances than primary education and the tertiary level supersedes the lower levels.

Studies in many parts of the world have shown that women's education, compared with that of men, correlates strongly with their increased desire to educate their female and male children (Behrman, 1990). For instance, increased participation in education among children in Nicaragua, Brazil, Malaysia, the Philippines and Peru has been correlated with their mothers' education. In Botswana, rural female-headed households were found to be more likely than others to send their children to primary school, possibly because the women were in control of the family resources and decision-making. In Tanzania, female household heads saved their income to pay school expenses, including fees, and encouraged their children to study and prepare for entrance examinations. The male-headed households portrayed the most affluent men as disinvesting in education as they opted to marry multiple wives, possibly to enhance the reproduction of domestic labour and for social prestige. Generally, women tend to play the dominant role in financing their children's education, paying school fees for all the children, especially in situations where men have refused to support girls' schooling (Floro and Wolf, 1990:50). In this context, Lavy (1992) contends that maternal education is the main influence on children's schooling, with the effect on girls roughly twice as great in terms of enrolment and transition to the next grade. Although paternal education also promotes children's enrolment, particularly for girls more than for boys, Lavy argues that the maternal effects are stronger.

Despite a demonstration of the positive effects of female education on national development, the majority of African women have historically continued to receive a relatively inferior education in terms of quality (processes and content), quantity (in terms of numbers that attend school and complete) and performance. In this kind of situation, women are ill-prepared to compete equally with their male counterparts for jobs that require formal education or high-level technological skills and professionalism. It is in this context that the next sections address gender concerns within educational policy as it attempts to respond to girls' and boys' education in Kenya.

Policy orientations

The first official policy document that addresses issues of equality in Kenya is the Constitution, which prohibits discrimination between different social groups. Soon after independence in 1963, the government published *Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965, African Socialism and its Applications to Planning in Kenya,* which emphasised the country's commitment to the objectives of individual freedom, social justice and human dignity, including freedom of conscience; freedom from want, ignorance, disease and exploitation; enhancing equal opportunity and a high growing per capita income which is equitably distributed (Republic of Kenya: 1965). However, even with the seemingly good intentions, this Sessional Paper hardly mentions, let alone addresses, the gender dimension as the crucial defining factor in the existing inequalities between women and men, girls and boys in all sections of society.

Further, the first and second National Development Plans,1965-70 and 1970-73, which mainly addressed the need to translate political independence into economic and social realities, did not mention women at all, giving the impression that women did not have a role to play in national development besides their traditional reproduction obligations. However, the government constituted a women's division in the Ministry of Culture and Social Services, a Department of Women's Education in the Ministry of Education and Maternal/Child Health Services within the Ministry of Health (Royal Netherlands Embassy, 1994). The common denominator in all these initiatives was the concern for women as an independent group that did not have any significant links with the men in society. The first direct mention of women in government documents since independence was in the third National Development Plan (1974-1978), which coincided with the Women's Decade of 1976-1985 and the government's creation of the Women's Bureau in 1976 as part of the national machinery for integrating women in development. The operative units of the Bureau include processing of statistics, legal issues, appropriate technology, information and communication, non-governmental organisations, handicrafts, small-scale businesses, and agricultural and horticultural developments (Royal Netherlands Embassy, 1994).

The National Development Plan helped guide new ways of programming that portrayed a clear bias towards activities that directly or indirectly promoted women's integration in development. Successive development plans re-emphasised this trend. As a division of the Department of Social Services in the Ministry of Culture and Social Services, the Women's Bureau had the broad objectives of ensuring that women were integrated in the development processes. Hence, as a follow up and part of the implementation of the World Plan of Action emanating from the First World Conference on Women held in Mexico in 1975, the Bureau's mandate was expanded to include policy formulation, coordination and harmonisation of women's activities within government ministries and NGOs. It was also mandated to collect and analyse data and information on gender issues as well as coordinate, monitor and evaluate women's projects.

Thus, the Bureau helped create awareness of the actual position of women and the potential they have in national development, mobilising women's groups for socio-economic activities and liasing with governmental, non-governmental, international and bilateral agencies in funding and implementing programmes that aim at

improving the conditions of women. Although these developments were highly significant, the Third World Conference on Women held in Nairobi in 1985 (popularly referred to as 'Forum 85') clearly accelerated the impetus for gender research and policy formulation in the country, thus, moving away from the tendency of focusing on women *per se*. This Forum highlighted and substantially raised awareness about fundamental issues affecting the status of women and girls in Kenya within the context of human rights and democratic education. Thus, it became possible to critique education that sidelined girls and women vis-à-vis their male counterparts as undemocratic (Wamahiu and Chege, 1996).

While concrete action in favour of gender equality has remained a great challenge to the government, it is noteworthy that since 'Forum 85' gender issues have taken centre stage in activities by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and in policy statements. For example, the ensuing national development plans deliberately portrayed the government's effort to include the gender dimension in development programmes. Unfortunately, however, top government officials continued to interpret gender issues as women's issues, thus responding with contempt to initiatives intended to bring women on board in development policies and action on an equal level with the men. The trashing of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action* emanating from the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 bears testimony to the previous Kanu's government's lack of commitment towards gender equality.

Since the publication of the 1994/96 Development Plan, however, colonial subjugation of women has been criticised for its Victorian attitudes towards women and exposed as being responsible for the erosion of women's traditional economic and social status. The development plans expressed the intention of government to put women at the centre of development strategies not only in economic development, but also in the private ownership and control of wealth, increased education, improved health facilities, urbanisation, employment and leadership roles (Republic of Kenya, 1993). Such well-meaning expressions suggest a changed stance on the part of government to improve gender equality in the country. Nonetheless, it is important to bear in mind that deep structures that govern gender inequalities tend to militate against the perceived successes in advocating and reinforcing gender equality in all sectors of government and society. This is mainly because, until the change of political leadership in 2002, such pious platitudes lacked political commitment as exemplified in the non-ratification of key policy documents that sought to promote women as key actors and partners in development. For example, the Kenya Women's Bureau is on record as having drafted policy documents that were sensitive to gender issues, but which have remained unattended for more than a decade, thus slighting their objectives to:

- Increase education and training opportunities for women and girls.
- Improve income-generation through gainful employment and access to the means of production.
- Ease access to basic services such as health, water and sanitation.
- Improve affordable and accessible technology that would minimise domestic workloads.
- Increase gender awareness and sensitisation in all sectors of development that would facilitate smooth implementation of gender sensitive policies and programmes.
- Lobby for a gender-sensitive legal framework and practice that would facilitate fairness and justice to the women of Kenya relative to the men (Royal Netherlands Embassy, 1994).

The new political leadership, which on assuming power in 2002, re-introduced Free Primary Education (FPE), has increased access to education at the primary level. However, issues of gender inequalities need to be addressed at all levels. The gender gap in access as well as issues of quality, poverty and pedagogy, all of which are crucial in ensuring positive educational outcomes for both the girls and the boys, continue to raise concern. The absence of gen-

der policies that would ensure that gains at primary school were not lost during the transition to the secondary level underscore the need for strategic planning. This would help improve the educational status of girls and women in the broader analysis. The implication is that for a majority of girls compared to boys, primary education could be terminal, as has been the tradition in the country in the past.

Attempts to increase opportunities for women and girls in science, mathematics and technical (SMT) subjects at secondary and university levels have taken high priority in policy discussions in the country. However, the commitment to translate this priority into action has remained problematic for many schools that lack the required human and material resources. In addition, even where such resources are available for the girls, career information and counselling has remained wanting, thus continuing to mystify the SMTs, excluding and condemning most girls to a future that lacks adequate scientific and technological knowledge and skills, which are crucial in the development, not only of girls, but also of the nation. Even though role modelling through female teachers has proved quite effective in some single-sex secondary schools in the country, where girl schools have tended to outperform boys schools in science and mathematics, very few girls' and mixed schools can boast of such advantages.

Responding to international policies of education and gender

Following the Jomtien Declaration on Education for All (EFA) of 1990, to which Kenya was a signatory, various national conferences were organised. They include the 1992 National Conference on EFA held in Kisumu, which recommended strategies that would ensure the attainment of basic education by the year 2000; the 1992 National Conference on the Girl Child, held in Nyeri, and the 1994 National Symposium on Education of Girls held in Machakos. One outcome of the Machakos symposium was the setting up of a Gender and Education Task Force and the Girl Child Project implemented jointly by the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) and the MoEST. The second phase of the project recommended parents, chiefs, and community leaders in selected disadvantaged districts as potential key actors in community advocacy for girls' education. The Gender Unit at the Ministry of Education was to act as an overseer on gender issues within various sections of the Ministry with members drawn from various departments and parastatals of the Ministry. Officers were required to monitor gender responsiveness within their sections and inform the Gender Unit.

Another important outcome of the Machakos symposium was the formulation of guidelines for re-admission into the mainstream of formal education of adolescent mothers who had dropped out of school due to pregnancy. A Ministry of Education circular to that effect was issued to provincial, district and municipal education officers in 1996 for further dissemination. However, the school re-entry policy remains unclear, ungratified and, hence, lacks clear and effective directions/mechanisms for implementation. This vagueness in the re-entry policy can fairly be interpreted in the context of explicit resistance from a cross-section of national leaders, who argued that schools were not meant for mothers, and that the re-entry policy would condone and encourage sexual promiscuity among adolescents. They also argued that young mothers would be a bad influence on other girls. Considering that adolescent motherhood is often the result of sexual relationships with schoolmates or even sexual exploitation or abuse of schoolgirls by older men, including teachers, such arguments only serve to direct attention to the skewed attitude towards women and the problems of maternity and sexuality, which is different from the attitude towards male sexuality and responsible paternity.

In terms of improving girls' performance in SMT subjects, the Machakos symposium recommended that efforts be made to equitably distribute science equipment to girls' and mixed secondary schools at a ratio of one to two. This meant that for every item given to boys' school, two were given to girls' and mixed schools. Equally important, closing the gender gap in the

teacher training colleges was considered a priority. As a step to realise this, one wing of the Kenya Science Teachers College male dormitory was converted into accommodation space for females, thus allowing an increased intake of girls. In the primary teachers' colleges, response to the gender equality policies saw an increase in female students in the 1996/97 academic years.

A similar response was noted at university through the lowering of the intake points by one point in favour of females since 1996. Notably, even with this kind of affirmative action at university, the ratio of girls to boys remains relatively low, with the number of girls equivalent to about one third that of the boys. This indicates that transition rates from lower levels of education for the girls dwindled drastically. Gender-sensitive policies in the country have also supported the establishment of a gender disaggregated data bank at the ministry that helps to identify gender disparities in the education system. This practice was mainstreamed in all relevant sections, including the Kenya National Examination Council, which provides gender-disaggregated data on examination performance by region, school and subjects.

Gender equality in education in the 21st Century: Some policy strategies

As Kenya navigates through the 21st Century, national education plans reveal the absence of comprehensive gender policies with specific monitoring and evaluation guidelines. For example, few educational policies provide guidance on how to link and address poverty, sexual maturation, early marriages, adolescent pregnancy and gender violence in education in a manner that can be interpreted and implemented easily at the practical level (Bunyi, undated). Further, the Kenya government hardly provides effective guidance on how to ensure that schools are not only learner-friendly, but also that they are gender-responsive and that they ensure that girls are made to feel safe at school. According to Bunyi, unless the policies are explicit on girls' educational needs, the gender gap would continue to be skewed in favour of boys. She argues that the continued negative effects of poverty, unfavourable socio-cultural practices, gender-insensitive physical environments in schools, lack of a pedagogy that empowers girls, long distances to schools, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic combine to disadvantage girls' education.

To address the educational challenges of the 21st Century we need to locate gender within broader policy concerns and in the context of the global focus on EFA, the Millennium MDGs, and other international conventions and treaties that advocate equal education for every person. Government's slow action on the relevant recommendations in such documents often results in the infringement of the rights of the people, especially women and girls. This has far-reaching implications for the socio-economic and political development of a nation (UNESCO, 2004). Educational analyses identify two main types of instruments that embrace international commitment to gender inequality in education. These are international treaties and political commitment. Individual countries are expected to ratify the treaties and give them legal backing that is enhanced through action by the political leadership. The following are some of the key international treaties that embrace gender equality in education:

- The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which was adopted in 1966 and came into force 10 years later in 1976, albeit with a limited coverage of gender and education issues. Some 144 countries ratified it.
- The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was developed specifically with gender in mind and adopted in 1976. It covers all types of education at all levels and came into force in 1981. Some 173 countries, including Kenya, ratified this convention.
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) that was adapted in 1989 and came into force a year later. Kenya is among the 190 countries that ratified it. This convention is unique because of its strong emphasis on clear measures for promoting free

primary education, human rights education, sex education, reproductive health and gender-responsive curricula (UNESCO, 2003: 26).

International political commitment

In terms of political promises that require unwavering commitment on the part of governments, the following are key:

- The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993) stresses the state's obligation to promote gender equality in education.
- The International Conference on Population and Development (1994) demonstrated increased awareness of gender issues not only in education but also in the areas of population control and reproductive health.
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (1995) reaffirmed the Vienna Declaration that rights of women and girls are inalienable, indivisible and an integral part of human rights. The agenda of this platform of action seeks not only to promote, but also to protect the full enjoyment of all human rights and the fundamental freedoms of all women.
- The World Summit for Social Development (1995) ushered in a new consensus on the need to put people at the centre of development through community capacity development in ways that enhance equality and equity between women and men and the attainment of universal and equitable access to education and enhanced primary health care (UNESCO, 2003: 26).

Locating gender equality in education policies

Since political declarations tend to serve political ends and are difficult to monitor and evaluate, the idea of having clear targets and dates by which to measure success is a crucial strategy in any development agenda, not least, education. The World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand (1990), set the pace in what may be described fairly as the right direction by declaring 2000 as the target date for achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE). However, considering that UPE had not been achieved by that date, the ensuing Dakar Framework of Action (2000) and the MDGs yielded further specific gender equality and equity goals to be achieved by specified dates.

In the Dakar Framework of Action, goals two, four and six (UNESCO, 2003: 27) are explicit in their gender concerns, which are:

- Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls; children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete free and compulsory primary education.
- Achieving a 50-per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2015, focusing on quality and achievement (UNESCO, 2003: 27.)

In a clearly complementary way, two of the MDGs set out clear targets for education and gender. The MDGs also indicate some moderate mid-term targets to be met by 2005 such as:

- To achieve UPE by ensuring that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and,
- To promote gender equality and empower women by eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education by 2015 (UNESCO, 2003: 27).

Summary and conclusions

The achievement of independence in Kenya and other parts of Africa did not, by and large, result in revolutionary changes to improve gender equality in education or in the labour market. The increased participation of women in formal-sector employment has not challenged, in any substantial way, the patriarchal ideologies that characterised most traditional cultures, which colonialism perfected by alienating women in all sectors of development in most

fundamental ways, commencing with female exclusion from formal education. Despite demonstration by research that women play a key role in social and economic development, gender differences in education and formal employment have continued to retard the female potential in favour of the male.

The role of policy in addressing gender gaps in education seems to stop at formulation and declarations mainly because the practical aspects of implementation fail to define clearly strategic plans that address specific issues of access, quality, retention and performance. Further, proper monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for gender equality are not available. It is in view of this that towards the 21st Century, international frameworks for action were developed to help translate, in practical ways, the declarations and the expressed political commitments on gender equality in education. It is in this context that the EFA targets and MDGs have articulated clear targets in terms of expected achievements by given dates within the first two decades of the century. Although the achievement of UPE and gender equality and parity could take time to be achieved, having 2015 as the target date serves as a regulatory tool that transcends previous declarations designed around the model of the human rights treaties. Thus, the agenda for gender equality is expanded rather than re-confirmed, as was historically the case.

In the next chapter, we shall contexualise gender concerns in education in Kenya within a historical background that enables use to capture the gravity of the issues at hand.

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CHAPTER TWO

WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD

It is important, at the onset, to appreciate the context within which gender issues in contemporary education in Kenya have developed. In Kenya, as in other African countries, most of the earlier studies that addressed issues concerning women during the colonial period were bent on countering the imperialist claim that colonialism improved the condition of African women, who reportedly had lived as slaves and beasts of burden for a long time at the mercy of traditional patriarchal structures. While the existence of a dominant patriarchal arrangement was true for many traditional African communities, the claim that the underlying ideology translated exclusively into the exploitation of women is inaccurate.

Moreover, such claims are conspicuously silent on matriarchal societies in Africa, whereby gender relations comprised a balance of female relative positions of power which were highly revered in the community's economic, political and religious life. The claims are also silent about the way the colonial administration used models of Western education to propagate female inferiority, exploitation and oppression that resulted in the disproportionate marginalising of African women relative to their male counterparts in ways that were unprecedented in recorded and oral history of the colonies (Chege, 2001; Jell-Bahlsen, 1998; Day, 1995; Sofola, 1978).

Prior to the colonisation of Africa, Western missionaries had introduced formal education, ignoring completely the customary and cultural relevance of traditional African education, which they found in place and which functioned adequately in sustaining a gendered community life. Undoubtedly, the presence of gendered communal life provided the colonial administration and its predecessors, the Christian missionaries, with fertile grounds upon which to indoctrinate Africans about foreign divine designs that polarised, arbitrarily, the feminine and masculine genders in favour of men. Based on this situation, the missionaries proceeded to deconstruct the African masculinities and femininities and reconstruct them as polar opposites that were bound by a new gender order whose boundaries were elaborated further through formal education and enforced by claims of divine ordinance. The onset of colonialism, therefore, exploited a ready-made gendered platform on which a convoluted social order that was racialised and gendered was introduced. This novel set-up only helped to alienate African women by offering them the lowest quality and quantity of education relative to their male counterparts as well as compared to the women and men of other races.

What followed was a complex scenario in which traditional gender relations were transformed in a manner that has been difficult to undo, even several decades after the collapse of political colonisation in Africa. It is in this context that this chapter discusses traditional gender relations, showing how the Kenyan colonial state influenced these, via a Western education modelled on an exploitative capitalist ideology that was not only racist but also sexist. We will discuss how, in the provision of education to the African people, Western colonialism clearly ignored the diversity of African cultures and the reality of a functional traditional pedagogy that had regulated gender relations among African societies for generations (Chege, 2001). The effects of the colonial and missionary gendering processes that were engrained in, and perpetuated through, Western education have continued to plague the Kenyan education system into the 21st Century.

Colonial capitalist economy and the subordination of women

Under the Anglo-German Agreement of 1890, the East Africa Protectorate, as Kenya was known before 1920, became a British sphere of influence. For strategic and economic reasons, it was found desirable to construct the Uganda Railway, which was to provide an effective link between the Indian Ocean Coast and Lake

Victoria and thereby strengthen British control of the interior. Following the construction of the railway line, the British administration began to consider White settlement as a desirable and necessary condition for making the protectorate economically viable. The dream of White settlement became a reality from 1896 when European settlers began to arrive in large numbers in the protectorate (Ogot, 1974). This settlement was to become the precursor to the transformation of gender relations among the African communities in Kenya.

The 1900 land ordinance sparked off land alienation for European settlements that affected many ethnic communities, who lost their traditional lands. The European settlers, all of whom felt racially superior, deemed manual work in their newly acquired farms very humiliating in a country that was inhabited by Africans. In order to prosper, they needed cheap labour, which they could only secure by strengthening their hold over the African population. To achieve this, the colonial administration imposed taxation in all areas under its jurisdiction from 1901, consequently forcing the African men to work for wages in order to pay the taxes. Further, another scheme was hatched that required Africans to pay a hut tax. This new move forced all able-bodied African males to leave their homes and go to work for wages on European settler farms as well as other colonial enterprises.

Since the hut tax was levied on each hut, it had far reaching implications on polygamous men who had to pay the tax for each of their wives, who lived in separate huts. Such men had no choice but to work to respond to their tax burdens. In cash-crop growing areas, some of the men had to sell part of their own, or their wives' produce, to pay the taxes. From around 1906, a tax on males over 16 years was introduced, compelling more men to venture into the nascent labour on the European farms, popularly referred to as the 'White highlands' (Bennel, 1963). This taxation actually forced the men to abandon their traditional roles as farmers and household heads to sell their labour in a way that they had not done before. Further, the alienation of 7.5 million acres of high-potential land for European settlements resulted in a growing shortage of land in the so-called African reserves in most parts of the country.

This alienation had serious implications for women as it elicited new tensions regarding land that was traditionally utilised by women. The over-utilisation of land in an attempt to meet domestic and market needs created an ecological imbalance unknown in the history of land use in Kenya, and which became quite evident from the early 1920s. Furthermore, the constant use of rapidly decreasing land holdings resulted in the depletion of the fertile topsoil and played considerable havoc on the environment that had served as the core source of domestic and family survival for generations. As land fertility diminished and crop yields decreased, women's worlds became more and more constricted. Amidst an increasing land shortage, peasant farmers, of whom women constituted the largest group, were forced to cultivate on steep slopes, thus encouraging soil erosion. Such a practice portrayed women as unscrupulous land miners, who were insensitive to, or unwilling to adopt improved methods of agriculture (Kanogo, 1992) as advocated by the colonial administration. This tendency to exclude women from agricultural education reflected the general tendency of marginalising women as active agents, including in development endeavours.

In the prevailing monetary economy, it is not surprising that the colonial policies fundamentally changed the context in which African household and kinship relations functioned, not to mention educational practices that had worked for many generations in Africa. First, male migration to the European farms placed considerable burdens on the African women who were left behind to perform, not only their traditional chores but also, the work of the absent men. They had to, at least, maintain agricultural production to continue feeding the family and sometimes, even their absent sons and spouses. In addition, the women were also required to work as cash crop farmers and to respond to export or local markets. Logically, the amount

of time and energy that the women spent cultivating food and cash crops increased dramatically, yet they still had to perform their traditional reproductive tasks of rearing and educating children as well as cooking and caring for the young, the sick and the elderly members of the family. In addition, wives of migrant labourers had to undertake their husbands' production activities, which involved cattle-rearing, herding and cash crop farming, in the absence of the male help (Wiper, 1972).

The new roles for women on the domestic front yielded a new family economy that positioned women, in practical terms, as the *de facto* household heads who, ironically were culturally denied the authority or power to make decisions regarding sales, loans or gifts of an economic nature, which were traditionally controlled by the men. As property rights became individualised under the influence of colonial legal charges, African men, whose dominance over women had increased with the onset of the colonial capitalist economy, were able to accumulate much of the productive land that was available. Women's access to land for subsistence farming and market products was highly circumscribed. Thus, the concept of property rights effectively sidelined the women who often threatened by encroachment of private male claims for land that they had traditionally used for food production, but which the colonial law barred them from owning in favour of their male relatives (Hay, 1982).

To make matters worse, the colonial policy was contradictory on the matter of women's personal rights. On the one hand, Christian missionaries and the colonial administration would, at times, intervene against what they considered excessive female oppression based on the presumed African cultural norms, which, ironically, they helped to enhance by allowing the men to become the legal landowners of ancestral communal land. On the other hand, the colonial authorities upheld patriarchy as a useful ideology that gave men the power to mobilise the almost free labour of women and young men. When conflicts arose between the need to keep women working in both subsistence and cash crop farming, and the desire of the state or Church to protect women from assumed male excessive oppression, the basic logic of the colonial capitalistic economy dictated that patriarchal interests prevailed. In the final analysis, contradictory colonial interpretations of existing policies produced no fundamental positive change in the women's status, as they increasingly became social and economic beings, thus condemning them to a life of dependency on their fathers, husbands and other male relatives (White, 1990).

Notably, the migrant labour system was not meant to be permanent or even designed to enable the migrants to be self-reliant. The African men working on the settler farms entered contracts for between a couple of months to several years, working for wages that barely kept them alive and for which they were provided a meagre bonus when the contract expired. Ironically then, the so-called male 'breadwinner' was not paid enough to fully support his family. Hence, the family's survival relied increasingly on female labour in food production and the informal economic activities that the women found tenable in their local areas. Having to make do with absentee wage earners in the form of their husbands, women became the *de facto* 'bread winners'. Thus, contrary to common belief, the new family economy did not, in the least, improve the condition of African women, as the colonialists would have wished to portray. Instead, the women's workloads increased manifold, depriving them of traditional space for trade and leisure.

As the production of export crops altered the sexual division of labour and significantly increased the total labour time of all members of the rural household, it is noteworthy that most of the workload fell hardest on women. Men commonly withdrew from food production tasks to concentrate on export crops, which earned them money. Hence, cash crops became known as 'men's crops', while tending these 'men's crops' remained largely a female occupation that yielded no direct monetary returns (Stichter, 1976). As cash transactions became widespread in the colonial period, male

'household heads' attempted to maintain tight control over family cash, and in particular labour. The colonial administration recognised the danger that export crop production would face should male household heads lose control over dependents that provided the family labour. With male 'household heads' being in firm control of land and cash, women were hard put to challenge the new patterns of labour and income distribution, which drastically diminished their welfare and freedom of decision making. (Stichter, 1976). Outside agricultural production, women suffered discrimination and numerous barriers to self-development, including systematic exclusion from various wage employment sectors within government and industry (Van Zwanenberg, 1972).

Based on the English imperial ideology of 'female domesticity', the colonial administration worked relentlessly to instil in African women anachronistic values regarding work and social graces (Mama, 1996:28) that were designed for the service and pleasure of men. The construction of femininity in terms of qualities that men desired in women, and the idea of protecting the women from the male employers by denying them employment, became a contradiction. Evidence abound that such protectionism only served to bar women from the better paying jobs and, by implication, rendering them dependents of the same men from whom they were, supposedly, being protected in the first place.

Since the colonial period, and into the 21st Century, protectionist legislation has been founded on apparent concern over women's reproductive capacities and their assumed familial responsibilities, which would require that women be precluded from working overtime and participating in night work, in addition to exempting them from physically arduous tasks that were likely to distract them from social reproduction endeavours. This colonial tendency fits in well with the theory of privatisation of the family whereby; women, children and other physical resources become the property of the husband (Engels, 1940 edn). Accordingly, it is only by entering fully into the labour force that women could help eliminate their confinement to the private and domestic labour that culminated in their oppression by men. The colonial powers were determined to ignore this view, clearly because it was not in the interest of their capitalist patriarchal design.

Although colonial employers largely excluded women from formal wage employment, they did not hesitate to extract female (or even child) labour at relatively lower cost than that offered for African male labour. And once they discovered that they could do so without a hitch, they proceeded with impunity. Because women were not defined as true 'workers', the engagement of female labour was not subject to even the minimal controls and conditions that regulated male employment. As a result, women could be exploited through casual labour that was less secure and poorly paid compared to that of men. Some European-owned plantations at times employed women on a seasonal basis, especially for crop processing such as shelling or bagging coffee berries.

However, these jobs were normally limited to a few women living in the immediate vicinity of the plantation. Gradually, in some areas, a wealthy class of export crop producing peasants emerged and provided seasonal 'wage work' for women, but more often than not, this work brought only a small payment in the form of food for land clearing services, or gifts after the harvest was sold (Clark, 1980). In all cases, however, a woman's earnings were lower than the meagre amounts paid to men. Hence, the devaluation of female productive labour tended to make employment for women less attractive in terms of aspirations to become competitive workers and in terms of seeking education that was commensurate with the labour market needs.

The question of 'professionalising' female employment within colonial contexts

The colonial administration as well as Christian missionaries had their perceptions about the type of women that suited African men who were in the colonial service as clerks and junior administrators. Hence, reason dictated that efforts be directed towards the creation of a select cadre of 'suitable wives' for that class of African men entering the colonial service. This construction of the African man's wife was imbued with the ideology of domesticating women in ways that kept their reproductive work locked out of the public sphere. Such women were, therefore, trained in the social graces of Victorian fashion and etiquette, cake making, needlecraft and other such domestic occupations that narrowed down to nothing beyond housewifery. This cadre of women was not expected to engage in highly specialised occupations such as farming, trading or manufacturing industrial products, most of which were occupations that many of the women had been engaged in before the onset of colonialism, a system that disorganised the construction of African femininities and masculinities.

Furthermore, the gradual development of urban labour markets in the colonial period provided very limited opportunities for women that demanded that they also pursue formal education comparable to their male counterparts. For example, restrictions were placed on women who attempted to enter in Nairobi and other towns for the purpose of employment or other pursuits. The colonialists argued that Africans were bush dwellers by nature and that it was out of necessity that male labourers were allowed to work in government offices and industries that were located in the towns. The African men were required to return to their rural homes after completing their employment contracts. These restrictions, which were based on the availability of waged labour for men, provided the basis for denying women educational opportunities to match those of men. This diverted women away from the search for wage employment in urban areas, resulting in unbalanced sex ratios in Nairobi and other towns (White, 1990). In both rural and urban settings, women adjusted to the new colonial situations, sometimes with ingenuity and innovation, and at times, at incalculable personal cost. For example, in the rural areas they often adjusted by utilising and occasionally modifying all the sources of support available to them, such as customary law, relocating to mission stations and even joining women's self-help organisations. In some cases, they were able to trade in foodstuffs or handicraft. Some local employers also found it economical to encourage peasant women to sell cooked food to their workforce, thus, providing new sources of cash for the women. Most of the women did not simply accept the restrictions on migration and the barring of employment opportunities imposed upon them by the colonial rule or their African in-laws. They sought ways of moving into the towns, many of them relocating to Nairobi.

Due to stiff opposition to female labour in the city, some of the women could not afford to rent houses for themselves and soon they had no choice but to engage in commercial sex. This turned out to be a lucrative business that had a ready market in the form of male workers who lived without their wives. Many of the women sex workers displayed so much initiative and entrepreneurship that they managed to accumulate considerable wealth and property with which they were able to even support and educate children of their relatives back in their rural homes (White, 1990). Of significance is the fact that the image of the female body was transformed into an available commercial commodity that did not require investment in formal education on the part of its proprietor – an image that was bound to have implications for girls' and women's education.

Apart from prostitution, migrant women in the urban areas found numerous ways of earning a living in the informal sector. For example, beer brewing, food preparation, laundering, domestic, and social services required by single male workers provided them with avenues for earning money. Since these activities required no additional training apart from the traditional edu-

cation in feminine chores as wives, mothers and daughters, the African women were able to earn a living without much problem. However, this did not substitute for formal education that would have guaranteed them an equal chance with men to compete in urban wage employment. As it were, the women serviced the male labour force in ways that did not add much value to their status and dignity as human beings.

Ostensibly, most of the women's informal economic activities in the urban centres did not pass without problems. The colonial administration designed and executed harsh decrees and edicts that were meant to ensure that all women who were perceived to be of questionable repute, such as those who brewed and sold alcohol and those who practised commercial sex, were removed from the towns and repatriated to their rural homes. On the one hand, husbands were barred from living with their wives in towns, which denied them conjugal rights and other services that they offered each other, mutually, in their traditional settings. On the other hand, denying women education, dislocating their male co-workers and increasing their workloads in the rural areas disenchanted the women and motivated them to seek supplementary means of livelihood in the towns.

The gendered and racialised colonial education: processes and outcomes

Depriving women of an equal chance to education with men clearly reflects the determination of the colonial administration to clearly define the gender divide in a more fundamental way than was obvious to the Africans at the time. When, occasionally, a few women were offered a relatively superior education, it was geared towards employment only as nurses, lady physicians (not doctors), schoolmistresses and secretaries. Notably, however, even in these selected areas, women were denied access to any position requiring them to exercise authority over men, a policy which was hypocritically justified on the basis that the idea would be too foreign to Africans. Yet, research shows the feminisation of those occupations was in harmony with the gender relations in Victorian England – not traditional Africa – where women's employment positions were constructed as subordinate to those of men. This institutionalised gendering of occupations continued to negatively affect the education and employment of women both in government and the private sector to the present times.

The subordination of women in public positions of power and decision making that arose from a combination of the colonial patriarchal, racist and economic structures is clearly explained by a correspondingly low female participation in colonial education compared with that of males. Usually, girls were not sent to school, and the few that were, received an education that prepared them neither for equal competition in the job market nor for self-employment in any way that gave them adequate economic independence, dignity, or self-esteem. Education that guaranteed employment in the more prestigious and better-paying jobs was exclusive for men and was, logically, closed up for the women (Robertson, 1986).

One of the main reasons for the low prioritisation of female education was colonial arrogance and the colonisers' thirst for a relatively cheap labour force that was skewed against women and which encouraged female participation mostly in reproductive services at the family level and the provision of casual labour for large farms and plantations. By implication, women's reproductive activities ensured that they serviced the African male labour force, reproduced it and worked to support the colonial capitalist economy from which women did not reap any meaningful economic benefits. It is in this context that Marxist feminists have singled out the mystification of women's work in the home and the obscuring of domestic labour as the basis for their subjugation and the foundation upon which capitalism and patriarchy are reproduced and sustained (Rowbotham, 1973).

The colonialists' arrogance in dealing with Africans clearly blinded them to the existence and reality of an African pedagogy of difference,

which functioned on principles akin to the sex-role theory (Bennaars, 1995; Humm, 1995). Further, by ignoring not only education, but also the social-political, economic, and religious status occupied by many women in traditional African societies – particularly those from matrilineal communities – the colonial administration and the missionaries committed a fundamental mistake, as a result of which cultural dynamics of gender relations were sidelined, distorted and trashed (Chege, 2001; Wamahiu, 1995). Arguably, the theoretical components of African pedagogy manifested themselves in sets of beliefs, ideas, and assumptions underlying people's thoughts and a 'hands-on experience' that may not have been as obvious as the empirical practice of education as understood by the Europeans (Bennaars, 1995).

However, even though the African pedagogy was based on 'implicit theories' that tended to blur the distinction between the philosophical and scientific meanings of education, ignoring their intrinsic value in the existential lives of Africans and in the planning of colonial education can only be explained as contemptuous to indigenous communities. This resulted in a well-orchestrated imperial agenda to develop an inferior education for the African men in a manner that marginalised their women. In this context, the colonialists appeared least interested in studying and understanding the modalities of gender power relations. They were also not bothered to understand the power distribution at the household and political village levels, whereby the relationship between African women's empowerment and the ideal womanhood is actually subtle, complex, esoteric, and multidimensional, thus making the issue of power and gender relations considerably different from the one-dimensional Western paradigm. Sofola (1978) encapsulates the imperialist attitude towards understanding and reporting on the African culture by asserting that:

> The British social anthropologists, both of the colonial and pre-colonial eras, who went to Africa to analyse the society in depth, socially and culturally, had among them those who distorted what they found to justify an assumed racial superiority. But there were also those who, possessed of a modicum of intellectual honesty, interpreted honestly what they found (…). They were accused of 'going native' (turning African). (Sofola, 1978: 61).

Many contemporary historians and feminists have supported the views expressed by Sofola and proceeded to demonstrate that women's capabilities and social power were not scarce and unique phenomena among African communities, or indeed, those from Kenya. Records show that such feminine characteristics were widespread across Africa in ways that irritated colonialists, especially the missionaries, who believed that a woman was inferior to a man by divine ordinance (Schipper, 1985). For example, like the Kenyan Kikuyu women's association, *ndundu ya atumia* (Wai, 1995), the mid-19th Century Sierra Leonean women's association of *Bundu* was so influential in social, political, and religious life that the missionaries went to great trouble to discredit and destroy it (Day, 1998). It is in the context described above that the effects of colonisation on education and development in Africa, and indeed Kenya, need to be understood.

Family wealth and colonial education

Although more Africans started clamouring for schooling, particularly after World War I, and that enrolments continued to rise after this period, access to education was limited by the fact that it required financial wealth, which many of the Africans did not have. Only those families that could afford to pay fees and to release children and young people from their duties in the family subsistence economy could sponsor their children at least for the elementary grades of the educational ladder. As Munro points out:

> The families with the necessary means were generally those whose members had responded to educational opportunities in the 1920s and had become actively involved in the market economy and developed contacts sometimes through intermarriage with the influential figures in government and church. Education in short tended to become a reinforcing mechanism by which the innovating maintained the economic and social gap, which had opened between them and the rest of the community (Munro, 1975).

While Munro refers to children as if they were a homogenous group, it is imperative to understand his observations within the prevailing colonial context as well as the dominant gender ideology, which explicitly deterred many girls from joining the education system. Hence, it is reasonable to assume that the children in Munro's reference were mainly boys from relatively wealthy African families. Notably, Africans were competing for education, not only against other races but also against each other, whereby undertones of socio-class stratification apparently hindered poor parents from investing in the education of their sons or daughters. And even when relatively wealthy Africans were capable of sending girls to school, they could not guarantee them an equal education with their male siblings because the colonial curriculum was gendered in ways that did not favour the girls in their respective racial groupings.

By way of supplementing education, it is noteworthy that the colonial administration adhered strictly to the racialised structures in which education was clearly tiered according to perceived superiority and inferiority of the dominant racial groups in Kenya at the time. These were namely, Europeans, Asians and Africans, in order of their educational advantages. In this set-up, a comparatively large budget was allocated for the education of European children and a relatively small one for the education of Africans. In 1950, for example, the government allowed one British Pound per annum for the education of an African child, while the Asian had 8.3 Pounds and the European had 56 Pounds spent on education per child. Logic dictates that in terms of offering quality education, the investment of one British Pound for every African child (more often a boy) could not compare reasonably with that of 56 Pounds for every European child (Chege, 2001; Mwiria, 1991; Anderson, 1970).

Missionary education for girls

Generally, the first Europeans who settled in Kenya shared the traditional view about the status of women and the type of education that was considered suitable for them. In addition, African elders and the men who had tasted the benefits of formal education appeared to connive with the colonialists against female education with the aim of curtailing female independence that was bound to enhance social mobility and, undoubtedly, pose a threat to male hegemony. However, even with the apparent male connivance, Christian missionaries, particularly in Central Kenya, are on record as having been among the first groups of Europeans to support female education through the practice of sheltering runaway girls who entered the missions and sought refuge based on a host of cultural reasons (Dubel, 1981). The missionaries provided these girls with minimal education while at the same time converting them to Christianity. Some of the mission classes served as a combination of orphanages and refugee centres, which came to be known as 'Native Girls Homes'.

The missionaries' response to women's education elicited negative reactions from both African men and European women; each of them based on what appeared to be selfish interests. For example, while the African men resented the loss of control over their women who left homesteads for mission compounds, the European women appeared threatened by the possibility of their husbands being sexually interested in the educated African women. In addition, the white women seemed to fear that the educated black women would be disobedient and unwilling to perform menial domestic tasks as was expected of them and perhaps engage in power struggles with the white women. For this reason, European women preferred the employment of African men as domestic workers (Mama, 1996), a practice that most likely boosted their ego as females from a superior race.

In addition, this also served to guarantee protection against possible sexual intrusion of the white territory by educated black Christian women who were also educated. It is worth mentioning that the Christian missionaries who pioneered African education were middle class educated men who were endowed with Victorian ideals of gender relations. Although

they did not approve of some of the traditional customs and practices, their encouragement of women's education was motivated by the need to provide the educated African men with literate wives (Dubel, 1981). They considered women's vocation as being wives, mothers, and housekeepers *per se*. The Christian missionaries, therefore, favoured the exclusion of women from work outside the home, a tendency that resulted in the development of a gendered curriculum for boys and girls respectively. The boys were taught wagon making and masonry, while girls were tutored in cookery, food preservation, tailoring and laundry.

Far from lifting the African women out of domestic drudgery, the missionary education ensured that female domesticity was perfected and that women were encouraged, through Christian teaching, to be subservient, and to dutifully combine traditionally feminine chores with hoeing, animal rearing and many other occupations that were traditionally masculine (Mama, 1996). Christian missionaries, who had initially trained girls to be good and enlightened wives, began to encourage girls to acquire paid jobs as washerwomen and house assistants in European households, thus ushering them into the wage-earning economy. As their role in the subsistence agricultural economy declined, the educated women increasingly joined their menfolk in the job market, with the largest batch of recruits coming from around mission stations where scarcity of land, which emanated from alienation, was a motivating factor (Mutua, 1978:165).

Implications of colonial education for girls in Kenya

Surprisingly, it was not until 1925 that the colonial government openly decried the low status of women and girls' education, describing it as having seriously lagged behind that of men and boys. Government started to advocate for the improvement of girls' education, arguing, for the first time, that 'educated wives and mothers would contribute to the general welfare of the home and the community' (KNA, Annual Report, 1926:12). However, it is clear that even as it drummed up support for girls' education, the colonial administration failed to interpret the value of girls' education in terms of their personal development and well-being. For this reason, the curriculum of girls was restricted to the service fields of health, nutrition, needlework and childcare, which in 1927, the Director of Education described as the three Bs, representing 'baby, bath and broom' to substitute for the Three Rs –writing, reading and arithmetic – that were deemed crucial skills for boys (Trignor, 1976:206).

Even when the colonial government appeared willing to set up schools for girls and women, it did so only insofar as female education served its imperial interests. But even then, the curriculum for girls ignored women's work in subsistence agriculture and wage labour, which may explain the persistently low attendance of girls in primary schools. Despite the failure of the colonial administration to provide a relevant curriculum and to create reasonable job incentives for girls and women, a senior colonial education officer had the audacity to explain the low attendance of girls in primary schools as a demonstration of the African girls' contentment with only the rudiments of literacy (Trignor, 1976). Based on this view girls' education was designed to cater for low intellectual ability and gradually:

> A new tradition was established for transmitting values of humility, low ambition and systematic underestimation of girls' and women's ability in cognitive achievement, social attainment and capacity to work in the public sphere. (Assie-Lumumba, 1994: 27).

With increasing urbanisation, especially after World War II, educational opportunities for women started to expand. Many parents in urban areas began to take their daughters to school. At least, they demonstrated concern about their daughters getting a modicum of education to make suitable wives for educated men (Robertson, 1986:99). However, the government was slow in opening up training opportunities for expanding occupational structures

for women. It was not until 1950, for example, that the first training school for women in the country - Jeanes School type - was initiated, drawing its students from married women with the sole aim of producing women leaders in the communities. The women's curriculum consisted of the following subjects: cookery, housewifery, laundry, hygiene, childcare, first aid, home nursing, needlework, handwork, games, curios, literacy, agriculture and simple accounting (Shepherd, 1955:2).

In view of the foregoing, it is not surprising that until after the end of World War II, school enrolment and attendance for girls was generally low. The first high school for African girls was started in 1949 and from then, girls had the chance to attend only one institution of higher education, which was Makerere College in Uganda. However, this is beside the point because only a handful of girls managed to attain education beyond secondary school as illustrated in Table 1. This table shows a low female enrolment compared to that of males in 1953, ten years prior to Kenya's attainment of political independence from colonial rule.

It is estimated that during the last two decades of colonial rule, girls constituted about 25 per cent of all African children enrolled in elementary schools. Within the secondary education sector, the distribution between sexes was extremely skewed with 5 to 10 per cent of the pupils being girls. Post-secondary education for girls was clearly dismal.

Summary

This chapter has attempted to demonstrate the fact that gender discrimination in Kenyan education and other sectors of development started during the colonial period. The apparent discrimination was clearly generated from an already existing pedagogy of difference that governed gender relations in Africa, which the colonialists, in their arrogance, did not bother to study and understand. Thus, colonialism in Kenya and the incorporation of a monetary capitalist economy seriously contributed to the breakdown and disorientation of the traditional societies and their ways of life, including education. Since the colonial capitalist economy was designed around racial and gender ideologies of oppression and exploitation, the African women, more than their male counterparts, were systematically and deliberately sidelined in the provision of education and in all sectors of social and economic development. With the new colonial arrangements that removed the men from their traditional family roles and pushed them into wage employment, the traditional division of labour between men and women was dismantled. The women were forced to undertake the men's traditional roles, in addition to their own. Domestic work that was performed by the women was deemed less important in terms of requiring formal education; yet, it was crucial in terms of servicing the colonial economy in the cheapest way possible. Although the colonialists would have wished to blame the low female participation in

Table 1: Female and male attendance in Kenyan schools in 1953

Primary	1 Year	2 years	3 years	Year 4
Male	71,229	50,822	41,694	39,127
Female	28,279	18,223	12,934	10,115
Intermediate	5 Years	6 years	7 years	8 years
Male	20,134	14,152	8,263	5,440
Female	4,629	2,814	1,760	955
Secondary	9 years	10 years	11 years	12 years
Male	2,072	946	398	298
Female	347	108	25	11
Post secondary	13 years	14 years		
Male	31	18		
Female	(Not given)	1		

Source: Shepherd, 1955 –African Women in Kenya, Nairobi Department of Community Development, and Rehabilitation. Mimeograph, May 1955.

education on traditional cultural norms, evidence reveals that the curriculum offered to girls was of low quality and did not offer any incentives for the labour market, which women found much more attractive than remaining in their rural homes performing domestic chores. Indeed, colonial education portrayed women and girls as being of relatively low value, thus discouraging African men from investing in female education. Official policy coupled with the betrayal by traditional leaders, who connived with the colonial administration, is largely to blame for the gender inequality in education during the colonial period in Kenya. The new value systems that were linked to formal Western education favoured men, thus influencing many parents against sending their daughters to school even when they could afford it. This trend has persisted in many African communities, several decades after the collapse of colonialism.

Further, Christian missionaries who pioneered the development of Western education in the country strongly believed in the ideology of the inferiority of women by divine order. This, coupled with their disapproval of many African traditional customs that regulated family life, tended to influence their encouragement of women's education, whose primary goal was to provide the educated African men with literate wives, and never vice versa or on equal terms. They considered women as basically wives, mothers, and housekeepers who lacked any status or autonomy. Hence, the curriculum that was provided to the few girls who attended school was designed to legitimise this colonial mentality. As a result of these foreign ideologies and practices, girls' education remained marginalised and, of low quality compared to boys'. Hence, it is not by chance that by independence in 1963, female participation in education still reflected a relatively small percentage of the total school enrolment, and dismal levels in the achievement rates of girls and women.

The following chapters address gender issues in Kenyan education using the education-cycle approach. The chapters highlight emerging trends in gender disparities and/or equality in education in ways that allow easy comparisons within and across the various education levels.

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CHAPTER THREE

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

Since the achievement of independence in 1963, the government and the people of Kenya have been committed to expanding the education system to cater for all children and illiterate adults. This has been in response to a number of concerns, among them the desire to combat ignorance, disease and poverty and the belief that every person has the right of access to basic welfare provision, including education. The other belief is that the government has the obligation to provide its citizens with the opportunity to participate fully in the socio-economic and political development of the country and to attain a decent standard of living. Education has also been seen as a fundamental factor for human capital development. The effort to expand educational opportunities has been reflected in the various policy documents and development plans (Abagi, 1999).

Immediately after independence in December 1963, the Minister for Education appointed an education commission (The Ominde Commission) to survey the existing educational resources in the country and to advise the government on the formulation and implementation of national policies for education. In identifying priorities, the commission was influenced by the then current international opinion as well as internal political and socio-economic forces. Education for human resource development was considered a key priority. A number of existing publications also had a considerable impact on the commission's approach to this problem. These included the reports on *High Level Manpower Requirements and Resources in Kenya, 1964-1970 and* the *Development Plan 1964-1970,* and the Sessional Paper No 10 of 1966 on *African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya.* These publications had evolved a principle, which identified a direct relationship between education and economic growth. It was noted that if education could produce the high level and middle level human resource so desperately needed by a developing country, then the pace of the country's economic development could be accelerated.

While placing emphasis on education for human resource development, the commission, however, endorsed the provision of free primary education as a valid education policy objective. It was seen to be critical for economic progress as it provided a reservoir of candidates for secondary and higher education, who in turn, were needed for the modern sector of the economy. But even then, it was not so important with respect to secondary, commercial, technical and higher education. Consequently, too great an emphasis on primary education was not to be allowed to hinder economic growth in these other sectors (Republic of Kenya, 1964).

The independent government, therefore, chose to place emphasis on the expansion of higher education, trying to gear it towards the human resource needs of the modern sector of economic life, while at the same time providing facilities for a slow but steady increase in primary school enrolment. Efforts were, however, made to avoid its rapid expansion. Although enrolments rose, the rate of increase over the period 1964-69 was only 20 per cent: from 1,010,899 in 1964 to 1,209,670 in 1969. *The Development Plan, 1970-1974* aimed to increase enrolments to 1,833,000, thus trying to cover 75 per cent of children of primary school age in 1974 (Tuqan, 1976:84).

The official policy to slow the growth of primary education received a major shift in 1971 when a presidential decree abolished tuition fees for all the hardship regions, which were considered poor. The argument was that the payment of school fees tended to prevent a large proportion of children from attending school. These regions were; the North Eastern Province and the districts of Marsabit, Isiolo, Samburu, Turkana, West Pokot, Tana River and Lamu. The presidential initiative was in line with the declared policy of the ruling party, KANU. During the 1963 election, KANU had published a manifesto entitled, *What a KANU Government*

Offers You, in which the party committed itself to offering a minimum of seven years of free primary education. In the 1969 election manifesto, the party echoed a similar pledge (Sifuna, 1990).

A presidential decree issued on December 12, 1973 moved the country closer to achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE). The decree provided free education for children in Classes One-Four nationwide. It went further and provided a uniform fees structure for those in Classes Five-Seven in the whole country (Muhoro, 1975). Each child was required to pay KSh60 per annum. Subsequent decrees further abolished school fees in primary education.

Since the pronouncement was dramatic and unexpected, in January 1974, the Ministry of Education had to rethink its priorities and areas of operation to cope with the staggering rise in pupil enrolment. Enrolment in Standard One classes rose by a million above the estimated figure of 400,000. The total enrolment figure for Classes One-Four increased from 1.8 million in 1973 to nearly 2.8 million in January 1974 (Muhoho, 1975). Despite the rise, it was estimated that another one to two million children of primary school age were still not attending school in 1974. It was estimated that each year an additional 400,000 to 500,000 would enrol in Class One. According to this estimate the enrolment in primary schools would reach four million by 1980.

In 1978, the government abolished all forms of school levies in all public primary schools in the country. In the following year, another politically loaded pronouncement was made; this time round, the government introduced a free milk programme for primary school children. These pronouncements, among others, were meant to popularise President Daniel arap Moi, who took over office in 1978 after the death of the first President, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta. These two measures increased primary school enrolment from 2,994,849 in 1978 to 3,698,246 in 1979, an increase of 23.5 per cent (Abagi, 1997).

Access, enrolment and participation

Early Childhood care and education/pre-primary education

Although Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is one of the educational segments that are not mentioned by the Education Act of 1968, it has become a fundamental part of basic education, aimed at providing the full range of purposeful and organised activities intended to cater for the healthy growth and development needs of children from birth to six or seven years. It often includes activities provided under the supervision of several areas of state responsibility, such as education, health, nutrition and social welfare. ECCE is a very diverse area of learning, ranging, on the one hand, from formal pre-primary education, which is integrated with national education system, via kindergartens where care, play and education are included, to more formal and often home-based activities (UNESCO, 2003). In comparative terms, Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe are African countries with comparatively high ECCE enrolments (UNESCO 2006). Their gross ECCE enrolments range between 30 and 50 per cent, which is still below the world's desired average of 70 per cent.

Enrolment rate in school is measured using the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) and Net Enrolment Rate (NER). The GER is derived by expressing the total enrolment irrespective of the age of the pupils as a percentage of the total population of the eligible age group (for the ECCE, three to five-year olds and for primary education six to 13-year olds). The NER on the other hand is the percentage of the eligible age group actually enrolled in school. It is the most reliable indicator as it excludes under age and over age pupils.

In ECCE, available statistics for 2002 indicate that there were 28, 300 pre-schools in Kenya compared to 18,327 1992. This represents a 68.9-per cent increase in the number of ECCE institutions. Consequently, enrolment rose by 37.7 per cent from 858,953 in 1992 to 1,175,225 in 2002 as shown in Table 2. In 2003, enrolment increased by 2.5 per cent to

Table 2: Number of pre-primary schools and enrolments

Year	1992	1994	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Pre-Schools	18,327	19,083	21,261	23,344	23,977	25,429	26,294	27,573	28,300
Enrolment	858,593	951,997	1,033,367	1,064,053	1,076,606	1,063,883	1,096,629	1,163,532	1,175225
Average Enrolment per Pre-School	47	50	49	46	45	42	42	42	42

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

1,204,606. The impact of the implementation of free primary education on pre-school enrolment has as yet to be conclusively evaluated as most of the ECCE institutions attached to public primary schools were normally supported through community contributions. However, there are indications that the figures may have dropped as parents opted to take their children to Standard One, where education is free, rather than pre-school, where they have to pay some levies. Nonetheless, the average number of children enrolled in each pre-school ranged between 42 and 52 per cent up to 2002.

Gender disparities in enrolment at the national level are not significant as shown in Table 2 and Chart 1. The proportion of girls enrolled in ECCE has been ranging between 48.5 per cent and 49.2 per cent. Available data indicate that Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) remained nearly constant at about 35 per cent between 1990 and 1998. However it rose significantly to 41.4 per cent in 1999 and 42.5 per cent in 2001 as shown in Table 3 and Chart 2. In 2003 it was estimated to have risen to 44.4 per cent, with 45.5 percent and 43.3 per cent for boys and girls respectively. This may be attributed to increased private sector participation in pre-school education. However, in 1992 the GER dropped to an all-time low of 33.7 per cent, which could be attributed to data problems. The enrolment rate for boys has been higher than that of girls in the period under review, although the differences are insignificant.

The percentage distribution of pre-primary school enrolment by province for 2001 as shown in Table 3 reveals significant gender and regional disparities. The North Eastern Province exhibited the highest gender gap of 13.6 percentage points with the proportion of boys being 56.8 per cent as against 43.2 per cent for girls, followed by the Coast Province with a gender disparity of 3.2 percentage points in favour of boys. However, it is worth noting that

Chart 1: Enrolment in pre-primary schools

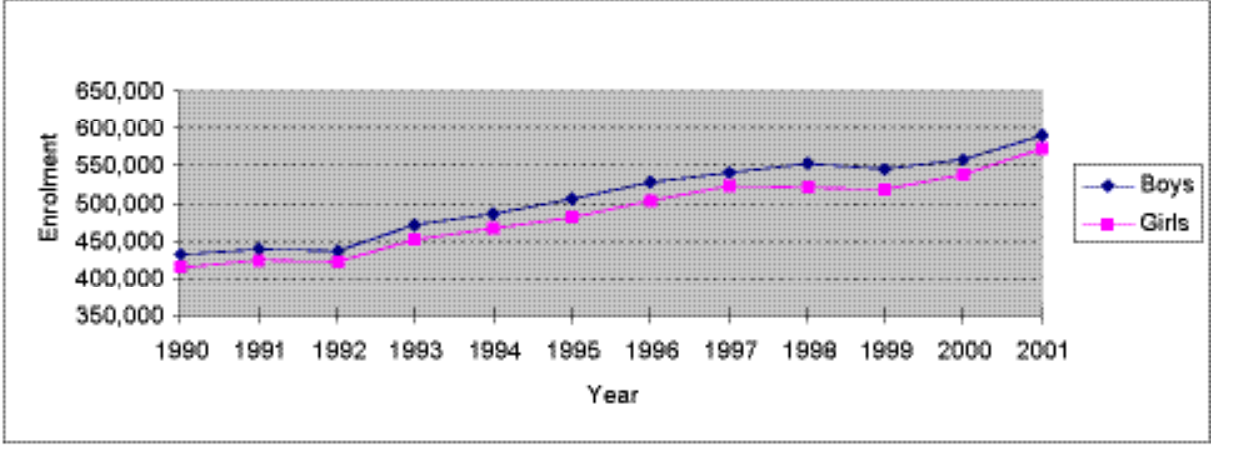
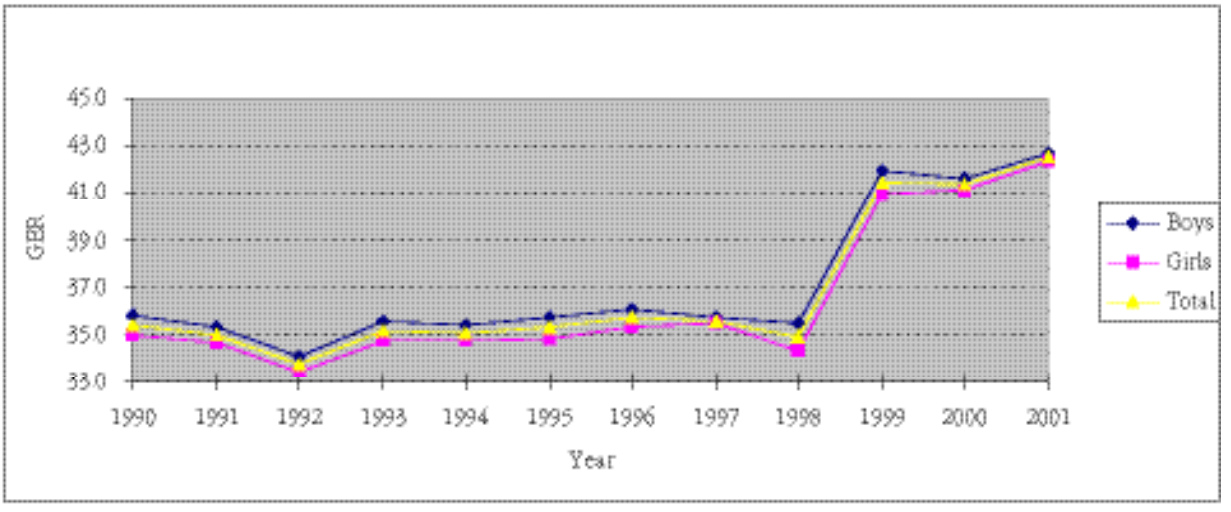


Chart: 2 Gross enrolment rates in pre-schools by sex, 1990-2001



Nyanza, Western and Nairobi provinces had higher proportions of girls' enrolment than that of boys. Overall, gender parity has more or less been achieved in pre-primary education. The estimates for 2003 showed a very high GER in Nairobi, 107.4 per cent for boys and 108.4 per cent for girls followed by Nyanza with 51.7 per cent and 47.5 percent for boys and girls respectively.

All other provinces were around the national average, except for Coast, 35.2 percent and 34.5 percent; Central 26.2 per cent and 24.5 percent; and North Eastern with 12.7 per cent and 10.3 per cent for boys and girls respectively (MoEST, 2005). The analysis of the GER by province in 2002 as shown in Table 4 and Chart 3 indicates that the North Eastern Province had the lowest GER - 11.8 per cent, with 13.6 per cent for boys and 9.8 per cent for girls - followed by Western province with a GER of 37.3 per cent. On the other hand, Central Province recorded the highest GER, 47.4 per cent, with boys and girls being on par.

Chart: 3 Pre-primary school GER by province and sex

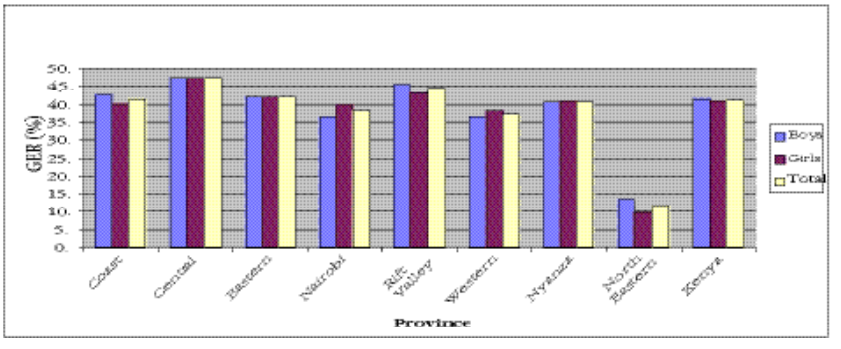


Table 3: Percentage distribution of pre-primary school enrolment, 2002

Province	% Boys	% Girls
Central	51.0	49.0
Coast	51.6	48.4
Eastern	50.9	49.1
North Eastern	56.8	43.2
Nyanza	49.8	50.2
Rift Valley	51.3	48.7
Western	49.8	50.2
Nairobi	48.7	51.3
Kenya	**50.8**	**49.2**

Table 4: Pre-primary school gross enrolment rates by sex and province, 2002

Sex	Coast	Central	Eastern	Nairobi	Rift Valley	Western	Nyanza	North Eastern	Kenya
Boys	42.7	47.4	42.3	36.7	45.7	36.5	40.4	13.6	**41.4**
Girls	40.2	47.4	42.1	39.9	43.3	38.1	40.8	9.8	**40.9**
Total	41.4	47.4	42.2	38.3	44.5	37.3	40.6	11.8	**41.1**

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

Access, participation and retention in primary education

The number of primary schools in the country increased steadily from 14,864 in 1990 to 19,129 in 2002 representing a 35.7-per cent rise (see Table 5). Enrolment in absolute terms also went up by 17 per cent, from 5,392,319 to 6,314,726, over the same period as shown in Table 5 and Chart 4. Girls' enrolment also increased in the period under review to 49.7 per cent, implying that gender parity in enrolment in primary schools at the national level has nearly been achieved.

Primary school Net Enrolment Rates (NER), however, show a very disturbing picture in the North Eastern Province, where they amount to 16.5 per cent for boys and 9.8 per cent for girls, with the average rate for the province being 13.4 per cent. The situation is equally worrisome in Nairobi, where the rates are 43.3 per cent for boys, 42.2 per cent for girls and 43.2 per cent for the province. However, it is quite encouraging that most of the provinces registered relatively high enrolment rates as shown in Table 6 and Chart 5.

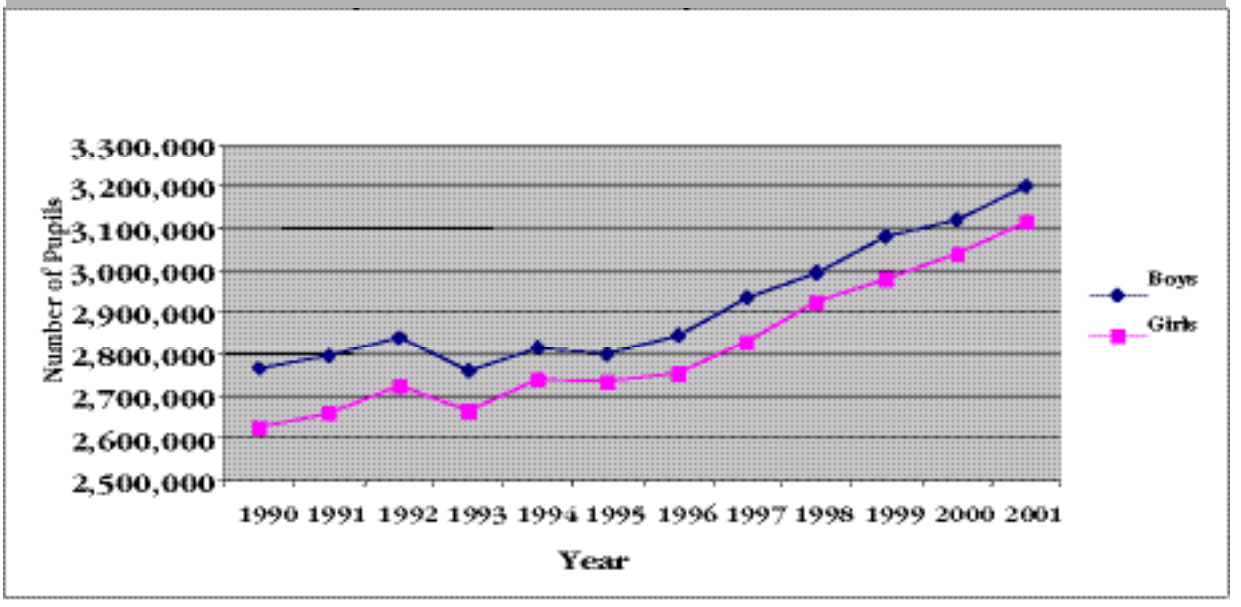
Since NER indicates the proportion of school-age children who are actually enrolled in school, it is possible to obtain the proportion of school-age children who are out of school. As shown in the Table 6, the national NER stood at 67.6 per cent in 2002 implying that 32.4 per cent of children of primary school age were out of school. The percentage of girls out of primary school stood at 32 per cent compared to 32.8 per cent of boys. In absolute terms, there were

Table 5: Enrolment in primary education by sex, 1990 – 2001

Year	Boys	Girls	Total	% Girls
1990	2,766,376	2,625,943	5,392,319	48.7
1991	2,796,972	2,659,024	5,455,996	48.7
1992	2,840,472	2,723,515	5,563,987	48.9
1993	2,760,929	2,667,457	5,428,386	49.1
1994	2,814,825	2,742,183	5,557,008	49.3
1995	2,802,305	2,734,091	5,536,396	49.4
1996	2,843,355	2,754,301	5,597,656	49.2
1997	2,933,982	2,830,873	5,764,855	49.1
1998	2,994,554	2,925,167	5,919,721	49.4
1999	3,082,200	2,982,100	6,064,300	49.2
2000	3,117,600	3,037,900	6,155,500	49.4
2001	3,200,433	3,114,293	6,314,726	49.3
2002	3,237,300	3,133,900	6,133,900	49.5
2003	3,487,254	3,331,633	6,818887	49.7

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Statistics Section

Chart 4: Primary school enrolment by sex, 1990-2001



2,172,862 primary school-age children out of school in 2002, 1,106,968 of them boys and 1,065,894 of them girls.

Table 7 represents primary school enrolment following the introduction of FPE in 2003. The total enrolment rose by 17.6 from 6,131,000 in 2002 to 6,819,324 in 2003. There was a gender imbalance, with around 3,702,800 boys enrolling at all levels compared to 3,505,300 girls, giving a sex ratio of 51.5 to 48.5. From the same table it is, however, a matter of great concern that FPE had very little impact on enrolments in Nairobi and North Eastern provinces, which contributed only 3.26 per cent and 0.89 per cent respectively to the national enrolment. The two provinces also display very high gender disparities: 39.71 per cent and 31.45 per cent respectively.

In spite of the rising number of pupils enrolled in primary schools, the GER has declined from

Chart 5: Primary school NER by province and sex, 2000

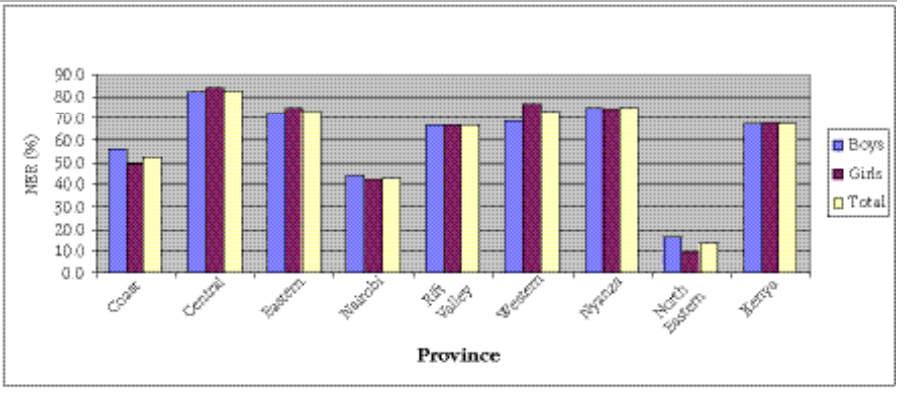


Table 6: Primary school NER by sex and province, 2002

Sex	Coast	Central	Eastern	Nairobi	Rift Valley	Western	Nyanza	North Eastern	Kenya
Boys	56.0	81.5	72.5	44.3	67.1	69.0	75.1	16.5	67.2
Girls	49.4	84.1	75.0	42.2	66.7	76.3	74.3	9.8	68.0
Total	52.7	82.8	73.8	43.2	66.9	72.7	74.7	13.4	67.6

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

Table 7: Enrolment in public primary schools by gender by province 2003

Province	Boys		Girls		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Central	425,034	50.08	423,655	49.92	848,739	12.39
Coast	242,337	54.23	204,541	45.77	446,932	6.52
Eastern	641,562	50.62	625,838	49.38	1,267,451	18.50
Nairobi	134,782	60.29	88,783	39.71	223,625	3.26
North Eastern	41,688	68.55	19,129	31.45	60,886	0.89
Nyanza	616,967	51.05	622,786	48.95	1,239,804	18.57
Rift Valley	875,002	51.07	838,162	48.93	1,713,215	25.01
Western	509,883	50.04	508,739	49.96	1,018,672	14.86
Grand Total	3,487,255	51.14	3,331,633	48.86	6,819,324	100.00

101.8 in 1990, 104.0 per cent for boys and 99.6 per cent for girls, to 91.2 per cent, 91.9 per cent for boys and 90.6 per cent for girls as shown in Chart 6. The drop in the GER was most pronounced between 1993 and 1998. The marked rise in GER from 88.8 per cent in 1998 to 94.3 per cent in 1999 was due to the revision of the MoEST data following claims that the previous GER calculations had ignored a large proportion of children already enrolled in school.

In looking at the GER by provinces as shown in Table 8 and Chart 7, it is quite alarming that the North Eastern Province records a GER of 17.4 per cent, with the rate for boys at 21.9 per cent and girls 12.1 per cent. Nairobi, Central, Nyanza, Western and Eastern provinces record a very high GER. The implementation of free primary education significantly changed the GER regionally as follows: Nyanza has the highest with 120 per cent, Western 119 per cent, Eastern 110 per cent, Rift Valley 103 per cent, Central 102 per cent. Coast 82 per cent, Nairobi 62 per cent and North Eastern 25 per cent.

It is apparent that after the upsurge in 2003, the GER began to decline 2004, falling to 99.8 overall, with 102.7 per cent for boys and 97.0 per cent for girls. Regionally, Western recorded higher figures in 2004, with 140 per cent and 123.4 per cent for boys and girls respectively. The others were: Eastern, 118.3 per cent and 115.4 per cent for boys and girls respectively; Nyanza 116.7 and 109.1; Rift Valley 108.6 and

Chart 6: Primary school GER by sex, 1990-2001

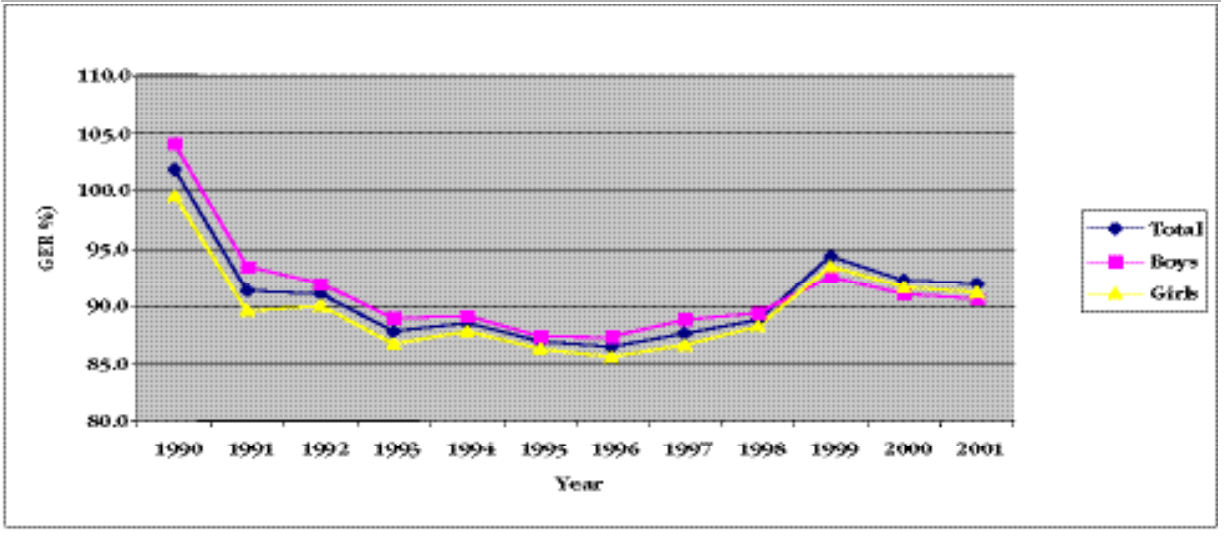


Table 8: Primary school GER by sex and province, 2001

	Coast	Central	Eastern	Nairobi	Rift Valley	Western	Nyanza	North Eastern	Kenya
Boys	81.7	100.2	95.7	108.1	87.2	98.0	103.1	21.9	91.8
Girls	69.5	102.3	98.8	102.2	85.4	98.8	100.2	12.1	90.6
Total	**75.6**	**101.2**	**97.2**	**105.0**	**86.3**	**98.4**	**101.7**	**17.4**	**91.2**

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

100.7; Central 94.5 and 92.6; Coast 90.8 and 77.6; Nairobi 35.9 and 40.8; and North Eastern 31.0 and 16.9 (MoEST, 2005).

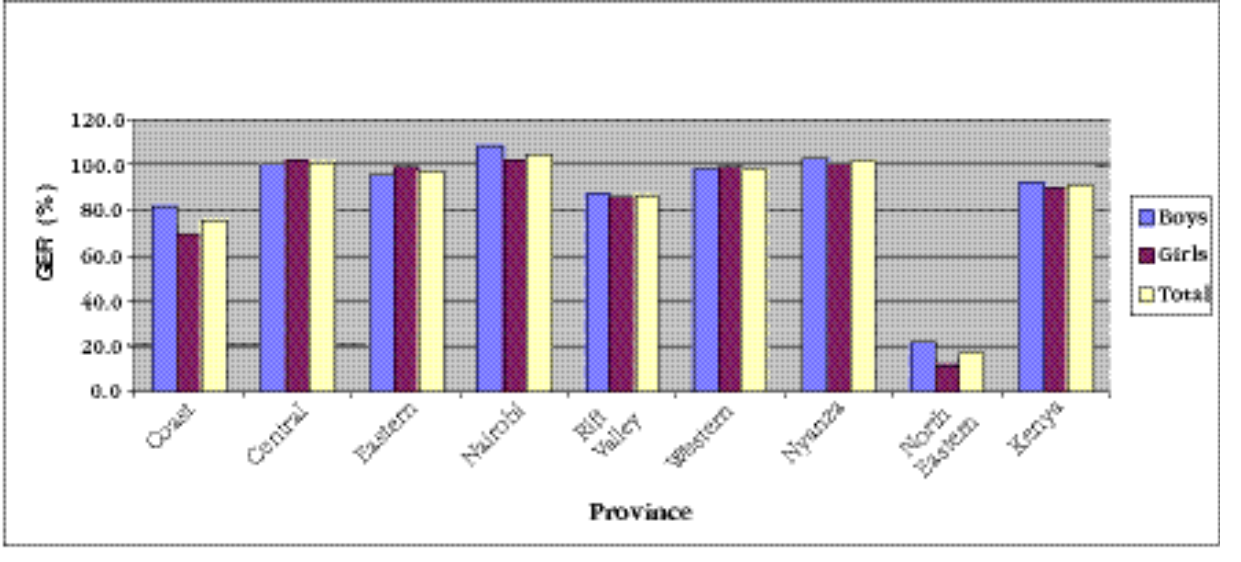
The massive influx in enrolment during the implementation of the FPE policy by the government, however, resulted in a very significant increase in the GER, from 92 to 104 per cent overall, with the percentages for boys and girls amounting to 106 and 104 respectively. However, this worsened the national pupil/teacher ratio from 34:1 in 2002 to 40:1 in 2003 on average. In some extreme cases the ratio went up to 100:1.

Factors that affect girls' access to formal education

Women's participation in formal education reflects their economic position and related factors in society. Although the enrolment rates of boys and girls in primary schools have levelled off in some regions, girls' chances of reaching the higher levels of education are considerably less than those of boys. When money is scarce, parents prefer to invest in their sons' education to higher levels because of the anticipated economic returns.

This implies that decisions made by households and families on educational investment are often gender-related. A number of studies highlight the ambivalence towards investment in female education. Some parents believe that boys are more intelligent, that they perform better in school and that they are a better educational investment than girls. A factor that is often ignored in parental preference for boys' education is the prevalence of patrilineal inheritance systems. As the prime beneficiaries of family assets, boys are favoured in human capital investment decisions. In addition, parents worry about wasting money on the education of girls who are likely to get pregnant or married before completing their schooling. There is also the strong belief that once married, girls

Chart 7: Primary school GER by sex and province, 2001



become part of another family and parental investment is lost (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995). In some cases, therefore, the lack of money is an excuse for the reluctance of parents and families to invest in the education of girls because they do not perceive the value of education for girls and also because of the socio-cultural perceptions about the role of women in society.

There is also the high opportunity cost of girls' education. In many communities child labour is critical for the survival of some households, and schooling represents a high opportunity cost to those sending children to school. Although child labour for agricultural, domestic and marketing tasks cuts across gender lines, when it comes to child care, girls are more likely to be involved than boys.

The rapid growth in urbanisation has also increased the demand for domestic labour. Poor rural households have responded by sending their daughters into the domestic labour market in exchange for regular cash income. This also draws young girls away from schools. Their parents receive payment for their services, but the girls have little or no opportunity to return to school.

Another important factor related to girls' participation is the continuing importance of institutions such as bride price, polygamy, adultery fines, and the economic value of girls, especially in the rural areas. Girls are an important source of income for their families, and the need for additional household income often takes priority over education. The high status accorded to marriage and motherhood in many communities impacts negatively on female participation in education (Cammish and Brock, 1994). In poor households, this value certainly takes on a significant meaning, particularly as girls approach puberty.

Cultural expectations and values also play an important role in influencing the pattern of women's participation in formal education. There are regions where parents wish to protect their daughters from contact with foreign cultures. Even in regions where there is acceptance of the importance of education for women, it has been observed that parents tend to discourage `too much' education for their daughters. There is always the fear that if a girl is highly educated, she will have difficulties in finding a husband or being "a good wife".

Religion, especially Islam, has usually been associated with low female participation in schools. In Kenya, on the whole, areas where Islam has existed for many years, like the Coast Province and many parts of North Eastern Province, there has developed an educational system and ideology, which is considered by many Muslims as largely acceptable. Consequently attempts to establish a Western system of education does not normally meet their approval (Bellotti, 1975). Some Muslims considered the Christian presence through the schools disruptive. School is perceived to be the instrument for the spread of non-Muslim ideology and culture.

With regard to girl's education in particular, some religious leaders prefer Islamic education for their daughters as they fear that Western education promotes values and behaviour that are contrary to cultural norms often articulated as religious edicts. Western education, according to them, leads to certain unacceptable innovations which alter the accepted views held by male members of society of the ideal wife and bring about changes in the prescribed roles of women, which have been rigidly defined by religion and custom. They tend to see an ideal woman as submissive, obedient and content to enjoy the status of her husband (Clarke, 1978).

Regional disparities in female enrolment in primary schools

As was stated earlier, the expansion of primary education since independence contributed to a steady rise in girls' enrolment. In 1963, girls accounted for only one-third of primary school enrolment. By 1979, however, the proportion had risen to 47 per cent. As was noted at the official level:

> Significant progress in improving girls' representation occurred even before the elimination of school fees for the first four years of primary school in 1974. In 1973, girls numbered up to 45 per cent of the total enrolment indicating parental willingness to invest in the education of daughters (CBS and UNICEF, 1984:57)

Statistics now tend to show that gender differences in enrolment have narrowed at the primary school level with the increasing expansion of the education system. In 1989 it was estimated to be 49 per cent, with some districts registering 50 per cent. The same trend has continued to date with some districts registering higher girls enrolment. This means that since independence, female enrolment has increased at a faster rate than that of boys, enabling girls to approach some degree of equality in enrolments (Eshiwani, 1985:10).

However, girls' primary school participation varies considerably at provincial and district levels. Regional differences in the provision of educational opportunities for girls correspond with regional variations in economic and political development in the country. Girls are most fully represented in the primary schools of Central and Nairobi Provinces. By 1979, some 14 districts and municipalities had nearly achieved gender parity, having been successfully integrated in the colonial economy faster. Their difference from other regions was reinforced by post-independence development policies, which have involved the ideology of ethnic competition, rural development and authoritarian political approach. As it has aptly been pointed out:

> ... the state and the dominant classes would like Kenyan peasants to believe that improvement in their lives or hopes for their children depends on the competition, on the basis of ethnicity and locality, for scarce resources, all which will reward good (hard-working, obedient) districts with government aid for rural projects and punish bad (lazy unruly and/or politically troublesome) districts with deprivation of resources... (Lamb, 1977: 50).

This policy has been demonstrated through generous government support for loyal districts, which generate large funds for development through harambee, and a deprivation of districts that do not generate much funds through such means or express political dissent.

The government does not, however, think its own development policies tend to enhance regional inequalities. While recognising that districts and municipalities where there is parity in boys and girls' enrolment are areas with more advanced economic and educational development than the rest of the nation, it blames the existing regional disparity on the colonial legacy. It is noted that regions with high enrolments were favoured initially in the construction of school facilities prior to independence and consequently had a higher proportion of adults with four or more years of primary school attendance than the rest of the nation (CBS and Unicef, 1984:52). It is noted that:

> The strength of the relationship between educational attainment of adults and primary school attendance strongly suggests that prior to the achievement of universal primary education the past history of development had a considerable influence on the attendance within a district, if only because districts with higher than average adult educational attainment are more likely to have schools or because educated parents are more motivated to seek (and more able to afford) education for their children than those without such background (CBS, 1978:9).

Not much is said about the corrective measures to be taken to assist regions with low girls' enrolments to improve. Emphasis is placed on why there are disparities between districts. It is noted that the localities, which were educationally advanced, also tended to be leaders in economic development. These have relatively high cash incomes from agriculture, formal and informal employment, which has enabled parents to meet the direct costs of schooling for their sons and daughters as well as the indirect cost of foregoing their daughters' assistance in the home and farm. Economic development is also said to have provided an incentive for educating daughters, as well as sons' since it multiplied the possibilities for women to enter wage or self-employment. Parents could begin to look forward to economic return from boys and girls who reached the high levels of educational attainment. Additionally, the potential of earning

higher incomes from an educated daughter had begun to raise her marriage value. Finally it is said that the increasingly prevalent view that it is daughters rather than sons who will help their parents financially as they mature, also may have motivated parents to invest in their daughters' education (CBS, 1978:53).

Data have also shown that at the other extreme there are a number of districts in which girls comprised less than 45 per cent of primary school enrolment. In about 12 of them, girls accounted for less than 37 per cent of the total. The low enrolment in these districts is blamed on the historic patterns of educational and economic development (CBS, 1978:54; GoK and UNICEF 1992). These are districts that were not fully integrated into the colonial economy. They fall in the arid and semi-arid regions of the country, and they include; Garrisa, Mandera, Marsabit, Narok, Samburu, Tana River, Turkana, Wajir, and West Pokot. The people who live here are mainly pastoralists. In the colonial period, they had very limited contact with the colonial economy and Christian missionaries. Their way of life was least affected by the capitalist economy by way of land alienation or the supply of labour. Hence, they remained insulated from the impacts of colonialism (Kinkajou, 1978:20).

These districts fell into the bottom of educational attainment in school enrolment and education for girls. In 1987, girls' participation rates were as follows: Marsabit, 36 per cent, West Pokot, 39 per cent, Turkana, 34 per cent, Samburu, 37 per cent, Wajir, 30 per cent, and Mandera, 24 per cent. Other districts with low girls' participation rates include Kwale, 42 per cent, Kilifi, 40 per cent and Tana River, 42 per cent, (Republic of Kenya, 1989:110).

In these districts low participation rates of girls is attributed to cultural factors, especially early marriages, (GoK and UNICEF, 1992). The fact that there is some resistance in these areas to allowing children of both sexes to attend school cannot be denied. Whereas some progress has been achieved in the last two decades with regard to boys' school attendance, girls' education continues to lag behind. Resistance to schooling is, however, both cultural and economic. Young children are seen to be removed from traditional economic activities as well as from the cultural influence of the community when they go to school.

Studies on pastoralist areas are beginning to show that economic factors play an important role in limiting the participation of children in school. However, the assertion at the policy level is that a substantial proportion of the population in these areas is not fully aware of the social and economic benefits that result from education of their young people (Republic of Kenya, 1974). A programme, which the government launched to raise pastoralist communities' participation in schooling through the provision of boarding schools, failed because parents in these areas are reluctant to send their children to school. Not that the pastoralist communities have no interest in education. Behind their reluctance lies their inability to pay the relatively exorbitant school fees and to meet other costs that are required in order to benefit from the boarding schools allegedly built for them (Chege, 1983:107).

It is for these economic reasons that the progressive abolition of school fees, which began in 1974, benefited girls only marginally and had just a slight effect on regional disparities. In the districts and municipalities where ability to pay and perception of benefit already had created an advantageous climate for female education, the average increase in girls' representation in primary school was only 2.2 per cent for the entire six-year period (CBS and UNICEF, 1984:54).

The largest average increase in female primary school enrolment is said to have occurred initially in the districts where girls were the most disadvantaged in 1973, but the gain is said to have been too small to change girls' educational chances appreciably. These were the low opportunity districts in the arid and semi-arid regions predominantly occupied by pastoralist communities (CBS and UNICEF, 1984:55). The factors tending to affect female enrolment

before 1974 continued to exist after the presidential decree abolishing fees in the first four years of the primary school.

Following the introduction of free education in the four classes, the government, however, introduced other funds that only camouflaged the term `school fees'. These funds were the building fund, activity fund, equipment levy, and others. While the payment of some of the funds was compulsory, others were collected on a *harambee* basis. Besides these funds, parents were required to supplement the school equipment with textbooks, exercise books and other writing materials. The total amount of money spent by each parent for a single child in rural areas, for instance, turned out to be much higher than the original fees paid before the presidential pronouncement. The government eventually acknowledged that such increasingly compulsory contributions contravened its intention to provide greater access to primary schooling, (CBS, 1978:11).

> Although the abolition of school fees enabled the government to achieve considerable progress towards its goals of attaining universal primary education, the policy initiative was however, less successful in narrowing the gap between the districts with the highest and lowest attendance (CBS, 1978:12).

An incentive such as the provision of free education in itself may have an important political connotation because it is seen as an indicator of government's effort to raise enrolment in primary schools. However, it had little if any effect on the differentiated enrolment rates in the various regions of the country, for parents in the arid and semi-arid districts were unable to pay the direct and indirect costs of their daughters' education. Economic realities and tradition combine to reinforce the perception that there is no benefit in education, and if anything, its acquisition is a potential threat to their girls. Educational opportunities for girls are further constrained by the comparative inaccessibility of educational facilities in these districts, (Chege, 1983:108).

Grappling with early withdrawals from school

It needs to be pointed out from the outset that dropout figures are generally difficult to obtain from schools. According to data from a sample of about 8,000 primary schools, which participated in a survey carried out by the Ministry of Education in 2002, the dropout rate in primary schools was estimated at 5.4 per cent. However, it needs to be stated that this was an extremely conservative estimate, considering that the completion rate has for long remained below 50 per cent. It was established that the North Eastern Province had the highest dropout rate, at 9.4 per cent, followed by Western Province with 8.0 per cent. Central Province, with 2.2 per cent, had the lowest dropout rate.

However, as shown in Table 9 and Chart 8, the primary school dropout rate improved marginally from 5.4 per cent in 1993 to 4.9 per cent in 1999, with boys recording a rate of 5 per cent and girls 4.8 per cent. Regionally, Eastern Province registered the highest dropout rate, 6.1 per cent, followed by North Eastern Province, with 6 per cent. Nairobi had the lowest dropout rate of 1.5 per cent followed by Central Province with 2.9 per cent. More boys than girls were reported to be dropping out of school in all the provinces except North Eastern and Nyanza provinces. Whatever benefits may exist in increased enrolment in primary education are often wasted through high dropout and repetition rates.

Table 9: Primary school drop-out rates by sex and province, 2002

	Coast	Central	Eastern	Nairobi	Rift Valley	Western	Nyanza	North Eastern	Kenya
Boys	5.2	3.1	6.4	1.6	4.9	5.1	5.5	5.5	5.0
Girls	5.0	2.6	5.7	1.3	4.7	5.0	6.2	6.9	4.8
Total	5.1	2.9	6.1	1.5	4.8	5.1	5.8	6.0	4.9

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

Overall, it is estimated that wastage ranges from 30 to 47 per cent. It has also been shown that girls drop out at a higher rate than boys, with the result that their disadvantages are multiplied. For example, of the 864,593 pupils who entered Class One in 1984, only 380,990 or 44 per cent, reached Class Eight in 1991. The other 483,603 repeated or dropped out and the repetition and dropout rates were higher for girls than for boys. In total, out of the 417,425 girls who enrolled in 1984, some 58.4 per cent dropped out, whereas 447,168 boys enrolled and 53.6 per cent dropped out (Republic of Kenya, 1991). Dropping out results from economic, socio-cultural and pedagogical factors, including the inability to pay for the cost of education, lack of interest in schooling, poor health, cultural and nomadic practices, and pregnancies and early marriages. Studies of repetition and dropout rates, however, show that the dropout pattern is consistent with the regional socio-economic disparities in the country.

Among the regions with the lowest dropout rates are the country's largest municipalities and the rich agricultural districts. Conversely, the most shocking manifestation of the dropout problem is the arid, semi-arid or pastoral districts. Studies also show that the underlying problem with regard to early withdrawals from schools is the ability of the family to pay the cost of education, (Nkinyangi, 1980:246). Girls tend to be the victims of dropping out as opposed to boys in families with low socio-economic status. In situations where parents cannot pay for both boys and girls, the latter are the obvious sacrifice. Boys are allowed to proceed while girls drop out.

It is concluded that girls who, therefore, go to school and proceed through school unimpeded are a select group determined not only by the socio-economic status of the family, but also by prevailing sexist attitudes regarding the perceived costs and benefits of girls education (Nkinyangi, 1980:246). The socio-cultural factors such as customs and beliefs that influence decisions for girls' non-enrolment in school equally influence decisions to withdraw them from school. Some studies have identified such factors as well as school-related factors that focus on performance and levels of attainment. Among the most widely identified cultural factors have been the initiation ceremonies.

Initiation ceremonies are still important in some Kenyan communities. Evidence seems to show that initiation creates several dilemmas for girls, affecting their school attendance and academic performance and even leading to dropping out of school. First and foremost, the scheduling of initiation ceremonies quite often conflicts with the school calendar, leading to absenteeism from school. Secondly, although initiation marks the passage from childhood to adulthood, school authorities continue to treat initiated girls who return to school as children. They expect them to participate in certain activities and punish them in a manner that is considered inappropriate for adults, especially for the circumcised girls, who perceive themselves as adults following the initiation ceremonies. Furthermore, these girls not only have a negative influence on their uncircumcised peers, but they are also rude towards uncircumcised teachers, especially the female ones. They become undisciplined and, consequently, their academic performance declines sharply and they begin playing truant, eventually dropping out of school. Many initiated girls also find it difficult to return to formal school or concentrate on their studies because their next expectation is marriage (Njau and Wamahiu, 1994).

There are also pedagogical factors that contribute to high dropout rates. These include poor methods of instruction and the perceived irrelevance of education. More serious is the issue of sexual violence and abuse in some schools, which affect boys and girls, although the latter are more vulnerable. The main offenders include teachers, workers in boarding schools and school peers. The abuse, which ranges from verbal harassment to physical abuse, leads to withdrawal from school, unwanted pregnancies, and the death of boys and girls through HIV/AIDS (GoK and UNICEF, 1998). Although the Ministry of Education's policy is to allow girls who give birth to resume their studies, little has been done to enforce it.

Some studies have established the existence of a 'hidden curriculum', which encourages girls to be servile and to have little or no pride in schooling. By and large this has been found to be related to teacher expectations, which are different for pupils of different sexes, and a sexual division of labour in work and play activities in the classroom and the school. These factors, coupled with different student expectations for their future position in society, could contribute to withdrawals from school. In a study of some districts of the Coast Province, it was noted that although headteachers did not generally think teachers discriminated against female pupils in the classroom, it was agreed that teachers' expectations of their pupils had a bearing on the latter's performance.

The structure and selected interaction process with pupils shape girls' and boys' participation and persistence in school. This is particularly the case with the predominant mode of teaching in the primary schools in Kenya, which relies heavily on learning by rote and voluntary pupil participation in classroom activities. Since boys have been socialised from birth to be assertive and girls to be submissive and quiet, it is often the case that boys dominate classroom activities. This, too, applies to the content of curriculum materials, which are male-dominated and persistently signal to the girls that they have little or no business in school (Juma, 1994).
The study also examined school-related factors, which included the distance from the home to the nearest school. The distance that pupils travel to school was particularly important in sparsely populated districts. Most rural districts do not have good roads and vehicles, hence some children have to walk for two to three hours, often going through difficult terrain and hazardous surroundings, especially in areas bordering game reserves and national parks (Juma, 1994).

To a large extent, repetition results chiefly from one cause; the desire of parents, teachers and children themselves to perform well in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination and thereby gain entry to government-maintained secondary schools. This fact reflects on both the competitive nature of education in the country and the limited chances of entry into secondary schools.

Repetition: a phenomenon that refuses to go away

The 1993 sample of 10,500 primary schools gives a national repetition rate of 15.4 per cent - 15.2 per cent for girls and 15.6 per cent for boys. Once again, this has to be treated as a very conservative figure. Repetition rates improved significantly from 15.4 per cent in

Chart 8: Primary school dropout rates by sex and province, 2002

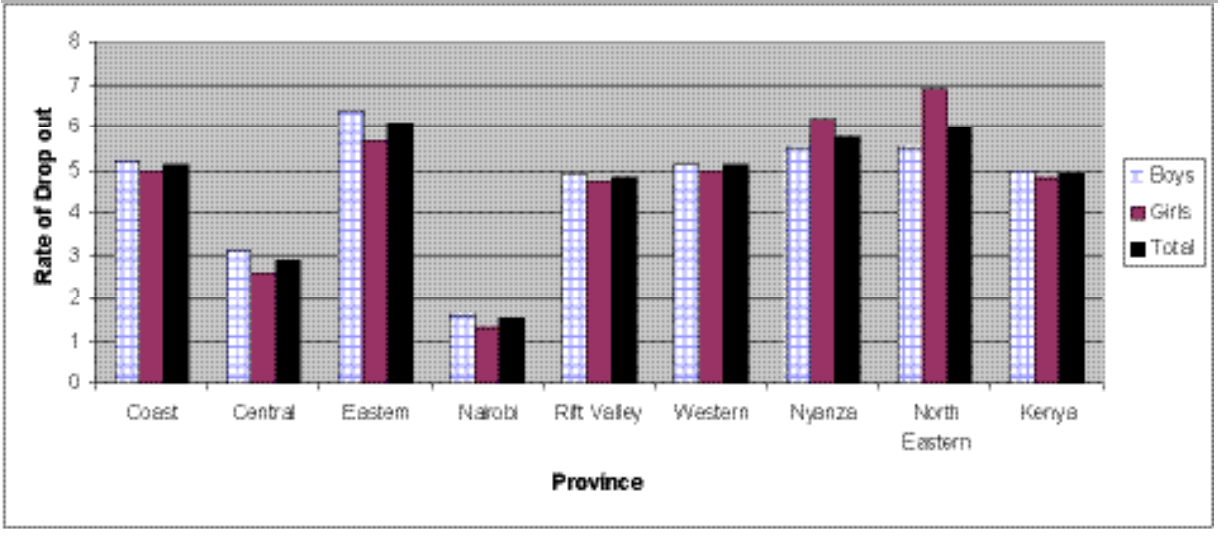


Table 10: Primary school repetition rates by sex and province, 2002

	Coast	Central	Eastern	Nairobi	Rift Valley	Western	Nyanza	North Eastern	Kenya
Boys	14.7	11.6	13.2	3.0	15.6	15.4	12.7	6.5	13.5
Girls	15.1	10.5	13.1	2.4	14.9	13.8	12.2	9.3	12.9
Total	**14.9**	**11.0**	**13.2**	**2.7**	**15.2**	**14.6**	**12.5**	**7.4**	**13.2**

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

1999 to 13.2 per cent in 2002 as shown in Table 10 and Chart 9. Boys recorded the highest repetition rate, 13.5 per cent, as opposed to 12.9 per cent for girls. Nairobi and North Eastern provinces had the lowest repetition rates in the country, posting values lower than 10 per cent. On the other hand, Rift Valley Province had the highest rate of repetition: over 15 per cent.

One survey made an important disclosure of the KCPE examination and the repetition process in the old primary school system in many parts of the country, where the proportion of girls enrolled in Class Seven dropped dramatically. This was not due to a sudden exodus of girls as they faced their final year of the primary school, but to a large number of male repeaters in Class Seven, (Krystall, 1978:56). The low enrolment of girls in this class was explained by the fact that nationally, when a child failed to get good marks to secure a secondary school place, parents tended to encourage their sons to repeat Class Seven, but were less willing to give their daughters a second chance. Studies have not yet been carried out on the 8-4-4-education system, but their conclusions are not likely to be different. The study concluded that in most districts, the proportion of girls enrolled in each grade of primary school tended to remain the same through to Standard Six. The high proportion of girls in Standard Six was, therefore, presented as strong evidence attesting to the fact that once in primary school, a girl's chances of completing the seven years were fewer than those of boys. In Central Province they were slightly higher, in Eastern Province, they were the same and in the remaining provinces they were lower, (Krystall, 1978:57).

Chart 9: Primary school repetition rate by province and sex, 1999

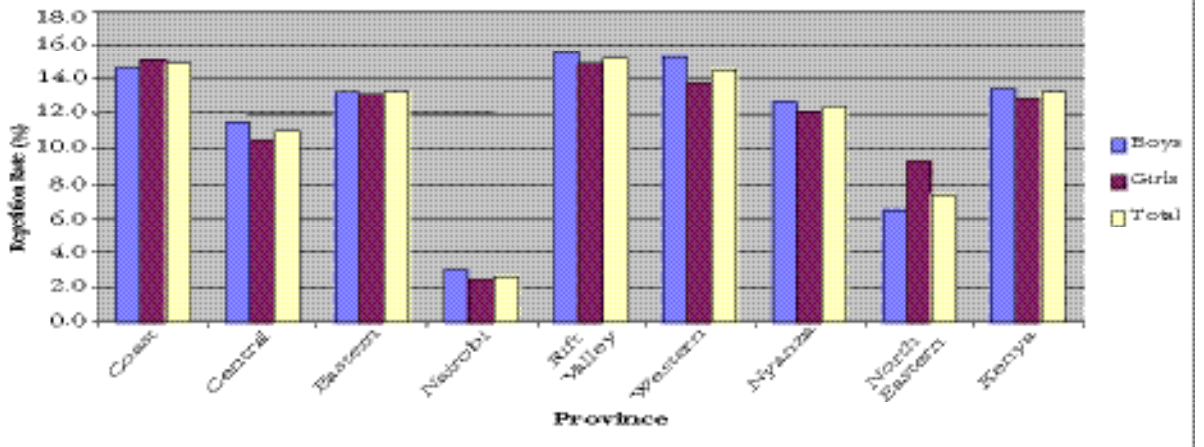


Table 11: Primary school completion rates by sex, 1990-2001

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Boys	45.7	46.4	44.7	44.5	44.6	43.0	45.1	46.3	46.4	47.7	48.3	52.5
Girls	40.5	41.6	48.2	42.2	43.0	42.1	43.5	45.8	48.1	47.8	49.5	52.6
Total	43.2	44.1	46.4	43.4	43.9	42.6	44.3	46.1	47.2	47.7	48.9	52.6

ource: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

Completion of primary schooling

As for primary schools, completion rates have remained steady and low through the 1990s. However, the MoEST data seems to suggest the completion rate shot up from below 50 per cent to 52.5 per cent for boys and 52.6 per cent for girls in 2001 with an overall completion rate of 52.6 per cent. Generally, completion rates for girls have continued to increase faster than those of boys. Table 11 and Chart 10 summarise the data for percentages of pupils completing class eight in the period under review.

For primary school pupils, proceeding to secondary school involves completing Class Eight and obtaining good scores at the KCPE - the primary school-leaving examination. It also means having resources to pay for the costs involved. Although not many studies have been carried out to determine girls' performance in the KCPE in the 8-4-4 education system, there are general indications that girls perform as poorly as they did before. Studies based on the old system showed that the KCPE eliminates a larger proportion of girls than boys from the education system. It was concluded that by the time a cohort entered Form One, approximately three-quarters of the girls who entered Class One had been eliminated from the formal educational system, compared to only two-thirds of the boys (Krystall, 1978:58).

As girls advance, obstacles that reduce their chances of completing the primary cycle and proceeding to secondary school increase. Thus, in many districts, girls are doubly disadvantaged. They have fewer chances than both boys and their female counterparts in other parts of the country of entering and completing primary school, or passing CPE, and securing secondary school education, and of having their education paid for (Krystall, 1978:58). A study on completion rates based on the Central Bureau of Statistics survey seems to support

Chart 10: Primary school completion rates by sex, 1990-2001

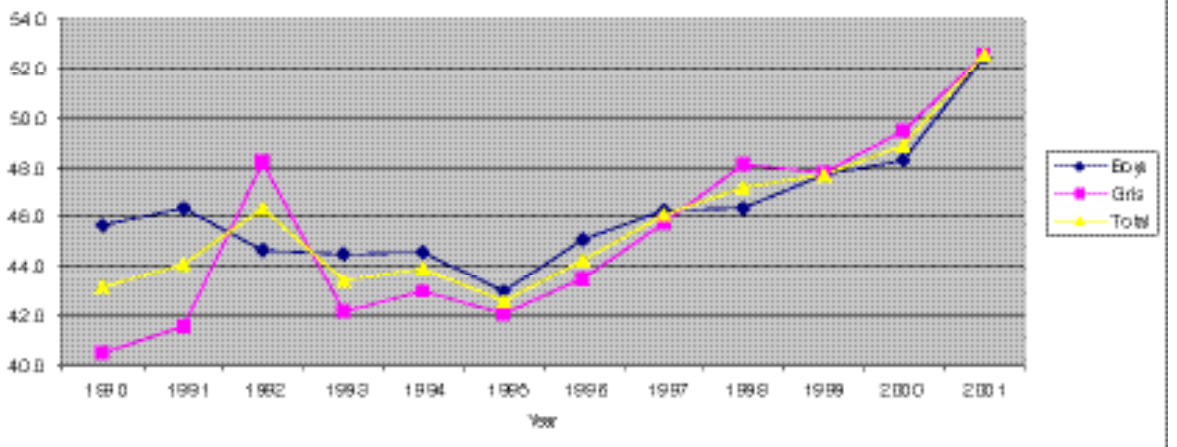


Table 12: KCPE performance by gender by province, 2001-2003

Province	2001		2002		2003	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Coast	202.68	190.89	198.70	188.91	185.17	175.15
Central	196.34	188.26	182.87	177.37	174.09	166.47
Eastern	198.49	186.48	190.48	181.46	177.72	168.80
R/Valley	207.12	195.91	197.93	188.79	181.93	171.32
Western	203.34	192.48	196.57	185.77	183.45	172.26
Nyanza	195.41	183.23	186.02	172.63	173.26	158.47
N/Eastern	194.07	184.61	191.20	182.33	178.55	168.74
Nairobi	209.77	206.35	202.23	200.84	191.26	189.13
National	**194.07**	**184.61**	**191.20**	**182.33**	**178.55**	**168.74**

Source: Kenya National Examinations Council.

the view that primary school completion rates have steadily remained low since the 1980s, being consistently below 50 per cent. For example, the rates for those enrolled in Class One in 1987, 1988 and 1989 were 43.9, 42.6 and 44.3 per cent respectively. Although girls have shown some slight improvement, their completion rate has generally been lower than that of boys. For example, in 1988 the rates were 39.6 per cent for girls and 47.40 per cent for boys, while in 1996 it was 43.5 per cent for girls and 45.1 per cent for boys (Abagi, 1997).

Generally, studies have established that in varying degrees, boys performed better than girls on the old CPE since this examination worked against girls in the same way that it worked against children from poor backgrounds. Some reasons for the differences in performance have been suggested as follows:

> The higher proportion of male repeaters gives boys an advantage over girls. In addition, the higher proportion of male repeaters suggests greater parental concern for their sons to advance to higher educational levels. This concern may translate itself in a lowered sense of competence or more limited aspirations among girls. It also may express itself in a greater willingness to excuse boys from household responsibilities so they can study. However, we cannot eliminate the adequacy of school preparation as a factor contributing to girls' lower pass rates. Research has found that there are specific areas of the curriculum, like mathematics, which are taught less well to girls because teachers consider boys more important to educate or brighter than girls and transmit these attitudes, through differential treatment, (Krystall, 1978:59).

As Table 12 illustrates, the situation has not changed much in recent years. Boys continue to outperform girls by a margin of around 10 points in every province every year, and the situation is similar at the national level. Apart from the overall poor performance, girls are generally allocated about a third of secondary school places, while boys are allocated two thirds, as the ratio of girls' secondary schools to those for boys is 1:3. This implies that the allocation mechanism at the end of primary education tends to reinforce the inequality of opportunities for girls and boys at the primary school level, (Kinkajou, 1978:24). Factors, which originally increased the likelihood of a primary school education for girls, now boost them over the potential barriers to a secondary education.

As already pointed out, pupils whose KCPE performance fails to secure them a secondary school place are encouraged by their parents to repeat Class Eight. This is not generally the case with girls. It has, however, been observed that in the most economically and educationally advanced districts, enrolment of girls and boys in the final class of primary school is nearly equal, which indicates that parents also encourage both boys and girls to repeat Class Eight. Lack of opportunities for repetition contributes to girls' low KCPE performance. The problem gets worse as one moves from the `high-opportunity' districts to the disadvantaged areas (Krystall, 1978:60). Thus in many respects, girls' chances of qualifying for secondary school are strongly linked to the level of socio-economic development in their localities.

Table 13: Primary to secondary school transition rates by sex, 1990-2002

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Boys	42.9	45.4	46.9	41.8	43.2	45.4	46.0	45.3	46.4	44.0	47.3	50.9
Girls	39.4	43.7	45.0	35.0	42.1	43.9	44.3	44.5	43.1	42.2	44.9	46.8
Total	41.3	44.6	46.0	38.4	42.7	44.7	45.2	44.9	44.8	43.1	46.1	48.9

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

Transition from primary to secondary level

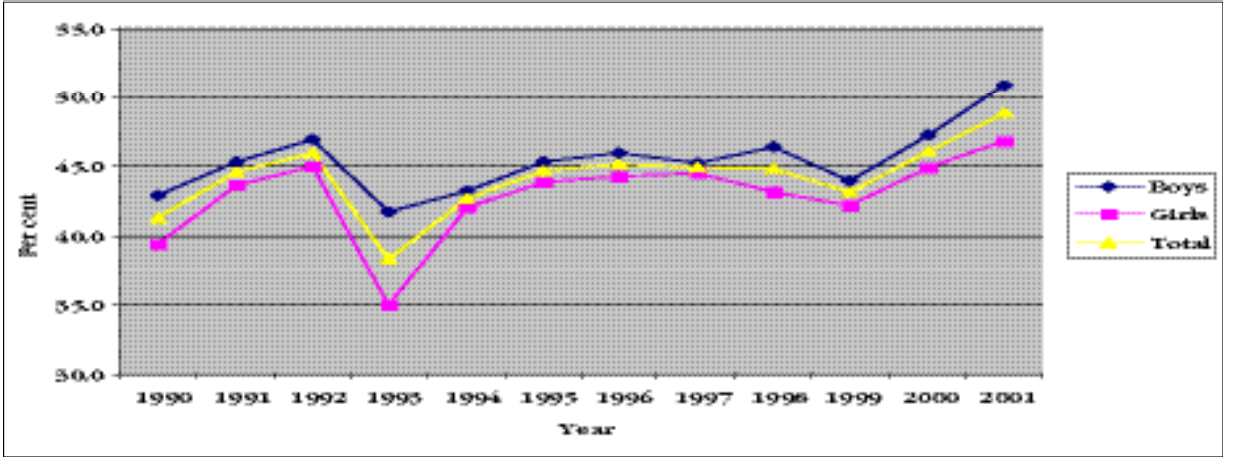
Transition from primary to secondary school is a major area of concern. Table 13 and Chart 11 clearly show that the transition rates have generally been lower than 50 per cent, except in 2001 when boys hit the 50.9 per cent mark. The gender disparity is evident, with boys recording higher transition rates than girls.

Summary

Enrolment statistics in ECCE and primary education show that gender differences have diminished considerably with the increasing expansion of the education system. This means that since independence, female enrolment has increased at a faster rate than that of males, leading to a near gender parity. Girls' primary school participation, however, varies considerably at provincial and district levels. Regional differences in the provision of educational opportunities for girls correspond to regional differences in economic and political development that originated in the colonial period. Regions and districts that were successfully integrated in the colonial economy and reinforced by post-independence socio-economic and political policies, register higher girls' enrolments. Conversely, districts that were on the periphery of the colonial economy and have remained economically marginalised have very low girls' enrolment.

This chapter has also attempted to show that socio-economic and cultural factors that constrain girls' education at the household and community levels are closely interwoven. Their effects on girls' education are far-reaching and affect their persistence and performance in school. The lack of resources to cover the direct cost and opportunity cost of educating girls is a major constraint to their education. Above and beyond the economic and socio-cultural factors, the school environment also affects girls' access to education. School and classroom cultures are generally hostile to girls. Sexual harassment and violence create uncomfortable learning environments. All these factors combine to contribute to low girls' enrolments and completion of primary education in Kenya.

Chart 11: Primary to secondary school transition rates, 1990-2001



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CHAPTER FOUR

SECONDARY EDUCATION

With the achievement of independence in most African countries in the 60s, planners were guided by the human capital and modernisation theories, which assumed that education was the most profitable form of investment not only for the society but also for the individual. Education was believed to contribute to economic growth by improving the quality of the labour force, giving qualified workers the skills and knowledge demanded by the modern sector of the economy. It also made the workers more productive, improved their health standards and childcare, reduced fertility rates, and provided other benefits. This perception, which was advocated largely by economists from Western industrialised countries, stemmed from the understanding that the lack of high and middle-level human resource development was a major bottleneck to economic growth. Manpower planning, therefore, was a partial solution to this problem. To illustrate the efficacy of investment in formal education as being essential to high and sustained rated of economic growth, the experience of the United States, Japan and more recently Korea were cited to support the causal link between education and growth (Simmons, 1980:28).

The Kenya Government responded to the problem of human resource development by making a major expansion in secondary education. Between 1964 and 1968, Form One intake doubled from 8,956 to 15,169. The intention was to raise the intake to 21,530 by 1974. The importance that was attached to secondary education expansion is also reflected in the distribution of development expenditure on education during the first Development Plan period. The largest share of development expenditure went to secondary schools. From 1966 to 1970, out of 8,841,000 Kenya Pounds earmarked for education, 5,127,000 Kenya Pounds or nearly 58 per cent, was spent on secondary schooling. During the second Development Plan period, the percentage of expenditure on secondary education was 43. Secondary education did not expand only in the junior forms, but also most significantly at the top. By 1966, there were 34 institutions teaching up to higher school certificate or the Advanced Level of the GCE. There was indeed a major commitment to the expansion of Forms Five and Six. By 1974 enrolment increased to 9,180, representing an increase of nearly 68 per cent since 1964 (Tuqan, 1976).

One phenomenon that had sprung up a few years before the attainment of independence was the *harambee* (self-help) movement. In many places, especially where opportunities for secondary education were poor, the old tradition of the independent schools' movement in Kenya was maintained in a new wave of voluntary self-help schemes to build embryo secondary schools. Taking their name from President Kenyatta's famous slogan, *Harambee* (let us pull together), these schools were called *Harambee* schools. Chavakali Secondary School in Kakamega, Western Province, is perhaps the first of these schools. It was established in 1960 after consultations between parents, chiefs, provincial officials and government education officials. It was to be a day school with a strong agricultural, vocational bias, paid for initially by a new tax collected over four years from parents of the catchment area (Furley, 1972).

By the time the Education Commission of 1964 surveyed the education scene, these schools had sprung up in large numbers. Fifty were opened in 1964, and 30 more in the first half of 1965. Nearly all these schools were unregistered and, therefore, technically in breach of the Education Act. By 1965 they had constituted about one third of all the secondary schools in the country. These schools sprung up largely because parents saw a decline in educational opportunities as primary schools expanded. In 1964/5, in spite of a 22.6 per cent increase in the number of secondary school places, the enrolment as a percentage of those completing their primary education actually fell by 25 per cent.

Harambee schools usually began as single-stream day schools teaching Forms One and Two, often with hostel accommodation for boarders. Educators and planners alike were extremely alarmed at this trend. They were concerned about these fast growing schools with unqualified teaching staff and poor facilities, which could produce disastrously poor results and likely cause resentment and political unrest. They were generally in favour of enlarging existing secondary schools to four streams for boarding schools and three streams for day schools. They also hoped that *harambee* schools would confine themselves to Forms One and Two, then the students with good results could go to government aided schools.

A major solution to the *harambee* school phenomenon was that no proposal for a *harambee* school should be sanctioned unless it coincided with a proposed school in the Development Plan. Yet these were the views of planners and educators aiming for efficiency in the face of a wave of popular enthusiasm. It was indeed hard to curb this tide and arrest the growth of *harambee* schools. In 1964/65, the Ministry of Education tried to set up controls, and stipulated that a community had to raise at least, KSh 20,000 before establishing a *harambee* school, but this policy was attacked as "acting in an imperialist manner" as ministers and Members of Parliament joined in the movement to establish them in their own districts. The public had seized the initiative most remarkably, and in a sense was showing the Ministry of Education the way forward (Furley, 1972).

While the government opened 129 additional streams in aided schools between 1964 and 1966, some 226 unaided schools, mostly *harambee* ones, were opened during the same period (Furley, 1972). Moreover while the government had previously doubted whether many *harambee* schools could manage to go beyond Form Two, many of them were now going up to school certificate level, which prompted the government to increase its school inspection services. The unaided schools, especially

Table 14: Number of secondary schools (Forms One-Four) management type (1969-78)

	School Type						
	Aided		Harambee assisted		Harambee unaided		
Year	N	%	N	%	N	%	Total Schools
1969	244	48	19	4	244	48	507
1970	281	48.5	19	3	281	48.5	581
1971	312	39	19	2	478	59	809
1972	346	36	18	2	585	62	949
1973	363	40	17	2	522	58	902
1974	362	35	37	4	630	61	1,029
1975	409	35	8	1	745	64	1,162
1976	413	29.5	7	.5	967	70	1,387
1977	437	29	7	.5	1,042	70.5	1,486
1978	413	23	322	18	1,053	59	1,737
1979	418	24	393	23	926	53	1,737
1985	651	30	801	37	724	33	2,176
1986	698	29	941	39	756	32	2,395
1987	709	27	1,142	44	741	29	2,592

Source: Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Education, Annual Reports, 1969-1979 (Nairobi: Government Printer, and Annual Reports, 1985-1987.
NOTE: Percentage figures are rounded. Data for the year 1980-84 are unavailable.

harambee ones, continued to increase at an alarming rate. In 1968, out of the 369 unaided schools, about 245 were run on the *harambee* effort. There were 232 aided secondary schools by then. By the mid-70s, *harambee* schools along with other unaided institutions such as private schools were already catering for more than half of Kenya's secondary school population. As of 1979, there were 1,319 assisted and unaided *harambee* secondary schools with a total enrolment of 222,952 students, compared with 418 government aided secondary schools with an enrolment of 148,357 as shown in Table 14 (Mwiria, 1990).

Some lengthy discussion of the evolution of *harambee* secondary schools in Kenya has been necessary since, as will be discussed later in the chapter, they tend to enrol more girls than the aided secondary schools.

Access, enrolment and participation

As in other less industrialised countries, girls' enrolment at the secondary school level has been more dramatic since the early 1960s. The enrolment of girls from the 1960s to the 1980s rose faster than that of boys. Enrolment at secondary school level generally increased from 30,120 in 1963 to 658,253 in 1996. Girls' share of total enrolment at independence was 31.8 per cent. This has since improved to 46.4 per cent in 1996 as shown in Table 15 (Abagi, 1997). In recent years the GER at the secondary school level has remained at 22.2 per cent to 23.2 per cent, with boys achieving 24.5 per cent and girls 21.9 per cent. Despite the apparently widespread participation of girls at the secondary school level, government policies have forced the majority of girls into the unaided secondary schools, where they are disadvantaged in terms of the quality of education they receive, as will be discussed later in the chapter.

As already pointed out, in the first post-independence decade, priority was given to expanding secondary and tertiary opportunities for men so that they could take over positions of national leadership. For example, in 1968 there were twice as many government secondary schools for boys than for girls. There were 143 boys' schools and only 61 girls' schools and 28 co-educational or mixed schools. The gap between government provision for males and females widened progressively until the 1974 decision to freeze the expansion of the maintained secondary schools in order to upgrade the rapidly growing numbers of unaided schools, mainly *harambee* secondary schools (GoK and UNICEF, 1978). By this time there were almost three times the number of government secondary schools for boys than

Table 15: Enrolment in secondary schools by sex in selected years, 1963-1996

Year	Female	Male	Total	% Female
1963	9,567	20,553	30,120	31.8
1965	13,256	34,720	47,976	27.6
1970	37,528	89,327	126,855	29.6
1975	81,529	145,306	226,835	35.9
1980	162,889	237,018	399,907	40.7
1985	167,174	270,033	437,207	38.2
1990	264,766	353,695	618,461	42.8
1995	290,581	341,807	632,388	45.9
1996	305,327	352,926	658,253	46.4

for girls. There were 235 boys' schools and only 82 girls' schools and 47 mixed ones. Thus, the growth in female secondary school enrolment, which began in the 1970s, was primarily a growth in *harambee* schools enrolment. The proportion of girls and boys enrolled in the three main secondary school sectors showed that boys had an overall advantage in terms of access to secondary education. They constituted 68 per cent of maintained, 50 per cent of assisted and 55 per cent of unaided schools as against 32 per cent, 50 per cent and 45 percent for girls respectively (GoK, UNICEF, 1984).

It should also be pointed out that it is not just the numerical strength of schools that determines enrolment by gender at the secondary school level. It has been established that the enrolment capacity of particular secondary schools also depends to a great extent on the number of streams per class available in the school. Data on the number of streams per class are not readily available, but cursory observations from one key study indicated that boys' schools have more streams than girls' schools, sometimes even up to four as compared to one or two streams for girls. Thus, boys' schools have a greater capacity to admit more students than the girls (Wamahiu, Opondo and Nyagah, 1992). The structure of secondary school opportunities also seriously disadvantages girls from less developed regions and less affluent families. As is the case with primary schools, there are sharp regional and district disparities in girls' enrolment. Regions of greatest economic development have the largest increases in the proportion of girls enrolled. As shown in Table 15, Central, Eastern, Nairobi and Western provinces had the highest rate of girls' participation between 1975 and 1980. These were followed by the Rift Valley and Nyanza provinces while North Eastern Province lagged behind.

Available data also shows that the enrolment of girls in secondary schools was almost equal to that of boys in a number of districts such as Kirinyaga, Embu, Nyeri and Murang'a in 1990. However, there were much fewer girls than boys in Wajir, Mandera, Marsabit and Samburu districts. Table 17 details the percentage of girls enrolled in secondary schools by district in that year. The picture that emerges from the table appears to be similar to that in primary education. Moreover, the districts with a higher percentage of girls in primary schools end up enrolling more or less the same proportion of girls in secondary schools. The major factors responsible for these variations, such as the level of economic development of the districts, have already been discussed.

Table 16: Total enrolment of girls in secondary schools by province in 1975 and 1980

Province	Total girls enrolment		As % of total enrolment	
	1975	1980	1975	1980
Central	32,141	46,487	41.6	54.8
Coast	5,013	7,556	30.5	34.0
Eastern	14,187	29,717	36.8	43.5
Nairobi	8,428	11,753	36.8	40.2
North Eastern	74	238	14.1	16.9
Nyanza	10,184	24,685	31.1	36.2
Rift Valley	9,587	20,824	32.1	36.8
Western	10,915	21,459	34.2	41.1
Kenya	81,529	162,889	35.9	40.7

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology: Education Statistics Office, 1985.

Table 17: Ranking of districts according to the percentage of girls in total enrolment in secondary schools, 1990

Rank enrolment	District	% of girls in total enrolment
1.	Kirinyaga	51.8
2.	Embu	50.2
3.	Nyeri	49.9
4.	Muranga	49.6
5.	Meru	48.3
6.	Kiambu	47.6
7.	Uasin Gishu	47.4
8.	Taita Taveta	47.0
9.	Machakos	46.7
10.	Elgeyo Marakwet	45.8
11.	Nyandarua	44.5
12.	Kakamega	43.4
13.	Laikipia	42.8
14.	Nairobi	42.3
15.	Baringo	42.3
16.	Kajiado	42.2
17.	Tans Nzoia	41.9
18.	Nandi	41.6
19.	Nyamira	41.6
20.	Nakuru	40.6
21.	Bungoma	40.6
22.	Busia	40.4
23.	Kisii	39.8
24.	Narok	39.4
25.	Siaya	38.8
26.	Mombasa	37.9
27.	Kisumu	37.2
28.	Kwale	36.4
29.	Lamu	36.2
30.	Kitui	34.6
31.	Isiolo	34.5
32.	Kericho	33.8
33.	South Nyanza	32.1
34.	Tana River	31.9
35.	West Pokot	31.9
36.	Kilifi	31.7
37.	Garissa	30.8
38.	Turkana	30.1
39.	Samburu	27.8
40.	Marsabit	17.7
41.	Mandera	15.4
42	Wajir	13.9
	National Average	**42.8**

Apart from the regional diversity in enrolments by gender, socio-economic factors also play a major role in girls' access to secondary education. A girl's chances of attending secondary school, compared to that of a boy's, depend largely upon the income of her family. Secondary school fees, even in government-maintained schools, are high and above the income of the average family. However, in *harambee* schools fees are a good deal higher since they are the source of the entire operating budget, whereas in maintained schools fees accounted for only one-fourth and government contributed three-fourths of the expenditures. In 1979, fees charged in a *harambee* secondary school was twice as much as those charged in a government-maintained school. The higher cost of the unaided sector denied many more girls than boys from poor backgrounds a chance to obtain secondary education. The quotation below elaborates the matter very well:

> ...the small, very affluent elite accords the benefits that their income provides relatively equally to their sons and daughters. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the poorest and the most destitute cannot contemplate educational investments for any of their children. But for the majority in between who may be able to support the education of only some of their children, sex undoubtedly plays a major part in determining which child or children will be financed. Enrolment patterns strongly suggest that parents, when forced to choose, prefer to educate sons. Thus when backgrounds of female and male students in their samples were compared, two researchers discovered that the girls came from more privileged social backgrounds. This pattern, with female students having a higher socio-economic status than male students at the same educational stage, shows that secondary school costs eliminated a larger proportion of females than males from poorer and less educated families (Smock, 1977).

In this regard, the under-representation of girls at the secondary school level does not reflect differential aspirations for the education of sons and daughters, but the greater resources required to turn aspirations for a daughter into reality. There are of course some places where extreme underdevelopment or strongly held traditions are the major barriers to female secondary education. However, in many parts of the country, secondary education is valued for daughters, as well as for sons as shown by the increase in female enrolments since independence, despite the cost for the community and the family. The bias in government provision, not in parental hopes, is therefore the basic constraint on educational equality for girls at the secondary school level (Krystall, 1979).

Table 18 details secondary school enrolment between 1994 and 1998. Total enrolment went up by 1.9 per cent from 687,473 students in 1997 to 700,538 students in 1998. However, the female population declined slightly from 47.1 per cent in 1997 to 46.7 per cent in 1998. Form One enrolment accounted for 27.9 per cent of the total enrolment while the share of Form Four was 21.7 per cent. Table 19 shows secondary school enrolment between 1996 and

Table 18: Enrolment in secondary schools by form and sex 1994-1998

Form	1994		1995		1996		1997		1998*	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Fe
Form 1	90,774	78,140	96,360	83,650	97,394	85,917	98,487	88,614	102,449	9
Form 2	87,993	76,549	88,737	75,961	93,526	81,444	95,539	86,856	98,066	8
Form 3	79,067	66,328	82,623	69,876	83,902	71,924	89,365	79,496	90,293	7
Form 4	78,605	62,383	74,087	61,094	78,104	66,042	80,457	68,659	82,632	6
Total	336,439	283,400	341,807	290,581	352.926	305,327	363,848	323,625	373,440	32
G. Total	619,839		632,388		658,253		687,473		700	

Table 19: Enrolment by gender 1996-2002 in thousands

Form	1996		1997		1998		1999		2000*		2001*		2002*	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	97	85	98	88	102	92	86	80	108	97	116	106	140	127
2	93	81	95	86	98	86	92	83	104	93	106	95	108	97
3	83	71	89	79	90	77	83	72	98	87	103	90	99	89
4	78	66	80	68	82	69	75	64	91	78	98	86	99	85
Total	658		687(4.4)		700(1.9)		638(-9.7)		758(18.9)		804(6.0)		847(5.3)	

2002. On the whole, enrolment tends to show a progressive growth between these years. There was an increase of 4.4 per cent from 1996 to 1997, a small increase of 1.9 per cent between 1997 and 1998. There was, however, a sharp drop of –9.7 per cent between 1998 and 1999, followed by a sharp increase of 18.9 per cent in 2000. It needs to be qualified that the 2000 enrolment figures, for the first time, included students from private secondary schools. In 2001 and 2002 the enrolment increase was 6.0 per cent and 5.3 per cent, respectively. In 2003 the total enrolment was reported to be 902,280, with 473,000 boys and 428,600 girls.

Although, nationally, the NER by gender is remarkably similar at the primary school level, the situation is different at the secondary school level. As Table 20 shows, percentages of enrolment between 1996 and 2002, boys' enrolment consistently remained about 53 per cent, while that of the girls has been around 47 per cent. It is estimated that at the secondary school level, there are 118 enrolled boys for every 100 girls enrolled. The increase in the male to female pupil ratio at this level also reflects the higher dropout rate for girls.

Regional disparities continue to be evident not only with regard to enrolment, but also in the spread of secondary schools. As already discussed, Kenya's post-independence policies of encouraging community expansion of educational facilities through *harambee* greatly disadvantaged marginal groups, especially the pastoralist communities of the ASAL regions, who lacked resources to establish and expand schools. The establishment of schools, particularly secondary, has been largely as a result of government action and support from NGOs and external agencies. Consequently, one of the major drawbacks in educational development in many of these regions has been insufficient secondary schools.

The overall effect of this is that there are considerable disparities in access to secondary between provinces and districts. For example, while NER in a district such as Nyeri (Central Province) is as high as 40 per cent, in Garissa, Wajir, Mandera (all ASAL districts) it is as low as 7 per cent, 6 per cent and 5 per cent respectively. In most of the ASAL districts, the female NER hardly exceeds 4 per cent. The NERs are far worse in these in these regions, with regard to girls' enrolment, especially in the North Eastern Province, where they are about 2.1 per cent in Mandera, 2.2 per cent in Wajir and 2.6 in Garissa. Other districts with low NERs include Kilifi 8.9 per cent, Kwale 8.7 per cent, West Pokot 8.4 per cent, Narok 5.9 per cent, Samburu 6 per cent, Turkana 5.1 per cent and Marsabit 4.1 per cent. Nairobi with an NER of about 35 per cent for males and around 18.4 per cent for females, exhibits one of the most serious gender gaps.

Table 20: Enrolment percentages by gender 1996-2002

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Boys	53.6	52.9	53.3	52.8	53.0	52.8	52.8
Girls	46.4	47.1	46.7	47.2	47.0	47.2	47.2
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Quality of girls' secondary education

The government recognises that adequate physical facilities as well as teaching and learning materials, particularly in science and other practical subjects, need to be provided if the curriculum is to lead to the stated objectives of secondary education. Since the cost-sharing policy of the late 1980s and early 1990s, the responsibility for constructing physical facilities and providing other learning and teaching materials has been shifted to parents and communities. Considering the poor economic performance and the rising costs of education, which parents are required to meet, the quality of facilities and equipment has continued to deteriorate in most secondary schools.

In the past, most girls' secondary schools were unaided, having mainly been started on a *harambee* basis. Very few were maintained by the government (GoK and UNICEF, 1984). Since 1969, the increased representation of girls in Forms One to Four had been due to their growing enrolment in unaided secondary schools. By 1973, 51 per cent of the girls - representing 17 per cent of all students enrolled in Forms One to Four - were attending unaided schools. In comparison, 39 per cent of the girls - 10 per cent of all the students - were in government-maintained schools. During the same period, the proportion of boys enrolled in unaided schools dropped from 48 per cent (35 per cent of all students) to 42 per cent (28 per cent of all students) (Krystall, 1979).

The reasons for the high percentage of girls in unaided schools are not difficult to discern. Unlike maintained schools, which have national or provincial intakes, the catchment area of unaided, mainly *harambee* secondary schools, is usually the district or sub-district. Due to limited places in government-maintained schools, many girls who complete primary school and score good marks at the national examinations have to depend upon the initiative, resources, and self-help priorities of their local communities to continue their education. Not surprisingly, districts with comparatively high levels of economic development maintained an advantage in the provision of unaided secondary schools. This meant that the districts with the greatest economic development are the ones, which had the largest increases in the proportion of girls in unaided *harambee* secondary schools. Between 1967 and 1972, the proportion of girls enrolled in unaided secondary schools rose by 17 per cent in Central Province and 12 per cent in Nairobi, Eastern and Western provinces (Krystall, 1979).

This situation has continued over the years. For instance, girls comprised 48 and 45 per cent of students enrolled in assisted and unaided *harambee* schools respectively in 1984, as shown in Table 21. In the same year, girls comprised 34 per cent of the enrolment in government-maintained schools. *Harambee* schools generally offered low quality education. Their inadequacies were not only limited to facilities, but also included a predominantly untrained teaching force and limited subjects, especially in the sciences. Researchers have often pointed out the poor learning environments in *harambee* schools and their restricted curricula, especially their failure to offer science subjects because of lack of laboratories.

> Unaided schools tend to lack the laboratories and equipment, which the Ministry of Education requires to be present before it accords permission for a school to enter candidates for the biological and physical science subjects in the EACE examinations. The inability of most Harambee institutions to meet these requirements has restricted them to offering courses in general science that do not require practical subjects... Biology courses entail a smaller investment in equipment and, therefore, more unaided schools can afford to offer programmes in biology than chemistry and physics. The current prominence given to science and mathematics in the selection of higher secondary school career training programmes and university entrance obviously places students from the unaided sector in a disadvantaged position (GOK and UNICEF, 1978:55).

The implications for girls entering unaided *harambee* schools are compounded by the poor learning environment at home. The *harambee* schools have little to offer by way of stimulating them and compensating for their poor

educational foundation. The introduction of the 8-4-4 education system in 1985 served to disadvantage the girls further. These schools have been faced with major crises in terms of providing facilities for implementing the new system. The 8-4-4 system requires that all schools offer science subjects and at least one, practical/technical subject.

Some studies have also discussed the limited options available for girls within the present educational systems. There is a strong gender bias in subject choices available for girls, and girls are often streamed out of the sciences and mathematics fields into the traditional female subjects. Due to cultural factors as well as perceived and preferred career possibilities, girls also tend to opt for subjects that steer them into non-professional and administrative jobs. This further limits options open to women in the formal labour market as they continue to concentrate in non-competitive fields (Kinkajou, 1987; Ndunda, 1990; Mbilinyi and Mbughuni, 1991).

The teachers' influences at school have also been found to be a hindrance to girls opting for sciences and mathematics. Studies have shown that teachers tend to carry the societal expectations of girls into the school, and therefore, treat boys differently from girls (Whyte, 1953). Some teachers are said to actually discourage girls by uttering statements such as "mathematics and science are not meant for girls" (Wamahiu, Opondo and Nyagah, 1992).

Wastage in secondary schools

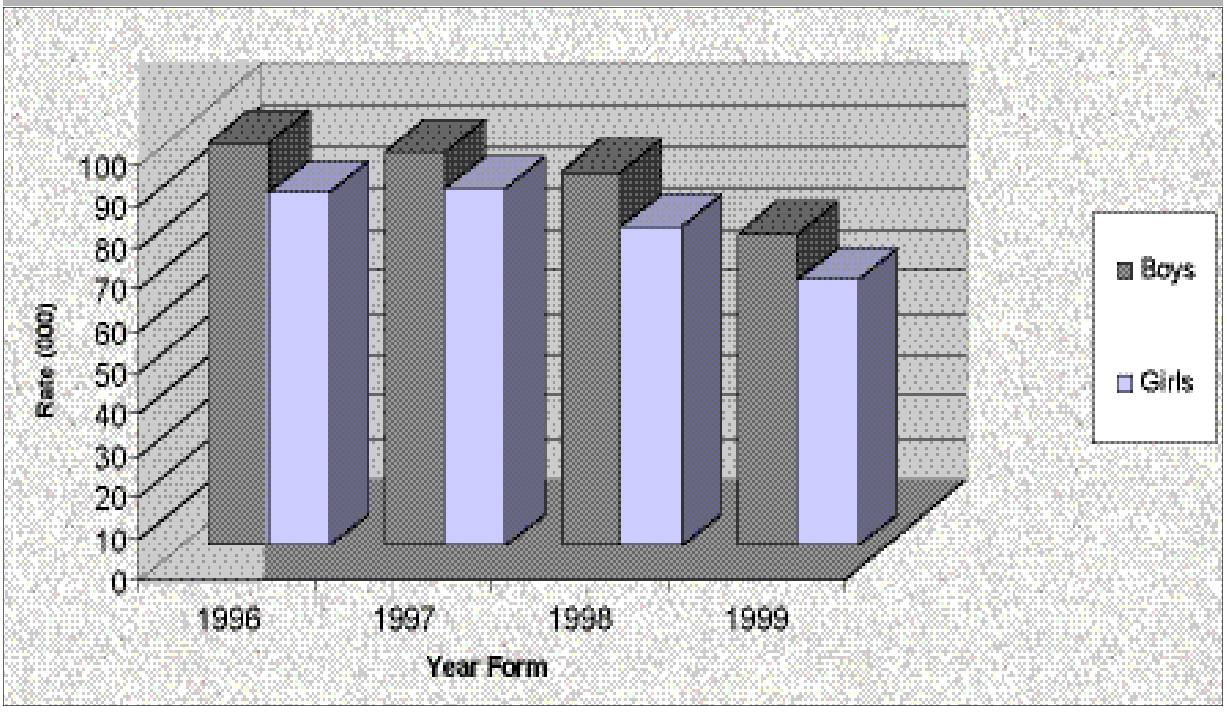
In all secondary schools, the proportionate loss between each successive year of schooling is greater for girls than for boys. Overall, only slightly more than half the female secondary school entrants proceed to Form Four. For example, 40 per cent of the girls who entered Form One in 1973 were lost from the system by the time their class entered Form Four in 1976, compared to 26 per cent of the boys. To some extent, the loss in female enrolment reflects their disadvantage of attending unaided rather than aided schools. The higher cost of education in the unaided sector is a major factor in the lower level of female attainment. In the same year, for example, there was a retention rate of 81 per cent of girls in maintained schools compared to 40 per cent in unaided schools (Krystall, 1979).

More recent figures show that the dropout rate is still a key area of concern at the secondary school level. For example, while the national dropout rate for the cohort, which entered Form One in 1996, was about 3.1 per cent, the rate for boys was about 1.1 per cent. With an enrolment of about 97,000, those who completed were about 96, 000, representing 98.9 per cent. On the other hand, while 86,000 girls enrolled in Form One during the same period, only 64,000 completed secondary education, representing 21-per cent dropout rate, as shown in Chart 12. Figures for the 2000 and 2002 cohorts show that the female dropout rate was higher than that of the boys – 11 per cent

Table 21: Enrolment in types of secondary schools by gender 1984 - 1985

Type of School	of Total Enrolment		% by Gender			
	1984	1985	1984		1985	
			M	F	M	F
Government Maintained	45	48	66	34	64	36
Harambee Assisted	22	21	52	48	56	44
Harambee Unaided	33	31	56	44	62	38
Nationally	**100**	**100**	**60**	**100**	**62**	**38**

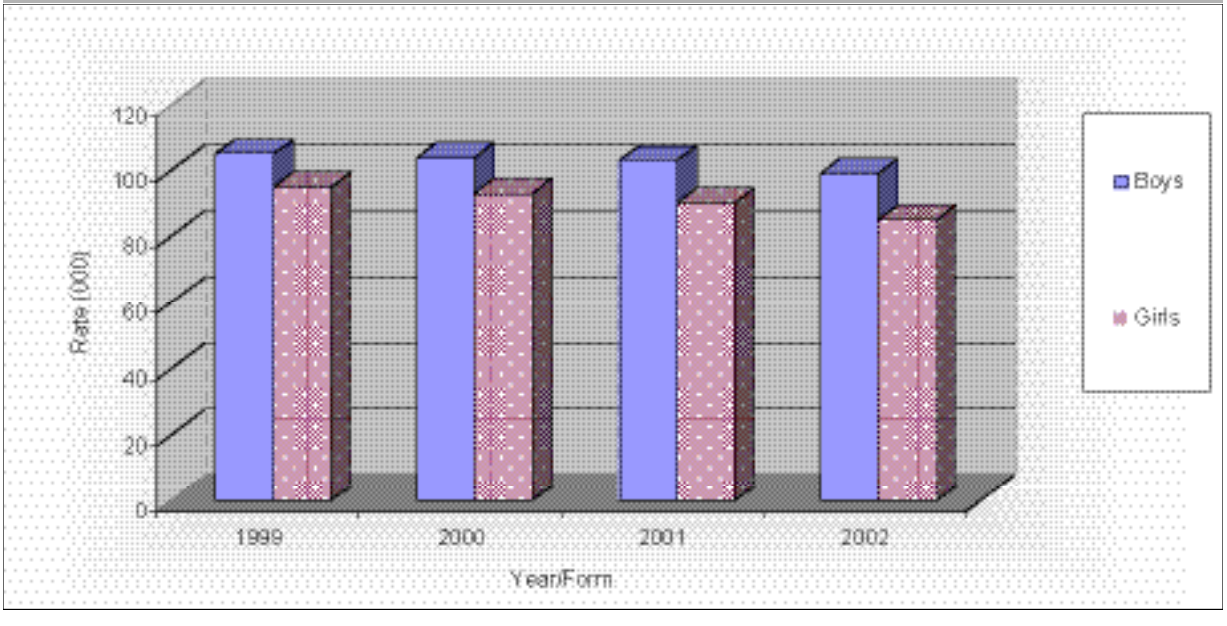
Chart 12: Transition rates by gender by year



compared to 5 per cent. The details are shown in Chart 13. The MoEST, however, estimates the national dropout rate to be 4.8 per cent: 4.6 percent and 5.1 per cent for boys and girls respectively.

High dropout rates among girls are also attributed to pre-marital pregnancies. Although data is not readily available to quantify the influence of pregnancy on girls' early withdrawals from secondary schools, it is generally acknowledged that sexual harassment and pregnancy

Chart 13: Transition rates by gender, year and form



cause a significant number of girls to terminate their secondary education. A 1995 study, however, provides details of the frequency of sexual harassment, particularly in unaided *harambee* schools. Notably:

> The most overwhelming data in girls' problems in their schooling is the high rate of teachers having love relationships with students and the problems it causes. Over 85 per cent of the students reported that teachers try to have love relationships with students... all of whom are male teachers dating female students. Although some girls try to date teachers, over 89 per cent of the students reported that the teacher trying to date the student caused many problems in the classroom. Most significant problems were that girls could not concentrate in class, they had to drop out of school because of pregnancy, their behaviours towards the teacher would disrupt the class, and they would be given high marks in school work which would lead to poor performance at the KCSE exams. It causes problems because a girl seduced by a teacher can be marked high even if she fails the test and can end up failing exams in future. Additionally, all these male teachers would either buy sex from the girls by giving them money or gifts or give them high marks or `leakage' of the class exams.

In addition,

> Over 98 per cent reported that students date one another and around 80 per cent claimed that this dating caused problems in the classroom. The most common reason reported was that if one's ' friend' was in the classroom then they could not concentrate on the class-work. Additionally, it will cause problems because girls will get pregnant and have to drop out and the boy might be expelled (yet he can transfer to another school whereas a girl cannot). They waste time writing notes to each other, will feel shy to answer questions, and may become rivals with another person and hate one another... Over 93 per cent reported that male students initiate these relationships and will buy gifts, give them money, write letters, buy sex, or engage in sex (Deabster, 1995).

Much of the sexual harassment, although not new at schools, was reported to exist more in *harambee* schools. Cases of teachers preying on female students, threatening to fail them, or publicly humiliating them to prod them into sexual relationships have been widely reported. Teachers are reported to reward female students who "cooperate" with grades and tuition-fee waivers. As girls become adolescents, especially at the secondary school age, pregnancy becomes a major factor in early withdrawals from school. Pregnancy emerges as a major cause of adolescent school girls leaving school, firstly due to its frequency and secondly, because the fear of pregnancy pushes some parents to withdraw their daughters from school as they approach or reach puberty.

The health implications of teenage pregnancy include a very high risk of death and illness for the adolescent mother and child. A study has shown that secondary school girls who have been pregnant are twice as likely to report poor health than those with no history of pregnancy (Youri, 1993). The increasing indications of significant levels of illegal abortions, particularly in the urban areas, and related health risks for young women are also discussed widely, suggesting that the pregnancies are not planned and there is a significant demand for contraception among teenagers. The exposure to sexually transmitted diseases, infertility, and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS are now a matter of public concern (Brock and Cammish, 1991; Yeboah, 1993; Lee and Made, 1994).

The last decade or more has shown that there is a pandemic of sexual violence and harassment, especially in Kenyan secondary schools, which has been a major cause of concern for students, parents and school authorities. The main offenders are male students, who in groups, prey on female students, abuse them verbally, harass, beat and rape them. There have been many cases of high-level indiscipline in educational institutions, especially secondary schools illustrated by the frequency of reports of student unrest in the local press. Cases of unrests and violence involving girls' schools alone are not quite common. The most outrageous case involving girls was in July 1991 at the St. Kizito Mixed Secondary School in Tigania, Meru District, where 71 girls were raped and 19 died after being attacked by their male colleagues. This was followed by a spate of violence and rape cases in schools in many parts of the country. At the micro-level it is fair

to argue that the society's moral decay seems to contribute largely to a culture of violence and hence fear and resentment in girls countrywide. Those who witness or are victims of rape and violence are traumatised and would obviously resent schooling.

Performance and progression to post-secondary education

The Ministry of Education estimates that between 1987 and 2000, the secondary completion rate declined from 86.4 per cent for the 1987-1990 cohort to 79.0 per cent for the 1997-2000 cohort. However, the rate peaked to 94.4 per cent for the 1993-96 cohort. This depicted a very sharp increase in the completion rate. The completion rates for boys ranged between 70.7 per cent (1990-93 cohort) and 95.8 per cent (1993-96 cohort). For girls it was between 66.6 per cent (1990-93 cohort) and 94.9 per cent (1993-96 cohort). The lowest completion rate for both boys and girls, 70.7 per cent, was registered by the 1990-93 cohort. In 1999, the completion rate dropped to 87 per cent, before increasing to 95 per cent in 2001. However, the rates dropped to 89 per cent in 2003, with boys registering 90 per cent compared to girls, with 89 per cent. The secondary school repetition rate is estimated to be around 1.6 per cent, 1.7 per cent and 1.5 per cent for boys and girls respectively (MoEST, 2005).

The inferior quality of unaided *harambee* education seriously constrains the access of females to post-secondary education and training. It should also be pointed out that the education provided in government-maintained schools also creates barriers to the further participation of girls in the education system and hence to women's opportunities for wage employment, especially at the higher levels. Despite the fact that career-training programmes and university requirements favour applicants who have specialised in science and mathematics, this emphasis is not reflected in the subjects available to girls in government-maintained schools.

Researchers investigating science performance in schools have identified the unavailability of learning resources and physical facilities, school types, availability of teachers and their qualifications as well as their attitudes and expectations as key factors (Twoli, 1986; Thuo, 1985). Twoli in his study of gender differences in achievement in the sciences found that boys' attitudes towards the sciences were more favourable and their aspirations were higher than those of girls. He also found that resources accounted for a very significant amount of variance in science achievement. He observed that many girls' schools lacked basic learning resources, including qualified science teachers, thereby producing poor achievers in the subjects. With the introduction of a practical and science-oriented curriculum under the 8-4-4 education system, the situation in girls' schools has worsened. Twoli further found that teachers had higher expectations for boys in science-learning activities, including practicals, problem solving and their ability to study science at more advanced levels. In the study, teachers' expectations were found to have a strong association with science achievement by their pupils (Twoli, 1986).

The negative societal perceptions regarding female involvement in science and technological fields are also transmitted within the educational system through textbooks. As Obura (1991) points out, textbooks reinforce the alienation of females from scientific and technical activities.

> A girl is likely to feel an intruder or a misfit in the science classroom and the technical workshop. She will feel different from the proposed male (norm) and therefore deficient with regard to it. If successful in class, she may begin to experience gender identity threat. Grown up women, it is suggested by the textbooks, do not engage in the scientific or technical activities as if it is normal for females not to do science (Obura, 1991:118).

Such perceptions are indeed a reality in the girls' settings. Tsuma and Townbridge (1986) discovered that by age 12, girls had already developed negative attitudes towards science subjects. Kinkajou (1978) suggests that these negative attitudes are rooted in societal perceptions of women's role in society, and are transmitted to girls through the educational system.

Societal perceptions of male-female roles, and hence, appropriate education are summed up aptly in a speech delivered by a female political leader at a political rally in 1991. Talking to a crowd estimated at 200,000, the speaker criticised the 8-4-4 system of education for attempting to offer the same subjects to both genders. "What would girls do with subjects like carpentry and boys with home science (cooking and knitting)?" she asked a cheering crowd. (Wamahiu, Opondo and Nyagah, 1992).

With regard to the overall performance at the KCSE, research findings show that, generally, girls are lower achievers than boys. As at the primary school level, the worst performance for girls was in mathematics and science (Eshiwani, 1985). A study by Kaggia in 1985 supported this conclusion. She showed that in the 1984 KCE examination, though the total number of candidates was lower, at 37.6 per cent, their failure rate was proportionately higher, at 46.9 per cent. That finding was further supported by research conducted by Maritim (1985), which showed that boys did better than girls at the `O' level examinations in all the subjects.

With the 8-4-4 system of education, the trend does not seem to have changed. If anything, it has become worse. An analysis of the 1989 and 1990 KCSE results as shown in Table 22 indicates that the percentage of candidates who scored a B grade and above was 2.1 and 0.6 per cent for boys and girls respectively. For physics, the percentages were 8.4 for boys and 2.6 for girls in 1989. In physical sciences, a subject that seems to be generally very poorly performed by both boys and girls, the former had 0.25 per cent, and the latter 0.01. Performance in chemistry was 7.1 per cent and 3.9 per cent for boys and girls respectively, with girls, however, showing considerable improvement. The situation with the 1990 KCSE results was not particularly different.

Industrial education, which includes subjects such as power mechanics and woodwork, has traditionally been male dominated. With the 8-4-4 system, girls began penetrating these fields as shown in Table 22. In 1989, for example, out of the 2,078 candidates who sat the woodwork examination at KCSE, girls were only 86. Unfortunately, the girls who opt to take industrial education subjects perform very poorly compared to boys. In the 1990 power mechanics examination, for example, the best grade obtained by a girl was a D+. A total of 11 girls had sat the examination. At the same time, seven out of 261 boys scored an A grade. Table 22 gives a grade analysis of the 1989 and 1990 KCSE results by gender in the industrial education courses. In the first five courses, all the girls are clustered around C and D grades, with a much higher percentage around the D grades. It is only in woodwork that two of the 81 girls, (2.3 per cent), scored a B-. Performance in drawing and design was no better with 15.8 of the girls scoring an E grade. On the whole, the results obtained by girls paint a very pathetic picture of female performance in

Table 22: Percentages of pupils who achieved a B grade and above, KCSE, 1989 and 1990

Subject	English	Maths	Physics	Chemistry	Physical Science	Biology
1989						
Males	3.20	2.10	8.41	7.10	0.25	0.87
Females	4.13	0.60	2.64	3.90	0.07	0.81
1990						
Males	1.80	3.53	3.55	4.04	0.49	0.87
Females	2.80	1.17	0.69	2.49	0.13	0.39

Source: Adapted from unpublished data, KNEC, 1991.

science- and technology-based courses. There are, however, some areas in which girls tend to excel in comparison to boys. In the previous 7-4-3-2 system of education, an analysis of the 1983 `A' level results showed better performance by girls in the arts subjects and biology. Currently, girls perform better in English than boys. Table 22 shows that in 1989, 3.2 per cent of boys scored a B grade and above, compared to 4.1 percent for girls. Similarly, in 1990 2.8 per cent of the girls obtained a B grade or above in biology as against 1.8 per cent of the boys. However, the performance observed at the `A' level examination does not hold for the new system. Table 22 shows that boys have an edge over girls in the biology results.

It is, however, important to note that given a generally conducive learning environment, girls can perform as well as, if not better than, boys (Eshiwani, 1983). An analysis of the past examination results at primary and secondary school levels gives credence to Eshiwani's observation.

Table 23: Analysis of KCSE results, industrial educational courses, 1989/1990 grade statistics

Subject	Year	Sex	A-B-	C+-C-	D+-E	Number of Candidates
			No. %	No. %	No. %	
Woodwork	1989	M F	321(16.1) 0 (0)	855(42.9) 7 (8.1)	816 (41) 79 (91.9)	1992 86
	1990	M F	365 (17.3) 2 (2.3)	935 (44.4) 12 (13.8)	808 (38.3) 73 (83.9)	2108 87
Metal work	1989	M F	120 (18) 1 (6.6)	323 (48.4) 4 (26.7)	10 (66.7)	667 15
	1990	M F	209 (33.8) 1 (9.1)	255 (41.2) 9 (81.8)	154 (24.9) 1 (9.1)	618 11
Building Construction	1989	M F	106 (17.5) 1 (3.2)	355 (58.7) 7 (22.6)	143 (23.8) 23 (74.2)	604 31
	1990	M F	83 (13.8) 0 (0)	286 (47.5) 10 (17.2)	241 (40.0) 48 (82.8)	602 58
Power Mechanics	1989	M F	55 (22.5) 0 (0)	89 (36.5) 0(0)	102 (42) 10(100)	244 10
	1990	M F	71 (27.1) 0(0)	87 (33.3) 4 (36.4)	103 (39.5) 7 (63.6)	261 11
Electricity	1989	M F	49 (8.1) 0 (0)	162 (26.8) 1 (3.1)	394 (65.1) 31 (96.9)	605 32
	1990		66 (10.8) 0 (0)	178 (29.1) 1 (9.1)	368 (60.1) 10 (90.9)	612 11
Drawing and Design	1989	M F	182 (10.0) 1 (0.4)	341 (18.6) 6 (2.2)	1306 (71.4) 261 (97.4)	1829 1913
	1990	M F	378 (19.8) 2 (0.7)	480 (25.1) 9 (3.2)	1055 (55.1) (96.1)	1913 285

Source: Adapted from unpublished data, KNEC - 1991

Table 24: KCSE Performance by gender in languages, maths and science 2000-2003

Subject	2000		2001		2002		2003	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
English	37.4	32.2	34.7	34.4	29.7	29.6	32.8	32.5
Kiswahili	48.9	47.9	44.7	43.3	45.5	44.4	50.1	48.6
Maths	13.4	18.7	15.8	21.2	16.4	22.5	16.1	22.1
Biology	30.2	33.6	29.5	34.5	24.6	28.3	27.2	31.4
Physics	29.5	32.7	22.2	26.8	26.6	30.9	29.1	32.3
Chemistry	27.7	31.8	29.4	23.4	22.1	26.6	24.0	29.3

For example, several girls' schools have been among the top 10 and 50 nationally in the primary and secondary final examinations respectively over the years in both the former 7-4-2-3 and the current 8-4-4 education systems.

More recent data on performance shows much change in performance by gender in the KCSE examination. From Table 24, which shows performance in English, Kiswahili, mathematics and key science subjects, it is clear that girls seem to have an edge over boys in the language subjects only. They perform relatively poorly in mathematics, biology, physics and chemistry. It is also important to note that overall performance by both boys and girls in these subjects is generally poor, with most of them scoring below 40 per cent and, in the key subject of mathematics, well below 20 per cent.

While both boys and girls generally show improved performance in agriculture and industrial subjects as shown in Table 25, there are on the whole very few entries for these subjects, especially among girls. It is however, important to note that the few girls who enter the subjects seem to perform remarkably well in these male-dominated subjects.

Summary

This chapter has shown that in Kenya, as in other developing countries, girls' enrolment at the secondary school level has been more dramatic since the early 1960s. The enrolment of females rose faster than that of males. Enrolment rose from around 31.8 per cent to 46.4 per cent in 1996. Despite the apparently widespread participation of girls at the secondary school level, government policies have forced the majority of secondary school girls into the unaided (*harambee* sector) where they are disadvantaged in the quality of education they receive. This was reflected in a number of policy strategies. Firstly, in the government expansion of secondary education, by the close of the first decade of independence, there were more than twice as many government secondary schools catering for boys than girls, and the

Table 25: KCSE performance by gender in industrial subjects and agriculture, 2000-2003

Subject	2000		2001		2002		2003	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Agriculture	48.6	52.0	45.5	48.7	42.2	45.7	44.7	48.1
Woodwork	42.0	48.5	51.3	50.6	54.1	54.8	50.6	47.7
Metalwork	45.8	53.5	56.0	59.1	46.0	48.5	50.4	56.0
Build Cons	32.6	47.3	40.0	49.3	43.5	49.3	43.8	50.9
Power Mec	53.3	67.9	36.8	54.3	48.2	58.7	46.5	53.0
Electricity	58.7	53.5	52.3	54.9	48.3	56.8	50.4	52.0
Drawing D	25.5	42.2	37.1	51.6	37.1	51.6	39.4	52.8
Comp Stud	54.2	61.8	54.4	57.6	53.3	57.0	46.8	49.8

gap between government provision for males and females continued to widen progressively. It was not just the number of schools that determined enrolment by gender. The enrolment capacity of particular secondary schools was also determined by the fact that boys' schools had more streams than girls' schools.

The structure of secondary school opportunities also seriously disadvantages girls from less developed regions and less affluent families. As at the primary school level, regions and districts with greatest economic development had the largest increases in the proportion of girls enrolled, since they had more maintained government schools as well as more unaided *harambee* schools. Socio-economic factors also play a major role in determining girls' access to secondary education, with more affluent families having more of their girls in school.

In all secondary schools in the country, the proportionate loss between each successive year of schooling is greater for girls than for boys. The higher cost of education in the unaided schools is a major cause of the higher attrition of girls, followed by sexual harassment, which results in premarital pregnancies, and violence meted out to girls, particularly in mixed secondary schools. The inferior quality of unaided *harambee* education seriously constrains female performance and access to post-secondary education and training.

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CHAPTER FIVE

ADULT LITERACY

Adult Education is generally a very vague concept. To some people, adult education is concerned with making adults literate and it is discussed as though its concern is adult literacy. For many, it is the provision of evening classes and nothing else, while for others it includes continuing education. Therefore, adult education is an array of things; literacy classes, field days for farmers, correspondence courses, day release classes for administrative workers, leadership courses, study vacations, public lectures, evening courses for scientists, better housekeeping courses for women, among others. Folk high schools, extra mural centres, evening institutes, community development centres, farmers training centres, and others can all sit comfortably under the umbrella of adult education (Posser, 1966).

In general terms, adult education can be defined as an organised education process, whether formal of informal, undertaken by adults. Adult learners can be individuals who have not gone through the formal learning process or those who have not completed the existing formal learning package. They may also include those who have attained high levels of education, but wish to continue to pursue further education - hence the concept of `lifelong education' also applies (Meena, 1991).

Unlike formal primary or secondary school student, the adult learner is a purposeful and voluntary learner. There are four main objectives generally noted for adult education: realisation of social integration (acculturation); bringing about social change (transformation): acquisition of technical competence (skills); and building up social responsibility (citizenship). Within the context of these objectives, adult education can be considered as a means through which adult populations are incorporated into the socio-economic and political system of the state. This can be a double-edged process because while the state uses it to socialise the adult populations, on the one hand, the adult learners can use it to achieve their own ends, on the other hand. In either case, therefore, adult education has the potential to bring about change in the existing oppressive relations, including gender relations (Weiler, 1988).

This chapter is mainly concerned with one aspect of adult education, namely adult literacy. In any modern and civilised society, reading and writing are taken for granted as they are seen as indispensable elements in preparing a person for life. Children are taught to read and write early in life, for the rest of their education depends on their possession of literacy skills. The whole social, political and economic structure of the modern society rests on the assumption that every citizen can communicate and be communicated with by means of the written or printed word (Jeffries, 1967).

Some 771 million adults worldwide, two-thirds of them women, cannot read and write (UNESCO, 2006). This figure represents 18 per cent of the global adult population. The concentration of this adult illiterate population is in developing countries. Governments of such countries have perceived illiteracy to be a major obstacle to development. The following perhaps captures the problem of illiteracy:

> The illiterate person is a man or woman who is condemned to a status, which, in the circumstances of today, is less than human. The illiterate man who having scraped together ten shillings to meet the tax collector's demand, cheerfully walks away with a receipt showing that he has paid five shillings. The illiterate is another who has to trust someone else to read her letter from her absent son [or daughter] and send him/her replies. The illiterate is a farmer who cannot decipher the simple instructions, which could save his crop from disaster. The illiterate is a woman whose baby is dying of some malady, which the poster on the wall tells how to prevent or cure. The illiterate is a man who goes on a train journey not knowing whether he has been charged the proper fare, or not able to read the destination named on his ticket or the names of the stations through which he passes … (Jeffries, 1967:13).

To combat illiteracy and promote development, many countries have embarked on what is

commonly referred to as functional literacy programmes. Although the definition of functional literacy is not all that universal, a person is said to be functionally literate when he or she has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which will enable him or her to engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his or her culture or group. He or she should at least be able to read a simple instruction leaflet in his or her own or some other familiar language, to write a legible letter, and to keep a record of his or her money transactions or the produce of his or her farm (Jeffries, 1967).

The national literacy programme

Before independence, no large-scale efforts were undertaken to eradicate illiteracy, although several non-governmental organisations were running literacy projects in different parts of the country. Among them, special reference should be made to the National Christian Council of Kenya (NCCK), which has been, and is still, active in social and economic development programmes, including literacy work. Prior to the 1979 national literacy campaign, NCCK had played a leading role in training literacy teachers and writing literacy materials.

In 1964, the Kenya Government established the Department of Community Development, which, among other tasks, was responsible for promoting literacy activities on a self-help basis. However, due to the lack of appropriate material and human support, the Department's efforts did not show significant results.

An overall review of the illiteracy situation resulted in the establishment of the Board of Adult Education by an act of Parliament in February 1966. The Board, which comprised representatives of government and NGOs involved in adult education, was given the responsibilities of advising the Ministry of Cooperatives and Social Services on matters relating to adult education; co-ordinating the activities of government services and non-governmental agencies and; identifying and assessing needs for new developments in adult education.

Consequently, a national literacy campaign was launched in 1967. A special Division of Adult Education was created within the Ministry of Cooperative and Social Services and was put in charge of mounting the campaign. The same year, activities were started in a few pilot districts. The objective was to cover all the districts (41) in the country by 1970. But even in 1969, it had been realised that due to financial constraints, the division could not respond to the rapidly spreading demand to open literacy classes. As a result it was decided to limit the number of classes that would receive government aid in each district where classes had been started. This move created some negative effects: the morale of the field officers and the teachers fell, the enrolment figures dropped sharply and most of the classes had to close. By 1971, about 1,000 centres were still functioning and providing literacy training to some 30,000 adults. In the same year, a survey of the programme took place which revealed some of its weaknesses, which included the following: the teaching methods used were those originally designed for children; instructors were primary school teachers who lacked motivation for doing additional work without attractive remuneration; the policy on the language of instruction was not clear; and no suitable teaching materials had been produced so the learners had sometimes to use primary school primers.

Already in 1969, the Kenyan Government had requested UNESCO to explore the possibility of using a new, functional literacy approach. In line with this approach, a work-oriented literacy project was launched in 1972 as an integral part of the Special Rural Development Programme (SRDP). This programme had been started in 1971 with a view to stimulating integrated development in rural areas. Six districts were selected for experimenting the new programme. Instead of the traditional method of alphabet learning, a global learning strategy was proposed and income-generating projects become an essential component of literacy classes. Village youngsters who had completed at least primary education were used as instructors; Kiswahili was the only language of instruction and special common primers were being

prepared at the central level. The programme was supposed to last 900 hours with a follow-up course of six to 12 months. It was expected that the completion of two courses would take two years, after which the adults would have reached a literacy level equivalent to that of Class Seven of formal education.

At the end of this experimental project an evaluation took place, which provided several useful conclusions for future action on literacy. It became clear, for instance, that it was difficult to teach literacy in Kiswahili. Although Kiswahili is a national language, most people in rural areas do not use it for daily communication and, therefore, do not master it well. Teaching adults to read and write first in their local languages was then considered a better approach. The use of the same common textbooks in different locations was also seen as a handicap for making the programme truly functional and relevant to the local living conditions. Therefore, it was felt that emphasis should be placed on producing textbooks locally. The recruitment of local village youth as literacy teachers seemed to be a promising strategy if minimum appropriate financial incentives were used to sustain their motivation. It also became evident that appropriate training and supervision of the instructors was a key factor for making a literacy programme successful. Finally, the functional approach, combining literacy learning and acquisition of other practical skills, had proved to be the most suitable for the design of an overall national literacy strategy.

Addressing the nation on 12 December 1978, on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of independence, President Daniel arap Moi, who had just ascended to power, ordered a massive literacy programme to be launched to eliminate illiteracy within five years. The President stressed the socio-economic relevance of the programme. Illiteracy was described as a major obstacle to economic development and social participation. As the President put it: "We now clearly see that the individual Kenyan cannot become effective enough in promoting development, or participating fully in our social and political system if he is illiterate". Consequently, the literacy programme was presented as only a component of a more global development strategy, which had to form the basis for the *Fourth Development Plan (1979-1983)*. This strategy aimed at alleviating poverty, mainly in the rural areas, through the provision of basic needs. In addition to adult literacy, the basic needs package included free primary education, free milk distribution to school children, increased employment for school leavers and the provision of water schemes, better health care and family planning programmes.

At the beginning of 1979 a national seminar was organised to discuss ways and means of implementing the presidential directive and a full-fledged Department of Adult Education was established within the Ministry of Culture and Social Services. At that time, the total number of illiterate adults was estimated to be about five million. It was estimated afterwards, on the basis of the 1979 census, that the number of illiterates in 1980/81 was 4.4 million, which corresponded to an illiteracy rate of 51.7 per cent. Although some initial plans with specific national enrolment targets for each year were prepared, it should be clear that those plans were not compulsory. No precise quantitative objectives were imposed or even proposed at the provincial or district levels. In line with the overall development strategy presented earlier, what happened was a massive mobilisation for literacy by the whole society, by political and social leaders and the mass media. The actual implementation of the presidential order was, therefore, a question of self-help and of local initiatives. The roles of the Department of Adult Education involve stimulation, supervision and the provision of technical support.

The major means by which the Department has performed its roles are the following:

- Training literacy personnel through short-term seminars and correspondence courses;
- Preparing primers and other teaching materials according to a decentralised production scheme;

- Regular supervision of teaching staff;
- Collecting data on enrolment, learning centres and teachers; and
- Organising national literacy tests.

The Department has promoted a functional approach, aiming at establishing systematic links between literacy teaching and the everyday activities of the participants. In concrete terms, the functionality of the programme has the following implications as far as teaching methods and content are concerned:

- The medium of instruction used in the literacy centres is the local language except in the Coast Province and urban centres, where learning takes place in Kiswahili.
- The literacy materials are locally designed and produced so that their content reflects local socio-cultural conditions and economic activities. There are two literacy primers in 23 different languages, which aim at the systematic transmission of knowledge and skills directly relevant for improving the living conditions of the learners in terms of production, health and sanitation, family planning and others.
- Teachers are supposed to contact and invite local officers of the different development sectors to address their literacy learners on topics related to their respective fields of competence.
- Each group of learners is also encouraged to undertake a collective project as part of their participation in the literacy programme. Such projects include those that generate income for the learners (such as poultry rearing); community improvement (such as building a literacy centre); or just entertainment (such as traditional dances), among others.

The method of teaching should be based on the learner's experiences. Through discussions on subjects of interest, learners are introduced to sounds and words that are most familiar to them. As they progress from the first to the second primer, greater emphasis is placed on sentence construction based on topics related to their lives and likely to sustain their interest.

The teaching of numeracy is also based on the learner's experience with a view to stimulating and maintaining interest. Initially, teaching is concentrated on the recognition of numbers and the ability to reproduce them in writing. The learners are then introduced to the basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, leading on to simple fractions and decimals, and then to the measurements of surface, space, weight, time and money. Learners are supposed to become functionally literate within nine months, which corresponds to some 300 to 400 hours of literacy class attendance (two hours a day for five days a week) (Carron, Mwiria and Righa, 1989).

Achievements made so far

The launching of the 1979 adult literacy programme has been beneficial, particularly to women, in a number of ways. As shown in Table 26, the programme was more popular with women than men. Women, especially in the initial years, consistently constituted more than 70 per cent of the total number of enrolled learners. For instance in 1979, 321,208 women were enrolled in the literacy classes as compared to 93,468 men. In 1990, the respective enrolments for women and men were 105,458 and 32,696. The table also shows that the total enrolment figures have been gradually declining since the first year of initial enthusiasm and massive mobilisation (Carron, *et al,* 1989). More recent enrolments as shown in Table 27, continue to demonstrate an increasing decline, with marginal rises in a couple of years. A major problem that has faced the literacy campaign has been the difficulty in sustaining demand by the potential learners, especially women. The general decline in enrolments has mainly been the consequence of the fact that the literacy campaign relied more on individual motivation than on efforts of the government and NGOs to mobilise participation in the literacy programme.

A number of reasons can be advanced for the dominance of women in the programme. A combination of historical and socio-cultural factors explains the state of affairs. First and foremost, women have had less access to formal

education than men since the colonial era. To a great extent this gives women more impetus to want to learn than men. Secondly, poor families tend to prefer educating sons to daughters because of perceived long-term economic security, which is believed to be more likely guaranteed by the sons. On religious grounds, in some communities, especially among Muslims, many parents worry about the perceived effects of Western education on their daughters. Since education empowers and liberates women and make them question certain retrogressive cultural practices, such communities view it as a negative influence on their girls. Educated girls, they feel, cannot have happy marriages. In addition, there are some communities where girls are forced to leave school to get married so as to bring in dowry or because of fear of unwanted pregnancies if they continue their schooling. Such factors contribute to higher illiteracy levels among women.

Another explanation for the dominance of women in the adult literacy programmes relates to the demands of a changing economy, which force them to acquire extra responsibilities outside the home. Aware of the disadvantages they have to suffer in a demanding modern economy because of their limited formal education more women therefore wish to acquire new skills whenever they get the opportunity. Acquisition of new skills enables them to be self-reliant and perform similar roles to men. The desire for such skills has been inevitable with the continued migration of men to towns and plantations in search of employment, which leaves many women as heads of households. Therefore, they have a strong motivation and desire to master the basic communication skills that would allow them to become part of the mainstream of society, especially the acquisition of literacy and numeracy as well as language skills (Carron, *et al,* 1989:121).

It should also be pointed out that due to socio-cultural reasons in some communities, men are reluctant to attend literacy classes together with women. The difficulty to motivate men to take part in the adult literacy programme has been a major concern of the Department of Adult Education. Literacy classes have partly been popular among women because they provide much needed socialising opportunities. Such opportunities have been lacking in the current socio-cultural setting. On the contrary, men have numerous such opportunities at public

Table 26: Adult literacy enrolment by gender 1976-1996

Year	Men	Women	Total	Percentage of Women
1979	93,866	321,208	415,079	77.4
1980	89,053	309,824	398,877	77.7
1981	76,351	295,651	372,800	79.5
1982	74,481	273,319	347,800	78.6
1983	74,276	269,612	343,888	78.4
1984	57,188	205,244	262,432	78.2
1985	38,497	132,550	171,047	77.3
1986	51,367	174,866	226,173	77.3
1987	38,602	105,880	144,482	73.2
1988	52,744	105,490	158,238	66.7
1989	33,543	100,383	133,926	75.0
1990	37,093	110,487	147,940	74.7
1991	30,123	97,984	129,107	75.9
1992	25,425	84,049	109,474	76.8
1993	26,027	81,271	107,298	75.7
1994	26,554	87,648	114,278	76.7
1995	27,572	88,479	116,051	76.2
1996	26,612	89,029	115,641	77.0

Source: Economic Surveys, 1979 to 1997.

barazas, bars, towns and others. As a matter of fact, the availability of alternative socialising opportunities for men has been perceived as a real hindrance to their participation in the literacy classes (Mwiria, 1993).

In fact, one of the major positive results of the adult literacy programmes launched by the government and NGOs, besides the literacy skills, has been the provision of opportunities for women to organise themselves. There has been a proliferation of women's groups in villages, which conduct various activities: training in income-generating skills, setting up shops and co-operative farming ventures. Although there have been mixed results in that many groups failed to earn income, at least they promoted female solidarity. Besides, they provided women with the chance to meet outside their homes and also gave them some political leverage (Juma, 1991). Local women with slightly more education became leaders of the groups. Group meetings provided opportunities for women to develop organisational, leadership and political skills, including the art of public speaking. They also learnt how to relate to the local government and seek support from government agencies. Women's groups definitely provided an entry point into the public and political arena for many women.

Another educational component of these groups was the informal sharing of vocational skills such as sewing, tailoring, embroidery, food processing and preparation. Some formal education in commercial skills such as bookkeeping and accounting were also taught to members. Literacy and numeracy became more meaningful and valued in the context of these groups. In some areas adult literacy teachers have undertaken most of their activities at the village level and worked within village administrative structures. They have helped to galvanise local communities and have supported women's efforts to literacy. This has largely been through basic civic knowledge, awareness and sensitisation, which have a potential for social transformation. Although this transformation process may not eradicate rural poverty, it makes the women learners different from the illiterates. This is because literacy opens their eyes to their needs and rights, sharpens their economic appetites and makes them a potential force for political and economic resistance (Nyerere, 1988).

Some key issues

Although women on the whole benefit from the adult literacy programme, their participation is constrained by a number of factors, which centre on unequal access to resources and the sexual division of labour. The acquired skills such as sewing or gardening, for example, are useful only insofar as the resources needed to use them are at the women's disposal. These resources include not only cash or credit but also land, technologies and labour time. Without mobilising time and resources for women, the knowledge they gain becomes under utilised.

A major resource handicap in women's participation in the adult literacy programme is time. In many of the traditional African community

Table 27: Adult literacy enrolment by gender 1997-2003

Year	Male	Female	Total	%Female Enrolment
1997	28,139	73,215	101,354	72.2
1998	26,180	74,081	100,261	73.9
1999	30,200	71,061	101,261	70.2
2000	25,802	68,101	93,903	72.5
2001	26,479	66,573	93,052	72.0
2002	41,341	73,524	114,865	64.0
2003	31,305	77,126	108,431	71.1

Source: Economic Surveys 1998-2003

settings, women are overburdened with many responsibilities, which range from childbearing to the management of family farms. For example, it has been estimated that on the average 67 per cent of their day is spent on cleaning, family care, wood and water procurement and subsistence agricultural work (Stromquist, 1990). Most of the women in the literacy classes are engaged in occupations such as cash cropping, subsistence farming, wage employment and petty trade. This is in addition to their other roles as domestic workers and mothers, with many of them having no fewer than five children to take care of. This does not only leave women with little or no time for independent study, but also greatly affects the frequency and duration of their literacy class attendance. Consequently many of them tend to perform worse than their male counterparts in the proficiency tests (Carron, Mwiria and Righa, 1989). This has been supported by a similar study in Tanzania, where it was also found that women performed poorly on the proficiency tests because they did not have enough time and a conducive environment to continue studying outside the literacy classes (Meena, 1991).

The learning environment as pointed out in the Tanzanian study is also a major constraint to women participation in the literacy programme. The home environment in particular poses heavy demands on the learners, who have to fulfil their roles as mothers and do domestic chores, which allow them little time for independent study. Furthermore, some learners are likely to encounter hostility from their husbands who may feel threatened by the knowledge and skills their wives acquire from the literacy programmes. In addition, facilities such as lighting, reading and writing facilities, radio or piped water and a general environment conducive to the adult learner are not present in most homes (Mwiria, 1993).

Not only is the learning environment deplorable in the homes, it is equally so in most of the literacy centres. In the first place, many centres are located far away from learner's homes, a factor that forces them to walk long distances. This discourages learners from attending classes more regularly (Mwiria, 1990). Few of the centres were specifically constructed for adult learners, as many centres are churches, primary schools or some other converted building. Some adult classes are conducted in the open or under a tree. Such conditions are not conducive to effective learning. In such centres, learners sit on mats or logs of wood, use their knees for writing and lack some teaching materials as chalk boards (Department of Adult Education 1984:16). Although such conditions are undoubtedly difficult for all learners, they are particularly unbearable for female learners, who often have to take their babies with them to the literacy classes.

One of the key issues in the adult literacy programme is that for a long time, it has failed to include a functional component to enable adults to link what they learned directly with improvements in their own conditions, and this has contributed in a large measure to a loss of interest. For women in particular, the content of the curriculum hardly addresses gender issues. The content continues to perpetuate gender stereotyping. To break this approach, some NGOs like ActionAid and PLAN have recommended a new method - REFLECT - Regenerated Freirean Literacy and Community Empowering Techniques, in which the learners have to be left to decide where, when and what they need to learn. These have, however, not been operationalised because adult literacy teachers who are expected to use the Freirean Approach generally have a low level of education and have undergone a brief formalised induction course in which such an approach has not been clearly demonstrated (Sifuna, 1997).

Hence, once enrolled in the literacy programme, many professionally unqualified teachers teach women literacy learners, like their male counterparts. Only a minimum of a pass in the secondary school selection examination is required of prospective full-time literacy teachers. This particular condition is waived for teachers from the remote parts of the country. There are no specific educational qualifications required of prospective part-time or self-help teachers. Even primary school dropouts and graduates of

adult literacy programmes can become part-time or self-help teachers (Carron, Mwiria and Righa, 1989).

The short induction course for adult literacy teachers is not only inadequate, but also does not address gender issues. Consequently a majority of the teachers are not equipped with adequate adult teaching methodology. They lack knowledge about adult psychology and hence they end up teaching adults as if they were teaching children. They even use the same kind of ridicule used in primary schools, such as telling adults that they are stupid when they fail to understand a lesson. It is most embarrassing for an adult to be addressed in this manner by a young teacher - and this causes many learners to drop out of literacy classes (Meena, 1991). This approach reinforces the belief that education is oppressive rather than liberating; and it is a great loss for a potentially transformative learning process. For women, this loss is even greater as it stifles self-confidence, knowledge and imaginative resistance to oppression.

Another key factor revolving on the curriculum is the question: after literacy classes, what next? Adult centres are expected to enhance the literacy process and not to be an end in themselves. In other words, there is little or no consideration about the curriculum and primers for post-literacy learners to avoid a situation where they could relapse into illiteracy. Learning opportunities for post-literacy female learners are limited by the fact that women generally travel less and they listen to radio, read newspapers or watch television and cinema less frequently than men. Learning materials for post-literacy female learners, therefore, should be designed based on the immediate expectations of the learners, including activities that not only deepen and sharpen their literacy levels, but also help them to acquire new social skills relevant to their own life expectations.

Another key constraint already alluded to above in male-dominated communities is that female literacy learners are not given the necessary encouragement to enable them take advantage of the literacy programmes. It has been noted that husbands sometimes prevent their wives from taking part in literacy classes (Riria, 1983). This is worse in conservative Muslim communities where literacy is perceived to be a threat to the Islamic culture. In most communities, men also feel threatened by the effects of literacy on women. For example, it has been observed that one of the reasons why few men participate in literacy classes is because when they fail to do well in class in the presence of their womenfolk, they feel that their manhood is being undermined (Mwasi, 1984).

The male authority is further extended to the administration of the literacy programme. Men tend to dominate positions of authority in the literacy programme whereas women constitute a majority of the participants. Although women form 70 per cent of the participants as already noted, only a negligible proportion of women are involved in the administration. For example, by the early 1990s, out of the 11 most senior administrators of the Department of Adult Education, only four were women. There was only one woman among the eight provincial adult education officers, while out of 42 district adult education officers, only four were women. Similarly of the 162 assistant adult education officers, only eight were women. The imbalance also existed among literacy teachers in that women comprised only 34 per cent of the full-time teachers, but made up the great majority of the part-time teachers. The problem with this male domination, especially in teaching, is that women learners have few role models to emulate and are also taught by persons who are unlikely to be very sensitive to gender concerns (Mwiria, 1993). It is notable, though, that this has changed somewhat in recent years. The current director of the Department is a female and so was her predecessor. Equally, there are a number of women in senior positions at the Department. Even so, this has not had much impact on the literacy programme as it is poorly funded, with the result being a serious decline in enrolments.

A major constraint to the literacy programmes is financing. Apart from the 1979 programme launched by the government, mainly religious

organisations, development partners and NGOs have supported literacy programmes. These include UNESCO, UNICEF, NCCK, Catholic Secretariat, Inades-Formation, Kenya, ActionAid and Plan International. For this reason, new literacy programmes supported by development agencies are particularly vulnerable. The sustainability and acceptability of any one programme is dependent on the interests and priorities of particular development partners at any given time. In the recent past, donors have shown a particular interest in supporting gender aspects. While this is highly welcome, once donors shift their interest to something else, programmes specifying an interest in gender may find themselves starved of funds unless alternative sources are found (Meena, 1991).

Summary

This chapter focussed mainly on the adult literacy programme as an important feature of adult education. It was seen that since the launching of the programme in 1979, it has been particularly popular with women, who have constituted over 70 per cent of participants. Having been denied educational opportunities in the formal school system, women perceive the programme as a second chance to acquire knowledge and skills to cope with the demands of modern society. Although on the whole the programme has proved beneficial to women, they face many constraints, including unequal access to resources, the sexual division of labour and the poor quality of teaching resources.

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CHAPTER SIX

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

During the colonial period most indigenous Kenyans obtained their university degrees outside the country. In 1949 Makerere College in Uganda, which was owned by the governments of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika, entered into a special relationship with the University of London, enabling the college to offer degree courses. The Royal Technical College founded in 1956 to offer professional education below degree level also entered into the special relationship with the University of London and started offering degree courses in arts and science. In 1963, the University of East Africa was set up incorporating Makerere College, the Royal College, Nairobi, and the newly established University College, Dar es Salaam, in Tanzania. This arrangement lasted until 1970 when each of the three East African countries established its own national university.

Kenya had placed considerable importance on the role of education in promoting economic and social development after independence in 1963. This resulted in the rapid expansion of the education system to provide qualified persons for the growing economic and administrative institutions and to undertake reforms to reflect the aspirations of an independent state (Court and Ghai, 1974).

Political pressures also motivated the expansion and reform of the education system. Almost every politician and election manifesto leading to independence elections called for more educational opportunities of all types - cheaper or free education, universal primary education, the Africanisation of syllabuses and teaching staff and an atmosphere in which the African personality and culture flourish (Sifuna, 1998).

There were external factors which, too, contributed to the expansion of education, especially at the higher levels. Among the important ones was the Conference of African States on the Development of Education in Africa, which was held in Addis Ababa in May 1962 (UN Economic Commission for Africa and UNESCO, 1961). In addition, the Kenya government and the United Kingdom requested the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development to undertake a survey of the economic development of Kenya. A 10-member mission studied all aspects of Kenya's economy, and education was identified as one sector that required funding. The mission pointed to the bottleneck at the secondary level as the most critical educational need, requiring large numbers of expatriate teachers as well as qualitative improvements in teacher training (Sheffield, 1973). This report had an important bearing on the government's formulation of educational policies.

The socio-economic and political pressures coupled with external policy formulations led to a rapid expansion of all levels of the education system. At the university, enrolment rose from 452 undergraduates in 1963 to 5,454 undergraduates and 1,383 postgraduates in 1983 (Republic of Kenya, 1983). It however, needs to be pointed out from the outset that the expansion of formal education system at all levels has been more in response to the high public demand for it – and this has been difficult to contain. This has largely been due to the perceived strong relationship between education and formal-sector employment as well as the strong association between the attained level of education and economic rewards. These have increased public demand for educational opportunities.

As lower levels of education become less and less of a guarantee to formal employment, university levels of education have to be sought by an increasing number of Kenyans. Due to the important role formal education plays in legitimising the distribution of rewards in society, the Kenya government has not found it necessary or even desirable to control public demand for university education (Mwiria and Nyukuri, 1992). As a matter of fact, the government, in response to such demand, has actively supported increased enrolments in public universities irrespective of these institutions' capacity to accommodate more students and its policy to

respond to public demand is well captured in the following statement:

> …the government has established four public universities to provide increased opportunities for university education and training. However, there continues to be a growing demand for university education as more school leavers, especially from the 4-year secondary education of the 8-4-4 of education seek to enter universities. The government plans to continue with the expansion and the development of university education to meet this demand (Republic of Kenya, 1988:30).

Another factor that has contributed to the increasingly large numbers of students enrolled in public universities in Kenya is the relatively high frequency of student boycotts of lectures, which in most cases are accompanied by the closure of the institution concerned by the government. Closures have ranged from a couple of weeks to well over a year. When universities close for any length of time, teaching programmes are rescheduled and university calendars are altered to account for lost time. The prolonged closure of the University of Nairobi and its constituent college of Kenyatta in the early 1980s, for example, was a major reason for the 1987/88 academic double intake (Mwiria, 1990).

On August 1, 1982, amid increasing political repression, the Kenya Air Force staged a failed coup, which seemed to have popular support among the population, including university students, who openly showed this through demonstrations. In reaction, the government ordered an indefinite closure of the university, which lasted for about a year. This meant that around 8,000 applicants who qualified for university admission by the end of 1982 could not be admitted in the 1983/1984 academic year. This prolonged closure, coupled with the other closures, contributed to a backlog of qualified students due for admission (Sifuna, 1998).

While the student population increased rapidly due to public demand for university education and other political pressures the universities were still required to live up to the expectations placed on institutions of higher learning in more ideal situations. Higher education, especially at the university level, is expected to make four central contributions to national development. First, it is required to train the high-level technical, professional and managerial cadres needed in leadership positions outside the education sector. Secondly, it is expected to provide teachers, scholars, managers and administrators for the education system itself. Thirdly, it has to generate the knowledge and innovation needed for development through scientific research and the creation of scientists who can acquire, disseminate and adapt scientific developments from the outside world. Fourthly, it is expected to offer its recipients an analytical perspective on social and economic problems and solutions for consideration by policy makers (British Council, 1996).

On the basis of some of the issues discussed, a directive prompted further expansion in 1980 that required the government to establish a second university before the end of the 1979-1983 Development Plan period. This was to complement the University of Nairobi, then the only existing university. In January 1981, a Presidential Working Party on the Second University in Kenya was appointed to make general recommendations on the implementation of the government's decision to establish a second university. Among the Working Party's key terms of reference were:

- Recommend a philosophical framework concept and objectives within which the university could best serve the interests of the Kenyan society.
- Recommend the size, including student enrolment, structure and disciplinary coverage of the proposed university.
- Produce and submit its report within a period of six months from the date of appointment by the President (Republic of Kenya, 1981).

Since a decision had been taken to establish a second university through a presidential directive, the Working Party was not asked to determine whether a second university should be established, but how it was to be done and

what shape it was to take. It simply confirmed the social demand for university education and repeated the usual statements about the shortage of highly skilled manpower that was said to be hampering Kenya's development efforts. The Working Party was not asked to, and did not, examine the effective demand for university level skills in the economy, even though this should have been considered essential information for the execution of its terms of reference, especially with regard to determining in which areas the university should specialise (Loubser, 1983).

On the basis of a report of the Working Party, the government went ahead to establish a second university near Eldoret in 1984, on land donated by the Lonhro Group, and UNESCO assisted with the development of detailed plans. The intention was to have the first phase completed by 1990, in time for the first intake of 8-4-4 school leavers. The social demand for university education was high and the government's decision to establish a second university had wide public support for this reason. The enrolment ratio for the 18-23 age group in Kenya at the tertiary level was only about one per cent and the majority of those enrolments were not at university (Sifuna, 1998).

Following the government directive on doubling the student intake, university enrolments increased substantially in 1987/88 academic year (see Table 28), with two incoming classes starting the year at both University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University. In that year, the enrolment was 98 per cent more than the previous year. The enrolments increased by a further 2,261 to 23,138 students in 1988/89 academic year, representing and increase of about 109 per cent over 1986/87 (Gray, 1992). Thereafter, the enrolments continued to grow, reaching their highest level ever in the 1997/98 academic year, with a student population of 43,591 in the public universities. According to the *Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training (Kamunge Report)* of 1988, enrolment at the public universities was estimated to hit the 50,000 mark by 2000.

The second double-intake of students occurred in 1990/91. This was prompted by the shift in the country's education system from the 7-4-2-3 cycle to the 8-4-4 system. The main changes that occasioned the shift were the extension of the primary school cycle to eight years following the abolition of the Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education ('A' level), which reduced the length of secondary education from six to four

Table 28: Growth in university student enrolment 1983-1999

Academic Year	Nairobi	Kenyatta	Moi	Egerton	JKUAT	Total	% Increase
1983/84	5,249	2,169	-	-	-	7,418	-
1984/85	5,103	2,144	83	-	-	7,330	-1
1985/86	5,158	2,338	112	-	-	7,608	3
1986/87	5,506	3,505	230	136	-	9,337	21
1987/88	8,984	8,196	977	786	-	18,943	89
1988/89	10,034	7,868	2,119	1,825	-	21,846	11
1990/91	14,888	8,820	6,298	6,198	1,381	36,781	-
1991/92	14,834	9,138	8,730	7,389	1,783	28,836	4.9
1992/93	13,055	9,525	8,830	7,999	1,433	40,842	5.1
1994/95	12,545	8,585	6,756	7,956	1,553	39,340	-0.6
1995/96	14,089	8,588	6,655	7,695	2,182	40,065	1.8
1996/97	12,313	7,935	7,102	7,785	2,234	37,973	-5.5
1997/98	15,400	8,574	7,403	8,056	3,005	43,591	14.8
1998/99	12,424	7,758	7,619	8,200	3,092	40,523	-7.0

Source: Economic Surveys, 1983-1999

years, and the extension of the undergraduate cycle from three to four years. By abolishing the `A' level segment of the education system, the Presidential Working Party had created a situation where more than 170,000 applicants for university entry were available as opposed to no more than 20,000 in the `A' level system. Thus, the 1990/91 admission process had to accommodate both `O' and `A' level applicants for entry into university (Sifuna, 1998).

The large enrolment of university students was a key corollary to the establishment of more public universities. In 1984, an Act of Parliament established Moi University as the second national university on the basis of what we have described. Kenyatta, which had been a constituent college of the University of Nairobi for some years, became an autonomous institution with the enactment by Parliament of the Kenyatta University Act of 1985. On July 30, 1986, Egerton College, which had been an agricultural training institution since 1939, it became a constituent college of the University of Nairobi through an Act of Parliament and became a full-fledged university on December 23, 1987 following the enactment of the Egerton University Act. In late 1988, Parliament made the Jomo Kenyatta College of Agriculture and Technology a constituent college of Kenyatta University (Achola, 1990). It became an independent university through the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) Act of 1994. Maseno University was later established by another Act of Parliament in 2000 and Western University College of Science and Technology in 2004. By the end of 2005, there were six public universities and 21 private universities, including five fully chartered ones that offer their own degrees.

Access to university education

As is the case throughout sub-Saharan Africa, women are dramatically under-represented in higher education in Kenya despite its rapid expansion. Their access to higher education is certainly a reflection of factors that limit their education at the lower levels. Although the participation gap narrowed slowly in the 1970s, the 1980s produced no changes. Since 1981, roughly 30 per cent of university students have been female. The situation was even worse with those studying overseas. Of the 9,000 Kenyans studying abroad in the early 1980s, data showed that about 11 per cent were females (Maliyamkono, *et al*, 1982). The rates are strongly affected by the retention of women at lower levels of education. As Kinyanjui (1978) noted, as girls ascend from one level of education to another, their proportion of the total enrolment decreases by 10 per cent! In 1986, women comprised 49 per cent of primary students, 41 per cent of secondary students, but only 30 per cent of university students (Republic of Kenya, 1988).

On the basis of the overall enrolment, females have, however, increased over the years. The enrolment increased from 4,740 in 1987/88 to 11,280 in 1990 as shown in Table 29, although the proportion remained around 30 per cent. An analysis of the 1990/91 undergraduate students in the national universities revealed that they represented 31 per cent of the total enrolment of 10,153 students. In 1997/98, which was the highest year of public university enrolment, female students constituted 30.5 percent of the population.
As shown in Table 29, the situation of female enrolment in the public universities has improved only marginally by the turn of the century. Female enrolment rates have increased to

Table 29: Enrolment at the national universities by gender 1987/88 to 1990/91

	1987/88	1988/89	1989/90	1990/91
Males	11,233	13,817	19,454	28,443
Females	4,740	5,993	8,118	11,280
Total	15,973*	19,810*	27,572	39,723

** Excludes Egerton University, which had 1935 students in 1987/88 and 1825/89.*
Source: Economic Surveys, 1989 and 1991.

about 31 per cent overall, although there are considerable variations between the different universities, depending on the kind of programmes offered as well as the duration of study. Maseno University, with largely arts-based degree programmes, has the highest female enrolments, with women consistently comprising around 37 per cent of its students between 1999 and 2004. JKUAT, which had a low proportion of women in 1999 at only 20 per cent, increased this to 31.2 per cent in 2004, while at Kenyatta University, which in 1999 had 40 per cent female enrolment, the percentage of women within the student body has dropped to about 30.

However, female student enrolment is much higher in the private universities, where they register well above 50 per cent. This could largely be due to the fact these universities offer more arts-based programmes and are relatively more secure than the public universities, which offer many science courses and whose programmes are frequently interrupted due to student disturbances. The high enrolment in the private universities pushes female representation in university education to about 35 per cent nationally as shown in Table 30, with the overall enrolment amounting to 49,891 in 1999/2000, 50,837 in 2000/2001, 63,214 in 2001/2002, 68,722 in 2002/2003 and 67,558 in 2003/2004. These figures include students registered in the parallel programmes of the respective universities (Republic of Kenya, 2004).

In terms of background, it is apparent that most of the women who attend universities come from proportionately more advantaged backgrounds. This apparently has been the characteristic of Kenya's higher education over the years. For example, Van den Berghe (1968), in his study of 130 African students attending the then University of East Africa, found that 40 per cent of the women in the sample had fathers who had completed secondary education, compared to only 7.9 per cent of the male students. Hughes (1986) in his study of 295 University of Nairobi graduates of 1970, 1975, 1979 and 1983 supported Van den Berghe's findings. On the basis of parents' education, occupation and income levels, women tended to come from higher socio-economic levels. Similarly, Njenga (1986) reported that parents of

Table 30: Percentage of students enrolled by gender

Inst. 2003/2004	1999/2000		2000/2001		2001/2002		2002/2003		2003/2004	
Public	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Nairobi	70.5	29.5	71.5	28.5	70.0	30.0	69.9	30.1	68.5	31.5
KU	58.2	41.8	59.9	40.1	69.1	28.9	69.2	31.8	69.2	31.8
Moi	60.0	40.0	70.8	29.2	70.3	29.7	70.4	29.6	67..4	32.6
Egerton	71.5	28.5	75.3	24.7	74.9	25.1	74.5	25.5	63.9	26.1
JKUAT	80.0	20.0	69.9	30.1	69.7	30.3	69.4	30.6	68.8	31.2
Maseno	62.8	37.2	62.8	37.2	62.6	37.4	62.2	37.8	61.2	38.8
Sub-Total	67.2	32.8	69.0	31.0	70.9	29.1	69.5	30.5	68.4	31.6
Private										
Accredited	45.5	54.5	43.3	56.7	43.3	56.7	45.5	54.5	45.5	54.5
Un-Accredited	69.1	30.9	65.0	35.0	65.0	35.0	50.2	49.8	50.2	49.8
Sub-Total	48.8	51.2	46.7	53.3	46.9	53.1	26.3	53.7	46.3	53.7
Total	64.2	35.8	65.3	34.7	67.6	32.4	66.4	33.6	65.3	34.7
Grand Total	**49,891**		**50,837**		**63,214**		**68,722**		**67,558**	

Enrolment data includes parallel programmes of the respective universities
Source: Economic Survey, 2004.

the women in her sample of 410 agriculture, veterinary science and engineering graduates from the University of Nairobi were more educated and had higher incomes than did parents of male graduates. These findings are generally consistent with data gathered throughout the less industrialised countries on women in secondary and post-secondary education (Bowman and Anderson, 1980).

It is argued that when a choice must be made between educating a son or a daughter, African parents usually pick the son. Although other factors may intervene, the predominant barrier is economic. For the poorest Kenyans, educational investment cannot be considered for any children, male or female. At the other extreme, when money is no longer significant a constraint, all children are much more likely to be educated. But for the majority, who may be able to support the schooling of only some of their children, sex plays a significant role in the determination of which children will be educated. Not only do sons have the potential of a greater economic pay-off for the family, but also the opportunity costs of removing a daughter from critical child-care and household responsibilities can be devastating. Because of these considerations, it is not surprising that there is a greater likelihood that female students come from more advantaged families than do their male counterparts (Hughes and Mwiria, 1989).

The broad participation rates hide even greater variations when enrolments are examined at individual faculty levels. For example, between 1976 and 1987, women constituted less than 15 per cent of the total Bachelor of Science enrolment or 4 per cent of the engineering enrolment. Of course differences in the type of courses pursued by boys and girls begin to emerge mainly at the secondary and tertiary levels since at the earlier levels there is not much choice in the curriculum. Very few girls enrol in science- and technologically-based courses at the secondary and tertiary levels. Consequently, a very small number of females are to be found in the generally rewarding, scientific and technological spheres of work. In the previous education system in Kenya, the number of girls' schools offering science subjects at the secondary level was much smaller than that of boys (Twoli, 1986). A study of the curriculum options in the former 'A' level schools revealed that most of the available places for girls were in the arts-based subjects like History, Geography and Religious Studies. Boys had proportionately greater access to schools offering courses in the sciences and mathematics. In addition the proportion of the science streams for boys and girls respectively was 5:1. This limited the chances of girls studying sciences or science related subjects and this had implications for the choice of careers and hence the outcome of education for girls (Eshiwani, 1985).

Under the current 8-4-4 system of education, both boys and girls have to do science subjects. One would expect such a system to offer more opportunities for girls' admission into university science and technology faculties. This has certainly not been the case. By 1993/94 when the system had taken effect and admissions depended on performance at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination, it was apparent that, overall, fewer girls gained admission in the science and technology faculties and, in particular, female admissions dropped rather significantly. Enrolments for girls have dropped from the previous 30 and 31 per cent to around 26 to 28 per cent in all the public universities. Although the situation has improved as shown in Table 30, this is because admission requirements are that applicants have at least to pass some science subjects, for which girls' schools are not particularly adequately equipped. Very few girls attained good grades for admission into science programmes in all the public universities. At Moi University, for example, female representation in the 1993/94 academic year dropped from 26 per cent to 18 per cent (Ominde, 1999).

On the whole, therefore, most of the female students tend to pursue law, teaching subjects and arts subjects over science, engineering, agriculture and medicine, although the last two tend to attract slightly more female participants. Between 1980 and 1987, bachelor's degrees in

education and arts alone accounted for between 63.7 per cent and 67.6 percent of the total obtained by women in the public universities. Obviously, the areas of educational concentration do weigh heavily upon the nature of subsequent employment, especially for women in the science or science-based professions. As Kinyanjui (1978) noted "girls educational and occupational aspirations tend to be shaped by the educational system to conform to the existing definition of the role of women in the society". There is strong reason to fear that the potential exists for the increasing isolation of women in, and identification with, a narrow range of service and teaching occupations.

At the postgraduate level at the University of Nairobi, for example, in the early 1990s, women comprised only 1.2 per cent of those enrolled at the Faculty of Engineering. Journalism had the highest proportion, followed by African Studies and Population Studies (Wamahiu, *et.al.,* 1992). Looking at the trends by individual universities, for example, at the University of Nairobi, the representation of women went above 35 per cent only in the Faculty of Arts, and this was once, in 1990 ('A' level group), when the enrolment was 36.5 per cent. In fact, there was a decline in the succeeding years, with women's representation falling to 35 per cent in 1992/93 and 27.2 per cent in 1993/94.

In the Faculty of Law, women students registered the highest representation in 1987/88 when they accounted for 34.8 per cent of the total enrolment. In this faculty, too, there has been a general decline in the enrolment of female students. In 1990/91, the enrolment was 30.9 per cent ('A' level group). It dropped to 28 per cent in 1992/93 and to 24.6 per cent in 1993/94.

In the Faculty of Engineering, women have been generally under represented. In this faculty, women did not account for more than 10 per cent of the total enrolment in any of the years that were studied. It is, however, interesting to note that even with this under representation, the enrolment of women has been rising slowly over the years. From zero in 1974/75, the enrolment of women in this faculty was 3 per cent in 1987/88 rising further to 6 per cent in 1990/91 (8-4-4 group). In 1992/93 the enrolment of women stood at 6.1 per cent and in 1993/94 it rose again to 9.7 per cent.
In the Faculty of Medicine, an upward trend has also been evident in the enrolment of women students despite their gross under representation. Women's enrolment was 9.7 per cent in 1974/75 and 18.3 per cent in 1987/88. It went down again to 17 per cent in 1990/91, but shot up to 20.6 per cent in 1992/1993 and 24.5 per cent in 1993/94 (Nungu, 1996). At

Table 31: Postgraduate student enrolment by gender and programmes at the University of Nairobi 1990/91

	Course	Males	Females	Total	Females
1.	Journalism	16	17	33	51.5
2.	African Studies	24	18	42	42.9
3.	Population Studies	38	19	57	33.3
4.	Arts	232	105	337	31.2
5.	Architecture	59	22	81	27.2
6.	Agriculture	163	57	220	25.9
7.	Medicine	195	55	250	22.0
8.	Commerce	41	11	52	21.2
9.	Vet. Medicine	66	15	81	18.5
10.	Law	10	2	12	16.7
11.	Science	205	41	246	16.7
12.	Diplomacy	23	2	25	8.0
13.	Computer Science	32	2	34	5.9
14.	Engineering	81	1	82	1.2
	Total	**1,165**	**367**	**1,5323**	**24.0**

Source: Economic Survey 1992, Government Printers. Republic of Kenya

Table 32: Participation in university education by gender (percentages), University of Nairobi

Faculty/ Period	Arts		Commerce		Engineering		Law		Medicine	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
74-75	76	24	92	8	100	0	83	17	90	10
87-88	71	29	76	24	97	3	65	35	82	18
90-91	71	29	79	21	94	6	72	28	83	17
90-91	64	36	76	24	94	6	69	31	76	24
92-93	65	35	80	20	94	6	72	28	79	21
93-94	73	27	74	26	90	10	75	25	76	24

Kenyatta University, women are only over represented in Home Economics. In this department, male students accounted for about 10 per cent of the total enrolment in 1987/88 (first year lot) when they accounted for 18.2 per cent.

Contrary to popular belief, female students are not in the majority on the Bachelor of Education (Arts) degree programme, although they are fairly well represented. Their enrolment went beyond the 50 per cent mark only in 1987/88, when they accounted for 50.8 per cent and 50.5 per cent in the first lot and second lot respectively. This was the year when there was a double-intake to clear the backlog of 'A' level students. There was a decline in 1990/91 when the 'A' level class accounted for 42.8 per cent and the 8-4-4 class accounted for 34.9 per cent in 1991/92, the enrolment of girls went up to 37.4 per cent and in 1993/94 it rose to 38.7 per cent.(Nungu, 1996).

The under representation of women in science-based courses is even more pronounced at Moi University. The Faculty of Technology has been the worst hit. In 1987/88, women accounted for 3.6 per cent of the student enrolled in this faculty. In 1990/91, there were no female students enrolled from the 'A' level class while the 8-4-4 class accounted for only 4.6 per cent of the students enrolled in this faculty. In 1992/93, the enrolment of female students rose to 7 per cent but then it dropped to 2 per cent in 1993/94 (Nungu, 1996).

An interesting trend at Moi University has been at the Faculty of Science, where the enrolment of female students had been rising steadily. The enrolment was 3 per cent in 1987/1988, rising to 7.5 per cent and 10.8 per cent during the 1990 double-intake for the 'A' level and 8-4-4 classes respectively. In 1992/93 the enrolment of female students rose to 18.2 per cent and in 1993/94 it went up to 27 per cent (Nungu, 1996).

Academic performance

Students attending university in Kenya receive one of four grades, the highest or first class degree, followed by upper second, lower second and pass at the undergraduate level. Generally, the opportunity for postgraduate education is awarded to students receiving either a First Class or an Upper Second. Studies undertaken in the seventies and eighties showed that academically, female university students tend to be under-represented among those students who graduate with honours

Table 33: Participation in university education by gender (percentages)-Kenyatta University

Faculty/ Period	Arts		Science		Home Economics	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
87-88/1	49	51	77	23	18	82
87-88/2	50	50	79	21	0	100
90-91	57	43	69	31	2	98
90-91	65	35	77	23	5	95
92-93	68	32	80	20	4	96
93-94	61	39	75	25	2	98

Table 34: Participation in university education by gender (percentage), Moi University

Faculty/Period	Forest Resources & Wildlife Management		Science		Technology	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
87-88	91	9	97	3	96	4
90-91	93	7	93	7	100	0
90-91	88	12	89	11	95	5
92-93	89	11	82	18	93	7
93-94	84	16	73	27	98	2

Source: Nungu, M.J. 1996, Affirmative Action and the Quest for Equity in University Education: The Case of Kenya, (1974-1994), Unpublished M.Ed. Dissertation Kenyatta University

degrees. As shown in Table 35, which gives an overall picture of the academic performance at the University of Nairobi for selected years beginning from 1975, women's performance was on the whole lower than that of men. Performance records for graduates in arts, education, commerce and law were examined, which accounted for between 79.4 per cent and 83.1 per cent of the total number of women who graduated in 1975, 1978, 1981, and 1987. Results of the Home Economics Department were, however, excluded from the tabulations because of the skewing caused by the extraordinary proportion of very high marks scored by its graduates.

In 1981, for example, 19 of the 23 Home Economics graduates received a first class or upper second-class degree while in 1984, 88.7 per cent of 97 graduates, and in 1987, 97.5 per cent of 79 graduates received a first class or upper second. These proportions are more than double the overall percentage of graduates earning these marks.

Without the Home Economics marks, the pattern that has consistently emerged showed that women were under-represented among those graduates receiving a first or upper second-class degree. Explanations, which were highly speculative tended to suggest that women had a greater fear of success (Flemming, 1972), had less incentive to achieve and were socialised to be less aggressive and competitive than their male peers (Edwards and Whiting, 1976).

Some recent data, however, seems to reflect a marked improvement in women's performance. Although they are relatively few in the first class degree, they are now quite a sizeable number in

Table 35: University of Nairobi, academic performance by sex (graduates in Arts and Education)

Year	Sex	First Class/Upper Second (per cent)	Lower Second/Pass (per cent)
1975	Female	19.0	81.0
	Male	24.0	76.0
1978	Female	32. 0	67.5
	Male	40.5	59.5
1981	Female	31.7	68.3
	Male	37.0	63.0
1984	Female	35.1	64.9
	Male	40.1	59.3
1987	Female	43.2	56.8
	Male	45.5	54.5

Source: Hughes R. and Mwiria K., Kenyan Women, Higher Education and the Labour Market, Comparative Education Vol. 25, No.2, 1989.

the first class and upper second class combined. For example, in 1992 at the University of Nairobi, 40.6 per cent of males obtained a first class or upper second-class degree, while 46.5 per cent of females did. In the same year, 59.3 per cent of males obtained lower second class and pass degrees as against 53.6 per cent of females. In 1994 males were 43.9 in first class and upper second class while females were 55.1 per cent. Males constituted 57.1 per cent in the lower class and pass degrees while females were 42.9 per cent (Ominde, 1999).

The situation does not appear different at Kenyatta University. In 1992, males were 26.1 per cent in the first class and upper second class while females were 29 per cent. In the lower class and pass degrees, males were 73.9 per cent as females 71 per cent. In 1994, males were 25.1 per cent in the first class and upper second, while females were 29.9 per cent. In the lower class and pass degrees, males were 74.9 per cent and females were 69.1 per cent. At most public universities, therefore, females have shown very remarkable improvement in academic performance, doing much better than their male peers (Ominde, 1999)

Although female students are on the whole performing as well as their male counterparts, a recent study shows that early marriages before completion of their courses, especially in the undergraduate programmes, and subsequent pregnancies and child-care responsibilities put extra demands on female students' study time. In addition there are household chores that also burden them and affect their performance (Ominde, 1999).

The study further reports cases of sexual harassment by male lecturers, some of which have appeared in the dailies and which are said to contribute to women's poor performance. These have included victimisation against female students who do not yield to sexual advances. There are also negative attitudes of male students regarding women academic performance. Some of the male students hold perceptions that female students are not expected to perform well academically because they spend a lot of time on leisure and beauty instead of academic assignments (Ominde, 1999).

Affirmative action

To provide easier access to education to women and other disadvantaged groups, governments have often adopted what is sometimes referred to as "Affirmative Action". In Uganda, for example, Makerere University introduced this in 1990. Working from the perspective that a student body that was 21 per cent

Table 36: Overall academic performance at University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University 1992 and 1994

Year	Sex	First Class/Upper Second (per cent)	Lower Second/Pass (per cent)
University of Nairobi			
1992	Male	40.6	59.4
	Female	46.5	53.5
1994	Male	43.9	55.1
	Female	55.1	44.9
Kenyatta University			
1992	Male	26.1	63.9
	Female	29.0	71.0
1994	Male	25.2	64.8
	Female	29.4	69.6

Source: S.G. Ominde, Gender Participation in Undergraduate Programmes in Kenyan Public Universities, 1970-1994. Unpublished M.Ed. Dissertation, Kenyatta University 1999.

female was unrepresentative, the university undertook to recruit more women students. It weighted admission examination scores by an additional 1.5 points for women students. The percentage of women students in the university rose from 21 per cent in 1989/90 to around 30 per cent in 1990/91. Universities in Ghana also accepted the need for increased female participation and decided to allocate residence hall space in accordance with the number of women admitted. This was expected to solve the limited space available in women's halls of residence as a constraint to women's access to university education (Saint, 1992).

In Kenya, in August 1992, the Joint Admissions Board (JAB) made proposals, which were consequently accepted, that were to provide a gender consideration in university entrance. The university cut-off points were lowered from 69 points for women. This raised the number of female students from the initial 2,547 (25.6 per cent) to 2,771 (27.7 per cent) (Chege, 1994).

Although affirmative action raised women's admission by about 3 per cent, recent research has shown that the practice does not receive much support. Female academic staff in particular are opposed to the practice as it is said to consign women to an inferior status. There was the feeling that lowering admission points was a very cosmetic gesture. It was reasoned that such a gesture has often ended up benefiting girls from well-known schools and well-connected students from the so-called disadvantaged regions. The practice has also been widely misinterpreted by politicians who tend to believe that it amounts to some kind of quota system through which the respective areas they represent should enjoy university admission (Nungu, 1996).

Explanations of low female enrolment

A number of issues have been advanced to explain the low enrolment of women in higher education. First, low secondary school enrolments greatly reduce the scope for progress in higher education. Coupled with low secondary school enrolments is the high dropout rate of girls. This rate is estimated to be so high as to result in only a small pool of completers eligible for entry into higher education. As already pointed out, the poor examination results in the former and current education systems further affect the number of female entrants into higher education. There is also the rigidity of admission requirements for particular degrees or course majors, which also narrow the potential pool of applicants.

At the universities, there are other sets of factors that make university education rather unattractive for women. One is the high failure rate in certain fields like medicine and engineering. A high level of sexual harassment of women students has also been cited by some studies. A number of women students reportedly chose not to enrol at the main campus of the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, because of "Punch", a form of wall literature, which has increasingly been subjecting girls to sexual harassment (Mbilinyi *et al,* 1991).

At the postgraduate level, opportunities have been severely reduced as a result of both the economic crisis and the deprioritisation of higher education by many development agencies. The University of Nairobi's Medical School, for example, has operated at under-capacity due to the deterioration of its equipment, materials and other resources. Consequently, the percentage of women is even lower in postgraduate enrolment than at the undergraduate level (Aduda, 1999).

On the demand side, the low level of manufacturing and service activities tends to discourage parents from sending their girls for university education as they do not see prospects for absorption in the formal labour market (Subharao, 1994). There is also the growth of alternative tertiary education opportunities outside the universities and student preferences for more vocationally oriented courses. Admission requirements for such courses are often lower and such training is preferred because it is shorter and leads almost immediately to higher paid work than university education. Seemingly these material rewards outweigh the greater

prestige and value of a university education. Finally there are still the socio-cultural factors within some communities that confine women to the lower levels of the education system. This perception, coupled with economic factors, leads some families to terminate girls' education at the lower levels. A recent study also shows that many men tend to shun highly educated girls, especially where candidacy for marriage is concerned. Most of them view highly educated women as rude, uncooperative and unable to manage housework. These perceptions are also said to discourage some female graduates from continuing with postgraduate studies at masters and Ph.D. levels (Kanake, 1998).

Summary

Since the achievement of independence, the population of students in higher education institutions has increased dramatically with the expanding of the existing institutions and opening up new ones. By the early 1990s, it stood at about 40,000 students. As is the case in other sub-Saharan African countries, women are seriously under-represented in higher education in Kenya. Their access to higher education is certainly a reflection of factors that limit their education at the lower levels. Although the gender gap narrowed somewhat in the 1970s, since the early 1980s, only about 30 per cent of university students have been female. Women's under-representation is greatest in science and technology-based courses. Their performance in university examinations has generally been lower than that of their male counterparts except in recent years. Although the affirmative action of the early 1990s raised their enrolment percentage by about 3 per cent, this measure, on the whole, is not quite popular. In terms of background, it is apparent that a majority of women who attend universities come from proportionately advantaged backgrounds.

A number of issues have been advanced to explain the low enrolment in higher education. These include: low secondary school enrolments which greatly reduce the scope for progress in higher education; high dropout rates; poor examination results; rigidity of admission requirements; university-based factors such as high failure rates in certain fields, sexual harassment; and labour-related factors. These issues require urgent attention to increase women's participation in university education.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Vocational and technical education, which was central to colonial education, was a major source of conflict between the state and the people. The main issue of conflict was the so-called adaptative nature of elements of vocational and technical education. While the state perceived technical and vocational education as a means of introducing relevant skills for rural life, the population regarded it as a legitimisation of inferior and futureless non-academic education designed to condemn Africans to be perpetually hewers of wood and carriers of water. The unpopularity of this adaptive approach generally led to its failure during the colonial period. It was also partially responsible for the post-independence insistence on academic, employment-oriented education.

Vocational and technical education is inextricably linked to the formal education system. The vocational and technical education and training system builds on the foundations laid by the education system. At the lower levels, education provides mostly trainability but at higher levels and for more technical fields it is expected to provide specific foundations, such as science subjects and mathematics. For these reasons, therefore, there are usually close links between the two systems, with the education system determining at which levels entry to the training can be made. Hence different levels of training are often identified as post-primary, post-secondary, post-graduate, indicating the level of education that is considered a prerequisite for entry.

Another dimension of the training system is the extent to which it is formal, informal or non-formal. Informal on-the-job training is of critical importance in translating skills and knowledge into effective job performance. At the lower levels of skill acquisition, it is often the principal mode of acquiring the required skills as has been and, still is, the case at the craft level in the county. But even at higher levels, informal practical training is essential for effective matching of skills and performance requirements on the job. This is the main rationale for the sandwich and day release programmes that characterised polytechnic training.

The term 'non-formal' is often used to indicate institutionalised training that is not oriented towards formal qualifications based in standardised curricula as, for example, in the youth polytechnics. Formal training, on the other hand, is largely a public sector activity, but there are significant programmes in the community and private sectors, mostly in technical training. Such formal training programmes as exist in the private sector are either commercial or company specific and in the latter case, usually rely on public institutions such as the polytechnics to provide the formal programmes in general skills.

The vocational and technical training system in Kenya is on the whole complex, involving formal, informal and non-formal elements at various levels. Historically most training has been informal, acquired on the job through an informal apprenticeship system. The 1972 manpower survey, for example, found that 80 per cent of skilled workers had no formal education beyond primary school and very little institutional vocational training. Even today most technical training is on an in-service rather than pre-service basis and at the lower levels, most of it still appears to be informal in spite of the rapid development of formal technical training institutes. The informal sector in particular relies almost completely on informal training.

In terms of qualifications, only the Government Trade Test is not tied to a formal educational certificate as an entry requirement to the training programme. With the exception of the semi-craft level, which for a long time has been mostly post-primary, a secondary school certificate is the minimum prerequisite for entry into the formal technical training system, making it almost entirely post-secondary. Technician training is available almost exclusively on a sponsorship basis at the national polytechnics. A secondary school leaver first has to find an employ-

er who is willing to sponsor him or her for further training by enrolling him/her either in one of the polytechnics or in the National Technician Apprenticeship scheme under which formal training will take place initially at one of the National Industrial Training Centres (NITCs) and eventually finish at one of the national polytechnics.

In both cases the training consists of sandwich courses, but at the polytechnics day release courses are also available. At the polytechnics the full technician certification is either the Ordinary Diploma or the Full Technician Certificate (FTC), both requiring three years of training. In the case of the latter, there is a graded set of tests, not to be confused with the Government Trade Test, leading from Part I through Part III to the FTC, which signifies full technician status for trainees in the Technician Apprenticeship Scheme. Those who wish to acquire craft-level skills register with the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) in search of employment and sponsorship for further training, or apply for admission at a Harambee Institute of Technology (HITS) offering the course in which they are interested, if they can afford the fees (Loubser, 1983).

This chapter reviews enrolments by gender in the various vocational and technical programmes and factors affecting female participation. As vocational and technical training institutes are many, the focus will only be on the major ones.

Youth polytechnics

The youth polytechnics (YPs), formerly known as village polytechnics, signified a response to the then emerging problem of primary school leaver unemployment. The National Christian Council of Kenya (NCCK) drew attention to the need for community initiatives in 1966 in a booklet entitled “After school what?” and proceeded the following year with the founding of four village polytechnics. The original idea was to provide rural primary school leavers with informal training in skills for which there was a demand in the local community. Training programmes were, therefore, to be determined on the basis of a survey or assessment of which skills were locally needed and were to be kept flexible to respond to changing community needs.

Trainees were to acquire a range of such elementary skills that would enable them to be versatile in the services they offered. They were to be trained in agriculture, masonry, carpentry, home economics, sewing and others. Since employment was unlikely to be available in local rural areas, they were to be trained for self-employment and given some practical experience through the organisation of work groups, which could continue after they had completed their training. The village polytechnics (VPs) were to be small, modest and informal day institutions that could become self-sufficient through community *harambee* support and income from the productive activities of the students.

The movement grew so fast that by 1971, when the government launched a major programme to extend assistance to Youth Development Projects, including village polytechnics, the number reached 69. By 1975, Government assistance went to 100 village polytechnics with 400 instructors and some 6,000 trainees. In 1982 there were 286 VPs assisted by the government with an enrolment of 29,250 students and 1,600 instructors. On the average a VP had 102 trainees and 5.6 instructors. The unaided VPs were estimated to be several hundreds.

In terms of enrolment, a survey carried out in 1982 in Central Province established a total enrolment of 5,634 trainees, of whom 35 per cent were girls. The survey also showed that a large proportion of girls, 32 per cent, enrolled for courses in tailoring and home economics, while boys enrolled in courses in carpentry, masonry, metalwork, plumbing, leatherwork and electrical trades. It was established that by way of diversifying the curriculum, tailoring had been added to the girls programme to provide them with employable skills that could not be offered by home economics. A very small proportion of

girls, 2.5 per cent, were enrolled in commercial courses, with a very negligible proportion enrolled in carpentry, metalwork, motor vehicle mechanics and leatherwork (Keino, 1985). Although the research did not cover other provinces, the picture was not likely to be different. On the whole, the YP movement has been rapidly declining throughout the country. The main factors which have contributed to the retardation of its growth have included inadequate physical facilities and training equipment, lack of training materials and tools, inadequate supply of instructors and administrators, lack of funding for operational expenses and many other related problems. A further problem of YPs is their poor image in the community where they are seen as catering for school dropouts who are generally considered failures (Okech, 1995; Danuda, 1998; MoEST and GTZ, 2003).

National Youth Service

The National Youth Service (NYS) was started as a scheme to mobilise the unemployed out-of-school youth. The service was established in 1964 for youths between 16 and 30 years. The objective of the NYS was to place such people in an environment that would inculcate good citizenship and provide an opportunity for education and training that would make them productive, skilled workers and farmers. Through such a programme they were expected to contribute directly to the economy of the country by helping to conserve and rehabilitate the country's natural resources while in the service, and enhance their opportunities for continued productive employment, primarily in the rural economy, after they left the service. The original motivation of the programme was to keep unemployed young people off the streets. Consequently, the recruits were mainly primary school leavers.

The service, which was established through an Act of Parliament, is classified as a disciplinary force. Following their recruitment, the trainees undergo three to four months of basic paramilitary training after which they have a passing-out parade. They are then posted to remote areas of the country to engage in national building projects, including road construction, bush clearing, construction of dams and houses, and to operate as security units.

After 18 months of project work, the service men and women are selected for courses of specialised training depending on their record of conduct, the results of an aptitude test and their personal ambitions. The courses, which prepare the trainees for Trade Test Grade III, include:

- Building trades: masonry, carpentry, plumbing and welding.
- Mechanics: motor vehicle mechanics.
- Plant mechanics and operator.
- Agriculture: agriculture-technical assistants courses.
- Secretarial and typical courses.
- Tailoring and dressmaking.
- Upholstery.
- Driving: light vehicle (girls) and heavy vehicle (boys).
- Catering.
- Electrical work and refrigeration.

By the mid 1980s, the service had recruited about 37,000 men and 5,000 women. Women comprised about 10-20 per cent of every recruitment and were largely enrolled in programmes such as tailoring, secretarial, driving of light vehicles, catering and certain types of farming (Loubser, 1983).

Diversified secondary schools - Technical Training Institutes (TTIs)

Secondary schools that were formerly known as diversified schools were in the mid-1980s transformed into technical training institutes (TTIs). The diversified secondary schools were an intervention to enhance employment opportunities for secondary school leavers. In Kenya as in many African countries in the 1970s, secondary education expanded more rapidly than wage employment among the educated youth, whose aspirations, it was believed, made them reluctant to accept blue-collar employment. This made policy makers question the relevance of the curriculum of the academic secondary school for those graduates who did not enter

the university. Because university and secondary school graduates were among the unemployed, many planners believed that an academic education alone was an insufficient preparation for employment. In addition, many people believed that academic education led to a disdain for manual labour, thereby exacerbating the difficulties of absorbing school leavers into the workforce. Academic secondary schools would thus be diversified in an attempt to equip students with practical skills and knowledge of how to make or do things and create positive attitudes towards blue-collar work (Sifuna, 1999).

There were 18 technical/diversified secondary schools offering either basic building courses or the basic engineering courses except for Kabete Technical, which offered both courses. Most of the technical secondary schools were mainly reserved for boys until 1977, when some opened their doors to female students. However, except for one, which went ahead and abolished typing for girls and offered a uniform curriculum to both sexes, these schools offered girls a separate curriculum in home science, business studies, tailoring and dressmaking. Therefore, enrolment in technical secondary schools was strongly in favour of boys. In 1982, for example, while 8,212 boys were enrolled, girls numbered only 771 (Keino, 1985).

Girls were found mostly in commercial and science courses: they formed about 97.5 per cent of enrolment in courses with a home science bias, while boys were in the majority in technical courses. There were also 35 industrial secondary schools which, except for a few mixed ones, were predominantly boys' schools. These schools offered the usual academic curriculum alongside either a combination of metal and woodwork courses or power and electrical mechanics. Female participation in these courses was generally very low (Keino, 1985). They were later transformed into technical training institutes and the situation regarding female enrolment has not changed much. In 1998, for example, girls constituted about 40 per cent of the 7,979 students.

The Harambee Institutes of Technology (HITs)

The Harambee institutes of technology represent a community response to the demand for post-secondary education and training opportunities. Whereas Harambee efforts to establish secondary schools were mainly focused on general academic education, the HITs were unique in that their objective was to provide training for employment, particularly to meet manpower needs in the regions with a focus on rural development and industrialisation.

Harambee fundraising efforts started in 1971 for some of the planned institutions and by 1973 there were 17 institutions at various stages of planning and fund raising. Initially, planning for each institute was carried out in isolation from the others, but since 1975 they were placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, which provided a support unit for the coordination of planning and curriculum development with the assistance of UNESCO. Enrolments grew rapidly as new institutions became operational and others expanded as resources permitted. Between 1978 and 1982, for example, total enrolment increased from 953 to 2,915 and by 1988, it had risen to 6,846.

The HITs offer three-year programmes to secondary school leavers, including a one-year industrial attachment for technical courses. By 1980, about 36 per cent of the students were enrolled in business studies, 34 per cent in building and construction, 9 per cent in mechanical subjects, 8 per cent in agricultural subjects, including home economics, 7 per cent in textiles and 5 per cent in electrical engineering.

A very striking feature of the current programme of the HITs is the limited opportunities they provide for women. The only programmes with significant female enrolment are the conventional secretarial studies, tailoring and home economics. This contrasts significantly with the harambee movement at the secondary school level, where women fare considerably better than in the former government-maintained schools.

Women's enrolment, however, continues to remain quite low in these institutions. In 1998, for example, female trainees constituted 36.1 per cent of the 7,094 students.

The national polytechnics

Currently, there are four national polytechnics in Nairobi, Mombasa, Eldoret and Kisumu. The oldest is the Kenya Polytechnic in Nairobi, which was established in 1961. About 75 per cent of all students at the Kenya Polytechnic and a higher percentage of technical subjects are sponsored by industry in various training programmes pursued through sandwich, day-release, full time and evening courses. Besides engineering subjects – mechanical, electrical and civil - the polytechnics offer programmes in science and business studies. The Kenya Polytechnic also offers courses in printing, general studies, institutional management and library science.

Admission requirement are high and that means they only attract students with very good grades. Given the high entry requirements, most students are recruited from the better-maintained quality secondary schools. Thus, the polytechnics do not significantly address the inequalities in the training sector, especially with regard to gender differentiation.

An analysis of the 1991 student enrolment at the Kenya Polytechnic by gender and department reveals the concentration of females in Business Studies (55 per cent) and Institutional Management (85 per cent). The two departments have strong secretarial and home economics components, fields traditionally perceived as being female-oriented. In the so-called male-oriented departments such as Building and Civil Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering and Mechanical Engineering, female representation is particularly poor - comprising 6.3 per cent, 3.4 per cent, and 2.7 per cent of the student population respectively.

Most females in Business Studies departments are clustered around three secretarial courses, which constitute 100 per cent of the total student intakes, while others are enrolled in the professional purchasing and supplies course. (Wamahiu, *et al,* 1992).

The above situation, which prevailed at the Kenya Polytechnic in the early 1990s, had not changed much by the late 1990s. In 1998, for example, while only 1.4 per cent of the students enrolled in mechanical engineering were women, 84.4 per cent of female students were registered in institutional management. At the Mombasa Polytechnic, as shown in Table 39, 52.4 per cent of female students were registered in business studies compared to less 5 per cent, in engineering courses (MoEST, 2003).

Kenya Technical Teachers College (KTTC)

KTTC was built through financial assistance from the Canadian government and started

Table 37: Kenya Polytechnic student enrolment by department and gender, January, 1991

	Male	Female	Total	%
1. Applied Science	268	81	349	23.2
2. Business Studies	171	205	376	54.5
3. Building and Civil Engineering	150	10	160	6.3
4. Computer Studies	27	14	41	34.2
5. Electrical and Electronic Engineering	198	7	205	3.4
6. Graphic Arts	537	237	774	30.6
7. Institutional Management	23	132	155	85.2
8. Information and Liberal Studies	178	142	320	44.4
9. Mechanical Engineering	286	8	294	2.7
10. Surveying and Mapping	115	25	140	17.9
11. Mathematics and Statistics	125	52	177	29.4
Total	**2078**	**913**	**2991**	**30.5**

Source: Kenya Polytechnic, Registrar's Office.

Table 38: Percentage enrolment of females by courses in Business Studies Department

Course	% Female Students
Diploma Foundation Purchasing and Supplies	23.1
Certificate in Marketing	12.9
Diploma Professional Purchasing and Supplies	0.0
Diploma in Marketing	20.0
CAP Parts I & II	32.0
CPS Part I & II	33.3
Diploma in Legal Secretarial Studies	100.0
Diploma in Medical Secretarial Studies	100.0
Personal Assistant Secretarial Studies	100.0
Diploma in Business Administration	38.9
Average	**54.5**

Source: Kenya Polytechnic, 1991, Nairobi

operating in 1977. It has a capacity of 700 students and offers diploma courses in technical, business and industrial training. It also offers short courses in skills training in technical areas. It is the only institution that trains teachers for technical education.

The college was originally conceived to train teachers for the secondary school system, but was expanded to offer courses for HIT, youth polytechnics and industry instructors and trainers. With the transformation of technical secondary schools into technical institutions and the lack of expansion in industrial programmes, there have been problems with the placement of its graduates, with some of whom increasingly been finding employment outside their area of training.

Enrolments at the KTTC show a similar picture as at the Kenya Polytechnic. The proportion of girls enrolled in 1991 was negligible in the Building, Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering departments. In Institutional Management, women were 132 out of 155, or 85 per cent, while in Business Education they formed about 55 per cent of the population (Wamahiu, *et al*. 1992).

Currently, the KTTC trains most teachers for secondary schools and middle level institutions as well as trainers in industries. The programmes range from a one-month TOT course for training officers to a two-year higher diploma in education management. The college has, however, diversified it programmes to include continuing education programmes. This was the result of reduced interest in TVET and the need for institutional survival. The diversification of programmes was a departure from its original mandate of TOT, putting it into competition with other institutions that it was intended to serve (MoEST and GTZ, 2003).

Table 39: Students enrolment in Mombasa Polytechnic by course and sex, 1998

Course	Male	Female	Total	% Female
Mechanical & Automotive Engineering	598	23	621	3.7
Electrical & Electronic Engineering	535	22	557	3.9
Building & Civil Engineering	279	12	291	4.1
Medical Engineering	88	23	111	20.7
Applied Sciences	357	232	589	39.4
Computing & Information Technology	156	74	230	32.2
Business Studies	186	205	391	52.4
Small Business Centre	6	1	7	14.3
Total	**2,205**	**592**	**2,797**	**21.2**

Table 40: Enrolment at the Kenya Technical Teachers College by department and gender, 1991

Department/Programme	Males	Females	Total	% Females
Building	147	2	149	1.4
Business Education	99	60	159	37.7
Mechanical Engineering	73	2	75	2.7
Electrical Engineering	59	5	64	7.8
Institutional management	2	41	43	95.4
Instructors Training	124	5	129	3.9
Total	**504**	**115**	**619**	**18.6**

Source: KTTC, Nairobi, 1992.

As Table 41 illustrates, women's participation in technical training institutes between 1999 and 2003 seems to have improved considerably, averaging 39 per cent in all the training institutions as well the overall enrolment.

Some key issues on access

From the survey, it is clear that women's participation in vocational and training programmes is extremely low. Although the number of female students enrolled in technical institutions has increased, the number enrolled in engineering courses is low. The majority of the female students enrol in institutional management courses and in business studies. There are serious gender disparities in enrolment both at the Kenya Polytechnic and Mombasa Polytechnic.

For example, only 1.4 per cent of the students enrolled in mechanical engineering in 1998 were females, while institutional management registered 84.4 per cent females. Business studies attracted 58 per cent of women who enrolled in the institutions. During the same year, some 2,797 students were enrolled at Mombasa Polytechnic, 21.2 per cent of whom were females. The bulk of female students (52.4 per cent) were enrolled in business studies compared to less than 5 per cent who were taking engineering courses (MoEST, 2003)

Reasons for their low enrolment are many and varied. Possible reasons include the traditional gender stereotypes of desired male and female occupations, the macho environment of vocational trades and parents' attitudes towards

Table 41: Student enrolment by gender in technical institutions, 1999-2003

Institution	1999		2000		2001		2002		2003	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Kenya Polytechnic	61.0	39.0	70.9	29.1	76.6	23.4	69.8	30.2	69.0	31.0
Mombasa Polytechnic	61.0	39.0	70.9	29.1	76.6	23.4	69.2	30.8	65.6	34.4
Kisumu Polytechnic	61.0	39.0	70.8	29.2	76.6	23.4	69.8	30.2	70.0	30.0
Eldoret Polytechnic	61.0	39.0	70.9	29.1	55.7	44.3	69.9	30.1	69.0	31.0
Total	61.0	39.0	70.9	29.1	70.9	29.1	69.8	30.2	68.0	32.0
Other TTIs										
TTIs	61.0	39.0	60.2	39.8	56.0	44.0	55.0	45.0	55.0	45.0
Institutes of Technology	70.5	29.5	60.2	39.8	56.0	44.0	55.0	45.0	55.0	45.0
Total	59.0	41.0	60.2	39.8	56.0	44.0	55.0	45.0	55.0	45.0
Grand Total	**59.8**	**40.2**	**64.1**	**35.9**	**61.5**	**38.5**	**61.2**	**38.8**	**61.6**	**39.4**
Total Number	23,661		24,554		28,073		32,750		32,718	

girls' vocational training. Other possible explanations may be economic (the perceived low return from vocational training as opposed to other opportunities), educational (lack of girls exposure to technical/craft skills), ignorance of vocational opportunities, particularly in the rural areas, the opportunity cost of girls' labour or early marriage (Mbughuni, 1991).

However, one of the key reasons for girls' low enrolment is the fact that few of them perform well in sciences and technical subjects at secondary school level. As already discussed, women are not only under-represented in the science subjects at the secondary school level, but they also perform poorly in these areas in the national examinations.

Another factor in the selection process, which perhaps affects girls' enrolment, is the admission age. Many centres admit candidates who have just completed school, nearly all of them below 27 years of age. Girls at this age are particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment as well as to "sugar daddies", which affects their performance and even leads them to drop out.

There is a tendency for many women to resist taking up technical training due to gender typing. They suffer from deeply rooted socio-cultural norms and ideals for male and female behaviour, with girls thinking that technical education is a "male" field, they have little confidence to pursue it or are afraid of getting dirty. Such gender typing is reinforced rather than broken in the earlier educational levels as already discussed.

Gender-typing often contributes to gender streaming. Girls generally tend to concentrate in the so-called "soft" trades or fields. Thus, they are not only streamed into the traditionally feminine trades and fields, but are concentrated in trades with low technology and or low employment opportunities. In some institutes, tailoring is taught on domestic machines with no design/cutting training. Painting/sign writing is a problem trade for in-plant placement as is printing and bookbinding. In the polytechnics and related institutions, women's reasons for choosing fields such as electronics, laboratory technician and electrical engineering is that they are "soft" subjects that do not require physical strength and grime.

Another set of reasons for turning down technical careers may be the methodology and content of technical education. According to a study done in Tanzania, rote learning methods and favouritism of male students by teachers were some of the major factors that contributed to women's rejection of these subjects. It was clear that rote teaching or the "terrorist pedagogy" which hinges on examination performance and the control of knowledge by the teacher cannot promote the transformation process for either men or women (Mbughuni, 1991). Even in the absence of open discrimination, there is often the macho environment of technical education which is a crucial barrier to success as it influences the dominant gender relations, whether this means interaction with teachers or male students, as well as among themselves.

After admission, women face greater chances of non-completion of technical and vocational courses. Although hard data on the situation in Kenya is hard to come by, a related study in Tanzania indicated higher dropout rates for girls (Lauglo, 1990). Another study showed 14 per cent for boys and 17 per cent for girls (Mbughuni, 1991). The possible reasons for dropping out include: dissatisfaction, misplaced expectations, pregnancy, harassment and academic problems. The main reasons seem to centre on socio-cultural factors and not their academic ability. The Lauglo study also asserts that girls are more likely to drop out of courses where they are a minority. More often, however, the field or trade being taught seems to have a higher correlation to dropout rates than the percentage of girls in class (Mbughuni, 1991).

These studies also showed that in terms of examination performance, there was no difference between men and women. Examination performance in technical subjects was generally good for the two groups. However, obstacles for women seem to emerge at the levels of

placement or employment. Some surveys have shown that women make up a relatively small percentage of technical staff and are very few in managerial positions. Female technical staff are also under-represented in the staff development and training programmes (Hughes and Mwiria, 1989).

At least one identified obstacle to women's advancement at the technical level is the attitude of employers. Although many employers deny discrimination against women, the facts tell a different story. Generally, only a small number of women are promoted or given staff development opportunities. This situation is part of the same pattern of women's employment, which focuses on factors such as gender typing of employment and socio-cultural and economic reasons. However, as the graduates of technical colleges represent the cream of secondary school leavers, there is need for special attention to be given to the future of these high potential women.

Summary

This chapter makes it clear that vocational and technical education is inextricably linked to the formal education system. In this regard, since girls are disadvantaged in the formal education structure, they are automatically under-represented in the vocational and technical education. Women's low participation in the technical fields is exacerbated by the admission requirements, which place a strong premium on achievements in sciences and mathematics.

Apart from problems of lack of academic prerequisites and performance in the formal education system, the core problem for women in technical education appears to be the dominant gender relations, which foster a discouraging form of gender typing. Related to this, three identified major areas which constrain women's participation in vocational and technical education are the socio-cultural, institutional and employment factors. The socio-cultural sphere is that of dominant gender relations, which result in gender-typing, negative attitudes, lack of confidence and the macho domination of training and education. The institutional sphere involves such factors as curriculum and teaching methodology and the employment sphere, embraces career opportunities, which is also reflected in the differing expectations of the student and employers.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

INFORMAL SECTOR TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

In many African countries, traditional apprenticeship in small firms, often in the informal sector, has been a major source of skill formation. Its strengths in enabling individuals to acquire the broad range of technical and managerial skills necessary for self-employment are widely recognised. And in an area of scarce resources for education and training, the fact that apprentices finance their own training is increasingly appreciated.

In most countries, apprenticeship is the principal mode of training for traditional crafts, such as blacksmiths, leather craft, and herbal medicine as well as for modern, technical trades such as automobile maintenance and repair, woodwork, radio repair and others. These apprenticeships exist whenever a small business owner is willing, for a fee, to teach a skill or trade that is in demand. Entry is open to anyone who can pay the training fee and meet other qualifications such as ethnic or clan identity. The training period varies in length, depending on the technical difficulty of the trade and how quickly the apprentices master the body of skills. Apprentices receive their training almost exclusively by working on actual commercial assignments and contracts. They learn by observing the techniques of older, more experienced workers, asking questions and participating in work routines to the extent that they are competent (Fluitman, 1989). Normally there is no certification for those who go through the apprenticeship programme.

Policy evolution

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) recognised from the late 70s that unemployment had become chronic and intractable in nearly every developing country. It therefore launched the ILO World Employment Programme. As part of the programme, pilot country missions were envisaged, to study, with the help of UN agencies, the causes of unemployment in countries with particular types of problems, and find out what needed to be done internationally and nationally. The reports of the missions had several purposes. Not only were they to give governments an analysis of the unemployment problem and a suggested programme of action, but they were also to provide guidance for the aid and trade policies of international organisations and donor agencies, and to indicate research priorities. Kenya was among the countries studied and, after its visit, the mission team published a report entitled: *Employment Incomes and Equality: A Strategy for Increasing Productive Employment in Kenya*. Among the key areas identified for combating unemployment was the informal sector. It was noted that "vigorous action must be taken to facilitate employment and raise incomes in the informal sector, where the migrant will seek a livelihood if he cannot find wage employment through formal recruitment systems", (ILO 1972).

One of the most noticeable features of the ILO's analysis of the informal sector in its 1972 report was its contrast with the prevailing attitudes towards the large numbers of Africans not working in regular, modern-sector employment for whom it was quite positive. Unlike the images of shiftless, under or unemployed Africans, the report observed that most of those outside the modern sector were actually working - and working very hard with the resources they had saved, with labour-intensive and adapted technologies, and with skills acquired outside the formal system. The report, therefore, urged the abandonment of the shanty demolition and harassment policies and their substitution with the site-and-service schemes, and greater security of tenure. It also recommended the simplification of the trade licensing system, and suggested that there should be much closer ties between formal and informal sectors through subcontracting (ILO, 1972).

The thrust of the report was that the informal sector's development, like that of the *harambee* movement, had been independent of government support, but there was need for a close

relationship between the policies adopted by the government in all the spheres of development, be they fiscal, employment, education, agriculture, technology or others. The report recognised that the informal sector was there to stay and to expand whatever policies the government did or did not adopt. It was the provider of employment, goods and services for the lower-income groups, for which there was no alternative source of supply.

The special and positive aspect of the informal sector was that it had developed despite total neglect and even active discouragement by the state, hence it was only logical for the government to continue a hands-off approach. This was the origin of the view that on the whole, the sector should be left alone, and that there was nothing to be gained by government interference. Any attempt to 'formalise' the informal sector could well undermine its robust independence. This perception by the report seemed to create tension between doing nothing and intervention that characterised the government's thinking and policy towards the informal sector many years following the report. It is notable, though, that a Sessional Paper on Employment published after the report touched on the informal sector; and the subject has also been mentioned severally in Development Plans (King, 1996).

What, however, seemed to drive the informal sector to the policy centre stage was the introduction of the 8-4-4 education system that placed more emphasis on vocational, scientific and technological development and the commissioning of the *Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond,* which was quite concerned about the skills base of the expanding population. By late 1985, the core thinking about the macro-economic changes necessary in the country and the crucial role of the informal sector in these policies was discussed at the cabinet level in anticipation of a new sessional paper. These developments were reinforced by visits by then President Daniel arap Moi to Kamukunji and Ziwani to have a glimpse of the operations of the informal sector.
These were followed by the publication of the Sessional Paper No.1 of 1986, *Economic Management for Renewed Growth,* which brought the informal sector to the centre stage once again. Among the key factors was the crucial problem of the cost of creating jobs within the formal sector of the economy. Macro-economic policies aimed at stimulating productivity and incomes had to be complemented by direct assistance to individuals and small-scale business. This was to be achieved by developing more positive lines of devising flexible credit schemes, encouraging technical graduates to begin their own business, encouraging the informal sector to produce alternatives to expensive imported items, forming cooperatives for assistance, providing information on new technologies, providing access to credit and others. Another important move was the establishment of a task force to review all policies to promote the informal sector with the aim of recommending ways to create 'a healthy regulatory climate' for informal sector activities (Republic of Kenya, 1986).

Following the Sessional Paper No. 1, in *Development Plan 1989-1993,* the term Jua Kali was finally accepted into a major planning document and in many institutions. This gave the momentum for continued focus on the informal sector. In 1987, for example, in collaboration with the ILO and UNDP, a project on entrepreneurship was started. This was soon broadened, in 1989, into a small enterprise development policy project, organised in a very participatory manner, which involved all the relevant ministries, aid agencies, representatives of industry and commerce, and with targeted seminars and workshops focused on small-scale exporters, the banking sector, NGOs and many other interested parties. An effective management strategy held together a strong core committee throughout the project, which in 1989, published three volumes, namely; *A Strategy for Small Enterprise Development: Towards the Year 2000; Part One; Small Enterprise Development in Kenya: Programme of Action Part Two;* and *Small Enterprise Development in Kenya: Project Ideas; Part Three.* There was also increased support for the national policy development process in the Jua

Kali sector by development agencies and NGOs (King, 1996). Since the above developments, there has been considerable interest in policy and research in this sector in Kenya. It is now generally accepted that there are more young people acquiring their training on the job via the informal sector enterprises than there are via institutional training systems. For example, one broad estimate showed that there were probably some 80,000 informal sector apprentices by June 1990 compared with only 55,000 trainees in the formal sector system (Yambo, 1999). It is worth noting, however, that enterprise-based training in the informal sector does not take place exclusively within that sector. A substantial number of informal sector workers and owners acquire their main skills from the formal sector of the economy.

Many NGOs in Kenya are involved in training for the urban poor. They do not generally consider it training for the informal sector although they acknowledge that many of their trainees enter the sector. Their focus is less often on assisting small-scale enterprises than on helping young people, older men and women acquire skills to earn a livelihood. Training workshops are provided and selected trainees go through some kind of conventional courses. What makes the courses often very different is the extraordinary level of commitment that many of the trainees manifest. This means that a great deal of attention is given to recruitment of the trainers as well as to the wider social relations of the training activity. Some NGO initiatives in skills training for the urban poor have sought to build upon the traditional system of the master and the apprentice in the informal sector to develop beyond technical skills, attitudes and values of benefit to the society as whole (King, 1989).

In the past many apprentices in the informal sector had little or no education at all. Because primary education expanded at the same time that wage employment contracted, levels of education for apprentices rose substantially. It is now common to find secondary school leavers as well as university graduates in the informal sector. With regard to employment, the informal sector in Kenya provides an example where this sector has shown considerable ability to adapt in a crisis situation, much more than the formal sector. Employment in the informal sector grew at annual rate of nearly 8 per cent during 1981 and 1984, as against 4.1 per cent for the modern sector. Between 1983 and 1984, when other sectors of the economy were experiencing severe economic decline, informal sector employment increased by 8.2 per cent compared to 2.6 per cent in the modern formal sector. It has been estimated that the sector has been growing by 10 per cent annually, after some decline in the mid 1980s when formal-sector growth was virtually marginal (Yambo, 1991). A recent survey has shown that the informal sector has almost reached parity, with males amounting to 52.7 per cent of its participants and females 47.4 (Owigar, 2003).

Selected characteristics of women in the informal sector

Although regarded as being most vibrant, the informal sector faces many constraints. Until recently, it has suffered from a very negative public image, with the result that its operations have not grown in a co-ordinated, planned manner and have not been easily integrated in the national planning processes. Although the informal sector has been seen as a vehicle for "mobilising domestic resources for equitable development" nothing very concrete is done by policy planners to integrate its operations in the national economy. As a result, the informal sector has continued to grow and operate on the periphery of the formal sector (King, 1996).

The negative public image suffered by the informal sector has been partly a function of the legal relationships between the operators in the sector and various organisational and institutional arrangements within the formal sector. These relationships include the lack of registration arrangements for most informal sector operations (in part, those falling within the "community of the poor" categorisation); and lack of property and "residential" arrangements, with the result that about 90 per cent of all

informal sector operations take place on squatter land (whether belonging to the government or individuals) thereby making many of the operations in the sector very temporary. A majority of the informal sector operations take place on shop pavements, roadsides, or areas of urban centres, which are often undeveloped.

Operations in the informal sector fall outside the nation's tax structure, with the consequence that official policy frowns on the activities as illegitimate, and they fail to raise any money for the state. Despite the rhetoric about the importance of the informal sector, the government has not only shown hostility towards the sector, but has also had to unleash maximum violence on its operators. The relationships affect the image of the informal sector, quite often ignoring some of its peculiar positive attributes. Most discussion on the informal sector would rather highlight these shortcomings, quite often out of context and ignoring the positive elements that have been associated with it (Aleke-Dondo *et al*, 1987).

Some of the factors that hinder the development of informal sector operations include the inability to attract credit. This is largely because most informal sector operations under individual enterprises are managed by poor and inexperienced entrepreneurs, a majority of whom are driven into the sector because they cannot find employment in the formal sector. This group of operators comprises what has been referred to as the "community of the poor". The crippling lack of capital is made worse by other shortcomings such as their high level of functional illiteracy, which makes it difficult for them to acquire technical and management skills, as well as a high level of inexperience, since many of them are young school leavers.

Women are an important component of the informal sector in Kenya. It is estimated that they make up 46 per cent of the sector's entrepreneurs, and that they outnumber men in the commercial agriculture-based, forest-based and textile sub-sectors. The notion, probably still widely held by many, that the typical Jua Kali is a man in the urban areas making metal products is no longer tenable. Women's contribution in certain informal sector activities is quite significant although statistics on their overall participation and contribution are not readily available. Both in urban and rural areas, women dominate vegetable vending, managing food kiosks, making and selling curio such as *ciondos* and working as ayahs and housemaids. Many women also operate Jua Kali enterprises, which make *jikos*, *jembes*, frying pans and other households items. Others now are beginning to feature in predominantly "male" trades such as car repairs, panel beating and others. The participation of women in the informal sector will continue to increase and grow as the economic pressures continue to bite and take a toll on the school leavers, throwing more and more of them out of formal sector employment. But socio-economic policies such as those that govern land tenure, ownership and devolution of family property and employment negatively affect the position of women and their economic status in society (Aleke-Dondo, *et al*, 1987).

Women generally work in the so-called unproductive areas of the informal sector such as commerce and services, while men work in productive trades. Since fewer women than men are trained and they have little access to information, they perform tasks that they are traditionally restricted to, and which represent an extension of their activities as housewives. These tasks are processing and selling food, - beer, fruit juices, bread, cakes/biscuits and fish - and trading in food products, handicraft and such like. In many societies, women have a high status in their role as mothers. Their choice of work, therefore, also depends on whether it can be combined with looking after children. Thus women are restricted in their mobility in time and space by their maternal duties. In addition to bringing up the children, women are chiefly responsible for feeding the family. Their role as mothers is thus always linked to their economic role as providers of food for the family (Burchhardt, 1997).

In Kenya as in many parts of the world, the informal sector rivals formal wage employment as a source of jobs for both men and women.

Women, however, are disproportionately represented in the informal sector occupations. Unable to gain high level and better-paid jobs in the formal sector, they turn to self-employment as a supplement to formal sector earnings, or as their main source of income. Although their income is characteristically low, access to the sector in many countries is relatively easy and can be combined with their domestic responsibilities (Goodale, 1989).

In the urban areas of Tanzania, for example, about 80 per cent of the female workers are self-employed. In fact, about 53 per cent of all informal sector workers are female (Shields, 1980). In India, an estimated 89 per cent of all employment is generated in the informal sector and approximately 40 per cent of those employed are women (Jumani, 1986). In Kenya, women make up 46 per cent of the informal sector's entrepreneurs, and they outnumber men in the commercial, agriculture, forest-based and textile sub-sectors. The notion widely held in the country that the typical Jua Kali is a man in the urban areas making metal products no longer holds. In some respects, though, it could still be the case that female entrepreneurs are more clustered within subsistence self-employment, working from home, using less skilled labour and relying on informal rather than formal credit (Parker and Torres, 1984).

Informal sector employment for women tends to be associated with economic activities which are generally insecure, do not provide full-time employment, generate low incomes and are characterised by relatively low productivity. Their average earnings are lower than those of men. For example in Brazil, informal sector earnings were found to comprise only 55 per cent of those in the informal sector for men and only 47 per cent for women (Merrick, 1976). In Tanzania, 47 per cent of self-employed women versus 4 per cent of self-employed men earned incomes of less than 100 shillings, while in Kenya 41 per cent of women in the informal sector as compared to only 14 per cent of the men had earnings of less than 200 shillings (Shields, 1980).

What is significant is not only the low levels of income, but also the differential earnings of male and female heads of households. Studies point to the severely disadvantaged conditions of female households (Merrick, *et al,* 1978). These women not only earn lower incomes than male heads of households, but they typically have more dependants and fewer adults contributing to the household income. In addition, they suffer from a relative lack of access to productive resources such as credit, technology and land. This situation is of particular concern in view of the growing number of households, which are supported solely by women.

It is also equally important to note that the model of a male household head as the sole supporter of the family is neither tenable nor the norm in many instances. More often than not, the wages earned by men in the informal sector are inadequate to support the family, which means that women, and often children, are obliged to work to meet the subsistence needs of a household. Furthermore, as the phenomenon of female household heads continues to rise worldwide, there is little basis for questioning why women work. Like men, the need for money is a dominant motivating factor.

Worldwide, women are working as vendors and bankers, home-based workers producing garments, footwear, furniture, crafts, food products, and women who sell their labour and services in agriculture, construction, transportation, cooking, cleaning, and others. The literature of these areas has generally failed to distinguish between the situation of women and men. The net result is a relatively male-biased delineation of both skills acquisition and work in the informal sector, while women are largely invisible. The contribution of micro-level studies of women's work over the last several decades has been making women more "visible" as workers whose contributions in economic terms to their families and nations that can no longer go unrecognised (Goodale, 1959).
The increase in participation of women in Kenya's economy is positive and an encouraging sign of the overall development of the country. This trend reverses previous patterns in the

Table 42: Self-employment and unpaid family workers in the agricultural sector

Agriculture & Forestry	1986			1988		
	Male	Fem	%F	Male	Fem	%F
Coffee plantation	1467	289	19.6	1786	489	27.4
Tea Plantation	512	434	84.8	691	527	76.3
Sugar plantation	853	337	39.5	1120	463	41.3
Sisal plantation	28	11	39.3	43	21	48.8
Mixed farming	7513	2023	26.9	8038	2348	29.2
Ranches	3598	915	25.4	3732	1103	29.6
Other agricultural activities (N.E.C.)	2103	425	20.2	2116	396	18.7
Processing co-op. small farms	72	22	30.6	94	34	26.2
Agricultural services, hunting, trapping game	75	18	24.0	86	19	22.1
	16211	4474	27.6	17706	5400	30.5

Source: CBS, Labour Enumeration Studies.

economy that pushed women's activities to the periphery of the economy. These activities also tied them to household related to jobs, such as: child bearing, house keeping and others. However, their participation is crucial if the country is to realise the desired level of growth. This happens to be the case since women account for more than half of the country's population and labour force. Their presence in the economic arena where they will participate on an equal footing with men will go along way in speeding up the women participation in the country's development.

In the past, the policies were biased against women and their economic interest and, in turn, considerably slowed down the pace of overall development in the country. Socio-economic policies such as those that govern land tenure system, ownership and employment affect directly the position of women and their economic status in society. In patrilineal, male-dominated societies, all properties devolve to the male children, leaving out the girls. Women have access to land by marriage but this access does not confer ownership. The scarcity of land, partly due to population pressure, has made women increasing alienated thereby creating serious problems. These problems arise since a woman who does not marry or whose marriage collapsed, loses all rights over the use of land and must look out for some other means to sustain her livelihood. This partly explains the reasons why women have increasingly relied on petty informal sector trades in both urban and rural areas to sustain their livelihood. There are other factors, however, which have contributed to this phenomenon. Women have taken up on small-scale informal trades because of the discrimination between themselves and their male counterparts in education opportunities and facilities (Aleke-Dondo, *et al.*, 1987).

Table 43: Distribution of self-employed urban labour force by occupation, 1995

Occupation Category	Males	Females	Total
Professional, technical and related workers	8.1	0.8	5.1
Administrative, managerial and clerical workers	9.6	2.3	6.6
Sales workers	37.7	566.8	45.5
Services workers	5.8	7.0	6.3
Agriculture, forestry and related workers	13.0	24.1	17.5
Production, manufacturing and maintenance workers	9.2	9.0	9.2
Smiths, welders and sheet metal workers	14.6	0.0	8.6
Packing, loading and transport workers	2.1	0.0	1.2
Total	**100.00**	**100.00**	**100.00**

Source: Republic of Kenya, Economic Survey, 1996, Government Printer.

The movement of women from formal to informal sectors has taken place in both rural and urban areas. Despite this, it seems that the rate at which women are joining the informal sector in the urban areas is much higher than in the rural areas. In the rural setting, many women depend on the farm for their livelihood, but the same is not true in the urban settings. In the urban areas, unemployment and the low levels of earnings of most husbands have forced the majority of women to engage in informal sector activities. Today the rate at which the sector recruits new members is so high that the informal sector activities have become some of the most competitive trades in our time. The phenomenon has been observed with respect to informal sector activities dominated by men. At the same time, the number of women operating in the urban areas is much higher. The urban areas have a special attraction for the women who often carry on more than one trade. A vegetable vender may double as a barmaid or as a semi-prostitute, because of the low levels of earnings from the two activities.

The nature of some informal sector activities has had special appeal to many women, and some particularly suit women. Many of them are mothers and shoulder responsibilities that go with child bearing. Many have household duties. Ordinarily, these household duties consume much time and quite often, they can qualify as-full time engagements. If a majority of the women, however, were to perform these duties only then they would have to rely completely on someone to provide for the family. Many of them have no such a person and what such breadwinners take home is hardly enough to satisfy their basic needs. Therefore, women are forced to engage in small economic activities, either to subsidise the family income or to provide that income. A majority of them end up in the informal sector which has been described as an "easy entry and easy exit" enterprise. Such enterprises require very small amounts of capital outlay and quite often little or no expertise in the trade (Aleke-Dondo, *et al*., 1987). Some participants join the informal sector as ayahs or domestic workers on a part-time basis. After carrying out these trades, they return to their households in the evening to continue their family duties. In this way, the informal sector does not dislocate the participants from their families or places of residence. Most informal sector operations can also be carried out conveniently without the rigidity of formal sector employment in terms of schedules. This factor has been crucial in attracting many women to the informal sector since they continue to play their other roles along side the trades they are engaged in. It has been observed that this more than any other factor accounts for the immense popularity of the informal sector activities undertaken mainly by women.

The nature of the informal sector operations and its problems are general, affecting both men and women. The majority of informal sector activities cannot be categorised along purely gender lines. Problems facing the informal sector, such as lack of capital for investment, illiteracy and inefficiency in informal sector operations, lack of markets, cut-throat competition, lack of legal recognition manifested through frequent harassment by civic authorities and other law enforcement officers affect both women and men operators. Drawing a line between female and male operators in terms of the problems would be artificial and fallacious.

There are two non-governmental organisations that predominantly support women's activities in the informal sector, namely the Kenya Women Trust Fund and the Undugu Society. We shall now discuss briefly each of these organisations, highlighting how various categories of informal sector women are supported.

The Kenya Women Trust Fund was registered in 1982 as a company limited by guarantee. The idea of a trust was first mooted in 1975 during the First UN Conference on Women in Mexico. The Fund was set up with the help and support of several donors, including the Ford Foundation and the African Development Bank. Some of its objectives are: improving Kenyan women's social and economic status; training women in legal awareness and business management and conducting research on women's

affairs and development. The fund grants loans under two schemes: the small-scale business loans scheme which lend loans ranging from KSh2,000 to KSh20,000, and the loan guarantee scheme, which is still relatively new and offers loan guarantees from KSh20,000 to KSh100,000. The Fund has offices in Nairobi, Nakuru and other towns in the country.

Apart from the loans, which are offered to women entrepreneurs, the Fund is running a training programme on co-operative matters. This encourages concerted "joint" effort as the basis of enterprise by women. The training programme also seeks to help women attain self-sufficiency. It does this by discouraging the use of middlemen in marketing products made by women entrepreneurs.

The Undugu Society runs several programmes including those targeting women. The women's programme is run in Kibera, Mathare, Shauri Moyo and Pumwani, all in Nairobi. The Undugu Society helps unemployed women to participate in income-generating activities under the auspices of a co-operative society programme. The women members participate in various small-scale businesses such as vegetable selling, and crocheting. The society has shops in Westlands and Shauri Moyo in Nairobi.

The society operates under several constraints, which include: illiteracy, disunity resulting from the diversity of tribal backgrounds of the members and lack of market opportunities. Undugu Society has attempted to bridge this gap by introducing literacy programmes to educate the members on new techniques of running modern organisations. Financing the various women programmes has also met with a few difficulties, particularly with regard to collateral to secure loans. There are now several NGOs and agencies that support women in the informal sector.

Skills acquisition for the informal sector

Women's involvement in the informal sector is not only limited by their low participation in education and training. Of equal importance is the type of education and training they receive. As already discussed in both formal and non-formal education and training, it is not unusual to find girls and boys channelled into different subject areas. For example, girls are channelled into courses that revolve around household tasks such as sewing, food processing, nutrition and home economics. As a result, they are limited at an early age to occupations in the service sector and trade or marginal areas of production. These are well-known trends, which, unfortunately, have not changed despite the increased awareness of the negative effects of such streaming on the employment opportunities for women.

Traditionally women transmitted skills and know-how from one generation to another. While a mother played a key role in the education of her daughters, other older women, usually relatives, also contributed to the teaching of girls and young women. By and large, a young girl learned domestic and productive skills through participating in activities carried out by her mother and other adults. These activities included agriculture, livestock-husbandry and trade. Her role models were those adult women engaged in the same range of economic activities. The mother-daughters apprenticeship arrangements for production and marketing purposes still represent a chief survival mechanism for women.

Girls could also be apprenticed to a personal acquaintance or a person with whom they have had no previous contact and who owns a workshop, but they are most likely to be introduced by a friend. In such cases, mediation through a network of friends or kin is an important factor in securing apprenticeships (Hoppers, 1985). Nonetheless, this age-old system has some key weaknesses. First and foremost, the skills customarily transmitted between women are those that essentially represent an extension of their household, domestic reproductive responsibilities and as such, are limited in their scope and economic viability. While the skills girls acquire within the family or community may form a basis for future employment, they are typically of the type and level that do not readily lead to

feasible employment or self-employment opportunities. Additional training is therefore usually required for women to break out of this narrow range of economic activities, which have low levels of skills, productivity and earnings.

Schools could be an avenue to expose girls to different values and life options. Factors that can influence girls training and employment options include teachers' attitudes, the curriculum and course content. However, formal education has been often criticised for perpetuating certain stereotypes of women's roles and behaviour and the kinds of work considered suitable to them. These are usually low paying and nurturing occupations such as nursing, primary school teaching and midwifery.

The education and training which girls receive is not only inadequate in terms of the types of vocational skills they develop, but also in terms of the lack of preparation and appreciation for self-employment as a legitimate occupation. Much of the values transmitted in the classroom serve to orient girls' expectations to formal sector, white-collar employment and undermine the value of other traditional occupations. While boys may be confronted with the same problem as regards the low value placed in self versus wage-employment, the situation of girls is worse since they rarely have access to the managerial and entrepreneurial skills needed for the creative or expansion of small business. Their potential productive activities are generally considered as "income-generating activities" and not wage or self-employment. Furthermore, it is common knowledge that formal schooling tends to foster a lack of interest in trading as a career, since full-time trading is often associated with illiteracy and low socio-economic status as well as dishonesty. It also reinforces the notion of female dependency on males (Braimah, 1982).

Improved access to education and training has not in itself been perceived to be sufficient to improve the productivity and incomes of women and girls working in the informal sector. Efforts have been made to pursue it within a context of training or potential market opportunities geared to the circumstances of women's lives. As growing population levels heightened concern for poverty and disadvantaged groups, women became the target for family planning, maternal and child healthcare and the provision of basic needs. This assistance was designed for women in their roles as mothers and housewives - as beneficiaries and not actors in economic development process. However, the proportion of female-headed households and increasing unemployment among women has lately served to draw attention to the productive and income-generating activities of women and the ways of improving performance and income levels. However, while the aim has been to increase income, the approach has tended to support the notion of women's income as secondary to that of the male household head. In other words, women's productive activities are seen as secondary to the reproductive ones. Women have not been considered producers of goods and services in their own right (Buvinic, *et al.,* 1978).

Consequently, the majority of technical assistance programmes since the 1970s have aimed at enhancing incomes through a narrow range of economic activities, which had a limited, if any, link to the labour market. Classic examples of these so-called "income generating" projects for women have been in the field of handicraft production, where they have aimed at building on the traditional skills of women, such as embroidery and cooking. Many years of experience have now shown that raising income levels through such schemes are the exception rather than the rule, and in many cases, women's work burdens increased and their income level decreased. Markets have often been saturated or non-existent, economies of scale have not been possible, capital investment levels have been low, technology has been rudimentary, raw materials scarce, vocational skills also of a low level, and business skill virtually non-existent (Goodale, 1989).

More recent reviews of income-generating schemes for women in the informal sector have, however, tended to indicate that the provision of relevant training, productive experience and

counselling/follow up can vastly improve the performance and income returns of women. For example, in one study of 113 development projects worldwide, vocational skills development was found to be more readily available than basic business skills training. Women's restricted access to the latter had serious repercussions for some projects reviewed. This lack of basic business and entrepreneurship development was due to the fact that women's economic activities were viewed as projects rather than small enterprises. Furthermore, a business orientation was found to be even more critical as regards support to women, since their vocational skills were usually in areas which did not match existing or potential employment opportunities, as seen in the case of many handcraft projects.

Regarding vocational and technical training, the limited range of skills transferred to women is often due to the inadequate technical support by the staff of the sponsoring organisations, and women's lack of awareness of options to strictly `female' occupations. The technical and managerial capacity of the professional and extension staff of organisations promoting income-generating activities is often limited to staff of volunteers or generalists, rather than managers and technical specialists. This tends to tune project aims and activities in a particular direction. One study of 65 income-generating projects for women in Africa and Asia, for example, indicated that they were approached as projects in the health and education sectors, and not planned around basic business principles. As a result they showed a low return on investment, difficulty with marketing and low-quality production. They tended to promote production and hope there would be a market, rather than assessing the market opportunities first (Buzzard, 1984). The failure to conduct feasibility studies to identify market opportunities prior to the provision of training made women face distinct problems in gaining access to relevant vocational training and successfully applying skills they acquired when they were not linked to market opportunities. The major recommendation was that since income-generating activities are affected by the dynamics of the economy, they should be planned and executed as small enterprise development programmes and not as welfare activities. Vocational training should ensure that a profit-producing skill or job lies at the end of the programme and it should, therefore, be combined with the development of business and entrepreneurial skills.

Formal training systems in Kenya, as elsewhere in Africa, are generally not tailored for the informal sector clientele. This is because each institution provides training in certain key skills and there is usually no attempt to cater for the informal sector as the skills offered are geared to meet the demands of the formal modern sector. The courses offered, therefore, tend to neglect the skills required by the informal sector workers. Training is also directed towards production techniques, repair and maintenance, with no basic skills provision in credit management, marketing or small business development and management, which are important to the development of micro- and small-scale enterprises.

In non-formal skills training centres, some of which have been discussed in a different chapter, the majority provide institution-based rather than enterprise-based training. Girls are generally segregated in programmes for sewing, home craft shop assistants, and nursery school assistants. The narrow focus for girls is motivated more by traditional views as to what is a proper way to keep the youth occupied than by a careful assessment of current employment opportunities. There is a marked absence of courses in business skills, with the exception of costing and book keeping.

Many centres place emphasis on formal programmes aimed at increasing the prospects of wage employment prompted in part by parents and students, but more so by those who manage the centres, including instructors and committees. Since self-employment is not particularly promoted, trainees do not usually receive essential business skills.

From the above analysis, it is apparent that there is no single solution to training women in the informal sector, and in view of the magni-

tude of the demand for skills, a combination of strategies should be envisaged. Furthermore, training should not be seen in isolation of the objective of improving the working and living conditions of women. Of particular importance is the need to target the informal sector explicitly and systematically if training is to be accessible, relevant and effective. This point is even more critical in the case of women, where their access to and control of productive resources, their role in production processes, and their participation in decision-making are quite different from those of men. Consequently, rather than assume that the opportunity structure of men and women is the same, data on occupations in the urban informal sector should be disaggregated by sex, or not only to clarify where women are working, but also how their work compares to employment and income-earning opportunities for men. The resources of Kenya's vocational training systems should be similarly reviewed in light of the access and participation rates of women, the courses they attend, and fit between their existing or potential employment opportunities and the training available for women.

Modifications of institutional training procedures and arrangements may also be required to ensure that women participate. For example, information and promotional material should be disseminated so that it is clear that the courses are also accessible to women. Programme content, timing, duration and location should be reviewed to ensure that courses are accessible to women. Provisions for retraining and upgrading of skills may be required. Support services may be necessary, such as day-care centres for children, transport, housing, vocational guidance and business advisory services; and it may also be necessary to sensitise management and staff to the economic contribution of women to avoid discrimination.
At the same time, it is equally important to review the content of the training provided to women in existing training institutions and how it relates to employment/income earning opportunities. Not only do women lack the technical skills required to diversify and upgrade production for competitive markets, they are also usually channelled into dead-end occupations, with limited economic potential. Courses in formal training institutions are theoretical and inaccessible to women with low levels of literacy.

The participation of girls and the relevance of their training could also be enhanced by having flexible entry-level qualifications. The other way is to provide courses that would fill gaps in certain areas such as in maths or technical skills; or short courses at suitable times and places accessible to women. Training institutions should also: adopt methodologies which are learner-oriented and foster personal development; integrate vocational skills development as well as production and marketing experiences, and the development of business skills; provide follow-up counselling and advisory services; and promote the idea of self-employment as a legitimate career. The training of women should also emphasise their personal development; how to overcome discrimination and hostility; how to maintain good business relations in the face of unwarranted pressure to do things that might jeopardise their business; how to negotiate and influence people and many others.

While there may be less resistance to women's entry into non-traditional occupations and their work outside the home in situations of economic necessity, this does not diminish the need to make concerted efforts to raise the awareness of policy-makers and planners, training centres' management and personnel, and the trainees' and their family members about women's economic contribution, and the importance, therefore, of investing in them as human resources. Efforts at countering stereotypes could include policy-level seminars, media campaigns, and vocational counselling for girls and women.

Finally, rather than presuming that all women working in the informal sector face the same problems, it would be more effective to focus on the specific trades or sectors in which women are engaged and to tailor training and assistance programmes accordingly. The starting point would be detailed studies of the sector including profiles of women and their businesses (production processes, inputs, outputs,

market opportunities, and others) and the problems they face in terms of gaining access to critical resources, discrimination and harassment, poor working conditions and many others.

Summary

Since the publication of the International Labour Organisation's report on Kenya in 1972, which popularised the concept of the informal sector, there has been considerable interest in policy and research in this sector. There has also been considerable policy intervention in the sector, especially since the mid-1980s. It is now generally admitted that there are more young people acquiring their training on the job through the urban informal sector enterprises than there are via the institutional training systems. Women constitute an important component of the informal sector in Kenya. Their contribution in certain informal sector activities is quite significant although statistics on their overall participation and contribution are not readily available. In both urban and rural areas, women dominate vegetable vending, managing food kiosks, making and selling curios such as *ciondos*. Many women also operate Jua Kali enterprises, which make such items as *jikos, jembes,* frying pans and other household items. Others are now beginning to feature in predominantly male trades, although generally in terms of skill acquisition or training and operations. A majority are still segregated and relegated to the traditional trades considered appropriate for women.

Women's participation in the informal sector, however, is hampered in a number of ways. The education and training which girls receive as already discussed in the various chapters is not only inadequate in terms of the types of vocational skills they develop, but also in terms of the lack of preparation and appreciation for self-employment as a legitimate occupation. Women rarely have access to managerial and entrepreneurial skills needed for the creation or expansion of small businesses. Efforts made by various agencies to enhance women's training and market opportunities have been hampered by low capital investment levels, low-level vocational and business skills, and saturated or non-existent markets. There seem to be many issues that need to be addressed by future policy and interventions.

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CHAPTER NINE

TEACHER EDUCATION AND THE TEACHING PROFESSION

The rapid expansion of education depended heavily on the expansion of teacher education. At independence the government embarked on a policy of consolidating small primary teachers' colleges established during the colonial period into larger and better-equipped facilities. The number of primary teachers' colleges went down from 37 with an enrolment of about 400 students to 17 colleges with an enrolment of 9,843 students. With fewer but larger colleges, teaching technology improved tremendously and the variety of subjects taught also increased. With the assistance under the First and Second International Development Association (IDA) Project, the quality of the buildings and facilities was considerably improved in most of the 17 colleges. With World Bank assistance, 10 new primary teachers' colleges were to be completed by 1985. Emphasis was also placed on upgrading the academic quality of entrants into primary teacher education. A majority of the entrants are now holders of the KCSE with grade C average and having scored at least a grade C in English/Mathematics. These are trained as P1 teachers. A small percentage of the former KCE division four holders and KJSE holders used to be trained as P2 teachers, and holders of CPE were trained as P3 teachers. The last group of teachers continued to cater especially for less developed areas like the North Eastern Province, parts of the Coast, and Rift Valley provinces.

The duration of the course for all the groups of teachers is two years. They study professional studies, English, Kiswahili, mathematics, science, religious education (Christian or Islamic studies), physical education, art education, music history, geography, agriculture, home science and teaching practice. The P1 and P2 groups take a national examination at the end of the two courses set by the Kenya National Examinations Council (Sifuna, 1988). There also used to be an in-service course conducted by the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) to upgrade untrained teachers.

Secondary school teachers' education is provided at several institutions. Kenyatta College was opened in 1965 as an educational institution of higher learning, having formerly been an army barracks - Templar Barracks. At the time of its handing over to the Kenya government by the British government, two sections were established, the higher secondary education and the teacher education sections. To cope with the rapid expansion of secondary education, a non-graduate programme for teachers known as S1 had been created in 1963. This programme was transferred to the college in 1965, recruiting students with an ordinary level Cambridge overseas school certificate, in which case the courses lasted three years, and advanced level students, whose training lasted one year. In 1972 the college attained university college status, the secondary education section was phased out and the first group of students to pursue courses leading to a bachelor's of education of the University of Nairobi were enrolled. The S1 programme was thinned down and transformed into a non-graduate diploma programme, though the college later stopped training this category of teachers (Sifuna, 1988).

The Kenya Science Teachers College was established with Swedish Government aid. A year before independence, a Swedish team came to Kenya to discuss the implications of Uhuru (independence) for education. The study was completed in December 1962, and was followed in less than a year by an informal and exploratory request for assistance. The request stressed the fact that there was a small number of local science teachers and emphasised that the situation needed to be corrected through the establishment of an institute to train science teachers along the S1 pattern offered at the Kenyatta College. The Kenya Science Teachers' College was established in 1965 to offer a three-year non-graduate course in the science subjects. The S1 course has since been changed to a diploma programme and enrols about 520 students a year (Sifuna, 1988).

Together with other diploma colleges they enrolled 1,636 students in 2003, of whom 607 were female.

The Kenya Technical Teachers College (KTTC) was established to cater for the increasing expansion of technical secondary schools. The Canadian government was approached in the early seventies to provide a new technical teachers' college. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) responded with a plan to include a building complex and a scholarship scheme for Kenyanisation. The complex was occupied in December 1977. The technical teacher training programmes formerly at the Kenya Polytechnic and the industrial teachers training programme at the KTTC. It enrols about 120 non-graduate teachers a year in technical, business and industrial education (Sifuna, 1988). Its current status was discussed in the section on technical training

Other non-graduate teachers' institutions included Egerton College, which trained diploma teachers in agriculture, and Siriba, Kagumo and Kisii which formerly trained primary school teachers but were upgraded to train diploma teachers for secondary and primary schools. The same applied to Moi Teachers College near Eldoret. All these have been transformed into universities and university colleges except for Kagumo. As of 2003, a total of 2,222 trainees were enrolled in private colleges in the country. Those enrolled for diploma courses decreased by 4.7 per cent from 2,225 in 2002 to 2,120 in 2003.

The Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) is the trade union that deals with the improvement of terms of service for teachers in the country. Started in the mid-50s during the colonial administration, it embraces largely primary school teachers and a small proportion of secondary school teachers and college tutors. Since independence it has fought for better salaries, and protects individual teachers from victimisation and undue harassment by employers. The union has been active in commenting on curriculum reform and on a number of aspects of teacher education as well. Its force as a powerful trade union was demonstrated in the October 1965 strike over the issue of a single employer for all teachers in the country and other subsidiary issues. Following this strike, the government established the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) as a sole employer of teachers in the country. The commission started functioning in 1967. Under the TSC Act, the commission was empowered to recruit and employ registered teachers, to assign teachers for service in any public school, to promote or transfer any such teachers and to terminate the employment of any such teachers.

The TSC has provided its members with greater financial security by guaranteeing their salaries and has generally given the teaching profession a more secure status. Within the commission, there is a teaching service remuneration committee that examines the remuneration of members of the teaching service from time to time, in consultation with the Ministry of Education and KNUT (Sifuna, 1988). Following major KNUT-organised teachers' strikes around national election time in 1997, the government bowed to pressure and agreed to a substantial salary increment, which was to be implemented in stages until 2008. However, as conflict continued over the salary issue, a splinter union targeting post-primary schools teachers was registered in the late 1990s - the Kenya Union of Post Primary Teachers (KUPPET). Although still existing, KUPPET has not been successful in recruiting many members, and hence has not weakened KNUT.

Primary and secondary education teaching force

Following the post-independence developments, the proportion of qualified teachers is exceedingly high at both the primary and secondary school levels. The number of primary school teachers by qualification and sex from 1996 to 1999 is shown in the Table 44. The number of primary school teachers increased by 3.1 per cent from 184,393 in 1997 to 192,306 in 1998 and dropped to 186,612 in 1999. Female teachers constituted 42.1 per cent of the total primary school teaching force.

Table 44: Primary school teaching force by gender, 1996-1999

Grade	1996		1997		1998		1999	
Trained	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Graduate	36.2	63.8	54.9	45.1	66.0	44.0	59.1	40.9
Approved	62.0	38.0	63.2	36.8	62.6	37.4	64.5	35.5
S1/Dipl.	61.5	38.5	65.0	35.0	62.6	37.4	61.0	39.0
P1	58.9	41.1	58.2	41.8	57.4	42.6	56.7	43.3
P2	58.0	42.0	57.6	42.4	56.9	43.1	56.0	44.0
P3	47.8	52.2	48.3	51.7	48.3	51.7	---	---
P4	46.7	53.3	32.4	67.6	32.4	67.6	---	---
Total	58.3	41.7	58.3	41.7	57.6	42.4	57.9	42.1
Untrained								
KACE	64.9	35.1	51.6	48.4	77.6	22.4	---	---
KCE/KCSE	51.7	38.3	52.7	37.3	65.5	34.5	66.3	33.7
KJSE	71.8	28.2	71.4	28.6	75.9	24.1	72.0	28.0
CPE	54.7	45.3	53.9	46.1	59.4	40.6	57.7	42.3
Total	62.8	37.2	63.1	36.9	77.0	33.0	66.8	33.2
Grand Total	**58.8**	**41.2**	**58.6**	**41.4**	**57.9**	**42.1**	**57.2**	**42.8**
Total Numbers	**184,393**		**186,590**		**192,306**		**186,612**	

Source: Republic of Kenya, Economic Survey, 2004, Government Printer.

The proportion of trained teachers rose to 96.6 per cent, while the number of untrained teachers decreased by 37.8 per cent from 10,556 in 1997 to 6,570 in 1998. The pupil/trained teacher ratio remained at the level of 1: 32, while it improved slightly from 30.4 to 30.8 between the same period. Although the policy of the Ministry of Education is to maintain a low pupil-teacher ratio as a measure of maintaing quality education, that appears too expensive to sustain (UNICEF/GOK, 1999). The number of P4 teachers, the lowest grade of trained primary teachers, rose from 34 in 1997 to 1,114 in 1998.Table 45 shows the percentages of primary school teachers by gender between 2000 and 2003. There were a total of 178,622 teachers in public primary schools in 2003 of whom 41.4 per cent were female teachers. The number of teachers went up marginally by less than 1 per cent from 2002. A significant proportion, 98.7 per cent of the primary teaching force, is trained, with 72.7 per cent of them having

Table 45: Primary school teaching force by gender 2000-2003

Grade	2000		2001		2002		2003	
Trained	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Graduate	67.4	32.6	69.3	30.7	69.2	30.8	57.9	42.1
Approved	65.8	34.2	65.7	34.3	65.7	34.3	65.7	43.3
S1/Dipl.	63.1	36.9	45.7	54.3	45.8	54.2	45.7	54.3
P1	57.3	42.7	58.2	41.8	58.2	41.8	58.2	41.8
P2	55.9	44.1	57.3	42.7	57.3	42.7	57.3	42.7
P3	45.7	54.3	45.8	54.2	45.8	54.2	45.8	542
Total	57.5	42.5	58.7	41.3	58.6	41.4	58.5	41.5
KCE/KCSE	61.1	33.9	72.7	27.3	72.7	27.3	72.7	27.3
KJSE	73.9	26.1	75.7	24.3	75.7	24.3	75.8	24.2
CPE/Others	61.8	38.2	61.5	38.5	61.8	38.2	---	---
Total	67.2	32.8	73.0	23.0	72.9	27.1	68.4	31.6
Grand Total	**57.8**	**42.2**	**58.8**	**41.2**	**58.8**	**41.2**	**58.6**	**41.4**
Total Number	**178,900**		**178,622**		**180,860**		**178,037**	

Source: Republic of Kenya, Economic Survey, 2004, Government Printer.

Table 46: Secondary school teaching force by gender, 1996-1999

Grade	1996		1997		1998		1999	
Trained	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Graduate	62.3	37.7	63.2	36.8	62.4	37.6	62.5	37.5
Approved	68.7	31.3	62.1	27.9	62.1	27.9	68.7	31.3
S1/Diplo.	63.3	36.7	64.6	35.4	65.6	34.4	65.7	34.3
Technical	70.9	29.1	80.3	19.7	73.9	26.1	72.6	27.4
P1	78.6	21.4	85.4	14.6	78.1	21.9	---	---
Total	64.3	35.7	64.8	35.2	63.4	36.6	64.3	35.7
Untrained								
Graduate	78.1	21.9	79.1	20.9	80.3	19.7	78.6	21.4
Dip/Techn.	73.7	26.3	74.6	25.4	74.3	25.7	74.3	25.7
KAC	77.9	22.1	76.2	23.8	76.3	23.7	76.7	23.3
KCSE	73.5	26.5	80.3	19.7	89.1	11.9	---	---
Other	73.4	26.6	68.9	31.1	68.4	31.6	---	---
Total	77.1	22.9	77.3	22.7	69.2	20.8	75.9	24.1
Grand Total	**66.2**	**33.8**	**76.5**	**33.5**	**64.6**	**35.4**	**64.7**	**35.3**
Total Number	**41,290**		**44,378**		**43,694**		**40,782**	

Source: Republic of Kenya, Economic Survey, 2004, Government Printer.

attained P1 level. The number of secondary school teachers rose from 41,484 in 1995 to 43,694 in 1998. The proportion of female secondary school teachers increased slightly from 33.5 per cent in 1997 to 35.4 per cent in 1998 as shown in Table 46. The proportion of trained secondary teachers, however, rose from 86.6 per cent in 1997 to 92.5 per cent in 1998, while that of untrained teachers declined to 7.5 per cent in 1998. The pupil-teacher ratio dropped to 16:1 in 1998 from 15.5:1 in 1997 while the pupil-trained teacher ratio improved from 17.9:1 in 1997 to 17.3:1 in 1998. The increased proportion of trained secondary school teachers and improved trained teacher-to-pupil ratios were attempts by the Ministry of Education to provide quality education (Republic of Kenya, 1999). The number of teachers dropped by 1.8 per cent, from 44,378 in 1997 to 40,782 in 1999. This was attributed to restrictions on the recruitment of teachers and exacerbated by a high rate of natural attrition. Trained teachers accounted for around 97.3 per cent of the total teaching force at this level, with 35.4 per cent being females. About 70 per cent of the force were graduates.

Table 46 and 47 gives a breakdown of secondary school teachers by gender and qualifications. There were 46,455 secondary school teachers in 2003, representing an increase of 1.2 per cent in 2002. Female teachers consti-

Table 47: Secondary school teaching force by gender, 2000-2003

Grade	2000		2001		2002		2003	
Untrained	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Graduate	63.0	37.0	63.2	36.8	63.2	36.8	63.2	36.8
Approved	68.7	31.3	68.7	31.3	66.8	33.2	66.8	33.2
S1/Dipl.	65.4	34.6	62.9	37.1	62.9	37.1	62.9	37.1
Technical	79.3	20.7	68.5	31.5	68.7	31.3	68.5	31.5
Total	64.6	35.4	64.3	35.7	64.3	35.7	64.2	35.8
Untrained								
Graduate	84.4	15.6	84.4	15.6	84.6	15.4	84.6	15.4
Dip/Techn.	74.4	25.6	74.2	25.8	74.2	25.8	74.2	25.8
Total	82.3	17.7	81.2	18.8	81.2	18.8	81.2	18.8
Grand Total	**65.0**	**35.0**	**65.0**	**35.0**	**65.0**	**35.0**	**64.8**	**35.2**
Total Number	**40,090**		**44,855**		**45,901**		**46,445**	

Source: Republic of Kenya, Economic Survey, 2004, Government Printer.

tuted 35.2 per cent of the teaching force, with a larger proportion of the entire force, 65.6 per cent having attained graduate status.

Some key issues in the teaching profession

As is rightly pointed out in the WCOTP (1961) survey, in the history of the teaching profession in Africa, teachers once enjoyed high status. At first teachers were largely satisfied with their lot. In the villages they were the only educated people, and they had relatively envious lifestyles despite the low remuneration from their jobs. Many primary school teachers were mostly in the employment of Christian missionaries and, therefore, were expected to make sacrifices and not to demand payment for their work. It is noteworthy that when missionaries shifted from this earlier position and started paying their teachers, they always emphasised to them that love for money was evil and anti-Christian (Karugu, 1986). Colonial education records reveal acrimonious teachers' salary debates between governments and missionaries with the latter insisting that they be kept to the lowest basic minimum (Sifuna, 1990).

Despite their meagre salaries, teachers enjoyed high esteem. The respect for them stemmed partly from the fact that they were responsible for giving education to the children of the village and in many ways, they were the agents of modernisation of the rural areas. With the building of more schools, more graduates of secondary schools and universities were churned out. This, too, increased the space and tempo of social change and modernisation. Social life became more and more differentiated, with new status and elite groups emerging fast in the public service, particularly in administration, self-employment and in professions like law and commerce. There were no institutionalised avenues for self-employment for teachers unless they left the teaching profession. Gradually, the status of teaching got eclipsed. Teachers became increasingly frustrated and sought to leave whenever they could and their morale continued to sag badly (Sifuna, 1990).

Upward social mobility was not the only factor militating against professional dedication. Some studies stress some internal factors, which contributed to the lowering of the status of the teaching profession. These included demanding teaching responsibilities under unsympathetic school inspectors, who assumed the role of policing the teachers instead of guiding and counselling them, and a difficult social environment (Maleche, 1972).

Of course, within the internal factors were the rigid segmentation of the salary structure, reflecting differences between teachers in voluntary agency service and those in government. More insidious and divisive was the existence of two different codes of professional conduct. Many countries have endeavoured to prescribe a code applicable to all teachers so as to define clearly what is expected of them. But teachers are often subjected to the vagaries of their employers in matters, which are not only for their professional conduct but also personal behaviour. Teachers are often pressurised to conform to codes that they have had no hand in drawing up. Along with the Christian tradition already discussed, teachers like priests, were expected to present an acceptable public image (Sifuna, 1990).

The teacher in the colonial service had to face two entirely different, almost contradictory sets of standards in the same area. On the one hand, the missions were strong against drinking, drunkenness, gambling, a second wife, and laxity in church attendance. On the other hand, government did not regard drinking as a serious offence if it did not interfere with professional competence, and did not regard polygamy as an offence at all. Government was not interested in the teachers' private life provided they were not detrimental to their duties. As a civil servant, the government teacher was forbidden to engage in politics, to join a political party, or to hold public office. The missionary teachers, although discouraged from political activities, were not entirely prevented from participation (Cameroon, 1970).

As many African countries moved towards attaining their independence in the early 60s, the teaching profession, especially at the primary school level, was generally of low status. This was mainly due to teachers' underprivileged background, the illiberal narrow educational programme and poor conditions of work. These factors combined to give a different outlook and lifestyle to the teachers. They tended to assume a poor parsimonious personal appearance, which could hardly evince respectability as a professional group from the society as well as their pupils. Certainly pupils might have liked their teachers individually, but teaching as a profession was not a thing to aspire to. The most telling factor is that teachers themselves even today do not normally wish their children to join the profession (Sifuna, 1990).

At independence, therefore, because of the attractions of political life and the demands of Africanisation in all spheres of government and business, the teaching profession as the greatest and almost only reservoir of educated African human resource, became no more than a stepping-stone to higher and better things. People joined the profession to get out of it. Independence created a period of rapidly expanding job opportunities in government, industry and politics; and these created inflated expectations of quick economic and political personal power. Such power was usually obtainable outside teaching (Sifuna, 1995).

However, it is noteworthy that at independence, due to teachers' unionised and professional organisational pressure as well as government's concern to improve the status of the profession, successive salary commissions in most of the countries emphasised the necessity to increase the chances of promotion according to merit. Where paper qualification and professional courses were considered essential, special in-service and upgrading programmes were made available to teachers who did not possess them. Opportunities for private study were also expanded. At the same time efforts were made to improve teachers' salaries. Responsibility allowances for head teachers and teachers with special duties were introduced (Cameroon, 1970). These and related efforts were genuine moves to raise the status of the teaching profession in Africa. Even then, it is still difficult today for teachers to earn high personal reputations. With the rapid expansion of educational services over the past 40 years or so, teacher shortages have led to recruitment of many people who, in the past could not have aspired to white collar jobs. These expansionary pressures have led to the selection of people with inferior personal characteristics, lacking in motivation, drive and ability to enter more prestigious occupations. Many teachers, especially at the primary school level, are from low social backgrounds, and they can no longer achieve high personal status because of inferior education. Consequently, they no longer have the power to act as cultural brokers (Sifuna, 1990).

Surveys which have recently been carried out on the status of the teaching profession tend to show that school teachers suffer from low morale as an occupational group or groups, since governments, teacher associations and teachers themselves tend to differentiate between primary and secondary schools, between graduates and non-graduates, between general and technical teachers. The reasons why they suffer from low morale also partly explain why teaching ranks low in prestige compared to other occupations. These include comparatively low salaries, poor terms and conditions of service and few opportunities for career growth (ILO/UNESCO, 1982).

With regard to gender disparities, increasing the number of female teachers is often recommended as a strategy for raising achievement as well as attainment among girls and women. Unless female and male teachers are trained to be sensitive to gender equity, however, increasing the number of female teachers alone may not have the desired result. As already mentioned earlier, teachers' attitudes have an important effect on girls' achievement in education. Evidence shows that many teachers have negative attitude about girls and that affects

girls' achievement. For example, a Nairobi study found that only 40 per cent of the teachers and headteachers of schools interviewed thought that girls would do as well as boys if given the same opportunities. The same study also found that girls in single-sex schools performed as well as boys in single-sex schools and significantly better than both boys and girls in co-educational schools when tested for achievement in mathematics (Boit, 1986). Although in this study like others, the reasons for the better performance by girls are not directly explored, it is indicated that differences in performance are related to substantial differences between students, teachers and teaching practices. With regard to the differences in performance between schools, the implication is that all female schools attract higher quality students and teachers and they provide more effective teaching than other schools.

Where schools are segregated by gender, the availability and quality of female teachers crucially affect enrolment, achievement and attainment. Despite their predominance in teacher training colleges in the country, women are a minority of the teaching force, especially beyond the primary level. Although the number of female primary and secondary school teachers grew substantially in the first decades of independence, their increase in comparison to the male teachers remained modest. Despite the increase women constitute about 42.1 per cent of the primary teaching force and about 35.4 per cent of secondary school teachers.

The same factors that have depressed women's access to schooling have restricted their access to and persistence in the teaching career. These factors vary from one region to another. However, they include cultural attitudes, financial constraints, increasing devaluation of the teaching profession, especially at the primary level, difficulty in recruiting and retaining female teachers particularly in rural and hardship areas, and lack of mobility for women because of family responsibilities or cultural considerations. Despite the important role that female teachers play in improving girls' education, not many researchers in the country have addressed the matter. The marked educational expansion since independence has not been matched by sustained initiatives to train sufficient women teachers and administrators. Kenya faces female teacher shortages, especially in mathematics, sciences and even in a language like Kiswahili. The result is a high pupil-teacher ratio in some girls' school and a reliance on male teachers to teach in those schools. At secondary and many tertiary institutions, female teachers are in short supply because teachers colleges and universities do not train enough graduates to meet the demand, especially for mathematics and sciences. At the same time, thousands of women continue to graduate from colleges and universities with specialisations that do not match the existing needs.

Although not much research has been carried out on the conditions of women in the teaching profession, it is apparent that the need to juggle the double burden of teaching duties and domestic responsibilities accounts for a reportedly high rate of absenteeism. Sometimes this even leads to the abandonment of the profession or a decline in productivity among female teachers. In cases where childcare is unavailable or inadequate, some women quit to look after their children. Not much has been done to address this problem not only in Kenya, but also in many other African countries. At times, the measures that have been taken tend to create new and more serious problems. In some of the countries, there have been regulations to employ only unmarried women.

Others have denied married women maternity benefits. In some countries, due to high absenteeism of married female teachers during maternity and for other family reasons, and because of the difficulty of finding substitutes, Ministries of Education have had to prohibit the employment of married women teachers. In some cases, they have even pressurised those already teaching to resign. Although such measures have not been particularly applied in Kenya, trying to solve a serious problem through discriminating measures worsens the teacher shortage, violates the human rights of married teachers and discourages young girls

from enrolling in teacher-training programmes. In Kenya, however, the TSC normally grants a three-month maternity leave.

Some studies have highlighted the importance of teacher-student interaction to pupil motivation, achievement and attainment. As already discussed, teachers often perpetuate sex-role stereotypes directly and indirectly through what they teach and through their behaviour, their interactions with pupils and their assumptions about the different skills and abilities of girls and boys (Whyte, 1986). Female teachers may inspire girls to high achievement and accomplishment or direct them towards conformity with prevailing domestic ideals. Having qualified female teachers is therefore important but not sufficient; they must also understand sex-role stereotypes and their potential effects. Female teachers, if adequately trained, can identify girls at risk of dropping out and provide the special care and encouragement needed to keep them in school (El-Sanabary, 1993).

Female administrators play an important role in the management of schools and other educational institutions. Through efficient management and leadership as well as support for female teachers and students, female administrators can help improve the quality of girls' education. Generally, however, many are unprepared to handle the absenteeism, dropouts and lack of motivation that affect female students and teachers. With proper training, including being sensitised to these problems through the necessary literature, the media and in-service training, female administrators would be better placed to deal with these problems, thereby reducing attrition and improving educational quality (El-Sanabary, 1993).

It should be pointed out that, as within the teaching staff, female administrators are fewer than the males at both primary and secondary school levels. Like their male counterparts, they receive little if any training and they are often overworked, underpaid and lack adequate resources. Quite often they are less qualified academically than their male counterparts. The disparities in the management of schools and other educational institutions reflect the differences in the proportion of men and women who continue beyond secondary education and the different qualifications of teachers promoted to administrative posts. Just like teachers, female heads of institutions participate less in continuing education programmes than do their male counterparts who are more likely to learn of these programmes and take advantage of them because of men's networks and greater access to resources (El-Sabary, 1993).

For cultural and religious reasons, some families, especially Muslim ones, prefer and at times insist on having their daughters being taught by female teachers. A shortage of female teachers may, therefore, be an important educational constraint in these societies. The number of female teachers is a function of how many women enrol for teacher-training courses. At the same time, the cultural forces that create the need for single sex schools also result in broad support for employing women to teach girls. To increase the number of teachers from less developed regions of the country especially women teachers, the Ministry of Education for some time encouraged the recruitment of students with less academic grades for a P3 or P2 teaching grades that were no longer recruited in more developed regions.

Such P3 and P2 teachers have often been assumed to end up working within their relatively remote localities. However, the wisdom of recruiting female teachers locally has not been universally accepted in certain communities. Quite often on completion of their courses, some well-connected teachers resist being posted to their home areas and continually pester the local education administrators for transfer to town schools. For these reasons, villagers tend to oppose the use of local teachers. At the same time attracting and retaining female teachers from outside the region often poses a different set of problems since they have to be relocated, gain acceptance and clear the difficult hurdle of finding suitable accommodation, especially in the remote areas.

Table 48: The distribution of academic staff at Kenyatta University by gender - 1995

Faculty	Male	%	Female	%	Total (N)	% of total population
Arts	156	70.0	67	30.0	223	35.9
Education	137	66.5	69	33.5	206	33.2
Science	133	86.6	26	19.5	159	25.6
Commerce	10	76.9	3	23.1	13	2.
Environmental Studies	10	50.0	10	50.0	20	3.
Total	**446**	**71.8**	**175**	**28.2**	**621**	**100**

Personnel Office - Kenyatta University - 1995.

Kenya has also attempted to increase the number of female teachers in training colleges through the re-admission of those who become pregnant during their training courses. In terms of postings, the government provides hardship allowance to encourage both men and women to accept posting in hardship areas, where living and working conditions are difficult due to poor housing and medical facilities and others. Working in these areas is particularly tough for single women because it even denies them a chance of meeting suitable mates. But the allowance is low and does not end up attracting many women teachers to such areas. Moreover, most urban centres have high concentration of women teachers because they have to live with their husbands working in towns.

University teaching and administration

Women's under-representation is also quite pronounced in the academic and administration levels at the public universities. Kenyatta and Nairobi universities, as shown in Tables 48 and 49, demonstrate a fairly good example.

With regard to university education, findings of a recent study show that women form a small proportion of university teachers. At the University of Nairobi, for example, only 18 per cent of the academic staff were women in 1995, while at Kenyatta University, 28.8 per cent were women during the same period. With the exception of the Faculty of Environmental Studies at Kenyatta University, where women constituted 50 per cent, and the

Table 49: The distribution of academic staff of the University of Nairobi by gender 1995

Faculty	Male	%	Female	%	Total (N)	% Total of population
Agriculture	86	81.9	19	18.1	105	8.8
Veterinary Medicine	106	98.8	12	10.2	118	9.9
ADD*	56	90.3	6	9.7	62	5.2
Engineering	86	97.7	2	2.3	88	7.4
Arts and Social Science	187	79.8	48	20.4	235	19.6
Law	26	78.9	7	21.2	33	2.8
External studies	5	7.4	2	28.6	7	0.6
Commerce	48	85.7	8	14.3	56	4.7
Science	123	87.6	17	12.1	140	11.7
Dental Science	15	78.9	4	21.1	19	1.6
Pharmacy	16	88.9	2	11.1	18	1.5
Medicine	157	80.5	38	19.5	195	16.3
Education	71	58.7	50	41.3	121	10.1
Totals	**982**	**82.0**	**215**	**18.0**	**1197**	**100.2**

*University of Nairobi Computer List - 1995 *ADD: Architecture Design and Development *POP: Population.*

Faculty of Education at the University of Nairobi, where they constituted 41.3 per cent, women lecturers make up less than 40 per cent in all other faculties at the two universities. Women lecturers are heavily under-represented at the University of Nairobi at the faculties of Engineering (2.3. per cent): Architecture, Design and Development (9.7 per cent); Veterinary Medicine (10.2 per cent); Pharmacy (11.1 per cent) and Science (12.1 per cent) (Kanake, 1997).

By the turn of the century, the situation of women lecturers had not changed much. At Kenyatta University in 2004, for example, women lecturers constituted only 33.1 per cent. The situation is even much worse at the level of academic ranks. At the full professor position for instance, women constitute only 5.7 per cent, while at associate professor level they are 12.2 per cent. The situation seems to improve slightly down the academic ranks. At the senior lecturer level, they are 29.3 per cent, while at the lecturer position they constitute 34.9 per cent. In the tutorial fellowship position, they are 40.2 per cent and in graduate assistant grade, they are 41.2 per cent.

With regard to the distribution of academic staff with administrative responsibilities, the study considered top administrative posts at the university where important decisions are made and implemented. They include the posts of the vice-chancellor and their deputies; the principals of constituent colleges; directors of institutions or programmes; deans of faculties and chairmen of departments.

The findings revealed that very few women academics were appointed to administrative positions compared to their male colleagues. Of the total number of 118 senior administrators found at the University of Nairobi, only 7.6 per cent were women in 1995. Of these, 4.2 per cent were heads of departments (the lowest rank on the ladder according to this study). Among the deans, 92.9 per cent were male while 7.1 per cent were female; 90.9 per cent of directors were male whereas 9.1 per cent were female, and 83.3 per cent of principals were male and 16.7 female (Kanake, 1997). It was also pointed out that appointments to senior posts are political and very few women feature in the public politician arena. Appointments are usually done by the chancellor of the universities, who until 2003, was the Head of State. This used to be done informally with search and selection of a candidate being done by the male clique surrounding the chancellor. "We don't really have open criteria but from what we see, the person selected is in most cases known or close to the President and strongly supports his political ideas," observed a respondent. He strongly observed that the appointment of a person to such posts was sometimes viewed as a reward to him or to his community for the loyalty and support they have shown to the President (Kanake, 1997).

Following the election of the NARC government towards the close of 2002, some changes have been effected in the administrative structures of the public universities. The newly-elected President Mwai Kibaki decided to relinquish his position as chancellor of all public universities and appointed individuals to do the job. He also appointed some new chairmen of university councils of whom one was a prominent woman. As these changes were effected without necessarily changing the existing university acts and statutes, this has created serious conflicts in the functions and duties of the different positions, especially those of chairpersons of councils and chancellors and even vice-chancellors. There has also been an attempt to appoint vice-chancellors through competitive recruitment, beginning with the University of Nairobi.

Nonetheless, without a change in the acts and statutes governing such recruitments, the appointing bodies have to recommend at least three of the leading candidates to the president, who has to pick one as the vice-chancellor of the university. By December 2005, three other public universities - Egerton, Maseno and Kenyatta - had adopted the competitive recruitment process as they advertised the vice-chancellors' positions. This process is to be followed in the appointment of new vice-chancellors in the other public universities in future. While

such a process is a considerable improvement on the previous one, it is still subject to the whims of the president.

The foregoing discussion shows that the political system in Kenya has not been in favour of women for a long time and very few women academics have taken part in it. The result has been that even those women who are qualified have not had a chance to compete for certain posts because they might not be known to those in the corridors of power. Since women are very few at the top, they are also unlikely to make much influence during such appointments or in other decisions made. It is also evident from the study findings that there are no criteria for the appointment of top administrators. Loyalty to the government, closeness to the chancellor and the need to reward are some of the criteria considered. It can, therefore, be said that subjectivity in such a system is the order of the day and that women are disadvantaged because few of them participate in politics either to compete for these posts or to influence the appointment of fellow women (Kanake, 1997).

The result of the study confirms that women not only enter the teaching profession at the university in smaller numbers but in both universities, they obtain promotion much less frequently. Only a handful of female academics have been promoted to the highest academic ranks compared to their male colleagues. In no rank in the two universities studied does the proportion of women come near to 50 per cent. The highest percentage (37 per cent) is recorded among the tutorial fellows and graduate assistants at Kenyatta University (Kanake, 1997). Women's representation is especially low in the ranks of professors (5.1 per cent) at the University of Nairobi and none at Kenyatta University. Even where women seem to be doing well, for instance in the ranks of lecturer and tutorial fellows, the proportions are much lower compared to men - 18 per cent and 30.3 per cent for the ranks of lecturer at the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University, 33.3 and 37 per cent for the ranks of tutorial fellows at the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University respectively (Kanake, 1997).

Summary

This chapter shows that the expansion of education depended on the expansion of teacher education. At the primary school level, the achievement of independence heralded a policy of consolidating small colleges established during the colonial era into larger colleges with better-equipped facilities. This policy reduced the number of primary colleges from 37 with a total enrolment of 400 students to 17 colleges with an enrolment of 9,843 students. In the mid-80s, through the World Bank assistance, 10 new primary colleges were to be established. Concomitantly with expansion of primary teacher education was an emphasis placed on upgrading the quality of entrants.

To meet the demand for secondary school teachers, Kenyatta College originally the British Templar Barracks, started training SI teachers.

Table 50: Professional ranks by gender and institution - 1991

	University of Nairobi					Kenyatta University				
Rank	Male	%	Female	%	Total	Male	%	Female	%	T
Professor	56	94.9	3	5.1	59	14	100.0	-	-	14
Associate	78	88.6	10	11.4	88	31	91.2	3	8.8	34
Professor	204	90.3	22	9.7	226	76	83.5	15	16.5	91
Senior Lecturer	506	82.0	111	18.0	617	223	69.7	97	30.3	320
Lecturers	138	66.7	69	33.3	207	102	63.0	60	37.0	162
IF/GA*										
	982	82.0	215	18.0	1197	446	71.8	175	28.2	62.1

**IF/GA: Includes Tutorial Fellows and Graduate Assistants*
1. University of Nairobi Computer list - 1995
2. Personnel data Office - 1995

This was followed by the Swedish-supported Kenya Science Teachers College and the Canadian-funded Kenya Technical Teachers College. Other non-graduate diploma colleges opened in a number of places. Most of them have been converted into universities and university colleges, and together with the older universities, their functions include training graduate teachers.

Following the rapid expansion of teacher education, women now constitute a high percentage of the students at teacher training institutions and colleges. Despite their sizeable presence, women teachers are still fewer in Kenya's teaching force, especially beyond the primary school level. They constitute about 40 per cent of primary and 35 of secondary school teaching force. The same factors that have depressed women's access to schooling have equally restricted their access and persistence in the teaching career. They include the low status of the teaching profession, financial constraints, devaluation of the teaching profession, difficulty in recruiting and retaining female teachers particularly in rural and hardship areas and lack of mobility because of family responsibilities or cultural considerations.

At the public universities women form a small proportion of the teaching staff. Furthermore, very few of them are appointed to administrative positions as compared to their male counterparts. This is partly because appointments to administrative positions in the public universities have been highly politicised, making it very difficult for women academics to compete due to their weak access to political power in the country.

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CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD

In conclusion, it is important to reflect on the key areas of focus and make some deductions based on discussions raised and the supporting evidence provided in this book. Undoubtedly, the roadmap to an educationally fruitful 21st Century for Kenya will depend largely on how seriously all education stakeholders will, not only address the persistent gender disparities in all education, but also demonstrate commitment in responding actively and positively to the underlying challenges identified in this book and other studies on gender and education. Without such commitment from all stakeholders, the MDG and EFA goals of achieving UPE and gender parity at all levels by 2015 will remain a mirage for Kenya.

Reflecting on the foundations of gender in education for girls and women

This book serves as an analytical stocktaking resource that illustrates the status of girls' and women's education in Kenya, *vis-à-vis* that of their male counterparts. It illuminates relative achievements (and at times losses) made in eradicating gender disparities in education at the various levels and outlines trends in girls' and women's education since the country emerged from political colonialism in 1963. Although in some aspects, getting updated gender disaggregated data posed a major challenge, it was evident that many of the education departments such as the Kenya National Examinations Council and the Kenya Bureau of Statistics appear to have taken seriously the activity of compiling comprehensive and relevant data. This is definitely the best way forward because such data would keep gender issues in education at the centre stage and draw attention to action.

In Chapters One and Two, three key guiding positions emerge quite clearly. First, the role of feminist theoretical frameworks has been highlighted as central in the analyses of gender relations within social institutions of school, family and workplace in ways that expose some of the weaknesses and superficialities of gender equality approaches that hinge on the politics of 'equal opportunity'. Since the liberal nature of the 'equal opportunity' approach does not necessarily challenge the deep structures that cushion patriarchal ideology, it is not surprising that the fundamental reasons behind the sidelining of women's roles as inferior and belonging to the private world of the home will remain largely unexposed and trivialised.

Secondly, the contextualisation of gender issues in education, within the broader colonial history of Kenya, offers viable explanations about the *status quo* of the low status of female education relative to that of the male. It is fair to infer that, based on a superiority complex that was founded on racial discrimination against the African peoples and women in particular, the colonial administration ignored the gender ideology that governed social relations among Kenyan communities. Instead, it imposed the Victorian values of domesticating femininity through an inferior education that was gendered and discriminatory to women and girls. This kind of education effectively perpetuated a colonial capitalist economy that marginalised women and hampered their participation in social and economic activities. The colonial economy of education also expanded women's traditional responsibilities within the family and private sphere by transferring the same from the men. Comparatively, this approach to the education of the Africans clearly benefited the men more and offered them a head start that has kept women's education lagging behind in terms of quantity and quality. This tendency of prioritising male education was inherited by post-colonial administrations and hence, the post-colonial governments bear responsibility for the apparent perpetuation of the educational inequalities.

Thirdly, historical and theoretical perspectives interact to help clarify how girls' and women's education has remained sidelined from main-

stream development concerns. Hence, it is not surprising that even after several decades of political independence from British colonial rule, Kenya has yet to achieve gender equality in access to education and training as well as in the rates of participation and quality achievement at any level of formal education. The dismal gender trends in education that became even more pronounced as the educational ladder progressed towards the higher levels, is demonstrated in this book. Whereas considerable gains are evident in terms of the proportions of girls relative to boys who access formal educational institutions at the first instance in Class One, such gains are neither sustained nor translated into equal life chances for women and men, particularly in the labour market.

Girls and women's achievements through basic education

Kenya's achievement in expanding primary and secondary education has clearly contributed to the literacy rates in the country, estimated at 83 per cent (76 per cent for women and 89 per cent for men, UNICEF, 2004, *State of the World's Children 2004*; UNDP, 2004, Human Development Report, 2004). This rate is matched against the global one that stands at 63.3 per cent. Indeed, Kenya compares relatively well as it is positioned at number 146 in the world. Notably, at the primary school level before the introduction of cost-sharing policies in 1988, the gross enrolment rate was estimated to be about 95 per cent. This meant that nearly all school-age children were enrolled in primary education. However, these rates were recorded in a 'gender blind' manner, thus giving an erroneous impression about the enrolment situation for girls and boys.

Furthermore, enrolment rates at Class One cannot be used reliably to infer rates of improvement in transition, completion or even achievement according to gender. Even as the enrolments improved gradually over time, educational status, particularly of those groups that had been deprived of education during the colonial period, remained disproportionately low. Although more research data is needed to identify the different areas of development, anecdotal evidence and the factors discussed in this book seem to indicate that some of the difficulties faced in girls' and women's education in Kenya emanate from some or a combination of socio-economic, political and cultural issues as well as school-based factors.

The above views notwithstanding, the benefits of acquiring basic education cannot be underrated. With regard to health and nutrition, for example, it is common knowledge that infants and children of women with basic levels of schooling are more likely to have better health and nutrition, which minimises child mortality. Educated mothers have lower fertility rates, which are highly correlated with positive impact on maternal and child health. The success of the basic immunisation programmes is partially the result of increased literacy among the rural populations. There is also an increasing number of women who deliver in health centres or with trained attendants, and most women visit pre- and post-natal clinics, which help to ensure safe motherhood. The apparent decrease in population growth is generally explained as being the result of women's greater participation in education and female employment. In view of this, Government cannot afford to disinvest in education for girls and women, particularly basic education, whose mode of being 'free' tends to attract people outside the official school-going age. The analysis in Chapter Three demonstrates that Kenya is still home to many marginalised communities that require affirmative action to uplift basic education in their local settings. To achieve UPE and gender parity by 2015, the Government is obliged to source and allocate adequate quality resources with specified quotas that are proportionate to the educational needs of specific regions and marginalised groups.

Education and benefits for women

The fact that education empowers people has been the catalyst for pursuing EFA goals at a global level. Among other things, EFA puts emphasis on quality basic education and gender parity. Basic education, in particular, has

been key to the advancement of economic activities for many groups of women in the country since the early 1970s. Local women with relatively higher education have assumed positions of leadership to guide their colleagues up the political as well as the economic ladder. Organised group activities often provide opportunities for women to interact, develop organisational, leadership and political skills such as assertiveness in public speaking and relating to the local government leaders, and others, as they advocate their cause and lobby support from government agencies and NGOs. Women groups have indeed been one of the key avenues that have provided an entry point into the public and political arena for many women. A very important educational component of these groups has been the sharing of vocational skills such as sewing, tailoring, knitting, embroidery, food processing and preparation and many others. Some formal education in commercial skills such as book-keeping and accounting are also taught to members. Literacy and numeracy are highly valued in the context of such groups.

Many developments involving women at grassroots level have, by and large depended on the initiatives, participation and leadership of more educated women in positions of responsibility. However, it has to be appreciated that a major bottleneck that has hampered the promotion of such grassroots development has been scarcity of well-educated women who have some degree of commitment to gender issues and consciousness to advance them to greater heights. Also, the proportion of women in positions of responsibility and decision-making in government, private and NGO agencies is too low to make any meaningful impact. Their comparatively low participation at these levels is attributed to their relatively low education credentials and more so to the deep-rooted patriarchal ideology that tends to negate femininity in leadership and hence treats female leaders as 'masculine women'. Such tendencies create unhealthy relationships between many of the women leaders and other women in society

It is noteworthy that the private and public sectors of employment have been experiencing an influx of female labour. By 2004, women accounted for about 30 per cent of total employment with marked increases in public and self-employment. It is estimated that within the rural working age populations, 91 per cent of the economically active people are women. However, being 'economically active' should not be interpreted to necessarily mean 'economically endowed' because evidence shows that the majority of the poor people in the country are rural women who perform most of the economic activities, but reap the least benefits. However, in the urban areas, job participation rates are relatively low for women, who constitute just over one third of the work force. In rural areas, a large number of young female primary school leavers are hired as day-care attendants and health workers.

These opportunities depend on the level of education, which relegates early childhood care and education to the least educated workforce - the women. Hence, it is often the case that Class Eight leaver are recruited to teach the very young children. Primary school leavers – many of them young women – are likely to be preferred even as casual workers in agro-processing factories such as tea and coffee based on their basic literacy and numeracy skills. In addition, this group of workers would be most suited to work in subordinate positions based on the socialisation provided by schools in aspects of punctuality, unquestioning obedience, regular attendance, and ability to adapt to bureaucratic structures, among other working class attributes. Above all else, they are more likely to accept underpayment.

A considerably large number of women work in the formal and informal self-employment sectors or even as casual labourers. Some of these women are in charge of dispensing family incomes, hold relatively greater responsibility in family economies, play significant roles in household level decision-making, particularly over basic and subsistence resource utilisation.

While this situation is commendable, it is far removed from the centres of power located in the national economic and political sectors that determine the status of women *vis-à-vis* men in private and public life. Clearly, the national economic and political arenas continue to favour male dominance that effectively shuts out women from participating in the real issues that affect them and their families economically and socially. For women to participate adequately and effectively in national developmental affairs, the majority of Kenyan women need to access quality and higher education. What the majority of the women need is tertiary education with high-level skills training in areas that would make them competitive in the labour market. The government is obliged to provide such an education if only to demonstrate its commitment to gender equity and equality for its entire population without prejudice.

Beyond secondary education

Even though few girls compared to boys proceed beyond the secondary level, it must be appreciated that more than one third of the post-secondary education population is female. Not only does post-secondary education improve a person's employment chances, it has also widened the horizons for many young women and men, whose aspirations increase and they aim for higher standards of living through better-paying jobs or better skills for self-employment. This, however, does not mean that the 21st Century has remarkably changed the life chances of women. Men as a group continue to have an edge over the women, based on their historical advantages that have yet to be balanced.

Through increased gender sensitisation, teachers and school administrators are portraying a shift from traditional perceptions about the roles of girls and women in national development. The curricular are also being reviewed to include liberal principles of democracy, human rights, participation, cooperation and respect for human potential regardless of natural accidentals such as biological sex. Within families, communities and the nation at large, there is evidence of a growing mind-set with regard to gender and gender relations. Parents and teachers increasingly portray the appreciation that girls and boys can, and must, learn similar things and compete equally in the same tests without harbouring gendered expectations. Teachers also seem to acknowledge that all children in their care deserve to have equal rights to their attention, to books and to positions of responsibility. However, it is not enough to argue for these similarities and rights. What is critical is for teachers to ensure that they focus on more fundamental issues such as school and teacher cultures that are biased towards girls. Other areas of focus are a school culture whose informal curriculum does more harm to girls than the formal one; and the culture of sexualising and objectifying schoolgirls, giving the impression that their God-given ultimate goal is to become wives. For the school to do this, it must challenge a societal culture that dehumanises girls.

Among the young people, there is evidence of a growing sensitisation towards gender equality that is being manifested in the proportion of young women and men who are resisting oppressive forms of patriarchal relations, including early marriage. They also resist the feminisation of the farming industry as well as patronising tendencies of the political leadership that has been thriving on tokenising women leadership. This across-sex cooperation among young people is something that the older generation can learn from. The emerging changes have also been reflected in the efforts by many NGOs to advance women's educational opportunities by using participatory pedagogy and conscientisation activities, which aim at empowering women and men as partners in development.

The presence of a few committed women and men will make a tremendous difference in the ways the next generation of young women and men will interpret gender relations. It is this new thinking among the younger generations that is eradicating pervasive anti-women attitudes within the political establishment, leading to the election of more women to Parliament. It is

noteworthy that although the women parliamentarians are few, their number has been higher than in all previous parliaments by more than 300 per cent. The number of women appointed as permanent secretaries by virtue of their qualifications has also increased manifold; though it is nowhere close to that of the men. Many of the women in positions of power have been outspoken, and appear committed and willing to champion the cause of women. Their main drawback has been the scarcity of organised women's networks to provide effective support that would help deliver more women leaders into parliament and other political positions.

Women who are university graduates have produced research-based evidence that demonstrates continued gender differentiation and discrimination against girls and women. Government, other women and gender-responsive organisations have often used this kind of research to design programmes that enhance gender equality and support affirmative action, particularly in the education of girls. In this regard the pan-African NGO, the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), has done a commendable job of foregrounding girls' educational issues on the entire African continent as well as initiating numerous educational interventions.

FAWE is on record as championing quality education for all girls, for example, through the establishment of Educational Centres of Excellence and providing bursaries to needy girls, it has also sponsored girls rescued from early marriages and female genital excisions; both of which negate girls' educational attainments. Women graduates have also helped to improve females' education in the country through dissemination of research findings using official country reports to government and the UN and through other relevant media and forums such as publications. In what appears to be the vogue emerging from the last decade of the 20th Century and which is catching up fast in the 21st Century, women and men gender experts are increasingly working collaboratively to highlight the ills of gender discrimination and to sensitise top government, NGO and private sector officials to understand and respond positively to gender equality issues. This book also has to point out that despite the dismal rates of female enrolment in tertiary education, Kenya prides in its few but well trained and renowned professional women in law, medicine, education among others. These professional women have formed organisations, associations and lobby groups; all of which have taken their agenda for gender equality to the public arena and into the constitutional review where women are advocating legislation on equal human rights in education, health and other sectors of development. They have championed women's cause at national and local levels and provided mutual support for fellow women. In some cases, the women are inviting men who are sympathetic to women's cause to join and build partnerships geared towards achieving gender equality. The Women Education Researchers of Kenya (WERK) is one such organisation whose mission is to develop research capacity for both women and men. Perhaps because of the great awareness of gender equality issues through mass media, many NGOs have emerged in the last several decades to provide opportunities for organising and promoting women's solidarity. It seems that until gender equality is achieved in all spheres of life, this concerted effort is unstoppable.

It can be said that although the impact of education on the transformation of the lives of women may not be easily measured statistically, there is reliable evidence of a gradual acceptance of the inevitable change in gender relations. This is presenting hope for a fruitful march into a future that would see education delivering both women and men equally into prosperity.

The way forward

As demonstrated in this book, there has been more rhetoric in implementing policies to redress the imbalances in girls and women participation in education than the effect of policy action. Clearly, Kenya seems to lag behind in the area of implementing policies meant to enhance gender parity compared with other

partner states in the East African Community - Tanzania and Uganda. Hence, despite the above achievements, there is increasing recognition that the continued poor participation of girls and women in education and training systems in Kenya is a major stumbling block to all spheres of economic development. Unless urgent action is taken to enhance female education and training, the widely acclaimed goals of industrialisation, gender equity and equality will remain unmet. The greatest challenge with regard to charting the way forward for this country lies squarely with government. The government should continue to demonstrate its commitment to engendering its structures and by extension, society at large. By spreading the relevant gender messages such as supporting gender equality practices in education and other sectors of development, government and national leaders would go a long way in leading the nation towards a change of mindset and realising gender equality.

Since there is no disputing that the factors which contribute to girls' non-enrolment, poor participation and low learning achievements in both the school system and training are complex, all educational stakeholders need to embrace approaches that are multi-dimensional, holistic and participatory. Further, the use of well-designed intervention strategies that could accelerate girls' education should also receive priority in national and local education planning. There is ample evidence in this book to enable policy makers and practitioners to plan a way forward that is reconstructive of the education sector.

While it is appreciated that there are no easy solutions to existing gender disparities in education and other development sectors, the government cannot afford to relent in implementing effective interventions that respond to the complexities involved. Studies abound that have adequately analysed the various interacting factors that produce inequalities in education. What the government should do is to implement recommendations from such studies instead of commissioning new but similar research. New research should only be endeavoured to address gaps in existing data where particular local settings are the point of focus.

It is common knowledge, highlighted in this book, that attitudinal barriers serve to inhibit girls' participation in education and training, particularly in science and mathematics. In these specific areas of study, government ought to strategise on how to change attitudes among teachers and students. Parents and guardians also need the skills to help them guide their sons and daughters about school performance and also learn how to dismantle gender boundaries regarding science and mathematics education, at the family level. While we appreciate that changing traditional societal attitudes is not an easy task, particularly among rural folk and the urban poor, it is crucial that educationalists undertake to challenge retrogressive attitudes, especially those that construct competitive girls as 'bad girls' for marriage or workplace. Community mobilisation and media campaigns should be used to sensitise against gender stereotyping and the avoidable harm it does most girls. Similarly, institutional interventions to guarantee that girls showing academic promise are assured financial support, possibly through a government affirmative action programme, would enhance increased participation that is likely to see girls complete their education and pursue the so-called 'male professions'.

Just as familial and societal cultures influence attitudes, so do the institutional cultures of the school and other educational institutions. To make positive changes in this respect, in-service as well as pre-service training of teachers should incorporate courses that make gender awareness and responsiveness a central focus in education at all levels. Since teachers and instructors alike are as much a product of societal attitudes as parents and students, they should be empowered to take up the responsibility of implementing the relevant changes in their classrooms, schools and institutional communities in order to participate fully in promoting gender equity and equality in education and training from a life cycle approach. Such an approach in engendering the education system is likely to yield greater returns among genera-

tions of students and pupils. Finally, we cannot overemphasise the role of research in equipping policy makers and planners with timely and accurate information on the pertinent issues that retard the education of girls and even boys in particular circumstances. In this context, it is important that researchers are brought on board when it comes to education policy planning and implementation.

Above all, Kenya like most other developing countries should demonstrate a commitment to achieving EFA and MDGs on gender, which among other things, require ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and others, have access to a complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality. While it is appreciated that the successful implementation of FPE in 2003 increased access and participation of children from poor socio-economic backgrounds, especially girls, the government has to put in place systems to ensure gender mainstreaming in education. The little-known National Task Force on Gender, Education and Training has remained moribund since it was set up in 1994. The time to revive and revitalise it is now so that it can provide the locus for enhancing gender mainstreaming in education.

The handicap to the realisation of gender equality in education in the country is neither lack of knowledge nor of the necessary policy options. But rather, the challenge seems to be one of bringing the necessary political commitment, expertise and resources together in order to respond to the task. To meet this challenge, the government should show a strong political commitment to creating an enabling environment for promoting gender equality in education through legislative and policy reforms, and a redistribution of resources with a particular focus on female education and introducing special measures aimed at reducing inequalities. Without putting in place such strategies, achieving EFA and MDGs on gender will continue to remain a pipe dream.