Girls' and women's education in Kenya: gender perspectives and trends

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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, they policies tend to lose meaning when they remain unimplemented. Because the process of policy is so crucial to practical achievements, it is important the thinking that provides life to policy formulation. In contemporary educational theory and practice, the feminist thought provides invaluable direction on gender policies that seek to enhance inclusiveness and equality in education that does not discriminate girls and women or any other 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 upon 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 on 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 of gender issues. In this sense, gender perspectives prompt us to always ask the question 'what does this action, decision, outcome or benefit affect women vis-à-vis men or girls vis-à-vis boys?' Thus, helping us to always locate femininity and masculinity as relational concepts and to critique how differently, female and male human beings are can be affected by a single decision that happens to be gender blind.

A **framework** provides analytical structures within which to position particular forms of arguments in order to provide clarity and avoid misconceptions the processes of addressing and resolving conceptual and/or 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, among other socially defined 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, defining 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). This way, gender functions like a conceptual tool that helps 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 the masculinity often results in the 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 consistently drawn between sex as an innate definition of our sexual being and gender, which is a fluid and changeable social construct that is experienced and practised with variations within and over time as well as within and across cultures.

However, 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. This way in:

> 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 the social institutions, mainly the school and family, help to reinforce and perpetuate a legendary polarity between the feminine and masculine, thus creating gender boundaries that are justified through myths and related social stereotypes. According to Connell, Ashenden, Kessler, & Dowsette (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 that 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 tended to lean more on the sex-role theory, whose analytical approach stresses more on 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 dichotomy that stresses differences is has resulted in the politicisation of gender relations, thus creating artificially rigid dissimilarities between the 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 is the 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 is fitted into what are defined as male roles. This dichotomy serves to label non-conforming males and females as deviants or failures in their gender construction of their identities. Hence, a girl or woman who adapts the assumed masculine qualities of competitiveness, assertiveness, and suchlike qualities, is portrayed as lacking the 'correct' identity and is stigmatised by being categorised as 'tomboy' (implying that she has more of a male traits and less of female). In comparison, while a boy or man embraces presumed feminine qualities such as sensitivity, humility, intuition, compassion and so on, 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 the 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'.

In contemporary theorisation of gender, however, 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 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 recognition 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 respectively. 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 regarding human agency, post-structuralisms tends to share with modern feminism an interest in the reality of the shifting of social boundaries and the undoing of binary oppositions. This is exemplified in the different forms of femininities and masculinities, which 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 human agency, if left free to interact with the various social structures, including those of education, would produce themselves as polar opposites, but 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 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 1890's (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 lot in relation to their male contemporaries. Weiner (1994) observes that right from Sappo in the17th century BC, through to the modern times, distinctive feminist presence is evident. However, different strands of feminisms 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 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 in order 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 Feminisms. 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 not only 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 characteristic 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 one 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 were categorised as an oppressed under-class regardless of their social positioning or material circumstances. Hence, it is argued that women, as a class, are oppressed because men have the 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 for 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 with 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 that would offer:

> 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 feminist 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 which are based, not only on the exploitation of class relations, but also on gender, in ways that make 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 hierarchically 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 compared with 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 numbers of both men and women who received formal education and increased their chances of entry into the formal employment sector. Notably, however, even though from the early years of independence, the Kenya government, like many others in the region, engaged in tokenism of political appointments of women but kept their numbers conspicuously low, and often below 6 per cent of the men for more than 40 years of post-colonial era (that is, until 2002). 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 that was 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 ever witnessed in recent memory. The effects of the new trend of women in leadership position would most likely influence, positively, decision-making that is not hostile to women and girls in the areas of education, health and property rights, not to mention the presentation of positive role models for the girls. Indeed, the establishment of a Gender Commission 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 adequate in dismantling the colonial legacy of male oppressive tendencies towards the womenfolk. This is mainly because without educational policies that are clear about gender and 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 through 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 Decade of Women that national governments agreed to recognise women clearly as the 'missing link' in national development and economic success within the human capital investment 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 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 (UN) 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 development planning. Clearly, there was no way of giving this new definition 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 sphere 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 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 that 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 UN 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 preoccupation 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 marginalize the bulk of the women. What lacked in these mind-shifts was the will and ability to scrutinise the fundamental causes of women's subordination, particularly at 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 the girls and the 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 sexual division of labour in the family and in the workplace (reproduction and production). As microcosms of the state, educational institutions find themselves at crossroads in the provision of equal educational chances and in the questioning of women's exclusion from the realms of power (Weiner, 1994).

Academia Response to Gender and Women Studies

The introduction of women studies courses, gender studies departments, institutes, related centres and units, as well as crosscutting programmes that emerged in various universities in the sub-Saharan region in the 1990s was an important move towards legitimating gender studies within the 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 continue 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 the Republic of South Africa where the academia seems to have embraced gender issues in education. This is evidenced 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), University of South Africa (Institute for Gender Studies), and Centre for Gender Studies (University of Pretoria), among others (Africa Gender Institute, 2003). In Kenya, the Kenyatta University Centre for Gender Studies was established in the year 2001. Notably, this centre came into existence 10 years after the department at Makerere due to what was perceived as a reflection of the attitude portrayed 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, in 2004, the Centre for Gender Studies at Kenyatta University was de-established and its activities 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 some African educational institutions, including universities. However, it seems that Kenya has continued to 'limp' in this regard, perhaps because of lack of a comprehensive and functional national framework that would guide the education sector in designing strategies of 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 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 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 tradition mind-sets, 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 women and girls, as well as men and boys 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 is 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 the 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 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 production processes for both women and men, whereby primary education, for example, is linked to increase in farm productivity. Examples show that literate farmers (most often men farmers) tend to produce higher yields per acre because they have more access to agricultural and co-operative training, seek more contact with agricultural extension workers, and are better able 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; yet 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 mainstream of education that has its foundation right from the formative phase of girlhood. By implication, therefore, the low economic participation of women in agriculture, lack of competitive skills for entry into the labour market, as well as 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). Specifically for example, Callaway found that one of the primary impacts of education for girls in Nigeria, for example, 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 (Callaway, 1980). However, gender dimensions in education continue to face serious challenges from low rates in female participation, transition, performance and educational achievement. Because of this, men as a social group, have continued to benefit more in productive ventures as the women remained 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) – paradoxically - a condition for which they are often blamed.

In addition to the impact of female education in improving primary healthcare, research shows convincingly that women's education, compared with that of men, is linked directly to the delay in age of marriage, lower fertility rates, the desire for fewer children, and 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 compared with primary education and subsequent, tertiary level supersedes the lower levels.

Studies in many parts of the world have shown that women's education, compared with men, correlates strongly with their increased desires 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 both sexes even 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 where the effect on girls is roughly twice as great in both the actual enrolment and the probability that the girls would transit 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 comparatively 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 (that is processes and content) and 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 political independence in 1963, the Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965, **African Socialism and its Applications to Planning in Kenya,** emphasised the country's commitment to the objectives of individual freedom, social justice and human dignity including the 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, as a way of appearing politically correct, the Government of Kenya constituted a women's division in the Ministry of Culture and Social Services, 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 emergence of 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, 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-emphasized 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 United Nations International Woman's Conference held in Mexico in 1975, the Bureau's mandate extended so as to formulate policies, coordinate and harmonise women's activities within government ministries and NGOs, 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, and potential, that women 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 Second UN International 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 tended to remain a great challenge on the part of government, it is noteworthy that Since 'Forum 85' a progressive centring of gender sensitivity by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and in policy statements and has been visible. For example, the ensuing national development plans deliberately portrayed government effort to include the gender dimension in development programmes. Rather embarrassingly, however, top government leadership continued to interpret gender issues as women's issues, thus responding with contempt towards 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 International Women's Conference held in Beijing in 1995 bears testimony to the retrogressive attitude of government 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 restore women to 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 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 workload
- increase gender awareness and sensitisation in all sectors of development that would facilitate smooth implementation of gender sensitive policies and programmes
- lobby for 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 assumed power on a platform of re-introducing free primary education, has evidence of increased educational access at the primary level. However, issues of gender inequalities appear to have been sidelined whereby 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, are largely ignored. In addition, even as research continues to show that large class sizes have negative

effects on quality education, the poor teacher-learner ratio characterised the implementation of free primary education in Kenya. Notably, however, a proposed new constitution (Constitution Review Commission, 2003), raised hopes that gender equality would at the core of every development sector, including education.

The absence of gender policies that would ensure that gains at primary school were not lost during transition to secondary level portray lack of strategic planning that would help improve the educational status of girls and women in the broader analysis. The *status quo*, therefore, suggests that for a majority of girls compared with boys, primary education could be terminal, as has been the tradition in the country.

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 resource. In addition, even where such resources are available for the girls, career information and counselling has remained wanting, thus continuing to mystify the SMT, excluding and condemning most girls to a future that is devoid of adequate scientific and technological knowledge and skills that is crucial in the development, not only of the nation, 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 girls have tended to outperform the 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 of 1990, to which Kenya was a signatory, various national conferences were organised, which include the 1992 National Conference on Education for All (EFA) held in Kisumu, and which recommended strategies that would ensure 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 Gender and Education Task Force and the Girl Child Project implemented jointly by 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 of adolescent mothers who had dropped out of school due to pregnancy into the mainstream of formal education. 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 cross-sections 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 in the skewed attitude towards women and the problems of maternity and sexuality, which is not compared to 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. Importantly also, closing the gender gap in the teacher training colleges was considered a priority that started by transforming one wing of the Kenya Science Teachers College male dormitory into accommodation space for female students, thus allowing increased intake girls. In the primary teachers colleges, response to the gender equality policies saw an increase of female students in the 1996/97 academic years. 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 girls comprising about one third of the boys; an indication 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 desegregated data bank at the MOEST that helps to identify gender disparities in the education system. This practice was also 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 policy statements 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, the persistence of unfavourable socio-cultural practices, gender insensitive school physical environments and social cultures, lack of pedagogy that empowers girls, long distance to school that raises issues of security especially for girls, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic that makes girls more vulnerable to infection and domestic workload of caring and nursing the ailing parents, 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 global focus on Education for All (EFA), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and other international conventions and treaties that advocate for equal education for every person. Government refusal to act 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 to 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:

International Treaties that Support Gender Equality in Education

- International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which was adapted in 1966 and came into force 10 years later in 1976, albeit with a limited coverage of gender and education issues. 144 countries ratified it.
- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was developed specifically with gender in mind and adapted in 1976. It covers all types of education at all levels and came into force in 1981. One hundred and seventy three (173) countries, including Kenya, ratified this convention.
- Convention on the Rights of the Child that was adapted in 1989 and came into force a year later in 1990. 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 curriculum (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.
- 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.
- Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (1995) reaffirmed the Vienna Declaration that rights of women and girls are inalienable, indivisible and are integral part of human rights. The agenda of this platform of action seeks not only to promote but also protect the full enjoyment of all human rights and the fundamental freedoms of all women.
- 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 Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 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 as follows:

- 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 Millennium Development Goals sets out clear targets for education and gender. The MDGs also indicate some moderate mid-term targets to be met by 2005 as follows:

- 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 not later than 2015 (UNESCO, 2003: 27).

Summary and Conclusions

The achievement of independence in Kenya ad in 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 the 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 the educational and the formal employment sectors 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 the strategic plans that address specific issues of access, quality, retention and performance. Further, proper monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for gender equality are not availed the practitioners policy implementation is not given the 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 Dakar and the Millennium Goals 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 being 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 EDUCATION IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD

Introduction

It is important, on the onset, to appreciate the context within which gender issues in contemporary education in Kenyan have developed. In Kenya, like in other African countries, many of the relatively early 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 dominant patriarchal arrangements is true for many traditional African communities, the claim that the underlying ideology translated exclusively into on this issue are conspicuously silent on matriarchal societies in Africa whereby gender relations comprised a balance of female relative positions of power was 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 marginalizing of the 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 African communities, 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 alien 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 the 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 of 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 that was modelled on an exploitative capitalist ideology that was not only racist but also sexist. We will see how, in the provision of education to the African people, Western colonialism clearly ignored the diversity of ethnic 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 Twenty First 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 in 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 who 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 tax on each of their wives, each who lived in a separate hut. 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 in the European farms, popularly referred to as the 'white highlands' (Bennel, 1963). This taxation business 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 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 marginalizing women as active agents and agents 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. Firstly, 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 that involved cattle-rearing, herding and cash crop farming in the absence of the male help (Wiper, 1972).

The new roles for women at 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 economic nature that 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 even 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 survival relied increasingly on the 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 name of 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 off 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 the 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 freedoms in decision making seriously (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 R.M.A., 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 was founded on apparent concern over women's reproductive capacities and their assumed familial responsibilities, which would require that women be precluded from working overtime, 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 into 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 could help eliminate women's confinement to the private and domestic labour that culminated into their oppression by men (Humm). This view that the colonial powers were determined to ignore, clearly because it was no in the interest of their capitalist patriarchal design.

Despite colonial employers largely excluding 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 in way of gifts after the harvest was sold (Clark, 1980). In all cases, however, a woman's earnings were relatively 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 by 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 suchlike 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 system that disorganised the construction of African femininities and masculinities.

Further, 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, in Nairobi and other towns restrictions were placed on women who attempted to enter towns for purposes of employment or otherwise. The colonialists argued that Africans were bush dwellers by nature and implied that necessity directed that male labourers be 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 that were based on the availability of waged labour in favour of men provided the basis for denying women educational opportunities that was equal to that of men, thus diverting them away from wage employment in the towns, and resulting in unbalanced sex ratios in Nairobi and other towns (White, 1990).

In both the 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 handicrafts. 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. Many 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. Because of the stiff opposition to female labour in the city, some of the women could not afford to rent dwellings for themselves and sooner, 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 the 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 education on feminine chores as wives, mothers and daughters, the African women were able to earn a living without much problem. This however, 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, many 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, such was the contradiction of barring husbands from living with their wives in towns, thus denying 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 that 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 nurse, lady physician (not doctor), schoolmistress and secretary. 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 alien to Africans. Yet, research shows the feminisation of those occupations was in harmony with the gender relations in Victorian England – not traditional African – 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 corresponding low female participation in colonial education compared with that of males. Usually, girls were not sent to school, and the few that were, tended to receive an education that neither prepared them for equal competition in the job market nor in self-employment in any way that bestowed 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 low prioritisation of female education was the colonial arrogance and their thirst for a relatively cheap labour force that was skewed against women and which only encouraged female participation more on reproductive services at family level and to 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 colonialist's arrogance in dealing with African clearly blinded their administrators to the existence and indeed the reality of an African pedagogy of difference that 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 upon which cultural dynamics of gender relations were sidelined, distorted, and trashed within the colonial structure (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 educating 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 best 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, and the power distribution at the household and political village levels whereby the relationship between African women's empowerment and ideal the 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 precolonial 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 proceed 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, similar to the Kenyan Kikuyu women's association, *ndundu ya atumia* (Wai, 1995), the mid-nineteenth century Sierra Leonian women's association of *Bundu* was so influential in social, political, and religious life that the missionaries went to considerable trouble to discredit and destroy it (Day, 1998). It is in the context described above that 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, educational provision was limited by the fact that accessing 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 family subsistence economy could sponsor their children at least in 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 contexts 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 the relatively wealthy Africans were capable of sending girl children 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 (1) 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, per year. Logic dictates that in terms of offering quality education, the investment of 1 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 largely 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 women who entered the missions and sought refuge based on a host of cultural reasons (Dubel, 1981). The missionaries provided these women with minimal education while at the same time converting them into 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 reaction from both the African men and the 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 tended to prefer 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 among many other occupations that were traditionally masculine (Mama, 1996). Christian missionaries who had initially trained girls to be good, 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 subsistence agricultural economy declined, the educated women increasingly joined their men-folk 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 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 in so far 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 persistent 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 school as a demonstration of the African girls' contentment with only the rudiments of literacy (Trignor, R.L., 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 appeared to grow. Parents in urban areas seemed more able to afford education and were more conversant with job opportunities for their daughters. They also 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, relative to boys, managed to attain education beyond secondary school as illustrated in Table 1. This table shows a relatively low female enrolment relative that of males in 1953, ten years prior to Kenya's attainment of political independence from colonial rule.

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*

It is estimated that during the last two decades of colonial rule, the number of African girls attending elementary schools constituted about 25 per cent of all school going African children. 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 the Kenyan education and other sectors of development started in earnest during the colonial period. The apparent discrimination was clearly generated from an already existing pedagogy of difference that governed gender relations in the African settings, 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 as 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 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 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. This trend has persisted in many African communities, several decades after the collapse 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 alien ideologies and practices, girls' education remained marginalised and, of low quality relative to boys'. Hence, it is not by chance that by independence time, 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 ensuing chapters address gender issues in Kenyan education settings using the education-cycle approach. The chapters highlight emergent 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

Introduction

Since the achievement of independence in 1963, the government and the people of Kenya have been committed to expanding the education system to enable greater participation. This has been in response to a number of concerns. Among them are the desire to combat ignorance, disease and poverty; and the belief that every child has the right of access to basic welfare provisions, including education. The other belief is that the government has the obligation to provide the opportunity to its citizens to fully take part 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 in 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 of *High Level Manpower Requirements and Resources in Kenya, 1964-1970,* 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 economic development in Kenya could be accelerated.

While placing emphasis on education for human resource development, the commission, however, endorsed as a valid education policy objective, the provision of free primary education. It was said to contribute to economic progress by providing a reservoir of candidates for secondary and higher education by fulfilling the minimum basic education requirement for participation in the modern sector of the economy. But in this regard 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 the main emphasis on the expansion of higher levels of education, trying to gear them to 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 did rise, 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 the primary school age population 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 and 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 North Eastern Province and the districts of Marsabit, Isiolo, Samburu, Turkana, West Pokot, Tana River and Lamu.

The presidential initiative seemed in line with the declared policy of the ruling party, KANU. In 1963 election, KANU had published its party 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).

The December 12, 1973 presidential decree was issued that moved the country closer to achieving Universal Primary Education. The decree provided free education for children in Standard I-IV nationwide. It went further and provided uniform fees structure for those in Standards V-VII in the whole country (Muhoro, 1975). They had all to pay KSh 60 per child 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 of pupil enrolment. Enrolment in Standard One classes rose by a million above the estimated figure of 400,000. The total enrolment figure for the Standards I-IV children 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 Standard One. According to this estimate the enrolment in primary schools would reach 4 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 Development Education (ECCDE) is one of 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. ECCDE 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 countries whose ECCDE gross enrolment ratio is between 30-50 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 ECCDE, 3-5 year olds and for primary education 6-13 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 ECCDE, available statistics for the year 2002 indicate that there were 28, 300 pre-schools in Kenya compared to 18,327 recorded in 1992. This represents, 68.9 per cent increase in the number of ECCDE 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, the enrolment had increased to 1,204,606 being a 2.5 per cent increase. The impact of the implementation of free primary education on pre-school enrolment has as yet to be evaluated as most of them attached to public primary schools were normally supported through community contributions. The average number of children enrolled in each pre-school ranged between 42 and 52 in the period under review.

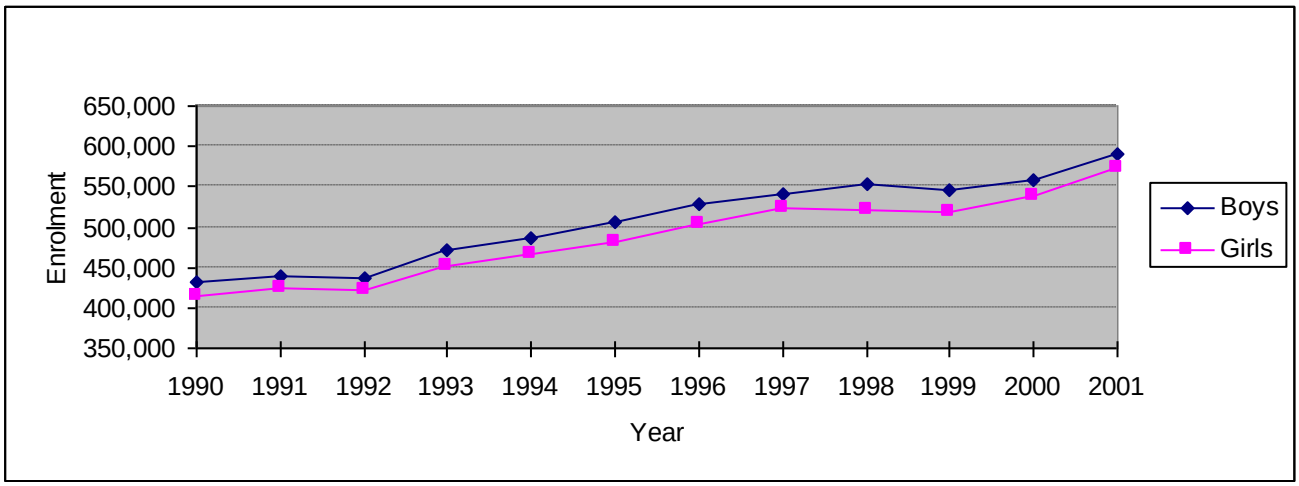
Table 2: Number of ECCDE/Pre-primary Schools and Enrolments

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; Statistics Section

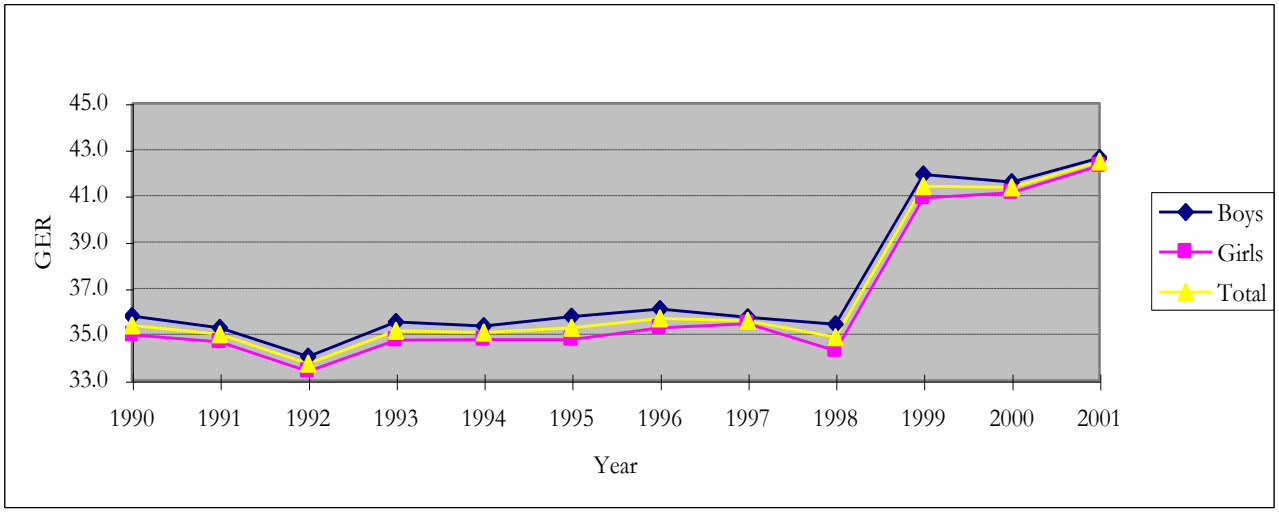
Gender disparities in enrolment at the national level are not significant as shown in the Table 2 and Chart 1. The proportion of girls, enrolment has been ranging between 48.5 per cent to 49.2 per cent.

Chart 1: Enrolment in Pre-Primary School



Available data on Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) indicate that the rate has remained nearly constant at around 35 per cent between 1990 and 1998, after which it rose significantly to 41.4 per cent in 1999 and 42.5 per cent in 2001 as shown in the Table 3 and Chart 2. In 2003 it was estimated to have risen to 44.4 percent, with 45.5 percent and 43.3 percent for boys and girls respectively. This may be associated with 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. Enrolment rate for boys has been relatively higher than that of girls in the period under review, although the differences are insignificant

Chart: 2 Gross Enrolment Rates in Pre-Schools by Sex, 1990-2001



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 and 43.2 per cent for girls followed by Coast province with a gender disparity of 3.2 percentage points in favour of boys. It is however worth noting that Nyanza, Western and Nairobi provinces had higher proportion 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, being 107.4 percent for boys and 108.4 percent for girls followed by Nyanza with 51.7percent 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 percent and 24.5 percent; and North Eastern with 12.7 percent and 10.3 percent for boys and girls respectively (MoEST, 2005).

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of ECCDE/Pre-Primary Schools 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**

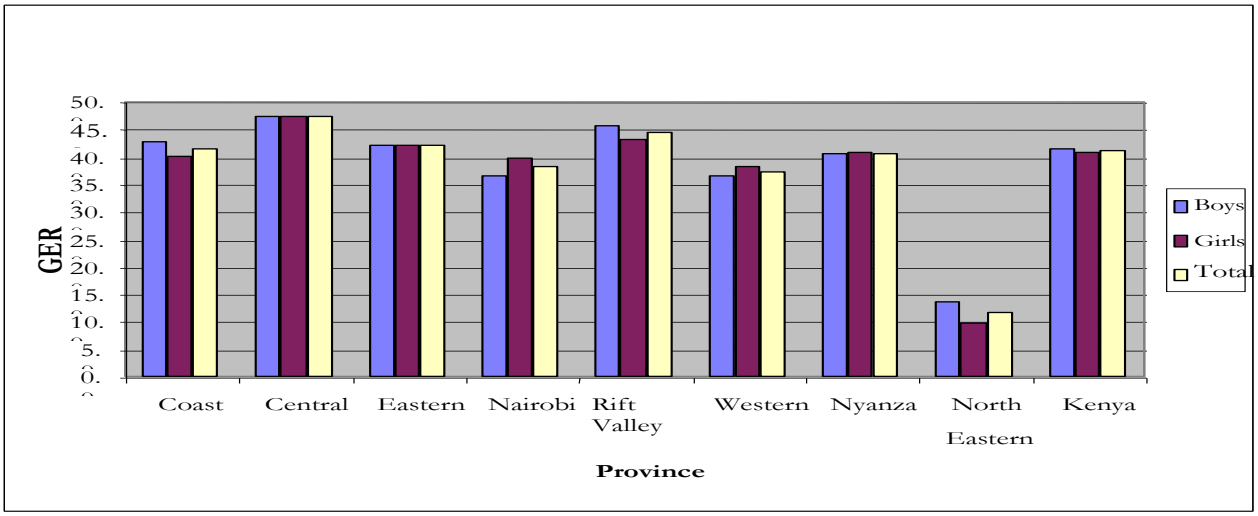
The analysis of the GER by province in 2002 as shown in Table 4 and Chart 3 indicate that North Eastern Province had the lowest GER of 11.8 per cent with 13.6 per cent for boys and 9.8 per cent for girls followed by Western province with a GER of 37.3 per cent. On the other hand, Central Province recorded the highest GER of 47.4 per cent with boys and girls being at par.

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

Chart: 3 Pre-Primary School GER by Province and Sex



Access, Participation and Retention in Primary Education

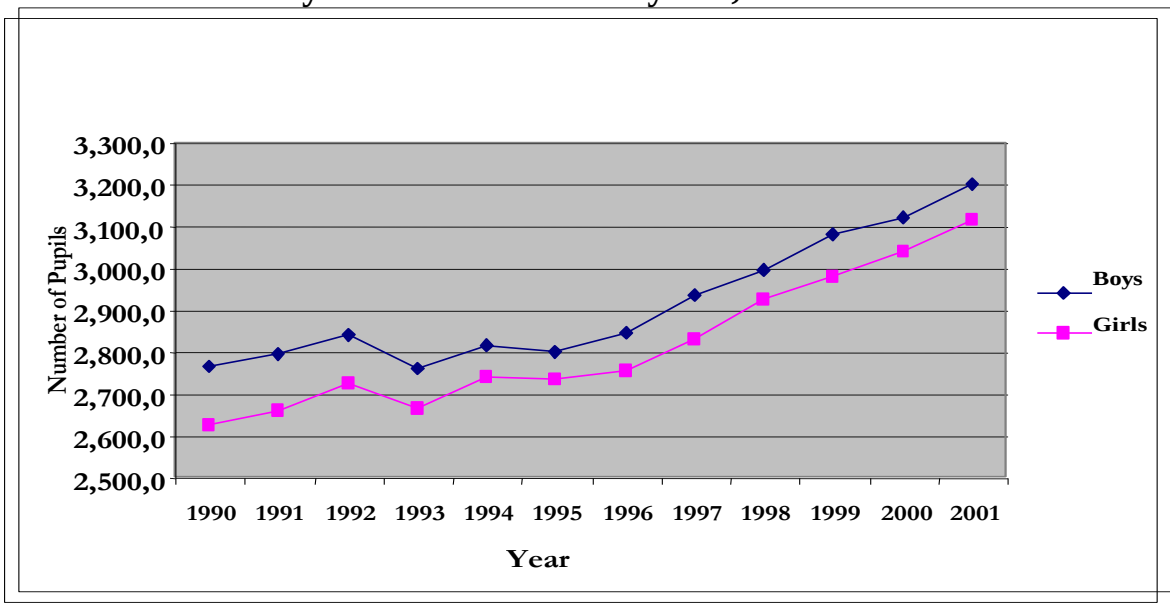
The number of primary schools in the country has increased steadily from 14,864 in 1990 to 19,129 in 2002 representing 35.7 per cent increase (see Table 5). Enrolment in absolute terms has also gone up from 5,392,319 to 6,314,726 being 17per cent rise over the same period as shown in Table 5 and Chart 4. The percentage of girls' enrolment has 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.

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



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

Since NER indicates the proportion of the school-age children who are actually enrolled in school, it is possible to get 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 the primary school-age children 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 a total of 2,172,862 primary school-age children who were out of school in 2002, with boys being 1,106,968 and girls 1,065,894.

Table: 6 Primary School Net Enrolment Rates 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

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

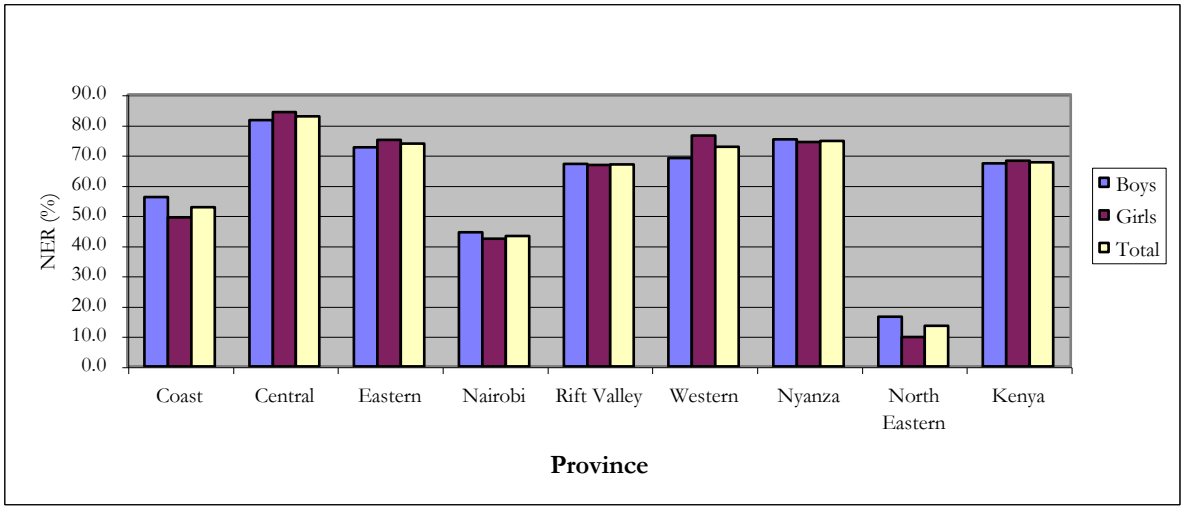


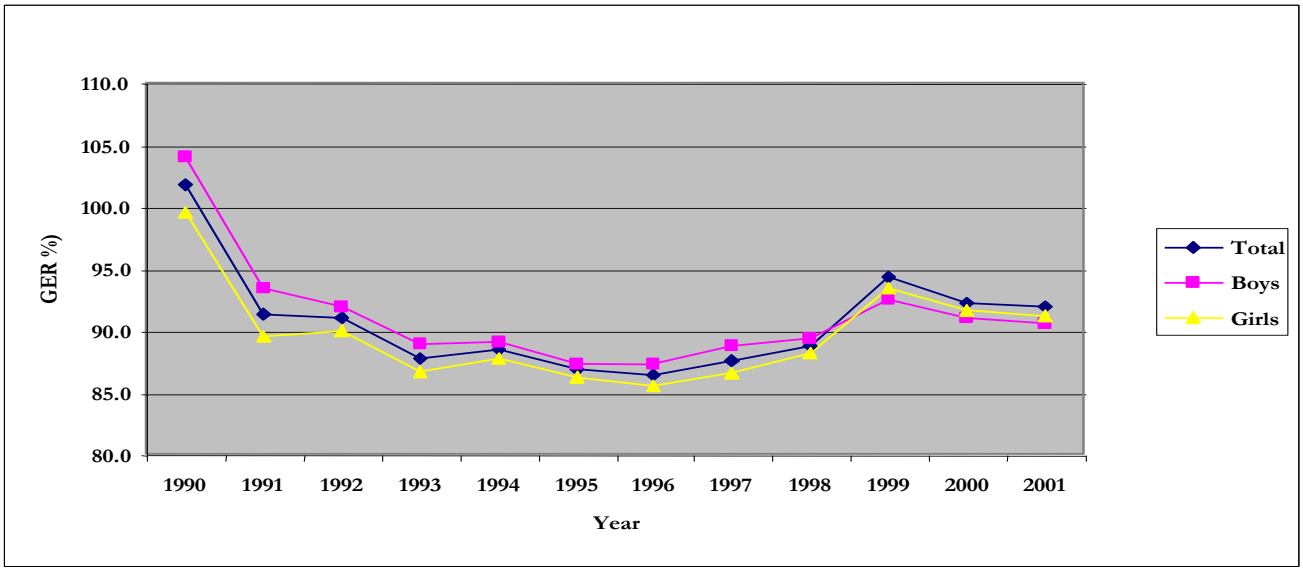
Table 7 below represents primary school enrolment following the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003. The total enrolment rose by 17.6 from 6,131,000 in 2002 to 6,819,324 in 2003. There was a gender imbalance with around 3,702800 boys enrolling at all levels compared to 3,505300 girls, giving a sex ratio of 51.5 to 48.5. From the same table it is however, a matter great concern, that FPE had very little impact on enrolments in Nairobi and the North Eastern Province, which contributed to the national enrolments by only 3.26 per cent and 0.89 per cent respectively. The two provinces also display very high gender disparities, being 39.71% and 31.45% respectively.

Table 7: Public Enrolment 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**

In spite of the rising number of pupils enrolled in primary schools, the GER has declined from 101.8 in 1990, with a GER for boys being 104.0 per and girls 99.6 per cent to 91.2 per cent, with boys constituting 91.9 per cent and girls 90.6 per cent as shown in the Chart 6. The drop in the GER was most pronounced between 1993 and 1998. The marked rise of GER from 88.8 per cent in 1998 to 94.3 per cent in 1999 was due to revision of the MoEST data in which it was claimed that the previous GER calculations had ignored a large proportion of children already enrolled in school.

Chart 6: Primary School GER by Sex, 1990-2001



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 boys constituting 21.9 per cent and girls 12.1 per cent. Nairobi, Central, Nyanza, Western and Eastern record a very high GER. The implementation of the free primary education significantly changed the GER regionally as follows; Nyanza being the highest with 120 percent, Western 119 percent, Eastern 110 percent, Rift Valley 103 percent, Central 102 percent. Coast 82 percent, Nairobi 62 percent and North Eastern 25 percent. It is apparent that after the upsurge in 2003, the GER was beginning to decline 2004, which was 99.8 overall, with 102.7 percent for boys and 97.0 percent for girls. Regionally it was 140 percent and 123.4 percent Western; Eastern, 118.3 percent and 115.4 percent; Nyanza 116.7 percent and 109.1 percent; Rift Valley 108.6

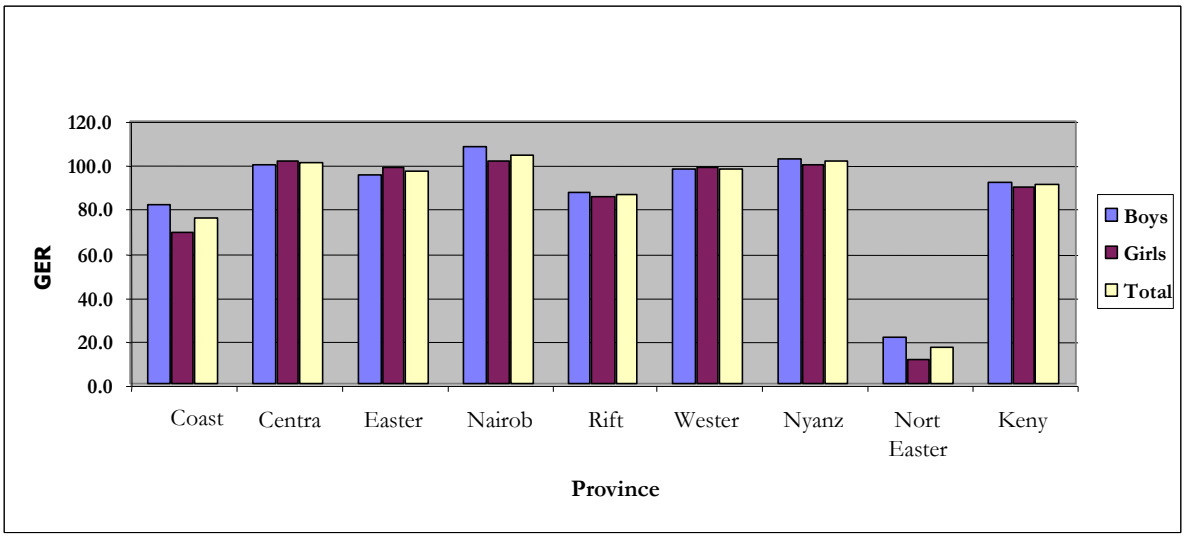
percent and 100.7 percent; Central 94.5 percent and 92.6 percent; Coast 90.8 percent and 77.6 percent; Nairobi 35.9 percent and 40.8 percent; and North Eastern 31.0 percent and 16.9 percent boys and girls respectively (MoEST, 2005).

Table 8: Primary School Gross Enrolment Rates 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

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



The massive influx in enrolment during the implementation of the free primary education policy by the government, however, resulted in some very significant rise in the GER from 92 to 104 per cent overall, with boys and girls constituting 106 and 104 respectively . But 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 75:1.

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

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

Another important factor relating 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's 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 alien and non-traditional exposures. 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 existed for many years like the Coast Province and many parts of the 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 presence Christian through the schools is as disruptive. The 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 brings about change 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 contended to enjoy the status of her husband (Clarke, 1978).

The expansion of primary education since independence has been discussed, contributed to a steady rise in the proportion of girls' enrolment. In 1963, girls accounted for only one-third of the primary school enrolment. By 1979, however, the proportion had risen to 47 per cent. As it 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. 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, girl's primary school participation varies considerably at provincial and district levels. Regional differences in the provision of educational opportunities for girls correspond with the regions of 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 differentiation with 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 of loyal districts, which generate large funds for development through harambee, and a deprivation of districts, which 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 in districts and municipalities where there is parity in boys and girls' enrolment are areas with advanced economy 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 relative high cash incomes from agriculture, formal and informal employment which has enabled parents to meet the direct costs of schooling for both their sons and daughters' as well as the indirect costs 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 income earning potential of an educated daughter had began 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 the primary schools 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 ; Government of Kenya and UNICEF 1992). These are districts, which were fully integrated, in the colonial economy. They fall in the arid and semi-arid regions of the country, and they include; Garrison, Madera, Marsabit, Nark, Samburu, Tana River, Turkana, Weir, Naiad and West Pokot. The people who live here are mainly pastor lists. In the colonial period, they had very limited contact with the colonial economy and Christian missionaries. Their way of life was the least disturbed by incorporation into capitalist economy by way of land alienation or the supply of labour. Hence their way of life was not disturbed by 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, Weir 30 per cent, and Madera 24 per cent. Other districts with low girls' participation rates include Kale 42 per cent, Killifish 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, (Government of Kenya and UNICEF, 1992). The fact that there is some resistance in these areas to allow children of both sexes to attend school cannot be denied. Whereas some progress has been achieved in the last two decades in 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. The assertion at the policy level, however, is that the 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, not because parents in these areas are unwilling to send their children to school. Pastoralist communities' interests and concerns for the education of their children are not any less than those of the parents in other areas of the country. Behind their reluctance lies an explanation of their inability to pay the relatively exorbitant school fees and to meet other costs, which are necessary to participate in 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 also had 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 years periods (CBS and Unicef, 1984:54).

The largest average increase in female primary school enrolment is said to have initially occurred in the districts with the greatest disadvantage to girls 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 operate 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 under building fund, activity fund, equipment levy, and others. While the payment of some of the funds was compulsory, others were collected on *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 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 in trying to raise enrolment in primary schools. But little if any did it affect the differentiated enrolment rates in the various regions of the country. For the arid and semi-arid districts parents 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. Girls educational opportunities are further constrained by the comparative inaccessibility of educational facilities in these districts, (Chege, 1983:108).

Drop-out Rate

It needs to be pointed out from the out set that drop-out figures are generally difficult to be obtained from the 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, dropout rate in primary schools was estimated at 5.4 per cent. However, it needs to be qualified that this was an extremely conservative estimate, considering that the completion rate has for long remained below 50 per cent. It was established that North Eastern Province had the highest dropout rate of 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 5 per cent dropout rate and girls 4.8 per cent. Regionally, Eastern Province registered the highest dropout rate of 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.

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

Whatever benefits may exist in increased enrolment in primary education are often wasted through high dropout and repetition rates. 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 Standard One in 1984, only 380,990, that is 44 per cent, reached Standard Eight in 1991. The other 483,603 repeated or else dropped out and the repetition and drop-out rates of girls were higher than for boys. In total, out of the 417,425 girls who enrolled in 1984, some 58.4 per cent dropped out. By comparison, 447, 168 boys enrolled and 53.6 per cent dropped out (Republic of Kenya, 1991). Drop-outs result from economic, social-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 pattern of dropouts 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 and semi-arid or pastoral districts. Studies also show that the underlying problem of dropout is the ability of the family to pay for the cost of education, (Nkinyangi, 1980:246|). Girls tend to be the victims of dropout as opposed to boys in low socio-economic families. In situations where parents cannot pay for both boys and girls, the latter is sacrificed outright. Boys are allowed to proceed while girls drop out. It is concluded that girls who, therefore, go to school and proceed through unimpeded are a selected 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 the level 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 brings 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, which 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 negative influence on their uncircumcised peers, but they are also rude towards uncircumcised teachers, especially the female ones. They become undisciplined and consequently sharply decline in their academic performance and begin playing truant, eventually drop 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).

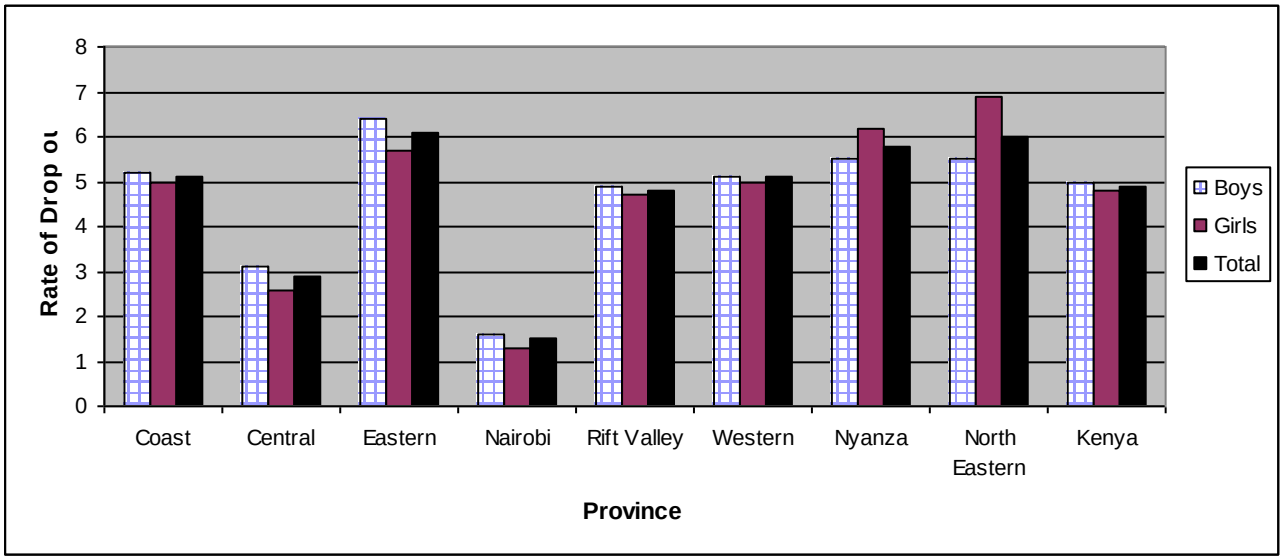
There are also pedagogical factors that contribute to high dropout rates. These include poor methods of instruction and the perceived irrelevance of education. More seriously is the issue of sexual violence and abuse in some schools, which affect boys and girls, although the latter is more vulnerable. The main offenders include teachers, workers in boarding schools and school peers. The abuse ranges from verbal harassment to physical ones. The harassment and abuse lead to withdrawal from school, unwanted pregnancies, death of boys and girls through HIV/AIDS (Government of Kenya and Unicef, 1998). Despite the Ministry of Education's policy that allows girls who give birth to resume 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 have little or no pride in schooling. By and large this has been found to be related to teacher expectations, which are differentiated for pupils of different sex 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 school withdrawal. In a study of some districts of the Coast Province, it was noted that although headteachers do not generally think teachers discriminated against female pupils in 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 rote learning 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 distance to the nearest school. The distance that pupils travel to school was particularly important in sparsely populated districts. Most rural districts do not roads and vehicles, hence children have to walk for two to three hours often traversing inhospitable topologies 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 both the competitive nature of education in the country and the limited chances of entry into secondary schools.

Chart 8: Primary school drop-out rates by sex and province, 2002



Repetition Rate

The 1993 sample of 10,500 primary schools gives a national repetition rate of 15.4 per cent with a rate of 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 1999 to 13.2 per cent in 1999 as shown in Table 10 and Chart 9. Boys recorded the highest repetition rate of 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 with a rate above 15 per cent.

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

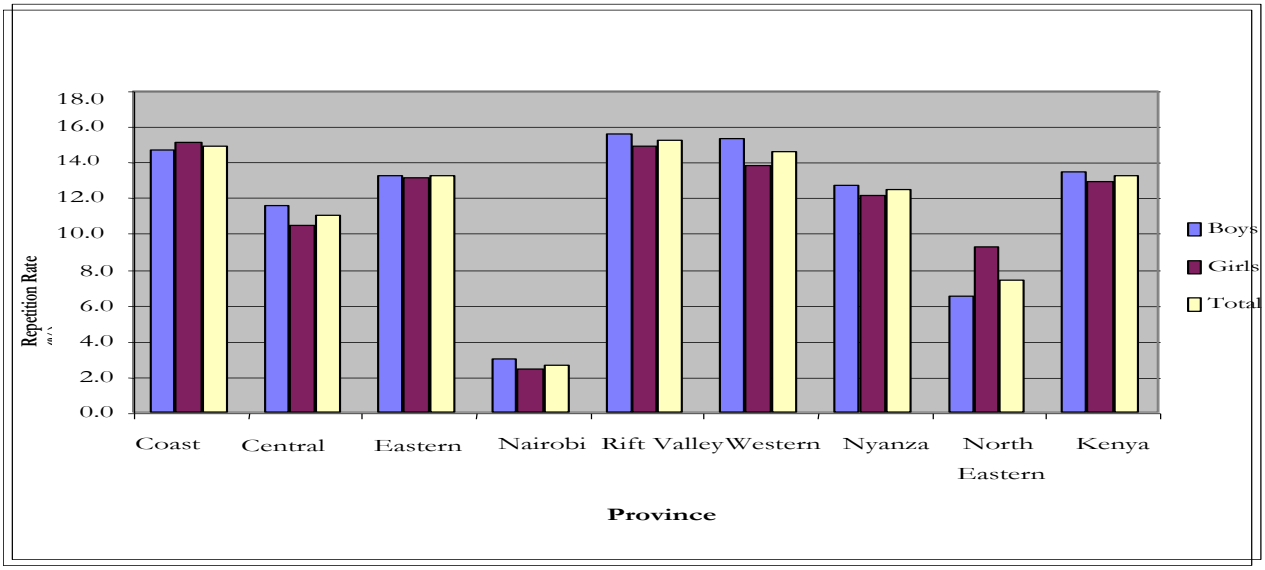
	Coast	Central	Eastern	Nairobi	Rift Valley	Western	Nyanza	North Eastern	Kenya
Boys	14.7	11.6	13.2	3.0	15.6	15.4	12.7	6.5	13.5
Girls	15.1	10.5	13.1	2.4	14.9	13.8	12.2	9.3	12.9
Total	**14.9**	**11.0**	**13.2**	**2.7**	**15.2**	**14.6**	**12.5**	**7.4**	**13.2**

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

One survey made an important disclosure of this examination and the repetition process in the old primary school system, in many parts of the country, where the proportion of girls enrolled in Standard 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 Standard 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 Standard 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 the 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 to attest to the fact that once in primary school, a girl's chances of completing the seven years tended to be little different from boys. In fact in Central Province, they were slightly higher while in Eastern Province, the same and in the remaining provinces only marginally lower, (Krystall, 1978:57).

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



Completion Rates

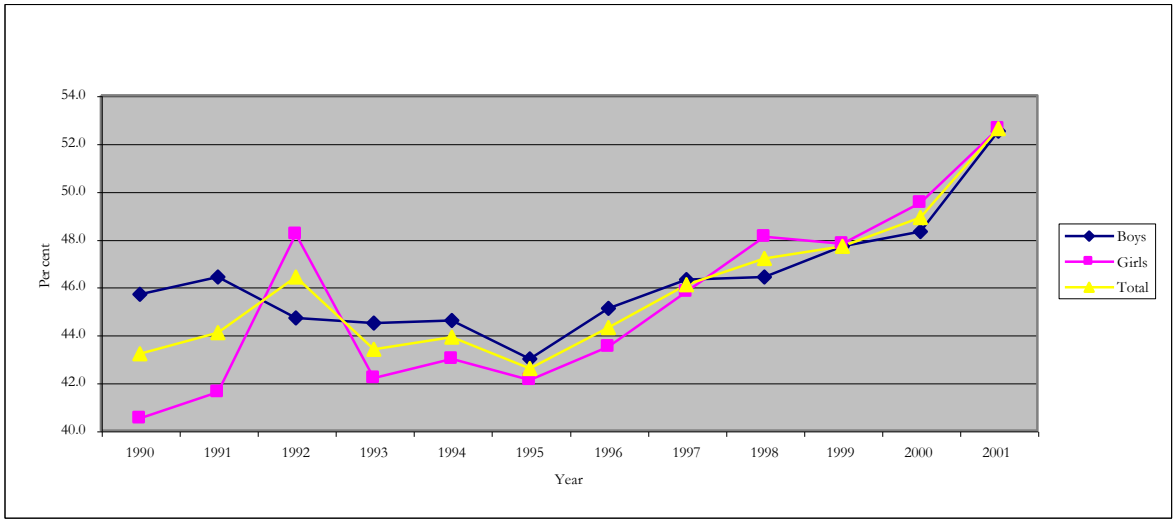
As for primary schools, completion rates have remained steady and low through the 1990, although the MoEST data seems to suggest the completion rate shot up from below 50 per cent to 52.5 per cent for boys and 52.6 per cent for girls in 2001 with an overall completion rate of 52.6 per cent. Generally completion rates for girls have continued to increase while the one for boys has been on the decline. Table 11 and Chart 10 summarise the data for percentages of pupils completing standard eight in the period under review.

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**

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

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



For primary school pupils, proceeding to secondary school involves completing Standard Eight and obtaining good scores in KCPE - the primary school leaving examination. It also means having resources to pay for the costs involved. Although not many Studies have not been carried out to determine girls' performance in the KCPE in the 8-4-4 education system, there are general indications that girls perform 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 Standard One had been eliminated from the formal educational system, compared to only two-thirds of the boys who entered Standard One at the same time' (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 less chances than boys and less chances than their female counterparts in other parts of the country of entering and completing primary school, or passing KCPE and securing and financing secondary school education, (Krystall, 1978:58).

A study on completion rates based on the Central Bureau of Statistics Survey seems to support the view that primary school completion rates have steadily remained low since the 1980s, being consistently below 50 per cent. For example, the number of those enrolled in Standard One in 1987, 1988 and 1989 were 43.9, 42.6 and 44.3 per cent respectively. Although girls have shown some slight improvement, on the overall, their completion rate has generally been lower than that of boys. For example, in 1988 it was 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 tended to perform better than girls on the old CPE since this examination worked against girls in the same way 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 below illustrates, KCPE performance by gender by province, 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 it is similarly the case at the national level.

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.

Apart from the overall poor performance, girls are generally allocated about a third of secondary school places, while boys are allocated two thirds of the places as the number of girls' secondary to those of boys are in the ratio of 1:3. This implies that the allocation mechanism at the end of primary education tends to reinforce the unequal opportunities existing between 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 Standard 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 the primary school is nearly equal, which indicates that parents also encourage both boys and girls to repeat Standard Eight. Girls' smaller opportunity for repetition contributes to their low KCPE performance. The repetition disadvantage for girls increases progressively as one moves from the `high opportunity' districts to places of extreme female educational disadvantage, (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 locality within the country.

Transition Rate

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 it is

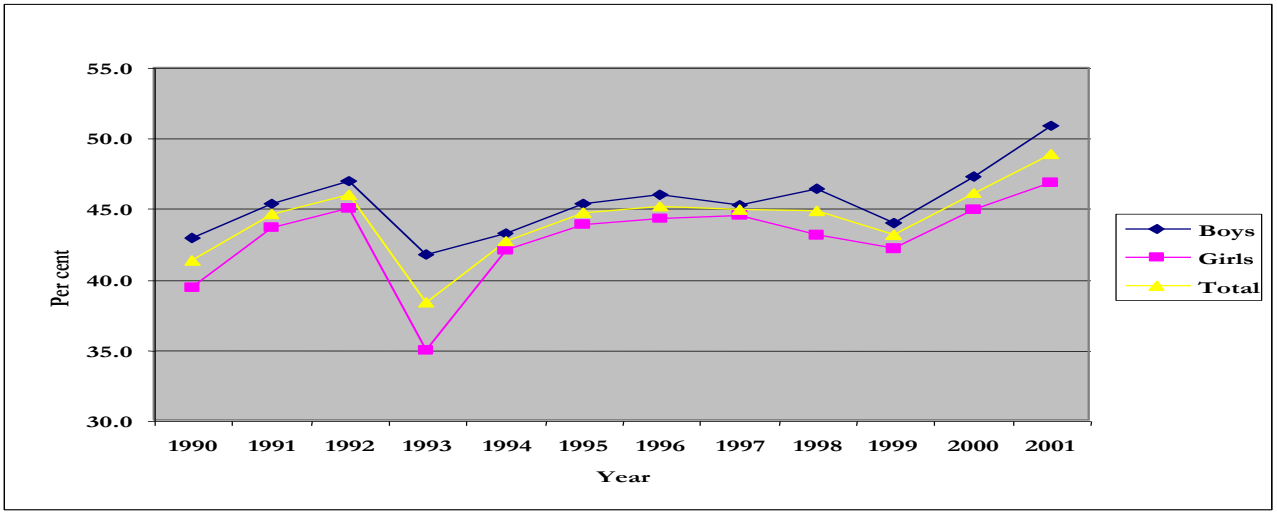
indicated that boys hit the mark of 50.9 per cent. Gender disparity is evident with boys recording higher transition rates than girls.

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

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



Summary

Enrolment statistics in ECCDE primary education tend to 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 with the regions of economic and political development in the country as they originated in the colonial period. Regions and districts, which 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.

The chapter has also attempted to show that socio-economic and cultural factors that constrain girls' education at the household and community level are closely interwoven. Their effects on girls' education are far-reaching and affect girls 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 girls' education. Above 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 environment. All these factors combine to contribute to low girls enrolments and completion of primary education in Kenya.

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CHAPTER FOUR

SECONDARY EDUCATION

Introduction

With the achievement of independence in most African countries by the early and mid-sixties, planners were guided by the human capital and modernisation theories, which assumed that education was the most profitable form of investment not only to the society but also to 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 child care, reduced fertility rates, and others. 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 casual 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 per cent. Secondary education did not only expand in the junior forms, but also most significantly at the top. By 1966, 34 institutions were teaching up to higher school certificate or the Advanced Level of the GCE. There was indeed a major commitment to the expansion of Forms V and VI. By 1974 enrolment increased to 9,180, representing an increase of nearly 68 per cent since 1964 (Tuqan, 1976).

One phenomenon which 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, perhaps, is the first of these schools. It was established in 1960 after consultations between parents, chiefs, provincial 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 a 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 borders. Educators and planners alike were extremely alarmed at this trend towards the creation of large numbers of 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 Khs. 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 were showing the Ministry of Education the way forward (Furley, 1972).

Following the strong *harambee* movement tide, while between 1964 and 1966, the government opened 129 additional streams in aided schools, some 226 unaided schools, mostly *harambee* ones 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 getting up to school certificate level, which prompted the government to increase its services of school inspection. The unaided schools especially *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 1970s, *harambee* schools along with other unaided institutions such as private schools were already catering for more than a 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 1 (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.

Table 14: Number of secondary schools (forms 1-4) by 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 (Unpublished data).
NOTE: Percentage figures are rounded. Data for the year 1980-84 are unavailable.

Access, Enrolment and Participation

As in other parts of the less industrialised countries, girls enrolment at the secondary school level has been more dramatic since the early 1960s. The enrolment of girls from 1960s to 1980s rose faster than that of boys. Enrolment at secondary school level generally increased from 30,120 in 1963 to 658,253 in 1996. The proportion of girls enrolled out of the total enrolment at independence was 31.8 per cent, which 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 percent to 23. 2 percent, with boys constituting 24.5 percent and girls 21.9 percent. 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 terms of the quality of education they receive, as will be discussed later in the chapter.

As already pointed out, the priority of first post-independence decade 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 catering for boys than for girls. There were 143 boys' schools and only 61 girls schools and 28 coeducational 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 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 as compared to 32 per cent, 50 per cent and 45 percent of the girls respectively (GOK, UNICEF, 1984).

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

It should also be pointed out that it is not just the numerical strength of schools that determine 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. In which case boys' schools have 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 is a sharp regional and district diversity in girls enrolment. Regions of greatest economic development have the largest increases in the proportion of girls enrolled. As shown in Table 15, Central Province, Eastern, Nairobi, and Western had the highest rate of girls' participation between 1975-80. These were followed by the Rift Valley and Nyanza provinces as North-eastern Province lagged behind the rest of the provinces.

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.

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 Kirinyanga, Embu, Nyeri and Marang'a in 1990. However, there were much fewer girls compared to boys in Wajir, Mandera, Marsabit and Samburu Districts. Table 17 details the percentage of girls enrolled in secondary schools by district in that year. From this table the picture which emerges appears to be similar to that in primary education. Again 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 are the level of economic development of these districts as already discussed.

Table 17: Ranking of districts according to 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.	Naiad	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.	Nark	39.4
25.	Siaya	38.8
26.	Mombasa	37.9
27.	Kisumu	37.2
28.	Kale	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.	Killifish	31.7
37.	Garissa	30.8
38.	Turkana	30.1
39.	Samburu	27.8
40.	Marsabit	17.7
41.	Madera	15.4
42	Weir	13.9
	National Average	**42.8**

Apart from the regional diversity in enrolments by gender, the socio-economic factors also play a major role in girl's 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 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 that charged in a government maintained school. The higher cost of the unaided sector denied many girls, compared to boys, from poor backgrounds a chance of secondary education. The quotation below elaborate 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 barrier 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

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	Female
Form 1	90,774	78,140	96,360	83,650	97,394	85,917	98,487	88,614	102,449	92,813
Form 2	87,993	76,549	88,737	75,961	93,526	81,444	95,539	86,856	98,066	86,922
Form 3	79,067	66,328	82,623	69,876	83,902	71,924	89,365	79,496	90,293	77,871
Form 4	78,605	62,383	74,087	61,094	78,104	66,042	80,457	68,659	82,632	69,492
Total	336,439	283,400	341,807	290,581	352.926	305,327	363,848	323,625	373,440	327,098
G. Total		619,839		632,388		658,253		687,473		700,538

The Table 19 below shows secondary school enrolment between 1996 and 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 in the years 1998 and 1998, followed by a sharp increase of 18.9 per cent. It needs to be qualified that for the first time, the 2000 enrolment figures 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.

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)	

Although, nationally the Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) by gender is remarkably similar at the primary school level, at the secondary school level the situation is different. As Table 19 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 to boys.

Regional disparities continue to be evident not only with regard to enrolment, but also in the spread of secondary schools. As already discussed, the Kenya Government post-independence education 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 utilise for school expansion. The establishment of schools, particularly secondary, have 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 a lack of sufficient 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, Weir, Madera (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 North Eastern Province, where they are about 2.1 per cent in Madera, 2.2 per cent in Weir and 2.6 in Garissa. Other districts with low NERs include Killifish 8.9 per cent, Kale 8.7 per cent, West Pokot 8.4 per cent, Nark 5.9 per cent, Samburu 6 per cent, Turkana 5.1 per cent and Marsabit 4.1 per cent. Nairobi with an NER of around 35 per cent male and around 18.4 per cent females exhibits one of the most serious gender gaps.

Table 20: Enrolment percentage 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
	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 and teaching-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 1989/1990, the responsibility of construction and provision of facilities has been pushed to parents and the communities. Considering the continued downward trend in the economy and the rising recurrent 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 country.

In the past, most girls' secondary schools were unaided, having mainly been started on *haramb*ee basis. Very few were maintained by the government (GOK/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 to - 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 (being 35 per cent of all students) to 42 per cent (28 per cent of all students) (Krystall, 1979).

The reasons for girls' high attendance of 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, usually are the district or sub-district units. Because of the limited places in government-maintained schools, many girls who complete the primary school level 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 with 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 enrolled in assisted and unaided *harambee* schools comprised 48 and 44 per cent respectively in 1984 as shown in Table 6. In the same year, girls formed 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 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 curriculum, 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 foundations. The introduction of the 8-4-4 education system in 1985 served to disadvantage the girls further. In the new system, these schools have been faced with major crises in terms of providing facilities for implementing the system. The 8-4-4 system requires that all schools offer science subjects and at least one, practical 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. Because of 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).

Table 21: Enrolment in types of secondary schools by gender 1984 and 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
Whole Country	**100**	**100**	**60**	**100**	**62**	**38**

School Wastage

In all of the 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, as compared to 26 per cent of the boys. To some extent, the loss in female enrolment reflects their disadvantage of attending an unaided rather than an aided schools. The higher cost of education in the unaided sector is a major factor in the lower levels of female

attainment. In the same year, for example, there was a retention rate of 81 per cent of girls in maintained schools as compared to 40 per cent in unaided schools (Krystall, 1979).

More recent figures still show that the dropout rate is still a key area of concern at the secondary school level. For example, between the years 1996 and 1999, while at the national level the cohort which entered Form One in 1996, the drop-out rate was barely around 3.1%; the dropout rate for boys was around 1.1 percent. With an enrolment of around 97,000, those who completed were around 96, 000 representing 98.9 percent. On the other hand, while 86,000 girls enrolled in Form One during the same time, only 64,000 completed secondary education, representing 21 per cent drop out rate, as shown in Chart 12, below. Figures for 2000 and 2002 cohort show that female dropout was higher than that of boys – 11 per cent compared to 5 per cent. The details are shown in Chart 13. The MoEST, however, estimates the national drop-out rate to be 4.8 percent, with 4.6 percent and 5.1 percent for boys and girls respectively.

Chart 12: Transition rates by gender by year

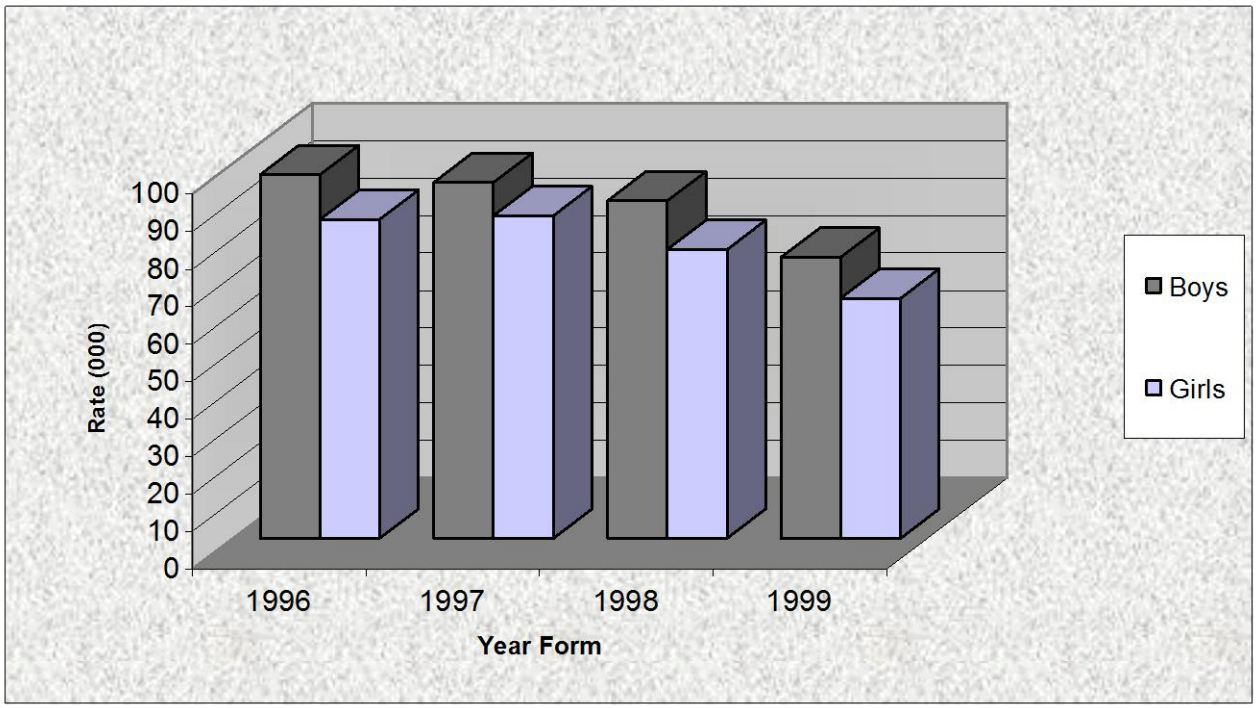
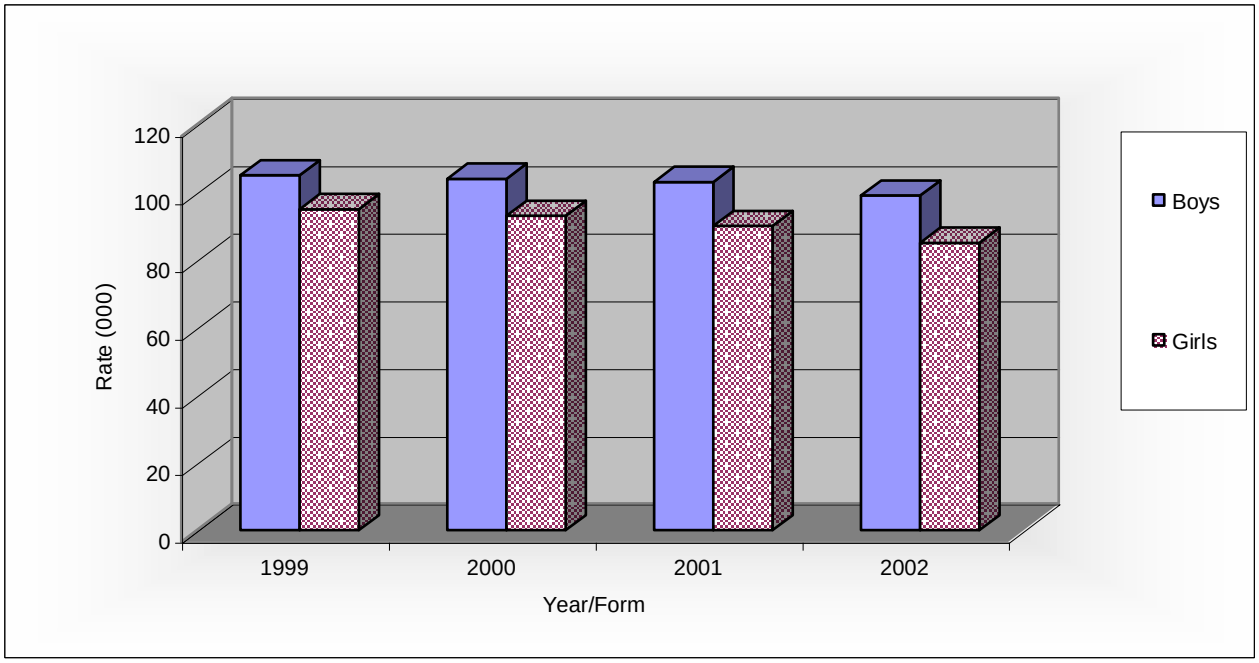


Chart 13: Transition rate by gender and year/form



Another cause of high dropout rate among girls is attributed to pre-marital pregnancies. Although data is not readily available to quantify the influence of pregnancy in female drop out of secondary schools, it is generally acknowledged that sexual harassment and pregnancy 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 on the KCSE exams. It causes problems because girls 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 reasons reported was that if one's ' friend' was in the classroom then they could not concentrate in 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, were 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 fees wavers.

As girls become adolescents, especially at the secondary school age, pregnancy becomes a major factor in school drop outs. Pregnancy emerges as a major cause of adolescent school girls leaving school, first due to its frequency and secondly, 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 showed that secondary school girls who had been pregnant were twice as likely to report poor health than those with no pregnancy history (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 frequently 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 is 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 have caused a major concern for students, parents and school authorities. The main offenders are male students, who in groups, prey on female students, abuse them verbally, harass and beat as well as raping them. There have been many cases of high-level indiscipline in educational institutions, especially secondary schools illustrated by the number of student unrests in schools frequently reported 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 largely contribute 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 MoEST estimates that between 1987 and 2000, the secondary completion rate had generally been declining from 86.4 percent for the 1987-19990 cohort and 79.0 percent for the 1997-2000 cohorts. However, the rate peaked to 94.4 percent for the 1993-96 cohort. This depicted a very sharp increase in the completion rate. The completion rates for boys ranged between 70.7 percent (1990-93 cohort) to 95.8 percent (1993-96 cohort) unlike for girls which was between 66.6 percent (1990-93 cohort) to 94.9 percent (1993-96 cohort). The lowest completion rate for both boys and girls was experienced in the 1990-93 cohort at 70.7 percent. In 1999, the completion rate dropped to 87 percent increasing to 95

percent in 2001. However, the rates dropped to 89 percent in 2003 with boys constituting 90 percent as compared to girls 89 percent. Secondary school repetition rate is estimated to be around 1.6 percent, with boys and girls constituting 1.7 percent and 1.5 percent 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 provision in government maintained schools also creates barriers to further participation of girls in the educational 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 with science and mathematics specialisations, 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 science achievement 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 practical, 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 for 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 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 the 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 is summed up aptly in a speech delivered by a female political leader in 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 compared to 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 a 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 performance in mathematics, the percentage of the 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 84 for boys and 2.6 for girls in 1989. In physical sciences, a subject which seems to be generally very poorly performed by both boys and girls, the former had 0.25 per cent, while 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 some 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 2078 candidates who sat 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 out of the 81 girls, (2.3 percent), scored a B- grade. Performance in drawing and design was no better with 15.8 of the girls scoring an E grade. On the whole, female performance in science and technology based courses portrays a very pathetic picture.

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	3.20	2.10	8.41	7.10	0.25	0.87
Males	4.13	0.60	2.64	3.90	0.07	0.81
Females						
1990	1.80	3.53	3.55	4.04	0.49	0.87
Males	2.80	1.17	0.69	2.49	0.13	0.39
Females						

Source: Adapted from unpublished data, KNEC, 1991.

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 for girls in the arts subjects and biology, compared to boys. Currently, the performance in English is better for girls compared

to 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. In 1990 the same prevailed with girls having 2.8 per cent while the boys had only 1.8 per cent for biology, however, the performance observed in the `A' level does not hold for the new system. Table 22 shows that boys have an edge over girls in the biology performance.

It is, however, important to note that given a generally conducive learning environment, girls can perform as well if not better than boys (Eshiwani, 1983). An analysis of the past examination results at primary and secondary school levels, give credence to Eshiwani's observation. For example, several girls' schools have been among the top 10 and 50 nationally in the KCPE and KCSE results respectively over the years in both the former 7-4-2-3 and the current 8-4-4 education systems.

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.

More recent data on performance shows much change in performance by gender in the KCSE examination. From Table 24, which shows performance in languages; English and 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 poor 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 mathematical subject being well below 20 per cent.

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

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 small entries for these subjects especially for girls. It is however, important to note that the few girls who enter the subjects seem to show some remarkable performance in these male dominated subjects.

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

Summary

This chapter has shown that in Kenya, as in other parts of the less industrialised 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. First in the government expansion of secondary education, by the close of the first decade, there were more than twice as many government secondary schools catering for boys than girls, and the gap between government provision for males and females continued to widen progressively. It was not just in the numerical strength

of schools that determined enrolment by gender. The enrolment capacity of particular secondary schools also depended on the capacity of these schools where 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. Like 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 both more maintained government schools as well as unaided *harambee* schools. Socio-economic factors also play a major role in determining girls' access to secondary education, with more affluent families having greater enrolments.

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 sector is a major factor accounting for higher attrition of girls followed by sexual harassment which results in premarital pregnancies and violence meted on 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

Introduction

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 others, it is the provision of evening classes and nothing else, while to others are not clear whether continuing education is properly part of adult education or not. 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 vocations, public lectures, evening courses for scientists, better housekeeping courses for women. Folk high schools, extra mural centres, evening institutes, community development centres, farmers training centres and this list of activities and institutions may be increased - all these can sit comfortably under the umbrella of adult education (Posser, 1966).

In more 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 level 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 contest 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 a person's equipment for living. Children are taught to read and write at the earliest possible age, 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 two fifths of the world's adult population cannot read and write and are said to be illiterate. The concentration of this adult illiterate population is in less industrialised 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 as 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/she has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which will enable him/her to engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his/her culture or group. He/she should at least be able to read a simple instruction leaflet in his/her own or some other familiar language, to write a legible letter, and to keep a record of his/her money transactions or the produce of his/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 of representatives of government and non-governmental organisations involved in adult education, was given the responsibilities of advising the Ministry of Cooperatives and Social Services on matters relating to adult education, of co-ordinating the activities of government services and non-governmental agencies and of 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 instructions 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 and 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 twelve moths. 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 Standard 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 given to local textbooks production. On the contrary, 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 proven to be the most suitable for the design of an overall national literacy strategy.

On 12 December 1978 on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of Kenya's independence, President Daniel arap Moi addressed the nation and officially 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 for 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 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, the provision of water schemes, of better health care and of 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 considered 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 correspond 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 to 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 initiative. The roles of the Department of Adult Education involved stimulation, supervision and technical support provision.

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

- Training of literacy personnel through short-term seminars and correspondence courses;
- Preparation of primers and other teaching materials according to a decentralised production scheme;
- Regular supervision of teaching staff;
- Collection of statistical data about enrolment centres and teachers;
- Organisation of national literacy tests.

The Department 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 at the Coast and urban centres, where learning take 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 some form of collective project work as part of their participation in the literacy programme. Such projects include those that generate income for the learners (like poultry raising); community improvement (like building a literacy centre); or just for entertainment (like folkloric dancing), among others.

The method of teaching should be based on the learner's experiences. Through discussions of subjects of interest, learners are introduced to sounds and words that are most familiar to them. As they progress form the first to the second primer, greater emphasis is placed on sentence construction based on topics related to their life and likely to sustain their interest. The teaching of numeracy is also based on the learner's experience with a view to stimulate and maintain 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

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. The female participation, especially in the initial years, was consistently 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. Table 24 also shows that the total enrolment figures have been gradually declining after the first year of initial enthusiasm and massive mobilisation (Carron, Mwiria and Righa, 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 hat 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 literacy programme. A combination of historical and socio-cultural factors explain the state of affairs. First and foremost, women have had less access to formal education than men since the colonial era. This to a great extent gives more impetus to women to want to learn than men. Second on economic grounds, 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 rounds, in some communities, especially Muslims, many parents worry about the perceived effects of Western education on their daughters – it is said to make the girls discontented or immoral and hence affect their marriages. There are also some communities in which girls are forced to leave school to get married and bring dowry or because of fear of unwanted pregnancies if girls continue with their schooling. Such factors contributed 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 women 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 of such skills have been inevitable with the continued migration of men to towns and plantations estates in search of employment, which leaves many women as heads of households, taking care of their families, farms, enterprises and general domestic affairs. Therefore, they have a strong motivation and desire to master the basic communication skills, which would allow them to become part of the mainstream of society, especially the acquisition of literacy and numeracy as well as language skills (Carron, Mwiria and Righa, 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 *barazas*, bars, towns and others. As a matter of fact, the availability of alternative socialising opportunities for men have 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 has been, besides the literacy skills, the provision of opportunities for women to organise themselves. There has been a proliferation of women groups in villages, which conduct various activities: training in income-generating skills, setting up shops and co-operative farming ventures. Although there were mixed results in that many groups failed to earn income, the forms of female solidarity attracted members, the chance to meet others outside the home and the political leverage it could provide (Juma, 1991). Local women with slightly more education became leaders of the groups. Group meetings provided opportunities for women to meet other women, and develop organisational, leadership and political skills such public speaking and conducting meetings. They also learnt how to relate to the local government and seek support from government agencies. Women 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 book-keeping 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. Committed and enlightened they have helped to galvanise local communities and supported women's efforts to literacy as avenues for their own activities. This has largely been through basic civic knowledge, awareness and sensitisation, which have been a potential transformative instrument. Although this transformation process may not eradicate poverty in the rural settings, it makes the women learners different from the bulk of the illiterates. This is because literacy has opened their eyes to their needs and rights, sharpened their economic appetites and made them a potential force for political and economic resistance (Nyerere, 1988).

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, Nairobi Government Printer.

Table 27: Adult Literacy Enrolments 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

Some Key Issues

Although women on the whole benefit from the adult literacy programme, the participation is constrained by a number of problems. The constraints generally centre on the unequal access to resources and the sexual division of labour. The acquired skills such as sewing or gardening for example are useful only in so far 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 participation in the adult literacy programme is one of time. In many of the traditional African community 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 to day is spent in 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 less 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 their frequency and duration for 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 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 domestic chores, hence 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, piped water and the general environment are not conducive to the adult learner in most homes of average Kenyans. (Kilemi, 1993).

The deplorable learning environment in the homes equally applies to most of the literacy centres. First and foremost, 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 either churches, primary schools or some other converted building. Some adult classes are conducted in the open or under a tree - these conditions are not conducive for effective learning. In such centres, learners sit on mats or logs of wood and 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 women 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 among others 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 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 drop-outs and adult literacy programmes graduates can become part time or self-help teachers (Carron, Mwiria and Righa, 1989).

The short induction course in which adult literacy teachers are exposed is not only inadequate, but does not also address gender issues. Consequently a majority of the teachers are not equipped with adequate adult methodology. They lack knowledge about adult psychology and hence they end up teaching adults as if they are teaching small children. They even use the same kind of ridicules 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 many learners drop out as a result (Meena, 1991). This approach tends to reinforce the culture of oppression rather than challenging it, 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 centring on the nature of the curriculum is the question: after literacy classes, what next? Adult centres are expected to facilitate 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 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 equally 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 tend to 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 where 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 top 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 162 assistant adult education officers only eight, were women. The situation was further extended to the literacy teachers where women only comprised 34 per cent of the full-time teachers, with the great majority of the part-time teachers being women. 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 (Kilemi, 1993). The recent appointment of a woman as the director of the department is unlikely to have much impact on the literacy programme as it is a low priority in funding, contributing to a serious decline in enrolments.

Among the major constraints to the literacy programmes has been one of financing. Apart from the 1979 programme launched by the government, mainly religious organisations, donors and NGOs have supported literacy programmes. These have include UNESCO, UNICEF, NCCK, Catholic Secretariat, Inades-

Formation, Kenya, Action Aid, Plan International, among others. For this reason, new development programmes supported by donor agencies are particularly vulnerable. The sustainability and acceptability of any one programme is dependent on the interests and priorities of particular donors 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 gender interests may find themselves starved of funds unless alternative sources are found (Meena, 1991).

Summary

This chapter mainly focussed on the adult literacy programme as a important feature of adult education. It was seen that since the launching of the programme in 1979, it has been particularly popular with women than men who have constituted over 70 per cent of the programme. 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 the modern society. Although on the whole the programme has proved beneficial to women, they face many constraints, which include, the unequal access to resources, sexual division of labour and the poor quality teaching resources.

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CHAPTER SIX

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Introduction

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 in 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 Report of the Conference of African States on the Development of Education in Africa, which met in Addis Ababa in May 1962 (UN, Economic Commission for Africa/UNESCO, 1961). In addition, the Kenya government and the United Kingdom requested the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development to undertake a survey of economic development of Kenya. A 10-member mission studied all aspects of Kenya's economy, and education was identified as one sector for 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 the 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 the formal sector employment as well as the strong association between the attained level of education and economic rewards. These have

increased the public demand for more and more 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 increased student numbers 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 also influenced large numbers of student admission in public universities as well as expansion in Kenya has been the relatively high frequency of student boycott of lecturers, which in most cases are accompanied by government closures of the institutions in question. 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 take account of lost time. The prolonged closure of the University of Nairobi and its constituent college of Kenyatta in the early 1980s 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 by sections of the Kenyan society, including university students, who openly demonstrated their support. 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 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. To clear the backlog, universities were directed to embark on a double intake of students starting with 1987/88 academic year (Sifuna, 1998).

The public demand for university education and other political pressures leading to the rapid expansion notwithstanding, in more ideal situations higher education in Kenya in general and university education in particular is expected to make four central contributions to national development. First, it has 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 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 claimed 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 his should have been considered essential information for the execution of its terms of reference, especially 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, on land donated by the Lohnro 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 in Kenya 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 around one per cent and the majority of these enrolments were not at university (Sifuna, 1998).

Following the government directive on double-intake of students, 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 increased by 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 more than the 1986/87 figures (Gray, 1992). Thereafter, the enrolments continued to grow reaching the highest level ever in 1997/98 academic year, with a student population of 43,591 in the public universities.

Table 28: Growth in University Student Enrolment 1983-1999

Academic Year	Nairobi	Kenyatta	Moi	Egerton	Jomo Kenyatta U.A.T.	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

In fact the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training (Kamunge Report) announced in August 1988 that by 2000, public universities would enrol 50,000 students.

The second double intake of students occurred in 1990/91. This was prompted by the shift in the country's education cycle from 7-4-2-3 cycle to the 8-4-4. The main changes that occasioned the shift were the primary school cycle which was extended to eight years after the Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education (`A' level) was abolished reducing the number of secondary education from six to four years and the undergraduate cycle extended 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 potential applicants in the `A' system. The 1990/91-admission process had however 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 became a constituent college of 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 Act of 1994.

Access to University Education

As is the case throughout sub-Saharan Africa, women are dramatically under-represented in Kenya's higher education. 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 9000 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 of public university enrolment, female students constituted 30.5 percent of the population.

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.

As shown in Table 29, the situation of female enrolment in the public universities has only improved marginally by the turn of the century. Female enrolment rates have increased to about 31 per cent on the 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, consistently enrolling around 37 per cent between 1999 and 2004. JKUAT, which was generally low in 1999 with only 20 per cent, has increased to 31.2 per cent in 2004, while Kenyatta University which in 1999 had enrolled 40 per cent female students has dropped to about 30 per cent. 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 secure as compared to the public universities, which offer many science courses and whose programmes are frequently interrupted due to students' 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 in numbers of 49,891 in 1999/2000, 50,837 in 2000/2001, 63,214 in 2001/2002, 68,722 in 2002/2003 and 67,558 students in 2003/2004. These figures include students registered in the parallel programmes of the respective universities (Republic of Kenya, 2004).

Table 30: Percentage of Student Enrolment by Gender, 1999-2000 to 2003/04

Inst. 2003/2004	1999/2000		2000/2001		2001/2002		2002/2003			
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.

In terms of background, it is apparent that most of those 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 with 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 level, women tended to come from higher socio-economic levels. Similarly, Njenga (1986) reported that parents of 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 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 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 variation when enrolments are examined at individual faculty levels. For example, between 1976 and 1987, women did not constitute more than 15 per cent of the

total Bachelor of Science enrolment or 4 per cent 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 levels was much smaller than that of boys (Twoli, 1986). A study of the curriculum options in the former sixth form 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 to girls was in the ratio of 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 are exposed to science subjects. One would expect that such a system offers 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 fewer girls on the overall got 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 relatively improved as shown in Table 30, this is because admissions' 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. Like 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 slightly tend to attract more female participants. Between 1980 and 1987, bachelors 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 the postgraduate students at the Faculty of Engineering. Journalism had the highest proportion, followed by African Studies and Population Studies (Wamahiu, et. al., 1992).

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: Republic of Kenya, Economic Survey 1992, Nairobi, Government Printer.

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, 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 the faculty. 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). In 1992/93 it dropped to 28 per cent and further down to 24.6 per cent in 1993/94.

In the Faculty of Engineering, women have been generally under represented. In this faculty, women have not accounted 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 an initial 0 per cent enrolment 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. In 1974/75, women enrolment was 9.7 per cent and went up to 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 and further to 24.5 per cent in 1993/94 (Nungu, 1996).

At 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.

In the B.Ed. (Arts) where female students 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 went further up to 38.7 per cent. Otherwise, and contrary to popular belief, women have not commanded a majority representation in the Bachelor of Education degree course (Nungu, 1996).

The under representation of women in science-based courses is even more pronounced at Moi University than at the University of Nairobi. 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 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. In 1987/88 the enrolment was 3 per cent 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 further to 18.2 per cent and in 1993/94 it went further up to 27 per cent (Nungu, 1996).

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

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)**

Academic Performance

Students attending university education in Kenya receive one of the 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 degrees.

As shown in the Table 35 below, which gives an overall picture of the academic performance at the University of Nairobi for selected years beginning from 1975, women 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, 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).

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.

Some recent data, however, seems to reflect marked improvement in women's performance. Although, they are relatively few, in the first class degree, they are now quite sizeable in the first class and upper second class combined. For example in 1992 at the University of Nairobi, males constituted 40.6 per cent in first class and upper second class, while females were 46.5 per cent. In the same year, males were 59.3 per cent in lower second class and pass degrees while females were 53.6 per cent. 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).

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.

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 at 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 lectures some of which have appeared in the dailies and which are said to contribute to women's poor performance. These have included victimisation due to non-responses to sexual approaches. 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 often referred to as "Affirmative Action". In Uganda, for example, Makerere University introduced this in 1990. Working from the perspective that a student body consisting of 21 per cent women 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 the affirmative action raised women's admission by around 3 per cent, a recent research has shown that the practice does not receive much support. Female academic staff in particular is 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 turned out to benefit 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 from 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 are 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 for 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 University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, main campus because of "Punch", a form of wall literature which has increasingly 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 donor agencies. The University of Nairobi's Medical School, for example, has operated at under-capacity due to the deterioration of their equipment, materials and other resources. Consequently, female ratio 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, tend 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 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 which still confine women to the lower levels of the education system. This perception coupled with economic factors lead 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 to continue 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 dramatically increased with the expanding of the existing institutions and opening up new ones. By the early 1990s, it stood at around 40,000 students. As is the case in other Sub-Saharan African countries, women are seriously under-represented in the Kenyan higher education. 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, about 30 per cent of university students have been female. Female 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 somewhat 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 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 drop-out rates; poor examination results; rigidity of admission requirements, university-based factors such as high failure rates in certain fields, sexual harassment; and labour based factors. These issues require urgent attention to increase women participation in university education.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Introduction

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. Vocational and technical education and training system build in 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 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 parallel to the training programme as an integral part of it, is essential for effective matching of skills and performance requirements on the job. Hence the main rationale for the sandwich and day release programmes that characterised polytechnic training.

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 skill areas.

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 employer who is willing to sponsor him or her for further training either by enrolling 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 finishing 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 one of the 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 problem. 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 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 fast such that by 1971 when the Government launched a major programme to extend assistance to Youth Development Projects, including village polytechnics, there were 69. By 1975, Government assistance went to 100 village polytechnics with 400 instructors and some 6000 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 56 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 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 leather-work (Keino, 1985). Although the research did not cover other provinces, the picture was most unlikely to be any different.

On the whole, the YP movement has been rapidly declining throughout the country. The main factors which have contributed to its retardation in 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 as failures (Okech, 1995; Danuda, 1998; MoEST and GTZ, 2003).

National Youth Service

The National Youth Service was started as a scheme to mobilise the unemployed out-of-school youth. The service was established in 1964 for the youth between 16 to 30 years. The objective of the National Youth Service (NYS) was to place such people in an environment, which 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, 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 the recruitment, the trainees undergo three to four months of basic para-military training after which they have a pass 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, houses and operating 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, results of an aptitude test and their personal ambitions. Some of the courses offered 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

Trainees are prepared for Trade Test Grade III.

By the mid 1980s, the service had recruited about 37,000 men and 5,000 women. Women have established about 10-20 per cent of every recruitment, who are 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 Institute (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 to 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 and 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, the rest offered 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 were only 771 (Keino, 1985).

In terms of enrolment for the different courses, girls were mostly found in commercial and science courses Girls formed around 97.5 per cent of home science bias, while boys were in a majority in technical courses.

There were also 35 industrial secondary schools, which except for a few mixed ones, most of them were predominantly boys' schools. These schools offered the usual academic curriculum alongside either a combination of metal and woodwork course 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 on the whole changed much. In 1998, for example, out of 7,979 students, female students constituted about 40 percent.

Harambee Institutes of Technology

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 their objective to provide training for employment, particularly to meet manpower needs in the regions with a focus on rural development and industrialisation.

Harambee fund raising 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 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, enrolments increased from 953 to 2,915 and by 1988, it had increased to 6,846.

The HITs offer three-year programmes to secondary school leavers, which in the case of technical subjects, include a year of industrial attachment. 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 very limited opportunities they provide for women. The only programme 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 enrolments, however, continue to remain quite low in these institutions. In 1998, for example, out of 7,094, female trainees constituted 36.1 percent.

The National Polytechnics

Currently, there are four national polytechnics in Nairobi, Mombasa, Eldoret and Kisumu. The Kenya Polytechnic in Nairobi dates from 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.

Admission requirement are high and as a result students are highly selected. Given the high entry requirements, most students are recruited from the better-maintained quality secondary schools and, therefore, the polytechnics do not significantly counteract the inequality already built into the opportunity structure, especially with regard to gender differentiation.

In addition to engineering subjects – mechanical, electrical and civil - the polytechnics offer programmes in science and business studies. Besides these, the Kenya polytechnic also offers courses in printing, general studies, institutional management and library science

An analysis of the 1991 student enrolment at the Kenya Polytechnic (Nairobi) 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. 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 more joined the professional purchasing and supplies course. (Wamahiu, et al. 1992)

Table 37: Kenya Polytechnic student enrolment analysis 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, Kenya Polytechnic 1991

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: Unpublished data Kenya Polytechnic, 1991, Nairobi

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 percent of the total students enrolled in mechanical engineering were women, 84.4 percent of female students were registered in institutional management. At the Mombasa Polytechnic as shown in Table 39, 52.4 percent of female students were registered in business studies compared to less 5 percent were enrolled in engineering courses (MoEST, 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**

Kenya Technical Teachers College (KTTC)

KTTC was built with assistance from Canada and started operating in 1977. It has a capacity of 700 students and offers diploma courses in technical, business and industrial training as well as short courses oriented to teaching skills for those with the required technical background. It is the only institution with a capacity to train trainees for the technical training system.

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

Enrolments at the KTTC display a similar picture as the Kenya Polytechnic. The proportion of girls enrolled in 1991 was negligible in the Department of Building, Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering. 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, middle level institutions and trainers in the industry. The programmes range from a one-month TOT course for training officers to a 2 year higher diploma in education management. KTTC has, however, diversified it programmes over the years to include continuing education programmes. This was as a 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 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: Unpublished Data KTTC, Nairobi, 1992.

As Table 40 below illustrates, women participation in technical training institutes between 1999 and 2003 seems to have improved considerably, averaging around 39 per cent in all the training institutions as well the overall enrolment.

Table 41: Percentage of 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**	

Some Key Issues in Access

From the survey, it is clear that women 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 percent of the total students enrolled in mechanical engineering in 1998 were females, while institutional management registered 84.4 percent females. Business studies attracted 58 percent of women who enrolled in the institutions. During the same year, a total of 2,797 students were enrolled in Mombasa Polytechnic, 21.2 percent of whom were female students. The bulk of female students (52.4 percent) were enrolled in business studies compared to less than 5 percent who were taking engineering courses (MoEST, 2003)

Reasons for their low enrolment are many and vary from one region to another and from centre to centre. No in-depth research has been carried out on this issue. Possible reasons, however include, the traditional streaming of girls out of the vocational training which is employment, industrial and urban oriented, the traditional male dominance in the field, the gender stereotypes of desired male and female occupations, the macho environment of vocational trades and parents' attitudes towards 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).

Among the key reasons for women's 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 them in the national examinations.

Another factor in the selection process, which perhaps affects girls' enrolment, is the age requirement. Many centres select candidates up to the age of 27, but it is most likely that girls enter at pre-marriage age, directly or shortly after school. Their youth makes them particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment as well as to the "sugar daddies", thus affecting their performance and even leads to dropout.

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, hence 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. Girls are thus 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 book binding. 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. Some study in Tanzania points out that the rote learning methods and male favouritism of teachers are among the major factors contributing 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 forward the transformation process for either men or women (Mbughuni, 1991). There is also the teachers' favouritism of male students, which could stifle interest. 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 a higher drop-out for girls (Lauglo, 1990). Another study showed 14 per cent for boys and 17 per cent for girls (Mbughuni, 1991). Among the possible reasons for dropouts 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 in courses where they are a minority. More often, however, the field or trade being taught seems to have a higher correlation to drop out 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 a relatively small percentage in the technical staff and very few in managerial positions. Women technical staff is also under-represented in the staff development and training (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

In this chapter it is clear that vocational and technical education is inextricably linked to the formal education system, as it is builds on the foundations laid by the 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 the science and mathematics subjects.

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 factors, institutional and employment factors. The socio-cultural sphere is that of dominant gender relations which results 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

Introduction

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 in increasingly appreciated.

In most countries, apprenticeship is the principle mode of training for traditional crafts, such as blacksmiths, leather craft, and herbal medicine as well as for modern, technical trades such as automobile, 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

Policy Evolution

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) from the late 70s recognised 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 bring out what needed to be done internationally and nationally. The reports of the missions had several purposes. Not only were they to give the government an analysis of the unemployment problem and a suggested programme of action, but also to provide guidance for the aid and trade policies of international organisations and of donor agencies and to indicate priorities in research. Kenya was among the countries for study and the mission team after its visit 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 to the prevailing attitudes towards the large numbers of Africans not working in the 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 by themselves, with labour intensive and adapted technologies, 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 report was in a nutshell of the view that the informal sector's development, like that of the *harambee* movement had emerged independent of government support, but there a 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 and 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 been developed despite total neglect and even active discouragement by the state, hence it would valuable 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 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. Although there was a Sessional Paper on Employment after the report and mentions of it in the 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 of the skill base of the expanding population. At the same time 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 President Moi's couple of visits 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.* This brought the informal sector to the centre stage once again since the ILO report. Among the key factors was the crucial problem of the cost to create 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 more positive lines of devising flexible credit schemes, encouragement of technical graduates to begin their own business, the informal sector to produce alternatives to expensive imported items, formation of cooperatives for assistance and information on new technologies 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 to recommend ways to create 'a healthy regulatory climate' for the informal sector activities (Republic of Kenya, 1986).

Following the Sessional Paper No. 1, in the *Development Plan 1989-1993*, the term, **'Jua Kali'** was finally accepted into a major planning document and in many of other institutions of society and the momentum for continued focus on the informal sector was maintained. 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 to the national policy development process in the **jua kali** sector by donor agencies and NGOs (King, 1996).

Since the above developments, publication of the report, there has been considerable interest in policy and research in this sector. In Kenya, it is now generally admitted that there are more young people acquiring their training on the job, via the urban informal sector enterprises than there are via institutional training systems. One broad estimate was that there were probably some 80,000 informal sector apprentices as at June 1990 as compared with only 55,000 trainees in the formal training system (Yambo, 1999). It is worth noting, however that enterprise based training in the formal sector does not take place exclusively within the informal sector. A substantial number of informal sector workers and owners acquire their major 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 as training for the informal sector although they acknowledge that many of their trainees enter the informal 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 by the trainees that often manifests many of them. 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 more than the formal sector. Employment in the informal sector grew at annual rate of nearly 8 per cent during 1981 and 1984 compared with 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 at the rate of 10 per cent after some decline in the mid 1980s when the formal sector growth was virtually marginal (Yambo, 1991). A recent survey has shown that the distribution of participants in the informal sector has almost reached parity with 52.7 per cent males and 47.4 females (Owigar, 2003).

Selected Characteristics of Women in the Informal Sector

Although reckoned as being most vibrant, the informal sector faces many constraints in its operations. Until recently, the sector 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 informal sector 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 partly been 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 arrangement for most informal sector operations (partly those falling within the "community of the poor" categorisation); lack of property "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 often are undeveloped. Operations in the informal sector fall outside the nation's tax structure with the consequence that official policy frown at the activities as illegitimate and which 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 also has had to unleash maximum violence to 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 in 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 high level of functional illiteracy that 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. Women are said to make up 46 percent of the informal sector's entrepreneurs, and that they outnumber men in the commercial agriculture-based, forest-based and in the textile sub-sectors. The notion, probably widely held still in Kenya, that the typical jua kali is a man in the urban areas making metal products is longer tenable. Their 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 items 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 informal sector will continue to increase and grow as the economic pressures continue to bite and take toll on the school leavers, throwing more and more of them out of formal sector employment. But socio-economic policies such as those which govern land tenure system, ownership and devolution of family real property and employment policy 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 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 total female force is self-employed and 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 where 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 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 can clearly no longer be upheld. Although in some respects it may still be the case that female entrepreneurs are more clustered within subsistence self-employment, working more frequently 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 characterised by relatively low productivity. In addition, their average earnings are even 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 percent of self-employed men earned incomes 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; Schmink, 1983; Buvinic; Yousseff; Von Elm, 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 man 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 incidence of female household heads continues to increase 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 skill 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 the families and nations that can no longer go unrecognised (Goodale, 1959).

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

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: Economic Survey, 1996

The increase in participation of women in Kenya's economy is positive and an encouraging sign of the overall development of the economy. This trend neutralises previous patterns in the 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 the country's population and labour force. Their presence in the economic arena where they will participate on an equal footing with male counterparts will go along way in speeding up the women participation in the country's development.

The increase in participation by women can be accounted for by several factors. These same factors can in turn be explained by broad socio-economic practices in the country. Although these policies do not consciously address gender issues, they have a serious impact on gender matters. The policies have disadvantaged women and their economic interest and, in turn, considerably slowed down the pace of overall development in the country, particularly those aspects touching on women.

Socio- economic policies such as those which 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 the girls disinherited. 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).

The movement of women from formal sector activities to informal sector activities has taken place both in the rural and urban areas and despite this, it seems that the rate at which women are joining informal sector operations in the urban areas is much higher than that in the rural areas. In the rural areas, many women depend on the farm for their livelihood but the same is not true in the urban areas. In the urban areas, the unemployment problem, and low levels of earnings of most husbands has forced majority of women to engage in informal sector activities. Today the rate at which the informal 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 in 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 out more than one trade. A vegetable vender may double up as a barmaid or as a semi-prostitute, doubling up because of the low levels of earnings earned from the two activities.

The nature of some informal sector activities has had special appeal to many of the female participants. Some informal sector activities peculiarly suit women. Many of them are also mothers, shoulder responsibilities that go with child bearing. Many of them have household duties. Ordinarily, these household duties consume a lot of time and quite often, they are heavy enough to be full time. 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 breadwinner takes home is hardly enough to sustain their basic needs. Women are therefore forced to engage in some small economic activities, either to subsidise the family income or to provide such 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 of 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 family or her place of residence. Most informal sector operations can also be carried out conveniently without the rigidity of formal sector employment in terms 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 carry out. 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 of general nature and affect both men and women. Majority of informal sector activities cannot be distinguished on purely gender classification problems such as: the lack of capital for investment, illiteracy and inefficiency in informal sector operations, lack of markets, cut-throat competition in the sector, lack of legal recognition due to frequent harassments by civic authorities and other law enforcement officers exists for both women and men operators. Drawing a line between female and male operators in terms of problems discussed earlier would be artificial and fallacious.

Two non-governmental organisation which support predominantly women's activities in the informal sector are: 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 UN Conference for 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 the objectives of Kenya Women Trust Fund are: the improvement of Kenya women's social and economic status; train women in legal awareness and business management; conduct 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 loans guarantee schemes which is still relatively new and offers loans guarantees from KSh20,000 to KSh100,000. The Kenya Women Trust Fund has offices in Nairobi and Nakuru. The trust has opened offices in other parts of the country.

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

The Undugu Society runs several programmes including a women's programme. The women's programme is organised for women situated in Kibera, Mathare, Shauri Moyo and Pumwani areas and 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; crocheting and others. Most members are unemployed women, who sought support from the Undugu Society. The Undugu Women Society has shops in Westlands and Shauri Moyo in Nairobi.

The society operates under several constraints which include: illiteracy, disunity resulting from the diversity in 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 in regard to collaterals 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, namely, sewing, food processing, nutrition, home economics, and several others. 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.

With regard to general skills acquisition in the informal sector, 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 skills and skills involved in her mother's primary productive activities; 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 also gain experience in certain areas of production, for example, food processing, handicrafts and many others, and in trading from other women who are not necessarily relatives.

They could be apprenticed to a personal acquaintance or a person with no previous contact who owns a workshop, but most likely introduced by a friend. In which case, mediation through some network of friends or kin is an important factor in securing apprenticeships (Hoppers, 1985).

Nonetheless, this age-old system has some key weakness. First and foremost, the skills customarily transmitted between women are those which 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, which 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 a girls training and employment options include the attitudes of teachers to employment potential of girls and 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 most suitable to them. These are usually low paying, less-skilled and nurturing occupations: nursing, office workers, housewives, hairdressers, primary school teachers and midwives.

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 tot he 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 of much of the assistance has tended to support the notion of women's income as secondary to that of the male household head and her productive activities of secondary importance to her reproductive ones. Women have not been considered producers of goods and services in their own right (Buvinic, Youssef and Von Elm, 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 handicrafts production, which have aimed at building on the traditional skills of women, such as embroidery and cooking. Many years of experience have now shown that raising the income levels through such schemes is 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 for 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 organisation promoting income-generating activities often consists of 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 skills or job lies at the end of the programme and, therefore, be combined with the development of business and entrepreneurial skills.

Formal training systems in Kenya, as elsewhere in Africa, are generally also 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; all of 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 enterprises-based training. Girls are generally segregated in programmes for sewing, homecraft shop assistants, and nursery school assistants. The narrow focus for girls is instigated 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 bookkeeping.

Most 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 magnitude of the demand for skills, a combination of strategies should be envisaged. Furthermore, training should not be seen in isolation of the objective to improve 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, is quite different from that 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 accessible to women and do not evoke the image of being appropriate only for men. 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 very notorious for being theoretical and too sophisticated for women with low levels of literacy.

The participation of girls and the relevance of their training could also be enhanced by the suspension of entry level qualifications which effectively bar their access; the provision of courses which would fill gaps in certain skills areas such as in maths or technical skills, short courses including refresher courses at suitable times and places accessible to women; methodologies which are learner-oriented and foster personal development; the integration of vocational skill development and production and marketing experiences, development of business skills; follow-up counselling and advisory services; and the promotion of the idea of self-employment as a legitimate career. 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 which 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 business (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. Both in urban and rural areas, women dominate vegetable vending, managing food kiosks, making and selling curio items 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 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 business. 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 which need to be addressed by future policy and interventions.

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CHAPTER NINE

TEACHER EDUCATION AND THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Introduction

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 and having 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 of all the groups of teachers is two years, and 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 Kenyan 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 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 of 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 whose courses lasted three years and advanced level students whose training lasted one year. In 1972 the college attained university college status, and the secondary education section was phased out and enrolled the first group of students to pursue courses leading to a bachelor of education of the University of Nairobi. The S1 programme was thinned down and transformed into a non-graduate diploma programme, though the college stopped training this category of teachers (Sifuna, 1988).

The Kenya Science Teachers College was established with the 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 be corrected through the establishment of an institute to train science teachers along the S1 pattern offered at the Kenyatta College. The Kenya Science was established in 1965 to offer a 3 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 students.

The Kenya Technical Teachers College was established to meet 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 Kenya Science Teachers College were moved to the Kenya Technical College (KTTC). It enrols about 120 non-graduate teachers a year in technical, business and industrial education (Sifuna, 1988). Its current status was discussed technical training

Other non-graduate teachers' institutions included Egerton College, which trained diploma teachers in agriculture, 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 is the trade union that concerns itself with the improvement of terms of service for teachers in the country. Started in the mid-fifties 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 Teachers Service Commission 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 from time to time examines the remuneration of members of the teaching service in consultation with the Ministry of Education and KNUT (Sifuna, 1988). Following KNUT organised major teachers' strikes, around the national election time, the government bowed in pressure and agreed to a substantial salary increment, which is still being implemented in stages.

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 1998 is shown in the Table 43 below. The number of primary school 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. 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 32, while the pupil teacher ratio declined slightly from 30.4 in 1997 to 30.8 during the year. Although the policy of the Ministry of Education is to maintain a low pupil teacher ratio as a measure of 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 44: Percentage of the primary schools 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**	

Economic Survey, 2004, Government Printer

Table 44 shows percentages of primary school teachers by gender between 2000 and 2003. There were a total of 178,622 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 attained P1 level.

Table 45: Percentage of the primary schools 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**	

Economic Survey, 2004, Government Printer

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 45. 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. Pupil-teacher ratio dropped to 16:1 in 1998 from 15.5:1 in 1997 while 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 ratio 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 and about 70 per cent of the force were graduates.

Table 46: Percentage of secondary schools 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**	

Economic Survey, 2004, Government Printer

Table 46 shows the percentage 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 constituted 35.2 per cent of the teaching force, with a larger proportion of the entire force, 65.6 per cent having attained graduate status.

Table 47: Percentage of secondary schools 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**	

Economic Survey, 2004, Government Printer

Some Key Issues in the Teaching Profession

As it is rightly pointed 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 ones, and with a relatively envious lifestyles despite the low remuneration from their job. 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 a high esteem. The respect for them stemmed partly from the fact 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 turned out. This too increased the space and tempo of social change and modernisation. Social life got 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 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 a 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 ones. Teachers are often pressurised to conform to codes in which 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 regarded the taking of another wife as no offence at all. Government was not interested in the teachers' morals provided they were not detrimental to his duties. Moreover, many teachers in government service were in fact voluntary agency teachers, dismissed for offences, which in secular life were regarded as irrelevant lapses. Conversely, as a civil servant the government teacher was forbidden to engage in politics, to join a political party, or to hold public offices. The voluntary agency 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 sixties, the teaching profession, especially at the primary school level, was generally of low status. This was mainly due to their underprivileged background, the illiberal narrow educational programme and poor conditions of work. These factors combined to give a different outlook and lifestyle of 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 be aspired 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 manpower, 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 reckoned that at independence, due partly to teachers' unionised and professional organisational pressure, and also partly as a result of government 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 in the service, who did not possess them. Opportunities for private study were also expanded. At the same time efforts were made to improve teachers' salary scales. Responsibility allowances for headteachers 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 30 years or so, teacher shortages have led to recruitment of many people who, in the past could not have aspired to a white collar job. 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 rely, on achieving personal status because of superior education and the consequent 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 primary from secondary, graduate from non-graduate, general from technical teachers. The reasons why they suffer from low morale also partly explain why teaching ranks low in prestige relative to other occupations. These include salary and conditions of service, working conditions and career opportunities (ILO/Unesco, 1982).

With regard to gender disparity, 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 female teachers alone may not have the desired result. As already mentioned in one of the chapters, there is an important effect of teachers' attitudes 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 heads 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 is one of substantial difference 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 institutes and teachers' colleges in the country, women are a minority of the teaching force in Kenya 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 and from one area 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 sparsely populated areas, lack of mobility of women because of family responsibilities or cultural considerations and added difficulties when they are married. Despite the importance of female teachers for the qualification and quantitative development of girls' education, not many researchers in the country have addressed factors that affect the demand and supply or problems that these teachers and their schools encounter because of special needs and circumstances.

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 of some school girls and a reliance on male teachers in girls' schools in many parts of the country, although the problem varies from region to region.

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 reported high rate of absenteeism and at times even abandonment of the profession and 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 teachers for maternity leave and other family reasons and because of the difficulty of finding substitute, especially in remote areas, Ministries of Education have had to prohibit employment of married teachers and pressurised those already teaching to resign. Although such measures have not been particularly applied in Kenya, trying to solve a serious problem by 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 model in the management of schools and other educational institutions. Through efficient management and leadership as well as support of female teachers and students, they can help improve the quality of girls' education. However, generally many are unprepared to handle the absenteeism, drop outs, and lack of motivation that affect female students and teachers with proper training and support, including being sensitised to these problems through the necessary literature, the media and in-service training. Female managers are better placed to deal with these problems, thereby reducing attrition and improving educational quality (El-Sanabary, 1993).

It should be pointed out that like within the teaching staff, female school administrators are fewer than the males both at primary and secondary school levels. Like their male counterparts, they receive little if any training and they are often overworked and underpaid and lack adequate resources. Quite often they are less qualified academically than their male counterparts. The disparities in the management for 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, who are promoted to administrative posts. Just like teachers, female heads of institutions participate less in in-service and 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 in teacher training courses in secondary and higher education. At the same time, the same 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 teaching 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 accommodations, especially in the remote areas of the country.

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 who are often unwilling to accept posting in the rural areas where living and working conditions are less desirable due to poor housing and medical facilities, and where good schools are lacking, supply of food and piped water are

limited, electricity and modern household technologies are absent and where single women may find it difficult to meet suitable mates. But the allowance is low and does end up attracting many women teachers to rural areas. Moreover, most urban centres have high concentration of women teachers because of having to be posted to places where their husbands work.

University Teaching and Administration

Women under-representation is also quite pronounced in the academic and administration levels in the public universities. Kenyatta and Nairobi universities as shown in Tables 47 and 48 demonstrate a fairly good example.

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	2.1
Environmental Studies	10	50.0	10	50.0	20	3.1
Total	**446**	**71.8**	**175**	**28.2**	**621**	**100**

Personal Data Office - Kenyatta University - 1995.

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

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 Faculty of Education at the University of Nairobi where they constituted 41.3 per cent, women teachers make up less than 40 per cent in all other faculties in the two universities. Women teachers are heavily under-represented at the University of Nairobi in 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 are 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). There were 92.9 per cent male deans compared with 7.1 per cent females; 90.9 percent male directors compared with 9.1 per cent females and 83.3 per cent male principals compared with 16.7 female principals (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 tot he 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. President Kibaki decided to abolish the position of president as the chancellor of all the six public universities and instead appointed some prominent Kenyans to hold those positions. 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 3 names of the

leading candidates to the president from whom he/she has to pick one as the vice-chancellor of the university. This process is to be followed in the appointment of new vice-chancellors in the public universities in future. While such a process is a considerable improvement from 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 the President or those around him. 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 no particular criteria exist 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).

Table 50: Professional ranks by gender and institution - 1991

	University of Nairobi					Kenyatta University				
Rank	**Male**	**%**	**Female**	**%**	**Total**	**Male**	**%**	**Female**	**%**	**Total**
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

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 highest academic ranks compared with their male colleagues. No rank in the two universities studied does the proportion of women come nearer 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 profession (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 those of their male counterparts (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-eighties, 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. 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 which have been converted into universities and university colleges, and together with the older universities, their functions include training graduate teachers.

Following rapid expansion of teacher education, women now constitute a high percentage of teacher training institutions and colleges. Despite their sizeable presence, women teachers are, however, still in a minority of the teaching force in Kenya especially beyond the primary school level. They constitute around 40 per cent of primary and 35 of secondary school teaching force respectively. 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 right form the colonial period, financial constraints, increasing devaluation of the teaching profession especially at the primary school level, difficulty in recruiting and retaining female teachers particularly in rural and sparsely populated areas, lack of mobility because of family responsibilities or cultural considerations.

In the public universities women form a small proportion of the university teaching staff, and 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 WAY FORWARD

Conclusion

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 this country, will depend largely on how seriously all education stakeholders will, not only address the persistent gender disparities in all education levels as illuminated in this publication but also demonstrate commitment in responding actively and positively to the underlying challenges identified in this book and in many studies on gender and education. Without such commitment from all stakeholders, the MDG mission and EFA goals of achieving UPE and gender parity at all levels by 2015 will remain a mirage that Kenyans will continue to chase way into the future.

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* those of their male counterparts. In a reader-friendly way, 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 the most recent 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 data that is relevant and disaggregated by gender. This is definitely the best way forward because such data would keep gender issues in education at the fore of attention.

In chapters One and Two, Three key guiding positions emerge quite clearly. First, the role of feminist theoretical frameworks has been highlighted as core 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 '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 against African women in particular, the colonial administration ignored the gender ideology that governed social relations among the local communities in Kenya. 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 marginalized women and hampered their participation in the 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 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 administration 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 mainstream 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 progresses 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 he first instance in Primary One, such gains are neither sustained nor are they 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% (76% women and 89% men, UNICEF, 2004, *State of the World's Children 2004* Human Development Report, 2004). This rate is matched against the global one that stands at 63.3%. Indeed, Kenya compares relatively well at 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 erroneous impression about the enrolment situation for girls and boys. Furthermore, enrolment rates at entry to 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, the educational status, particularly of those groups, which had been deprived of education during the colonial period, remained disproportionately low. Although more research data is needed to facilitate identification of the different areas of development, anecdotal evidence seems to indicate that some the difficulties faced in girls and women's education in Kenya emanate from some or a combination of the following issues

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 that minimises child mortality. Educated mothers tend to 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 marginalized communities that require 'affirmative action' in order to uplift basic education in their local settings. In order to move towards achievement of UPE and gender parity by 2015, the Government is obliged to source and allocate adequate quality recourses with specified quotas that are proportionate t to the educational needs of specific regions and marginalized groups.

Education and Benefits for Women

The fact that education empowers people has been the catalyst for pursuing goals of EFA, UPE and gender parity at a global level. Basic education, in particular, has been key to the advancement of economic activities for many women groups in the country since the early 1970s. Local women with relatively higher education have assumed positions of leadership in order 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 course 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 bookkeeping and accounting are also taught to members. Literacy and numeracy are highly valued in the context of such groups.

Many of the 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 higher-level positions of responsibility and decision-making in government, private and NGO agencies are too few 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 around 30 per cent of total employment with marked increases in the public and self-employment. It is estimated that out of 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 most of 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, female 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 medical workers. These opportunities depend on the level of education, which relegates early childhood care

and education to the lowest educated workforce; the women. Hence, it is often the case that, Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) graduates 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, ability to adapt to bureaucratic structures among other working class attribute. Above all else, they are more likely to accept terms of underpayment.

A considerably large number of women work in the formal and informal self-employment sectors or even as casual labourers. Some 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 both in the national economic and political sectors that determine the status of women *vis-à-vis* the 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. In order for women to participate adequately and effectively in national developmental affairs, the majority of Kenyan women need to access quality education that transcends basic 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 secondary level, it must be appreciated that more that one third of post-secondary education population is female. Not only does post-secondary education improve a persons 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 and 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. Parent and teachers increasingly portray appreciation that girls and boys can, and must, learn similar things equally and compete equally in the same tests without harbouring gendered expectations. Teachers also seem to acknowledge that all children in their care deserve have equal rights to the teachers' 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 is biased towards girls; a school culture whose informal curriculum often 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 sex objectives of wives. For the school to do this, it must challenge 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, 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 education and increase their educational opportunities by use of participatory pedagogy and conscientisation activities, which aim at empowering women and men as partners in development.

The presence of some few and committed women and men will make tremendous difference in the ways that the next generation of young women and men will interpret gender relations. It is because of this wave if new thinking among the younger generations of Kenyans that the pervasive anti-women attitudes within the political establishment could not have prevented the election of the few women to parliament. It is noteworthy that although the women parliamentarians are few, their number has outdone all previous parliaments by over 300 per cent. The number of women permanent secretaries appointed 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, appear committed and willing to champion the course of women. Their main drawback has been the scarcity of organised women 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 and 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, Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), has particularly done a commendable job of foregrounding girls' educational issues in the entire African continent as well as initiating numerous educational interventions. FAWE is on record for championing quality education for all girls, for example, through the establishment of educational centres of excellence and providing bursaries to needy girls, not to mention its work in sponsoring girls who need rescue from early marriage and female genital excisions; both of which are rampant practices in the continent. Women university graduates have also helped to alleviate the plight of female 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-level management staff in government and other organisation with the aim of, helping them to understand and respond positively to the gender equality issues in policy formulation and practice.

This book cannot fail 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 the areas of 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 for legislation equal human rights in education, health

and other sectors of development. women's course at national and local levels and to provide mutual support for fellow women. In some cases, the women are inviting men who are sympathetic to women's course 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 education media, many organisations in the form of NGOs have emerged in the last several decades to provide opportunity 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 gradual acceptance of the inevitable change in gender relations in social transformation that is emerging thereof, thus presenting hope for a fruitful match into a future that would see education delivering both women and men equally into prosperity.

Way Forward

As demonstrated in this book, there has been more rhetoric in implementing policies to redress the imbalance in girls and women participation in education than the effect of policy action. Clearly, Kenya seems to lag behind in the area of policy implementation that is meant to enhance gender parity compared with other partner states in the East African Community - Tanzania and Uganda. Hence, despite the above outlined 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. To the authors of this book, therefore, the greatest future challenge upon which to chart the way forward for this country seems to lie squarely on government. The government of the day should continue to demonstrate its commitment in 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 that is poised against 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 demonstrated in this book to enable policymakers and practitioners to plan a way forward that is reconstructive of the education *status quo*.

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 government should do is undertake 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. As we continue to appreciate appreciated that changing traditional societal attitudes is not an easy task, particularly among rural fold 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 that influence attitudes are, so are the institutional cultures of the school and other educational institutions. In order 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 need to be enabled 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 life cycle approach. A life cycle approach takes into account early childhood, early and late adolescence, as well as young adulthood. Such an approach in engendering the education system is likely to yield greater returns among generations 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 (or even boys) in particular circumstances. In this context, it is important that researchers are brought on board the Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) as a way of ensuring that duplication of research activities is minimised and that the education sector benefits from relevant multi-disciplinary research findings.