

**GENDER ANALYSIS OF LITERATURE SET BOOKS: A STUDY OF
SELECTED KENYA CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY
EDUCATION (KCSE) LITERATURE TEXTS.**

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REG. NO. C82/10927/2006

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL
SCIENCES, DEPARTMENT OF LITERATURE, IN FULFILMENT FOR THE
AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY OF KENYATTA
UNIVERSITY.**

JUNE 2012

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

To my beloved mother, Anne Mumbi Mundia, who sacrificed her all to lay a foundation for my academic journey and to all men and women who value education of girls.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A big thank you to my supervisors, Rev. Prof. Wangari Mwai and Dr. John Mugubi for their expert and selfless guidance, support and encouragement throughout my study. I am also grateful to Prof. Catherine Ndungo for her insightful input during the initial stages of this study and to the Literature department, Kenyatta University, for facilitating the process of this study.

I also wish to thank staff at Kenya Institute of Education (KIE), particularly Charity Makau, Grace Maina and Jennifer Wambugu for their assistance in getting the data that I required for this study and the Ministry of Education for giving me a permit to carry out the research.

I am indebted to Daystar University for granting me a scholarship and reducing my workload to enable me pursue my studies. My gratitude also goes to the students and teachers of English who participated in this study and to the administration of those schools for kindly allowing me to conduct my research.

I will forever be grateful to my dear husband and friend, Prof. Gachari for his unwavering support and encouragement in this academic journey. To you my lovely children; Karoki, Wambui and Nyawira, thank you for your patience and understanding as ‘mum did her home – work!’

And above all,

To Jesus my Lord and Saviour

Great is Thy Faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

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ABSTRACT

Set books are an important socializing tool and play a crucial role in determining students' worldview of gender relations in society. Gender responsiveness is one of the emerging issues that have attracted major debates in various forums including in the education system in general and choice of set books in particular. This study examined the gender responsiveness of selected KCSE literature set books, and students' and English teachers' responses to the gender issues in the set books. The study applied the ABC Gender Analysis Model and the Reader – Response theory. The ABC Gender Analysis Model measures gender responsiveness of set books and other curriculum materials while the Reader – Response theory emphasizes the reader's role in creating meaning of a text and experience of a literary work. The findings indicated that the KCSE set books all had elements of gender bias, stereotyping of character and role, unequal representation of male and female characters and use of gender insensitive language. However, the study also revealed that some writers had made attempts to make the literature set books gender responsive. In addition, students' responses revealed a great sense of gender awareness and sensitivity in regard to the gender issues raised in the set books. Finally, teachers' responses revealed that the teachers were keen and enthusiastic about gender issues in set books despite the fact that they had no formal training on how to implement the gender policy in education. The study recommends closer scrutiny of literature set books, in-house training of teachers on gender responsiveness, sensitizing students on gender responsive set books and providing checklists for identifying gender stereotypes and other relevant gender issues in set books. In addition, it also recommends the development of a more gender responsive curriculum in tandem with Kenya's developmental aspiration where men and women are viewed as partners in the development of all sectors of society.

1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The debate on gender equality, stereotyping, bias, gender responsiveness and other related gender concepts has been ongoing in Kenya. Several pressure groups, especially those working with Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) and the Convention of Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), have been calling for gender equality in general and for an education system that addresses gender equality and gender responsiveness especially in regard to set books that are used in our schools.

Since Kenya attained independence in 1963, several efforts have been made to show the country's commitment to the principle of human equality. Kenya subscribes to international bodies such as the United Nations (UN), implying that it is committed to adhere to the UN Charter Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Kenya has also participated in several international conferences (World Women Conferences in Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995) concerned with gender equality which binds it to implement their declarations. One of the issues discussed in those conferences and which is significant to this study was gender equality in relation to set books and other curriculum materials used in schools. Closer to home, there have been numerous calls for a gender responsive curriculum at all levels of education in Kenya.

In an effort to reverse the process of female gender marginalization, the United Nations (UN), adopted the Convention of Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1979. According to the UN, CEDAW defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. The office of UN High Commissioner on human rights notes that Kenya ratified CEDAW in 1984. The Convention resolved, among other resolutions, that “any stereotyping concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education should be eliminated, in particular, by revision of set books and school programs” (UN, 1979).

Despite the above CEDAW’s condemnation of set books that are stereotypical and biased against women, reports in various fora including academic researches continue to show that the problem still exists. For instance, the UN World conferences on women in 1985 and 1995 showed that the problem of gender inequality, stereotyping and other related vices in set books still existed. Several UN organizations such as United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and United Nations Fund for Population (UNFPA) have expressed great concern on gender equality in different aspects of development including education. They have addressed the question of set books that are not gender responsive. Some of these organizations have clear strategies to eliminate the gender bias in set books. For example, UNESCO has coordinated several studies in countries such as

Kenya, France, China, Norway and others on images of women and men projected in school set books including literature ones (Michel, 1986).

The above studies among others such as Obura (1991), Kobia (2009) and Foulds (2009), aimed at alerting the international community to the problem of gender inequality in set books. It was expected that the findings obtained from them would enable the authorities in the respective countries and others who subscribe to the UN conventions to have a clearer picture of the problems and take appropriate actions to address them.

Kenya is also a signatory to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) whose goal number 3 on education stipulates that countries should have eliminated gender disparities in primary and secondary schools by 2005, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality. Kenya has also come up with Vision 2030, a long term development blueprint for the country that is aimed at achieving the status of "globally competitive and prosperous country with a high quality of life by 2030". It aims at transforming Kenya into a "newly industrializing, middle income country providing a high quality of life to all citizens in a clean and secure environment". Indeed, the vision aspires to meet the MDGs for Kenyans. Through the social pillar, the Vision seeks to create a just, cohesive and equitable society. Gender is one of the eight key social sectors that the vision seeks to transform to bring about prosperity (Ministry of Planning and Development, 2005). To address the above issues,

the Ministry of Education created a point based system of focusing on the promotion of emerging issues, which included gender responsiveness in set books.

It is encouraging to note that Kenya is making progress towards eliminating aspects of gender inequality in all sectors. According to African Union International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa, as reported in the Daily Nation on 6th July 2010, Kenya is among 15 countries in Africa that are closing the gap on gender inequality in education. The forum noted, among other things, that states should strive to build ideal schools to ensure that girls make the most out of the education systems. This would entail checking that curriculum at every level, and teaching methods, were appropriately ordered to ensure gender sensitivity. In 2011, Kenya was also rated highly by the World Bank as having realized the most gender-parity reforms between 2009 and 2011 (The Daily Nation Newspaper, 2011).

Whereas the objective of this study was not to evaluate how Kenya has performed in regard to ensuring gender equality *per se*, it was important to situate this study in the international context in order to emphasize the importance of gender responsiveness in set books.

The school system is one of the important socializing agents in sensitizing people about gender equality whereas set books are vital tools for propagating a society's values and

aspirations. The critical role that literature plays in implementing the goals of education in Kenya cannot be underestimated. In Kenya's education system, literature is integrated with English language which is a core academic subject and the official medium of instruction in all subjects except Kiswahili, French and other languages. The subject aims at enabling students to appreciate literary materials and to foster understanding among people. It is therefore imperative to briefly, at this point, discuss the function of literature and the effects it is likely to have on readers, especially students in secondary schools.

Literature has long been understood as having a dual purpose of entertaining and educating its readers. Literature texts are constructed in effect as objects of beauty, sources of pleasure and as conveyors of messages and information. Although some authors often claim no practical purpose for their works, all literature constitutes an attempt to persuasively convey certain values and ideas (Farjardo-Acosta, 2001). What this means in effect is that readers of literature texts will be affected both aesthetically and cognitively.

One of the fundamental functions of literature is to enlarge the reader's overall vision of a given cultural landscape by expanding the reader's understanding of the entire projected world and by conveying to him or her some distinct image of the people and surroundings that comprise the setting under portrayal. As Gallagher and Lundin (1989) note, it is a widely accepted fact that works of art including literature reflect the social

structures of the societies from which they emanate. Literature and creative art in general thus helps us to define specific cultural and social heritages (Mugo, 1978).

Literature also possesses the affective characteristic of influencing readers. The power of both the spoken and the written word cannot be underestimated. Mugo (1978) observes that what is implanted in the mind through reading may form a permanent impression on young minds. Therefore the power of the writer to create an impression on the reader's mind places him or her in a very powerful position. Wa Thiong'o (1978) argues that a writer tries to persuade us, to make us view not only a certain kind of reality but also from a certain angle of vision. The power of the writer to persuade the reader to accept reality from a particular angle is significant in this study due to the influence the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) literature set books may have on high school students with regard to gender responsiveness.

Governments and religious organizations have also acknowledged that literature has a profound effect on its readers. In several countries such as Russia, South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya, creative writers have been arrested, jailed, detained or even killed. In Africa, for instance, writers such as Alex La Guma, the late Ken Saro Wiwa, Wole Soyinka, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Abdulahi Abdalla, Alamin Mazrui, Ngugi Wa Mirii and the late Wahome Mutahi suffered exile, detention or other forms of persecution for the ideas they expressed in their books which were considered a threat to the political stability of their countries at the time. In the Philippines, Catholic bishops censor films and literature

books, sometimes forcing the government to withdraw some materials from public view. In addition, in some cases, creative works have been banned. For instance, the publication of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* sparked off widespread protests by Islamic groups and was eventually banned in 1989. Ayatollah Khomeini, the then supreme leader of Iran, also issued a *fatwa* (a religious opinion on Islamic faith issued by an Islamic scholar or leader) calling on all good Muslims to kill Rushdie (Coleman, 2010).

Conversely, some key political leaders attest to the fact that reading literature books has a positive influence on the way people think and act. For instance, the president of the United States of America, Barack Obama, acknowledges the transformative nature of the written word and confesses that throughout his life he has often turned to literature books as a way of acquiring insights and information from others (Michiko, 2009). Literature also seems to have played a big role in the lives of renowned African leaders like the late Sedar Senghor who wrote and promoted poetry, African Music and even hosted Pan-African Cultural Festival in Senegal. Mwalimu Julius Kabarage Nyerere, the late Tanzanian president, also so highly valued literature that he translated two of Shakespeare's plays: *Julius Caesar* and *The Merchant of Venice* into Kiswahili so that the literature would be more accessible to his people.

The inclusion of *A Man of the People* by Chinua Achebe, *Kuu*, by Mohamed Said Mohammed and *Kitumbua Kimeingia Mchanga* by Mohammed S. Ahmed as set books in the KCSE syllabus in 2003 sparked off protests from The Roman Catholic lobby group, *Parents' Caucus*, led by the *Catholic Justice and Peace Commission* as they alleged that the said texts contained pornographic and sexually explicit material. Their fear was that the texts would influence high school students negatively. This call by the *Catholic Justice and Peace Commission* was not unusual. Books worldwide have occasionally been excluded from the literary canon on the basis that they have nothing of aesthetic value.

The above scenario brings to question the significance of the role that set books play in the lives of the learners. Set books worldwide are a vital means of imparting knowledge and inculcating values to learners. Teachers and students alike, view set books as sources of authority. As observed by Obura (1991), in some cases, set books are taken as the truth of the reality that they present. Set books can be potent instruments which help in building up or destroying desirable attitudes in young learners (Sumalatha, 2004). This emphasizes the need to closely scrutinize set books prescribed for study in our schools if the expected learning outcomes are to be realized.

Rosenblatt (1978) observes that literature can be modified, redefined or even revised to serve new purposes or suit emerging trends. For instance, the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) recommended the following sections of *The river between*, (currently a KCSE set book under analysis in this study), to be deleted because of the sensitivity of the topic of ‘female circumcision’ (popularly referred to as ‘Female Genital Mutilation’ or ‘FGM’ in short) and the language used. “You could more readily trust a man than *a kihii*, an uncircumcised boy” (38) and “A day would come when all these ‘*irigu*’ (uncircumcised girls) would be circumcised by force to rid the land of all impurities” (117). As Wa Thiong’o (1978) has rightly said, words have a suggestive power well beyond their immediate meaning. Creative writers, therefore, have no excuse in perpetuating societal stereotypes about either gender or any material that is not gender responsive for the reason that they are being faithful to the conventions of society.

Literature provokes thought, expands our view of the world and opens avenues for alternatives in the social reality (Charters and Charters, xxxviii). This is a role that creative literature has performed since time immemorial and which it will continue to play. Literature set books should therefore provide high school students with a forum for responding to various issues raised in the books they read and assisting them in their quest for alternatives. As Achebe (1988) indicates, literature, more than any other art form, has the added advantage of appealing to our sense of aesthetics. Herein lies the danger if we offer our children and young adults literature that is not gender responsive, or we fail to teach them to recognize gender insensitivity since “young readers are most

vulnerable to insensitive literature, tuition, and general socialization” (Bamhare 1999, 43).

Ngugi (1978) further states that it is the values that people have that are the basis of their collective and individual image of self and their identity as a people, since culture is an ideological expression of the totality of their activities. If this be the case, then high school students as members of their respective societies will be affected by the same values that are presented in the literature set books. So, if the values of the said people place either gender in an inferior position, the learners will take it as the truth and internalize it in their adult life. As Fox (1993) observes, what we read constructs us and makes us who we are, by presenting the image of ourselves as girls, women, men and boys. Indeed, students’ responses analyzed later in this thesis lend credence to this observation.

Literature plays a significant role in constructing gender roles; in presenting the image of the girl as woman, and the boy as a man who play different roles in society. Hence literature set books play a significant part in transmitting a society’s culture to students. The way in which gender is portrayed in literature set books contributes to the images that learners develop of themselves and their roles in society. Gender roles exist in the content, language, symbols, character portrayal where boys may be depicted as heroes, strong, adventurous, self-sufficient saviours while girls on the other hand are depicted as naïve, passive, self-sacrificing, sweet and so on.

The significance of this representation of gender stems from the fact that most readers tend to identify with the characters of their own sex in books (Gooden, 2001). Therefore, the relative lack of active, independent, and strong female characters can limit the opportunity for girls to transcend the imposed gender roles or to validate another desired place in society. Gender representation therefore conditions most boys and girls to conform to the social norms without providing them with alternative role models. Consequently, girls remain trapped in passive roles, while boys remain trapped in heroic ones. Gender stereotypes deprive both boys and girls of the freedom to express themselves and force them to behave in ways that are stereotypical.

Fortunately, literature also has the potential of altering perceptions and possibly helping to change lives (Gooden, 2001). If literature is able to negatively affect young people's lives, then it can also have a positive effect. Positive portrayals of either gender have the possibility of improving young people's sense of self-esteem and identity options in their lives. With this in mind, teachers of English need to help the young readers become aware of negative portrayals and stereotyping in literature to realize that they are not acceptable.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Set books are powerful tools of influence and persuasion in learners' behaviour as the young usually identify with the principal characters in the books they read. The values and attitudes exhibited by these characters may be internalized by the learners and thus influence their behaviour. It is therefore important to recognize any form of gender bias, stereotyping, and other forms of gender unresponsiveness since the way genders are portrayed in literature set books contributes to the image and the roles that young people develop of themselves and of their gender in society.

Teachers on the other hand are central to the teaching and learning process and therefore their understanding and awareness of gender responsiveness in set books is key to the effective participation of boys and girls in the learning process. Teachers also play an important part of reinforcing gender roles in their students. They are therefore expected to be serious about the way they handle gender issues in set books in addition to exhibiting a gender responsive attitude and behaviour so as to act as role models for the students.

Fox (1993) observes that what we read constructs us and makes us who we are, by presenting the image of ourselves as girls, women, men and boys. Hence literature set books play a significant part in transmitting a society's culture to students. Using the ABC of Gender Analysis Model, this study set out to investigate the extent to which the selected KCSE literature set books are gender responsive. In addition, Reader-Response theory helped us establish whether high school English teachers perceived the set books

as gender responsive and what responses students had towards gender issues raised in the set books.

1.3 Objectives of the study

This study set out to:

1. Carry out a gender analysis of selected KCSE literature set books in order to establish to what extent they are gender responsive.
2. Investigate whether teachers of English in high schools perceived the set books as gender responsive.
3. Investigate high school students' responses to gender issues in literature set books.

1.4 Research Questions

1. To what extent are the selected literature set books gender responsive?
2. Do high school teachers of English perceive the literature set books as gender responsive?
3. What were the high students' responses to gender issues in the literature set books?

1.5 Research Assumptions

The assumptions guiding this study are as follows:

1. The selected literature text books are gender responsive.

2. High school teachers of literature perceive the selected texts as gender responsive.
3. Students in high school respond to gender issues raised in the selected literature texts.

1.6 Justification of the study

Several studies, for instance, Chesaina (1987), Obura (1991), Kiai (1992), Kabira (1993), Stratton (1994), Foulds (2009), Kobia (2009) and others have been done on gender issues especially on portrayal of women and girls in various contexts in Kenya. These studies indicate that there is need to do more research in the field especially in regard to the kind of curriculum materials used in schools. To the best of our knowledge, other than Obura's (1991) study on portrayal of women and girls in primary school text books, Kobia's (2009) examination of femininity and masculinity in English primary set books and Foulds, (2009) exploration of representations in Social Studies set books, there is no other systematic gender analysis research done on set books in Kenya. The three studies cited above analyzed primary school set books. This study will therefore be a contribution to the gender debate by analyzing selected literature set books approved for KCSE by the MoE from 1999 to 2009. This period was chosen to give the researchers a wide scope from which to sample the set books. The study also notes that from 2002, the MoE put in place a new KCSE syllabus incorporating a point based system focusing on the promotion of emerging issues, which included gender responsiveness. This inclusion emphasizes the significance of gender in curriculum materials.

Secondly, the study is significant in that set books play an important role in the teaching and learning process. Apart from providing the academic and technical knowledge about the subject matter of the intended curriculum, they also contain knowledge about the world in general. Kabira and Masinjila (1997) note that the writers of set books, especially literature ones, create a human world in which learners get to know about what people do and how they relate with one another. This humanizing effect of set books could lead to discrimination of either gender if not handled carefully. Though this discrimination may be subtle and unconscious, the tone, symbols, and examples given may foster in the learner positive and negative attitude about gender, sex, occupations, and life expectations in general.

Another justification of this study was prompted by the uproar led by *The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission and The Parents' Caucus* in 2003 regarding some literature set books selected for study at KCSE level. Using the moralist view of literature, they argued that the following texts, *A man of the people* by Chinua Achebe, *Kiu* by Mohamed S. Mohamed and *Kitumbua kimeingia mchanga* by Mohamed S. Ahmed contained pornographic material and therefore “the best thing that the government of Kenya could do was to select set books that do not discuss issues as contentious as sex” (The Daily Nation Newspaper, 2003). Scholars such as Wang (2003) and Rosli (1995) argue that one of the roles of literature is to inculcate moral values. They indicate that teachers can guide students into searching for moral values while

reading literature books. The call by the above Commission therefore reinforces the need to scrutinize closely any set books and other curriculum materials before they are prescribed for study in schools.

1.7 Scope and Limitations

This study was limited to form four students in twelve (12) public secondary schools in Central Province of Kenya. The selection was done using the cluster sampling technique since the target population (form four students in all secondary schools in Central Province) was too large to sample and manage the data. Whereas the selection may not claim to be totally representative of all high school students in Kenya, it was a pointer to the kind of responses high school students have towards gender issues such as portrayal of male and female characters, distribution of roles, possession of power, and making decisions raised in the two compulsory KCSE literature set books, namely *The river between*, and *An enemy of the people*.

The study was also limited to a selection of KCSE literature set books that were approved by the MoE from 1999 to 2009. In addition, only the compulsory set books were selected. Gender was another factor in the selection of the set books. Of the ten (10) compulsory texts, only two were by women writers, that is, *Coming to birth* and *The river and the source* and they were therefore purposively selected. In addition, the current compulsory set books, *The river between* and *An enemy of the people* were selected in order for the researcher to obtain responses from high school students. In sampling the schools, this

study was also limited to choosing mixed schools from only four (4) districts since mixed schools with the desired population (over 100 students) were not evenly distributed among all the districts.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has briefly situated Kenya within the international context in regard to gender. It has noted that Kenya has made progress towards eliminating gender inequality in education especially in regard to set books. The chapter has also discussed the function of literature and the effects it is likely to have on readers, especially students in high school. The chapter has also presented the statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, research assumptions, justification of the study, scope and limitations. Chapter two will present the literature review and theoretical perspectives employed in this study.

2.0 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Introduction

Our literature search established that no study on analysis of KCSE literature set books for gender responsiveness has been undertaken in Kenya. Three researches, however, proved useful to this study. Obura (1991) analyzed the portrayal of girls and women in Kenyan primary set books using qualitative and quantitative analyses. The findings showed that there were fewer and negative images of females compared to the images of males. The other studies by Foulds (2009) and Kobia (2009) explored representations of gender in social studies set books and femininity and masculinity in English primary school set books in Kenya respectively. Both of these studies established that gender inequality continue to persist in school set books despite the fact that set books are crucial tools in the teaching and learning process.

However, to put this study into a clear perspective, several relevant works have been reviewed. Firstly, the study notes that extensive research has been done on the question of gender relations by anthropologists, sociologists, literature scholars and others as noted by Kabira (1993). In literature in particular, the following studies looked at the portrayal of girls and women in various contexts: Kabira et al (1985), Gachukia et al (1986), Chesaina (1987), Kiai (1992) and Ndungo (1998). Florence Stratton's critical work, *Contemporary African literature and politics of gender* (1994) examined the way African women's writing has been sidelined by a male dominated literary tradition and argues for

the inclusion of African women's writing into the literary canon. Kuria (2003) tackled the challenge of feminism in Kenya by presenting an Afro-centric worldview. He argues that when attention is paid to African women themselves, and the cultures from which and within which they write, it is clear that they embrace both feminism and Afro-centricity.

While commending the above mentioned scholars in their attempt to tackle gender issues in Africa from different perspectives and viewpoints, we recognized a gap that has not been examined; that of listening to the voices of the consumers of the knowledge offered to them in form of literature set books. It was therefore the aim of this study to carry out a gender analysis of selected KCSE literature set books. The analysis was to help us establish the extent to which the selected set books are gender responsive, the extent to which the literature teachers perceived them as such, and if they highlighted the gender responsiveness of these texts to their students. Finally, the study set out to establish students' responses to the gender issues raised in these set books.

2.1.2 Analyses of Text Books for Gender Responsiveness

Books are image-forming and sources of information on social norms. They shape attitudes and the teaching content, (Crabbe' et al (1985) quoted in Obura 1991). In addition, Njoroge (1978) argues that literature books are a powerful image forming force whether they are meant for children or adults. In view of the fact that in sub-Saharan Africa the reading culture is not encouraging, the set book is a highly prized source of

information and has commensurate influence on the learner. Gachari and Oladipo's (2008) research among Continuing Education students in Daystar University, Kenya, indicated that only about 50% students read for leisure and what they read is far below the minimum of one book per week recommended for high schools (Nuttal, 1982). The set book is therefore among many of the socializing agents in the lives of the learners especially in Africa. It presents models of people that the learners may try to emulate and presents behaviour and thoughts which the set book may imply are good to follow (Obura, 1991). Learners' exposure to set books and other learning materials through years of schooling serves as a powerful medium of socializing young people into dominant patterns of gender relations and gendered behaviour which they will carry with them to adult life (Medway, 1987; Gathu, 1997; Leach, 2003).

Mkuchu (2004) reinforces the above observation by noting that set books remain as one of the versatile agents of socialization in the society. They are the sources of information in teaching and at the same time play the role of image forming and shaping attitudes by transmitting a society's culture. Gender images and roles are a crucial part of culture, therefore, the manner in which female and male genders are portrayed in set books contribute to the type of images that learners develop of female and male in the society.

The set book is designed to provide an authoritative pedagogic version of an area of study. It is also an important device in the learning process which might instruct the teachers' work, embody the subjects and contain the knowledge and norms preferred by

the school. The main aim of the set book is to form the subject skill and also part of the hidden curriculum to mediate the worldview, expectations and values of the society. The hidden curriculum has an identity forming role, since it mediates the gender specific expectations, norms and behaviours, and therefore contributes to the reproduction of social inequalities in society. Thus, as part of the hidden curriculum, set books might transform, strengthen or diminish the developed and developing power relations both in the classroom and in the society (Kereszty, 2009).

Set books play this persuasive role due to the important part the school plays in the process of socialization. The school is an authoritative and prestigious institution in Africa, and at least for the first few years of school, the overt curriculum is taken very seriously by the learners. However, it is important to note that in the latter years of schooling, it is probable that other factors such as the media, personal biases and peer pressure also influence the learners. The school and the set book preach social conformity in ideals, values and behaviour in that the learners are expected to act as one, be loyal to their school and be active members of their school community (George, 1999). In addition, Gathu (1997) notes that the school attending youths are a captive audience who are exposed to a common national curriculum which exposes them to a common culture, ideology and a common set of values and norms.

Several scholars have written on the influence literature can have on students and other readers in general. One, that literature is educative, that is, it can lead to acquisition of

desirable knowledge, skills and attitudes. Candlin (1989) adds that literature is a vital aid to learning while Brookes et al (1964) observe that literature is a product and a commentary on life process. By studying it, we get to know the meaning of life's experiences. It enlarges our experience of the world and of ourselves and brings forth a new world and a new outlook. Gachukia and Akivaga (1978) emphasize that literature has a role in shaping people's attitude toward life. They emphasize that a writer tries to persuade readers to accept a given view of life from a given dimension on behalf of race, class and nation.

Tomlison and Ellis (1980) underscore the fact that the study of literature provides students with a multiplicity of experiences, philosophies and attitudes of other societies. As a result, the students become more informed and tolerant of the world outside their own. In addition, the study of literature can make students realize their capabilities as they compare themselves with the characters they encounter in the texts they read. Thus, literature can act as an invaluable tool for sensitizing boys and girls against any gender bias that may be present in the literature set book.

Apple and Christian –Smith (1991) as quoted by Kereszty (2009), note that texts embody and mark one part of reality, and also contain patterns for arranging and selecting the infinite possible knowledge. What counts as legitimate knowledge is the result of complex interests and identities. Researchers have shown that legitimate knowledge does not include the experiences and forms of expression of those characters that have not

been in powerful positions throughout history, for instance women, people of colour and so on. Therefore the symbolic representations in literature set books are connected to real power relations, and they might also represent differentiated social relations as natural and unquestionable (Sketer & Grant, 1991). Set books usually represent the experiences of men, women, boys and girls which are considered the norm.

Similarly, teachers are key facilitators in disseminating the content in the books. They are enablers who create opportunities for the student to learn and discover the wonders of the text on their own (Widdowson, 2000). Teachers are also important agents of change because of the key role they play in the processes of education as major executors of the teaching and learning process (Seminar on Cooperation on Teacher Education, Bergen, Norway, and 27th Sept -2nd Oct 2005). Since the teacher is central to the teaching and learning process, their understanding and awareness of gender responsiveness is key to the effective participation of boys and girls in the learning process. Gender responsive teachers understand and respond to the specific needs of boys and girls in the teaching and learning process (FAWE, v).

Teachers also play a very important role in reinforcing gender roles in the different expectations they have for boys and girls. Teachers can therefore create a learning environment in which boys are encouraged to succeed whereas girls are allowed to fail. What is more, many teachers may be completely unaware that they treat girls differently (Anita, Nargis & Yasmin, 2010). Since teachers play this significant role in the early

development of the student, their ideas and beliefs can change the thought patterns of young students. A teacher must therefore be constantly aware of the fact that his or her actions, attitude, behaviour, outlook and mind set help shape a student's gender role.

Teachers are therefore required to be serious about gender issues in set books and other curriculum materials. On the other hand, for teachers to bring about a change in the student, they should be given enough knowledge on the issue. Teachers need not only a gender sensitive curriculum and set books, but also should exhibit a gender sensitive attitude and behaviour so that they can serve as role models for students. However, it is important to note that mere acquisition of knowledge on gender equality is unlikely to change teachers' attitudes as regards its implementation. What is needed is to enlighten them on the moral grounding, thus, going beyond 'cognitive understanding' and addressing the affective domain (Chinyani, 2010).

Several studies, for instance, Michel (1986), Grauerholz and Bernice (1989), Abbot-Richmond (1992), Joshi Govinda Prasad and Jean Anderson (1992), Friedman (1992) Ramachandran (2004), Mirza (2004), Mkuchu (2004) Exarhos (2005) Selander, (2005), Halberg (2006), Bazler (2006) and Kobia (2009), indicate that analyses of set books for gender responsiveness have been done in several countries worldwide including USA, India, Nepal, Greece, Islamabad, Sweden, France and Norway. The studies revealed a rather conservative portrayal of gender where men are featured in set books more positively and prominently than women. As a result of these studies, some of the

countries put in place gender awareness training and in-service of teachers where the teachers were taken through a gender sensitization module among other courses. Other countries used other strategies to generate and disseminate gender responsive set books and other curriculum materials with a view to eliminating gender bias in set books and supplementary materials.

In France, for instance, the Ministry of Education issued an order that beginning 1982/83 school year, an educational campaign against sexist prejudices was to be launched. In 1974, in Norway, the Ministry of Education supplied head teachers and staff with an educational syllabus designed to eliminate sexism from set books. In Austria, an inter-governmental group had in 1984 produced a guide on how to portray men and women and the family members in school set books in a non-sexist manner (Mkuchu, 2004). Despite these efforts, the situation has not changed much. Research on gender inequality and stereotyping continues to be done and the findings indicate that bias in set books still continue in varying degrees in different countries.

There is limited research focusing on gender and set books in Africa generally, and Kenya in particular. However, a few analyses of set books for gender responsiveness have been carried out in a few countries in Sub-Saharan Africa such as Zimbabwe, Togo and Botswana, Morocco (1992), Tanzania (Mkuchu, 2004) and Kenya (Obura 1991, Kobia 2009). They show among other things that there are distinct gender stereotypes in set books and that the teachers who were using these set books were not even aware that

there was anything wrong with the books (Obura 1991, FAWE 2005, Foulds 2009). In addition, the Kenya Oral Literature Association (KOLA) sponsored a review of a cross section of children's books in Kenya whose findings revealed that the majority of the books depicted a male world. The mentioned analysis was, however, of a general nature whereas the present study is specific to KCSE literature set books. Obura's research is also significant in this study in that it justifies the need to analyze set books since they are powerful tools of transmitting all kinds of information to the learner.

In view of such negative portrayals especially of girls and women, there is an obvious need to review set books with a view to portraying positive images of both men and women. This would involve, among other things, removing sexist language and illustrations that are damaging to the image of either gender. However, despite the negative portrayals, this study also noted that a number of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have taken various steps to reduce the gender gap by setting out to review the existing curriculum, teaching materials and methodologies for gender responsiveness, among other steps as will be shown in the following section.

2.1.3 Gender issues and National Book Policy in Kenya

Bamhare (1999) observes that in most of Africa, there is no clearly formulated and articulated National Book or gender policy in education in general or in regard to selection of curriculum materials in particular. Book practice therefore remains dominated by men and reflects the continuing unequal power relations between men and

women in society. In total, book content and provision remain in practice totally devoid of sensitivity to the issue of gender. However, a few countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Uganda and Tanzania are making effort to include gender as an “emerging issue” in the process of developing or changing national book policies, re-constructing or revising set books and other curriculum materials, and setting guidelines for publishers among other things as noted by INDABA99 (1999). In Tanzania for instance, there was no educational policy that took gender into consideration until February 1995 when an education and training policy incorporated gender. The policy categorically stated that in order to raise participation rate of females, education and school systems should eliminate gender stereotyping through curricula, set books and classroom practices, among other things (Mkuchu, 2004).

Muita (1998) and Rotich and Musakali (2009) note that the book industry in Kenya can be traced back to the colonial times during which time churches and the colonial government were charged with the provision of education resources to schools through such bodies as the District Education Boards (DEBs). Set books were mainly produced by the multinational publishers mainly in the United Kingdom where their headquarters were. At independence in 1963, both government and private publishers such as the Jomo Kenyatta Foundation, Kenya Literature Bureau, Oxford University Press, Heinemann and Macmillan also came into the industry. However, disagreements arose between the private publishers and the parastatals with the MoE establishing a centralized supply of books to schools through the Kenya School Equipment Scheme (KSES). The MoE

discredited the materials from the private publishers as expensive and irrelevant to the school situation in Kenya. KSES worked in collaboration with KIE whose mandate was curriculum development.

With the change of school system from 7-4-2-3 (seven years in primary, four in secondary, two in high school and at least three in university) to 8-4-4 (eight years in primary, four in secondary and at least four in university) in the 1980s, the Kenya government mandated KIE to be the official publisher through state publishing houses such as Kenya Literature Bureau and Jomo Kenyatta Foundation. This scenario brought the need to push for a book policy. International bodies like the World Bank, the Royal Netherlands, the British Department of International Development (DFID), and Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) in collaboration with MoE formed a National Book Policy which was launched in September 1998. The policy articulated among other things that schools were to choose books and other instructional materials that they felt best suited their needs. The MoE also started to categorize set books into core and supplementary ones. The core set books were those authored by KIE and the supplementary readers were those published by the local and international publishing houses (Rotich, 2006). The ministry's major role would be advisory and supervisory. With this new policy in place, MoE and other stakeholders moved in to address the question of gender as illustrated below.

2.1.4 African women's literary tradition

The study of African literature has been biased towards male writers for a long time. Scholars such as Brown (1981), Stratton (1994) and Nfah-Abbenyi (1997) note that African women writers were for a long time excluded from a male oriented literary world because they were impeded by marriage customs, lack of opportunity for formal education and by ignorant male criticism, among other factors. Although marriage, family system, and the paucity in women's education significantly hampered women's literary expression, these reasons cannot sufficiently reveal why those who did write, like Flora Nwapa (1966), were simply ignored (Nfah-Abbenyi, 1997).

The plight of African women writers began to change drastically with the explosion in the 1980s of women's studies and scholarly enquiries by and about women. Largely through the efforts of women's studies programmes created within the academy, more and more interest continued being directed towards African women's writing. This is evident in the space allocated (though in some cases still minimal), in University curricula especially in African universities. For instance, some universities such as Makerere (Uganda), University of Ghana (Ghana), Ibadan and Ahmadu Bello (Nigeria), University of Namibia (Namibia), Eduardo Mondlane (Mozambique), University of Cape Town (South Africa), Maseno (Kenya) and others have designed whole courses/units or programmes exclusively for gender studies including African women's writing. Others like the University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) have mainstreamed gender perspectives in all courses taught at the university (Bunyi, 2003). The creation of such gender /

women's studies units and programmes in universities is definitely an excellent indicator of the importance accorded to the subject and the readiness to adopt policies for fundamental changes.

What this means is that more work is being done on African women writers. Africans and critics are coming to grips with a distinctive and diverse literary tradition that demands to be given attention and /or treated differently from the dominant male literary tradition. One facet of this male tradition that has come under attack has been the representations of African women in subservient gender roles; always prepared to do the bidding of their husbands and family, and having no status of their own. These male writers have provided few images of African women as heroic characters, or as self determined subjects with agency (Nfah-Abbenyi, 1997).

A cursory look at the Kenyan secondary school Literature syllabus shows that only a few texts by women writers have been prescribed for study over the years. Efforts to include even the few have been prompted by education commissions that have emphasized the need for gender parity in education as vital in enhancing the pace of socio-economic development (Republic of Kenya, 1976). Since the Gacathi committee (1976) that recommended the need to remove the stereotyping of gender roles in education materials, provision of positive gender roles and the improvement of the learning environment as some of the strategies of ensuring gender parity in education, it is observable that the Kenya government has continually introduced the study of literature by women writers in

secondary schools. Such books as *Efuru* by Flora Nwapa, *Land without thunder* by Grace Ogot, and *So long a letter* by Mariama Bã were on the Kenya secondary school syllabus between 1983 and 1984. The books explore, among other issues, the role of women in socio-economic development (Taiwo, 1984).

One of the key objectives of teaching literature in Kenyan secondary schools is to enable learners to appreciate and understand the role that literature plays in their lives (KNEC, 2000). Tomlison and Eliss (1980) add that literature can reveal to students the nature and capabilities of human beings and give them insight into their true selves as they compare themselves with the characters they read about. This suggests that literature can act as a useful tool for empowering students, especially girls, since literature is one of their (girls') favourite subjects. Eshiwani (1986) notes that in 1981 and 1982 for instance, though literature was not a compulsory subject, over 60% of form four female candidates enrolled for it.

In 1998, after the recommendations of the 1989-93, 1994-96, and 1997-2001 National Policy on Gender and Development (NPGD) committees, the MoE prescribed other texts by women writers as compulsory KCSE set books: *Coming to birth* by Marjorie Macgoye, *The river and the source* by Margaret Ogola and a few short stories from the anthology *Looking for the rain god and other stories* by KIE. Others on the optional list included *Homestretch* by Velma Pollard and a few short stories from the anthology *Half a day and other stories* by Macmillan Publishers.

Even though the texts by women writers were not specifically chosen for purposes of empowering women, the fact that the study of texts by women who portray women favourably can make girls aware of their true potentialities, and enable them to transform this awareness into tangible academic and social achievements, cannot be ignored. The texts can also act as an invaluable tool for sensitizing boys and girls against any gender bias that may be present in the text. In a study done by Rimbui in 1982 on Kenyan secondary school students' attitudes to literature, students reported that literature helped them to interpret life, sharpen their intellectual faculties and enable them understand the socio-economic forces that shape society. They also indicated that the knowledge acquired through literature helped them adapt to their environments.

2.1.5 Efforts towards making curriculum materials gender responsive in Kenya.

As an important medium of learning and teaching, set books should be written in such a way that they empower both boys and girls on equal basis. This in turn should have positive influence on their learning, retention, completion and performance within the education process. This can only happen if the writers:

- are committed to challenging the unequal relationships that exist between boys and girls, women and men in their societies,
- present girls, boys, women and men on equal basis, with relationships that place value on all of them as essential human beings with the rights to prosper and belong,

- use gender responsive language and avoid use of gendered terms such as mankind, manpower, and watchmen among others, and
- present girls, boys, women and men performing similar roles successfully, and in equal positions of power (Crouch, 2005).

Kenya has been making efforts to incorporate gender concerns in education and teaching materials in several ways. First, Obura's 1991 comprehensive research mentioned earlier in this thesis was a milestone towards sensitizing all stakeholders regarding gender imbalance in set books at primary school level. Secondly, in 1993/1994 Donor-supported book selection and purchase was conducted for schools in the country and gender was an important criterion. This ensured that only books that were gender responsive were brought and distributed. Thirdly, in 1997, FAWE developed a gender analysis tool (ABC of Gender Analysis framework) which is widely used for training educationalists, publishers and writers. It is also a guide for research especially in the gender analysis of set books, learning materials and classroom dynamics. In addition, a gender manual for writers and editors was developed with an African specific focus by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) Working Group on books and learning materials. Finally, new books and learning materials, for instance, *The Sara* series by UNICEF that are gender responsive are now available in East and Southern Africa (Kimani, 1999).

In addition to the above efforts, MoE recognizes that the national educational system has been characterized by gender disparities at the national level, and between the various regions, in favour of males (MoE, 2007). Efforts towards addressing this gender disparity include the development of a Gender Policy in Education in 2006. One of the specific objectives of this policy is to “ensure that the curriculum design, development and implementation, pedagogy, and teacher training processes as well as curriculum materials are gender responsive”(7). At the secondary school level, one of the strategies in the policy will involve undertaking continuous review of the curriculum to ensure gender sensitivity (15). The MoE also established the Ministerial Text book Vetting Committee (MTVC) that works closely with the subject panels nominated by KIE to ensure that the recommended books meet the set criteria. KIE also established a Life Skills department where gender issues in curriculum matters are addressed.

In addition, Kenya has made a significant step towards achieving one of the United Nations’ (UN) eight Millennium Development Goals which aims at ensuring that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary education by 2015. In 2003, the government introduced the Free Primary Education (FPE) which saw a massive expansion of children’s enrolment in the classroom. This consequently achieved gender parity with gross enrolment (ratio of female rate to male rate) of 0.96 and the rate for net primary enrolment of females to males as 1.01 (UNICEF, 2007). Despite this milestone, gender imbalance remains in many other areas in Kenya. There are several other factors that

contribute to this imbalance. Of great concern to this study is the kind of gender messages that high school students are learning from literature set books.

In addition, FAWE established Centres of Excellence (COE) in Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Namibia, and Senegal. A teacher's handbook on Gender Responsive Pedagogy has already been piloted in the first four pioneer COEs. The pilot schools are already demonstrating results in terms of transforming ordinary and sometimes sub-standard schools into gender responsive environments, socially, physically, and academically. By 2006, eight schools, namely AIC Kajiado primary school and Athwana secondary school (Kenya), FAWE girls school, Gisozi (Rwanda), Grand Diourbel junior secondary school (Senegal), Mgugu and Lufilyo secondary schools (Tanzania), Hage Geingob high school (Namibia) and Sambang upper basic school (The Gambia). Plans to establish a further eight (8) COEs in Benin, Comoros, Madagascar, Swaziland, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zanzibar are ongoing (FAWE, 2011). KIE has also started using the handbook to train teachers in Kenya on gender responsive curriculum.

FAWE's COEs address the need of coming up with new and vital measures for sustaining and expanding gains in girls' education. This very successful model has proved to be an effective way of holistically addressing concerns in girls' education and clearly identifiable impact on the ground (FAWE, 2006). It is significant to note that the above schools do not only admit girls, but include boys as well. The COEs have therefore been

transformed into gender responsive institutions where there is increased access, retention, and performance of both boys and girls (FAWE, 2006).

Literary scholars have not been left behind in this endeavour to produce gender responsive materials for study in our schools. For instance, the Kenya Oral Literature Association of Kenya (KOLA) came up with a gender sensitization project which produced three anthologies: *The good witch of Kiaritha-ini* by Kabira and Wang'ombe, *The last of the ogres* by Oduol and Obote and *The bearded woman and other stories* by Muthoni and Miruka. Kabira and Muthoni (1994) argue, that this kind of literature could contribute to the creation of new myths and hence a change in mentalities of the school pupils if put in the school curriculum. As Wainaina (2002) notes, myth can be all tales, be they myth, legend, ogre tales, fables or animal tales. Myths function to establish modes of behaviour and the figures described therein are sacred and therefore worthy role models for human beings. The above mentioned project therefore aimed at sensitizing creative writers and the readers on gender prejudices and offered hope for the future in terms of gender responsiveness.

As gender concerns continue to dominate our society, it is encouraging to note that issues affecting men and women in Africa and elsewhere occupy much space in virtually all literature set books under study in secondary schools in Kenya. A cursory look at the list of KCSE literature set books in the period under study confirms this. As Sigei (2007) and

Aluda (2007) note, female characters in *Coming to birth* (Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye), “Letter to my Sisters” (Conteh Fatmah), “Solitude” (Saadawi El Nawal) and others, voice the plight of the African woman in patriarchal societies. Sigei and Aluda further argue that such literature shapes the society in approaching gender debate constructively. Since it is commonly believed that today’s youth are tomorrow’s change agents, high school students should be given the opportunity to debate on the gender questions raised in these texts.

2.1.6 Treatment of gender issues by teachers

The way in which instructors approach gender related issues will very much depend on their own perceptions of gender. Some teachers, for instance, believe that differences between male and female students are originated by purely biological motives, while others attribute gender differences to socialization process, and there are a number of eclectics who attempt to combine the reasons from both sectors (Madrid & Hughes, 2010).

In terms of specific treatment of gender in the classroom, Alverman et al (1996) and Evans (1966) as quoted in Madrid & Hughes (2010) found that teachers often attempt to strike a balance in debates with students about gender related themes by introducing some points of view without imposing them, and allowing students to adopt their own personal opinions.

2.1.7 Use of gender biased language and generics

Language reflects social values and is therefore an important vehicle for transmitting ideas about different gender. Language gives some characters power to dominate, order about, organize and control others. Words in a language are powerful tools that convey meaning through inference and overtones. Therefore one of the major concerns for researchers in analyzing set books and the use of language is that, if not handled carefully, language can promote bias, insensitivity or not be gender responsive as would be expected. This would in turn promote the notion that one gender, usually the male, is superior to the other, the female. Researchers such as Scott and Schau (1984), Safran (1994) and Mkuchu (2004) among others, indicate that the use of gender biased language is one of the aspects that denote that set books that are not gender responsive. When the words used are not equally inclusive of males and females, then the set book is not gender responsive. Set books can therefore reflect the discriminatory nature of language.

Most of the English language that students acquire during their learning in school is through their teachers and the English set books. Lakoff as quoted in Kobia (2009) argues that society is reflected in the language, with values and assumptions held by the society being mirrored in the language. Kabira and Masinjila (1997) also note that language is one of the most subtle ways of depicting gender bias through writing. Therefore, the language that writers use provides an important model for students and the larger readership.

Gender bias in literature set books can be portrayed by use of naming, nouns, pronouns, generics and vocatives. Naming or not naming a character in a story is one way of portraying gender biased language. This is because it shapes attitudes and beliefs towards that character in the text. For instance, as noted above, not naming Waiyaki's mother in *The river between* and only referring to her in relation to either her husband or son denotes bias towards the female gender. It denies them individual identity.

2.1.8 Identifying gender biased language in set books.

Different researchers and institutions have identified aspects that constitute gender biased language in set books. Useful in this study are Obura (1991), Kabira and Masinjila (1997), Michel (1986) and Mkuchu (2004). Kabira and Masinjila (1997) whose framework this study applies has developed sub-categories on gender sensitive vocabulary that relate to gender biased language in set books. These include use of nouns, pronouns, generics and vocatives. Michel (1986), notes that sexist language manifests itself in the choice of vocabulary, use of grammar, and harmful insinuations.

Generics are meant to be gender neutral. The purpose of analyzing the way they are used in a text is to establish whether it is always the case, especially with respect to the text under scrutiny. Some generics easily lend themselves to questions of their neutrality when they bear a clear male name or female stamp in other forms of speech. For example, "early man", "businessman", "manpower", "mankind" and others all refer to men in their gendered form but include women in their neutral usage to the extent that it

may be difficult to determine in what sense they are being used. It becomes even more confusing when such generics are used with pronouns.

Research findings on set books in Kenya indicate that in most cases, it is women characters who are ignored by use of generics (Obura, 1991). In the analysis of the set books under study, the use of generics, nouns and pronouns has been closely looked into in order to determine if the language is gender responsive or not. Such generic terms as man, mankind, his, him and so others, have been discussed. The depiction of such terms becomes gender biased whenever the picked generic uses a masculine or feminine term as the proper form to represent both males and females (Kabira and Masinjila ,1997). Such depiction produces the impression that men or women are ignored or passed over in a certain situation (Mkuchu, 2004). They also give the impression that men or women are ignored in a given situation. To be inclusive, writers must use terms such as *humanity* instead of *mankind* and the best *person* for the job instead of the best *man* for the job.

2.1.9 Effects of gender unresponsive language on readers

The use of gender biased or unresponsive language has different effects on both male and female readers according to a specific gender (Obura, 1991). Ignoring females is manifested by using masculine gender to refer to human beings in general. The use of male terms to refer to all humans makes maleness the norm and femaleness the exception. Sugino (1998), cited in Mkuchu (2004), argues that the use of generic terms illustrates the inequalities between men and women. For instance, the use of pronouns

'he' in referring to females and males or human beings produces the impression that women are ignored and passed over. It also minimizes their contribution and worth as human beings. Kelly (1996) also notes that the use of generic "he" and male nouns and pronouns convey the message that only males act or are important while females are not. People usually perceive the masculine generic to refer predominantly to males (Basow, 1993; Martyna 1980).

2.2 Theoretical framework

2.2.1 Introduction

This study was guided by two theoretical perspectives, Reader-Response Theory and the ABC gender analysis framework. The Reader-Response Theory emphasizes the reader's role in creating meaning of a text and experience of a literary work, and ABC gender analysis framework is a reliable tool for gender analysis of literature texts and other curriculum materials for gender responsiveness. A brief analysis of each of these approaches will highlight the specific tenets that were applied in the study.

2.2.2 Reader-Response theory

The study used some aspects of Reader-Response theory (RR) based on Rosenblatt's Transactional Reader-Response Theory (1995). This was useful in helping to establish the responses of the students and teachers to the KCSE set books that they had read. RR also asserts that readers become participants in interpreting literary texts by bringing forth their own experiences to bear upon the text's meaning. These tenets were applied in an endeavour to ascertain how the students and teachers responded to the set books.

Response is an ongoing interaction between the reader and a literary work. Purves and Beach (1972) note that this kind of interaction may continue even long after the reader has finished reading the books. They argue that response can be revealed indirectly through observation of works preferred or rejected by the individual.

Reader-response criticism (RR) is a group of approaches or school of thought that raises a fundamental question regarding where literary meaning resides; in the literary text, in the reader or in the interactive space between the reader and the text. The theory focuses on two main aspects; one, the reader's (or audience's) role in creating meaning of a literary text; two, his or her experience of a literary text. It asserts that readers become participants in interpreting literary texts by bringing forth their own experiences to bear upon the text's meaning. In other words, RR is not a single, unified theory but a group of approaches (Bressler, 1994). This is in contrast with other schools and theories that focus attention primarily on the author or the content and form of the work. It rejects the idea that there is a single meaning inherent in every individual literary work.

These approaches were advanced by various literary critics, namely, Rosenblatt & Richards (1920s & 1930s), Hans-Robert Jauss (1960), Norman Hollard (1970), Wolfgang Iser (1978) and Stanly Fish (1980) among others. These critics focused not only on the literary text, but on readers or audiences and their responses to literary work (Bressler, 1994). RR is therefore mainly concerned with the relationship between the text and the reader or audience. It also emphasizes on the diverse ways in which a reader participates

or interacts with the text and the different perspectives that may arise in that relationship (DiYanni, 1995). RR is in a sense concerned with the reader's contribution to a literary work.

According to this theory, an author creates a relationship with a reader in order to discover the meaning of a text (Chambers 1990). In essence therefore, this theory recognizes the reader as an active agent who imparts 'real' existence to the literary work and completes its meaning through interpretation. This criticism therefore argues that literature should be viewed as a performing art in which each reader creates his/her own, possibly even unique, text related performance. This is so because all readers bring in their own emotions, concerns, life experiences and knowledge to their reading. Thus, each interpretation of a text is unique and subjective. The individual students' responses to the selected texts analyzed later in this thesis confirm this argument.

RR paid attention to the reading process which came into prominence in the 1930s as a reaction against the growing tendency to reject the reader's role in creating meaning by such critical approaches as New Criticism and Formalism (Bressler, 1994). These approaches mainly emphasized on the correct interpretation of an author's message as explained by experts or on learning the correct cultural values (Cuddon, 1991). New Criticism advocated for close reading and detailed textual analysis of a work of art rather than an interest in the mind and personality of the poet, source, the history of ideas and political and social implications (Bressler, 1994). The approach emphasized that only that

which is within the text is part of the meaning of a text. All that mattered was the text itself, no contextual or historical knowledge, or hint of the author's intentions gleaned from other sources were allowed to interfere with the search for meaning in the text. Any associations brought to a piece of literature from prior knowledge were seen as dangerous, offering the reader the possibility of an easy way out of the interpretative struggle (Robinson, 1997).

Formalism was another approach that was primarily interested in the way that literature texts achieve their effects and therefore establishing a scientific basis for the study of literature. For this approach, human content such as emotions, ideas and reality in literature did not possess any significance in defining what was specifically literary about a text. That a literary work exists independent of any particular readers, that is, a literary work exists outside of any reader's recreation of it in the act of reading (DiYanni, 1995). Both formalism and New Criticism approaches concentrate on the literariness of the formal devices of a text and underestimates the reader's role. The fact that readers are extremely varied in terms of gender, race, class and culture does not seem to be significant. Yet, students' responses to literature vary depending on the exposure and experiences of literature.

Several writers including Webster (1990) and Cuddon (1991) argue that the reader has often been thought of as a least significant element in the author-text-axis. This was because the role of the reader was largely unproblematic and therefore not requiring any

explanation or examination. Unlike the focus that was given to authors and texts, readers were thought of as passive receivers. In an author centred criticism, the assumption is that the author is both the origin and the object of literature and interpretation.

RR theorists on the other hand argue that a text has no real existence until it is read (Rosenblatt, 1978). This implies that a text's meaning is potential and it can be only completed by reading which actualizes the potential reading. Thus, the reader does not have passive role as was traditionally thought, but becomes an active agent or participant in the creation of meaning. By applying codes and strategies, the reader decodes the text (Cuddon, 1991). Readers base their interpretations on earlier experiences and thereby create their individual understanding of different literary works.

RR theorists have divergent views of the reading process, including their view of the factors that shape a reader's response, the line between what is objective and the subjective responses and the extent to which a text controls a reader's responses (Imtiaz, 2004). However, they agree on two levels: that the role of the reader cannot be omitted from our understanding of literature, and that readers do not passively consume the meaning they find in literature (Tyson, 1999, quoted in Ngugi, 2009). The fact that readers actively make meanings suggests that different readers may read the same text differently. In addition, it may also suggest that even the same reader can get different meanings after reading the same text on different occasions (Rosenblatt, 1978).

Several objections have been raised against RR criticism. The theorists have been accused of being subjective by holding that for one to understand the literary experience or the meaning of a text, one has to examine the process the readers use to create that meaning and literary experience (Fox, 1996, Imtiaz, 2004). RR theorists on the other hand, respond that to explore someone's experience, one must ask the someone to read, not to pore over the text. By contrast, text- oriented critics assume that one can understand a text while remaining immune to one's culture, status, personality and so on, hence, objectively. To RR theorists, reading is always both objective and subjective and the question is not 'which' but 'how'. Some RR critics assume a bi-active model of reading where the literary work controls part of the response and the reader controls the other (Guerin, 2003).

Another objection to RR is that it fails to account for the text being able to expand the reader's understanding. While readers can do and put their own ideas and experiments to work, they are at the same time gaining new understanding through the text. This is something that RR theorists overlook. In addition, the objecting critics agree that RR does not mean that any and all interpretation of a text is valid and of equal importance (Bressler, 1994). In most cases, one finds boundaries and restrictions which are placed upon possible interpretations of a text. These interpretations vary depending on how a critic defines the multiple elements of the reading process. Fox (1996) argues that readers are not necessarily at liberty to interpret texts in any way they choose, but they are controlled by an interpretive community.

Rosenblatt formulated the transactional theory which states that for a text to have meaning, the text and the reader must work together. He views the reader and the text as partners in the interpretative process. The term transaction is used in this context to mean the contribution of both the reader and the text (Bressler, 1994). The critic operates on the principle that the text cannot be said to have a meaningful experience outside this relationship between itself and its readers. The reader and the text therefore participate in or share this transactional experience. Rosenblatt emphasized what actually happens when one is reading.

Rosenblatt further states that the text acts as a stimulus for eliciting various past experiences, thoughts and ideas from the reader; those found in both the everyday existence and in the past reading experience. These responses influence the way in which a reader makes sense of the text as he or she moves through it. At various points as he /she reads, the text acts as the blueprint that they can use to correct their interpretation when they realize that they may have traveled too far from what is in the text. Through this transactional theory, the reader and the text produce a new creation, what Rosenblatt calls a poem. A poem in this context refers to the reader's construction of a text, may it be a short story, novel or drama or poem.

According to Rosenblatt, readers read for different purposes. He singles out aesthetic and efferent. Efferent reading means that the reader is focusing on the information contained

in the text. In other words the reader is interested with the knowledge, information, content and vocabulary; for instance what students may require to pass their examinations. Aesthetic reading on the other hand, makes the reader experience a personal relationship with the text that focuses his or her attention on both feelings and emotions and encourages the reader to make judgement in addition to being entertained. The reader notes the key words, sounds and patterns in the text. In this way, if one takes the commonly held principle of literature by seeing it as an art, then the purpose of art as evoking affective response is seen, its beauty and its emotional and imaginative power as one reads (Bressler, 1994). This therefore means that when reading aesthetically, one is involved in an elaborate give and take encounter with the text.

According to Beach and Hynds (1991), the above stances taken by readers towards literature in general have been found to influence the elaboration and quality of responses; for instance, readers with negative attitudes towards reading particular texts may be reluctant to bring the full range of the interpersonal knowledge to literature. This may be one aspect to consider when dealing with children's and young people's reading behaviour since they react differently depending on their interest in books.

RR is based on the idea that every single reader of a text interprets the text based on experience and personal associations. In this regard, the study used unstructured questions based on the tenet that readers who were in this case high school students, should be allowed to freely respond to the texts and reflect on what emotions and

experiences the texts bring forth. This gives the students an environment where they can interact with the texts and respond freely.

Personal factors will certainly appear and will inevitably affect the relationship between the text and the reader. The students' earlier experiences and current interests can actively affect their interpretation of the text. Sometimes they will lead to deep and balanced reflections, however, sometimes they will limit and distort the interpretation (Rosenblatt, 1982).

Further, Vandergift (2007) observes that RR helps students to recognize the specificity of their cultural backgrounds and to work towards understanding the cultural backgrounds of other students. In addition, using RR in the classroom can have a profound impact on how students view texts and how they see their role as readers. Through this approach, students can learn to construct their own meaning by connecting the textual material to their own lives and describe what they experience as they read instead of relying solely on the teacher to give them a single standard of interpretation of a text. By so doing, students become active learners because their personal responses are valued. They begin to see themselves as having the authority and responsibility to make judgements about what they read. All that the students need, Vandergift continues to argue is an adult intermediary, who in this case is the teacher who can help develop and maintain the interpretative community and to ensure that each participant finds both private and public space within the community of readers.

Several researchers have used this perspective of the theory. For instance, Karin (2006) used the theory to examine what happens with individual reader's understanding of a text if several other readers and their interpretations of the same text influence the reader. Some of the conclusions reached were that a group discussion clearly can give the individual reader another perspective of the same text, and sharing these experiences and consequently being influenced by other people's individual reflections help the students widen their imaginations and subsequently receive a larger understanding of the complexity of literary texts. Ngugi (2009) also employed RR theory to investigate the state of children's literature in Kiswahili in Kenyan primary schools by examining the reading habits of pupils both in school and at home. The present study, however, focused on students' and teachers' individual responses to gender issues raised in the selected literature set books.

2.2.3 The ABC of Gender Analysis Framework

The ABC of gender Analysis framework was commissioned by FAWE in response to the urgent need to raise the consciousness of teachers, writers, curriculum developers, researchers and others on the dangers of a gender biased curriculum. Analyses of school set books by Obura (1991) and others had pointed to the often biased and educationally damaging portrayal of gender roles and relationships within set books and to the continued perpetuation of gender stereotypes. The name was chosen because the framework provides the basic tools of gender analysis that teachers, researchers,

illustrators and others can use to analyze the books they read, write or illustrate. It is intended to open the eyes of the users to gender disparities and discrimination. It is the beginning of a long process of trying to bring about gender responsiveness in all areas of curriculum and the school environment.

The framework has two parts: one dealing with the set book itself (presentation) and the other with the school or other educational environment in which the set book is used (classroom interaction). It therefore offers the opportunity to analyze either the text itself as Obura (1991) does, or the text in use, that is, the way in which the text is mediated by the learners and the teachers in the context of the classroom. Fawe (1995) and Leach (2003) state that the framework can also be used selectively or modified to suit a particular context.

This study adopted parts of the framework, that is, presentation analysis and an element of classroom dynamics. However, the researcher only used the classroom context to get responses from students who had already interacted with the set books under study. The students were therefore only required to respond to unstructured questions where they could give free responses. The questionnaires for students were given in a classroom situation to avoid students influencing each other in their responses.

The presentation part of the framework has two sections; narration and illustrations. This study applied the narration part only, which, according to Leach (2003) is more

substantial because the process involves asking and responding to a series of questions that seek to reveal the gender responsiveness of a text. The study also dealt with literature set books which mainly use narration as their mode of communication through characters.

This framework proceeds from the assumption that each set book and learning materials tell a story about people, how they relate with one another and the environment within which they live. Learning from a set book has a dual nature. A literature text will expose students to the aesthetic and cognitive functions of literature. Students will learn how to identify plot, characterization, themes, style and other technical elements of the text. In addition, the text will expose the students to historical, sociological, religious and other aspects of the world that the text portrays. The literature text therefore will serve as a socializing agent in terms of knowledge about other people and their relationships over and above the technical literary aspects of the text.

This framework further posits that set books paint a picture of a world inhabited by men and women, boys and girls and hence it is gendered. It also recognizes that any written, visualized and (or) spoken text contains within it a gendered perspective that purports to mirror the reality of that which is written about, spoken about or visualized. In addition, the framework also offers a systematic scrutiny to measure the gender responsiveness of a text.

It is also the operating assumption within this framework that learning materials have of necessity to appeal to both male and female learners alike in order to make knowledge equally accessible to both sexes. The framework also operates on the premise that reducing a text to its smaller components and systematically analyzing it enables one to understand inter-relationships within the text and their underlying implications. The primary aim of the systematic analysis is to bring out as objectively as possible the gender dynamics within a text as the basis of drawing conclusions as to whether the texts are gender responsive or not.

The framework also seeks to quantify the portrayal of men, boys, women and girls under different analytical categories such as locus, power relations, occupation, role and others. Alongside the quantitative data is qualitative analysis that seeks to show the level of gender responsiveness of a text.

This study therefore adapted the above framework from Kabira and Masinjila (1997) by examining the following elements in the following set books: *The river between*, *An enemy of the people*, *Coming to birth* and *The river and the source* for gender responsiveness.

1. An overview of the text in terms of subject, author, level, genre.
2. Designation of character by gender
3. The use of generics
4. Relationship between men, women, boys and girls

5. The activities/occupations of the characters
6. The locus of the activities/occupations
7. Who wields power and how it is perpetuated

2.2.4 Conclusion

Two theoretical perspectives were used in this study; Reader –Response theory and ABC Gender analysis model. RR helped in establishing the responses of students and teachers to the KCSE literature set books under study while the ABC Gender analysis model helped the researcher to do a detailed textual analysis where a deeper examination of the portrayal of gender issues such as stereotyping in character portrayal and role, use of language and others was carried out in the literature set books. This helped to establish the extent to which the texts were gender responsive.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research methodology used in this study. It describes the target population, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection and data analysis procedures. In addition, it gives a brief overview of the study area and categories of secondary schools in Kenya.

3.2 Population and sample

The target population for this study was all form four high school students and high school English teachers in Central Province of Kenya. However, due to limitations of resources and time, we settled for the accessible population. The accessible population is similar to the target population in its most general characteristics such as gender, education background and in all the specific features that are known to be significantly related to the items included in the questionnaires (Robson, 2002; Dornyei, 2003). The target and the accessible populations are comparable on many characteristics which are important to the study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

The selection of Central province for this study was therefore based on the assumption that public schools in Kenya in any part of the country have similar characteristics such as the age bracket (roughly 14-18 years), and that the teachers in those schools are mainly trained in government institutions, private universities and colleges. In addition, the students follow the same curriculum prescribed by the MoE. In this context all students

are required to read the compulsory literature set books. However, the study notes that there may be differences in the provinces due to socio-economic factors and individual idiosyncrasies among other things.

Singleton (1993) observes that the ideal setting for a research study is one that directly satisfies the researcher's interests. He adds that the ideal setting for any study should be easily accessible to the researcher and should be that which permits instant rapport with the informants. The province is easily accessible and therefore collection of data was not hindered. However, Wamuhu and Karugu (1995) and Magoma (1999) point out that familiarity with the area and informants can present its own problems as sometimes the informants may not cooperate fully since they may feel the researcher is already familiar with answers to his or her questions. This did not arise in this study since the researcher did not know any of the informants.

Sampling in research is done in order to allow for the detailed study of part, rather than the whole of a population (Ogula 2006). Stratified sampling was therefore used to select schools from the twelve (12) districts in the province. Gender balance was exercised in sampling schools with higher entries for KCSE i.e. more than 100 students (appendix 3). Four girls' only, four boys' only and four mixed high schools were therefore sampled in order to accommodate all categories of public secondary schools. This sampling method aims at achieving the desired representation from various sub-groups in the population (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Borg and Gall (1989) quoted in Robson (2002)

recommend about a 100 observations for each of the major sub-groups. For purposes of this study, the sub-groups were represented by the districts. The sample for this study therefore constituted twelve (12) high schools, about 1,470 form four students and about 60 teachers of English. Purposive sampling was used in the selection of teachers from the sampled schools because they have the required information with respect to the objectives of the study. A purposeful sample is obtained when a researcher uses his or her own expert judgement and purpose to decide whom to select into the sampling (Peter, 2004). Durrheim and Painter (2006) add that stratified sampling is used to establish greater degree of representativeness in situations where a population consists of sub-groups or strata. In addition, Stutton (2009) acknowledge that in purposeful sampling, the units are selected according to the researcher's own knowledge and opinion about which ones he or she thinks will be appropriate to the research topic.

3.3 Study area: Central Kenya

Before the adoption of a new constitution on 27th August, 2010, Kenya used to have a hierarchically nested administrative organization, from national, provincial, district, division, location and sub-location. This nested administrative organization of government is normally referred to as provincial administration. Within the administrative set up, local authorities are a dual administrative structure parallel to the local government. However, with the adoption of the new constitution, the above administrative structure has changed. The country is therefore in that transition period.

This study used the earlier administrative structure in sampling the schools in Central province.

Central Province covers an area of 13,220 square kilometers. Up to 2006, it was made up of seven administrative districts, namely, Nyeri, Kiambu, Murang'a, Thika, Maragua, Kirinyaga and Nyandarua. In 2007, four new districts; Kiambu East, Kiambu West, Nyandarua North and Nyandarua South, were created. Later, Nyeri North, Nyeri South, Murang'a North, Murang's South, Gatundu, Kirinyaga North and Kirinyaga South were created, bringing the total number of districts to twelve (12). The provincial headquarters were in Nyeri.

The Kikuyu people mostly occupy the province. The Kikuyu speak a Bantu language which has lexical similarities with Kamba, Embu and Meru. The community is culturally related to other Bantu speaking people of East Africa. The census results released in September, 2010 puts the area at a population of 4,383,743 people.

The area is characterized by steep slopes and high rainfall in the mountainous area while the low lying areas on the leeward side of Mt. Kenya and the Aberdares ranges have erratic rainfall. Rainfall is bimodal with the long rains being in March-May while the short rains season is from October – December. There is a short cold season with drizzles in June and July. The temperatures vary with altitude ranging between 26 degrees

centigrade and 30 degrees centigrade in the lower areas and between 10 degrees centigrade and 18 degrees centigrade in the upper areas.

Socio-economic activities include agriculture with high productions of coffee, tea, and dairy products. There are about 965,000 Ha of potential agricultural land out of which 753,000Ha or 78% have been exploited for agricultural activities.

Generally, the province is well covered with vegetation as the local people have taken up tree planting activity very well on their farms. The forest area is composed of Mt. Kenya Forest and the Aberdares Forest reserve which form an important water catchment area of the country.

3.4 Categories of High Schools in Kenya

In Kenya, high school education takes four years. The students are usually in the 14-18 years age bracket on average. There are two main categories of schools; namely, public or government assisted and private schools. Public schools constitute the largest number of secondary schools in the country. The distinctive features of these schools are mainly that the government is responsible for the payment of teachers' salaries, teaching materials, set books, and the provision of other resources for effective running of the schools. However, with the introduction of structural adjustment systems and cost sharing, the parents are now required to meet part of the bill of running the schools. The schools also receive support in form of supervision, curriculum development and other

aspects of pedagogical development. Most of these schools were initially set up by the local communities through self-help projects.

Private schools are owned by private entrepreneurs, churches, and trustees; among others. The proprietors finance and manage the schools mainly through fees paid in by parents, guardians and sponsors. The schools range from the very well equipped with excellent and state of the art facilities, to the poorly funded and ill equipped ones. The locations are equally diverse; with some in up market and serene environments and those in noisy slum areas.

The two categories of schools are registered by the MoE and are expected to comply with certain minimum conditions in terms of teaching, teacher qualification, academic standard, discipline, physical infrastructure and other requirements. Literature, which is integrated with English language, is one of the compulsory subjects.

3.5 Data Collection

Data was obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included form four students and their English teachers. The secondary sources included four Literature KCSE set books. The researcher managed to give questionnaires in all the twelve schools and got responses from one thousand, four hundred and six (1,406) students and fifty one (51) teachers of English. The

researcher was assisted by research assistants to administer the questionnaires to the students and teachers.

The researcher used structured questionnaires with open- ended questions in order to elicit individual responses from both the students and teachers. Turkman (1992) notes that questionnaires make it possible for the researcher to measure what a person knows (knowledge), likes and dislikes (values and preferences) and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs). Two questionnaires were used for this study, one for teachers and one for students. The questionnaires contained open- ended questions to allow for the respondents to express their personal feelings and thoughts about the questions asked and provide high amounts of data standardization. Such questionnaires give the respondents an opportunity to reflect upon their own interpretation of the set books since the study required flexible and varied responses. It was hoped that the respondents would reveal and express their opinions and attitudes as was required in this study. As Frankel and Wallen (2000) and Robson (2002) indicate, such questionnaires provide a relatively simple and straightforward approach to the study of attitudes, beliefs and knowledge.

In addition, open ended questions encourage full expression of an opinion containing nuances, rather than merely having to select an answer from a pre – determined set of response categories. In addition, open ended questions tend to be more objective and less leading than close ended questions. The students responded in writing. Responses from these sources gave evidence to draw conclusions and make recommendations.

Another advantage of using questionnaires is that both quantitative and qualitative data can be collected simultaneously. As Holliday (2007) indicates, a questionnaire is a very versatile tool in educational research. Since some questionnaire items in this study were both of a qualitative and quantitative nature, the questionnaire became a convenient and useful instrument of data collection.

On the other hand, the study notes that despite the many advantages of using a structured questionnaire with open -ended questions, there are also limitations and care must therefore be taken while using them. Piloting of the questionnaires was therefore done to bring to light any weaknesses, if any, of the questions as recommended by Kothari (2004). The students' questionnaire was piloted in one (1) girls', one (1) boys' and one (1) mixed school to ascertain its reliability and validity. Amendments were made on the questions that appeared unclear or confusing to the students. For instance, question one had listed a number of themes that students were required to reorganize in the order that they considered important. It was noted that the items on the list influenced the students to list only what they could see. The question was revised in such a way that the students were to think of the themes themselves and list them. Other questions were revised according to what the researcher considered would give the desired answer. The teachers' questionnaire was similarly piloted in the above schools and amendments done.

The researcher also ensured that the questionnaire was compiled in line with the research questions since any deviation may result in a distorted interpretation of the respondents' view. The questions were also clearly phrased to avoid any ambiguity which could lead to misinterpretation by the respondents thus giving information that is not useful to the study. Towards this end, the researcher worked closely with the research assistants and the English teachers in the sampled schools in order to clarify anything unclear in the questionnaire. Finally, to ensure that the respondents did not feel inhibited when responding to the questionnaire items, the respondents were asked not to indicate their names or students' numbers. However, they were to indicate their gender since this was a significant variable in the data analysis.

Despite the above limitations, the questionnaire method was found to be an effective data collection tool especially in eliciting the students' responses to the gender issues raised in the literature textbooks under study.

The secondary sources consisted of KCSE literature set books approved for study by the MoE from 1999 to 2009. The ten year period was chosen to give the researcher a wider selection of literature set books. The textbooks selected were the compulsory ones. There are usually two categories of set books: the compulsory and optional. The books on the compulsory list are prescribed for all schools while individual schools select those on the optional category. Gender was also a factor in the selection of the textbooks. During the period under study, there were only two set books by women writers; *The river and the*

source and *Coming to birth*, and so they were selected for the study sample. In addition, *The river between* and *An enemy of the people* which were the compulsory set books in the KCSE syllabus were also included in the sample. In addition, critical works, articles in journals, researches on analyses of set books, literary responses to literature, and other sources were consulted to enhance and supplement the field research.

The above set books were subjected to a gender analysis to establish the extent to which they are gender responsive. Gender analysis is a simple gender screen that aims at establishing whether the set book in question is gender responsive or not. It is a process of reducing the text into smaller components with the aim of quantifying the portrayal of men, women, boys and girls under different analytical categories. On the whole, the analysis helps to qualitatively explain the gender map of the text and possible implications to the learners, by showing the level of gender responsiveness in the set book. Gender responsiveness on the other hand refers to any action or effort taken by writers in the selected set books to correct gender imbalances, insensitivity and any other bias toward either gender.

The outcome of the analysis should be identification of any gender discrimination and disparities. This may require revision of the set book to ensure it portrays a gender responsive perspective. Ultimately, such a portrayal can help “contribute to a more humane and gender responsive society, where women and men are seen as important for each other’s success and survival, and for the national development” (Crouch, 2005).

The sampled schools were grouped into three strata, that is, single sex (boys and girls only) and mixed schools (boys and girls in the same schools). The responses from these schools were analyzed separately in order to see if there were any distinctive differences from those in single sex schools and those from mixed sex schools. The results were then compared and contrasted in order to show the emerging relationships.

The fieldwork was carried out from May to September. This period was preferred because most schools usually complete the KCSE syllabus by this time in order for the students to sit for mock examinations in July and also be in a position to revise for the KCSE examinations which begin in mid-October. It was assumed that the students would therefore be quite familiar with the content in the set books and would respond to the questionnaires easily.

In preparation, the researcher sought a research permit from the MoE. Once the relevant documents were obtained, the next step was to telephone and even visit the sampled schools to make appointments with the English teachers and to notify the office of the principals. In most schools, the researcher liaised with the office of the deputy-principal, who in turn introduced the researcher to the English teachers. The researcher then met the English teachers and explained the purpose of the study and the modalities of administering the questionnaires. The researcher explained to the teachers the importance of being honest in their responses to the questions so that their individual views could be noted and understood. The teachers and research assistants were to communicate the

same to the students. The students were assured of confidentiality and that their answers would not contribute in any way to the mock examinations.

The respondents were not required to indicate their names on the questionnaires for confidentiality. The school's administration and teachers appeared familiar with the phenomena of filling questionnaires and therefore were willing to participate in administering the questionnaires to the students. The researcher explained to the teachers and students that there were no 'right' answers expected; rather the respondents were expected to give their own honest responses to the questionnaire items.

3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis is the process of simplifying data in order to make it comprehensive (Frankel and Wallen, 2000). The study used both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to analyze the data. The qualitative aspect was intended to capture the responses of the individual respondents in order to understand their attitude, beliefs and knowledge. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) explains that qualitative research methods are techniques and measures that produce data that is in form of words that are grouped in categories rather than numbers. Ngechu (2006) adds that qualitative method of study encourages interaction between the researcher and the target community members thereby bringing out in-depth, holistic information, attitudes, values and knowledge. From this argument, therefore, the qualitative method was the most suitable tool to gather and analyze the data collected on the students' and teachers' responses toward KCSE set

books. On the other hand, the quantitative data was utilized to capture the statistical aspect of the study.

Questionnaire data was systematically organized and coded into categories using the Predictive Analytical Software (PASW). All related items in the questionnaire were tallied with the number of respondents who gave similar responses. The main purpose was to simplify many individual responses by classifying them into a smaller number of groups; each including responses that are similar in content. In addition, in this kind of research, the researcher would be working to organize, categorize, and thematize the information (Robson, 2002; Best and James, 2009). This thematic approach also allows the data to be taken holistically and re-arranged under themes corresponding to the objectives of the study (Holliday, 2007).

The themes arising from the responses were reported using narrative and interpretive reports as well as verbatim citations. In an attempt to address any possible bias in the interpretation, examples of the students' responses were frequently used in the interpretation of the data to illustrate the types of responses that were allocated each category.

This study used the above guidelines in coding and analyzing the data that was based on common themes in every category in order to achieve the objectives of the study. The

Reader-Response theory and the ABC Gender analysis framework enabled the researcher to analyze the data in line with the theoretical perspectives explained earlier in this chapter.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the methods used for data collection in the study have been explained.

The area of study, categories of high schools in Kenya, the target population and the study sample, the research instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis have been described in detail. The textual analysis of the selected literature set books is presented in chapter four.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF THE SELECTED LITERATURE SET BOOKS FOR GENDER RESPONSIVENESS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present a gender responsive analysis of *The river between*, *An enemy of the people*, *Coming to birth* and *The river and the source* for gender responsiveness. The study adapted the ABC of Gender Analysis framework from Kabira and Masinjila (1997) because the framework has been proven to be a reliable tool for analyzing the gender responsiveness of set books. The following elements have been examined:

1. An overview of the text in terms of author and genre.
2. Designation of character by gender
3. Use of generics and other gendered associations
4. Relationship between men, women, boys and girls
5. The activities/occupations of the characters
6. The locus of the activities/occupations
7. Who yields more power and how the power is perpetuated.

4.2. ABC analysis of *The river between*

4.2.1 The genre

The river between is a fictional narrative which begins by giving a brief overview of a fictional landscape with two ridges named *Kameno* and *Makuyu* in the greater land of the *Gikuyu* people. According to the *Gikuyu* myth of creation, *Gikuyu* and *Mumbi* were the first man and woman of the tribe created by the *Gikuyu* God, *Murungu*. This opening introduces a gendered perspective to the story and fits perfectly in the above framework

since it introduces a picture of an inhabited landscape with men and women, boys and girls going through an ordered pattern of life.

The origin of the *Gikuyu* community is significant here in that it provides a backdrop on some of the explanations given regarding the gender relations that we observe in the set book. Wanjohi (1997), notes that the *Gikuyu's* origin and history are given in two separate accounts; one scientific and the other mythical.

Wanjohi (1997) further explains that the scientific origin incorporates the oral, linguistic and historical dimensions. The linguistic one shows that *Gikuyu* language is akin to a group of related languages like *Mbeere*, *Tharaka*, *Igembe*, *Tigania*, and *Meru* found around Mt. Kenya and which are subsumed under the name *Thagichu*. The linguistic evidence infers that a people called *Thagichu* existed, occupying the north east and south sides of Mt. Kenya. Going by the linguistic data, then it can be said that the *Gikuyu* being descendants of *Thagichu*, probably came from the *Tharaka - Mbeere* area. Historians however, argue that the *Gikuyu* had a prior origin in the *Igembe* and *Tigania* areas of *Meru* district from where they migrated south to the *Thagichu* or *Tharaka* area around the middle of the fifteenth century. Harsh climatic conditions of this area could have impelled some enterprising and adventurous *Gikuyus* until they got to the famous *Mukurwe wa Gathanga* in *Murang'a* district. The linguistic and historical explanations are supported by oral traditions. Muriuki (1974) for instance reports that ancestors of the

Gikuyu came either from *Meru*, *Igembe*, *Chuka*, *Mbeere* or *Ithanga*. This oral evidence goes to establish that the *Gikuyu* are fairly recent migrants to Central province.

Wa Thiong'o (2009) uses the latter to explain the origin of the people he is writing about. He presents a clearly gendered world where *Gikuyu*, the father of the *Gikuyu* community is given instructions directly from *Murungu*, the god of the tribe. *Gikuyu* desires a male heir and he is given nine handsome men to marry his nine beautiful daughters and given the following instructions "... take the handsome young men who are willing to marry your daughters under any conditions that will please your family" (Wanjohi 1997, 33). Consequently, *Gikuyu* gave away his daughters as long as the men would agree to live in a matriarchal system. The myth of the origin of the *Gikuyu* people continues to relate that due to the harsh and capricious rule of women under a matriarchal system, men revolted against it and overthrew women from power, replacing it with a patriarchal system.

Many scholars wonder why Wa Thiong'o would prefer to use the mythical account rather than the more scientific to explain the origin of the *Gikuyu* people. A plausible reason is given by Wanjohi (1997) who notes that of the two origins, the mythical one is better known generally by most *Gikuyu* and which has most likely influenced the people's thinking in a greater way. Just as Aristotle (1941) claimed that all knowledge originates from wonder, the *Gikuyu* people therefore may have postulated this myth to explain

among other things, the gender disparities and the patriarchal system where women own nothing and are also subservient to their husbands.

In this myth, Kabira and Mutahi (1998) note that women were supposed to be the original rulers of the *Gikuyu* community and were said to have been very cruel and unsympathetic to their men. The men therefore conspired to overthrow this tyrannical matriarchal rule and replaced it with a patriarchal one. Wanyoike (2002) notes that inherent in this myth, therefore, is a justification for the institution of patriarchy whose tenets were the reverse of matriarchy. Men were now more domineering and patronizing towards women and polygyny replaced polyandry. Men gained control even over female sexuality as is shown in the practice of husband sanctioned sexual relations between the man's wife and his age mates in spite of the respect accorded to marriage.

This mythical explanation is significant in this analysis since it helps us see the gender relations as explained by some of the characters. For instance, Chege uses this myth to explain to his son Waiyaki why women are considered weak and also own nothing. (Wa Thiong'o, 2009). In a myth like this one, the members of the community especially women are persuaded to understand why men rule them and therefore perpetuate the status quo. The story of Wangu Wa Makeri has been used to deny women leadership within the *Gikuyu* community. As time goes by, the story becomes even more mythical and the truth or untruth of what historically happened becomes irrelevant; and the myths'

function to block women's ascendance to power becomes primary (Kabira and Karega, 1988).

Another notable aspect of the myth is the fact that man and woman appear to have been created equal unlike the biblical creation story where Eve was created out of Adam's rib. *Gikuyu* and *Mumbi* were also given land; "this land I give to you O man and woman. It is yours to rule and till, you and your posterity" (Wa Thiong'o, 2009). It is ironical that the same myth is used to justify women's disinheritance and disempowerment.

4.2.2 Designation of character by gender

Different scholars have discussed what constitutes gender responsiveness in set books or other curriculum materials. One of the key features is frequency of appearance of male and female characters. As Scott and Schau (1984) quoted in Mkuchu (2004) note, one of the features of a gender biased set book is when female characters appear less frequently than male characters. Invisibility is another feature of gender unresponsiveness. Invisibility is when a certain character or groups of people are under-represented or omitted altogether (Grossman, 1994). Manifestations of gender unresponsiveness in set books, therefore includes exclusion and infrequent portrayal of female characters or vice versa.

On the other hand, one way to indicate the prominence of male or female characters in set books is the number of characters depicted in a particular text. Michel (1986) indicates

that depiction of male and female characters in terms of frequency of appearance can indicate discriminatory attitudes towards women and girls. Likewise, it can also indicate discrimination against male characters. Gupta and Sui Yin (1994) add that another level of discriminatory attitude is prominence given to characters in terms of being either the main or minor character.

According to Kabira and Masinjila (1997), naming or not naming a character is instrumental in shaping attitudes and perceptions towards a character. Failure to name characters of either gender in the textbooks may result in the students not identifying themselves with the characters. It is more likely for students to identify with the characters that are named because a name is an important tool of identity.

Characterization in *The river between* is clearly done according to the specific gender. For purposes of this analysis, the names have been categorized into common, Christian, legendary/mythical, coined (anagrams), unnamed and collective names as shown in table 4.0.

Table 4.0: Depiction of character by gender in *The river between*

Depiction of character	Male	Female
Common names	5	3
Christian names	2	1
Legendary/mythical names	2	0
Names heroes	3	0
Coined names (anagrams)	1	0
Unnamed & collective names	5	3
Total	18 (72%)	7 (28%)

Common names refer to such names as Chege, Waiyaki, Nyambura and others that are used frequently in the text and are common among the *Gikuyu* community of Kenya which the text features prominently. As can be seen from the table, there are more male characters than female ones.

The text also features names of the first generation of Christian converts such as Joshua and Miriam. Joshua was brainwashed by the missionary to sheepishly follow the missionary and colonial ideology and vehemently condemn African practices. Joshua also represents a tyrannical father and husband who expects to be obeyed without

question. Miriam on the other hand represents a submissive Christian wife. She represents an earlier generation of women who saw the irrationality of a male dominated colonial world but are not able to openly resist against it. However, one could tell from her eyes that hers was a religion learnt and accepted, inside the true *Gikuyu* woman was sleeping (Wa Thiong'o, 2009).

There seems to be no gender bias in this category of African Christian converts since Livingstone, the head of Siriana Mission, represents the early missionaries. There is, however, a notable absence of female missionaries.

Ndemi and Mathathi, the legendary giants, protectors and mediators of the community are both male. They are the heroes that Waiyaki wants to emulate. In addition, the novel names three *Gikuyu* heroes as Mugo the seer and spiritual leader, Kamiri, the witch, and Wachiori, the warrior. There is a notable absence of female heroes. The young male characters, notably, Waiyaki have plenty of role models that they can aspire to emulate while the females have none. This will definitely perpetuate a male system of heroism.

It is important to note that non – acknowledgement of female heroes was not based on reality of the epoch during which Wa Thiong'o wrote. Indeed, female heroes have existed in Africa since time immemorial, for instance, Queen Grace Kilunji of the Batamba (1623-47), Fatuma of Zanzibar (1652-99, Nang Nkatis of Ghana (1750-65), Abudok Nyar Brook of the Shilluth in Sudan, Queen Nzinga of Zimbabwe and Rainha Jinga of Angola

among others. These female heroes remained unacknowledged for a long time with Mekatilili wa Menza whose stature of honor was erected only recently being a good illustration. But even in the event that female heroes were non – existent, the writer would still be faulted on the basis that literature should go beyond mere reflection of reality.

The text also features a name like Kabonyi which does not exist in Gikuyu culture of naming. Mwangi (2007) suggests that the name is likely to be an anagram of Nyokabi, a female name common in Gikuyu culture meaning “one from Ukabi, Maasailand”. If this be the case then, Kabonyi implies a person who was originally from a foreign place and this would enable us to see the irony in Kabonyi’s dogmatic stand for purity of the community customs. However, we note that it is not positive for the writer to use the anagram of a female name to name a man who is not featured positively in the text. It depicts females in a negative light.

Another category that the text features is that of unnamed and collective names. For instance, fathers and mothers are named on the same level as parents to the school going children. “And mothers and fathers waited, expecting their children to come home full of learning and wisdom. Parents would feel very proud, very proud, when a son came in the evening with a tear washed face” (Wa Thiong’o, 2009, 67). However, there is no mention of parents expressing similar pride towards their daughters. The question arises then in this passage whether children refers to boys only or is used to refer to boys and girls

collectively. In addition, when Joshua is preaching to his congregation, it is clear there are men and women as he calls them to salvation; ‘Therefore, brothers and sisters, I tell you today, come to Jesus (83).

The term “elder” is used to refer to men, mostly the members of the council of elders or the ‘kiama’. For instance, “thereafter, every elder and teacher who spoke added nothing but praise for the Teacher” (94). Similar references appear in six other pages (80, 113, 121, 122, 125, 148). In some instances the writer uses the word “people” to refer to both genders as illustrated by the following sentence: And Honia river went on flowing between them...reaching into the heart of the people of Makuyu and Kamenno (148).

Some of the characters are not named but described in relation to others. Waiyaki’s mother is one such character who is most of the time referred to as Chege’s only wife who had borne him many daughters but only one son, Waiyaki (6). In other references she is referred to as Waiyaki’s mother. For instance, Chege instructs Waiyaki; “Go then and get your mother to give you something to put in your mouth” (9). Similar references appear in the following pages: 10, 11, 15, 51, 81. In other instances, she is wife to Chege, who had borne him many daughters but only one son (6). The other wives are referred to similarly: “The other two wives had died during the great famine, without any children (6). This shows that this community regards women significant only in relation to the men in their lives; fathers and sons.

In all the categories of characters portrayed in the text, the ratio of the male to female is eighteen (18) males to seven (7) females, which translates to 72% and 28% respectively. As mentioned earlier, a name is an essential tool of identity and the low number of named female characters in the textbook may be detrimental to the female students' learning and enjoyment of the literature textbook which they may also interpret to be reflecting a man's world. As Kabira and Masinjila (1997) note, naming or not naming a character is instrumental in shaping attitude towards the character in a text. The findings in this analysis agree with studies such as Ernst's analysis of children's and young adults' literature texts where male names were represented nearly twice as often as female names (Ernst, 1995).

Although the above scenario can be attributed to the traditional set up of the community in the novel where male dominance was the norm in a patriarchal society, Renner (1997), notes that this gender representation may have an impact on classroom practices and restrict female learners' language learning opportunities. When using set books with over representation of male characters, teachers will need to develop awareness in their students to discuss and consider gender roles, gender representations and other gender related issues. Any imbalance in the set books might lead to the assumption that this is how the reality of life is.

Jones, Kitetu and Sunderland (1997) also suggest that authors of set books can attempt to make the occupational roles of men and women in set books to mirror those of society, or create positive role models in the set books by describing women who are employed in a wider range and higher level of professions, and perhaps even assuring that there is an equal number of men and women in the professions described.

4.2.3. Use of generics and gendered associations

The analysis of use of generics in *The river between* indicates that the way a few generics have been used makes it difficult to get the writers message across to the reader in regard to gender. For instance, in his description of Honia River, (Wa Thiong'o 2009, 1) the writer says; "*Honia* was the soul of *Kameno* and *Makuyu*. It joined them And men, cattle, wild beasts and trees, were all united by this life-stream". In this statement, the author uses "men" in the gendered form but women are inclusive to mean that all people depended on this river as the writer notes in the same page. "People saw this and they were happy" (Wa Thiong'o, 1).

In criticizing Christianity as practised by people like Joshua, the narrator uses man to show the effect that following Christianity blindly would have on people:

A religion that took no count of people's way of life,
a religion that did not recognize spots of beauty and
truths in their way of life, was useless...
It would only maim a man's soul, making him
fanatically cling to whatever promised security,
otherwise he would be lost (Wa Thiong'o 2009, 137).

In the above passage, the author seems to be using ‘people’ and ‘man’ interchangeably to mean the same thing. The use of man here seems to refer to all people as in the earlier statements. The same is extended to the following illustration that explains how important circumcision was as a cultural practice that facilitated a sense of community between different groups. The writer says; “circumcision was an important ritual to the tribe. It kept people together, bound the tribe. It was the core of the social structure, and something that gave meaning to a man’s life” (Wa Thiong’o 2009, 137).

Some texts may contain overt (unconcealed) references with derogatory connotations towards women and men. During Waiyaki’s verbal exchanges with the elders of the *kiama* where Kabonyi accuses him of betraying the tribe and breaking taboos, one of the elders makes the following comment: “ Our land is gone slowly, taken from us while we and our young men sit like women, watching” (Wa Thiong’o, 2009, 124). The insinuation here is obvious, that women are weak and not capable of doing anything even at a time of crisis like the one the community is facing. Even animals know that women are weak. So why should they fear them? (Wa Thiong’o, 2009, 15). Other statements depict women’s perceived weakness in their relation to men: “But then women were always shy when men’s eyes were on them” (10).

The above sentences illustrate how the author uses language to capture the society’s perception and attitudes towards women while at the same time encouraging men not to acquire negative personality traits like laziness, cowardice and weakness. The author is a

product of his society and he encourages the men to acquire positive personality traits like being courageous, intelligent, knowledgeable, and innovative.

4.2.4. Relationship between men and women

In this novel, the relationship between adult men and women is usually seen in familial setting. For instance, Chege, an elder in *Kameno* is described as having only one wife who bore him several daughters but only one son. He had two other wives who had died during the great famine without any children. Waiyaki's mother is not even given a name but always mentioned in relation to either her husband or son as illustrated below:

- “Go then and get your mother to give you something to put in your mouth” (9).
- “His mother always turned her eyes away from his (Waiyaki)” (10).
- “His mother sat near the fireplace in her hut as if in labour.”(11).
- “Leave the cattle with your mother, for tomorrow we shall go to the hills” (13).

The above statements illustrate that Waiyaki's mother has no identity outside her relationship with the husband or son. Her identity is therefore pegged to her reproductive role of mother and nurturer: Chege's wife, or Waiyaki's mother.

Miriam is the only wife and mother described in detail. She is Joshua's wife and her description brings out his overzealousness in his practice of Christianity and his draconian habits at home. She and her daughters are terrified of his anger. She is presented as a loving mother in contrast to her husband's lack of love and concern

towards her children, especially, Muthoni. She is submissive to her husband in both the traditional and modern (Christian) context. Her dilemma during Muthoni's disappearance highlights the burdens of motherhood: "This is what it meant bearing on one's shoulders all the sins and misdeeds of the children" (Wa Thiong'o, 2009, 33).

The home is structured in the traditional patriarchal set up where the male head of the family operates from his hut (*thingira*). This is where the male members of the home and male visitors congregate to discuss important matters. Even the young boys would usually sit with their father in the hut: "One evening, a few weeks after his second birth, Waiyaki was called by his father, who liked holding talks in his *thingira*, the man's hut" (Ngugi, page 13). The women would have their own huts where the meals were cooked. The young children and girls would stay with their mother. Other familial relationships include that of Kabonyi and his son Kamau while there are several other unnamed families in Makuyu and Kamenno.

Another aspect of the family relationships regards offering help. The relationship between the helper and the helped is explored as an indicator of social gender relations. Often, whoever is helped can be compromised and may have to be psychologically and ideologically dependent upon the helper. Sometimes the helper may end up doing the major part of the activity but still remain a "helper" (Kabira and Masinjila, 1997).

The help may have implications on the division of labour as often work undertaken as help may not be recognized. For instance, among pastoralist communities, men are usually in charge of livestock activities, especially those related to grazing. Women may be called upon to help in watering the animals, milking, grazing around the homestead and taking care of the young ones. Usually, only the activities undertaken by men are recognized as work and may even be rewarded materially or by privilege. In *The river between*, Waiyaki's mother is left to take care of the cattle and goats as Waiyaki and his father go out to the hills (13).

Closely related to the above relationships are the activities that characters engage in at family and community levels. The activities fall into three groups, namely, productive, reproductive and community. Firstly, productive activities refer to those activities carried out to produce goods and services for the generation of income. They also contribute to the income, economic welfare and advancement of the household. Secondly, reproductive activities which are also called maintenance activities like collecting firewood, fetching water, nursing children, cooking and others are done for the maintenance of the family. Traditionally, child rearing activities related to maintenance of the family were considered female roles. Both productive and reproductive activities are necessary for the survival of the family members. Thirdly, community activities such as attending meetings, funeral and church related activities and others are done for the general community welfare. However, reproductive and community activities are not remunerated. These activities are summarized in tables 4.1, 4.2 & 4.3.

Table: 4.1. Productive activities/occupations in *The river between*

Activity/occupation	Men	Women
Looking after cattle	✓	Sometimes
Organized raids	✓	
Building schools	✓	✓
Teaching	✓	
Working in hospital	✓	
Working in colonial office	✓	
Total	6	1

Table: 4.2. Reproductive activities/occupations in *The river between*

Activity/occupation	Men	Women
Looking after cattle	✓	
Hunting	✓	
Cooking		✓
Fetching water		✓
Cultivating	Sometimes	✓
Sacrificing	✓	
Attending to births		✓
Looking after children		✓
Total	3	5

Table: 4. 3. Community activities/occupations in *The river between*

Activity/occupation	Men	Women
Organizing raids	✓	
Building schools	✓	✓
Sacrificing	✓	
Organizing community meetings	✓	
Total	4	1

A common feature observed was that a majority of the productive occupations were held by men whereas the women took the reproductive occupations. As table 4.1 shows, it is the men who are engaged in activities such as keeping cattle and goats, teaching in the mission and independent schools, working in the mission hospitals and also in the colonial office. For instance, in Mariosioni school, there are only male teachers: “Siriana was still the nearest mission centre: a big place with hospitals and a flourishing school taking boys and girls from all over the country” (27). In addition, the writer says: “Siriana was the only place which could still produce men with the necessary education for carrying on the teaching in the ridges” (105). The question remains as to where the girls were going after completing school.

The problem with representing women in the reproductive occupations only while the men take up all the productive and prestigious occupations is that students might get the idea that some occupations are only appropriate for men or women whereas the reality on the ground may be different. This representation which borders on stereotype goes against the fundamental values of gender equality that the school system should be instilling in students.

As noted earlier, set books are important agents of socialization especially at the formative age. As Mkuchu (2004) observes, it is true that the socialization of students who use the set books exposes boys to more role models of revered occupations as compared to the role models that the girls are exposed to. This kind of gender

stereotyping based on occupation is presented according to the pre-conceived ideas about what people do and should do as males or females in the society.

4.2.5. Ownership of property

The depiction of ownership of property shows the status of an individual in relation to possession of power. The kinds of goods and assets, the durability of the owned property and the value of the property an individual owns would determine the status of a male or female character in a given community.

As shown in table 4.4, men owned all the property while women took care of and used the property as directed by the men. As Waiyaki says “his mother owned nothing”(15), as indeed all women. Apart from the fact that men owned all property including women and children, they also had power over everything.

Table: 4.4. Ownership of property in *The river between*

Type of property	Male	Female
Cattle & goats	✓	
Land	✓	
Money	✓	
Total	3	0

Apart from the possession of power based on ownership of property where the owner has the ability to influence others by rewarding and punishing other people through use of property, possession of power can also influence the leadership position an individual holds in a given society. Such leadership presentation to characters empowers an

individual to influence the behaviour of other people by having expertise, legitimate title and leadership position. The depiction of characters in leadership positions shows the status, either high or low, accorded to an individual. For instance, in the text there are several patriarchal figures representing leadership of the traditional society including Gikuyu, the father of the community, Mugo, the seer, Wachiori, Kamiri, Chege, the legendary Ndemi and Mathathi and Waiyaki. On the other side of the divide, there was Joshua, the leader of the Christian converts. However, there is no woman in any of the leadership positions described as shown in table 4.5.

Table: 4.5. Leadership positions in *The river between*

Type of leadership	Men	Women
Political	✓	
Religious	✓	
Family	✓	
Total	3	0

4.2.6. Locus

Where the characters operate from is very important in determining the gender responsiveness of a text. The locus may be broadly identified as shown in table 4.6: Other than the few places designated as sacred, for instance the sacred grove, where only men go to offer sacrifices or consult with their gods, other places are open for both men and women.

Table: 4.6.Locus in *The river between*

Locus	Characters & activity
Home	Family meetings, eating, socialization, celebrations (men and women)
Away from home	In the bush, wrestling, grazing, playing (boys), sacrificing (men)
By the River Honia	Fetching water (women & girls), watering animals (men) circumcision (boys & girls)
On a journey	To the scared grove (Waiyaki & Chege) The fig tree where Gikuyu and Mumbi first stood. Chege brings Waiyaki to the same to reveal Waiyaki's destiny
Public ground	Meeting ground (Men & women from the two ridges)
School	Parents & other people from the two ridges
Church	Worship services (both genders)

4.3 ABC analysis of *An enemy of the people*

4.3.1 Genre.

An enemy of the people is a play with realism and concern for social affairs. It fits into the category of social drama with elements of comedy. Although written in 1882, the play has a lot that relates to today's social concerns: greed, corruption, political sycophancy, and dissent among others. Of concern to this study is the way Ibsen deals with gender issues.

4.3.2 Designation of character by gender

Data in table 4.7 shows that the set book has portrayed 8 named male characters as compared to 2 named female characters. In addition, there is an unspecified number of men and schoolboys. This translates to about 80% named male and 20% female characters.

Table: 4.7: Designation of character by gender in *An enemy of the people*

Depiction of character	Male	Female
Common male names	8	2
Group of men & schoolboys	Unspecified number	
Total	8 (80%)	2 (20%)

4.3.3. Use of generics and gendered associations

Analysis of *An enemy of the people* shows that the writer has used generics that are not gender responsive and there are only a few cases where he has been neutral. The following generics and their referent pronouns, ‘man’, ‘men’, ‘chairman’, ‘brotherhood’ ‘he’, ‘his’ which are masculine to represent both males and females, have been used. The following sentences illustrate this:

- Hovstad: You bet your life they will! And then, once the ring’s broken, we’ll get to work and show the public every day just how incompetent the mayor is!- and of course, keep insisting that, for the future, the town council – indeed, every responsible position – must be filled by *men* of more liberal ideas (Ibsen, 47)
- Hovstad: Of course they don’t, but an editor can’t always do as *he* likes, y’know (Ibsen, 54).

- Dr. Stockman: All *men* who live by lies should be exterminated – like vermin!
(Ibsen, 87)
- Dr. Stockman: ...Take the dog- *man*'s best friend (Ibsen, 83).
- Dr. Stockman: Ah, it's a wonderful thing to feel oneself in such *brotherhood* with one's fellow citizens (Ibsen, 33). The implication here is that citizens are all male.
- Mr. Aslaksen: And you could do a lot worse, let me tell you, than to have us middle –class *men* behind you. You see, we form what you might call a 'solid majority' in the town (Ibsen, 29).

Aslaksen informs us that the solid majority or the compact majority is formed by men, yet the people that turn out to cheer and later to condemn the doctor are men and women.

In the above sentences, the masculine generic “man” is meant to depict both men and women, or to imply that only men are involved in the situations depicted, thereby shutting out the women.

The masculine pronoun ‘he’, and ‘his’ have been used with a gender neutral term ‘person’ or ‘individual’ to imply that the person is male although the writer had made an attempt to use a gender neutral or gender responsive language. However, the problem arises when the pronoun ‘he’ or ‘his’ is gender specific. The hidden message through the use of a gender specific pronoun could override the intention of the writer in being gender sensitive in his writing. The following sentences illustrate this:

Peter: You have heard me say this before: it's the duty of the individual to subordinate himself to society, or to be more precise, to the municipal authorities in charge of our civic welfare! (Ibsen, 9).

In the context of the mayor's immediate reply, the pronoun 'himself' may be referring to Dr. Stockman. However, the mayor says this is a statement he has used several times before; implying that each time he is using it, he is referring to a man (Ibsen, 9).

- Peter: In my letter to *The Herald* two days ago, I tried to lay the essential facts before the public – and in such a way that any fair-minded person can easily form his own opinion (Ibsen, 75).

There are a few situations, however, when the writer has used gender responsive or gender neutral language. The following sentence illustrates this:

- Peter: Katherine- you appear to be about the most level-headed person in this house.

Other sentences show outright discrimination against women in situations where their presence is clearly visible, for instance, when Aslaksen tells Dr. Stockmann that if the doctor plans to lead a protest march in town, “you will not find a single man in town to match with you”.

Throughout his speech, Dr. Stockmann refers to ladies and gentlemen, yet when he makes a specific reference, he always refers to 'man' or 'men', thereby ignoring the women in the meeting. For instance:

- The doctrine you have inherited...that the public, the masses, the multitude is the essence of the people; that the common man- the untrained-inexperienced man-in-the-street has the same right to approve

and to condemn, to counsel and to govern, as the qualified intellectually few! (Ibsen, 82).

In other instances, the playwright uses language that is insulting to women. For example;

- Dr. Stockmann: I'll tell you why. – It's because all men in this town are a lot of old women- like you. All they think about is themselves and their families, they don't care a damn about the rest of the people!
- Katherine: Then I'll show you that an old woman can be a man for once! Because from now on I'm going to stand by you, Thomas! (Ibsen,67).
- Voices (scattered): Shut up!- Order! Throw him out! Send him home to his missus! Shame! He's drunk! Turn him out! Disgraceful! Out with him! Chuck him out! (Ibsen,76).

4.3.4 Locus

The location where the characters are depicted to operate from is important in determining the gender responsiveness of a set book. The place where characters act from has been particularly useful in analyzing accurately the presentation of gender roles in set books (Kabira and Masinjila, 1997). Certain places such as the kitchen or inside the house generally, may be despised as both reproductive and productive activities carried out there are not remunerated. Non-remuneration for the activity carried out is one of the reasons leading to an activity being assigned a low status (Kabira and Masinjila, 1997).

Table: 4.8. Locus in *An enemy of the people*

Locus	Character and activity
Home	Dr. Stockmann's sitting room & study (press men, mayor and Dr Stockmann meeting) Kitchen (Katherine)
Away from home	A large meeting room in town (men & women) Newspaper office (men only meeting) Captain Horster's house (men & women meeting)
School	Petra teaching school children Eiliff and Morten (Dr. Stockmann's young sons)

All the locations in this set book are reflective of patriarchal dominance. Women are almost invisible except when serving their families in the house. They are generally involved in the reproductive and productive activities for the maintenance of the family. They are voiceless when it comes to business, political and social matters.

4.3.5 Depiction of characters' occupation/activity

Like in *The river between* analyzed earlier, women in *An enemy of the people* are confined to the reproductive roles of maintaining the home and family as Dr. Stockmann tells his wife Katherine; "Now you run along home and look after the house and leave me to look after the town". Throughout the action in this drama, Katherine is either seen in the house serving the family and visitors, supervising home work for their two young sons, or trying to make Dr Stockmann see sense in thinking about the welfare of the family even as he makes radical decisions in his career. For example,

- Oh I don't know anything about that - but goodness knows what sort of life we shall all have if you go on defying them. There you'll be again with no salary, no regular income; and we have nothing else to live on!

Table: 4.9: Character's occupation/activity in *An enemy of the people*

Occupation/activity	Men	Female
Politics	✓	
Business	✓	
Profession (Medical)	✓	
Journalism	✓	
Teaching		✓
Real-estate (renting houses)	✓	
House-keeping		✓
Total	5	2

4.3.6 Source of power

According to Kabira and Masinjila (1997), social gender relations are kept in place by prevailing power structures that can be observed in set books. Types of power include those of making decisions in various situations that call for leadership, ownership of property or wealth, and the use or association of characters with modern technology. Ownership of property or wealth is one of the indicators of the character's social and financial status in the community.

There are several ways that can be used to determine negative portrayal of social and political roles of female and male characters including male and female set book characters presented in possession of or lacking skill, information and exposure to

political issues and portrayal of male and female characters holding leadership positions and those who are just followers. As shown in table 4.10, male characters hold almost all the sources of power in the text. The female characters like Katherine and Petra can only access power through the property they either acquire through inheritance or teaching,

Power is generally considered a positive trait to possess; however, it must be noted that power can also be abused or in certain cases wasted. For instance, Peter Stockmann uses his power and influence as the mayor to have his brother, Dr Stockman, dismissed as the medical officer in charge of the baths. The majority of the men in this drama hold immense power in the municipal council, health, the press, and Householders' association, among other areas. The power was not always put into use in positive ways.

Table: 4.10. Sources of power in *An enemy of the people*

Source of power	Men	Women
Politics	✓	
Money	✓	
Real estate	✓	
Profession (doctor, press-men etc)	✓	
Inheritance		✓
Total	4	1

As noted in the analysis of *The river between*, possession of power can influence the leadership position an individual holds in society. The data in table 4.11 indicates that no leadership position is accorded to women. All the positions in various fields are held by men; for instance, the mayor of the municipal council and chair of the Baths Committee,

Medical officer of Health, president of the Householders Association, and the key journalism positions at The Herald; the editor, sub-editor and the master printer. The only two named women, Katherine Stockmann and her daughter, Petra, are house wife and school teacher respectively. For Petra, following instructions includes even what to teach the pupils.

Despite women playing a very important political and social role in *An enemy of the people*, they are not portrayed positively other than being depicted as just following what the men are doing. Katherine, for example, provides the voice of reason when the husband seems to be carried away by his political agenda. However, when Dr. Stockmann thinks about who can take over after him, he doesn't think of Petra despite her sharing so much in his convictions. Rather, he thinks of his two young sons who are still too young to understand what is going on.

The results of men wielding power in leadership positions in the analyzed set books in this study tie favourably with results of studies done earlier by Obura (1991) and Kobia (2009) in Kenya, Biraimah (1988) in West Africa, and Mkuchu (2004) in Tanzania among others. Table 4:11 illustrates leadership positions in *An enemy of the people*.

Table: 4.11. Leadership positions in *An enemy of the people*

Type of leadership	Male	Female
Politics (mayor)	✓	
Profession (medical, journalism etc)	✓	
President Householders Association	✓	
Total	3	0

4.4 ABC analysis of *Coming to birth*

4.4.1 The genre

Coming to birth is a novel that draws parallelism between fiction and history where characters and events are juxtaposed against known historical personalities and time frames. The action and reactions of the characters are understood within the historical context. The novel deals with issues such as motherhood and female subjectivity among others. It is a novel that dismantles the gender hierarchy by enabling the female protagonist to have room for her own manoeuvres thereby “debasement of the male character and elevating the female which is a salient feature of women writers like Macgoye, Ogot and Ogola” (Stratton, 2002).

4.4.2 Designation of character by gender

For ease of analysis, the characters in *Coming to birth* have been grouped into categories as shown in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12. Designation of character by gender in *Coming to birth*

Depiction of character	Male	Female
Historical/political figures	16	2
Named fictional characters	15	24
Unnamed fictional characters	12	14
Street children	Unspecified number	
Patients at Amina's clinic		Unspecified number
Total	43	40

The above data shows that there are sixteen (16) named male characters who include Jomo Kenyatta, Arwings Kodhek, Pio Gama Pinto, Eduardo Mondlane, Nixon and others. These are politician characters drawn from countries such as the USA, Kenya, Mozambique and others. They were all instrumental in the political landscapes of their respective countries. However, there are only two (2) female characters in this category; Chelagat Mutai, a Kenyan woman politician, and Mary Jo Kopenche, the woman who reportedly died in Edward Kennedy's car. This near absence of female characters reflects marginalization of women in the political sphere, especially in Africa. Though the named characters may have been the key political figures at the time, the reality on the ground

was that there were many un- acknowledged male and female heroes whom writers had chosen to ignore.

The category of named characters contains fifteen (15) named male and twenty (24) female fictional characters. There is an obvious imbalance in the number of characters in this category. It is also observed that the male characters are portrayed in various negative aspects. For instance, Martin is portrayed as a violent husband who physically and emotionally abuses his wife, Paulina. He is also disillusioned with life as he almost always uses the word “can’t” in relation to what he is expected to do. Simon gets into a clandestine liaison with Paulina. Mr. M. is having extra marital affairs with young women. The author sums up the men’s behaviour in the following statement: “Men’s work was so often destructive - clearing spaces, breaking things down to pulp, making decisions - and how often did the decisions amount to anything tangible?”(Macgoye, 129). All this is in contrast with the way the author portrays female characters like Paulina “always demanding to grow, to get out, to do things, and he (Martin) as tired and disillusioned” (Macgoye,112). Mr. M. and Paulina are not “prepared to accept ‘can’t’ as a standing answer” (Macgoye, 113). On the other hand, there are twelve (12) unnamed male and fourteen (14) female characters. In this category, there is a near balance in the portrayal.

There are groups of characters including street children, the Christian brothers and sisters, police, the women patients at Amina’s clinic and others who are used to enhance the

theme of the story. The author clearly states the gender of the characters, for instance, the street children are all boys and the patients at Amina's clinic are all women. However, the number is not specified.

In total, there are eighty three (83) characters, forty three (43) male and forty (40) female. The total number of characters portrays a near balance in the presentation of gender. However, as noted earlier, the female characters are portrayed more positively than the male characters. This kind of bias towards characters of either gender can only be detrimental to learners. As Sunderland (1992) explains:

restricted roles for women in textbooks will not contribute to empowerment of female learners, likewise, a similar scenario for male characters can only be detrimental to male learners. This may lead to alienation, marginalization and de-motivation which can only hinder learning as the textbook can contribute to existing social situations (Teo, 2000).

4.4.3 Occupations

The data in table 4.13 shows that male characters occupy prestigious occupations as compared to the female characters. In the rural setting, for instance, women characters are confined to the reproductive roles of maintaining homes and farms as can be seen in Paulina's situation. She has even to travel from Nairobi to go and plant or harvest back at the rural home and then bring the food to Nairobi. Men usually concentrate on their jobs which keep them away from home for long hours or periods. Some men leave their families back in the rural areas as they work in the urban areas.

In the urban areas, the situation is different. Women go out to work as secretaries, teachers or attend women’s meetings. Whereas this is a positive development, it is important to note that women are doing stereotypical jobs of teacher, secretary, and house- keeping. The depiction of women in these stereotypes is an extension of feminine activities carried out in homes and offices as nurturers, keepers and supporters. It is also stereotypical to depict men only in prestigious occupations.

Table 4.13 Occupations in *Coming to birth*

Men	Women
Policemen	Nurses
Politicians	Teachers
Doctors	Small scale farmers
	Secretaries
	Handicraft (weaving, crocheting)

4.4.4 Locus

The location or environment where characters are depicted to operate from is important in determining gender stereotyping of male and female characters. The portrayed locus also assists the determination of active and passive characters. The depicted locus where characters of each sex carry out activities can for example be inside or outside the home. The place where characters act has been particularly useful in accurately analyzing the presentation of gender role in set books. Certain places such as the kitchen may be despised as both the reproductive and productive activities carried out in the kitchen are

not remunerated. Non-remuneration of carried out activity is one of the reasons leading to an activity being assigned a low status (Kabira and Masinjila,1997).

Table: 4.14 Locus in *Coming to birth*

Locus	Character and activity
Home	Paulina, other women keeping house Rural women keeping house and taking care of the farm Political meetings in Mr. M.'s urban home
Away from home	Paulina in home-craft school Martin working at the printing shop Simon working at Town hall Mr. M. out for political meetings Mrs. M. and Paulina out for women's meetings Mrs. Okelo working as secretary Male politicians out for meetings

In this text there are two places where characters operate from, that is, home and away from home. The data in table 4.14 indicates that in the rural areas women are usually confined to the traditional roles of keeping house and taking care of the home. They may occasionally go out to the towns for shopping or to attend ceremonies like funerals and weddings within their neighbour hoods. Even the ones in Nairobi like Paulina occasionally go back to the rural areas to plant or harvest. It is also significant to note that for some of the women, the home is a kind of prison. For instance, Paulina suffers physical, sexual and emotional abuse at Martin's house in Nairobi. For women to get out of this kind of patriarchal and oppressive locus, they may have to re-define the concept of home, which will involve confronting and coming to terms with the reality that they may

have to shun marriage or negotiate it within their own terms, seek money, wealth and knowledge, and cultivate cultural as well as economic independence (Kuria, 2003). To some extent Paulina manages to negotiate a “new marriage’ with Martin moving to her house in Nairobi.

In the urban centres, the scenario is different. Women as well as men go out to work or attend meetings. For instance, Mrs. Okello works as a secretary, while Mrs. M. and Paulina go out for women’s meetings. Martin goes to work at the printing shop while Mr. M. is out for political meetings. However, it should be noted that as much as the women may go out to work or attend meetings, they still have to take care of the household chores or engage house helps for those who can afford it like Mrs. M. The men go out for leisure activities or political meetings and only come home to eat and sleep.

4.4.5. Use of generics and gendered associations

Of all the set books analyzed in this thesis, *Coming to birth* was the only one where the author appeared to be conscious of using gender responsive language. For instance, the following are some of the sentences which the writer uses that can be considered gender responsive:

- ✓ It was a bad time to travel, that is all, and *your people* should have helped you on the way (p15).
- ✓ And of course the *hospital people* should not have pushed you out without finding out where you lived (p 15).
- ✓ But we have brothers indeed, *brothers and sisters* in Jesus. Ask us for those and we can hardly fail to know where to find them (p16).

The statement below is the closest that this analysis could get where the author uses language that could be considered gender biased.

- ✓ ‘And you want to go off to Amina’s little two-bit nursing home without a proper *man doctor* in the place. Is that it? (p 147).

Concern about the use of sexist language is part of our increased awareness that the perceived meanings of some words have changed in response to the changing roles of men and women. Writers should therefore not use words connoting gender that does not accurately represent the people behind them (Miller and Kate, 1980).

Gender responsive or nonsexist language represents with fairness the gender identified. Gender responsive language minimizes unnecessary concern about gender, allowing both the writer and the reader to focus on what people do rather than which sex they happen to be. For instance, the use of “man” and “he” as generic terms poses a problem of not representing a general picture of reality, but tends to mislead the reader into thinking about the male gender. Studies clearly show that people equate neutral male terms with males, even when the term is intended to refer to both males and females. Martyna (1980) and Basow (1993), for instance, indicate that the average reader’s tendency is to imagine a male when reading “he” or “man”, even if the rest of the text is gender neutral. Therefore, writers should not imagine that the reader will normally ‘see’ the woman when the male term is used to refer to both man and woman as in the following sentence in *The River and the source*:

- ✓ “Everybody wanted to see with *his* own eyes this bride who cost the chief thirty head of cattle”.

Earlier in the page the author had indicated that both men and women came out to see the bride (Ogola, 24).

4.4.6 Source of power

The data in table 4.15 shows that male characters have many sources of power including politics, money from salaries and sale of property and inheritance of land and other property. This gives them undue advantage over women. Sometimes men use this power to harass women, for instance, Martin leaves Paulina in his house in Nairobi without any food or charcoal to cook. Women characters have only two sources of power: salaried jobs and businesses. For instance, Mrs. Okello has a salaried job while Paulina’s neighbours in Pumwani do petty businesses like selling vegetables to supplement their husbands’ earnings.

However, some women characters negotiate their way by going to study to acquire skills which enlarge their mental space. For example, the certificates Paulina gets give her power to get employed and become a “big person” who is admired and revered in the village. She manages to achieve a balanced and contented life “without the blessing of children” (Macgoye, 110).

Table: 4.15: Source of power in *Coming to birth*

Source of power	Men	Women
Politics	✓	
Money	✓	✓
Profession	✓	✓
Inheritance	✓	
Total	4	2

4.5 ABC analysis of *The river and the source*

4.5.1 The genre

The novel is a narrative of a family history across three generations. The author interrogates Kenya's history with reference to how it treats women. She privileges women within the narration with the aim of offering a counter narrative to recent history, a woman's view on Kenyan history as opposed to the narrative told by Kenyan male writers such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Meja Mwangi (Odhiambo, 2006).

4.5.2 Depiction of character by gender

Since characters in *The river and the source* are very many, they have been presented in categories for ease of discussion. The categories include the named characters, the unnamed, groups, legendary male and female heroes, colonialists, Christian converts and biblical characters. Each of the main categories have further been subdivided into male and female categories as shown in table 4.16.

Table: 4.16 Depiction of character by gender in *The river and the source*

Depiction of character	Male	Female	Unspecified gender
Named characters	45	12	0
Unnamed characters	3	0	0
Characters in groups	0	0	Number unspecified
Legendary characters	8	2	0
Colonialists	3	0	0
Christian missionaries	3	0	0
Biblical characters	7	3	
Total	66	17	0

The data in table 4.16 shows that of the eighty three (83) characters in the novel, sixty six (66) are male and seventeen (17) are female. Though the number of male characters is much higher than that of the female, only a few of the males such as the traditional chiefs Odero Gogni, father to Akoko, and Owuor Kembo, and Akoko's husband are prominently and positively portrayed. In addition, they are also eliminated early in the story. The portrayal of men in prominent positions seems to present the age old tradition that most societies especially in Africa are patriarchal, and culturally exclude women in important societal matters such as being a member of the council of elders that governed the society including negotiating dowry. The women were confined to the family domain, where they devoted their time to cooking and taking care of the family's basic needs. However, though the named male characters are three point seven five (3.75) times more than the female characters, they are not given as much prominence like the females. Almost all the promising male characters like Chief Owuor Kembo are eliminated early in the novel. Most of the female characters are given prominence by being named and designated to specific roles. It is worth noting that the author pays tribute to female heroes, something few African writers do in their works.

On the other hand, of the twelve (12) female characters, Akoko, the main protagonist; Maria Nyabera, the pioneer woman Christian convert, and Wandia Mugo, who represents modern career women, represent the three family generations whose history the author

presents in the novel. However, the gender and number of characters in groups are not specified.

The author attempts to address gender imbalance by extolling female characters from traditional (Akoko) to modern (Wandia) times. For instance, Wandia, Vera and Becky are elevated to the public sphere against the basic traditional idea that a woman's place is the home. The three female characters break this patriarchal tradition by combining both domestic chores and scaling high in public affairs. Wandia is a professor in a traditionally male dominated field of medicine while Akoko on the other hand negotiates her space within a purely male dominated traditional setting.

The quest to address the gender imbalance creates counter imbalance in that some of the male characters are 'eliminated' before they can achieve much. These include Chief Owuor Kembo and his sons Obura Kembo and Owang Sino. Others like Otieno are portrayed as brutes. Those who appear to be successful especially in the modern era are portrayed as support structures for the women. Wandia for example succeeds so well partly because of the support of her husband doctor.

The other category of 'successful' men like Chief Owuor Kembo and Father Antony Sigu join the church and churn the traditional role of marrying and raising families. The text therefore comes out as a celebration of women rather than an attempt to bring about gender balance and to create meaningful gender awareness.

4.5.3 Occupations

The text presents a stereotypical pattern in that male characters are in the army, office (clerk), priesthood, and administration. The females are in small scale farming, nursing and home – making. However, the pattern seems to change a little in that both male and female characters are pegged to teaching and medical professions as shown in table 4.17. This shows that female characters have entered professions that were traditionally considered male. The writer has depicted a reflection of reality in that in the modern world, females are increasingly entering previously male dominated fields of engineering, medicine, export business and other prestigious and well paying occupations. Female characters in such occupations should be depicted in textbooks with the objective of providing role models for girls. Continuing to portray occupations in the traditional patterns will have less impact in addressing gender bias in occupations which is prevalent in our societies today.

Ogola's depiction of female characters in occupations and roles traditionally perceived as 'male' seems to follow Kitetu and Sunderland's (1997) suggestion on how writers, publishers and textbook editors can deal with the problem of unequal relationships between men and women and characters in set books. They suggest that writers can either attempt to make the occupational roles of men and women in set books mirror those of society, or create positive role models in the set books by describing women employed in

a wide range and at higher level of professions than they really are and perhaps even assuring that there are the same number of men and women in the professions described.

Table: 4.17. Occupations in *The river and the source*

Men	Women
Armed Forces	Teaching
Clerical	Small scale farming
Priesthood	Nursing
Teaching	Medical (Doctor)
Medical (Doctor)	Home making
Administration	
Religious (Catechist)	

4.5.4 Locus

It was noted that characters in this set book operated from two main loci; the home and away from home. In the traditional set up, women were confined to the reproductive occupations of keeping the house and attending to the farm. They would occasionally go to the market and attend ceremonies like weddings and funerals. On the other hand, men would attend to the cattle and other ‘manly’ duties like attending the elders’ council meetings.

The scenario changes with the coming of the colonialists and Christian missionaries when women also venture out of the home: Akoko goes to Kisumu to seek justice from the colonial government while Nyabera becomes a pioneer in joining the Christian church. The modern women like Wandia venture into a traditionally male field of medicine as shown in table 4.18.

Table: 4.18. Locus in *The river and the source*

Locus	Character and activity
Home	<p>Akoko and other women characters keeping house, farming, keeping cattle. Men attending to meetings like Owuor Kembo in council of elders meetings etc Men and women entertaining dowry, wedding and funeral parties</p>
Away from home	<p>Men negotiating dowry etc Obura fighting in Tanzania Akoko on her epic journey to Kisuma to seek justice from the new colonial government. Nyabera's epic journey to the new Christian mission at Aluor where Akoko joins her later. Owuor Kembo attends a friend's funeral during which time his wife runs away to her parents' home. Elders dispatched to Yimbo to plead for Akoko's return to her husband's home. Akoko's grandchildren e.g. Awuor Sino off to seminary, Awiti, Nyabera's daughter, to mission school, Sigus children to boarding schools and universities. Becky to Nairobi to work as an air hostess. Wandia off to Johns Hopkins University in USA.</p>

4.5.5 Sources of power

Other than the traditional sources of power (chieftaincy, eldership), which were male dominated, women have access to all the other sources of power including joining professions like medicine which were initially male dominated as illustrated in table 4.19.

This is a positive step towards achieving gender balance in the society.

Table: 4.19. Sources of power in *The river and the source*.

Source of power	Men	Women	Means of Perpetuation
Chieftdom	✓		Hereditary
Eldership	✓		
Property e.g. cows, land etc	✓	✓	Hereditary, hard work
Professions e.g. doctor, teacher	✓	✓	Training
Church	✓	✓	Training/vocation
Business	✓	✓	Training
Total	6	4	

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4.5.6 Use of generics and gendered associations

Of all the texts analyzed in this study, *The river and the source* was found to contain the most generics and language that are not gender responsive. Below are twenty sentences that contain generics and other elements that are not gender responsive:

- The child would therefore have been called Adoyo and indeed she was, but as was the custom some ancestor or other would send a dream to stake out *his* interest in the baby and therefore like so many others, the little girl ended up with more than one name (p. 9).

The above statement assumes that an ancestor is male.

- For example, a child named after a brave warrior may spend most of *his* life being called Wuon-Okumba (bearer of the shield); or another be called Wuod- Lando (son of the brown woman p.12).

Since it was not uncommon as indicated on p. 10 of *The river and the source* to name a girl after a man or a boy after a woman, it is hence not right to indicate in the above example that a child is 'he'.

- Everybody wanted to see with *his* own eyes this bride who had cost the chief thirty head of cattle (p. 24).

Earlier in the same page, it is indicated that both men and women had come out to see the bride.

- Obanda my great-uncle was a great healer, after whom many children are named. He was known to harm *no man* and frequently sent off those who sought trouble for others with a flea in their ear (p.31).

The above statement either assumes only men could be harmed, or that the word "man" stands for both men and women.

- There are two ways to deal with pain - either bear it until time heals, for time is a *master* healer of even the greatest wounds; or commit suicide (56).
- Cry my child... It is for *us men* to wash away our painful confusion with tears and then carry on ... (p.68).

The above statement is said by Akoko while consoling her daughter Nyabera on the loss of her child. The word "man" here is used to mean men and women.

- In explaining her tribe's genealogy and spirituality to her daughter, Akoko uses man and the referent pronouns *he* and *him* either to refer to all human beings or exclude women.

Were is a spirit and a spirit is like a frame...it is like the air...it is like the wind--- it is like lightning.... Yes, it is like the essence of *man* which makes *him* all that *he* is yet departs from him quietly and suddenly leaving only a dead image. *Man* has a form which is spiritual (p.74).

- Without ‘chik’ to tell each person where *he* fitted in the exact order of things, where *he* came from and where *he* could expect to go, there would be confusion and apprehension (p.80).

The statement implies that ‘person’ is male.

- As they made their epic journey to Aluor, Akoko and her daughter Nyabera carried ugali cooked in sour milk to eat on the way, and as a reminder of the old life, a pot of ghee. Now, ghee is a rich *man’s* food for it is made from boiled butter-fat (p.104).

“Man” in the above statement refers to all people who are rich.

- Further along was the school - the place of learning without which one was a *blind man* in a strange house (p.136)

You must be brave for to be a coward is an insult to God and *man* (p. 105). As cited earlier, “man” is used to refer to all persons.

In the following sentences, the referent pronouns “he”, “him and “his” are used to refer to all persons.

- If you have a worthy friend, (a rare thing) never spare yourself for *him* (p. 105).
- Now that her cousin and only close male friend was in the seminary, she was the only connection they had to the continuity of the family, something that the African, like the Chinese, holds dear *to his* heart (p. 120)
- “Yes, soon you will have a brother or a sister”
 “ Oh, I have a sister already”
 “Well, soon there will be another one”
 “How can the baby see if *he* is in there?”
 “*He* sleeps most of the time...” (p. 158)
- Finally, each Kenyan loved *his* own skin dearly and though politicians would try to incite them to violence in later years...(p. 162)

- It makes me very sad to see a Catholic, a child of God, called by Baptism to be another Christ - calming *his* conscience with a purely formal piety... that leads *him* to pray... and only if *he* thinks it worthwhile (p. 222).
- If you saw a medic murmuring to *himself*, it was not because *he* was at prayer, the poor *guy* was practicing anatomy (p. 230).
- It was not for nothing that interns were called *house-men*... (p. 237).

In the last two sentences, the assumption is that all medics are male, yet the author clearly portrays that there were very successful female medics.

- She is the most open minded person I know and the only person who believes that each person is free to choose whatever *he* wants so long as *he* harms no one else, of course (p. 257).
- Everyone chipped in to make Aoro's and Wandia's wedding a success... Everyone involved felt as if *he* had a stake in the marriage and thus willed it to succeed.

Though the writer has used several aspects of language that are not gender responsive, she has also made an attempt to use gender responsive language as shown in the sentences below:

- Therefore, whenever an elder was alone with a young person, he or she always recited the history of the tribe or clan (p. 74). The writer also uses statements that implied the ancestor is male as noted on page 9 of the novel.
- Akoko explains her tribe's genealogy and says that:

Were (their god) gave Ramogi a wife, Nyar Nam, and together they had many children. These are all the children of Ramogi from whom we all arise (p. 75).

The text also recognizes legendary heroes and heroines unlike in The River Between where the author only lists heroes:

- These men of renown include Lwanda Magere and Gor Mahia. There were many others, great leaders and warriors, and women of renown such as Lela Kabanda (p.75).

4.6 Summary of findings across set books

The analysis and discussion of the findings in *The river between*, *An enemy of the people*, *Coming to birth* and *The river and the source* were done in this chapter. The main categories of analysis were done in terms of writer's gender, genre, designation of character by gender, occupation, locus, source of power and use of generics and gendered associations.

The analysis showed a gender imbalance of 62% males to 38% female writers during the period under study as illustrated in table 4.20. The problem with this kind of gender imbalance is that learners might get the impression that female writers do not produce interesting or useful textbooks since very few are represented in the choices (Liselotte, 2007).

Table: 4.20 KCSE Literature set books and writers' gender (1999 – 2009)

<u>Text</u>	Author	Male	Female
<i>The government inspector</i>	Nikolai Golgol	1	
<i>Mine boy</i>	Peter Abrahams	1	
<i>The winner and other stories</i>	KIE	12	4
<i>The burdens</i>	John Ruganda	1	
<i>The river and the source</i>	Margaret Ogola		1
<i>Looking for a rain god and other short stories from Africa</i>	KIE	14	12
<i>Coming to birth</i>	Marjorie Macgoye		1
<i>The river between</i>	Ngugi Wa Thiong'o	1	
<i>The merchant of Venice</i>	William Shakespeare	1	
<i>An enemy of the people</i>	Henrik Ibsen	1	
<i>Homestretch</i>	Velma Pollard		1
<i>Shreds of tenderness</i>	John Ruganda	1	
<i>Half a day and other stories</i>	Macmillan Publishers	8	6
<u>Total</u>		41(62%)	25 (38%)

The findings in each of the texts by male writers showed preponderance of males over females. For instance, the overall appearance of male characters is greater than that of females by 66.6% male and 33% female and 63.6% male and 36.3% female in *The river between* and *An enemy of the people* respectively. On the other hand, a different pattern was observed in *The river and the source* where there were 52.9% male and 47% female characters. This showed an attempt by the writer to balance the male and female character representation. In *Coming to birth*, however, 78.6% characters were male, 20.2% female and 1.19% unidentified. The gender imbalance in this text is worse than in the texts by male writers.

The table below illustrates the overall frequency of character by gender across the textbooks.

Table: 4.21 Number of characters in each set book

Number of characters	<i>Coming to birth</i>	<i>The river and the source</i>	<i>The river between</i>	<i>An enemy of the people</i>
Male	66 (78.6%)	45 (52.9%)	18 (66.7%)	9 (63.6%)
Female	17 (20.3%)	40 (47%)	7 (33.3%)	4 (36.3%)
Unidentified	1 (1.19%)			
Total	84 (100%)	85 (100%)	27 (100%)	13 (100%)

In terms of occupations as illustrated in table 4.22, the analysis showed that out of the fourteen (14) occupations depicted in the texts, men are pegged to nine (9) while women

have seven (7). Other than in the medical field, females are pegged to traditional occupations like home- maker, handicraft, small scale farming or other sex typed occupations of nursing and teaching. The men are in male dominated fields like the church, administration, the army and medical field. It is only in teaching that men are pegged to female typed occupation.

Coming to birth and *The river and the source* peg male characters to prestigious jobs of doctors, politicians, army, clerk, priesthood, and administration whereas females are confined to stereotypical female jobs of nurse, teacher, secretary, small scale farming, handicraft and weaving. However, in the latter, the pattern seems to change a little in that both male and female characters are pegged to teachers and doctors which reflects reality in the modern world where females are increasingly entering previously male dominated fields of engineering, medicine, export business and other prestigious and well paying occupations.

In *The river between*, the pattern is very clear where male characters are pegged to occupations traditionally presumed to be male such as herding cattle, hunting, sacrificing, raiding cattle, building schools, working in colonial offices and hospitals, and teaching whereas the females engage in house chores such as cooking, looking after children, tending the gardens and sometimes looking after cattle when the men are away. In *An enemy of the people*, male characters engage in politics, business and medical fields while females are in teaching and housekeeping.

The analysis therefore showed that quite a number of occupations are sex typed whereas there are some attempts to break job stereotyped patterns for men and women. In view of the changing trends in employment patterns where women take what are considered men's jobs and men likewise take 'women's jobs', some writers like Ogola have attempted to portray that trend in their set books. The effect of continuing to present sex typed occupations on male and female learners would be that certain jobs are compatible with women's femininity while others are of man's masculinity.

Table: 4.22 Occupations in all set books

Type of occupation	Male	Female
Religious (Catechist)	✓	
Priesthood	✓	
Administration	✓	
Medical (Doctor)	✓	✓
Armed forces	✓	
Clerical	✓	
Teaching	✓	✓
Nursing		✓
Small scale farming		✓
Forces (police man)	✓	
Politics	✓	
Secretarial		✓
Handicraft		✓
Home – making		✓
Total	9	7

The analysis further showed that in *The river and the source*, *Coming to birth* and *An enemy of the people*, the loci is clearly defined at home or away from home. Male

characters are operating away from home whereas the female are confined to the home performing domestic related chores. Even the female characters in urban areas are confined to the reproductive roles. Patriarchal dominance is felt in all areas of their lives. However, the advent of colonialism and modernity bring change in that we now see female characters venturing out to school or to work or to seek help from the colonial offices.

In *The river between*, other than the few places designated as sacred where only male characters perform particular roles, the other places are open to both men and women. However, patriarchal dominance is seen in all areas including the home.

The analysis also showed that *Coming to birth* has the least number of generics and other gendered associations. The statement below is the closest that this analysis could get where the author uses language that could be considered gender biased. This demonstrates a very high level of gender responsiveness by the writer.

✓ ‘And you want to go off to Amina’s little two-bit nursing home without a proper *man doctor* in the place. Is that it?’ (p 147).

The river and the source was found to contain the most generics and language that are not gender responsive. There are twenty sentences that contain generics and other elements that are not gender responsive. Ten of those statements used the generic ‘man’ to refer to all persons. In the other ten statements the generic pronouns ‘he’, ‘his’ and ‘him’ were used to refer to all persons. This finding was intriguing especially coming from a woman

writer so keen on championing the cause of women yet on the other hand uses gender insensitive language. A plausible explanation would be that Ogola seems to be "too keen on identifying the negative elements of patriarchal practices and expectations whose jettisoning she advocates and celebrates" (Kuria 2003) than paying attention to use of English language which is itself a borrowed medium of expression. Ogola, however, has also demonstrated gender responsiveness by naming female legendary heroes unlike most African writers who only name male heroes.

An enemy of the people has eight (8) statements where the masculine generic man is meant to depict both men and women, or to imply that only men are involved in the situations depicted thereby shutting out the women. In three of the statements, the masculine pronouns 'he' and 'his' are used with a gender neutral term like person or individual which may override the intention of the writer of being gender responsive. In addition, there were four (4) statements that are outright insulting to women.

In *The river between*, there are five instances where the writer uses language that is not gender responsive especially in regard to generics. This makes it difficult to get the writer's message across to the readers.

Finally, the analysis showed that male characters had access to all the sources of power presented in the set books while female characters were locked out of traditional sources such as traditional chieftdom, eldership and modern politics as illustrated in table: 4.23

Table: 4.23 Sources of power in all set books

Sources of power	Male	Female
Chiefdom	✓	
Eldership	✓	
Property –cows, goats etc	✓	✓
Teaching	✓	✓
Medical (Doctor)	✓	✓
Church	✓	✓
Business	✓	✓
Politics	✓	
Money	✓	✓
Inheritance	✓	✓
Land	✓	✓
Total	11(100%)	8 (72%)

Having analyzed the selected set books, it is important to note that literature can affect readers positively and negatively in that it has the potential of altering perceptions and possibly helping to change lives (Gooden, 2001). Positive portrayals of gender therefore have the possibility of improving young people’s self-esteem and identity options in their lives. With this in mind, teachers, educationists and other stakeholders need to help students become aware of negative portrayals of gender and realize that these portrayals are not acceptable.

Sadker et al (1991) argue that curriculum materials and set books where males outnumber females in many respects would affect learners (especially females) negatively in their long term development. Invisibility is one of the most pernicious forms of bias and female invisibility must be of primary concern to all educators, and should naturally be

the main focus of investigation in any research in sexism. This study was concerned about use of sexist language in literature set books.

One of the possible solutions of dealing with literature that contains negative portrayals is to avoid using it (Fox, 1993). However, this may be unrealistic. Avoiding such literature would leave students and teachers with a limited sample of set books to choose from. A more realistic approach would be to use such non inclusive set books and classics as a forum to discuss gender issues such as negative gender portrayals, underrepresentation of female characters and others. In addition, such texts should be placed in their proper historical context and should be balanced by other texts that show gender - fair roles and assumptions (NCTE Guidelines).

It is also important for writers and publishers to write and publish literature set books that have positive portrayals of male and female characters. Likewise, it is important that males and females are equally represented as the main characters and named characters. Literature that shows gender responsiveness and which allows students to freely express their emotions and be all they would want to be is desirable. In addition, being observant in detecting literature that continues to display negative gender portrayals, gender bias and stereotyping, is essential.

Writers should present gender – equitable examples by alternating male and female names and by avoiding the use of stereotyped roles. When discussing roles traditionally

held by males, writers should use examples of females in those roles, and use examples of males in roles traditionally held by females.

Teachers, curriculum developers and other education stakeholders need to be aware of the limitations they put on students' potential when they allow set books that are not gender responsive into the curriculum. With the proper training of teachers, more awareness of the publishers and good will of the education policy makers, students in high school can be made aware of their potential socially, behaviourally, and intellectually, among other ways.

Occupations represented for both genders need to be sex-free; both males and females need to occupy non-traditional roles. Following societal norms only forms a cycle from one generation to another and limits students' potential. A student's potential is maximized when he or she is not limited to male or female standards. Since today's society generally acknowledges that females and males are equal and need to be treated as such, it is important that we do not allow any literature that is not gender responsive to pass unchallenged. We need to ensure that positive role models for both genders are promoted for our students to emulate and enhance their well being. Needless to say, teachers should be at the fore front in selecting and recommending set books that break through the bias of the past and promote gender responsiveness. It is anathemic that in this present day and age, the school system continues to use set books that degrade any of the gender.

4.7 Effects of disregarding gender balance in character portrayal in set books

Set books that do not take into consideration the gender balance in portrayal of characters have diverse effects on the readers. Studies by Obura (1991), Koza (1994) and others indicate that under representation or omission of some characters based on gender has the implication that males or females are of less value, significance or importance in society. The effect is that students will learn to take for granted the alienation of either gender from all sectors of society, culture and history (Michel, 1986). If any groups of people are ignored, readers will feel that the set books do not acknowledge their existence. The other effect is that students will lack role models to identify with since it is easier to identify with a named than an unnamed character (Kabira and Masinjila, 1997).

4.8 Steps towards eliminating gender biased language in set books.

Several attempts have been made by publishing houses and authors to reduce the use of gender biased language in set books.

Michel (1986) notes that due to the increased sensitivity to the issue of gender bias in the language used in set books, many academic publishers have produced guidelines for authors and even made interventions in editorial work of the set books. Some of the publishing houses that have produced such guidelines include The American Psychological Association (APA) and McGraw-Hill Company. In Kenya, KIE in conjunction with the MoE have come up with a gender policy that should guide

publishers and authors towards producing books and other curriculum materials that are gender responsive.

Intervention at the level of selection of appropriate set books by teachers is another strategy. Teachers should be encouraged to ensure that the set books they select are free from gender bias of any form. The subject panels selected by KIE and the MoE's Textbook Vetting Committee work towards achieving this goal.

But guidelines in writing set books that are free from gender bias is not panacea to removing sexism in set books. Making minor changes in vocabulary and word usage to achieve gender fairness is virtually futile if underlying assumptions about gender restrict the people represented in the set books to traditional roles (NCTE Guideline). Other interventions include revision of the education policy, in-service training for teachers, monitoring of set books in use in the classrooms, developing guidelines for working with existing biased set books some of which are considered classics, and teaching students how to analyze content materials in order to recognize the biases, exclusions and omissions.

4.9 Effects of nonsexist set books on readers

Several researchers including Crossman (1994), Peterson et al (1990), Scot and Schau (1985), and Koza (1994), cited by Mkuchu (2004), have discussed the effects of nonsexist and sexist set books on readers. Some of the effects of gender responsive set books include having a gender balanced knowledge of people as equals in society,

developing more flexible attitudes and more accurate gender role behavior, imitating gender role behaviour in the set books and an increased motivation to read, learn and achieve. This is best accomplished when the set books being read contain characters with whom the readers can identify. It has been demonstrated that if the character is of the same sex as the reader, the reader will stay on the text longer and remember the story better.

Grossman (1994) has summarized what different researchers have agreed upon on the effects of using nonsexist set books and other instructional materials on readers as follows:

- Exposure to sex-equitable materials to the same characters results in decreased sex-type attitudes in the students aged 3-22 years;
- Attitude change towards gender equity increases with increased exposure to non-sexist textbooks and instructional materials and
- Use of sex equitable materials in schools helps students to develop more flexible gender attitudes, which allow them to make educational and career choices based on their own interests and potentialities rather than on preconceived notions of what is right for males and females.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed the selected literature set books using the ABC of Gender Analysis Model. The analysis shows that *The river between* and *An enemy of the people* are not gender responsive in terms of selection, character portrayal, occupation, loci, access to power, and use of language. A different pattern was, however, observed in *The river and the source* and *Coming to birth* where African women writers have attempted to break away from the traditional patterns where female characters are under - represented and male characters associated with activities in the public sphere and females acting with passivity and confined to the home context. They have undermined the patriarchal power and created space for female characters. By so doing, they have created a counter imbalance by sidelining male characters. As Stratton (2000) notes, inversion on the basis of male/female character portrayal is a necessary stage in the process of resistance in many fictions of African women writers.

The analysis of set books in this study compares favourably with studies done in Nigeria (Aniche, 1998; Areo, 2001) which indicated that illustrations and language used in English textbooks used in Nigeria contained gender bias where boys were generally portrayed as brave, intelligent, decisive, and adventurous while girls were shown as timid, shy, looking after their siblings and doing general housework. Lambo (1989) noted that stereotypical roles of women projected in school set books and other curriculum materials are retrogressive.

Chapter five presents an analysis of students' responses to gender issues in *The River between* and *An enemy of the people*.

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE: STUDENTS’ RESPONSES TO GENDER ISSUES IN *THE RIVER BETWEEN AND AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE*.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings on students’ responses to various gender issues addressed in *The river between* and *An enemy of the people*. The responses were measured in terms of how students responded to the questionnaire items presented to them. The questionnaire sought to investigate the following items: the themes that were foremost in the students’ minds as they read the set books, students’ perception of the writers’ portrayal of character and role, students’ attitudes to the writers’ portrayals, politics of power and students’ preferred themes in KCSE set books. The results are presented in tables and narratives with verbal citations as illustrations.

Table: 5.0. Students’ response rate

	Questionnaires given to boys in single sex schools	Questionnaires given to girls in single sex schools	Questionnaires given to boys in mixed schools	Questionnaires given to girls in mixed schools	Total 1470
	500	450	260	260	
No. of Respondents	482	426	256	242	1406
Response rate in %	96.4	95	98.4	93.1	96

The above data shows that boys in mixed schools recorded the highest response rate of 98.4 %, followed by boys in single sex schools at 96.4 %, girls in single sex schools at 95 % and girls in mixed schools at 93.1%.

5.2 Themes in *The river between* and *An enemy of the people*.

The next item was to investigate the themes that were foremost in the students' minds as they read the literature set books. As shown in table 5.1 and 5.2 the responses reflect what has been taught and emphasized in class since the themes the respondents have indicated are among the main ones in those set books. In this question, the respondents were using the same terms, for instance, sibling rivalry, gender discrimination, political wrangles and so on as the main themes. In this sense, the respondents did not seem to 'think beyond' what has been taught in class or read in literature guide books. As Mackenzie (2004) notes, reading in Kenya has for a long time been closely linked to set books. This could also explain why the students appeared to have read the set books closely. In addition, it could also be explained by the 'exam oriented' approach and attitude in our Kenyan education system. These responses also reflect Rosenblatt's assertion that readers engage in efferent reading to get certain information; in this case, information that can aid students in examinations. Finally, the responses could also be reflecting the teachers' emphasis of particular themes in the set books.

Table: 5.1. Themes in *The river between*

Boys in single sex schools(482)	Girls in single sex schools (426)	Boys in mixed schools (256)	Girls in Mixed schools (242)
Rivalry and conflict 28%	Love & friendship 28.4%	Betrayal 57 %	Betrayal 30 %
Betrayal 22 %	Tradition & culture 28 %	Traditions 40 %	Education 26 %
Religious conflict 21.2 %	Betrayal 28 %	Education 37	Love & friendship 24.4 %
Love & friendship 19 %	Religious conflict 26 %	Gender (e.g. boy child, plight of women) 34 %	Religion 20 %
Education 16.2 %	Education 24 %	Love & friendship 30 %	Tradition 19.4 %
Colonialism 16 %	Antagonism/conflict 21 %	Rivalry/conflict 30%	Cultural conflict 18.2 %
Traditions 12.2 %	Gender issues(plight of women, FGM etc) 19 %	Change 22%	Change 16 %
Change 11.4 %	Colonialism 13 %	Religion 21%	Colonialism 10 %
Female genital mutilation 8%	Change 12%	Colonialism 18 %	Alienation 7%
Leadership 5 %	Alienation 10 %	Alienation 17 %	Female genital mutilation 7%

Table: 5.2. Themes in *An enemy of the people*

Boys in single sex schools (482)	Girls in single sex schools (426)	Boys in mixed schools (256)	Girls in single sex schools (242)
Misuse/abuse of power 16.2 %	Corruption 36.4 %	Betrayal 37 %	Corruption 28 %
Conflict/sibling rivalry 14.3 %	Betrayal 26 %	Abuse of power 38 %	Sibling rivalry 17 %
Betrayal 12 %	Sibling rivalry 25.1 %	Corruption 24 %	Role of the press 15 %
Role of the press 8.1 %	Misuse/ abuse of power 21.3 %	Role of press 23 %	Abuse of power 14%
Politics 7.3 %	Role of the press 12 %	Sibling rivalry 15.2 %	Change 12 %
Fight for truth & justice 4 %	Political wrangles 10 %	Dictatorship 14 %	Moral decay 8.7 %
Hypocrisy 3 %	Hypocrisy 7.3 %	Political sycophancy 12.1 %	Selflessness 2.3 %
Change 2.3 %	Environmental degradation 7.1 %	Violence 12.1 %	Violence 2.5 %
Greed 2.3 %	Change 7 %	Nepotism 12 %	Environment 1.2 %
Blackmail 2.1 %	Fight for truth & justice 4 %	Quest for truth 11 %	Leadership 0.83 %

5.3 Perception of writers' presentation of character and role

Respondents from all the categories of schools used words such as 'keen, curious, interested, and anxious' to express how they felt about the writers' presentation of men's, women's, boys' and girls' character and role in *The river between* and *An enemy of the people*. Their responses were coded into themes such as discrimination of women, gender sensitivity, gender responsiveness, traditional attitude and role modeling as captured in table 5.3 and 5.4

Table 5.3: Perception of writers' presentation of character

Themes	Boys in single sex schools	Girls in single sex schools	Boys in mixed schools	Girls in mixed schools
Gender discrimination	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gender sensitivity	✓	✓		
Role modeling	✓	✓	✓	
Use of gender stereotypes	✓	✓	✓	✓
Traditional perspective	✓		✓	
Generation gap			✓	✓
Presentation of women as courageous			✓	

Table: 5.4. Perception of writer's presentation of role

Themes	Boys in single sex schools	Girls in single sex schools	Boys in mixed schools	Girls in mixed schools
Role modeling	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gender equality	✓	✓	✓	✓
Writers' attitude to gender		✓		
Traditional perspective	✓		✓	
Gender discrimination	✓	✓	✓	✓

To begin with, both male and female respondents in this study noted that the writers have presented character gender stereotypes, with male and female characters possessing stereotypic gendered attributes, for instance, men are presented as egocentric, harsh, irrational, and cruel. Women characters are presented as weak, stupid, rash, emotional and other such traits. As Longmire and Lisa (1998) note, gender stereotypes limit and trivialize both females and males, presenting an inaccurate view of the world and its possibilities. Such misrepresentations constrain communication.

The respondents further noted that as much as writers may want to present how women were treated in the past, they should indicate that “things are changing and the world is moving towards equality”. The writers should therefore respond to the changing situations in society and portray a true picture of how the situation is changing for the better, especially for women. Writers should be sensitive to women’s issues including the kind of language they use.

To this end, it was interesting to note that male respondents in single sex and mixed schools admired the presentation of women as bold, courageous and ready to confront men and society, for instance, the way Muthoni disobeyed her father in *The river between*. The respondents further noted that they felt very encouraged to see some female characters like Muthoni fighting for what they considered their rights. By identifying

with the plight of women, the respondents felt that it made them understand themselves better and how to treat women in a fair manner.

Male respondents in single sex and mixed schools noted that both set books presented characters in the traditional setting where each gender is assigned roles according to the traditional structures of the respective societies reflected in the set books. Traditionally, men were superior, courageous, never despairing, yield a lot of power and make all decisions whereas the women are subordinate, obedient, submissive, yield no power or make decisions. For these respondents, this was in order and that is the way things should remain. They felt that each gender should adhere to the prescribed gender rules and regulations governing relationships, behavior and attitude towards each gender. They were particularly happy with the way male characters are presented in superior and powerful positions because this is the way the situation should be. One male respondent noted: “We can’t claim to change nature- men are born the superior gender”. In addition,” male superiority is God given (even the Bible and Koran state clearly), so what are women fighting for?” The respondents further noted that the community runs smoothly when women are made subjects of men. This ensures that there is respect between them. Therefore, men and women should do their respective roles as determined by the communities- otherwise there will be chaos.

The respondents further noted that roles in the set books were assigned according to the traditional set up of the societies depicted in the stories. They asserted that this is the kind of model that should be encouraged even in modern societies where women are confined to household chores serving subservient roles whereas the male roles take supervisory roles in all areas. In addition, roles in politics, religion and taking care of property should be left to men and boys since such activities require strength, courage and such like traits. If women were given such tasks, there would be disruptions through factors such as pregnancy and child birth whereas men are free all the time. Since women cannot participate in all the mentioned activities, there should be no question of gender equality.

The male students' responses above reflected some common attitudes and held values regarding gender in different cultures. For instance, men and boys are aggressive, decision makers and independent whereas girls and women are submissive, to be seen not heard, dependent and so on (Crouch, 2005). In addition, Esplen (2006) argues that males may unknowingly internalize certain established gender norms such as "men expected to be physically strong and successful, to be risk – takers, decision makers and to financially provide for their wives and children".

Gender discrimination was another issue cited by respondents from all the categories. They explained that they were interested to see if there was any gender fairness or gender

equality reflected in the set books. Other concerns were whether men were presented as superior and women as inferior, whether the writers were gender sensitive or were giving men superior and prominent positions while ignoring women and girls.

The respondents noted that to their surprise, there was overwhelming evidence of gender discrimination in *The river between* and *An enemy of the people*. They identified discrimination in terms of character portrayal, ownership of property and power and other aspects. For instance, they noted that

many roles in the texts are taken by men while women remain subject to males and whatever the women do or say is not considered important. Even in character portrayal, female characters are fewer in number as compared to male characters.

Male respondents in single sex schools noted that when writers present male characters in superior positions, they are perpetuating male supremacy where women are denied the right of expression and treated as objects or property to be used and discarded at will. The respondents indicated the fact that the two writers' presentation of fewer female characters as compared to the men is a strong indication that the presence of women is not valued highly. In addition, use of such stereotypical phrases like "... the men in this town are a lot of old women..." (Ibsen, 67) was insulting to female readers. Similarly, there are "writers who elevate female characters at the expense of the male; tend to fight for the girl child ignoring the boy child: why all this fuss about the girl child: Let there be equality for the two genders".

Female respondents in single sex schools noted that in many literature set books they have read, gender roles are assigned according to a traditional perspective where women are assigned less prestigious tasks like taking care of the children, looking after the home and so on. Those in the modern period are assigned jobs like teachers, nurses and such like jobs. In addition, women are not considered as valuable members of the community. The respondents wondered why there are these negative portrayals of women yet the men are portrayed positively. Even in communities that are embracing modernity women do not feature much, for instance, in *The river between* girls are not seen to be excelling in education whereas the young men like Waiyaki, Kinuthia, and Kamau are progressing well. A female respondent retorted;

I got angry at the writers' presentation of women and girls as inferior... the segregating of the female gender while boys and men are encouraged to be heroes and women can only take orders from men. This presentation reinforces what we see in real life, women taken as the weaker sex; this is not healthy for our relationships with the opposite sex. Women are also exposed to practices like circumcision that are harmful to their health. We were also interested in seeing the writers' view on women's struggle for recognition in education and politics.

In addition, women like Miriam are presented as mere spectators, while others like Chege's mother do not even own anything. One of the respondents said, "what is even more infuriating is the fact that Chege uses a myth to justify this scenario". Both male and female respondents noted: "gender discrimination is annoying, subordination of

women inhuman; we would like to see a gender sensitive society where men and women are treated fairly”.

Female respondents expressed anger and frustration at women characters who are just submitting to the discrimination. They explained that as students they see discrimination in set books “as a challenge for them to work very hard and defeat male supremacy”. They also noted that such discrimination make boys in high school emulate male chauvinism.

Female respondents in single sex schools noted that in the set books, male characters are given more power to make decisions whereas women characters are just expected to obey without question. They noted that both genders should be given power and freedom to exercise what is within their mandate.

Another point of concern for female respondents was power distribution within the home and in the community. They noted that women characters are not given leadership positions even when they are capable. They argued that there was a lot of male chauvinism where men are made leaders in everything and women mere objects to obey orders. For this group of respondents, the question was ‘why’.

From the above responses, it was noted that the respondents tended to equate gender discrimination with women. They argued that reading of these texts makes students think deeply about how women should be treated in society. Several writers have noted that textbooks that do not take into consideration gender balance in the presentation of male and female characters have different effects on the readers. For instance, Charlotte (1976) posits that significant omission or under-representation of some characters based on gender has the implication that females or males are of less value, importance and significance in society.

Closely related to gender discrimination is the politics of gender equality. All categories of respondents indicated that gender equality is significant in assigning of roles in literature set books. Within the school setting, learners are exposed to reading materials which contribute to their knowledge of and attitudes about gender. Through their portrayal of male and female characters, these materials are a means of socializing learners into gender roles (Witt, 1996). In addition, Adell and Klein (1976) as quoted in Martin and Ruble (2004) posit that as we grow up, we are influenced to think about ourselves the way others think about us. In addition, if the books we read depict girls as always in one role, and boys in another, our minds and potentials will be restricted by these limitations. The respondents in this study tended to agree with the above observations when they indicated that roles assigned to both genders should reflect gender equality. Female respondents particularly noted that:

both genders should be treated equally according to ability-otherwise if all positions, responsibility, and power go to men, the girl child in the society feels degraded. Girls would like to see modernity reflected in the texts where women and girls can do more than just engage in house chores.

On the other hand, though men and women may be more biologically suited to perform certain duties, male respondents felt that both genders should be accorded equal opportunities in order to create harmony, understanding and unity that would be very useful in confronting challenges that come their way. Several respondents emphasized that each individual, regardless of gender, has the right to do what he or she is capable of doing. Furthermore, women have demonstrated that what a man can do, a woman can do even better.

Boys in single sex schools noted that the way roles are assigned help bring out any discriminatory attitudes especially towards women. Though the texts reflect traditional times of the societies where gender discrimination was prevalent, we are living in the modern era. Therefore, roles should be assigned according to ability, where power needs to be shared, it should be a '50-50 deal'. They agreed with their male counterparts in mixed schools that except in situations where the task requires a biologically determined performance like breast feeding, all other areas can be assigned to either gender as long as one is capable.

Male respondents further noted that many writers tend to think that only the female gender is hurt by inequality, thereby neglecting the boy child. Equality should be about both genders and writers should therefore address oppression of men as well.

Portrayal of characters communicates various messages to the readers regarding gender status in society. Through the roles assigned to each gender, readers get to know how communities regard men and women. They are also able to gauge whether the writers have incorporated modern ideas such as gender equality and others in regard to the genders' status. Readers can also gauge whether writers are gender sensitive or not in assigning various roles to characters. Writers should not favour any gender but show equality in power distribution.

Another important aspect of the writers' presentation of character and role is role modeling. All categories of respondents indicated that role modeling by characters in literature texts was of utmost importance to young people. They went on to say that they expected to see the writers presenting modern and progressive gender relationships that young people would emulate. Some of the respondents noted that:

the way gender relations are presented in this modern age is important to help the young to change their attitude towards the opposite sex. Young people see the characters in textbooks as in real life situations hence copy them. In addition, characters are our role models, the way they behave influences us. Nowadays, young people are interested in gender relations and the books provide a forum that influences their attitude.

As argued elsewhere in this thesis, set books provide a major source of role models for young readers. If these models show women in limited stereotyped roles, girls may tend to limit their own expectations. Self-esteem, fears and aspirations are all influenced therefore by the extent to which readers identify with the characters and situations that they encounter in the set books. This situation of role modeling is illustrated by Foley and Boulware (1990) who have given an example of a 12 year old girl who comments:

I like to read because I can relate with the characters in the books I read. In the textbooks I read the characters are usually the same age as me, I can therefore relate with the things they are going through.

Similarly, in the present study, a number of female respondents noted that women characters should be portrayed in roles that present role models for girls, for instance, fighting for women's rights, while boys and men should be portrayed in a way that they encourage gender equality like working in the kitchen. In addition, other respondents indicated that set books have a great impact in the minds of the students even after school, which can affect man/woman relationships. Girls are usually demoralized by negative portrayals of their gender whereas positive portrayals boost girls' attitude to themselves, inspire confidence and a positive general attitude about themselves. The respondents further noted that libel minded characters like Petra and Muthoni encourage girls to stand their ground and express themselves. These responses are backed by Limbo (1991) who posits that many literature books are filled with negative portrayals of women. Such passive, negative and domestic roles of females depicted in many of the

literature set books are not likely to inspire female students with a desire for achievement and self improvement both at school and later in life.

Male respondents also noted that male characters serve as role models for the boy child. They indicated that the texts reflect what we see in real life which is a reflection of what role each gender should play. This unconsciously gets imparted in our minds and if the portrayal is negative, it is not healthy for the young people. The texts are therefore setting the pace for the young people's behavior. One male respondent said, "male characters are our role models, so we will imitate their behaviour and strive to fit in the roles they play". Others argued that positive gender roles help create a healthy gender relationship as they serve as mirrors for young people to reflect on.

Male respondents continued to say that literature set books teach them how to handle their responsibilities as men as boys and girls really copy what they read, see or hear from the teachers or other older people. The way characters act in these textbooks therefore help young people to see how each gender is regarded.

The female respondents said that they were keen to see whether the writers have given women a chance to express themselves, whether the women are also fighting for their rights to be recognized. Are there changes in gender relations? These and other questions were presented by the respondents who also noted that the set books gave them an

opportunity to improve themselves as girls and look beyond the kitchen and giving birth to children. One respondent indicated that:

the way writers assign different roles enables me either to appreciate or despise either my own or the other gender. Many young people tend to believe what the texts say, therefore what is presented matters a lot especially about gender relations and what each gender is assigned. The roles assigned will either encourage or discourage me about the respective gender.

Finally, male and female respondents in single sex schools raised the issue of gender sensitivity of writers. They both indicated that they were very interested to see how the writers presented each gender and if there was any bias especially towards women characters. Since KCSE set books should be addressing emerging issues in society, more emphasis on gender should be seen. Most of the other books that the respondents claim to have read all portray men as superior, so they were expecting to see a difference in the books that the ministry of education has recommended for schools. Since these texts are supposed to be read by both genders, then no gender should be relegated to an inferior position.

They further noted that writers should respond to changes in real life and reflect it in their books. Since literature mirrors society, they expect the writers to reflect the changes in regard to gender relations. One respondent noted that: “In our society today, there are many elements of gender inequality, I was interested to see if writers agree with that state, or if they had a different perspective”. Others added that since KCSE set books are

being read by future leaders, it is important that writers portray gender positively. As Flerx et al (1976) cited in Mineshima (2008) argue, exposure to traditional gender-typed symbolic models in textbooks, television, and movies play a role in the vicarious learning of such traditional gender role standards. Although it can serve for learner socialization, the problem is that it could restrict learners' role behaviour (Scott 1981) and shortchange girls by limiting their horizons and expectations (Macaulay and Brice 1997).

Though reading literature is expected to expose students, both male and female to different cultures with the intention of developing them cognitively, in order to discriminate, judge and make right decisions, it was observed that some of the responses may have been influenced by the students' socialization in their own communities. For instance, some of the girls felt that the traditional role of the man is to be the head of the family, making all decisions pertaining to that home while the woman is oriented towards docility, passivity and service to others. To those students therefore, there is nothing wrong in the writers' portrayal of women's role as taking care of the home and children whereas the man takes all the leadership roles both at home and at community level. This is also in line with Iser's phenomenological view that the reader comes to the text shaped by cultural and personal norms and prejudices from their social backgrounds.

The theme of generation gap was raised severally by male and female respondents in mixed schools. The study notes that it is not directly a gender issue but nevertheless,

worth mentioning. The respondents pointed out that the textbooks should give a 'hearing' to the young generation and present them as tools of change. In addition, the young generation is discriminated against and denied a chance to voice its concerns. The respondents felt that the older members of the societies usually ignored the youth despite the fact that the latter also have useful ideas to contribute.

The respondents who said that they did not feel anything regarding presentation of male and female characters advanced various reasons for their stand while others offered no explanation for their stand. One male respondent explained that the stories were "too outdated to have any relevance for today's youth and that the books were also boring and nothing strange in the way men, boys, girls and women were presented".

Other responses were that the stories were just fictional and therefore should not be taken seriously while others said they were just interested in passing examinations. Finally, some responses that were not gender related and therefore not included in this analysis.

5.4 Politics of power

As Kabira and Masinjila, (1997) note, the question of power is crucial because social gender relations are kept in place by prevailing power structures that come out clearly in textbooks. Most of the visible power has to do with decision making and the ability to

force others to do what the power holder prescribes. In this connection, the study sought to know whether students thought it important or not whether it is men, women, boys or girls who hold power and make decisions in *The river between* and *An enemy of the people*.

Table: 5.5. Students’ responses to politics of power

Responses	Boys in single sex schools	Girls in single sex schools	Boys in mixed schools	Girls in mixed schools
Yes	268 (56%)	210 (49.2 %)	161 (63%)	148 (61.1%)
No	207 (43 %)	198 (46.4%)	77 (30.1%)	84 (35%)
Yes with no explanation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (1.6%)	1 (0.4%)
No with no explanation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.4%)	0 (0%)
No response	3 (0.62%)	13 (3.1%)	11 (4.3 %)	4 (1.7%)
Response not gender related	4 (0.82%)	4 (0.94%)	2 (0.8%)	3 (1.2%)
Stories just fictional	0(0%)	1 (0.2%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.4%)
Interest in only passing exams	0(0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.4%)
Total	482 (100%)	426 (100%)	256 (100%)	242 (100%)

The ‘yes’ and ‘no’ responses from respondents in single sex schools were almost balanced with 56% ‘yes’ and 43% ‘no’ for boys and 49.2% ‘yes’ and 46.4 % ‘no’ for girls. Those in mixed schools exhibited a different trend with 63% ‘yes’ and 30% ‘no’ for boys and 61% ‘yes’ and 35% ‘no’ for girls. The study went further to seek students’ explanations why they took the positions indicated in table 5.5 and 5.6.

Table: 5.6. Themes from ‘yes’ responses to politics of power

Themes	Boys in single sex schools	Girls in single sex schools	Boys in mixed schools	Girls in mixed schools
Traditional perspective	✓	✓	✓	✓
Equality of gender		✓	✓	✓

All categories of respondents indicated that the question of power was very important since it is a strong indication of who is in charge. They cited traditional perspective as one of the considerations in determining who holds power. However, they gave diverse explanations for this assertion. To begin with, male respondents in single and mixed schools maintained that African culture must be upheld, and noted that people should stop aping foreign cultures in the name of gender equality. They added that power hierarchy at the family and society level is important since it represents the set up in those societies. One respondent argued that “men have held power since time immemorial, are respected and feared whereas women are neither taken seriously nor respected”. Interestingly, the same sentiments were expressed by some girls in the mixed schools. They indicated that it is important for men to hold power because they are feared and respected by both men and women and are likely to rule more fairly. Women on the other hand, should take care of the home and children and not become leaders.

Girls in mixed schools agreed with the male respondents in single and mixed schools that only men should hold power so that “men can feel what it means to be a man”. The girls also said that “women can be influenced easily and are not able to express themselves, are not as courageous as men and have low self esteem”. Male respondents also argued that if women and girls are given power, they will become very proud and this will attract hostility from men. One male respondent added that, “young girls may begin to develop ideas that they can compete with men which is dangerous. They may develop the *Wangu wa Makeri* syndrome”. Another respondent said,

I don't like reading books where women hold more power, it reminds me of the story of *Wangu wa Makeri* and why women should be overthrown from any powerful and decision making position.

Wangu wa Makeri was a firm, assertive, principled and diplomatic female leader in the Gikuyu community whose strong personality enabled her to make in-roads into the male world when it was almost impenetrable (Wanyoike, 2002). However, the stereotypical description of *Wangu wa Makeri* is “the Gikuyu woman leader who danced the *kibaata* naked... a tyrannical ruler who literally sat on men” (Wanyoike, 2002).

Other reasons advanced by male respondents included what they termed ‘biological factors’; that men are stronger physically and capable of accomplishing strenuous jobs and men make ‘brave decisions’ which women cannot. Power and decision making are

also 'God given' to men and women should respect that. Women cannot make sound decisions because they are weaker, not firm, are easily convinced and emotional.

The findings further noted that girls in single sex schools were emphatic that gender equality should be exercised in distribution of power. Though traditionally men held leadership positions and made important decisions at family and community level, in the modern world, women should also have access to power and decision making powers. We should be striving for gender equality. The girls argued that the modern world requires that both genders are given a chance to make decisions according to their abilities and expertise. Unfortunately, many societies tend to believe that women cannot lead or make sound decisions but can only take care of children and homes. In many situations, therefore, women are taken for granted when it comes to power sharing. Unfortunately, women have also come to believe that they cannot hold senior positions in society. Yet, even in those societies that hold that notion that women cannot make sound decisions, reality has proved that women are as capable as the men. What matters is that the women are accorded equal access to the same opportunities as men.

When both men and women hold more power or make decision, they are in a better position to share ideas and thoughts for the common good of the society. The respondents added that decisions that the men make also affect women; therefore women should also be given a chance to participate in decision making. They noted that since nobody is

more powerful than the other because of gender, girls motto should always be that ‘what a man can do women can also do’. Skill, expertise and capability are the qualities that should count. One female respondent said, “it really makes us girls angry to see girls and women mistreated and subordinated... women should rally together and fight for fairness”.

On the other hand, 43% male, 46.4% female respondents in single sex schools and 30% male and 35% female respondents in mixed schools said that it did not matter who held power in *The river between* and *An enemy of the people*. They all cited gender equality as the main reason for their stand as shown in table 5.7.

Table: 5.7. Themes from ‘no’ responses to politics of power:

Themes	Boys in single sex schools	Girls in single sex schools	Boys in mixed schools	Girls in mixed schools
Gender equality	✓	✓	✓	✓

Male and female respondents noted that are all people are equal in God’s eyes and this should be reflected in all sectors of our society. Therefore, it is not important who holds power as long as one is skilled, talented or has the expertise required in particular positions. In this case, gender should be immaterial. This would ensure that both genders respect each other and also ensure equality in distribution of power. This would also show gender sensitivity by not elevating the male gender and discriminating against the

female. In any case, in some situations, as one respondent noted, “women have proved to be more sensible in decision making than men”. Male respondents particularly noted that women are setting very good examples by using power responsibly - beginning with their mothers at home. The respondents felt that giving power to whoever is capable would dispel the myth that men are the superior and women the inferior gender.

Female respondents said that since youth tend to emulate what they see around them, gender equality is important so that either of the genders does not feel discriminated against. One respondent stated that “because times are changing, we need a society that is gender sensitive and set books should portray that sensitivity”. A gender sensitive set book will influence what the reader will become, for example, a woman holding power in the text will motivate a girl child who reads that story. For once, women should be put in superior positions; it should not always be the men. Another female respondent added that, “as a girl child, I have a voice to speak out against negative portrayals”.

The respondents further noted that inclusion of both genders in decision making brings harmony, understanding and unity among other positive things. This situation will also help get rid of gender bias, insensitivity and other negative aspects in gender relationships.

In addition, male and female respondents in single sex schools often quoted the phrase 'equal rights and justice for all'. They explained that the important thing is that whoever is given power uses it reasonably. When the two genders are involved, it is even better because stronger and more reasonable decisions will be arrived at. Consultation and dialogue are desirable. Where possible, power should be shared equally, preferably 50/50. Societies should therefore be ready to change to accommodate new trends of gender equality. Those who have more power hold the key to many doors, therefore no gender should be discriminated against.

Through tradition, we were made to believe that only men should rule and hold power. However, modern times have proved otherwise as "women have become presidents, scientists, prime ministers among other top prominent positions. In Kenya, we have our own Prof. Wangari Maathai, who is known internationally", stated one female respondent. Finally, men should also stop harboring the idea that it is only them who can hold power or lead.

Other categories of responses included 1.6% boys and 0.4% girls in mixed schools who said 'yes' but offered no explanation and 0.4 boys in mixed schools who said 'no' but offered no explanation. In addition, 0.62% boys and 3.1% girls in single sex schools and 4.3% boys and 1.7% girls in mixed schools had no response to this question. Finally, 0.4% girls in mixed schools indicated that they were only interested in passing examinations.

5.5 Students' attitude to Writers' portrayals

In this section, the study sought to know whether the respondents agreed with the authors' portrayal of men, women, girls and boys in *The river between* and *An enemy of the people*.

Table: 5.8. Students' responses to writers' portrayal

Responses	Boys in single sex schools	Girls in single sex schools	Boys in mixed schools	Girls in mixed schools
Yes	210 (44%)	84 (20%)	107 (42%)	64 (26.4%)
No	241 (50%)	331 (78%)	112 (44%)	165 (68.2%)
'Yes' with no explanation	9 (2%)	0 (0%)	3 (1.17%)	4 (1.7%)
'No' with no explanation	2 (0.41%)	2 (0.5%)	1 (0.4%)	3 (1.24%)
No response	11(2.3%)	9 (2.1%)	13 (5.1%)	4 (1.7%)
Response not gender related	9 (2%)	0 (0%)	19 (7.4%)	2 (0.83%)
Stories just fictional	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Interest in only passing exams	0(0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.4%)	0 (0%)
Total	482 (100%)	426 (100%)	256 (100%)	242 (100%)

Less than 45% of all respondents indicated that they agreed with the writers' portrayal of men, women, boys and girls. The boys registered a higher percentage with boys in single schools 44% and those in mixed schools 42% while girls in single sex schools registered

20 % and those in mixed 26.4%. The ‘yes’ responses generated the themes shown in table 5:9.

Table: 5.9. Reasons for supporting writers’ portrayal

Themes	Boys in single sex schools	Girls in single sex schools	Boys in mixed schools	Girls in mixed schools
Traditional setting	✓	✓	✓	✓
Elements of gender sensitivity	✓	✓	✓	✓

The respondents noted that the set books bring out the traditional set up clearly where gender roles are defined by culture. The set books therefore portray the reality of these traditional set ups some of which is also reflected in our own cultures today. To this end there is nothing wrong with the depiction of gender roles for men, women, boys and girls since each gender fits well in the prescribed roles where men are portrayed as courageous, determined, dedicated, focused and very hardworking. Women on the other hand are depicted as loving, caring and nurturing among other female character traits.

However, the male and female respondents differed on whether the traditional trend should continue. The male respondents were emphatic that the male gender has since

time immemorial, been superior, powerful and wiser while the female has always been the 'helper'. This trend should continue into modern life. In addition, they argued that:

men are the naturally accepted leaders who make decisions in all situations. Women should never be allowed to yield power especially politically since they become tyrannical like the legendary *Wangu wa Makeri*.

The male respondents further noted that they agreed with the writers' traditional portrayal of characters and their roles where the men and boys are heroes exuding courage, wisdom and other virtues whereas the women and girls are submissive and obedient towards their husbands. Some emphasized that women are weaker vessels by divine design and therefore should be subject to men but not to be exploited. Lastly, they underlined that if the texts did not portray the genders this way, the texts would not be interesting for boys.

Conversely, female respondents expressed that they were excited about the writers attempt to show women struggling to get out of the docile traditional closet and fighting for what they believe to be their rights. The respondents cited the example of Muthoni and Nyambura as good illustrations of this. In this sense, the texts are not reflecting women as a weak gender, which is admirable. One of them said,

I admired the writers' attempt to elevate women by giving them a voice. In cases where there is gender discrimination, the writers educate us about the evils committed against women, our eyes are opened and we can fight for gender equality.

Other respondents cited cases where the writers are depicting characters' attempts to bring change to society. For instance, some women characters like Petra and Muthoni are focused and determined to make their voices heard. Muthoni fights to the extent of losing her life in order to achieve what she considered her right. In so doing, she acted as a change agent which is admirable considering the situation she was in. One respondent noted that "young readers like us really admire Muthoni and other young characters like Waiyaki who acted as change agents". The set books teach young people that they should fight for their rights within the roles they are given in society.

The other reason why both male and female respondents agreed with the writers' portrayals was because the former felt that the writers have made an attempt to be gender sensitive. For instance, the portrayal of women characters like Muthoni, Petra and Katherine Stockman's attempts to fight for their rights is commendable even in stories set in the traditional times of the respective societies. In addition, the authors' portrayal of weaknesses in men like Kabonyi, Dr. Stockman and Waiyaki demystifies the notion that men are all powerful, wise, strong and courageous.

On the other hand, 44% of boys in mixed schools, 50% boys in single sex schools, 68.2% girls in mixed schools and 78% girls in single sex schools registered 'no' responses. The responses generated the themes shown in table 5:10.

Table: 5.10.Reasons for not supporting writers’ portrayal

Themes	Boys in single gender schools	Girls in single schools	Boys in mixed schools	Girls in mixed schools
Gender discrimination	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gender insensitivity	✓	✓	✓	
Portrayal of boy child	✓		✓	

The study observed that respondents in all categories cited gender discrimination as the main reasons they did not agree with the writers’ portrayal of men, women, boys and girls. As noted earlier, respondents in this study equated gender discrimination with discrimination of women. They noted that women have been discriminated against in several ways. Firstly, there are fewer female characters than men. This was confirmed by the analysis in chapter four. Secondly, men are given more prominent roles and positions than women and women just come to ‘help’ like in the case of Waiyaki’s mother who is asked to look after the cattle and goats when Chege and the son go out into the hills. In addition, ‘portraying women as inferior and as mere objects irritates modern minded readers’. Thirdly, women are subjected to outdated cultural practices like circumcision which sometimes results in disastrous consequences. Other reasons were that women have no power to make decisions and have little freedom of expression, among other discriminatory tendencies. In a nutshell, men are portrayed as demigods while women and girls are underdogs.

Female respondents noted that this negative portrayal of women is not healthy for both genders since it can create a feeling of inferiority in the girl child and superiority in the boy. The above portrayal is also not healthy especially for the young generation that is looking for role models in those characters. In the modern world, young people should be yearning for equal opportunities and respect for all since all humans are equal.

Both male and female respondents felt that characters of both gender should be portrayed in a way that they respect each other and be allowed to express their opinions without fearing punishment as in the case of Waiyaki, Muthoni and Nyambura in *The river between*. The respondents also noted that involvement of both genders especially in influential and powerful positions is not balanced, for instance, “no woman hero is mentioned in *The river between*. The way genders are portrayed shows the attitude the society accords each gender and:

when young readers like us read about negative portrayals, they tend to develop a negative attitude towards both the discriminating gender and the one being discriminated against. This results in negative role modeling for both genders.

The study further noted that except girls in mixed schools, all other respondents felt that both writers are insensitive to the female gender especially in the portrayal of character and role. For instance, there are fewer female characters than men, and the few women are not given prominence like their male characters. Women’s abilities are also underrated in the sense that they are not given prominent positions but inferior ones. One

female respondent demanded that writers should strive to “put women and girls on the world map, not making them obscure”.

In addition, respondents felt that the authors have portrayed women and men in the traditional way without recognizing changes that are taking place in the world regarding gender relations with one respondent arguing that “such portrayals are no longer relevant in today’s world”. Women are rising in all spheres of life including leadership and education, so they should not be so negatively portrayed. The respondents further noted that:

The danger in portraying one gender as superior and more powerful is that those young people who copy things blindly may copy the characters as brought out in the set books. Girls want this gender bias corrected even in set books.

The respondents further noted that writers influence readers and impact their behavior. It would therefore be important to display gender equality in their texts. One of the respondents posed this question; “What are schools teaching us giving us books that are not gender sensitive?” Writers should enlighten the young on what is happening in society which will arouse a desire in the young people to change - so let the writers present the positive trends and changes in society. In the ancient days it was alright to have such portrayals but today things are different - it is insulting to have either gender portrayed negatively.

Finally, the issue of the boy child was raised by male respondents in the single sex and mixed schools. They explained that writers like Ngugi wa Thiong'o emphasize the plight of women and ignore the boys and men. In addition, the writers tend to elevate what they consider positive about men and boys, ignoring the fact that boys and men also have issues that need attention. The fact that the boy child is portrayed more positively is also not good since it will present a negative picture towards the girl child. On the other hand, highlighting evil deeds mostly by male characters portrays the male gender negatively which is not also healthy for the boy child. Therefore, there should be a sort of balance in portraying both the boy and the girl child.

The other responses registered 'yes' with no explanation where boys and girls in single sex schools registered 2% and 0% respectively; while boys and girls in mixed schools registered 1.2 and 1.7 % respectively. Those who said 'no' but gave no explanation were 0.41% boys and 0.5% girls in single sex schools while 0.4 and 1.24 % were boys and girls in mixed schools respectively. Those who gave no response at all were 2.3 % boys and 2.1% girls in single sex boys; and 5.1 % boys and 1.7% girls in mixed schools. Finally, 2 % boys in single sex boys and 7.4% and 0.83% girls in mixed schools gave responses that were not gender related while 0.4% boys in mixed schools said they were only interested in passing exams.

5.6 Students' preferred themes in KCSE literature set books

The respondents were further asked to indicate the issues that they would prefer literature set books selected for study in high schools address. The responses showed that gender issues are foremost in students' minds as they read literature set books as shown in table 5.11. The data indicates that 50% boys in single sex schools topped followed by girls in mixed schools with 49%, girls in single and mixed schools with 27.5% and 27.3% respectively. The students indicated that they would like to see more of the same reflected in KCSE literature set books. Other issues indicated by all groups of respondents are love and boy/child relationships with boys and girls in single sex schools 30% and 24.7%, and boys and girls in mixed schools with 9 % and 24% respectively. Others are drug and substance abuse at 19%, 15%, 12.7% and 17% for boys and girls in single sex and mixed schools respectively.

Table: 5.11. Students’ preferred themes in KCSE literature set books

Boys in single sex schools	Girls in single sex schools	Boys in mixed schools	Girls in mixed schools
Gender issues (equality, sensitivity, discrimination, sexism etc) 50%	Gender issues (equality, early marriages for girls, sexual harassment of girls etc) 27.5%	Gender related issues (inequality, gender sensitivity, gender discrimination etc) 27.3%	Gender related issues (inequality, discrimination of women etc) 49 %
Love and relationships 30%	Boy/girl relationships 24.7%	Life skills 13.3%	Boy/girl relationships 24%
Drug and substance abuse 19%	Drug abuse 15%	Cultural values 12.7%	Drug & substance abuse 17%
Racial/tribal bias 19%	Morality issues 12.4%	Love and friendship 11.3%	Careers and life skills 15%
Importance of education 19%	Challenges facing youth (discipline, leadership 14% peer pressure, spiritual issues etc) 9%	Drug and substance abuse 11%	Traditions/culture 8%
Leadership 14%	Education 7 %	HIV & AIDS 7.8%	Love & friendship 7%
Moral issues 11 %	Cultural/traditional issues 5.4%	Tribal/ethnic conflict 7.4%	Immorality especially among the youth 7 %
Politics/neo-colonialism 7.1%	Corruption 5.4%	Corruption 5.8%	Conflict resolution 7%
HIV & AIDS 6%	Career choices 5%	Conflict resolution 4.7%	Tribal conflicts 5 %
Parent – child relationship 4.2%	Misuse of power (political, spiritual etc) 4.2 %	Importance of education to the youth 4.3 %	Corruption 4%
Others	Others	Others	Others

5.7 Chapter summary on students' responses

The findings in this chapter brought out several things. First, when students were asked to indicate what themes were foremost in their minds as they read KCSE literature set books, their responses reflected the common themes in the set books and their guidebooks. This was an indication that students do not reflect beyond what is likely to be useful in their examinations. This can be blamed on the 'exam oriented approach' of the Kenyan system of education.

In terms of the students' perception of the writers' presentation of character and role, the respondents cited such issues as gender discrimination, gender sensitivity, gendered traditional portrayals and role modeling as their main concerns. On the question of power, the statistics ranged between 49.2% to 63% for those who thought it important and 30% to 46.4 for those who thought it was not. The former indicated that there should be a clear demarcation of powers with males as the superior and females inferior whereas the latter argued that the question of gender should not arise in appropriation of power. Skill, capability and suitability should be the key parameters to gauge who gets power.

The respondents who agreed with the writers' portrayal of men, women, boys and girls in traditional positions where males take superior positions argued that this status quo should be maintained even in modern communities to create a sense of harmony in male – female relationships. On the other hand, those who opposed this kind of portrayal cited gender discrimination and negative portrayal of the boy–child as some of the reasons

behind this stand. Finally, an interesting observation was made in that all respondents indicated to varying degrees that they would like to see KCSE literature set books address gender issues such as equality, discrimination of both girl and boy child and sexual harassment among others.

5.8 Conclusion

All respondents displayed a great sense of gender awareness and sensitivity in regard to the gender issues raised in the literature set books. However, it was clear from the responses that some supported the traditional status quo where the male gender is superior while others advocated for change where the two genders would be treated equally. They generally raised similar issues like gender discrimination in regard to women and gender sensitivity of the writers among others. In addition, male respondents raised the issue of the boy child. The respondents noted that use of gender bias among other gender issues in set books, in whatever manner affects learners' self concept, potential achievement and perceptions of others.

6.0 CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS FROM ENGLISH TEACHERS' RESPONSES ON GENDER RESPONSIVENESS OF SET BOOKS.

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on responses of English teachers to questionnaire items presented to them. The study aimed at finding out the extent to which teachers find the following texts gender responsive: *Coming to birth*, *The river and the source*, *The river between* and *An enemy of the people*. In an attempt to get these responses, the teachers were asked questions relating to how the above texts were gender responsive, in other words, are there any indications of efforts to correct gender imbalances? Secondly, the teachers were asked how their students responded to gender issues addressed in *The river between* and *An enemy of the people*. Thirdly, these teachers were to indicate why they thought high school students should be sensitized about gender issues addressed in literature set books. Other questionnaire items included how teachers sensitized their students about gender issues in teaching of literature. Finally, teachers were to indicate whether they were aware of the Gender Policy in Education and the Gender Responsive Pedagogy and how they were implementing these in the teaching of literature.

A total of 51 teachers from the selected schools were interviewed using an unstructured questionnaire with open ended questionnaires in order for them to provide free responses. The first part of the questionnaire contained items on the teachers' qualifications and teaching experience.

6.2 Teachers' academic and professional experience:

This section investigates the background information of the respondents. It consists of demographic information including gender and teachers' academic and professional experience in teaching literature. Teachers' academic, professional experience and preparedness are important as predictors of the quality of teaching because the essence of effective teaching lies in the ability of the teacher to set up desired educational outcomes (Bogonko, 1992). Well trained teachers can encourage their students to get interested even in matters outside the curriculum but which are beneficial to their lives outside school.

Table: 6.0. Academic qualifications of English teachers.

Qualification	Male	Female	Total	%
M.Ed	3	3	6	12%
MA	0	0	0	0%
B.Ed	5	22	27	53%
BA	1	1	2	4%
S1/Diploma	5	6	11	22%
PGDE	0	4	4	8%
Other	0	1	1	2%
Total	14	37	51	100%

The above data shows that a majority (53%) of teachers interviewed hold a Bachelor's degree in education, 22% hold a Diploma in education, 12% hold a Master's degree in education, 8% hold a post graduate diploma in education while 4% hold a bachelor's degree in arts while 2% hold a master's degree in leadership. The study reveals that 98% of the teachers who participated in this study are qualified enough to teach Literature in

Kenyan high schools, with a majority 53% being holders of a bachelor of education degree.

The next step was to find out how long the teachers had taught English in high school.

The results are presented in table 6.1.

Table: 6.1. Professional experience of English teachers.

Years of teaching	Male	Female	Total	%
1-5 years	3	4	7	14%
6-10 years	5	10	15	29%
11-15 years	2	4	6	12%
16-20 years	3	9	12	24%
21-25 years	1	8	9	18%
Did not indicate	0	2	2	4%
Total	14	37	51	100%

The above data shows that 29% of teachers had taught for 6-10 years, while 24% had taught for 16-20 years. This was followed by 18 % who had taught for 21-25 years. 14 % had taught for the shortest time, that is, 1-4 years while 12% had taught for 11-15 years. Lastly, 4% female teachers did not indicate how long they had taught. The study therefore reveals that all the interviewed teachers had considerable experience in teaching literature in Kenyan high schools.

6.3. Elements of gender responsiveness in the selected set books.

As observed earlier in this study, teachers play an important role in students' achievement in schools. They are crucial enablers in matters relating to students' interpretation of gender issues in literature set books, among other issues. Being responsible for promoting learning in schools, teachers contribute in translating curriculum materials into practicalities (Anita et al, 2010). As shown in table 4.2, 59% of the teachers considered the set books gender responsive.

Table: 6.2. Teachers' responses to gender responsiveness of set books.

Responses	Male	Female	Total	%
Yes	12	18	30	59%
No	2	19	21	41%
Total	14	37	51	100%

The teachers advanced several reasons to support their stand. For instance, male and female teachers concurred that though the traditional society used to belittle women, authors have attempted to portray some female characters positively. In *The river between*, for instance, Muthoni is portrayed as courageous whereas Paulina, in *Coming to birth* emerges courageous, assertive and strong, albeit through sheer determination in very challenging circumstances. This is one point of consensus where even students felt the same way.

In addition, the teachers felt that the girl child should be given more chances to express her mind without victimization. The male and female teachers further noted that the role of the female is over emphasized in *Coming to birth* and *The river and the source* where the writer of the latter seems to imply that society can survive without the boy child. However, some male teachers noted that despite a few characters being positively portrayed; male chauvinism eclipses development of female characters especially in politics as demonstrated in *An enemy of the people*.

In addition, both male and female teachers pointed out that *Coming to birth* and *The river and the source* highlight plight of women and elevate female characters while *The river between* and *An enemy of the people* elevate the male. It is like a battle of the sexes, males elevating males and females elevating females. The teachers noted that this is not a positive development of gender responsiveness. Sometimes, in the process of elevating male characters, texts like *The river between* bring out biases against women.

Another aspect of gender responsiveness noted by the male teachers was the deletion of the following sections of *The river between* which they considered gender insensitive. “You could more readily trust a man than a *kihii*, an uncircumcised boy” (page 38) and “A day would come when all these ‘*irigu*’ (uncircumcised girls) would be circumcised by force to rid the land of all impurities” (page 117). The teachers argued that this was an

attempt by the writer and the publishers to be gender responsive and they should be commended for it.

On the other hand, 41% of teachers strongly felt that the texts are not gender responsive. Male teachers argued that the set books have portrayed female characters negatively in several ways. For instance, there are fewer female characters compared to the male which tends to deny women visibility. When teaching a set book with over representation of male characters, teachers will need to develop awareness in their learners to discuss and consider gender roles and representations. Any imbalance in set books may lead to the assumption that this is how women should be treated in real life (Jones, Kitetu and Sunderland, 1997).

In addition, female characters like Paulina are subjected to domestic violence while others are denied leadership positions. Female characters are generally confined to reproductive roles which are not rated highly as compared to male characters who are depicted in leadership positions both in public and private arenas. Set books with this kind of representation perpetuate inherent gender bias by assigning traditional roles to men and women, thereby reinforcing stereotypes. Men characters operate in spaces that are traditionally and socially public and participate in outdoor assignments that project them in stronger roles like engineers, lawyers, professors, pilots, mechanics and so on.

Women and girls on the other hand are shown as passive observers where boys and men are performing important experiments (Bakt, 2003).

On the other hand, some male teachers felt that the way the set books are written is a true reflection of the cultural set ups of the respective societies and they should remain so. They argued that there should be no question of gender responsiveness if the set books are portraying the reality in those societies. These types of responses echo Gordon's (1995) observation that teachers are products of societies that raised and socialized them. Therefore, the way they handle gender issues is a function of the values they were socialized to acquire. In this case, they are likely to perpetuate values of gender differentiation. In school, teachers are important role models and if they are not gender sensitive, their students are likely to imitate them.

Female teachers had several reasons why they thought the set books are not gender responsive. They noted that the set books are generally set in traditional times when women in many communities were relegated to inferior positions in almost all spheres of life. For instance, female characters are given minor roles and are not expected to question anything and those who do so like Muthoni are punished severely. This continued portrayal of females does not provide proper role modeling for female students.

Teachers observed that despite the fact that over the past few years “women have risen to prominence in various sectors, some set books still continue to depict men in prestigious positions. Women are portrayed as feeble, dependent, insecure and in need of men more than the men need them”, among a host of other negative portrayals. Such texts, the teachers note, ought not to be taught in our schools, or if they are, the teacher must be at pains to explain the context in which the text is set. As Iqbal (2005) observes, such texts that may legitimize and reinforce repressive and retrogressive ideologies ought not to be taught in schools especially in view of the fact that the prevalent teaching methodology may be subscribing to an uncritical acceptance of the validity of the ideas inherent in a text.

Finally, some female teachers noted that gender responsiveness should not be just about women. One teacher said, “if it is about elevating the woman, I feel we are doing a disservice to the boy child – it leaves the man / boy no longer sure of his position in the society. As Crouch (2005) observes, gender issues should be balanced and not be seen as if writers are favoring one gender. An ideal set book represents girls, boys, women and men in such a way that they are on equal terms in language, illustrations and narration. This is one way in which set book writers can contribute towards the establishment of a society free of gender bias and where issues of human rights are upheld and respected.

In addition, Rudman (1995) and Simpson and Masland (1993), note that set books should portray women and girls in a positive light and with active dynamic roles. They should not portray either gender in a stereotypical manner. Teachers should therefore encourage their students to read gender neutral books which:

1. Portray individuals with distinctive personalities irrespective of their gender
2. Do not evaluate achievement on the basis of gender
3. Portray occupations as gender free
4. Do not portray females as always weaker and more delicate than males
5. Portray individuals who are logical or emotional depending on the situation
6. Use gender neutral or gender sensitive language.

6.4 Teachers' responses to students' perception of gender

The data in table 6.3 shows that 86% teachers indicated that their students respond to gender issues addressed in literature set books.

Table: 6.3. Teachers' responses to students' perception of gender.

Responses	Male	Female	Total	%
Yes	12	32	44	86%
No	2	5	7	14%
Total	14	37	51	100%

Male teachers noted that through class debates and discussions, students point out where there is gender bias, inequality, discrimination and other gender related issues in the set books. For instance, they ask questions on portrayal of female characters. The female students are particularly very vocal on issues touching on women and girls. For instance, they admire positive portrayals of women, for example, Mrs. Stockmann's nurturing role as a model mother, and home – maker but also pointed out that her moderate approach to political issues is not admirable; and that she should be more vocal in matters that she feels are not going right. Others admire Muthoni's and Nyambura's courageous and rebellious nature in confronting the traditional status quo.

On the other hand, female teachers note that their students respond to gender issues enthusiastically by asking gender related questions and commenting on incidents both in the texts and in contemporary life that bring out gender issues like subordination of women. The students vehemently argue for gender parity.

In addition, female students are very sensitive to any issues touching on their gender. They appreciate the great role that women play to bring sanity to society and so wonder why women are presented so negatively in some texts. The students are usually very excited by writers who attempt to address gender imbalance.

The teachers reported that male students on the other hand keep wondering why male characters in *The river and the source* keep dying while in *Coming to birth* they are either depicted negatively or not developed fully. They argue that there is need for each gender to be portrayed positively and to assert itself. Lastly, male students are excited to identify with courageous and prosperous male characters as their role models.

14% of teachers said that their students do not respond to gender issues. They attributed this partly to students' poor understanding and interpretation of the textbooks. Secondly, they take the texts as just fictional. This response compares favourably with the responses of students discussed earlier where they indicated that they were not interested in portrayal of men, women, boys and girls' characters and other gender issues in *The river between* and *An enemy of the people* because they considered those set books as just fiction with little to do with real life.

Other students appeared complacent with the situation in the set books and therefore accepted the status quo, while others are only interested in items that will help them pass KCSE. Some, especially, males, do not appear to be very enthusiastic about gender imbalances and discrimination. One respondent noted that the students were not keen to discuss gender issues in class and eschewed such discussions by emphasizing how impractical it is to practice gender equality at school and in the wider society since it is at "variance with cultural norms, values and practices".

However, such students should be made aware that culture is dynamic and gender is a human rights issue and that no country or community can craft its own human rights that are not universally applicable (Chinyalu, 2010). Teachers handling students with this kind of mindset should also be encouraged to develop the critical and analytical faculties of their students and encourage them to think for themselves so that they may be able to reflect insightfully upon social, cultural, ethical and other issues with unprejudiced clean minds (Iqbal, 2005).

6.5 Importance of creating gender awareness among students.

First, the teachers noted that many societies in the world today, Kenya included, have undergone a huge change in the traditional views regarding men and women. However, issues of gender including how men and women relate, remain a thorny issue in the African continent and beyond. “Students should therefore be sensitized about their rights in regard to gender. Each should enjoy equal rights regardless of their gender”.

Secondly, the teachers argued that students need to realize that when it comes to ability and responsibility, gender does not matter. This is important so that the boy child does not “internalize the misconception that the girl child has no say in society as some of the literature texts tend to portray”, among other prejudices acquired at home and elsewhere. Since societies are changing, gender roles included, the traditional male attitude towards

women should also change. As Anita et al (2010) argue, to minimize contentious issues in gender relations, we need to start changing the mindsets of the younger generation of society as they are the ones who can bring about further change in society, with their “innovative ideas, thoughts and practices”. To this end, we need good educated teachers who have a sound knowledge regarding gender issues.

Thirdly, the teachers concurred that the gender issues highlighted in the set books also happen in real life since ‘literature is about life’. Students should therefore be equipped with the knowledge and skills to help them handle issues arising in their circumstances.

The other reason why students should be sensitized about gender issues in literature textbooks is that of promoting the image of the woman. Teachers argued that students need to see women as important forces that contribute to societal growth. It will also encourage the girl child who is usually the victim of gender discrimination. This will in turn enhance gender balance and help the students to see that “both genders complement each other physiologically and in gender based orientations”. This will also encourage male and female students to work together and respect each other.

Finally, the teachers agreed that students should be sensitized in order for them to be able to pick out elements of gender bias, prejudice and stereotypical portrayals among other gender issues in textbooks and other teaching materials. They added that “in order to

have a balanced society, we should use everything possible, set books included, to take care of the boy and the girl child. Writers who promote gender bias should be shunned when selecting KCSE set books”.

Female teachers also noted that many students take it as if the gender issues addressed in the set books reflect who is better between a boy and a girl; there is therefore need to correct this mindset; that it is not about gender competition. In addition, it is important for learners to be encouraged to have liberal ideas and realize that there is no gender that is more important than the other - this would enhance equity in all areas. This would in turn enhance liberal ideas and sensitivity to gender issues such as equality in all matters affecting society. The students should also be encouraged to avoid stereotyping of genders and make them aware that societal views are not necessarily correct.

The male teachers on the other hand also noted that gender issues are real issues that touch on human relationships. Therefore, it is important to create gender awareness in the students for better male/female relationships. This awareness will enhance gender harmony and enable students to think independently and respond to gender issues logically. In addition, it will help narrow the disparity between men and women by according women equal opportunities as men.

6.6 How teachers create gender awareness among students.

Liselotte (2007), notes that teachers have a responsibility of making learners aware of gender issues and helping them towards becoming critical respondents to set books. In addition, teachers must also bear in mind that they have a huge responsibility for providing a more versatile view on gender representation than is provided in the textbooks (Iqbal, 2005). The male and female teachers in this study explained that they used the following methods to sensitize their students about gender issues addressed in literature set books:

1. Giving assignments and questions for discussion on gender discrimination/bias, gender equality and other gender related issues.
2. Encouraging debates on gender related issues by highlighting specific gender issues as they arise in the set books and giving students a chance to discuss/ debate what they feel about such issues.
3. Relating gender issues in the set books to the students' immediate environment and other real life situations.
4. Identifying female success in the set books in relation to successful female personalities in real life and quoting role models that students would like to emulate.
5. Encouraging students to look at females as persons who can help men grow, and vice versa – and explaining that men and women work together to develop the fictional plot as well as real plot in life.

6. By illustrating specific points with positive character traits – capitalizing on the strengths and showing students how they can correct the shortcomings/weaknesses portrayed in the set books and in real life.
7. Encouraging students to develop a positive attitude / opinion on gender relations and ensure mutual respect for all. Similarly, encouraging each gender to fight for their rights while respecting the other gender. While emphasizing that each gender is important.
8. Exposing and correcting gender biased views / opinions about gender in set books and real life situations.
9. By emphasizing the importance of gender balance and faulting the negative treatment given to women in some set books.
10. By giving equal opportunities to boys and girls to participate in the class and school environment.
11. By asking students to be practical by asking themselves if they would like to see their own relatives like mothers, sisters and girlfriends mistreated; and asking them to adopt the opposite sex's point of view on specific gender issues.
12. By using a variety of material on gender issues other than set books in class.

13. Explaining terms such as gender, gender equality, gender bias, gender parity among other gender related terms so that students understand what gender is all about and correct any misconceptions they may be having regarding gender.
14. Use of gender neutral/ sensitive language and encouraging learners to do the same.
15. Sensitizing girls about their rights.
16. Showing students the importance of giving equal chances and opportunities to either gender both in school and in their communities.
17. Teaching positive and negative aspects of either gender.

The above data illustrates that teachers interviewed in this study are keen and enthusiastic to create gender awareness in their students and to encourage students to practically apply the positive ideas they learn in school and from set books. Their responses correlate well with Lawrence (1995) and Rudman's (1993) suggestions that teachers can sensitize their students about gender issues in set books by:

1. Raising questions about character portrayal
2. Asking learners to reverse the genders of individuals
3. Encouraging learners to use gender neutral or sensitive language

4. Asking learners to adopt the opposite sex's point of view about a gendered issue among other strategies.

The responses of teachers interviewed in this study also seem to validate FAWE's intervention efforts to train teachers in order to make them more gender responsive. FAWE, (1997), note that the teachers who have gone through their training have been empowered as agents of change. This has resulted in teachers paying attention to gender issues within the school plans and processes, and support to needy girls and boys. The teachers interviewed in this study may not have gone through any such training or even possess that kind of empowerment and mandate to deal with gender issues in textbooks and the school environment, but they have shown great enthusiasm and keenness in dealing with gender issues in literature set books.

6.7 Teachers' interaction with gender policies.

The Gender Policy in the Kenyan education system was developed in 2006 as a response to the MoE's recognition of the fact that the national education system had been characterized by gender disparities at the national level, and between the various regions, in favour of males (Gender Policy in Education, 2007). The development of this policy was an effort towards addressing this gender disparity. One of the specific objectives of this policy is to "ensure that the curriculum design, development and implementation, pedagogy, and teacher training processes as well as curriculum materials are gender responsive". At the secondary school level, one of the strategies in the policy involves

undertaking continuous review of the curriculum to ensure gender sensitivity. It is in this regard that the study sought to find out if teachers of English in Kenyan high schools are aware of the existence of the Gender Policy in Education and how they were implementing it in the teaching of literature. The findings are illustrated in table 6.4.

Table: 6.4. Level of teachers’ awareness about Gender Policy in Education

Responses	Male	Female	Total	%
Yes	11	23	34	67%
No	3	14	17	33%
Total	14	37	51	100%

The above data shows that 67% of the interviewed teachers indicated that they already know about the existence of the gender policy in education. This comprised 45.2% female and 21.8% male. The teachers’ responses revealed that most teachers seemed to have a good understanding of gender equality but were not quite sure how best to handle it in their pedagogical practice since no training had been offered towards this end. All interviewed teachers therefore indicated the various ways in they were trying to implement the policy as shown below:

1. Treating both girls and boys in classroom situations and other areas equally in addition to encouraging students to learn through the example and treat each other with respect.

2. Using gender sensitive language in the classroom situation and outside and encouraging students to do the same.
3. Sensitizing students about gender equality and explaining why each gender should be given equal opportunities in every area of their lives.
4. Encouraging both boys and girls to respect each other and ensure none takes advantage of the other.
5. Taking every opportunity to promote the education of the girl child to attain the level of that of the boy.
6. Highlighting the role played by female characters in the prescribed textbooks and other literary materials while at the same time giving equal attention to male characters as well. This is very important especially in a mixed school so that none of the genders feels isolated.
7. Sensitizing students about gender issues such as female circumcision (popularly known as FGM) which mostly affect girls. Sensitizing girls on the issues that affect them and how they can fight discrimination. Raising other emerging gender issues as they teach.

In addition, male teachers indicated other ways in which they are attempting to implement the gender policy.

1. Trying to dismantle any myths, beliefs, biases and any misconceptions which have been constructed around sex/gender and which may also be portrayed in literature set books.
2. Initiating debates on issues concerning the plight of women in some African communities and expressing the need to deal with it.

The female teachers indicated that they also express the need for women empowerment and go ahead to “compose songs and poems on women empowerment” while encouraging students to do the same.

Finally, some of the teachers, however, indicated that they are in the process of learning how to implement the policy. They expressed enthusiasm and readiness of implementing the policy as soon as they are sure of how to do it.

33% of the teachers said that they had not heard about the Gender Policy in Education. One male teacher said “I am not bothered about gender issues. My job is to make students pass KCSE”. The rest just said ‘no’ but did not offer any explanation.

The teachers were also asked to explain their interaction with the gender responsive pedagogy. The findings are illustrated in table 6.5.

Table: 6.5. Level of teachers’ awareness about Gender Responsive Pedagogy

Responses	Male	Female	Total	%
Yes	7	5	12	24%
No	7	32	39	76%
Total	14	37	51	100%

24% of the teachers indicated that they were already aware of the existence of a Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP). However, they indicated that they were not sure how they could apply it in their teaching since they “did not have comprehensive knowledge about its applicability in the teaching of literature or the entire school system”. Some have barely heard about it and therefore need instructions on how to implement it. They further noted that the little knowledge they had about GRP was acquired from outside the school system; out of their personal interest and initiative. They lamented lack of education mechanisms to equip teachers with knowledge pertaining to gender.

Bridget et al (2010) note that many well – intentioned teachers often do not have gender training and are not well informed to intervene or advocate on gender issues with students. This scenario may arise from the fact that most of the teacher training institutions in Kenya and elsewhere do not include training in gender responsiveness (FAWE, 2001). This results in teachers not addressing the specific needs of students, especially girls, since they are largely unaware of the issues facing them. However, the teachers’ responses in this study show that the teachers are open to ideas of gender

responsive pedagogy but they need access to training and knowledge to become more effective actors of change.

The teachers in this study therefore, were using their own interpretations to implement the GRP. Below are some of the ways they are using:

1. Teaching learners about gender equality
2. Ensuring equal participation of both genders since there are many efforts to elevate the girl child, but also taking care that the male students are not sidelined in any way.
3. By emphasizing the need for girls to fight it out in academic circles so that they merit to be placed in positions of responsibility.

Research findings by Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender (2005), Challenges for Teachers' Training (2005) and Mloma et al (2005) indicate that teachers who receive training on gender issues are better able to address individual needs in the classroom and the school. In addition, FAWE's Teachers' Manual for Gender – Responsive Pedagogy suggests that a teacher's interaction manner and pedagogy limits discriminatory non – verbal or verbal language, promotes equal questioning of boys and girls and highlights strategies for selecting gender neutral set books and other curriculum materials.

FAWE's training initiatives ensure that teachers are gender responsive. The training has empowered teachers as agents of change. In return, this has resulted in teachers paying attention to gender issues within the school plans and processes, including use of textbooks. A study done in the COEs acknowledged that the learners confirmed that they were getting support from the teachers towards their academic performance and other important issues (FAWE, 2006). FAWE (2011) further indicates that from their experience, girls excel academically and are better equipped to overcome life's challenges when they have teachers who are trained to meet their needs, learning materials that portray them in positive and equitable ways, school environment that is welcoming and conducive to learning, and a community of adults that support them.

On the other hand, 76% of the teachers said they did not know about the Gender Responsive Pedagogy. They, however, indicated interest and enthusiasm to learn about it so that they can begin implementing it in their teaching. Going by this high percentage of teachers who are in the dark concerning GRP, there is urgent need for the government to address the issue.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that teachers advanced several reasons why they thought the set books were gender responsive or not. They also indicated that their students responded to gender issues in the set books through debates, class discussions, and asking questions

related to gender in and outside class. Finally, the chapter shows that though the teachers had no formal training or mechanisms on how to implement the Gender Policy in Education, they were already making efforts to sensitize their students on gender issues in literature set books.

7.0 CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings of our research and makes some conclusions and recommendations and also indicates implications of the study in relation to gender responsiveness of the selected literature set books and the students' and teachers' responses. In addition, suggestions for further research have been made.

7.2 Summary of findings

From the study and research questions asked, various findings related to gender responsiveness in KCSE literature set books were arrived at. The summary of the findings are presented in terms of gender responsiveness of the selected set books and students' and teachers' responses to gender issues in the selected set books.

The study observed that the set books under study were not gender responsive in terms of selection, character portrayal, occupation, loci, access to sources of power, and use of gender biased language. During the period under study (1999-2009), 62% writers were male while 38% were female. The findings also showed clear sex typed patterns for males and females in the areas of character portrayal, occupation, loci and sources of power. For instance, *The river between*, *An enemy of the people*, and *Coming to birth* showed preponderance of males over female characters. Similarly the writers also pegged

characters to sex typed occupations, loci and sources of power. However, a different pattern was observed in *The river and the source* and *Coming to birth* where there was an attempt to break away from traditional patterns by creating inversion of gender roles where females become providers among other changes. Depictions of gender biased language in form of generics and other gendered associations were featured most in *The river and the source*, followed by *An enemy of the people* and *The river between*. *Coming to birth* registered the least with only one statement which could be considered not gender responsive.

Secondly, the findings showed that students did not reflect on themes beyond the main ones emphasized in class and literature guidebooks. In terms of their perception of the writers' presentation of character and role, the students cited gender issues such as discrimination, gendered traditional portrayals and role modeling as their main concerns. In addition, between 49.2 to 63% of students thought it important that males hold power in all areas in order to maintain the traditional status quo while 30 to 46.4% thought skill, capability and suitability for particular positions should be the parameters to determine who holds power regardless of gender. Further, those who agreed with the writers' portrayals of men, women, boys and girls explained that the traditional portrayal where males are superior ensured harmony and stability in all sectors of society while those who disagreed with the portrayal cited gender discrimination and negative portrayal of the boy child as the main reasons for their stand. Finally, all respondents indicated that they would like KCSE literature set books to address gender issues as a matter of priority.

Thirdly, the study showed that all the interviewed teachers hold qualifications ranging from master's and bachelor's degrees to post graduate diploma in education and diploma in education. In addition, their experience ranged from one to twenty five years. The teachers advanced several reasons why they thought the set books were gender responsive including what they termed as the writers' efforts to portray female characters positively and deleting sections of set books that were not gender responsive. Others argued that the set books were not gender responsive because they portrayed female characters as inferior while subjecting others to violence and other vices. These observations tallied with those in objective one. They also indicated that their students responded to gender issues in set books through debates, class discussions and asking questions related to gender in and outside class. In this connection, teachers suggested ways in which more gender awareness can be created among students including giving gender related assignments and using gender sensitive language in class while encouraging students to do the same. Finally, though teachers had no formal training or mechanism on how to implement the Gender Policy in Education and the Gender Responsive Pedagogy, they were already making efforts to sensitize their students on gender issues in literature set books.

7.3 Conclusion

The findings in this study were based on gender responsive analysis of *The river between*, *An enemy of the people*, *The river and the source* and *Coming to birth*, and responses from 51 teachers of English and 1,406 form four students. This section discusses the conclusion based upon the analysis of that data. From the findings, it was revealed that the KCSE set books under study are not gender responsive. They all had elements of gender bias, stereotyping, unequal representation of male and female characters, use of gender insensitive language and discrimination of both men and women among other gender (un)responsive elements. Gender bias has therefore been perpetuated in all the KCSE set books analyzed in this study.

The students' responses revealed a great sense of gender awareness and sensitivity in regard to the gender issues raised in the literature set books. The students generally raised similar issues like gender discrimination in regard to women and gender (in)sensitivity of the writers among others. Some students, however, indicated that they were comfortable with the traditional portrayal of gender, while others noted that the writers should change with the times and accommodate a modern outlook where both genders are treated equally.

The teachers' responses revealed that they were keen and enthusiastic on gender issues in literature set books. Despite the fact that they had no formal training or mechanism on

how to implement the Gender Policy in Education and the Gender Responsive Pedagogy, they were already making efforts to sensitize their students on gender issues in literature textbooks. It was also noted that the Gender Policy in Education was only recently formulated and no proper training of teachers on how to handle gender issues in set books and other curriculum materials had been done.

Therefore, efforts to eliminate gender inequality in set books are impeded by various reasons including:

- Inexistence of comprehensive and clear guidelines for teachers to track down gender bias/ equality in set books.
- Writers and publishers have no clear guidelines that would assist in the production of set books that are gender responsive.
- Since literature set books are not written specifically for study in schools, writers may not necessarily be keen on gender responsiveness.
- Lack of training of teachers on how to implement the Gender Policy and Gender Responsive Pedagogy.

The findings of this study have implications on education research and practice. First, some pedagogical implications might be suggested. One is the vital role of the teacher in preventing gender discrimination from sneaking into the classroom. Even if some form of biased description of either gender were to be found in the set book, as long as the teacher

is well aware of such likelihood beforehand, he or she could deal with it more appropriately, or even turn it into a valuable educational opportunity to raise learners' consciousness of gender issues.

The findings of this study may also have policy implications to different stake holders as far as the production of set books and implementation of the school curriculum are concerned. Curriculum developers, teachers, principals of high schools, and subject inspectors are responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Gender Policy in Education.

7.4. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, which have established that KCSE set books are not gender responsive, students have a high sense of gender awareness, and that teachers do (not) consider the set books gender responsive, the following recommendations have been made.

Recommendations to MoE

- The textbook vetting committee of the MoE should continue to give specific guidelines to the English panel at KIE in selection of set books. Such guidelines would also assist publishing houses, writers, editors, illustrators and others in the production of gender responsive set books.

- The MoE through KIE should organize training workshops and seminars for teachers, writers and other personnel involved in the production of set books and other curriculum materials so that they can become well informed about gender responsiveness in the production of set books. Such training will sensitize the personnel on observing gender aspects in the process of selecting school set books.

Recommendations for curriculum developers, tutors in teacher training colleges and university lecturers.

Gender responsive mechanisms should be developed within the existing educational institutions like KIE, teacher training colleges for secondary school teachers of English, departments of literature in universities and any institutions responsible for the training of teachers for secondary schools. The following steps can be taken:

- Develop a gender inclusive curriculum that does not perpetuate gender inequality.
- Train teachers to identify and critically review any aspect of gender (un)responsiveness in literature set books.
- Empower teachers to be able to empower students as well.
- Train teachers to interpret and use the Gender Policy in Education and Gender Responsive Pedagogy.
- Organize seminars, workshops and in – service training for the teachers who are already teaching.

- Sensitize teachers against using any teaching strategies that may undermine the values and images of male and female learners through the teaching of literature.
- Encourage teachers to be creative in the way they teach set books that contain gender bias, gender stereotypes, gender insensitive language and other aspects of gender unresponsiveness and also in encouraging students to be open – minded and critical in interpreting literature set books.

Future developments

- By applying the ABC of Gender Analysis Model to analyze literature set books for gender responsiveness, this study might be able to serve literature and language teachers in their choice of teaching materials, or to use the prescribed KCSE literature set books in a way that will sensitize students on gender issues in literature set books. Although the literary and linguistic contents of set books would naturally be of primary concern, the potential effect of explicit and implicit sexism in the set book should not be underestimated because it can affect the long term development of the learners.
- If one of the goals of teaching literature is to, among other things, help students not merely to gain more personal power over language but also to fulfill their human potential eventually, teachers should always be cautious of sexism and gender bias in their teaching environment. By sharing the results of analyses of other literature set books, English teachers can further pursue more gender

sensitive and gender fair teaching materials suitable for the development of learners as individual human beings.

- It is important that all set books and reading materials be free of the notion of gender inequality, gender discrimination and bias which are embedded in set books, lessons and teachers' interactions with students.
- Gender sensitive and gender neutral language needs to be promoted at all levels and throughout the institutions for students, staff, faculty and management levels.
- Intensive in – service teacher training for gender responsiveness already initiated by FAWE can be incorporated by MoE in existing pre –service and in – service training programmes.
- Centres of Excellence founded by FAWE can be mainstreamed into existing programmes of the MoE aimed at equality improvement and reducing gender inequities.
- Teachers should be trained in gender responsiveness in the short run, special seminars and workshops can be conducted for them from time to time but in the long run, an appropriate module should be incorporated in all teaching training curricula.

7.5 Suggestions for further Research

This study was limited to KCSE literature set books, form four students and teachers of English in Central Province of Kenya. Further research can therefore be carried out in other parts of the country and also analyze other literature set books that are not prescribed for KCSE; especially those that are used at lower levels of the education system. The analysis can be extended to English language and other subjects.

Further research could also be conducted to carry out classroom observations in relation to how teachers handle gender issues in literature classes and consequently how students respond in actual classroom environment.

To have a more comprehensive picture of how teachers and students in high schools respond to gender issues in literature set books, further research can be done in the following areas;

- Examine the extent to which students in lower levels of the school respond to class readers, passages and other literary materials.
- Investigate the extent to which English teachers in the lower classes consider gender responsiveness in their choice of class readers, literary passages, poems and other literary materials for use in class.

- Compare and contrast the portrayal of gender issues in KCSE set books that have already been analyzed with those that will be prescribed for KCSE in future in the light of the Gender Policy in Education.
- Examine the extent to which literature guidebooks address the question of gender in KCSE set books.

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APPENDICES

A1: KCSE Literature set books (1999 – 2009)

a) Compulsory

1. *The government inspector* - Nikolai Golgol
2. *Mine boy* - Peter Abrahams
3. *The winner and other stories* – KIE
4. *The burdens* - John Ruganda
5. *The river and the source* - Margaret Ogola
6. *Looking for a rain god and other short stories from Africa* – KIE
7. *Coming to birth* - Marjorie Macgoye
8. *The river between* - Ngugi Wa Thiong'o
9. *The merchant of Venice* - William Shakespear
10. *An enemy of the people* - Henrik Ibsen

b) Optional

1. *Homestretch* - Velma Pollard
2. *Shreds of Tenderness* - John Ruganda
3. *Half a Day and other Stories* - Macmillan Publisher

A2: Framework for analyzing the selected texts

A framework for analyzing the selected literature texts for gender responsiveness.
(Adapted from Kabira and Masinjila, 1997)

1. An overview of the text: subject, level, genre (e.g. play, novel, short story)
2. Which characters are designated by gender?
3. What generics are used and are there situations when they are gendered?
4. Describe the relationship between the men and women, boys and girls.

Men & women, boys & girls	Relationship

5. List the activities/ occupations that the men and women, boys and girls are engaged in.

Occupation/activity	Men	Women	Boys	Girls

6. What is the locus of these occupations/ activities?

Locus	Men	Women	Boys	Girls

7. Who has the power and how is it perpetuated?

	Source of power	Means of perpetuation
Men		
Women		
Boys		
Girls		

A3: Students' Questionnaire

Preamble

This is a research on **Gender analysis of literature textbooks: A study of selected KCSE texts**. It is based on the following selected texts: *The river between*, *An enemy of the people*, *Coming to birth* and *The river and the source*. The objective of the study is to establish the extent to which the above texts are gender responsive, if the teachers perceive them as such and the extent to which the students respond to the gender issues raised in the texts.

Kindly answer the questions.

1. Please indicate your sex: Male/Female
2. List down some of the themes covered in *The river between* and *An enemy of the people* in the order that you consider them important.
3. As you read the above literature texts, how did you feel about the writers' presentation of male and female characters?
4. What would you say about the roles that men, women, boys and girls play in the above texts?
5. In your assessment, is it important whether it is the men or women, boys or girls who hold more power or make decisions in *The river between* and *An enemy of the people*? Please briefly explain.
 - a) Why it is important
 - b) Why it is not important.
6. Do you agree with the above authors' portrayal of men, women, boys and girls?

Yes/No Please explain

7. Indicate the issues that you would prefer literature texts selected for study in high schools address?

A4: Sample Questionnaire for secondary school teachers of English
Preamble

This is a research on **Gender analysis literature textbooks: A study of selected KCSE texts**. It is based on the following selected set books books: *The river between, An enemy of the people, Coming to birth* and *The river and the source*. The objective of the study is to establish the extent to which the texts are gender responsive, whether the teachers see them as such and the extent to which the learners respond to the gender issues in these texts.

Kindly assist me to acquire the necessary information.

Section A: Background Information

1. Please indicate your sex: Male Female

2. Academic Qualifications:

SI/ Diploma

Bachelor of Education

Bachelor of Arts

Master of Education

Post-Graduate Diploma in Education

Other: Specify

3. Experience in teaching in secondary school.....years

Section B: Please respond to the questions below.

1. Do you consider the above texts gender responsive?

2. a) Do your students respond to gender issues addressed in *The river between* and *An enemy of the people*?
b) If your answer is “Yes”, how do they do that?
3. Indicate reasons why high school students / should not be sensitized about gender issues addressed in literature texts.
4. If your answer to question 3 above is “Yes”, how do you sensitize your students about gender issues in your teaching of literature?
- 5 a) Are you aware of the **Gender Policy in Education**?
b) If your answer to the above question is “Yes”, how are you implementing the policy in the teaching of literature?
- 6 a) Are you aware of the **Gender Responsive Pedagogy**?
b) If your answer to the above question is “Yes”, are you using it in your teaching of literature?

A5: Full responses for table: 5:4

Theme	Frequency	%	Some illustrative statements
Traditional perspective	120	31%	<p>Roles should be assigned according to gender like in the traditional times e.g. women should help.</p> <p>It's shameful to see women ruling.</p> <p>Roles for each gender should be dictated by societal traditions and we should not attempt to change.</p> <p>I've been brought up to understand that each gender performs specific tasks this is what I see in the texts.</p> <p>Portrayal of women as inferior and men as superior should be upheld: attempt to change will destabilize society.</p> <p>Men are ordained leaders.</p>
Role modeling	84	21.8%	<p>Characters are our role models- then roles should reflect what we want to become. The roles that each gender plays is a reflection to the kind of</p>

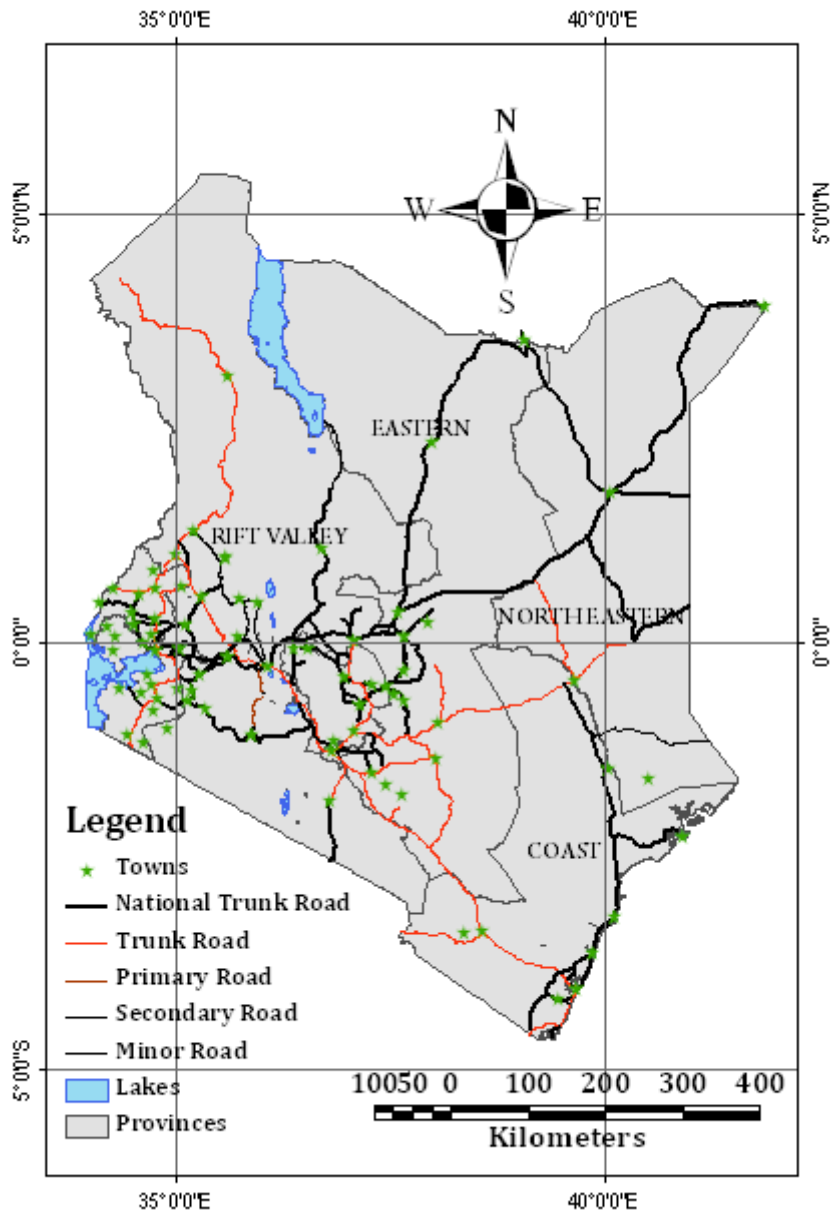
			<p>roles we should follow. Literature is a reflection of reality, the roles we see are imparted unconsciously in our minds and we follow. Texts are a good pointer to how men and women should relate. Texts are setting models of how the young should relate with each gender. My reading of the texts would be meaningless without considering what role each gender plays.</p>
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A6: Full responses for table: 6.2

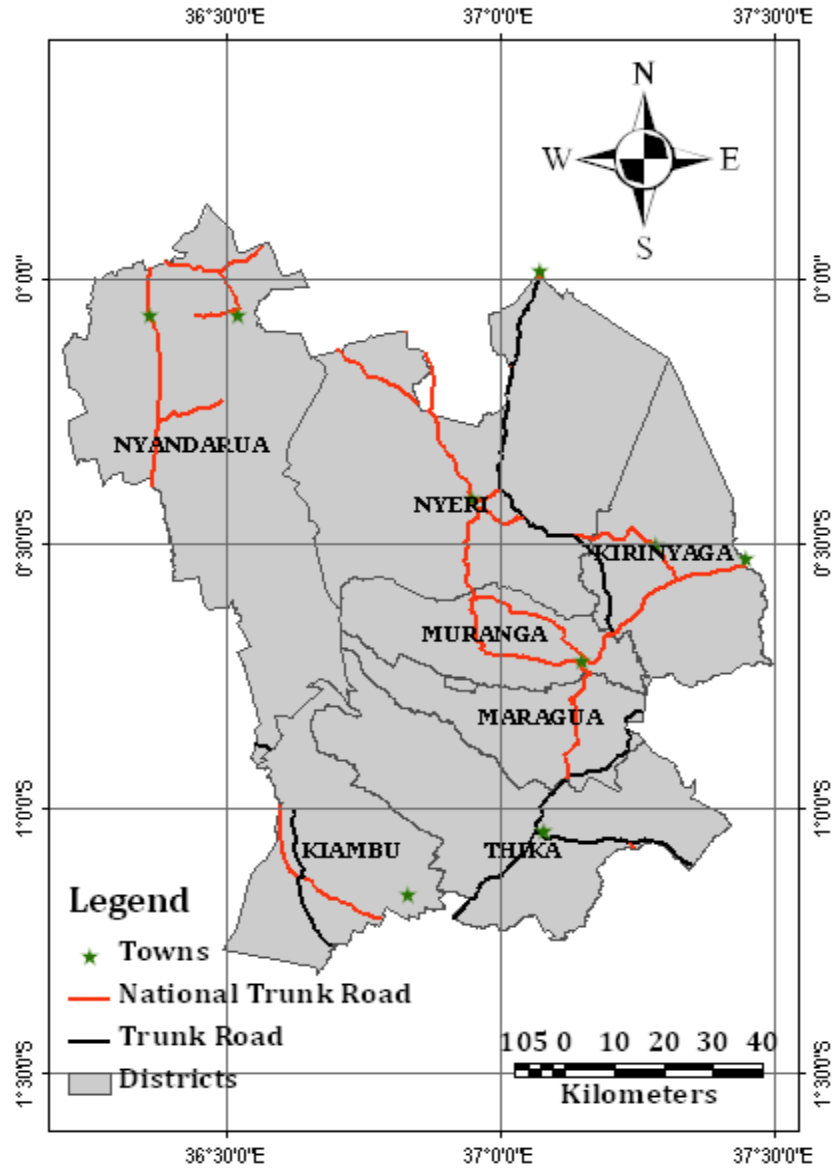
Theme	Frequency	%	Some illustrative statements
Selected texts are gender responsive	30	58.8%	<p>Though traditional societies used to belittle women, some writers like Macgoye have attempted to portray women positively.</p> <p>Muthoni in TRB is portrayed courageously.</p> <p>Some writers are going overboard to be gender sensitive. CTB and The River and the Source seem to imply society can do without men.</p> <p>Deleting of some sections that were offensive to both men and women in TRB is a good sign.</p>
Selected texts are not gender responsive	20	39.2%	<p>Female characters are given minor roles, not expected to question anything and punished when they do so.</p> <p>Female characters have no voice and are subjected to male domination.</p>

			<p>Some texts have more male characters thereby overshadowing the females. Since some texts elevate the girl child, I feel this is a disservice to the boy child.</p> <p>Writers should give equal attention to both gender.</p> <p>Continued portrayal of females as inferior demoralizes girl child.</p>
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A7: Map of Kenya



A 8: Map of Central Province



A9: Research permit from Ministry of Education

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THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

Prof./Dr./Mr./Mrs./Miss REGINA
MUTHONI GACHARI


of (Address) KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
P.O. BOX 43844, NBI

has been permitted to conduct research in
..... Location,
..... District,
..... CENTRAL Province,
on the topic. A GENDER ANALYSIS OF
SELECTED KCSE LITERATURE TEXT BOOKS
IN KENYA.

for a period ending 31ST MAY 20 11

PAGE 3

Research Permit No. NCST/RRI/12/1/SS/1000
Date of issue 9/12/2010
Fee received SHS 2,000



[Signature]
Applicant's
Signature

[Signature]
Secretary
National Council for
Science and Technology