

Gender Inequalities in the Context of Basic Education: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Gender inequality in education has been a buzzword in our educational system in recent decades. This paper identifies the factor that creates gender inequality in education and in the world in general. Our study focuses on the identified factors that elevate the existence of gender inequality in education. Based on the literature, recent studies and reports shows that there are 5 factors that contribute to the existence of gender inequality in education and these include poverty, geographical remoteness, armed conflict, lack of school infrastructure, and quality of education. The researchers strongly believed that our young learners are our future innovators and heroes, thus, without quality education; none of these would be achieved. The results suggest that our educational system needs to collaborate with the private sector and provide innovative measures to address these issues of gender inequality in education.

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INTRODUCTION

Gender Equality is very important at nowadays. It's because women have to deserve equal things as same as the men. Such as, education, rights, and privileges in the society. Women also can get a good education, and women also have a power to change the world, for giving an opinion, and sharing what they feel about something (Shaffa, 2019).

According to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognised the right to education, stating that education should be free and compulsory for everybody, and higher levels of education should be accessible to all (Santosh et al. 2011). On the one hand, education is seen as a human right that is essential in order to fulfil the rest of human rights and the overall world's development (UNESCO 2016).

Previous research by (Mesa, 2007; Mueller-Oppliger, 2014; Salinas & Suson, 2020; Aburayya et al., 2020a) has stated that the value of education is well-known and is widely acknowledged. Recognizing it as a crucial instrument in improving welfare and alleviating poverty, countries all over the world have ranked it as a leading global concern. Equal access to education makes possible the social and economic

mobility of the poor. By enhancing the skills of the underprivileged groups, education is an important factor in putting a stop to poverty's virtuous cycle. Furthermore, education's benefits extend beyond the individual level. Firms, industries and the economy as a whole also benefit from the improvement in the quality of human capital brought about by education.

However, equality of access in education is often seen as being the crucial factor affecting gender based education. UNESCO (2016) claimed that large gender gaps exist in access, learning achievement and continuation in education in many settings. This has been used in several studies to assess the gender inequality in education. Results of the studies of (UNGEI, 2009; Gachukia, 2012; Aburayya et al., 2020c) found out that gender equality in education (GEE onwards) is crucial to progress towards poverty reduction, since it enables women and girls to become part of the labour market, increasing economic productivity, and empowering them to participate in the decision-making at a community level, as well as to improve family health and well-being by reducing the fertility rates and infant and maternal mortality.

Similarly, Bertocchi & Bozzano (2019) claimed that gender-based inequalities are a universal and pervasive characteristic of all societies, today and in history. One of the most crucial dimensions in which gender differences manifest themselves is in human capital accumulation and its acquisition through education. In turn, gender gaps in education are among the main factors that determine gender disparities in a broad set of socioeconomic realms, including work, family, and public life.

Moheyuddin (2005) argued that in the world in general and in the underdeveloped countries (UDCs) in particular, the women are inadequately served in terms of education, health, social status, opportunities and legal rights. Bista (2004) claimed that gender disparity in terms of participation, learning conditions and funding. Further, educational policies, acts and programs were not prepared in a gender sensitive manner. The curriculum, text materials, teacher training and examination practices did not favor girls. Moreover, results shows that evidence from the study of these three countries Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi shows that boys and girls are enrolled almost at parity for primary school as a whole and yet educational outcomes for girls are still relatively poor (Bridge, 2019; Aburayya et al., 2019a).

Finally, ensuring access to and improving the quality of education for girls and women, as well as removing all gender stereotyping and further obstacles which impede their active participation, was stated as the biggest priority at the world due to unhealthy demands on both sexes which inhibit their natural talents and interests from developing, and consequently limit economic progress and prevent social cohesion (UNGEI 2009; Helsinki, 2014; Aburayya et al., 2019b). Moreover, gender equality is a global priority for UNESCO and inextricably linked to its efforts to promote the right to education and support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Through the education 2030 framework for action, SGD 4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' and SDG 5 to 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls' (UNESCO, 2016).

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

While this division of inequalities of education has continued to emerge, this study determines the existence of the factors that affect gender inequality in education in the perspective of global systematic review.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a meta-analysis to describe and explain previously reported statistical significant results that examine the same phenomenon. Therefore, in simplest terms, a meta-analysis is a statistical analysis of the survey findings of a large number of empirical studies (Zeng et al. 2014; Aburayya et al., 2020b). In Meta-analysis is a statistical technique, or set of statistical techniques, for summarising the results of several studies into a single estimate. Stanley (2001) noted that meta-analyses allow the evaluation of the effect of different data characteristics and methodologies on the results reported.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature relied on a wide variety of gender education initiatives, ranging from Person metrics for composite

indices. According to Jakiela and Hars (2019) gender gaps narrowed in some places and widened in others. Gender gaps have developed in some low-education countries where they did not exist before, but disappeared or diminished elsewhere. UNESCO (2016) noted that poverty, geographical isolation, minority status, disability, early marriage and pregnancy, gender-based violence, and traditional attitudes about the status and role of women, are among the many obstacles that stand in the way of women and girls fully exercising their right to participate in, complete and benefit from education.

Historical overview

For several decades, differences between boys and girls in educational achievement have been the focus of scientific attention. In the seventies, the emphasis was on the low achievement of girls. Girls had lower scores and participation in science and mathematics when compared to boys (Byrne 1978; Foster et al. 2001). Researchers posited several explanations for these findings, which could be divided into two categories. Firstly, girls were positioned within a 'deficit framework' (Foster et al. 2001; Hodgetts 2008). Their poor performances were attributed to a lack of certain qualities, such as low confidence, high anxiety and fear of success. Furthermore, girls' tendency to be compliant in class, work hard and hand in homework that was neat and on time, was taken as a sign of a passive, compliant and malleable learning style (Hodgetts 2008). This was contrasted with boys' active and curious learning style, which would be focused on understanding rather than on achievement or teacher expectations. This way, girls' attitudes and behaviour in school were taken to be a sign of an inferior learning style (Byrne 1978). Secondly, several researchers pointed to factors other than innate traits that impeded girls' academic success. They suggested studying the impact of societal norms and expectations of gendered behaviour (Byrne 1978; Skelton and Francis 2011; Poligrates & Suson, 2020). For instance, research pointed out that textbooks lacked positive role models for girls, and that boys dominated the classroom and teacher attention. These researchers declared that it was therefore no surprise that girls would be less confident than boys. Policy recommendations based on this literature focused on changing learning material and raising teachers' awareness of inequalities in their classroom management by letting girls answer questions as often as boys, debunking gender stereotypes concerning mathematics and science, and so on.

Gender Inequality in Education

Gender inequality in education as the process that treats people (men and women) are treated unequally in access and opportunity to educational matters. In this study, the term gender inequality will be used to imply social injustices, unfairness in distribution of resources and opportunities among men and women as these groups try to acquire education (Osongo, 2019; cited by Linda (2014)). Moreover, in many poor countries, women are educationally strongly disadvantaged, and this is clearly connected with sustained high fertility in many of these countries. In the rich countries of the West, the situation is very different. There, a major social development of the second half of the 20th century has been the spectacular increase of participation in higher education in general, and participation by women in particular. In North America and Europe today, women excel men in terms of participation and success in higher education. However, research on the demographic

consequences of the reversal of gender inequality in higher education is rare, even if education, and especially women’s level of education, has proven to be relevant for all kinds of demographic behaviour (Lutz et al. 1998, 2008; Vincent-Lancrin 2008).

Impacts of gender inequality in Education

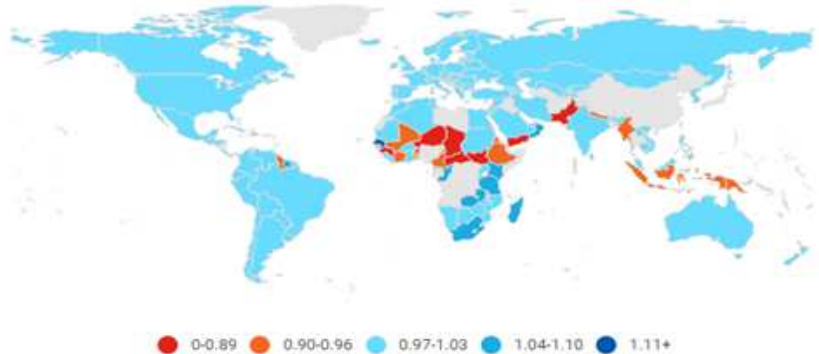
There is strong relationship between inequality in education and poverty. The impact of poverty on a child’s academic achievement is significant and starts early, young children growing up in poverty face challenges with cognitive and literary ability and [often] begins school both academically and socioeconomically behind their peers from higher-income backgrounds. In its 2016 report, The Condition of Education, the National Center for Education Statistics attributed living in poverty during early childhood, in part, to lower levels of academic performance “beginning in kindergarten and extending through elementary and high school” (Taylor, 2017). Despite global efforts to expand educational opportunities for women, gender inequalities persist in many developing countries (Osby et al., 2016). Systematic educational inequality between boys and girls is now much wider at the level of basic education. In many countries the introduction of free primary education led to a significant increase in enrolment. This in particular enabled access for girls, poor people, and other marginalized groups. However, it also led to lower quality due to the limited resources to meet the demand. Even where free secondary

education has been introduced, the lower enrolment and retention of girls in secondary education persist in most low-income countries, indicating that the lasting impact of low quality and discrimination during primary education is working as a barrier to transition (ECF, 2013; Tembon, 2008).

Distance to School and Gender Inequality in Access to Education

According to De Jaenghere (2004) found that in Africa lack of formal secondary school in close proximity to girls’ homes prohibits their participation. Similarly study by Coady and Parker (2002) in Mexico had shown that distance to secondary school had consistently large negative effect on probability of enrolling in secondary school. The impact in general was much larger for girls than boys in long journey from home to school affect students particularly girls in retention and completion of study circle. A study by Scharff, (2007) in Malawi found that girls were more vulnerable than boys to abuse, both while in transit and when in school. To avoid lengthy walk to school some girls make their own lodging arrangement near community day school that do not offer boarding facilities (Scharff and Brady, 2006). Those self-borders are unsupervised by the school and they fall in risk of theft and self abuse. This results to gender gaps in education especially in rural areas due high dropout rate by girls.

Figure1. Gender parity for primary enrolment, 2012-2018

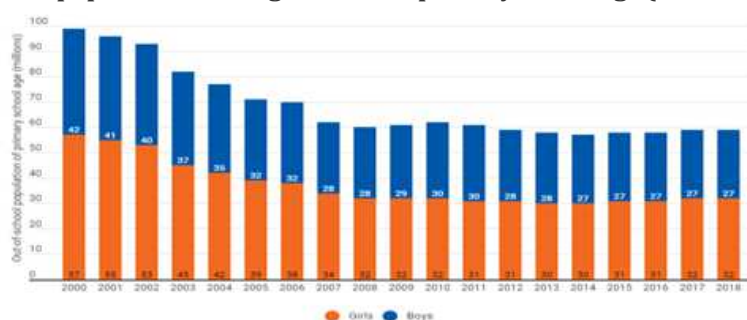


Gender and Education, (UNICEF, 2020)

Notes: Gender parity index on adjusted net enrolment rate is used as primary source, and where administrative data is not available, household survey data is used.

Primary education is the basis for a lifetime of learning. Providing universal access and ensuring the completion of primary education for all girls and boys is one of the main areas of concern listed in the Beijing Platform for Action adopted in 1995. Since Subsequently, substantial progress has been made towards achieving universal primary education and narrowing the gender gap in enrolment. More than two-thirds of countries have achieved gender parity (defined as having a gender parity index of between 0.97 and 1.03) in enrolment in primary education, but in countries that have not achieved parity, especially in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia, girls are more likely to be disadvantaged than boys. In Chad and Pakistan, for example, the GPI is 0.78 and 0.84, which means that 78 girls in Chad and 84 girls in Pakistan are enrolled in primary school for every 100 boys (UNICEF, 2020).

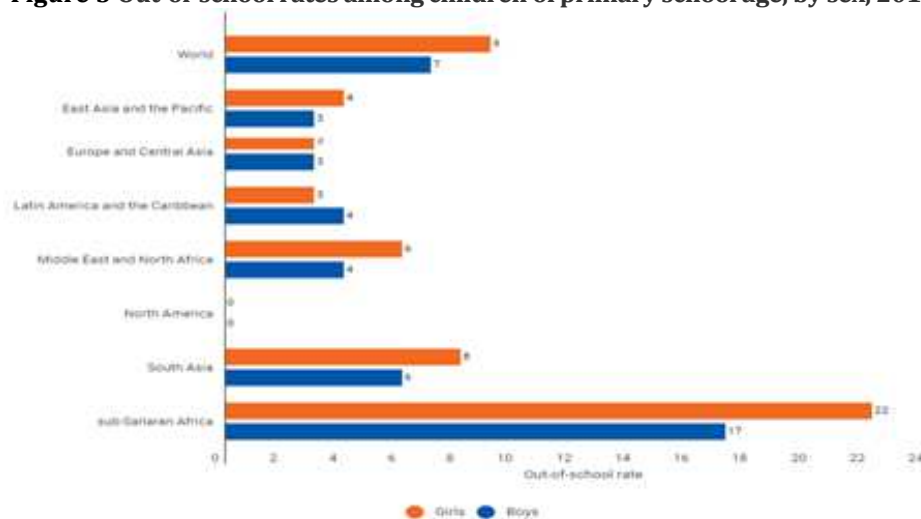
Figure 2 Out-of-school populations among children of primary school age (millions) by sex, 2000-2018



Gender and Education, (UNICEF, 2020)

Around 2000 and 2018, the number of primary school-age out-of-school girls declined by 44 percent globally, from 57 million to 32 million. During this same time, boys saw a global decrease of 37 percent, from 42 million to 27 million. Despite this development, some 59 million primary school-age children were out of school in 2018 (55% of whom were girls), with the highest overall rates being observed in sub-Saharan Africa. While out-of-school girls worldwide are more likely to never enrol in school than out-of-school boys, progress has stagnated for both girls and boys since 2007 in reducing the number of out-of-school children, as increased access to primary education has barely kept pace with the growth of the global child population, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (UNICEF, 2020).

Figure 3 Out-of-school rates among children of primary school age, by sex, 2018



Moreover, according to the report of UNICEF (2020) the barriers that deter children from attending primary school vary across and within countries but are often associated with poverty, geographic remoteness, armed conflict, lack of school infrastructure and poor-quality education. Moreover, these obstacles often interact with gender inequality to intensify learning disadvantages for marginalized girls. Interventions that address the high costs of education for families, including the abolition of school fees, cash transfer programs and school feeding programs, have demonstrated success at reaching out-of-school children, whether applied universally or targeted towards specific populations, such as rural girls. Village-based schools to shorten the distance girls need to travel to attend school include additional steps to meet the most vulnerable girls; 'girl-friendly' schools with separate latrines for boys and girls; gender-sensitive teaching methods and flexible education options for girls who have dropped out of school and want to return, such as young mothers. However, more data are needed to understand the precise impact of gender norms on the likelihood of girls and boys being out of school, including the relationship between decisions around child marriage, the withdrawal of girls from school and perceptions of the value of girls' education versus boys' education.

Meanwhile, results from the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of 15-year old students reveal that girls performed better than boys in reading literacy in every country participating in the assessment. In comparison, in around 80% of the participating countries, boys performed better than girls in mathematics. In 38% and 55% of nations, respectively, gender differences favoring boys and girls were found. Although there has been a lot of controversy about the variables that account for gender disparities in educational achievement, emerging evidence of the importance of positive gender socialization in all children, both at school and at home, indicates that parents, teachers, and policy makers may promote basic skills in reading, math, and science.

Results and Discussions

Findings of this investigation have shown that although gender equality in education is a fundamental right, there are also some instances that gender inequality in education do really exist in different countries. Results from the study UNESCO (2020) this gender inequality is associated with the following factors: poverty, geographic remoteness, armed conflict, lack of school infrastructure, and poor quality of education. Moreover, beyond education-related deficiencies, low-income children can experience inadequacies with physical and cognitive development and disparities regarding access to healthcare and to key resources that help ensure success. Furthermore, data show that low-income students are five times more likely to drop out of high school than those who are high-income and 13 times less likely to graduate from high school on time (Taylor, 2017). Another factor that contributes to gender inequality is the distance or geographical locations of the school which learners have difficulties in reaching their schools. It is expected that boys have capability to walk or reach their schools even if it's in the mountain, however, girls on the other hand, not all can do the same. Further, armed conflict was also seen as factors that elevate the gender inequality in education, this entails that terrorism, war and any unlikely behaviour in a country does affect the way students pursue or learn in the school. Next factor is the lack of school infrastructure, this entails that poor country has significant gender inequality in education, due to the lack of funding that enhance the education and interest of the students. In fact, these not only affect the gender inequality in education, but rather affect the whole system of education. Lastly, poor quality education contributes to the overall gender inequality in education. Poor quality means different perceptions and quality of learning. It affects how learners view the importance of education in their future career. This makes a limitation to the learners to strived hard and make their dreams a reality. Overall, these factors does not only touch the gender inequality in education but rather also crushed the whole system of education.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, different factors affects were seen as contributors of gender inequality in education, this includes poverty, geographical remoteness, armed conflict, lack of school infrastructure and poor quality of education. Although, the quality of education has emphasized in the sustainable development goals, however, it is also imminent that equality does exist due to the identified factors that hinder gender quality in education.

Implication to Practice

This study suggests that our educational system with the help of private sector should find innovative ways to address these issues of gender inequality in education. We should always remember that our young learners are our future innovators and heroes, thus, without quality education none of these would be achieved.

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