

# **Women's education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Obstacles facing women and girls access to education: The case of Kenya**

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## **Abstract**

Today, many African nations and international communities have committed themselves to eliminating gender and education disparities by the year '2005'. I ask myself-how are rural African women included in these policies of education for all and how their educational needs are being met by their governments. The continent of Africa in no doubt faces many challenges that range from educating its population, to economic development. However, due to many western 'so called' developmental programs such as Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), Africa Growth and Opportunity Agreement (AGOA) and the recent trends of globalization, substantial African governments have neglected to address the needs of their women population and education. Rather, educational policies that are generated are geared towards assisting those already educationally advantaged groups.

For the past four decades, women and education inequality has been the most discussed subject in many developing countries. Many of these developing countries are located in Sub-Saharan Africa. The emphasis put on gender and education should alert us to the fact that education is necessary for women and men, either economically and socially, and it advances development for both women and men. Studies have indicated that educating girls increases women's wages, health productivity, and it also allows women in developing countries to gain access to rising job markets, thus, making them the main benefactors (Hill et al., 1). In order to address issues of gender and education disparities, Sub-Saharan African governments need to acknowledge that gender gap in education does, indeed exist. *One does not cultivate his field without acknowledging to himself that he will die of hunger.* When these governments start to invest more in women's education and schools openly extend their enrollments to include girls, the outcomes will be tremendous. Educating women will reduce the number of women living in poverty, women will be less dependent on their husbands, and most importantly, the number of illiterate women will begin to decline. However, when policy makers fail to invest adequately in educating women, it reduces the potential benefits of education productivity that influences household income, and reduces women's quality of life.

**Key Words:** Gender; Women; Pastoralists; Education; Kenya

## **Introduction**

Over the decades, most African women have received some sort of informal education, but formal education, has been reserved for men who occupy the more important and elite roles in government and society. In reality has changed slowly over time. However, the change needs to be expedited, despite the complexities of the situation, by involving all stakeholders, and without confining women to the "one size fits all" description that, unfortunately, has characterized, for example, the conditions placed on African nations by international lenders such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

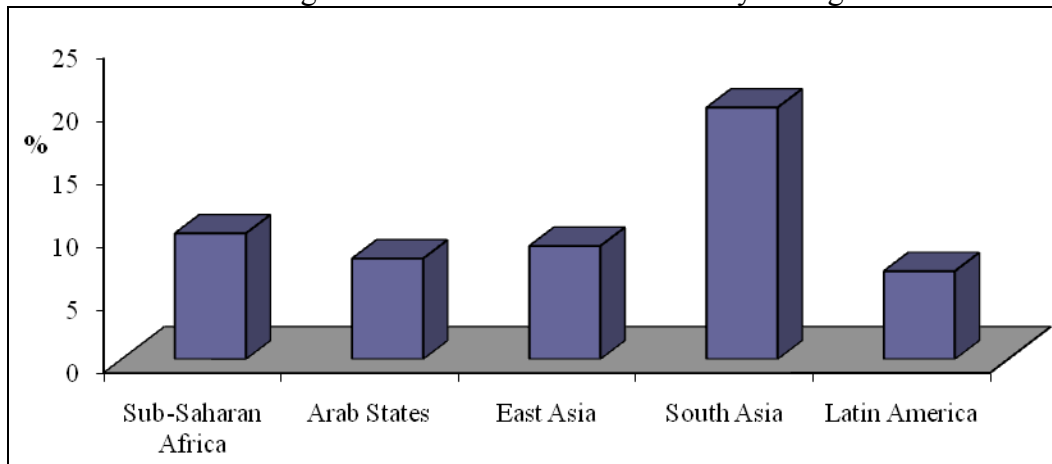
This article seeks to analyze the issues of gender and education inequalities in two East African countries of Kenya and Tanzania. Taking into consideration the process through which these countries have responded to the issue of gender and education inequalities. The article focuses on girl's access to primary schools and the hardship that keeps them from enrolling in secondary schools. It examines obstacles, parents and teachers' attitudes towards girls' education. A brief description of gender and education inequalities in Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole is provided. The article begins with a summary of the world's forums on education in Dakar and Jomtien. It is divided into sections of Sub-Saharan Africa; Kenya and Tanzania. These are some of the countries with the highest rates of gender and education disparities. Understanding Nyerer's socialism and self-reliance in Tanzania is an essential part of understanding the current educational system that shapes gender and education inequalities in Tanzania. In some parts of the article, the term "women" is used to refer to girls because in rural areas, which this article focuses on, students in primary schools range from age 7-16 years old. At this age, girls are often referred to as "women" since those aged above 15 and beyond are regarded as being in a marriageable age.

Over 130 million children in the world are not in schools and two-thirds of these children are women. Four years have passed since the Jomtien "Education for All" forum at which time nations pledged themselves to educating every child by the year 2000 with special attention to closing the gender gap in education. Previous conferences, such as the World Summit for Social Development that took place in 1995, moved the 2000 deadline to 2015, with an emphasis in achieving gender and education equalities by 2000. At the World Education forum in Dakar, Senegal April 2002, the world leaders agreed on providing education for all and agreed on closing the gender gap in education by 2015. Although, the deadline was moved from 2000 to 12 years from today, the mission has nonetheless changed from that of 2000. The Dakar plan of action includes a commitment by Western governments and the international Communities, such as UNESCO UNIFEM and Oxfam among others to develop a global initiative that will assist national efforts. The challenge however remains how to implement these policies. An international structure with the ability to mobilize the partnerships, resources and commitment is needed to guarantee that the Dakar framework continues to be implemented throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Oxfam, 2000). The goals that had been set in the objectives of 2000 had not been met by November 2001. In the mean time the number of children, especially two-thirds of girls will still be neglected of their education by 2015 (Oxfam 2001).

Around the world close to 45 million, more girls than boys are not receiving primary school education. Sub-Saharan Africa, among other regions, leads the gender gap discrepancies in education. Primary education in this region is taking awhile to reach those who are anxiously waiting. The number of girls enrolled in primary schools in Sub-Saharan Africa had increased by 2% in the mid 1990s (Kwesiga, 2002).

Although girl's enrollment has increased in primary schools, most of them do not finalize their primary school education. More girls in Sub-Saharan Africa drop out of schools than boys. The consequence of these gender disparities is that many of Sub-Saharan Africa's illiterate population remains women. Africa and other continents such as Asia and Latin America still lag far behind in educating their female population. Fewer girls are enrolled in primary schools in these regions. As Figure 1 illustrates, Sub-Saharan Africa is next to South Asia in being more behind in educating its 'girl child'.

**Figure 1: The Gap in girls' school enrolment**  
 Percentage difference between rates for boys and girls



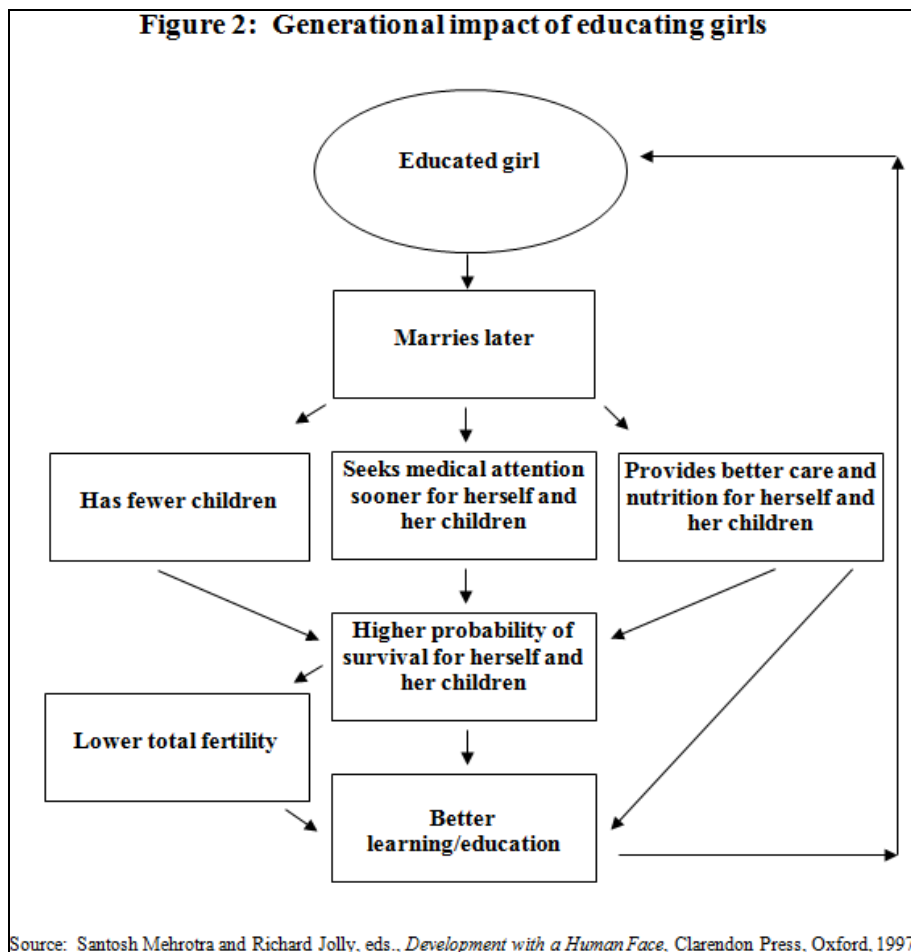
*Sources: Oxfam 2000*

The fundamental right of women to have access to education has been recognized in many international education policies as a human rights issue. Education for girls is another way of achieving an effective means of a wide variety of development goals. As an organization dedicated to fighting human rights issues, Oxfam believes that increasing the number of girls in schools and decreasing the number of illiterate women will have positive effects for Sub-Saharan African countries' economic growth (Oxfam, 2000). High enrollment of girls in schools is associated with longer life expectancy for both genders. Life expectancy in Tanzania, where 46% of women are illiterate, is 47 years (UNDP, 2003). Children in this country are more likely to die during their first five years of life. In households where mothers have some form of education, daughters are more likely to go to school and succeed, thus, producing a "virtuous circle" effect. Figure 2 provides a sense on how a women's education is driven from generation to generation.

Although the gender gap in education is beginning to be addressed in some developing countries in Africa, gender disparities are still evident in the number of girls enrolled in primary schooling. In the region of East Africa, the World Bank reported that in 2000, roughly 50% of girls had no formal education compared to that of boys. The Countries of Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea, Central African Republic, Rwanda, Burundi and Congo, just to name a few, have lower percentage points of women enrolled in primary schools than boys. At the same time, some countries in Latin America and the Philippines have a higher percentage of women and girls enrolled in school compared to many developing countries in Africa (World Bank 1991). This would indicate that many countries in Africa are far behind in educating their girl population.

Currently Kenyan and Tanzanian women have the opportunities to receive semi-free primary schooling. Originally Kenya and Tanzania were advised by the World Bank and the IMF to implement primary school fees. In 2002, however, they reversed this advisement and instead advised these two countries to eliminate primary schools fees. This is all through the process in which they called COST sharing. This elimination of primary school fees policies was suggested at the World Forum of Education Conferences held in Dakar and Jomtien. Though rural children in these two countries are attending primary schools, gender and education inequalities are still in tacked. There is still an absence of public financing and parents are frustrated because the cost of education is being shifted to poor families as part of privatization

of education financing. Parents are also being charged with the indirect costs of supplies such as books, uniforms, school supplies, among others.



The current condition of education in these counties carries with it financial constraints, along with political and cultural considerations. Sub-Saharan Africa's current economic conditions cannot be overlooked when dealing with education achievements and challenges. The continent as a whole has yet to achieve its economic development and has yet to stand on its own feet for independence. African countries are the victims of the World Bank and IMF debt programs. How does a continent achieve development when it has such a high illiteracy rate? External political factors, for example debt reimbursement and resources allocation, also influence how Sub-Saharan governments prioritize social programs, including education. It is fair to conclude that the term "education for all" in Africa remains alien. The World Bank and its arms assess the impact of education systems through rates of return to education (Hallak and Stevens, 132). *I am not an economist, nor am I experienced with finance, however, I would not run an entrepreneurship if I was not benefiting from the enterprise and definitely one way to determine that would be through its rate of return.*

The policies that the World Bank and the IMF have imposed on all African developing countries, with the exception of Somaliland, are the practices of demanding commitments in order to receive loans. The commitments consist of reallocation of government spending,

liberalization, and privatization. The World Bank and IMF set these standards with the expectation of a higher national gross produce (GNP). It is clear on the one hand, the World Bank urges for the creation of more jobs and reducing fertility and infant mortality rates through education. Studies have pointed out that there is a tremendous economic and social benefit that can result from educating women and girls (The World Bank, 1996). At the same time policies such as structural adjustment programs seem to encourage developing countries to spend less on education indirectly. Sub-Saharan African countries spend more money every year paying back loans and interest rates to the World Bank than they spend on social services to their population.

Apart from economic hardship, providing education to women in Sub-Saharan Africa has remained a challenge. These challenges include parental and community attitudes of a boy's education being more important than a girl's, a traditions that has kept many African women from accessing adequate education and curriculum. Since colonialism, Sub-Saharan education has changed very little. To Africa, "independence" does not mean freedom from the European infrastructures or from European languages and values. Rather, according to Said, "decolonization" means to Africa a reproduction of the European system and structures in national and international terms (Said, 1990). Perhaps this would explain why many parents feel less need for their daughters to attend European schools and attain Western ideologies.

Educating women in Kenya and Tanzania raise serious challenges of fewer enrollment rates adding on to already poor achievements and completion rates (Wamahiu, page 1999). The outcome is high illiteracy rates that impact more women than men. Many would argue that women's access to education in general has come a long ways since the 1950s. According to Sivard, the girls' enrollment rate was 1.2 thousand in 1950. This number rose to 26.3 thousand in 1985( 1985), " It is estimated that 30 million African girls, many of them in rural areas are out of school or have never enrolled, or have dropped out of the education system all together. Wamahiu states that these figures rose to 36 million in the year 2000" (Wamahiu, 1999). Fees are part of the obstacles that parents face when deciding to send their daughters to schools. Sometimes costs that schooling requires are viewed too high for parents to risk by sending their daughters to schools. Studies done by both Wamahiu, 1994 and Kiluva-Ndybda, 2001 show that in some cases, parents cannot risk their earnings to send their daughters to school because the risk of them dropping out are too high.

There is no doubt that the African continent contributes to some of the world's poorest countries, and some of the world's highest illiteracy rates lie in this part of the world. However, education in African countries has been shaped by a mix of influences that include colonialism, in which the continent was robbed of its people, its cultures, and its natural recourses, and has suffered the humiliation of being referred to as the "Dark Continent". Each group of Europeans who sat foot in Africa had their own purpose in being there. Missionaries, for example, were in Africa to save the savage African from "evils" and from practicing their barbaric traditions and beliefs. Military conquerors, such as the British, French, and Belgium's among others present on the continent, came to introduce their governing systems, such as militarism, taxations, and dictatorship.

In 1999, UNESCO reported that in the 1980s, Sub Saharan Africa's percentage of illiterates in the age group ranging from 15 and older was around 80 %. In 2000, that illiteracy rate within the same age group had increased to 84% (UNESCO 2000).

The language of instruction also puts limits on the enrollment of women in schools. African schools, whether urban or rural, in general use the colonizer's language as the language of instruction. The majority of Africa's population speaks the national languages. During

colonialism, Europeans used language to impose their cultures to the detriment the African traditional cultures. The ideology was to assimilate the savage people and create a class of elites. Also, providing “privileges” to few divided the oppressed Africans and favored the continuation of colonialism. Yet even today, African leaders have adapted these language policies and continue to impose these languages on children. Kenyan instruction materials, for example, are those of the colonizer. The instructional languages raise difficulties in the effectiveness of teaching. In Tanzania, English is the official language. However, it is not the national language. As a result, many African schools have lost their African communal aspect. In return, they become resources that prepare students for life outside their communities. The impact of instructional language contributes to illiteracy rates among women and girls.

The argument of gender and education in Sub-Saharan Africa has received a great amount of attention since the beginning of the 1990’s both on the international and national level and in policy debates, specifically addressing formal education. Studies done by both African scholars on the continent and those done by Africanists indicate that women’s enrollment in primary schooling has grown drastically. However, more work remains ahead (Mama, Millercomm presentation at UIUC in November 2003). Studies done by Vavrus also show, for example, that in some regions of the continent, girls’ enrollment has exceeded that of boys since the 1960s when many African countries were scrambling for their independence. These areas have included the country of Botswana, and communities in Arusha and Kilimanjaro, both located in Tanzania where some schools include private primary and secondary schools (1997). However, studies conducted by the World Bank and its arm agencies point out that women’s enrollment in both primary and secondary school level in Sub-Saharan African does not equal that of males yet. At the secondary levels where school fees are involved, female enrollment falls far behind that of male enrollment (UNESCO, 1995; United Nations, 1995).

In general, many African parents, particularly fathers, teachers, and to some extent, girls themselves have lower expectations of female students. Women students are frequently treated differently in the classrooms as well as at home. In an African traditional society, a girl child must be kept at home to perform domestic and farm labor. Apart from economic considerations, other strains limit female participation and success in schools. These conditions include parental attitudes against what they refer to as the second colonial influence on their daughters. Parents often marry their daughters off young and the emphasis is put on having numerous children, the amount of time spent in initiation rites and the longing for girls to acquire traditional skills (Hyde, 1989). A girl’s education is irrelevant to her extended family because it does not bring wealth to her father in particular. However, dowry, which rural and urban African families value for marriage, brings immediate wealth to the girl’s family, and also makes her feel valuable in her new community. A girl who is 16-20 years old and is unmarried is another mouth to feed in her father’s house.

The current obstacles facing girls’ access to education in Kenya include the number of eligible children who are not attending schools, which increased to 4.2 million according to the 1999 Kenyan census (cited in Mungai 2002). Kenyan parents cannot afford to send all their children to schools again because a boy’s education is favored over a girl’s. Parents prefer to pay school fees for boys while girls stay at home and assist with farm labor, housework, and often act as second parents to siblings.

At the time of independence, the government of Kenya was faced with challenges of producing the skilled manpower that was necessary to facilitate the “Kenyanization” of the economy. Evidence shows that before Western education, a traditional African and Islamic

education system existed in Kenya. This traditional form of education was geared towards teaching Kenyan children about real life and moral values and skills necessary to survive in the Kenyan environment. Education was viewed as a lifelong experience. The African education conserved and transmitted knowledge and wisdom from generation to generation. This form of education was not as expensive as the “Western” form of education. The financial hardship for primary and secondary education falls on parents, uncles, grandparents, aunts and communities members who pay for facilities such as classrooms, libraries, textbooks, chalk, exercise books and uniforms. Kenya also has technical schools that require workshops. Here, students learn tailoring, plumbing and perhaps basket weaving. In the past decade, Kenya and Tanzania have achieved a general education ratio of 80-85% nationally. However, rural districts suffer a great deal. Mungai argues that 30 percent of many Kenyan rural districts lag behind in educating women and girls (2002). “In these regions, gender disparities in education continue to exist” (Mungai, 2002). Traditional beliefs and neglecting a girl child of her education is what creates these gender disparities in education. Economic factors of course should not be singled out since large populations of Kenyans are still subsistence farmers who get very little for their cash crops due to structural adjustment program policies.

Kenya is currently in need of well-trained teachers. In 2001, the Kenyan minister of education, Sr. Musyoka, announced that Kenyan schools have a shortage of 10,400 teachers, with primary schools needing 6,000 and secondary schools needing 5,000. Subjects in which there is a shortage of teachers include mathematics and sciences. A great number of Kenyan educators have been unemployed since the government froze employment in 1998.

Perhaps there is no other society in the world that strongly emphasizes that women stay in their reserved employment positions than the African society. Teaching in many African societies is viewed a female career. According to Mungai, over 50% of people without jobs in Kenya are teachers and are females, thus contributing to the oppression of women who are already marginalized. The raising high costs of primary education in the form of indirect fees remains out of touch for many Kenyans. The enrollment in Kenyan primary education has increased by about 5% in the past three years, from 85% in 1997 to 89% in 2000. Only 24% of students make it to secondary school (The Kenyan Daily Nation, Cited in Mungai, 2002).

The movement to burden parents with education costs through the education policy of cost sharing is more detrimental to women and girl’s enrollment in primary and secondary schools (Kinyanjui, 1993). In January of 2002, the Kenyan government, in accordance with the World Bank, implemented the recommended World Banks policies of no primary school fees. This policy brings wrong assumptions to many non-profit agencies, outside the country especially, committed to providing education to all and most importantly, committed to bring education to already disadvantaged women and girls. The policy of not charging a fee has not eliminated Kenyan parents from the burden of having to pay for children’s associated expenses for schooling. Primary school tuition, as it is known to the West, is a small part of expenses that Kenyan families have to worry about when considering to send their daughters to school. There are many other expenses associated with schools that contribute to fewer enrollments of children from schools, particularly girls. Expenses such as school uniforms, registration fees, admission fees, examination fees, among others, all contribute to fewer enrollments in schools and impact parental decisions on whom to educate in a household.

The affect of providing or not providing schooling of course impacts a boy child as well. Girls, however, specifically from rural areas are disadvantaged due to the social beliefs that educating a boy child is more important since he is the future leader of his country or

community, the head of the household, and thereby, he provides for his family (Njau and Wamahiu 1994). In general, the African belief is that a girl child only needs a hardworking husband to feed and clothe the family, as they in return take care of their children. As Kenya has moved towards modernity, and as the age of globalization and structural adjustment programs have spread throughout Kenya, those in rural areas suffer from the consequences of these new trends. However, beliefs, traditions and myths, among others still carry on as they have for thousands of years. For example, the myth of boys being superior and therefore more intelligent than girls and thus more likely to succeed over girls is still believed by many parents of this East African country. In connection with school fees, parents feel that by investing in a boy's education, the risk of losing money is very minimal since they believe that boys are more likely to succeed (Davidson, 1993).

Studies in other parts of the continent have shown that the cost of educating girls is higher than educating a boy. Both Davidson and Kanyuka, 1992; Ilon, 1990 and Kapakasa 1992 argue that in Kenya, Malawi, Uganda and Tanzania the cost of educating girls are much higher than the cost of educating boys. Girls' uniforms for example, are more costly while boys can easily attend school in old torn uniforms. Different factors including the number of children in a household and the family's income are significant in determining a girl's education. Often, girls are used as sources of income, commonly working on sugar plantations, and or working as housemaids for low income in order to contribute to educating a boy child. Literature show that Kenyan girls in rural areas focus more on work, i.e. household work, farming and taking care of siblings than girls in urban areas. As a result, fewer rural girls are found attending school (Cammish, and Brock 1994). Another argument used to keep women and girls at home, is that parents believe in the myth that there are no jobs for women in the labor market. Parents begin to question their daughter's education by believing that it is a waste of time and money to invest in a girl's education. This is particularly true for rural families. When financial decisions are made, girls are more likely than boys to be held back or withdrawn from schools (Ilon, 1990).

Other factors that affect a girl's education in Kenya include ethnic societies placing emphasis on girls remaining virgins until marriage. This tradition is practiced among the Luo, Kikuyu, Luyia, among others. It is encouraged that two people who are engaged wait to consummate their marriage until all the traditional ceremonies have taken place. Parents worry that if their daughters attend school, they will forget this part of their cultural values and engage in premarital sex. This fear comes from the idea that girls will acquire foreign values and perhaps forget their own. Traditionally speaking, rich African men also exploit girls sexually in exchange for money and in general, Kenyan girls are no exception. Girls from poor backgrounds usually are at greater risk than those coming from well to do families.

The Kenyan education policy does not allow pregnant girls to attend or continue school. The education system does not allow girls to return to school after the birth of a child (Odag and Heneveld, 1995). One would conclude that education policies in Kenya were designed to keep girls from attending schools. Like most teenage mothers coming from poverty, these teenage girls go on to have more children as they seek for love and comfort from men. They also face stigmas of having borne children while unmarried and, depending on the community, ethnic group and religious beliefs, some families; particularly fathers and brothers, disown their daughters and sisters. In many cases, these girls with children and unmarried are viewed as outcasts, thus forcing them to work as housemaids for employment (Chege and Okuma, 1993).

As headmasters, parents, brothers and sisters, our attitudes towards schools have strong influence on whether we make decisions to invest or not to invest in women and girls education.



However, when we believe that it is more profitable to invest in one child's education and not the other, the consequences are unbearable. Stereotypes point to the interpretation of cultural beliefs and practices regarding education, and the place of women in society makes up the basis for discrimination against gender in education. In many rural Kenyan communities, educated women receive negative remarks from community members. Parents and communities believe that educated women acquire western knowledge and have forgotten their own. Due to lack of education themselves, some parents believe that education leads their daughters to prostitution and being unfaithful in marriage (Bello et al., 1993). I believe that it is fair to consider, perhaps that African women feel that once educated, the need to stay in a marriage that lacks equal structure is absurd. Traditionally, social norms and patriarchal values limit the expectations of women, especially in careers. Women's employment positions in most African countries are still very confined to the typical roles of teachers, nurses, and secretaries' etc. while positions such as CEOs or other decision making jobs are unfamiliar to most African women because these are stereotyped as male positions. It will take persistence, hard work, collaboration and motivation for women to begin holding positions that are male dominated.

As mentioned previously, globalization has affected the African continent, perhaps even harder than other continents in the world. Globalization has not assisted in educating women in rural areas as the World Bank, UNESICO and IMF would have us believe in their literatures. Rather it has had a negative effective on people in rural areas compared to urban areas.

Globalization has also introduced an ideology of consumption for the rural poor. Today, bread, sugar and dress cords, all have become a necessity for the poor rural African. The African, it seems, has forgotten how to survive off the land as he has been taught by his father, mother and community.

African cities are expanding at a rapid rate which means that the demand for domestic labor has also increased. Poor parents from rural districts have responded by sending their daughters into the domestic labor markets in return for regular income. This new trend takes many women and girls away from school because they must live with families that they provide labor services in the cities (Fanta, 1991). Those who remain at home while performing domestic labor, are at the same time expected to continue performing their traditionally designated roles at home, even as they attend school. Boys' participation in the domestic economy is often limited (World Bank 1990). The labor lost to a family by sending girls to schools is perhaps proportionately more than the value lost in sending boys to school (Ilon, 1992).

Formal education is a major source of transformation. It links us to employment opportunities in the labor markets, especially in civil service (UNICEF 1992). Poor performance and limited access of women to schools and labor markets reinforces the bias against girls in the labor market (Davidson & Kanyuka, 1992). Women in Kenya and Africa in general are expected primarily to be daughters, sisters, wives, mothers, and this takes precedence over their aspirations for career advancement. Women must grapple with the assumption that their abilities and capabilities, especially in administrative positions, are limited. In this society, the socialization process confirms that men are superior to women.

Women and access to education in Kenya and Africa in general is significantly biased. Despite a small increase in the enrollment, Kenya and Sub-Saharan Africa still lag below the goal of eliminating gender inequality in education in both primary and secondary schools. There is no doubt that education in Kenya requires education policy makers to invest adequate resources in making sure that girls in rural and urban setting receive proper education.

Perhaps the most successful country in Sub-Saharan Africa to address the issues of women and education inequalities is Tanzania, making it one of few leading countries in Sub-Saharan Africa to do so (Tadreg, 1990). Tanzania has in one way or the other distinguished itself from the continent. The country became independent in 1961 with Julius Nyerere as its first president. Mwalimu Nyerere, as he was often referred to, took over a nation that was unstable economically, politically delicate and educationally neglected. When Nyerere became Tanzania's leader, the country had only 110 college graduates. It is believed that this hardship led to the Arusha Declaration act of 1967, which brought Nyerere to adopt and implement socialism and self-reliance (Coulson 1982). At independence, the ideology of socialism had become favorable over capitalist ideologies in most African states. Along with the affect of socialism, becoming independent in many African countries brought a period of hope. For Tanganyika, today Tanzanian, winning independence and uniting its people brought a sense of national worth. The leaders of the newly independent nation believed that they had the ability to choose the directions in which their country would assume. All the ingredients for socialism, based on human freewill, were present in the 1960s as nation after nation became "independent" from colonialism. Many African leaders experimented with different forms of socialism in the 1960s and 1970s. Leopold Senghor, of Senegal, for example, practiced a form of socialism that was best explained in his ideology of African Negritude, a form of egalitarianism (Senghor, 1959).

Socialism attracted new leaders in different ways. As a principle, it associated leaders with historical progressive movements; as an ideology, it sought to develop social groups that could surpass individualism and communal boundaries; and, as a social unit, socialism concentrated its powers on elites. It provided for the nationalization of industries in the countries and their direction below some ministerial control.

Although socialism in the West has come to partial decentralization and mixed economy, socialism in newly independent African countries focused on central organization, total ownership of the state and one-party regimes (Freund, 1998). This was particularly true with Nyerere of Tanzania. His ideology of socialism and self reliance fits the example of a leader whose personal ideas have made significant difference not only to personal relations of power, but also to social relations in his society. He perhaps represented the best moral example in political history. Consequently, Nyerere's ideas have had a great influence in the making of modern Tanzania and as such, its critical analysis is of great importance.

The mainstay of socialism and self-reliance in Tanzania was the creation of Ujamaa villages, often referred to in the West as the "villagization program". This ideology of self-reliance was organized around cooperative villages (Hyden, 1980). Nyerere's Ujamaa had three main principles: equality and respect for human dignity, the sharing of the resources that are produced by the efforts of all, and work by everyone and exploitation by none. Nyerere's ideology was created to encourage cooperatives, encourage social equality and responsibilities among Tanzanians. The two policies of socialism and self-reliance were strongly marked responses to external factors. Nyerere emphasized to his people that Africa's choices are not between change and no change, but rather, Africa's choices were between changing and letting what he called the "West" change Africa. He argued for Tanzanians to change their lives under their own direction rather than change from the influences outside their control (Nyerere, 1996). Nyerere was responding to his country's reliance on the West and a reply to what the current Tanzanian government considered as the western governments' arrogance with their connection to Tanzania as a remaining product of colonialism. Through the Arusha declaration, it is clear

that the development of Tanzania was not going to be controlled by the West. At the beginning of Ujamaa policies, Tanzania's farmers were encouraged to provide examples that other African peasants would follow. In 1973, as one of the socialism and self-reliance policies, Tanzanians were resettled, some by force, into some 5500 planned villages. This resettlement of the people was based on the grounds that the agricultural sector would be modernized and that access to social service by those in rural area would be more feasible. Nyerere's socialism and self-reliance, however, became unsuccessful in 1978 due to a number of factors including a lack of good communication with local villages and the objection of some to being forced to move to planned villages against their will.

Gender and education inequalities issues in Tanzania were never raised during the period of socialism and self-reliance. Nyerere encouraged parents and every individual involved with providing primary education to work together as a nation in providing education to all. Then in 1978, the same year that his ideology became unsuccessful, Nyerere managed to pass an educational act, which gave the newly independent nation the power to enforce compulsory enrollment and attendance of boys and girls in schools. As elsewhere in Africa, schools fees contribute to the low female enrollment in primary schools (Mbilinyi 1980).

Nyerere called upon women in Tanzania to take a more assertive, self-directive role in the development of Tanzania. He argued for individuals from all backgrounds to fight against colonialism. The national women's organization, U.W.T. (Umoja wa Wanawake wa Tanzania) was encouraged to foster the "self-reliance" of women. Women have always played an important role in Tanzania's rural economy by in large, assuming responsibility of land cultivation. In general, African women in rural settings always work hard. In both Tanzania and Kenya, women are no exception. Women are the product of child rearing and child socialization. They contribute to the agricultural sector, where the bulk of Tanzania's population lies. One would make the assumption that with the country's drive towards modernization and educating its population, more attention would be placed on the female population. Rather, women in Tanzania have been left behind in formal education. Mbilinyi urges that if primary school registrations are evaluated, the gap among boys and girls enrollment are apparent (Mbilinyi, 1980). As the diagram illustrates, there are major differences between rural and urban access to education by boys and girls.

#### **Primary school enrolment figures for Tanzania in 1980**

	Boys	Girls	Total	Ratio
Rural	474,734	289,277	764,011	1.77:1 B.G
Urban	35,384	29,787	65,171	1.22:1
Total	<u>510,118</u>	<u>319,064</u>	<u>829,182</u>	<u>1.598:1</u>

Source: The education of girls in Tanzania. Institute of Education, University College, Dar es Salaam. 1980

The boy and girls ratio as the figure shows in 1980 was more disparate in rural areas. This is the case among districts and regions as well. In Magagura village, where my research took place in 2002, three times as many boys were enrolled in grade one than girls. In addition, there is a growing disparity between boy and girl's enrollment throughout grade seven of primary school. At the end of standard IV, students are given a national selective examination and the parents

there by decide whether to continue sending their children to school. Necessarily, the higher the standards, the less female population will be enrolled.

Tanzanian's female population has always been recognized as having played important roles in national development. Yet the female population in this region of Africa remains uneducated. How can the Tanzanian government along with education policy makers encourage women to undertake progressive roles while their education has been neglected and limited? Women in general must be included within the framework of the Tanzanian educational institutions. Understanding why Tanzania is one of Sub-Saharan African countries with low girl's enrollment in primary and secondary schools is necessary. Thus, evaluating parental attitudes towards education in general and the education of girls is perhaps a necessary analysis to understand, since parents are the ones who make decisions of which child attends school.

Over all, Tanzania has done quite well in ensuring that its rural and urban areas are equipped with at least one primary school. For those isolated areas, parents are involved in building new schools to reduce time that kids spend walking to and from school. For the case of Magagura village, two other villages sent their children to one primary school located in Magagura. Parents were continuously having meetings on where the next primary school would be built.

So what conclusions can be drawn about the disparity between the education of girls and boys in Sub Saharan Africa, focusing more specifically on Kenya and Tanzania based on the information presented in this article? Certainly, the most important disparity in education remains a large problem and one that is difficult to resolve. Those in rural areas continue to suffer most, many generally poorer without the resources needed to pay for the many expenses required for children to attend school. Numerous long held traditions favor sending boys to school rather than girls, especially where there is more than one child and choices have to be made. A lack of teaching supplies, equipment, and especially a lack of teachers make the conditions impossible to provide all children adequate education, especially past the primary school level. Governments are burdened with debts and interest payments on loans from the World Bank, IMF, making it impossible to provide sufficient funding to insure truly free public schooling.

The results of women not being educated in such large numbers results in making it difficult for them to fully participate in society as well as government structures in a meaningful way. As in Tanzania, women are expected to be involved in the development of the country while they have not been provided with the necessary skills gained by a sufficient education. Uneducated women, especially in urban areas, only have access to the most menial of jobs. Sub Saharan Africa is deprived of huge resources that would assist in providing more education for women.

Does the goal of women obtaining education look more hopeful in the future? In order for this to happen, governments would have to be relieved of some of the huge debt repayments that are currently required of them. They would have to be truly invested in providing free education to all boys and girls and ensure the resource allocation to provide for adequate schools, teaching supplies and equipment, and teachers. Costs that are currently expected to be paid by parents would need to be assumed by governments so that poor families would be able to afford to send all their children to school.

While providing women the opportunity to receive education on a par with men appears to be a daunting challenge, it must be pursued. Education in the formal setting of schools and universities shapes our lives. The experiences that we receive from education builds over time

into inter-subjective patterns and shapes what kind of individuals we recognize ourselves to be and what we believe ourselves able to do and handle.

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