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## Using Gender Responsive Pedagogy by Social Studies Teachers to Promote Gender Parity in Basic Schools

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### **Abstract:**

*Ghana is among Sub-Saharan African countries battling with gender disparity. There have been many attempts by government agencies and non-governmental organizations to address the issue of gender disparity. Despite these efforts there is still wide spread gender disparity in most facets of the life in Ghana. Parental socialization, the influence of the media and schools have been key factors perpetuating gender inequality in our various communities. The consequences of gender disparity call for the promotion and adoption of gender responsiveness pedagogies in our learning institutions. Social Studies is one of the subjects in the basic school curriculum designed to address social problems such as gender disparity. This research therefore seeks to see how the adoption of gender responsive pedagogy by Social Studies teachers could promote gender parity in schools. The research adopted the descriptive survey which blended both quantitative and qualitative methods. The purposive sampling technique was used to select 80 Social Studies teachers from schools in Jasikan, Kadjebi and Biakoye districts. It was realized that even though the Social Studies teachers treated both girls and boys equally in the classrooms, most of the activities and practices in the schools were not gender responsive. The paper recommends that basic schools should establish gender committees and clubs to promote gender equality in schools.*

**Keywords:** Gender disparity, gender responsive pedagogy, male-dominated, societal problems, traditional gender role

### **1. Introduction**

Gender disparity has become critical and grave social problem in our society and has attracted the attention of many researchers, corporate bodies, state agencies and NGOs. In this context, gender disparity is about the unfair treatment of females based on false perceptions on what they can or can't do. Generally, the perception is that males are superior and females are weaker, which leads to unfair treatment between females and males in all facets of life (Ngaaso & Attom, 2011).

Research has found that gender imbalance has placed females as lower status relative to males (Brown & Bigler, 2004). Even though females form majority of the population in Ghana, they have been marginalized and accorded low prestige. For instance, the census of 2010, the estimated population of Ghana was 25,000 000 (females-51%, males 49%). However, the Ghanaian society remains male-dominated in educational, economic and political sectors. Gender disparity has been a major bane to our national development.

Traditional cultures classify appropriate gender roles in most Ghanaian societies. These deep-rooted Ghanaian cultures determine the roles of females and males which must be adhered to (Ngaaso & Attom, 2011). Cushman (2010) indicates that cultures determine appropriate norms, values, behaviours and attitudes of females and males. These traditionally determined roles of females and males have resulted in gender disparity in most aspect of life. The strict jacket traditional gender roles in the Ghanaian society have influenced the activities, decisions and outcomes of individuals. These traditional cultures to a large extent contribute to gender-achievement gaps as well as the underrepresentation of females in decision making process. The gender disparity and perpetuating of traditional gender roles can be quite stubborn and difficult to uproot (Fortin 2005; Ngaaso & Attom, 2011).

The learning of gender roles and conforming to certain behaviours and attitudes are likely to begin from very early childhood depending on the orientation and could have a significant impact on the future development and achievements of both females and males. Through cultural transmission of traditional gender roles, families have the direct impact on the development of children and their achievements (Carranza, 2014; Antwi-Danso, 2006).

The modes families may use for transmission of gender roles could be through indoctrination and role modeling. For example, parents may discourage females from male-designated activities such as invention of toys, playing of football and always encourage them to get closer to their mothers to carry out household chores. Cultural transmission of gender roles by the family may have important implications for children's attitudes, behavior and outcomes (Mustapha, 2013).

Personality development and future achievement of the individuals are shaped and moulded by their social environment especially during childhood stage. Socialization of the family towards gender roles is rock-hard by other agencies of socialization such as media and school. The media especially the television, sometimes, reinforce the gender roles transmitted by the family (Jusoff and Sahimi, 2009). For example, most children see males as doctors, contractors, soldiers and policemen on the television. Before formal schooling, children are already exposed to gender identity and stereotyping from interactions with their family, television, movies, books and images (Gosselin, 2007).

A child starts school with previous knowledge learnt from the home and sometimes the media on roles, attitudes and behaviours of females and males. This is reinforced as they interact with their peers who have the same orientation and socialization.

The teacher's beliefs, orientation and disposition may influence pupils' own beliefs especially at the early grades. Since the teacher is seen as a significant authority figure, pupils are likely to adopt and internalize what the teacher says and does. Therefore, a teacher with strongly traditional gender role beliefs may directly or indirectly influence the pupils to have that belief. In some cases, teachers may relate teaching to what happens in the society by given examples that will reinforce the traditional gender roles. Such teachers may intentionally or unintentionally use pedagogies that will consolidate the traditional gender roles (Lavy 2008).

The influence of the teacher's beliefs and the pedagogy she or he uses could affect the achievement and for that matter long term outcomes of pupils. The outcome may be specialization in gender jacket educational programmes.

The lasting effects of unfair gender treatment in the school system are enormous which produce imbalance in opportunities. For example, an engineering company might state that their jobs are equally open to everyone and that they will employ the best candidates irrespective of gender. In some instances, they may give preference for females. However, due to the unfair treatment that females experience at home and in school, it is unlikely that the 'best' candidates will include many women because they will not have the requisite skills or qualifications since they did not offer programmes related to that area (Jusoff and Sahimi, 2009).

In Ghana, it is not socially acceptable to treat people unfairly. However, unfair treatment does exist in unconscious ways. For example, a girl in a rural area might have to collect water before going to school, but her brother does not have to, or at least not to the same extent. On the surface, this is unfair treatment, but the children's parents think it is 'normal' because they experienced the same treatment when they grew up, and see it in their community every day. It is however, not right to treat people unfairly because society thinks it is normal. Certain things which may be socially acceptable may not be fair or just.

Education is a key towards the transformation of unproductive cultures, beliefs and behaviours and teachers have a major role to play to achieve this. A country may have the best education system, but its success lies on its implementation by teachers.

One of the ways to ensure gender parity is through the adoption of gender-responsive pedagogy by teachers within and outside the classroom. Teaching and learning practices in most schools in Africa and for that matter Ghana were largely gender-biased. Creating gender responsive pedagogy entails the integration of gender perspectives in all school activities by teachers. Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE, 2016) indicates that for effective gender responsive pedagogy, teachers require training on change of mindset. There is the need to equip teachers with knowledge, skills, and attitudes to empower them to respond adequately to the learning needs of girls and boys by using gender-responsive classroom processes and practices

Integrating gender issues in teaching may be a challenge for many teachers, not only in terms of their activities but also in the choice of teaching and learning materials and language. This may stem from the fact that most teachers might not receive training on gender responsive pedagogies. Therefore, most basic school teachers may use activities that may reinforce the traditional gender roles. It is not uncommon to note that most teachers still adopt traditional teaching pedagogies that depict traditional gender roles. In terms of activities, it is common to see teachers asking males and females to role play to depict traditional gender roles (Maher & Ward 2002).

It is not uncommon to see teachers using teaching and learning materials that reflect traditional gender roles. Most teachers use gender-insensitive teaching and learning materials, most of which perpetuated gender stereotypes. For example, a teacher using a picture of male doctors and female waiters during lessons. In addition, some textbooks used in schools continue to transmit messages showing females in traditional, limited, and subservient roles such as domestic, care-giving, and supportive roles. Personality attributes portrayed in textbooks were consistent with traditional notions of male superiority. Consequently, the teaching and learning materials reinforce gender stereotypes.

The use of language in teaching is another important area that promotes traditional gender roles in teaching. Teachers sometimes use abusive and negative language which transmitted negative messages and tend to reinforce traditional gender roles in the teaching and learning process. For instance, comments like most of you the females will only end up as house wives. The school set-up and arrangement of both curricular and co-curricular activities portray gender disparity. For instance, during school assembly and in the classrooms, females are made to be in front while males at the back. In group work, males are usually selected as leaders. It is uncommon to see females as the main school prefect. In the school, there are certain activities that are supposed to be done according to the gender. For example, females sweep the classroom while males clean the chalkboard. All these have long term negative impact on the achievements of females.

Further, in Ghana, some educational institutions do not have enough or appropriate facilities and furniture which are friendly to females. This was particularly serious in schools that did not have enough and appropriate sanitation, such as water, sanitary bins, changing rooms or washrooms for females. Most schools in Ghana do not have facilities that provide females' menstruation needs. Some of the toilets and urinals do not have doors and therefore do not provide privacy. As a result, most females do not come to school during their menstrual periods, which could lead to poor performance and dropping out of school (Gay, 2002).

There seems to be a lot of policies to ensure gender parity but most of these policies seems not be implemented. Therefore, there is a gap between theory and practice concerning gender responsiveness. Most basic school teachers were not exposed to gender responsive pedagogy in their initial teacher training. Therefore, they do not have adequate pedagogical content knowledge on gender issues (Kreitz-Sandberg, 2013).

Social Studies is subject that deals with social problems such as gender disparity. Therefore, there is the need for the subject to equip teachers to adopt relevant strategies to address gender disparity in our society. In agreement to this, Boadu and Kwenin (2015) indicated that Social Studies is about problem solving and therefore its teaching should equip the learner with skills to solve societal problems. The learning of Social Studies becomes meaningful where students work together to solve real-world problems in their schools and communities Yidana and Boadu (2012) also indicated that one of the advantages of an integrated Social Studies curriculum is that it provides a mechanism of equipping students with problem solving skills. In the learning of Social Studies, the role of students is to acquire knowledge, attitudes, values and skills to address persistent problems of society. Seeking for solutions to problems of society is therefore the major task of students in social studies lessons Social Studies is about problem solving. In supporting this assertion, Yidana & Boadu (2012) opines that the main purpose of Social Studies is to solve persistent and contemporary problems of the society. In recent times, the global economy places demand on nations to citizens with critical and creative minds needed to solve problems. Day in day out, the society breeds more and complex problems ranging from social, environmental, political to economical. For Social Studies to assume its place in the curriculum, it needs to adopt techniques and strategies to equip the young ones with the needed competencies to address the complex and perplexing problems that are increasingly emerging.

### *1.1. Statement of Problem*

Teachers are very powerful in not only imparting curriculum knowledge to students, but greatly influence the general achievements, behaviours and attitudes of students. This is done mostly through implementation of both curricular and co-curricular activities. Currently the curriculum content of pre-tertiary education institutions in Ghana does not include comprehensive gender issues in terms of content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. Therefore, teachers seem to be handicapped on the right orientation towards gender issues so that they can incorporate them in their pedagogies. The curriculum does not suggest the content and pedagogies to be used by teachers to address gender issues.

Teachers require training in gender responsive pedagogy to fully transform classroom practice to be gender sensitive. Though some teachers might have received basic knowledge on gender during their course of study, this may not be substantial enough to champion gender parity and promote gender responsiveness in their schools.

On classroom practice, teachers may not deliberately discriminate against females and males and may assume to give equal opportunity to male and female students to participate in class activities but sometimes their teaching and learning resources, illustrations, examples, language and feedback have potential to reinforce traditional gender roles Therefore, (Leach, 2000). For example, they may use pictures of male leaders, footballers and doctors, and females taking care of babies and serving as waiters. The use of such teaching and learning materials may reinforce traditional gender. During co-curriculum activities, female might be asked to sweep, serve during occasions such as sports and cultural festivals and ushers. In most cases, leadership roles are assigned to the males. These strategies therefore, introduce the students to the status quo thereby fueling the cycle of gender disparity.

In performing their roles as counselors, some teachers sometimes direct minds of male students to be more serious in subjects such as mathematics, science and technical subjects so that they could be engineers and doctors while females are encouraged to specialize in female-dominated subjects such as Home Economics.

The best educational environments are those that are fair to all students irrespective of gender, race or social, economic or political background. However, in most basic schools in Ghana, female and male students do not always have the same chances as a result of the structure of our schools and society at large. Gender disparities occur in different areas of school life. The question is which school subject is to deliberately address these gender disparities. This has become a hanging issue with governmental and non-governmental agencies attempting to address it. The fundamentals to address the gender issue seem to be seriously missed in our school system. This is because current strategies in addressing gender issues are generic making all teachers responsible with no specific person responsible. The strategies seem not to target changes in attitudes and values among the young ones in basic schools but more of mere knowledge. Social Studies as a problem-solving subject cannot continue to stand aloof as the gender disparity is escalating. Gender disparity is a social issue. Therefore, there is the need for Social Studies teachers to adopt gender responsive strategies to promote gender parity. It is necessary because Social Studies by its nature is to address societal problems. Social Studies teachers should serve as gender safe space and focal persons to assist address any gender disparity.

#### 1.1.1. Theoretical Framework

The theory that underpins this research is social constructivism developed by Lev Vygotsky. Constructivism is a theory that sees learning as creating meaning from experiences. Constructivists have a relativist point of view of

reality, which is perceived as a social construct, (Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005). Constructivists believe that reality stems from our own interpretations of our experiences. According to the constructivists, humans make meaning from their experiences as opposed to acquiring it. Therefore, the real experiences of human must be examined in order to understand the learning that has taken place by the individuals, (Duffy, & Jonassen, 1991).

Social constructivism allows people to obtain meaning of the world from social interactions. Social constructivism is based on specific assumptions that reality and knowledge are social constructed. That is, reality and knowledge are based on human. Therefore, reality is socially constructed. That is, people acquire meaning or knowledge through their interactions with each other in the society (Kukla, 2000).

This research is related to the theory of social constructivism because gender is socially constructed. This means the individuals assume gender roles from experience gained through social interactions and experiences. Indeed, Kukla (2000) concludes that gender is perceived as a social construct and therefore individuals assume gender roles through their engagement with the social world.

### 1.1.2. Gender Parity in Education

The best educational system in a country is one that is fair to everyone irrespective of sex, race, colour and other social classifications. Gender parity in education is a situation where there is equal access of both males and females to quality education. Gender equality in education is where practices and activities in schools are gender sensitive and responsive. Aikman and Unterhalter (2007) indicate that gender parity in education involves equal access of females and males to attend school, learn and participate in a non-discriminatory environment (Aikman & Unterhalter 2007:4). UNESCO (2003:5) states that gender parity in education is when females and males are offered the same opportunities to go to school, with a teaching method and curricula free of stereotypes, enjoy counselling free of gender discrimination, equality of outcomes, learning achievement and academic qualifications, and overall equal job opportunities based on having the same conditions for similar, experiences and qualifications irrespective of the gender (2003: 5). Gender parity through education involves education which promotes equal roles, treatment and opportunities for females and males. (Gay, 2002; Maher, & Ward, 2002; Gosselin, 2007; Aikman & Unterhalter, 2007; Mustapha, 2013)

### 1.1.3. School Practices That Reinforce Traditional Gender Roles

It is important to note that there are many school practices that treat females unfairly in relation to their male counterparts in schools. Teachers who are to serve as models for students most often than not reinforce traditional gender roles through their daily engagement and the roles they assign the students. For example, female students are assigned duties such as sweeping of the classroom, tidying the offices and serving roles during co-curriculum activities (Erden, 2009).

In addition, some teachers use teaching and learning materials (TLMs) that are not gender responsive. For instance, using pictures of males as doctors, policemen, soldiers while females cooking and carrying babies. They also give examples during lessons that reinforce traditional gender roles thereby introducing pupils to the status quo and fuelling the cycle of gender inequality (Berger, 2011; Gachukia, 2012).

### 1.1.4. Challenging Traditional Gender Roles

It is important for teachers to correct the unfair treatment between females and males and its intended outcomes in schools by engaging in practices to challenge and reverse traditional gender roles in class. In order for teachers to assist female and male students to challenge traditional gender roles, teachers themselves have to be critical on these issues (Leathwood, Read, 2009; Gachukia, 2012).

Teachers should organise gender responsive lessons taking into consideration the specific needs of females and males in all teaching and learning processes, content, TLMs, methodologies, activities, classroom arrangement, and so on. The content of the lesson though determined by the syllabus, the teacher has to ensure that the delivery of the content is participatory and gender responsive.

Both females and males should be involved equally in activities such as running errands and cleaning activities (females and males doing the mopping and sweeping). Leadership roles such as class prefect and group leaders should be fairly assigned to both females and males. (Lavy, 2008; Erden, 2009; Cushman, 2010; Martin & Ruble, 2010; Bertrand, 2011; Mustapha, 2013).

Gachukia (2012) suggested that school activities should be reviewed so that they will not reinforce traditional gender roles. Schools should organize clubs to discuss gender equality and help females and males feel confident to challenge traditional gender roles in society. These gender clubs should build female students' confidence, as well as in specific subject areas (Maher, Ward, 2002; Gosselin, 2007; Aikman & Unterhalter, 2007; Mustapha, 2013)

## *1.2. Research Questions*

The study was guided by the following research questions;

- Have social studies teachers received training on gender responsive pedagogy?
- Which practices and activities in basic schools are gender responsive?
- Which classroom practices and activities in basic schools are gender responsive?
- How do Social Studies teachers use gender responsive pedagogies to challenge traditional gender roles?

## 2. Methods

The descriptive survey of this study adopted both quantitative and qualitative methods. Data were collected using questionnaire (quantitative) and interviews (qualitative). The mixed method approach was used to bridge the qualitative and quantitative methods. According to Whyte (2006) descriptive survey is where the researcher collects information from knowledgeable people to explain social problem or phenomenon. The researcher adopted survey research because it helps to collect data on opinions, feelings and attitudes from large samples of subjects (Weiten, 2001). The qualitative data were meant to obtain detailed information to authenticate the facts obtained from the questionnaire.

The population includes the total number of people in a well-defined geographical area. It includes all the people, cases or subjects that can give accurate and relevant information to address the problem. The target population for the study was one hundred and eighteen (118) Social Studies teachers in Jasikan, Kadjebi and Biakoye districts. The basic schools in Jasikan, Biakoye and Kadjebi districts are partner schools for Jasikan College of Education where student teachers from the College practise during their internship. Practices in these school's form part of the training of the student teachers from Jasikan College of Education. In addition, the study also considered proximity. The researchers have been carrying monitoring activities in these basic schools and collection of data was relatively easy.

The sample includes the actual people, cases, subjects or individuals from the population that are selected to give information relevant to the problem (Bryman, 2008). In addition to the purpose of the study and population size, the level of confidence and the level of precision help to determine the sample size. The researchers used published sample determining table by Yamane (1967) to select a sample size of 80 respondents at confidence level of 95% and margin of error at 5%.

Population size	Confidence level = 95%			Confidence level = 99%		
	Margin of error			Margin of error		
	5%	2,5%	1%	5%	2,5%	1%
100	80	94	99	87	96	99
500	217	377	475	285	421	485
1.000	278	606	906	399	727	943
10.000	370	1.332	4.899	622	2.098	6.239
100.000	383	1.513	8.762	659	2.585	14.227
500.000	384	1.532	9.423	663	2.640	16.055
1.000.000	384	1.534	9.512	663	2.647	16.317

Table 1: Sample Determining  
Yamane (1967)

The questionnaire was the main data collection instrument for the teachers. Kumar (2005), states that a questionnaire is a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorded by respondents. A questionnaire is an instrument that contains questions which the respondents is expected to answers.

The questionnaire helps to obtain reliable information, and eliminates biases and influence of the researcher (Kwabia, 2006). Multi-method questions of close-ended and Likert scale. It must be noted that, to design a valid and reliable questionnaire, the researcher must consider the purpose of the study and the research questions (Christensen, & Johnson, 2006).

Apart from the questionnaire, interviews were also conducted. There was face- to-face interviews between the researcher and respondents. Five Social Studies teachers in the selected schools who were either Headmasters or Assistant Headmaster were interviewed. The open-ended form of interview was used. The interview guide for this research was semi-structured to create room for follow-up questions from the researcher and free expressions from the respondents. The interview sessions were held under relax atmosphere devoid of any suspicion.

In order to establish both face and content validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was given to experts in the field of gender.

The researcher edited all the questionnaires that were collected and this helped to identify and eliminate mistakes made by the respondents. This is what Cohen and Manion (1985) recommended before data analysis. All the questionnaires distributed were successfully completed and collected. Descriptive statistics were mainly used because of the nature of the instruments and the responses.

## 3. Results

- Have Social Studies teachers received training on gender responsive pedagogy?

The ability of Social Studies teachers to adopt and practise gender responsive pedagogy starts with their understanding and knowledge level. On the question of whether the respondents have received gender training or not, it was realized that 66 (82.5 %) of them have not received training on gender responsive pedagogy. Only 14 (17.5%) of them indicated that they have received training on gender responsive pedagogy. This agrees with different studies that indicated that although most teachers have received little or no training on gender parity in schools at both pre-service and in-service levels, the government seems to be asking them to implement pedagogies that will promote gender parity Baxter, 2002; Fortin, 2005; Erden, 2009; Jusoff, & Sahimi, 2009; Martin, & Ruble, 2010; Cushman, 2010; Mustapha, 2013. The responses from the respondents show that they require training in gender responsive pedagogy to fully transform school and classroom practice to be gender sensitive.

The researchers wanted to know if the practices and activities in partner schools are gender responsive. The outcome is summarized in Table 2.

Item	Mean	%	Remarks
Cleaning activities in my school do not reinforce traditional gender roles	2.33	46.6	Unsatisfactory
Class prefect roles are equally assigned to female and male students	2.05	41	Unsatisfactory
Group leaders are equally assigned to female and male students	2.41	48.2	Unsatisfactory
There are specific clubs/extra-curricular activities designed to build female student confidence	2.11	42.2	Unsatisfactory
There is gender club in my school that discusses gender issues	2.02	40.4	Unsatisfactory
There are planned activities in my school to challenge traditional gender roles	2.41	48.2	Unsatisfactory
There are regular talks on gender issues to students	3.21	64.2	Good
MEAN	2.36	47.26	Unsatisfactory

Table 2: Basic School Practices and Activities That Are Gender Responsive

Source: Field Data, 2019

Key for Remarks

< 2.5 –Unsatisfactory

2.5 – 2.59 - Satisfactory

3.00 – 3.49 – Good

3.5 – 3.59 – Very Good

4.00 – 5.00 – Excellent

It could be realized from Table 2 that most practices and activities in the basic schools in Jasikan, Kadjebi and Biakoye districts are not gender responsive. It is surprised to observe from Table 2 that though majority of the respondents (64%) indicated that there were regular talks on gender issues in their schools, most of the practices are not gender responsive. The implication is that such talks are not put into practice.

It could be observed from Table 2 that only 46.6% of the respondents were of the view that cleaning activities in their schools did not reinforce traditional gender roles. This implies that about 53% were of the view that cleaning activities in their schools reinforce traditional gender roles. This means that the students are engaged in cleaning activities related to the traditional gender roles. The results from Table 2 agrees with Erden (2009) when he indicated that in most schools, female students for example are assigned duties such as sweeping of the classroom, tidying the offices and serving roles during co-curriculum activities.

On assigning of leadership roles, it could be seen in Table 2 that only 41% and 48% respectively indicated that they assigned class prefects and group leaders equally to both boys and girls. This means that majority of the Social Studies teachers in the schools not assign leader roles equally to both boys and girls. Most researchers agreed that one of the areas of discrimination against female students in most schools is assigning of leadership roles. There is therefore the need for schools to review the ways leadership positions are assigned to students to ensure fairness (Cushman, 2010; Erden, 2009; Mustapha, 2013).

Table 2 also shows that only 42% of the respondents indicated that their schools have specific clubs/extra-curricular activities designed to build female student confidence. That means majority of them (60%) indicated that their schools did not have specific clubs to build female student confidence. In addition, it could be observed from Table 2 that only 40% of the respondents indicated that their schools have gender club that discuss gender issues.

Table 2 clearly shows that most practices and activities in the schools are not gender responsive. This assertion was confirmed during the interview sessions that most of the practices reinforce traditional gender roles.

One of the respondents indicated that;

*What we normally do is that when we are going to clean the compound, yes, the school compound, we ask the girls to bring brooms, brush and water while the boys bring hoes and cutlasses. The girls are asked to sweep the compound and scrub the washrooms while the boys weed and clear the grasses. Normally it is the boys that clear the football and around the school building. Most of the girls do not know how to weed. However, both boys and girls have sweeping plots (#participant 1; November, 2019).*

Another respondent said;

*In our school, we do organize grounds work to clean the compound. Cleaning of the compound is the responsibility of the students. Normally boys do the weeding and clearing while girls do sweeping," (#participant 2; November, 2019).*

In expressing his views on whether practices and activities in schools are gender responsive, one of the respondents indicated that;

*Sometimes both girls and boys do the cleaning of the compound. We share sweeping plots among both boys and girls and they are to maintain the plots. The plots are to be swept before the morning assembly. We*

regularly inspect that. On the other hand, when we organize grounds work or general cleaning, we give different cleaning activities to the boys and girls. The girls do sweeping and picking while the boys do weeding and clearing (#participant 3; November, 2019).

Another respondent expressing his view said that;

*In our school, we train both boys and girls to acquire skills for good sanitation. They are all given sweeping plots apart from the school prefects. However, in cases of general cleaning, the girls are made to sweep while the boys weed. We however talk to them that as students they are expected to do the activities equally. You see you can't ask a boy to sweep the office while girls are there. Normally it is the girls that clean the staff common room and Headmaster's office (#participant 4; November, 2019).*

On the issue of assigning leadership positions to boys and girls, the results from the interview indicated that most of the school prefects are boys while girls are elected as assistant prefects. One of the respondents indicated that; *We have a School prefect who is a boy and the Girls' Prefect. It is the students who select their own class prefects under the supervision of class teacher. Most of the girls are not willing to take the position of class prefects so you could see that most of the class prefects are boys while the assistants are girls. We always ensure that the assistant class prefects are girls where the prefects are boys. This is also in the case of leaders for groups. We do this to ensure gender balance (#participant 3; November, 2019).*

On the issue of assigning leadership positions, another respondent said that;

*I must be frank with you, most of the prefects are boys. Girls always shy away from leadership positions. You give the position to them and they are not willing to take. So, the class prefects are boys while girls are assistant prefects. In case of groups in the class, there are a few girls that are group leaders but most of the group leaders are boys. We are trying to change that perception that boys are always leaders but the problem is from the girls. You cannot force leadership position on somebody (#participant 5; November, 2019).*

All those who were interviewed indicated that they did not have gender clubs to discuss gender equality issues and to disabuse students' mind on gender stereotype. The interview results show that once a while teacher talk to students on gender issues during morning assemblies.

The researchers wanted to know whether classroom practices in partner schools are gender responsive and the outcome summarized in Table 2

Item	Mean	%	Remarks
I use gender responsive pedagogy on a regular basis	3.88	77.6	Very good
I make sure females and males participate equally in activities during class	3.22	64.4	Good
Both females and males equally participate in class presentation, project work and discussion	3.21	64.2	Good
I assign leadership roles equally to females and males in lesson activities	2.24	48.8	Unsatisfactory
I am patient with females and males who may be shy or afraid to speak	4.11	82.2	Excellent
I mix females and males to work together in groups	4.56	91.2	Excellent
I provide positive verbal feedback to both females and males in class	4.67	93.4	Excellent
Grand mean	3.78	76.3	Very good

Table 3: Classroom Practices That Are Gender Responsive

Source: Field Data, 2019

Key for Remarks

< 2.5 -Unsatisfactory

2.5 - 2.99 - Satisfactory

3.00 - 3.49 - Good

3.5 - 3.99 - Very Good

4.00 - 5.00 - Excellent

Table 3 shows that most classroom practices are gender responsive. Majority of the respondents (77.6%) used gender responsive pedagogy on regular basis. In addition, majority of the respondents (64.2%) gave equal opportunity to female and male students to participate actively in class activities. This is made possible because during group work, class presentation, project work and discussion both females and males are encouraged to participate actively. However, only 48.8% of the respondents assigned leadership roles to females and males equally during lessons. This implies that there is discrimination in assigning leadership roles to students.

The results from the interview also show that classroom practices and activities are gender responsive. One of the Social Studies teachers indicated that;

*I don't discriminate against boys and girls when teaching. I involve all the students in the class. When a question is asked, I call anyone to answer. Sometimes, I rather point on those who did not raise their hands to answer to involve them. Generally, girls feel shy to talk in class thinking that they could make mistakes*

and their colleagues will laugh at them. In grouping students for an activity, I always consider gender by ensuring that almost equal numbers of girls are in the various groups (#participant 4; November, 2019).

Another respondent also indicated that;

*I always make sure both boys and girls participate equally in classroom activities. You know most girls by their nature do not want to be disgraced. So sometimes they will not like to talk. I encourage the girls in particular to actively participate in class. In selecting group leaders, I make sure the leader and assistant for a group are of different gender. That is if a boy is the leader, then a girl should be the assistant. The presentation of group work is done by group leaders so if a boy is the leader, he does the presentation on behalf of the group and vice versa. Most of the group leaders are boys and they normally do the group presentation (#participant 5; November, 2019).*

One of the respondents also indicated that;

*Involving everybody in classroom activities is very important. But there are some of the students especially the girls who are not ready to contribute in class even if the question thrown to the class is as simple as 'ABCD'. In most of the times, as a teacher, you ask those who raise their hands to answer. Isn't it? Some of the girls are good and they contribute a lot to class discussion. But if you rate, boys participate more than girls. Yes, I normally ask them to do group work and present their works. Most of the group presentations are done by the boys. Most of the girls feel shy to stand in front of the class (#participant 2; November, 2019).*

Item	F	%	Remarks
I use teaching materials that do not show or reinforce traditional gender roles (e.g., women cooking/cleaning and men in professional roles)	2.78	55.6	Satisfactory
I identify and discusses traditional gender roles that appear in books/materials and discuss how these limits what females think they can achieve in their education and lives	2.44	48.8	Unsatisfactory
I encourage girls to take leadership position	2.33	46.6	Unsatisfactory
I actively use examples that challenge or reverse traditional gender roles (e.g., show men cleaning)	2.41	48.2	Unsatisfactory
I use examples that make females and males feel confident to challenge traditional gender roles in general (e.g., males should cook, females should be doctors)	2.67	53.4	Satisfactory
I support female students in studying and achieving in subjects like maths and science	2.11	42.2	Unsatisfactory
Mean	2.46	49.13	Unsatisfactory

Table 4: The Use of Pedagogies to Challenge Traditional Gender Roles during Social Studies Lessons  
Source: Field Data, 2019

Table 4 shows that only 49% of the respondents used pedagogies to challenge traditional gender roles during lessons. It could be seen from Table 3 that only 47% of the respondents encourage girls to take leadership position. It could also be realized from Table 3 that only 49% of the respondents identify and discuss traditional gender roles that appear in books/materials and discussed how these limits what females think they can achieve in their education and lives. In addition, it could be observed that only 48% of the respondents actively use examples that challenge or reverse traditional gender roles

However, some of the teachers in the basic schools are using different strategies to challenge traditional gender roles during lessons. Table 3 shows that majority of them (55.6%) used teaching materials that do not show or reinforce traditional gender roles (e.g., women cooking/cleaning and men in professional roles). In addition, majority of them (53.4%) indicated that they use examples that make females and males feel confident to challenge traditional gender roles in general (e.g., males should cook, females should be doctors). Chartock (2010) states that schools should endeavour to implement practices and activities that will reverse traditional gender roles. Leadership roles such as class prefect and group leaders should be fairly assigned to both females and males. Policies on leadership roles should be reviewed to ensure that female and male students have equal opportunities to be prefects (Lavy, 2008; Erden, 2009; Cushman, 2010; Martin & Ruble, 2010; Bertrand, 2011; Mustapha, 2013). Gachukia (2012) suggested that school activities should be reviewed so that they will not reinforce traditional gender roles. Schools should revise the rules so that all activities are done equally by females and males and are not based on traditional gender roles

### 3.1. Ways to Make Practices and Activities in Basic Schools to Be Gender Responsive

The respondents provided the following as ways to make practices and activities in schools gender responsive.

- Regular talks on gender issues in schools.
- In-service training should be given to Social Studies teachers on gender and social inclusion.
- Female role models should be invited to give talks on potentials of females.
- Formation of gender of clubs to discuss gender issues.
- Deliberate activities should be organized in schools to challenge traditional gender roles.
- Female students should be encouraged to take leadership position.



The respondents also gave the following recommendations to promote equal participation of boys and girls equally in classroom activities.

- Teachers must try to use neutral gender language.
- Teachers should give equal opportunity to girls just as given to boys during contributions, discussions and presentations.
- Dividing class into manageable groups with each group comprising both gender for class competitions where the rules set should spell out that each group must have equal gender representation in presentations and answering of questions.
- Tasks given in the classroom must be neutral. The tasks should be able to involve the ability of girls as well boys.
- Girls who participate actively in classroom activities just as boys should be commended in order to encourage their fellow girls to do same.
- Teachers should give appropriate feedback devoid of humiliation of females.
- The use of project-based learning should be encouraged.
- Sitting arrangement and grouping of students should be gender sensitive.

On promoting leadership abilities of girls, the respondents suggested the following:

- Assign leadership position to girls often.
- Constantly talk about the values of being a good leader to girls.
- Reward good performance of girls with leadership roles to encourage others.
- Give opportunity to girls to lead discussions and classroom activities.
- Respect the views and opinions of girls in classroom activities.
- Assist girls to build self-esteem and confidence through an enabling environment.

### 3.2. Summary of Findings

Most practices and activities in Basic schools in Jasikan, Kadjebi and Biakoye Districts are not gender responsive. In most of the basic schools, leadership roles are not equally assigned to female and male students. Most of the leadership roles are assigned to males. In addition, most of the schools did not have specific clubs designed to discuss gender issues and build female students' confidence. During clean-up exercise, in most cases, girls were asked to do the sweeping, dusting and mopping while boys do weeding and this trend fuels the status quo.

Although, the practices and activities in the schools are not gender responsive, it was realized from the responses that majority of them (77.6%) used gender responsive pedagogy on regular basis. Majority of the respondents (64.2%) claimed they gave equal opportunity to female and male students to participate actively in class activities. This shows that classroom activities are gender responsive.

It was also realized that most of the Social Studies teachers were not using pedagogies to challenge traditional gender roles. For instance, Table 3 shows that 51% of the respondents did not use pedagogies to challenge traditional gender roles during lessons. In addition, it was also observed that 52% of the respondents did not use examples that challenge or reverse traditional gender roles

## 4. Conclusion

Gender parity is very important in promoting progress in every society. This could be achieved in schools where the personalities of individuals are moulded. This could be done through the use of gender responsive pedagogies by teachers in schools. Teachers should therefore be encouraged to promote a fair school and classroom environment through the use of pedagogies to reverse or challenge traditional gender roles that have brought about gender disparity.

## 5. Recommendations

In addition to the recommendations made by the respondents, the following should be adopted in schools to promote gender equality.

- All basic schools should have their own gender policy which should be in line with the national Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Policy.
- Gender committees should be established and gender Safe Space persons appointed in all basic schools in the districts.
- All basic schools should be encouraged to form gender clubs.
- School-based in-service training on gender should be organized for teachers on regular bases.

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