

Impact of Government Initiatives on Gender Balance in The Provision of Education Services

Case of Moshi Municipality

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to find out whether the enrolment in secondary and Institutions of higher education was in line with the Government's efforts to bring gender balance in the provision of education services in Tanzania. Specifically, the sought to:

- Find out the causes of low enrolment of girls in secondary schools and higher education Institutions in Tanzania and its effect to the nation;
- Assess the Impact of measures taken by the Government from 2000 to 2005; and
- Come up with recommendations on how to improve the gender balance situation those academic institutions.

A case study design was used in this study to enable the researcher understand the unit of study in a more detailed way by using a combination of various data collection techniques and tools. The study area was Moshi Municipality in Kilimanjaro region. The study cases were:

Moshi University College of Co-operative and Business Studies (MUCCoBS), Mawenzi Secondary School, Moshi Technical Secondary School and J. K. Nyerere Secondary School. A sample of 33 people was picked for the study. They were drawn from the three secondary schools and one University College. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to arrive at this sample size. Stratified sampling was particularly used to get two different members of staff (headmaster and six teachers) from each secondary school. Thereafter, simple random sampling was used to draw a sample from the two groups.

Primary data were mainly collected through interviews and administering questionnaires. Questionnaires were distributed to teachers and headmasters of the sampled secondary schools. Mainly, the respondents were required to assess and evaluate the impact Of Government initiatives in ensuring gender balance in the provision of education. On the other hand, secondary data were obtained from educational offices of Moshi Municipality and from files of each secondary school in the sample.

The collected data were analysed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Qualitative analysis involved content analysis to determine the presence of certain concepts within the text. This approach enabled the researcher to quantify and analyse the presence meaning and relationship of words and concepts and make inferences about the message in the texts.

From the analysis of the collected data, it was found out that the attainment of gender balance in the provision of education had not been achieved despite the Government efforts. The number of female students enrolling for secondary and university education is still comparatively low. At Moshi Technical School, for instance, the percentage of female students who enrolled in 2000 was only 10.8% against 89.2% male students. In 2005, the same school enrolled only 3% girls and 97% boys.

At J. K Nyerere Secondary School, the enrolled girls were 48.1% against 51.9% boys in 2000. In 2005, the female enrolment dropped to 40.4% while male enrolment rose to 59.6%. At University level, MUCCoBS' enrolment stood at 28% females and 72% males in the 2003/04 academic year. In 2005/06, the female enrolment rose to 38.7% at MUCCoBS.

According to this study, the low female enrolment was mainly attributed to poor performance of girls in their examinations. However, this reason was associated with several other factors which called for attention from various stakeholders. For instance, it was established that in day-schools, many girls didn't have adequate time to study after classes because they had other domestic obligations to perform after school hours.

These additional domestic chores further led most girls to be non-attentive in class. Some were totally exhausted due to previous night's many tasks or were pre-occupied with pending tasks after school hours. The study observed that when someone is tired, concentration becomes poor. The interviewed group of 60 girls from Mawenzi Secondary School said that after school they worked up to 11.00 pm at night with little chance to study or do any school work.

Other factors leading to low female enrolment in secondary schools and universities, according to this study, were early marriages and pregnancies. Most study respondents stated that the period between the time when pupils complete primary education and the time when they have to start secondary education (if selected) was a bit too long. They said that it was during this time that some girls got tempted into early marriages or pregnancies. For instance, in 2001, out

of 79 girls who were selected to join Mawenzi Secondary School, 7 (8.9%) did not report because of the above reasons.

Given the foregoing findings, the study recommended that:

- Efforts should be made by the Government and other stakeholders to establish or increase boarding primary schools for girls to enable them have more time to concentrate more on their studies than on other domestic obligations after school hours;
- parents should allow their daughters to spend more time on school work than on other domestic chores when at home after school hours; and
- The Government and other stakeholders should consider designing some short courses which would keep girls busy with academic work while waiting for standard seven results.