

**THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER ROLES ON THE EDUCATION OF PUPILS IN
EWUASO KEDONG DIVISION, KAJIADO COUNTY**

BY

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**A PROJECT PAPER SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF ANTHROPOLOGY,
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DECLARATION

This is my original work and has not been presented to any other institution or university for award of a degree.

Signature _____

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This project paper has been forwarded for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.

Signature _____

Date_____

Dr. W. Subbo

DEDICATION

To the best friend of my life and dear husband Maitha Siryah, to our children Baya and Kithi you have been the source of my unyielding inspiration; I thank God for the beautiful gift of all of you.

To my mother Dama Karisa and special mention to my brother Shadrack and wife Rose.

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ABSTRACT

This was a cross-sectional study on the influence of gender roles on the education of pupils in Ewuaso kedong division, Kajiado County. Specifically, the study sought to find out the effects of gender roles on the education of pupils and to identify strategies put in place to counter the effects of gender roles on the education of pupils. This study was guided by the Gender Relations Theory by Ruth Pearson (1992) positing that society views all activities that are carried out to be based on social roles and interactions of men and women.

Purposive sampling was used to select girls and boys for interviews as was for key informants and focus group discussions. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews. Qualitative data collected was analysed thematically guided by the study objectives. Verbatim amplifying the voices of the informants has been used alongside main arguments in the discussion of the findings.

The findings indicate that both boys and girls are involved in different activities within the home implying that the children are not only aware of their different home duties but are also conscious of what the parents expects from them before they go to school and when they return home. In addition, the pupils confirmed that, they are unable to do assignments given in school due to the workload at home. They are obliged to work after school with no ample studying time due to overwhelming domestic chores.

The study concludes that the gender roles have negative consequences due to the fact that gender division of labour has lead to one gender being over burdened with work than the other. This has contributed to lateness and absenteeism particularly with girls as compared to boys. It has

created a situation of one sex feeling superior to the other as a result of the honor, respect and preferences that is given to male children, whereas girls are left feeling inferior and inadequate.

The study recommends increased community awareness creation and advocacy against high burden labour to school children which impact negatively on their education achievements and performance. More so, PTA meetings be used to strengthen the teacher-family relationships by outlining the expectations of each stakeholder and their roles in addressing the gender role burden on children with an aim of improving pupils' overall performance. Furthermore, there is need for a study on school-based approaches to dealing with effects of gender roles in education of pupils to discern concrete issues around curriculum, mode of instruction and the teacher-family axis in helping pupils' performance at school.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AEO	Area Education Officer
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FPE	Free Primary Education
KII	Key Informant Interviews
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
PTAs	Parents Teachers Associations
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children Education Fund
WB	World Bank

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Protection of children and ensuring their future development into responsible citizens is the primary reason why many people and organisations are concerned about child labour. Child labour has been found to be one of the major obstacles to children's development especially in Africa (Bass 2004). Rural schools as a result are constrained by problems of insufficient teaching staff and these problems are further complicated by traditional values that discriminate between boys and girls in terms of work type and access to primary education.

Gender roles adopted during childhood normally continue into adulthood. At home, people have certain presumptions about decision-making, child-rearing practices, financial responsibilities, and so forth. At work, people also have presumptions about power, the division of labour, and organizational structures. None of this is meant to imply that gender roles, in and of themselves, is good or bad; they merely exist (Eleanor, 1988).

The issue of gender inequality is one which has been publicly reverberating through society for decades. The problem of inequality in employment is one of the most pressing issues today. In order to examine this situation one must try to get to the root of the problem and must understand the sociological factors that cause women to have a much more difficult time getting the same benefits, wages, and job opportunities as their male counterparts (Witt,1997).

According to Billitteri (2008), societies have always been shaped by males. The policy-makers have consistently been male and therefore it is not surprising that they reflect the biases which exist as a result of this male-domination. It is important to examine all facets of this problem, but

in order to fully tackle the issue one must recognize that this inequality in the workforce is rooted in what shapes future employees and employers (Billitteri, 2008).

Education is an indispensable catalyst for sustainable development and economic progress and its role cannot be sidelined. World Bank (1998) describes education as a pervasive element that must be integrated horizontally and vertically into all development efforts. Education is therefore an asset, not only for self advancement but also a means of promoting social and political consciousness.

An increase in access to education is critical to socioeconomic growth and productivity, increased individual earnings and subsequently reduced income inequalities. It also contributes to improved health, reduction in poverty, enhanced democracy, good governance and effective leadership (Republic of Kenya, 2007; Orodho & Njeru, 2003), stressed the importance of educating women as an important step in overcoming poverty and improving family health.

There is enough evidence that educating women is beneficial at all levels from the national, community, family and individual level. The benefit of educating women are summarized by Summers (1992), 'as an investment in the girls education may well be the highest return investment available in the developing world', (Republic of Kenya, 2007:2). The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) number two stresses the importance of achieving universal primary education and attaining gender parity by 2015 (Republic of Kenya, 2010).

The implementation of Free Primary Education (FPE) in Kenya since 2003, has tried to bridge the gap that existed in the attainment of primary education with some indications that gender parity is likely to be attained by 2015. This is true in some regions like Central and Nairobi. However other regions like the Coast, North Eastern and some parts of Rift valley still lag

behind due to some factors like poverty, child labour, religion, gender insensitive school environment, child labour ,inadequate school places and girls and women's multiple gender roles (Republic of Kenya, 2010).

These factors still remain as a threat to achieving a 50:50 education chances for both girls and boys by 2015 as envisaged by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This is especially so because education is one of the basic rights for all Kenyan children (Republic of Kenya, 2010) as a basic right, children therefore irrespective of their gender, should be able to access education equally.

In theory, every activity can be assigned to either males or females. However in practice men are assigned different activities as has been studied by Provost (1973). The world scenario has been that females gather food, nurture children and feed the family as men indulge in activities of economic gains and security. In Ewuaso Kedong, for instance, the adverse economic climate and the level of education of most rural parents do not render the home a very convenient place for children to live and study. Not only are the family sizes usually large, but the children may not have such basic materials like reading tables or even a separate room to study at their convenience. Children in their homestead have to grapple with their studies and other household chores: cooking and caring for their siblings – a common activity for girls and splitting of wood and herding by boys. There is also the fetching of water and firewood in addition to assisting their parents in farm work. Consequently, there is hardly any time for real academic work especially for the girl child.

A community that sees females as primary domestic workers may not see the importance of investing heavily in the girls' formal education. This therefore impacts either positively or

negatively on the education of children. Moreover, the Ministry of Planning and National Development (2009) identifies low participation in education as one of the major challenges facing Kajiado County. The County has a high illiteracy level of 48.2%. Furthermore, the County is characterized by low uptake of education by boys and girls largely due to the traditionally prescribed gender roles (Republic of Kenya, 2007).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Gender division of labour is widespread in Ewuaso Kedong where families struggle for survival under the pressure of worsening poverty. Many parents see the contribution of their children as part of the learning process. They consider farm labour and other activities as the normal transfer of knowledge and skills to their children that is essential for their own survival. Children need to be aware of the ins and outs of local economic activities, which have been transmitted from one generation to another. This belief in addition to the high illiteracy rate in the rural communities does not place most of the parents in a position to be able to make a meaningful follow-up of the children after school; seeing that their home work and or assignments are done and ensuring that there is enough time for studying. They consider school to be where formal learning takes place. When the children return home, they must work. Parents are of the opinion that children have to be aware that they have to work before they eat and this belief is prevalent in the larger society.

Girls have many gender roles like fetching water and firewood, taking care of younger siblings, cooking, going to the market, assisting in farming, cleaning of the house, washing dishes and clothes, and taking care of the sick. This leaves them with little time for active participation in education. Boys on the other hand might not get time to study due to cultural expectations of taking care of the family's herd of cattle and other livestock.

The study therefore undertook to investigate the influence of gender roles on education in Ewuaso Kedong division of Kajiado County. Particularly important, was the need to establish the effects of gender roles on the education of boys and girls in Ewuaso Kedong division in relation to their socialization process, the possible effects of the assigned gender roles in relation to performance in education as well as the strategies put in place to counter these effects. The study was therefore guided by the following research questions.

1. What effects do gender roles have on the education of pupils in Ewuaso Kedong division?
2. Which strategies have been put in place to counter the effects of gender roles in children's education in Ewuaso Kedong division?

1.3 Study objectives

1.3.1 Overall Objective

- To assess the effects of gender roles on the education of pupils in Ewuaso Kedong Division of Kajiado County.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- i. To find out the effects of gender roles on the education of pupils.
- ii. To identify strategies put in place to counter the effects of gender roles on the education of pupils.

1.4 Justification of the study

The findings of the study have illuminated the negative impact of gender division of labour on the education of children in Ewuaso Kedong, especially, how the multiple biased workloads toward girl-child has largely contributed to the high rate of drop-out and poor performance at school. The findings have also helped to demonstrate the home environmental set up as being non-conducive for the children's education pursuit due to the burden of gendered chores.

Should the recommendations of this study be adopted by the government through the Ministry of Education, the findings will address the problems arising from gender disparities in formal education by putting into context the recommendations of parents, teachers and community leaders who are significant gatekeepers and stakeholders in the education of children. Moreover, the derivatives of the study can be used to sensitize parents on the impact of socialization of boys and girls with regard to schooling.

Findings of this study have the potential to enhance understanding on the effects of gender roles on the education of pupils which can be put into use by scholars interested in issues of gender and education at primary level.

1.5 Scope and limitations of the study

The study was carried out in Ewuaso Kedong Division of Kajiado County. The study examined the influence of gender roles on the education of pupils and the strategies put in place to counter the effects of these gender roles within Ewuaso Kedong division.

The study used a small sample size given its qualitative approach hence limiting generalisation of the findings, however, the in-depth nature of data collection tools used in the study generated information sufficient to answer the study questions. Moreover, the research undertook to

triangulate the data collection methods so as to compensate for different limitations of methodological approaches in each tool employed in the study.

1.6 Definitions of key terms

Access: This refers to the opportunity or right to experience or make use of something in this case primary education.

Basic education: This refers to primary education or its equivalent.

Completion: This refers to the number of pupils who successfully finish primary education.

Gender relations: This is an analysis of women's and men's positions in relation to each other.

Gender roles: These are socially determined tasks, behaviors, roles and responsibilities for women and men, based on socially perceived expectations of how each gender should act.

Performance: This refers to the academic and non academic curriculum attained by pupils in terms of marks they manage to acquire after each class.

Retention: This refers to the level to which schools are able to maintain the number of pupils transiting from one class to another.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.7 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature that pertains to gender and education. The review has been carried out along the following areas: overview of education and development, gender roles and education of children and strategies of overcoming the burden of gender roles in education of children. The chapter finally presents the theoretical framework and the assumptions that guided the study.

1.8 Overview of education and development

According to the World Bank (2003), education is development. This is because it creates choices and opportunities for people and also it reduces the twin burden of poverty and diseases. For nations it creates a workforce and well informed citizens able to compete and operate globally therefore opening doors to economic and social prosperity. The need to realise universal primary education and education of quality has been the world's greatest challenge on the history education. Governments use education as a tool for achieving social equity, eradicating poverty, disease and ignorance. It is a means for training and producing qualified human resources needed to manage the economic, social and political sectors (UNICEF, 1992).

Although literature review has some variations on the role of education, most scholars agree that educational institutions impart knowledge, skills, traditional beliefs and attitudes which are essential for the preservation and continuity of life and society. (UNICEF, 1992).

It has also been realised that economic implication in education leads to higher output, higher wages as well as changes in distribution of earned income between the rich and the poor thereby leading to stability (Thurow, 1977).

The United Nations (UN) recognises that education is a basic instrument for achieving social equality but its access has not been accorded equally between boys and girls (UNICEF, 1992). The inequality between boys and girls, men and women in the field of education and consequent employment and in socio-economic life is very significant thus creating debates by educationists, researchers and gender-based lobby groups. Females with more education increase the desire to have their children enrolling in schools for education. It increases productivity by giving women access to agricultural and cooperative training, contact with agricultural extension, workers' implementation of new farming ideas and use existing facilities (Flora & Wolf, 1990).

Gender discrimination in education in Africa started in the colonial days when colonial governments introduced policies which discriminated against girls. With the attainment of independence in many African countries gender discrimination still persists at all levels of education despite government intervention policies. Even with the provisions of free primary education in Kenya for instance, things have not changed much particularly in rural areas (Mbilinyi & Mbughuni, 1991).

The Republic of Kenya (2007) reports that girls have very little chances of entering, remaining and completing education following a complicated interactive process of structural, cultural and personal factors that make the school wastage for girls higher than that of boys. A study carried out by Juma (1994) in Kwale and Taita Taveta Districts reveals that due to socio-cultural activities many parents tend to discourage girls from schooling but encourage them to perform domestic and household activities.

2.2.1 Gender roles and family set up

The genesis of gender roles can be traced back to the very establishment of the social life. Ever since man started living in societies, they differentiated between the male gender and female gender and implicated specific lifestyle, duties and functional areas for each of these genders. It was quite needed in the then lifestyle of human beings (Wood, 2008). Hunting was the only way of finding a living; thus muscular male members took the role of hunters of food suppliers and physically less fit female members took over the role of home makers and cooks. The masculinity helped male gender to dominate the society and made them authoritative in families. But with time lifestyles changed and the female gender was empowered to almost equal status of men (Wood, 2008).

From an early age, boys are taught, in tacit and explicit ways, the ideals that their mothers, fathers, peers and society expect from them as future men. This ideal of manhood can shape the attitudes and behaviour of boys and men. The societal concept of masculinity is connected to self-identity, sense of belonging and self-worth, where one ideal of masculinity is dominant, it is likely to be transmitted first within the family and then reinforced by the community, by other men and women, by opinion leaders and by the media. Consequently, boys and men face pressure to meet that ideal by internalizing the expectations and attitudes that go along with the ideal image of them and society (Eagly *et al.*, 2000).

Within developed countries, gender roles are breaking down. However, within developing countries it is more difficult to break down gender roles, due to lower standards and less access to education. The modern social structure sees both men and women as equal partners of the society with equal rights, status and responsibility. This is a sudden change of concepts of a male dominated society (Wood, 2008).

2.2.2 Clash in family responsibilities

Family is not just an institution of many people living together under one roof; but the union of similar minded or mutually loving people bound with certain duties and responsibilities. The gender role structure was deliberately designed by the initial social setups to help the people accept and realize the specific duties each gender bound to. But today, both the parents work and earn for the family and both father and mother enjoys equal social statues and financial independence (Maume, 2006). The role of homemaker becomes no one's responsibility and both the partners may insist the other one to be the homemaker. Adjustments, understanding and empathy are the advised aspects that may help a smooth running family. Clinging to the century old concepts and lifestyles may help only to worsen the situation (Maume, 2006).

2.2.3 Children and gender roles

Traditional family system had enough time dedicated for the children as the mother was responsible for the entire process of childcare and development, when the father had to bring in the essential food supplies. However, modern lifestyle makes both the parents busy working for the family and earning the amount of money needed to meet the demands of life. Children many a times are left with caretakers or paid nannies. Such lifestyles may affect the families badly as children may grow unaffectionate to the parents. It is quite difficult for any parent to balance between the modern lifestyle and parenting or homemaker tasks. Children need to be trained to cope up with the family roles. This will help them to be more understanding and affectionate to parents (Witt, 1997).

2.3 Gender roles and education of children

Many efforts have been directed at improving access to education of girls. This has included formulation of policies with specific targets to increase gender parity in enrolment (David, 1997). Whereas the numbers of girls enrolled at grade one has gone up there have been problems that stood the way of attendance and performance. Long distance to school, timetables that conflict with other occupations such as farming, herding cattle, domestic chores, that leave little time for studies, lack of facilities such as water and sanitation separate toilets for boys and girls, gender curriculum, teaching materials, teaching methodologies, and overall physical, social, and academic environment (Tamale, 2001).

Overwhelming number of girls in Kenya are not in school because of poverty. Poverty leaves families with little choices, since girls services are most valued at home; they are often withdrawn from school to save money. Even when girls do go to school, they continue to take care of the home and siblings, collect water and fuel. This leaves them little time to do school work and attend classes regularly. When this happens girls grades become lower (Odaga & Henveld, 1995).

In their continued quest for education, girls face various socio cultural barriers which include low esteem aspirations, parental attitude and perceptions and cultural practices and rituals, e.g., female genital mutilation (FGM). It is evident that socio-cultural beliefs, attitudes and practices are dominant in the society leading to gender disparity in education (FAWE, 2001).

According to UNICEF (1996), the strongest tradition is the idea that sons should be educated because they will be the providers of their own future families and supporters of their aging

parents. The girl is socialised to be self sacrificing and destined for reproduction and service to the family. The girl's work may be harder but less likely to bring monetary gains hence not valued unlike the boys who are valued, wanted and favoured.

Generally most households in rural areas have negative attitudes towards educating girls. This impedes their education progress (Battara, 1992). This notion is supported by Eshiwani (1993), who said that many parents invest in schooling of boys because they are believed to retain and provide continuity to their roles and responsibilities. It is argued that a son is a potential permanent source of income. In circumstances where the family lacks a protective cover for social security as pensioner provision, the son is the only source of protection for his parents hence his preferred for education.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

2.4.1 Gender relations theory

This study was guided by the Gender Relations Theory by Ruth Pearson. According to Pearson (1992), society views all activities that are carried out to be based on social roles and interactions of men and women. The assumption is that gender roles are dictated by society. The society seems to have the ultimate authority on the precise nature of what women and men actually do, and their real contribution to the production and reproduction which turns out to be biased against women.

The theory asserts that gender roles are dictated by society through its norms and values. Rono (1999) posits that the notion of gender roles and activities have a strong ideological content based on the values and norms persistent in a society which are reflected in the gender division of labour. Based on such ideologies, society seems to have an ultimate authority on the precise

nature of what women and men actually do, and their real contribution to production and reproduction which turns out to be biased against women (Pearson, 1992:12). Existential social structures with regard to division of labour determine the duty spheres of women and men in the society. Because of such bias, the performance of men and women in nearly all spheres of life such as business, environmental conservation, development projects and the like are bound to vary.

Proponents of gender relations theory, such as Rono (1999) and Emerek (1999) argue that women have been relegated to performing reproductive and undervalued roles within the households. These roles include those of caregiving since women have been brought up as good nurturers for children including the sick within the society. However, it should be understood that these care roles are performed alongside other reproductive duties that women and girls perform thus increasing the burden of work.

The gender roles are imparted through family socializations and family set ups. They are further reinforced through avenues such as school, religious institutions and community centres. Under this theory, gender forms the single most criterion governing production and distribution of resources. For example, in traditional set up, the family is headed by the male parent. The patriarchal ideology therefore is dominant. The roles assigned to women are narrowly defined since they are expected to be good mothers and wives.

The gender relations theory has been used in assessing the working time and roles amongst European families (Emerek, 1999), engendering of poverty analysis in developing regions with specific focus on feminization of poverty (Chant, 2003) and in evaluating gender mainstreaming within the UNDP work environment (UNDP, 2006).

2.4.2 Relevance of the theory

Girls and women are seen as subordinates hence education to them is not important. Since the distribution of resources is done by a man as dictated by patriarchy the woman has always been in a disadvantaged position as compared to men. The situation of girls' education shows that the disadvantage and discrimination of girls start before birth with parental and societal negative attitudes stress the role of sons against daughter. This ideology is the root cause of gender discrimination in education. Since education is an investment which are profitable, parents choose to educate boys over girls. Before parents make decisions on who is to go to school and for how long, gender becomes an important factor.

2.5 Assumptions

This study was guided by the following assumptions.

- i. There is a significant relationship between gender roles assigned to girls and boys and their education.
- ii. There are strategies put in place to mitigate the effect of gender roles in education.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

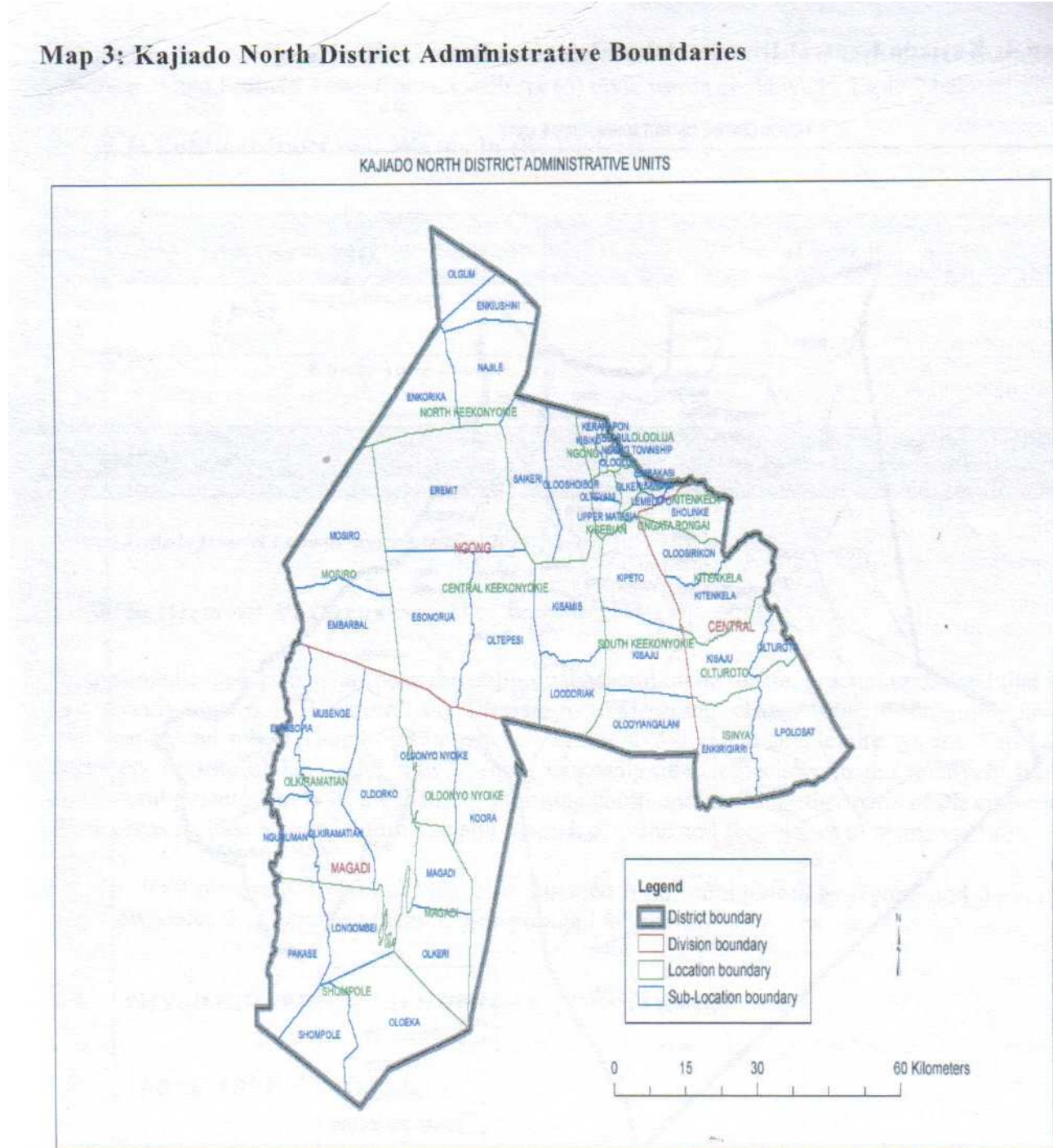
This chapter describes the research site, research design, study population, sample size and sampling procedures, data collection methods, data analysis and ethical issues of the study.

3.2 Study Site

The proposed study was carried out in Ewaso Kedong Division in Kajiado County. The Division is one of the Divisions in Kajiado North District. The other Divisions are Ngong, Ongata Rongai and Magadi. It covers an approximate area of 2,980 square kilometres. It is located in the southern part of the Rift Valley and, it borders Kiambu West to the north, Narok South District to the west, Kajiado Central District to the east and Ngong Division to the north east.

The Division is divided into 8 Locations namely; Keekonyokie North, Najile, Keekonyokie West, Keekonyokie Central, Entashart, Saikeri, Mosiro and Esoonorua (Republic of Kenya 2009). The Division has a population of 370,000 people 175,000 males and 195,000 females. There are 22 government public primary schools in the area (Kenya Population and Housing Census, 2009).

Figure 3.1: Map of Kajiado North showing Ewuaso kedong division



Source: Ministry of Planning & National Development 2005-2010

3.3 Research Design

This was a cross-sectional descriptive study. The study utilized in-depth individual interviews, focus group discussions and key informant interviews as its main data collection methods. Data collected have been analyzed according to the study themes guided by the objectives set at the beginning of the study. Verbatim amplifying the informants' voices has been used alongside the main discussions.

3.4 Study Population

The target population in this study was all pupils in public primary schools (in classes 6-8) in Ewuaso Kedong Division. The unit of analysis was the individual pupil.

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

60 pupils were drawn across the six (6) primary schools in Ewuaso Kedong Division for in-depth interviews. The informants for in-depth interviews were randomly sampled after purposive selection of their classes at different schools in Ewuaso Kedong. Key informants were purposely based on professionalism and understanding of the topic under study. Focus group discussion participants were conveniently selected based on their availability and to further discuss the impact of gender roles on the education of pupils.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

3.6.1 In-depth Interviews

This was conducted with 60 pupils drawn from class 6-8 in six primary schools in Ewuaso Kedong Division. The in-depth interviews largely contributed information on how the gender

roles assigned to the pupils affect their education. The method also highlighted the kind of roles assigned to different genders. In-depth interview guide appendix (1) was used to collect data.

3.6.2 Key Informant Interviews

Key informants interviews were conducted with teachers, the AEO and one official from the District Gender, Social & Development Officer (DGSDO) in the MoE. The key informants were selected on the basis of their knowledge of the topic under study. The KII have yielded data on the effect of gender roles on the performance of pupils. The method also generated information on strategies that are being put in place to mitigate the effects of gender roles on education of pupils. A key informant interview schedule (Appendix, 2) was used on teachers and (Appendix, 3) for the parents/guardians, (Appendix, 4) for the AEO and DGSDO.

3.6.3 Focus Group Discussions

Six focus group discussions were carried out with members of Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs) from the selected schools. The FGD participants were purposively selected. The focus group discussions yielded data on the home environment and its role on the academic performance of children, parents' attitude towards the education of their children, as well as the strategies they have on place to militate against the effects of gender roles in education. An FGD guide (Appendix, 5) was used to collect data.

3.7 Data Processing and Analysis

The qualitative data collected was analysed thematically guided by the study objectives. A descriptive approach was used where direct quotes emphasizing certain messages within the themes have been presented in verbatim.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Research permit was obtained from the National Council of Science and Technology (NCST) for the purposes of introduction to the field. The researcher sought the informed consent with the respective schools' head teachers, guardians, parents and the children before interviews began in the field.

The respondents were assured of confidentiality of all the information through use of pseudo names for the respondent's names for those who did not want to be identified. The researcher informed all respondents about the nature and purpose of the research, the methods that were used to select them and their importance in cooperating and giving valid information.

Respondents were also given a chance to seek clarifications on issues they did not understand in the study. Moreover, the study participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage in the interview process.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study across the following areas: the work types and effect on the pupils' education in Ewuaso Kedong, teachers' views on gender division of labor and its impact on children's education, parental perception of gender division of labour and strategies that are put in place to address the plight of children in Ewuaso Kedong. Discussions in cross reference to past findings and emergent issues has been carried to contextualize the study outcome and the broad gender division of labor and children's education theme. The demographic characteristics of the study participants have also been presented.

4.2 Demographic characteristics

4.2.1 Age of the respondents

In the study, more than half (62%) of the participants were aged between 11 and 12 years while another 38% were aged between 13 and 14 years as summarized in figure 4.1 below. Age was an important variable in the study in cross tabulation with classes where the children were at different ages.

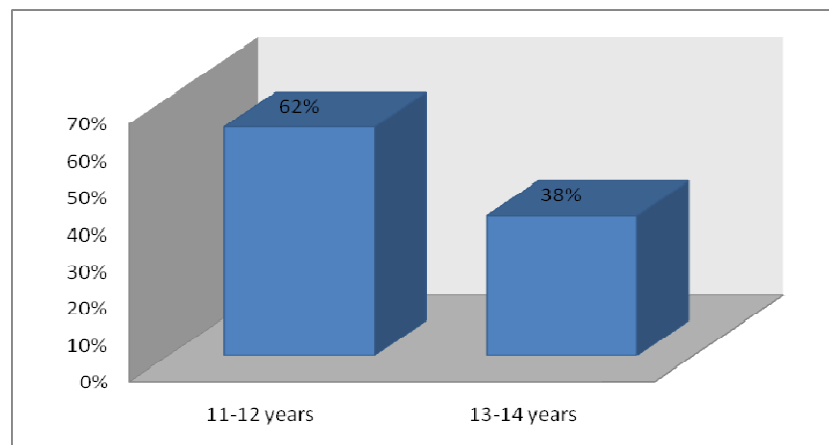


Figure 4.1: Age of the respondents

4.2.2 Gender

Analysis of the gender of the respondents in the study revealed that a majority at (58%) were males while females comprised 42% of the respondents. By implication, more boys are found to be enrolled in Ewuaso Kedong division compared to the number of girls. The findings are summarized in figure 4.2 below.

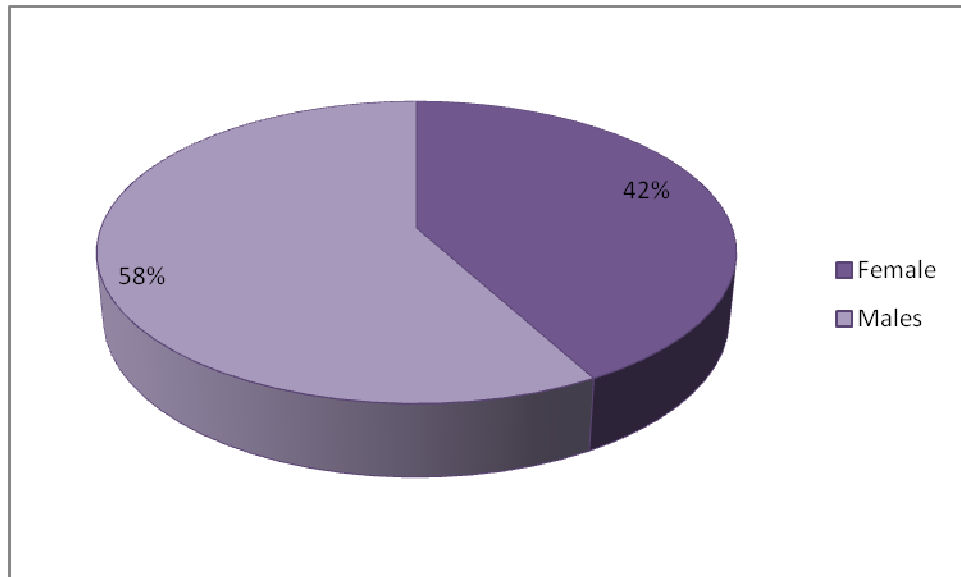


Figure 4.2: Gender of the respondents

4.2.3 Educational level

The study undertook to analyze the specific level of education as measure of classes where different pupils were drawn for interviews. The findings indicate that a mere 23% of the respondents were drawn from class six, 42% were drawn from class seven while another 35% were drawn from class eight. While class seven pupils formed the majority of the respondents, there is no statistical evidence that they skewed the findings in anyway given the qualitative nature of the study.

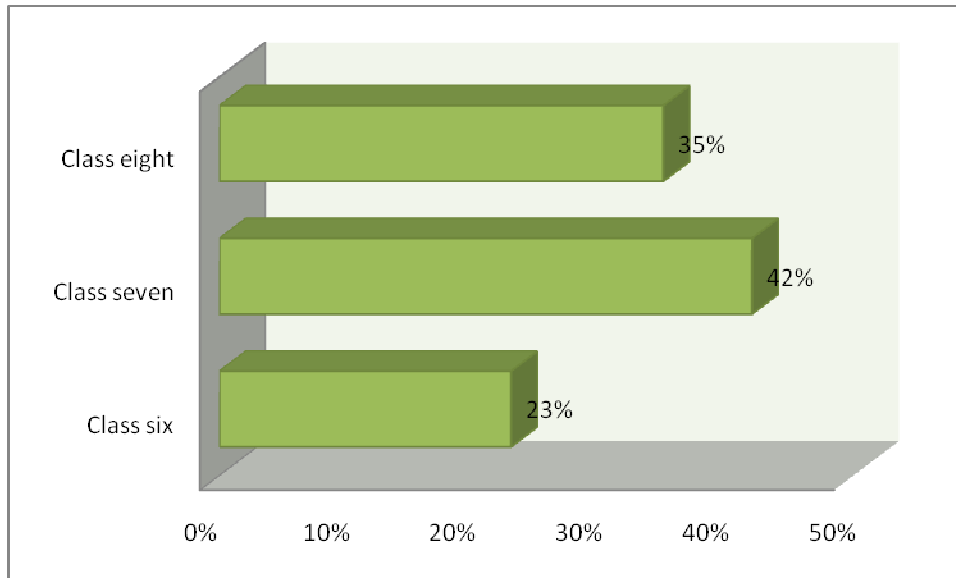


Figure 4.3: Educational level of the respondents

4.3 Work type and the effect on children education

Information collected from parents, teachers and the pupils revealed that both genders work before and after school, but the difference was seen in the kind of work they carry out. Girls were more located in household activities like cooking, caring for siblings, fetching water, splitting wood while boys looked after domestic animals, while both assisted on the farm. All were indicative of the challenges of gender division of labour that children face. The consequence is the inability of children to meet up with school time.

From the individual interviews, it was noted that though boys and girls work, their contribution to the labour demands differ, as well as the ways in which their education is affected. From the verbatim below, the work boys do seem hard, but is less time consuming compared to that of girls. The girls are occupied with household chores which look easy but consume a lot of time. In addition to girls been absent and going late to school, all the girls interviewed said that they are

not able to do assignments at home as a result of the domestic workload. To lay emphasis on the foregoing, females reported assisting in cooking the evening dinner and at times preparing the evening dinner by themselves in the absence of their mothers. Two girls said when their mother has an evening group meeting, they are the ones who have to prepare the dinner for the home as exemplified in the interviews below.

“Before I go to school in the morning I assist my mother to milk the cows, fetch water, clean plates, arrange fire and heat the food we all have to eat before going to school. When the food is heated, I serve each of my younger ones”. (Interview, female pupil Ewuaso Kedong).

“In the morning before I go to school I assist my father to take out the cows for grazing, wash my legs, face hands and leave for school.” (Interview, male pupil Ewuaso Kedong).

The findings from the above children reveal that the girl has more to do in the morning before she prepares for school in Ewuaso Kedong. It can also be noticed that the boy child finishes his work, takes a bath and eats before the girl child and subsequently will leave for school before her. By inference, the finding signifies that the work the children do in the morning determines when they would get to school. In another interview, a female pupil observed that;

“My mother heats the food we have to eat and I sweep the kitchen, clean plates and fetch water. At times, when I return from school I like to fetch water, clean plates so as to reduce my morning work and go to school early”. (Interview, female pupil, Ewuaso Kedong).

A male child described his duties as;

I tie the goats to their tether. On returning home, I wash my face and my legs and only need to put on my uniform eat and take off for school. (Interview, male pupil Ewuaso Kedong)

The messages from the two children show the different duties they have before they go to school.

A look at the work type and the time the children have to prepare for school answers the question

as to whether both children can get to school at the same time or at different times. One girl gave this reason for not being able to study in the evening:

“When I return from school I have to clean the kitchen, make fire and heat water for my parents, bathe my younger siblings, after which we have to prepare the evening meal for the family. By the time we finish cooking and eating I already feel sleepy and I cannot read nor do my assignment. (Interview, female pupil, Ewuaso Kedong)

In contrast, a boy described his work schedule as;

“When I return from school, sometimes I assist my father in bringing home the family herd of cattle after that, I fetch water to shower. (Interview, male pupil, Ewuaso Kedong)

Interview with the two children above revealed the kind of work they both perform as they return from school. Looking at the structure and the nature of work of these children, it can be noticed that the girl child is involved in more house work than the boy. From the above findings, one is tempted to say that parents are more lenient with the boys and too strict on the female. This can explain why the girl child is assigned more house responsibility than the male child within Ewuaso Kedong.

The domestic obligations of girls affect their studies in a way that they cannot read after school and are unable to do their assignments. They have the responsibility to assist the mothers as they both prepare meals for the family, an activity that is considered a female domain and responsibility in this culture. The parents consider it not only as the duty of the girl child to assist her mother while she is cooking, but also a mother-to-daughter grooming moment where she learns her future roles. It will be easier for the mother to assign certain responsibilities to the daughter when she has other commitments because of which she might not be able to carry out her responsibilities to the family. At such moments, the daughter is expected to step into her mother's shoes and fulfill such responsibilities as cooking.

In this way, the girl's education is affected as she works till late, gets tired and the following morning, for fear of being beaten by the teacher, some resort to copying answers from those who have done the assignment. In most cases, copying from friends does not help the child to understand what was given in the assignment which can subsequently affect her in the exams if such topics are covered in an exam.

This demand goes beyond the normal classroom duty of a teacher as it is the means through which some teachers evaluate the understanding of a new topic or subject taught to the pupils. In a study carried out by Wolf (1966) cited in Bloom (1981) the following conclusions were arrived at: that parents should have detailed knowledge of what the child is learning in school, know his/her strength and weaknesses in studying and give the child help on learning problems when necessary. The parents whose children were considered in this study may not have acquired the standards to give special support to the children as in the foregoing view. Children need support out of the classroom and sufficient time to practice what was studied in school during the day and also prepare for the following day's lessons. The importance of homework cannot be over emphasized, William(1988) cited in Frith (1988), observes that home work develops children's skills on self management, provide time and opportunity for the reinforcement and work done in class as well as for wider reading and support. Some children despite this, do little beyond what is done in classroom, and usually fail to do their home work. This situation stems from domestic work overload as evidenced in the findings of this study.

4.4 Teachers' views on gender division of labour

The study sought the views of the teachers on the effects of gender division of labor on education of pupils. This was meant to illuminate the experiences that teachers who directly interact with

children have had over the years in Ewuaso Kedong. The interest in teachers was also meant to generate information from a stakeholder's perspective in the education of children.

The general understanding gathered from discussions with the teachers was that boys are more participatory than girls during class lessons. Girls were also more likely to sleep in class than boys. This gives the impression that differences in their activities does not provide enough resting time for the girls as much as the boys such that when they arrived school in the morning they feel tired.

“Because children have their various household chores, lateness to school has been one of the difficult challenges to deal with...Usually this distracts other children when teaching”. (Interview, male teacher, Ewuaso Kedong).

The above observation made by the teacher point to the overwhelming burden of domestic labor on pupils before going to school where they can hardly concentrate in classroom especially the girl child. As a result, some arrive late for classes. The teacher's point is to the fact that when children come late to class they distract the attention of those already in class and the teaching. This, in a way, affects not only the child that is late but also those that are already in class and even the effectiveness of teaching and evaluation. According to one head teacher,

“Some children are always away from school during examinations and it becomes difficult to evaluate a single child or the children who were absent from school on that day...the absence more often a function of domestic responsibilities or having to step into the shoes of their parents to provide for others. (Interview, head teacher, Ewuaso Kedong).

From the above, it can be deduced that irregular attendance of school by the children affects their performance in classes while at the same time proper evaluation of children with respect to their performance. The teachers consider an evaluation of the children based on the understanding of the subject. It is challenging to evaluate how children get to understand what they teach and also difficult to assess pedagogical strategies. If assignments are not done, the teacher finds it difficult

to evaluate the children. And when tests and exercises are conducted, it becomes difficult to point out the weakness of children because it is hard to determine whether the child's low performance is a sign of weaknesses in teaching methods or it is a direct consequence of absenteeism. The teachers placed the blame squarely on the shoulders of parents.

“On market days some parents withdraw their children to the market without the knowledge of the teacher or the head teacher. Mostly fathers who take their animals for sale to the markets seek the assistance of their sons in taking the animals to the market. This is so because taking animals to the market by road needs more than one person, mothers on the other hand take along their girls to assist them carry the items sold home. (Interview, female teacher, Ewuaso Kedong)

From the data above, it can be concluded that girls have an irregular systems of attending school due to extended domestic chores to the market spheres. It will be noted that attending market days is done routinely in every week. While the activities may be deemed significant in contributing to the family's upkeep and income, its ramification on the education of pupils in general and girls in particular is acute within Ewuaso Kedong division. Similarly, teachers in the study observed that the responsibility of ensuring children's education is generally relegated to the school authorities while a majority of the parents in Ewuaso Kedong take a back seat. Education is considered an activity within the perimeters of the school environment and there's little space and efforts to provision children with favorable climate to study at home, a factor contributed largely by the overemphasized child domestic labor.

“Some parents overload their children with work at home and don't encourage them to study at home. The girl child especially is assigned a lot of house duties such as fetching water, cooking, tending to younger siblings.... The children are left to learn only from the teachers in school.” (Interview, female teacher, Ewuaso Kedong).

“Parents do not provide time for the children to study at home they are only interested in the assistance the children render to them.”(Interview, female teacher, Ewuaso Kedong)

The findings above indicate the extent to which parents have pushed the responsibility of educating the children to the teachers' domain. The interest in the children's school work look dismal, instead, there is emphasis in terms of what the children can contribute in the domestic upkeep of their families. The teachers want parents to also be part of the education of the children so that assignments and other school work the children have to do could be done as evident in an interview with a male teacher.

“Some parents do not encourage children to learn at home and to be in school early enough for classes and some keep children home on certain days to assist them without informing the teacher or the head teacher”. **(Interview, male teacher, Ewuaso Kedong).**

This poses a problem to the teachers because they are not aware of why children are absent from school. Besides, there are no communication links between parent and teachers on such matters. The teachers further revealed that when children are absent from school without the knowledge of the teacher, the child is the one who faces the consequences and not the parents. Some of the teachers observed that they often punished the children the next time they show up for class, because the teachers expect the child to give tangible reasons for their absence from school.

Similarly, gender division of labour among the children as revealed by the teachers shows that girls are involved in most household activities than boys and as a result when they get to school after being exhausted by the work load they perform before leaving for school, they sleep in class.

“In the class especially when I am teaching the girls usually sleep which is an indication of high amount of domestic work done before leaving for school”. **(Interview, male teacher, Ewuaso Kedong)**

When they are found sleeping in class they are punished by the teacher or asked to stand up. This disturbs teaching as the attention of the class is diverted towards the sleeping girl, which often

creates a situation of mockery. Although the teachers response is well intentioned (to prevent the girl from further sleeping) his action goes to affect the child's self esteem and discourages them from being interested in schooling. It is a widespread practice which other teachers admit to:

“When they are asked to stand to prevent them from sleeping, they get ashamed and unhappy.” (Interview, male teacher, Ewuaso Kedong).

It is tempting for such rural urban comparisons to be made. But the socio-economic conditions that exist in these two places are vastly different even though it is the same country. The rural poor are subsistent farmers whose livelihoods depend on the labour assistance from their children and they have traditional beliefs and practices which are hard to break away from. In contrast, urban parents who have adopted western lifestyles are civil servants or business people whose income generation does not depend on their children. They are able to educate their children without involving the children in their businesses. As such, urban children have enough time to study after school and sometimes have teachers who provide extra tuition after school.

4.4.1 Teachers views on the impact of gender division of labour

As already mentioned, lateness and absenteeism of pupils are some of the major challenges within the area. When children are absent from school, they are denied the chance to learn. There is no continuity in the teaching and learning processes, which leads to poor academic performance and this has to do with the work the children have before and after school.

“The boys have the tendency to do well in school because they have more time to study at home than the girls. And parents motivate boys by words or by giving them time to study. While the girls will not often have enough time as they assist the mothers a lot in cooking and child care. Some girls find it difficult to follow lessons... sometimes their minds are focused on the work they have to do at home after school”. (Interview, male teacher, Ewuaso Kedong)

The statement of the teacher above shows that, the results of the boys can be different from that of the female. As a result, boys might have some time to study back home as compared to the

girls. Thoughts about the work the children have after school make them loose focus in class. They are deprived of class lessons because they are thinking about their domestic obligations. The girl child in particular does not concentrate well in class and so focuses more on the work she has at home instead of concentrating on what is going on in class. She is reflecting on how she is going to do her work when school closes. This affects her mental development in terms of her abilities to follow class lessons, compelling her into less understanding of the need and the importance to concentrate on learning.

Subsequently, she is unable to make progress in her education and that leads to being unable to influence her own social or/and economic development. Socialist feminists advocates point out that it is only through education that there can be a change in power relation among the gender (Brock-Utne, 1989). Girls and women have been pushed into domestic work as their main responsibility while men get into paid work and are considered the only bread winners of the family. This continues to show why the Socialist feminist theorists push for women/girls to have equal education, which they believe will facilitate the liberation of women/girls from dominant patriarchy role (Odora, 1993). Commenting on the impact on the differences in treatment given to the different gender, one teacher explained that as a result of gender division of labor boys tend to be proud and think of themselves as superior and tend to be relaxed at housework while girls tend to be lazy and feel inferior to boys and thus shy away from practical and highly demanding subjects like mathematics.

Gender division in the situation as explained by teacher above shows that, due to gender division of labour boys' think and feel confident about themselves and they look down on certain house chores which are reserved for girls. This has affected the girls as they feel inferior. Mannathoko

(1992) analyzes the structural relations between the genders in which he concludes that power and family control has been pushed to the man. Men dominate as they consider themselves superior to the women according to the societal norms. Children observe and imitate their parents. The teacher's comment above confirms how boys grow up to be self confident and girls to be timid as a result of how they are socialized. The effect is seen in the classroom.

“The boys tend to score higher in class and participate in class lessons and are able to speak when questions are asked in class...the girls usually do not participate much when a question is asked. Because of this the girls always feel defeated by the boys and participate little in most class lessons”. **(Interview, female teacher, Ewuaso Kedong).**

“Boys carry the attitude of not assisting their mothers in the kitchen after school and do not pay attention to home economics lessons. Few boys in my class who had taken the subject wrote the final exams... All the girls liked the course as it deals with cooking and dressmaking and most of them perform well and participate during the lesson.” **(Interview, female teacher, Ewuaso Kedong).**

This goes to show how the girls are more knowledgeable with household work as evidence from their interest and active participation in home economics that is related to their field of work at home. Since it is what they often practice as they assist their mothers at home, it gives them the confidence and zeal to talk as what they have mastery in. They are more animated and express their skills in subjects which continue to place them in the feminine activities as boys scare away from it to masculine work or activities. This goes to confirm the conversional myth that the woman's place is in the kitchen (Martin and Roberts cited in Charles 1993 and Moser, 1993). This affects the girls' education as they become more interested in subjects that continue to keep them to the mother role and are less interest in subjects that will provide them opportunities to compete with the boys.

Similarly, Datta (1994) identifies the family, social and economic response to the children as having an influence on their educational pursuits. It further underlines that what the family

transmits to the children is important as it determines the children's development and interest into their different fields of studies. Datta's concern is to emphasize the important role parents have in the children's mind building and focus in life, which comes from their activities and interactions with the children. In cases where parents are biased in the education of their children and tend to think that some children are supposed to be of certain standards in the family rather than others, the children respond by gravitating towards their parents expectations. The children may end up taking more interest in education and less household activities and vice versa.

Burton (1988) who also points out that parents influence their children in the way they bring them up. Parents' occupational aspirations for their children go to influence the children's education and interest. As a consequence, the differences in performance are subject to the desire of the parents. Plan (2007) confirms this in an analysis of African rural homes where girls are faced with abuse and violence at home. The girl child is socialized to understand that she and the boy are not of the same status. This has contributed to make boys feel superior and girls inferior.

“In the distribution of work in school, boys are usually assigned to difficult tasks and girls to less tedious task. This has made the boys more creative than the girls which can be seen during hand work presentation in school.” (Interview, male teacher, Ewuaso Kedong).

This shows how gender division of labour directly and indirectly continues to place the girl and the boy child into a particular trend of activities and skills as an indication of what the children learn and experience as they grow and become socialized into the society. These skills that they develop is as a result of their daily experience as noted by Cranny-Francis (2003) that gender is everywhere and manifest consciously or unconsciously in our daily language, postal directives and the media. It can, therefore, be said that gender division of labour has continued to place girls and boys into activities that confirm different roles of gender not only in the society but also

in their role models as a function of what is seen and imitated. Whatever the stand point, the trend of gender division continues to circle around girls and boys who are considered as efficient in particular work types. Information from the above teacher gives a picture of gender division of labour being practiced in school as a continuation of the image society has already created between the children, thus, perpetuating a divide of power and roles between the children as they grow up.

These differences in work type allocated to the children even at school show shows how gender division of labour does not end only at the level of the family or the society but is also practiced in school as a continuation of the societal belief. This is considered an important element of the cultural heritage in rural Ewuaso Kedong, whereby children are expected to assist their parents in their activities and consequently acquire, maintain and pass it on to others.

4.5 Parental perception of gender division of labour

Parents opinions as to the reason for the gender division of labour between the children in Ewuaso are found to vary based on educational level and occupation. Interview with a pastor,

“Men have always been socialized to take care of the herds, the community inheritance, they are to keep off kitchen and do what’s manly, if they have to go to school they have to pursue tough courses and become our engineers...girls are meant to keep homes, so we train them to be humble and more often assist their mothers”. **(Interview, parent Ewuaso Kedong).**

The interview with this parent shows that, gender division of labour has existed throughout the history of the Maasai community. This is seen in the way the line of activities and work were shared between men and women. Women and girls have been responsible for the home, food provision to the entire family and men/boys have been engaged in activities that are seen as hard and income generating. The above interview further revealed that there was informal learning through which children were to learn from their respective parents what is required of them. To

them it was easier for children to integrate in their various fields as a result of the gender demarcation that children grow to see. Thus, children grow and develop more skills and creative knowledge that continue to place them into different gender roles within the society and their families.

The theoretical anchor of the above point of view also reveals that “when men, women and children worked together for family subsistence, family members were close to each other and children had a clear picture of their parents’ lives. Traditional education kept children in contact with parents, their social context and the activities of their daily life, permitting them to learn from their parents and interact on how to develop an identity as a husband/father or wife/mother” (Nsamenang, 2000:5). Based on the foregoing, a farmer in Ewuaso Kedong observed that:

“In my opinion, gender division of labour makes work easy as girls will be good in house work and child care which will place them in a good position in their marital homes and the boys will also grow to understand that they have to work hard to be able to support their family and children. Traditionally, boys’ contribution to the family is seen differently from that of the girl. But this does not change the fact that men remain the head in our society. That is why we put more pressure on our sons than the female to work hard”. **(Interview, parent farmer, Ewuaso Kedong)**

In the farmers view above, household work is suitable for the girls as they are seen as those to keep the home neat and provide food for the family. The farmers view is based on the fact that gender division of labour exists to give the different genders an understanding of their different roles in the family and in the society. From the above statement, I could say that the farmer’s ideas are still based on the grounds that girls should be educated informally as a way to socialize them in a mother’s role, which is discriminatory and places them in a less privilege position in the society. This is in line with Liberal feminist analyses of the sexual division of labour where tradition continues to place women and girls in the mother’s role as a function of their

responsibility in domestic work. It “consists of endless rounds of mindless, demanding and undervalued tasks” Odora (1993:34) while men are involved in jobs or activities that give them greater control, freedom and more financial power against the women (ibid). The liberal feminists focus on the oppressive role of women/girls and demand for increase in opportunity and equality for women/girls as a means to break the barriers of the social inequality that exists between the men and women so that they too can speak and act on their own behalf (Acker 1987). Women and girls through increased investment in education can be a means to empower them. Obviously, the views of parents in Ewuaso Kedong, the practices in and outside school do not help to bridge the gap between boys and girls. A retired parent observed that

“Boys were to attend school to be teachers and the few girls that were allowed in school at that time were those girls who were to be wives of teachers. The school was not popular among the indigenes because most parents did not see the importance of female education and it was difficult for them to accept girls being educated from school rather than by their mothers.” (**Interview, Parent retired worker, Ewuaso Kedong**).

Today, most of the roles are still implemented because families and societies circles continue to reflect on how things have been in the past. The interview with this parent shows a history of gender biases in the division of labour and education of the children as a cause for the continued gender differences in Ewuaso Kedong. A look at the view of this parent gives the notion that gender has been socially constructed, which has gone to shape the behavior and attitude of the parents towards assigning roles to their children. The argument against the above is put forward by Acker (1987) that the stereotyping ideology of girls being socialized into traditionally constructed myth of being responsible for household activities, contribute to limit them within a particular gender role and widen inequality gap between the genders. And this socialization of women and girls through the family, school and media has continued to place women in an inferior position and make them lose confidence of even a higher aspiration in life.

“Though gender division of labour is something we grew up to see and get socialized into, there are no doubts that there are activities that we feel can best be performed by the respective genders...Some things will be done better by the sex we feel is best suited for it. This is why we continue to train our children into the respective gender fields. It will guide them in future.” (Interview, parent business woman, Ewuaso Kedong).

The parent above upholds the ideas of gender division of labour as a way through which the parent’s guide the child into his/her future career, without considering the changes and the demands of contemporary. This shows how certain activities, according to the parent, pertain to a particular sex, leading to the conclusion that gender division of labour is a strong phenomenon considered among parents in the upbringing of their children and a way for the children to get a mastery of the different gender roles.

“With the rate of unemployment it is necessary for children to get more knowledge and ideas of the different activities within their environment for them to be able to face the challenges in future. There is western education, but it is also necessary for us to teach our children informally the basic activities that we think are important in our society to avoid the complete eradication of our cultural heritage among our children and the generation to come”. (Interview, Parent female-retired teacher, Ewuaso Kedong).

Interview with this parent shows that children automatically form part of the family labour force. There is no specific age for inclusion into the family labour force as children have different ages of attaining physical maturity for home activities. In this sense, almost every child undergoes or practices and participates in all home activities or work as a means to facilitate the smooth running of the home. The parents claim children form part of the family work force in different activities and these activities depict a high magnitude of the gender division of labour in the area.

However, concerning the existing practice of gender division of labour in Ewuaso Kedong, it was also realized that children involvement in these activities was as a result of the social and

economic situation of the family. In this region agriculture is the main economic activity with a small percentage of the people engaged in white-collar jobs.

Interviews with some of the parents show their interest and preference for their children to be in school. But the challenges they faced affect their ability to meet all the educational needs of their children. Thus, children's labor are exploited as much as possible so that besides the demand for food that is needed for the household, parents will be able to have time for other activities that can generate income for the family.

Focus group discussion with the parents revealed that, children remain their main source of labour within the community. Children's participation in household work is crucial for the family, besides their going to school, as they assist in caring for their younger ones, fetch water, fetch wood, clean the home, clean plates facilitates the parents activities as they return home from their daily activities. This was an indication that gender division of labour facilitates the parent's activities out of the home. In addition, the children will be able to work in times of difficulties and rely less on white-collar jobs as the only source of income. They emphasized that because of their economic situation children's contribution remain vital for the daily functioning of the family. Children's labour is needed not only in household but in other activities of the household as farming and in the market to generate income and food to meet household demands for food and health which are unpredictable. The household combination of children in labour activities facilitate home and out of home work. Because their support is crucial for the household and the family in general, it becomes difficult to work without their assistance.

Interview with the parents revealed that children are considered as part of their household labour force such that the assistance of children remains in high demand for the household activities and needs. Parents explained that for their daily activities to run properly children have a role in the

domestic work. This includes fetching wood which serves as household fuel, fetching water that serves for domestic use to cook and bath, care for their young ones, clean the home, and washing of dresses which is done manually by the children and assist on the farm. This facilitates the parents' work as they get home late, and are already aware of the responsibility the children have as part of their contribution to the daily management of the home. This is in line with Kielland and Tovo (2006) who note that rural African parents find it difficult to do work at home that is meant for children. In other words, the children have as an obligation to perform their duties as they return from school. Thus, it is difficult for most parents to carry out duties which they believe are meant for the children.

Responses from the parents show that gender division of labour is a traditional socialization of children and a great cultural heritage that needs to be passed on from one generation to another. In addition, parents revealed that, children assistance are needed at home so as to meet their daily activities as poverty makes hiring labour difficult. Parents consider children's assistance as normal socialization the child needs rather than the effect it has on the children's education. Parents consider the going to school as enough learning for their children. This is seen in the way the labour of the children is utilized by most parents before and after school and some parents cause children to be absent from school without informing their teachers and/or head teachers.

The parents revealed that gender division of labour between boys and girls continue to exist because it is considered as grooming for the children to get a mastery of their work type, and that traditionally boy's contribution to the family is seen differently from that of the female. As such, gender division of labour exists to place them in their respective roles in reference to the different family roles they are expected to perform as adults. For example, cooking and taking care of children by females and splitting of wood by males.

Some parents also acknowledged the fact that their level of education does not provide them the opportunity to check their children's books or assist in teaching them at home. They think that when children go to school they get what is required as they are taught by trained teachers. Since children have been in school the whole day studying, they need to assist in household work when they returned. This is why they make use of their labour when they return home.

The parents also revealed that they were not satisfied with the way some of the teachers teach. Reasons were that teachers organize afternoon teaching sessions where children pay for them to teach out of the normal school hours. Parents think that teachers are exploiting and over working the children. They resent it because they have to pay for these extra classes. Besides, they feel that children have to be at home to work to meet the household work demands. The daily tasks of the parents are many and usually they are already prepared for their children's assistance when they return from school.

In addition to the individual interviews with the parents, the focus group discussion showed that children are involved in the household labour activities as a result of their financial situation. The parents in the focus group discussion explained that, because their livelihood is based on subsistence farming, children are involved into different household labour to support the family so that income can be generated from other sources to supplement the household needs. Producing enough food to satisfy the family nutritional needs is an important reason for the utilization of every available family labour including the children in order to maximize productivity for household consumption.

From the findings above, it emerged that children within the same household are usually treated differently. There is an unfair disparity, which puts girls at a disadvantage. Boys and girls do not

carry out the same functions within the household alongside learning. Girls, as a result of the gender division of labour, spend more time assisting their mothers; by the length of time they spend working either with their mothers or in the absence of their mothers. This is perpetuated and enforced by parents and is seen as a normal practice by the society. However, educators do not take this imbalance into account in the assessment and the evaluation of the children.

The academic performance of pupils of both sexes remains a major concern to all actors in the educational enterprise. When pupils perform well in school, do their assignments, arrive in school for classes on time and register less absent from school, people will be less concerned than when some are irregular in school, late for lessons and drop in their performance. This implies that significant differences in children's performance attract at least concerns of some kind.

Gender bias in work type in most families is encouraged by the parents because as the children grow up they start by assigning them different duties according to their gender. The differences in work type are informed by the expectations parents and society at large has of females on one side and males on the other side. Whiles the male is expected to grow up to be the breadwinner of the family, the female expected to take charge of domestic work. Therefore, the birth of a male is welcomed with a lot of joy in African families. This gives the impression that, the male child is more valued and respected. The male child is seen as the family successor and not the female child. The male child is seen a potential leader in the community who must be given skills in order to take up that role at an older age. This reflects in the kind of work allocated to the male and the female. The male child hardly does any domestic chores.

It is the female child who is largely responsible for the household. In this way, the male child has more time to study after school than the female child. The female child is then considered as the mother's representative and so always has to be with her mother whenever she is cooking. According to Beal (1994) the girls closeness to her mother is associated with being obedient and calm compared to the boys who are noted for stubbornness and roughness. This is not to suggest that the male child does not engage in any activity. The male child may assist the father to split wood, cut grass for, and generally take care of the farm animals. The point, however, is that hard as the male child's activities may be, it is not frequent and does not take as much time as that of the female child. Depending on the commitment of rural parents, children's involvement in the work activities varies in scope and time. Kielland and Tovo (2006) observes that Rural children who attend school and rural children who don't have approximately the same number of working hours, school work included: rural girls both those in school and those not in school, have an average workday of seven and a half hours, while rural boys, both those in school and those not in school, have an average work day of six and half hours (Kielland and Tovo, 2006:17).

Usually the effect of gender division of labour on the children is not realized by the parents besides the apparent poverty, which has assumed normalcy. Parents are of the opinion that, besides studying, the children as a normal activity have to assist with household and farm work. Children have an obligation to work in exchange for food and the provision of their personal needs. When the parents return from their daily activities, either from the farm or market, their primary interest is in whether the work they assigned to their children has been done. This situation is perfectly captured by Kielland and Tovo (2006) as he notes that child labour in Africa results mostly from the household and that, children are associated with household assets like land and animals. Also, the poor nature of education in some rural areas in Sub-Saharan

Africa instigates parents not to see the importance of education for the children, especially the girl child. The benefits of education seem distant and out of reach. Therefore, parents make the children work so that even without jobs they can provide for themselves.

Kielland and Tovo further explains that most parents are reluctant to do work they consider to be meant for children as they are of the opinion that the work has to be done by children. By the time the children return home from school, parents are psychologically prepared for the children to fill their vacancies. As such, whatever the case and the activities of the child, he/she has to come home from where ever and perform the home duty as a child and as his contribution to the family.

4.6 Strategies to address gender roles' effects on education of pupils

Gender roles in the family remain largely unchanged and the most powerful jobs continue to be overwhelmingly dominated by men as evident in Ewuaso Kedong Division. Within education, a 'hidden curriculum', distribution of roles both at school and at home helps to perpetuate gender differences. It remains imperative, therefore, that effective equal opportunities strategy for improving and equalizing girls' and boys' educational experiences and opportunities by harmonizing the gender division of labor across the domestic and public spheres should be identified and pursued as the study revealed and herein discussed.

4.6.1 Family-school partnerships

In the study, it was established the families are continuously reached for their input into the children's education given their primary role as mentors. This is in a bid to cascade the education and learning of children to the parents who are also viewed as the custodians and transmitters of

cultural practices on gender division of labour that might bias against girls' education pursuit and performance as observed by one of the teachers.

“Families are the first educators of their children and they continue to influence their children's learning and development during the school years and long afterwards...we work to engage the parents in the learning of children and advice on the significance of giving light work to both in-school boys and girls to enhance their chances of good performance at school” (interview, male head teacher, Ewuaso Kedong).

“As parents, we have been made to understand the impact of domestic work on the academic achievement of our children; we have taken it upon ourselves to lessen the burden of work during week days to allow children concentrate on school assignments” (FGD, PTA members, Ewuaso Kedong).

Schools have an important responsibility in helping to nurture and teach future generations and families trust schools to provide educational foundations for their children's future. At the same time, schools need to recognize the primary role of the family in education. This is why it is important for families and schools to work together in partnership.

“Teachers have developed an outreach service as mobilizers and advocates, they hold meeting with parents and get to discuss the impact of work on their children's concentration in class and performance in general, they also use these discussions to change the parents' attitude toward the education of girls who mostly burdened by household chores in Ewuaso kedong” (Interview, male teacher, Ewuaso Kedong).

“The teachers are being sensitized on gender issues that negatively impact on the children's education, this way, they go ahead to advice parents and children especially on stereotypes and domestic labour effects on their education, this has translated into positive attitudinal change toward lessening the burden on children” (Interview, AEO, Ewuaso Kedong).

Developing family-school partnerships may not always be easy. It requires commitment and time. Because of pressures and circumstances, many families will need special arrangements, or extra support, to enable them to become actively involved in their children's school lives, and to help their children get the most from school.

4.6.2 Cultural Awareness and advocacy

Unfortunately, culture is often overlooked because the analysis phase of instructional design is one of the most commonly skipped phases. Thomas, Mitchell, and Joseph (2002:41) remind us that, “culture is so much a part of the construction of knowledge that it must underpin not only the analysis phase but all phases of the design process”. In the study, consensus coming out of the focus group discussion and expert interviews pointed to the need to understand the societal socio-cultural architecture in Ewuaso Kedong to enable education providers overcome the effects of gender roles on the education of pupils. Whereas some people may view gender roles as outright child labour and being detrimental to education of the pupils, the community may hold to the fact that they training their children for future occupation in the best way their traditions demand as in the interviews below:

“This is largely a pastoral community, the boys are trained to be protectors and enjoy the security in the herds, girls are home keepers and should do anything that is deemed domestic, the educationalists around should dig into these stereotypes and make the community aware of the changing fortunes and more importantly, education as an investment” (FGD, PTA members, Ewuaso Kedong).

“Eliminating the gender biases in roles between boys and girls will need everyone to understand what the values and organization of the society around is like, in that way you can explain to the community how the lessen the burden of labour on children and have their performance improved” (Interview, DGSDO, Ewuaso Kedong).

The findings are in concurrence with the conclusion of the works of Lea & Goodfellow (2003) who posit that instructional providers must become more knowledgeable about the cultural differences existing among the learners they serve. With an unpredictable learner population in most settings, perhaps especially in open and distance learning settings, instructional providers can no longer make overarching judgments about the demographics of their learners before

having the opportunity to interact with them. Similarly, Edmunson (2007; Young, 2008) observe that instructors should carefully consider the learner population during the analysis phase of any instructional design or planning effort.

Thus it is essential that instructional providers continue to familiarize themselves with the learners' cultures throughout the implementation phase and even through the evaluation stage. They might consider including a cultural expert as part of the design team or asking a representative participant to help plan a course, training event, or product before implementation occurs (Thomas, Mitchell, & Joseph, 2002; Young, 2008).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study set out to assess the effect of gender division of labour on the education of pupils in Ewuaso Kedong Division. The study also sought to determine the strategies put in place to ensure that pupils got the best of education by overcoming the effects of gender roles. The study was guided by Genders Relations Theory developed by Ruth Pearson (1992) to assess the differential impact of gender division of labor on the education of children. This chapter gives a recap of the findings from data collected and presented in the previous chapter.

5.2 Summary

The findings indicate that both boys and girls are involved in different activities within the home. In interviews with them, both sexes confirmed they are aware of their home duties even in the absence of the parents. This implies the children are not only aware of their different home duties but are also conscious of what the parents expects from them before they go to school and when they return. The children observed that when they wake up early to perform their household duties like fetching water, cleaning plates, sweeping the surrounding, they get tired when they get to school. Some of the girls said that their parents at times made them to forego school to care for their siblings especially during farming seasons thus attracting punishment from the school authorities and negatively impacting on their performance within school. This goes to affect the child in that while others are learning he/she is out of class carrying out the punishment.

In addition, the pupils confirmed that, they are unable to do assignments given in school due to the workload at home. They are obliged to work after school with no ample studying time due to overwhelming domestic chores. By the time they finish the home activities they are tired and hungry, and so they wait for their mother to provide their evening meals. Some of the girls said at times they prepare the dinner in the absence of their mother and that when she prepares the dinner and serves to everyone, they start discussing and forget that she has to read. This was also noted by some teachers who revealed that, some of the children lose concentration in class because of the thought of the work they have at home.

Discussion with the children also showed that some were not happy working at home in the morning before going to school. There were some who said they always like to do some of the household work in the evening so that they could have very little work to do in the morning so that they can finish in time and to go to school early. However, because there are so many people in the house, when they fetch water and clean all the plates they are re-used in the evening so they have to fetch water and clean the plates all over again. Observations from the field showed that it was difficult for children to learn late in the night because of the use of lanterns. While on the field it was also observed that when children close from school as there are going home there are discussing what there are going to do when they get home. Those who have to fetch firewood start discussing where they are going to fetch the wood, and those who have to laundry also discuss the stream where they are going to do the laundry. Those who are going to meet the parents on the farm and bring food home also tell their friends so that those who have the same direction make their plans to move together. This was usually among children who live in the same village.

Analysis from this study revealed that, the effect of gender division of labour between the children poses a number of challenges. As noted from the interview with the teachers shown in the previous chapter, absenteeism was one of the problems that some teachers faced. The teachers pointed out that some parents make their children absent in order to assist them at home without the prior knowledge of the teachers or the head teachers. This affects the teaching and learning as those that are absent from school usually are not able to follow up lessons the day they are back in school. In addition, children fear to ask questions where there are doubts because it might be a continuation of what was taught in their absence and so stay in ignorance.

Furthermore, the teachers revealed that parents think teachers are responsible for the complete teaching and education of children, such that when the children return from school parents do not see the need for them to study at home. Hence when children return from school, parents utilize their labour intensively without considering that they have to study at home. This is why some teachers said parents overload the children with work after school. Children too, afraid of their parents find it difficult to tell the parents they have an assignment. In some cases, even if they do tell the parents that they have work, they will tell them they will study after working which they do not do. As such, teachers see it as a weakness on the side of the parents for not providing them with time to study after school hours.

In addition, teachers also revealed that parents do not regularly attend Parent Teacher Association meetings (PTA) that are usually organized by the school to discuss matters in the school. Teachers attribute the negligence of parents not attending the PTA as pushing the full responsibility of the education of the children to the teachers. Teachers noted that, it is usually through PTA meetings that matters of children coming late to school, absence from school and children performance could better be addressed. Through the same forum teachers will be able to

point out some of the things that contribute negatively to the children's education. Parents too will also have the opportunity to know the time and the kind of work that is necessary for the children within school days.

5.3 Conclusion

From the above discussion of gender division of labour between boys and girls in Ewuaso Kedong in Kajiado, it can be concluded that gender division of labour on the education of these children portrays both negative and positive impact. Firstly, the positive impact is the satisfaction the parents get from the assistance the children give to them and to the household. Secondly, the socialization parents feel enables their children get to know their different duties within the household, which will be essential for their children's success when they grow up to manage their own homes and pursue their own careers. Thirdly, the parents believe that the informal education the children receive is important for the preservation of traditional cultural values, which must be transmitted from generation to generation.

On the other hand, the negative consequences are due to the fact that gender division of labour has led to one gender being overburdened with work than the other. This has contributed to lateness and absenteeism particularly with girls as compared to boys. Secondly it has created a situation of one sex feeling superior to the other as a result of the honor, respect and preferences that is given to male children, whereas girls are left feeling inferior and inadequate. It creates an impression of the society that education for girls is not valued compared to that of the boys.

5.4 Recommendations

1. Increased community awareness creation and advocacy against high burden labour to school children which impact negatively on their education achievements and performance. This should be done by parents, teachers, county administration and non-governmental actors in the entire Ewaso Kedong division;
2. PTA meetings should be used to strengthen the teacher-family relationships by outlining the expectations of each stakeholder and their roles in addressing the gender role burden on children with an aim of improving pupils' overall performance;
3. Instructors/teachers should delve into the cultural fabric of the Ewaso Kedong community, dig out gender biases and stereotypes in gender roles and teach pupils in a manner that dispel the myths around undertaking duties at home and school. The ministry of education should support the process by allowing curriculum adjustments or encourage life skills lessons in primary schools in Ewaso Kedong Division;
4. There should be a further study on school-based approaches to dealing with effects of gender roles in education of pupils to discern concrete issues around curriculum, mode of instruction and the teacher-family axis in helping pupils' performance at school.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: In-depth Interview Guide for Primary School Pupils

A. Personal Details

1.Name (optional)

2.Age (optional).....

3.Gender:

4.Class:

B. Interview Questions

5. Who pays for your school needs?

6. Have you ever been sent away from school?

7. Give reasons if yes on (6) above

8. Apart from paying your schools needs, what type of encouragement do you get from your parents or guardian?

9. Have you ever missed school?

10. Give reasons if yes on (9) above

11. What do you think should be done so that you don't miss school in future?

12. What are some of the duties that are assigned to you both at home and in school?

13. Do you think duties are distributed equally both at home and in school? Why?

14. Do the duties assigned to you at home and in school affect your schooling? If yes, how?

15. In your own opinion, do your parents or guardians encourage both girls and boys to attend school? Give reasons.....

Thank you for taking time to answer the questions

Appendix 2: Key Informant Interview Guide for Teachers.

A. Personal Details

- 1. Name (optional)
- 2. Years of service
- 3. Years of service at current station.....
- 4. Gender.....
- 5. Which class do you handle?

B. Interview Questions: Effects of Gender Roles on Education of Pupils

- 6. What is the pupil population of your school?.....
- 7. How many teachers does the school have?.....
- 8. What roles are assigned to boys and girls in school and in the community? (why are these roles designated as so?)

Boys.....

Girls.....
- 9. Do you think gender roles affect the education of pupils in public primary schools? (specify the role against the magnitude of its effects)Please ...
- 10. What do you see as your role in ensuring that pupils' education is not affected by the performance of gender roles?
- 11. What strategies has the school put in place to address effects of gender roles on education of boys and girls?
- 12. How effective are they? Give reasons for your answer
- 13. In your own opinion, what strategies do you recommend in order to address the effects of gender roles on education of pupils?

Thank you for taking time to answer the questions.

Appendix 3: Key Informant Interview Guide for AEO, DCO, DGSDO

A. Personal Details

- 1. Name (optional)
- 2. Gender.....

B. Interview Questions: Effects of Gender Roles on Education of Pupils

- 3. Do you think gender roles affect the education of pupils in public primary schools? (probe around attendance, performance, retention and concentration)Please Explain.....
- 4. What efforts have been made by the government to address issues of gender roles in education? (probe to dig out the successes of these government strategies)...
- 5. What has been the reaction of society (parents, colleagues, pupils, churches and teachers toward need for balance in gender roles?
- 6. What do you see as your role in ensuring that pupils’ education is not affected by the performance of gender roles?.....
- 7. What would you do to change the societal attitude of not addressing effects of gender roles on education of pupils?.....
- 8. What strategies would you like to see put in place by stakeholders regarding effects of gender roles on education of pupils?

- Parents.....
- Teachers.....
- Government.....
- Church.....
- Other.....

9. Please make observations that may enrich this study

...

Thank you for taking time to answer the questions