

Overcoming the Causes of Under-Representation of Women in Primary School Leadership in Eldoret Municipality, Kenya

Catherine Barmao

Department of Educational Management and Policy Studies,
Moi University; P. O. Box 3900-30100, Eldoret, Kenya.

Abstract

This paper is based on a study that investigated the factors contributing to under-representation of female teachers to headship positions in Eldoret Municipality. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study, and both quantitative and qualitative techniques were employed. The author employed stratified sampling, simple random and purposive sampling to select 105 respondents comprising 2 Municipal Education Officials (TAC tutors), 8 head teachers, 80 teachers and 15 committee members all from 15 randomly selected public primary schools in the Municipality. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study identified a number of significant factors which were found to influence low participation of female teachers to headship positions and were attributed by lack of support starting from the family to national level and other factors reinforcing each other like, women's dual roles, being undervalued as a result of African culture, societal perception, educational and political interference among others. The study recommends the strengthening of the mentorship system among women teachers to help young female teachers aspiring leadership in future. The findings would help educational institutions in the development of promotion, recruitment and appointment strategies for women aspiring headship positions. The study would also assist educational policy makers to better understand some of the causes of under representations in educational management and find remedies. The findings can also assist female teachers in headship positions to improve on their roles as mentors to other young female teachers in the profession. The study also has policy implications for various institutions in the government on the need to create gender awareness and promote equality in leadership positions.

Keywords: overcoming, causes, under-representation, women, secondary, school, leadership, eldoret, municipality, Kenya.

INTRODUCTION

Women Education and Training

Education plays a role in addressing gender disparities through its capability towards enhanced access to education opportunities, and empowerment of women to be able to participate in major economic activities. Parental guidance which is a form of informal education is also critical, especially among communities with retrogressive social and cultural effects (Institute of Economic Affairs, 2008). In Kenya, women enjoy access to higher level of education but few of them reach upper management levels. This can be explained by traditional views on women's role as primary care givers to their children. Women have increased presence in the professional and managerial sector notably in the judiciary, banking and civil service areas as well as the private sector (ILO, 1998). Studies have shown that girls are under-represented and under-achieve particularly in science and technology oriented subject at all levels of education (Abagi, 1993; Hughes & Mwiria, 1989; Obura, 1992). The Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) (1995) also identifies education as a human right and essential tool for achieving the goals of equality development and peace. It notes that equality of access to and attainment of educational

qualification are necessary if more women are to become agents of change and that investment in formal and non-formal education and training for women and girls is one of the means for achieving sustainable development and economic growth (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa [UNECA], 2005). International concerns about the situation of the world's women have enhanced campaigns for more equitable distribution of the world's resources between men and women. It has been noted, all over the world, that women are under-represented and generally face discrimination and marginalization on the basis of their gender (Karim, 1995).

However, these conventions have seldom been implemented at national levels. Moreover, in spite of laws banning discrimination, it has often been difficult to distinguish discrimination on the grounds of sex from discrimination on other grounds, such as social class, regional difference, race, language or disability. These forms of discrimination exacerbate gender discrimination and cannot be ignored (Onsongo, 2003). The theory on gender inequality on education and its impact on growth has been developed based on the selection-distortion factor in

which according to this theory expounded by Dollar and Gatti (1999), if one believes that boys and girls have similar distribution of innate abilities, gender inequality in education must mean that less able boys than girls get the chance to be educated and that the average innate ability of those who get educated is lower than it would be if boys and girls received equal education.

Women still constitute the large majority of the world's illiterate population. In several developing countries, gender gaps in education and literacy persist. Without equitable access to quality education, women do not have the means to build their knowledge, capacity and skills to access well-paid, formal sector jobs and attain positions of leadership. Unless gender gaps in literacy and education are addressed, the next generation of girls will be similarly marginalized from leadership roles. Other issues in relation to women's access to education include rural-urban disparities in levels and quality of education. Gender role stereotyping has also been raised as a concern to be addressed, as it is often reinforced by school curricula that hinder women from taking on leadership roles (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR, 2007).

The Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA, 2005) identifies education as a human right and essential tool for achieving the goals of equality development and peace. It notes that equality of access to and attainment of educational qualification are necessary if more women are to become agents of change and that investment in formal and non-formal education and training for girls and women is one of the best means for achieving sustainable development and economic growth. Most organizations involved in supporting education and training for girls and women report that they seek to address all of the six platforms strategic objectives which include intervention ranging from increasing women participation in mathematics, science and technology at the university level, to promoting the retention and participation of women and girls in primary, secondary and university institution, increasing access to vocational training and reducing illiteracy (Beijing 10th Synthesis Report, 2005).

Education is viewed as the prime mover of development process in any nation. The links between education, health and fertility provides a way of measuring non-market effects of education. It is a widely accepted major instrument for promoting socio-economic development as it has been perceived to benefit the society (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1985). The difficulties in access to education have been considered as the main obstacles to women's progress. Education is the determining factor for women's socio-economic advancement (Mukaranga *et al.*, 1997).

As women secure more education their political and economical status change in that they are able to participate in both public and private spheres of life. Providing the means through which women can gain access to learning opportunities is a major task for the national planners with intent to improving the lot of women. There are still numerous social, economic and cultural barriers in the way of female advancement. The first rule of education is to begin with the previous knowledge of the learner. Given the neglect of past years, for most women this will mean instruction in basic literacy and numeracy together with practical skills and knowledge suited to their needs and situations. For girls, the challenge is to provide a complete and meaningful primary education. For women who already possess a basic education, the challenge may be to provide access to employment. As a means to alleviate status of women there is a need for flexibility and innovation. The goal it must be remembered is not to provide instruction, but to ensure effective learning (Beijing 10th Synthesis Report, 2005).

Kwesiga (2002) argues that the basic issue to note in Uganda is patriarchal society where there is clear male preference. The inheritance system, marriage, divorce laws, ownership of property and the general status of men and women are guided by patriarchal values which tend to favour men. The gender imbalance is deeply rooted in the society and as such this has hindered them access to leadership position in higher learning. Kwesiga (2002) further asserts that education of women is a societal responsibility and all available resources should be harnessed to meet this challenge for example those of non-government organizations, the private sector as well as those of government at all levels. To provide real opportunities for poor women, attention must be given to day-care services for younger children. To enrol girls from disadvantaged families, additional incentives and inducements may be necessary. It is not only monetary costs, but also – and often mainly – opportunity costs that keep women and girls from pursuing education.

Educational opportunities have to be accompanied by social and development policies that make it possible for women and girls to take advantage of them. The harsh reality of their lives has been by far the greatest barrier women have confronted in pursuing education and training. A day of exhausting Labour and routine that begins before dawn and ends long after sunset leaves precious little time for the pursuit of education (Beijing 10th Synthesis Report, 2005).

Despite the expansion of education gender disparities in terms of access to education, retention in schools, transition from one level to another, the performance have become pronounced over the years. Access to

education has been affected by a down ward trend in the Gross Admission Rate (GAR) in primary schools and Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) in both primary and secondary (National Policy on Gender, GoK, 1999). At the national level there seems to be a near parity in education for boys and girls at primary schools. Gender gaps are still evident at regional and district level. Although the 8-4-4 curriculum offers same subjects for both sexes, most girls do not perform very well as boys. This trend has denied girls the opportunity to pursue certain course at tertiary level of education (ILO, 1998). It has contributed to low participation to low participation of girls and women in science technical profession in the country (Policy on Gender and Development, GoK, 1999).

High level of illiteracy among women is another concern in the country. The USAID, one of the donors, has made education reform the foundation of its work and its African Education initiative is a multi-year effort to increase access to quality basic education especially for girls and women. The initiative focuses on providing girl's scholarship, improving teachers training, and involving communities in educational Programmes. Japan is one of the bilateral donors that have helped to build and repair elementary schools and also create perspective in the schools. These include Programmes that guarantee safe learning environment for girl and develop capacity through training and seminars (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, UNECA, Beijing +10 synthesis Report, 2005).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In both developing and developed countries, women continue to be under-represented in decision-making and leadership in several areas. The consequence of this gender gap is that women do not participate fully in decisions that shape their lives and their communities, and countries are not capitalizing on the full potential of one half of their societies (Gentry, 1996). However, in Eldoret Municipality the pattern of representation into headship positions among female teachers reveals under-representation as they account for a small percentage of heads of institutions. There are 41 public primary schools in the Municipality and the numbers of female head teachers are 10 whereas their male counterparts are 31. This is a huge disparity of gender and equality despite the fact that female teachers in the municipality are 660 comprising 83% of the entire teaching workforce while the male comprise 17% with their total of 139 (MEO's office, 2010). Eldoret municipality, like other municipalities in Kenya, has more female teaching workforce who, unfortunately, enjoy low participation at the top headship positions in schools due to a problem that starts at an early stage in life where girls are discriminated against and the trend of inequality continues till maturity where more men are in leadership as compared to women.

As such, there is need to unearth and try to deal with the factors contributing to under-representation of female teachers to headship.

Gender Inequalities in Education

Education is widely recognized as the gateway to economic security and opportunity particularly for girls and women. The foremost factor limiting female education is poverty. Economic factors play a key role when it comes to coping with direct cost such as tuition, cost of textbooks, uniform, transportation and other expenses. Wherever, especially in families with many children, these costs exceed the income of the family, girls are the first to be denied schooling; all this, despite the fact that educating girls is one of the best investments a society can make. An educated woman has the skill, the self confidence and the information she needs to become a better parent, worker and citizen (Friedman *et al.*, 2004).

Girls' lack of access to education is not always related to scarcity of places in schools. It also emerges from expectations, attitudes and biases in communities and families. Economic costs, social traditions, and religious and cultural beliefs limit girls' educational opportunities. Whatever the underlying reason(s), having large number of girls outside the formal schooling system brings developmental challenges to both current and future generations. Individuals, families, communities and nations are affected. Inability to read, write and calculate all complicate a girl's efforts to engage in both market-focused production and household activities as effectively and efficiently possible. This affects her family's welfare and diminishes her potential contribution to the development of the household, local and national economy. Despite reported progress, there is still a persistent gap between women and men's access to education (Gerson *et al.*, 2004).

Combating the high rate of illiteracy among women and girls remains an urgent global need Gender inequality refers to the obvious or hidden disparity between genders. It is constructed both socially through social interactions as well as biologically through chromosomes, brain structure, and hormonal differences. Gender systems are often dichotomous, hierarchical and binary gender systems may reflect onto the inequalities that manifest in numerous dimensions of daily life. Gender inequality stems from distinctions, whether empirically grounded or socially constructed (Buchmann *et al.*, 2008).

Cultural stereotypes are engrained in both men and women and these stereotypes are a possible explanation for gender inequality and the resulting gendered wage disparity. Women have traditionally been viewed as being caring and nurturing and are designated to occupations which require such skills.

While these skills are culturally valued, they were typically associated with domesticity, so occupations requiring these same skills are not economically valued. Men have traditionally been viewed as the breadwinner or the worker, so jobs held by men have been historically economically valued and occupations predominated by men continue to be economically valued and pay higher wages (Gerson *et al.*, 2004).

Discrimination also plays out with networking and in preferential treatment within the economic market. Men typically occupy positions of power within the job economy. Due to taste or preference for other men because they share similar characteristics, men in these positions of power are more likely to hire or promote other men, thus discriminating against women. Natalty inequality is a situation given preference for boys over girls that many male-dominated societies have, gender inequality can manifest itself in the form of the parents wanting the newborn to be a boy rather than a girl (Sibbons *et al.*, 2000).

There are often enough, basic inequalities in gender relations within the family or the household, which can take many different forms. Even in cases in which there are no overt signs of anti-female bias in, say, survival or son-preference or education, or even in promotion to higher executive positions, the family arrangements can be quite unequal in terms of sharing the burden of housework and child care. It is quite common in many societies to take it for granted that while men will naturally work outside the home, women could do it if and only if they could combine it with various inescapable and unequally shared household duties (Buchmann *et al.*, 2008). Gender gaps that are widespread in access to basic rights, access to and control of resources, in economic opportunities and also in power and political voice are an impediment to development. The only solution to this is gender equality, which strengthens a country's ability to grow, to reduce poverty and provide its people – men, women and children – a better life.

The issue of gender equality, then, needs to be at the core of development policies - both in national and international arenas. Just because gender inequality is inextricably linked to societal norms, religion or cultural traditions, it should not be either a deterrent or an excuse to gender sensitive development planning. Promoting gender equality in education involves promoting equality in the culture and processes of schooling. Evidence shows that a caring, non-hierarchical and respectful school system not only reduces early school leaving for both boys and girls, it also promotes positive attitudes to learning that sustain people educationally in adult life - it encourages lifelong learning (Kendall, 2006).

Gender roles develop through internalization and identification during childhood. Sigmund Freud suggested that biology determines gender identity through identification with either the mother or father. While some people agree with Freud, others argue that the development of the gendered self is not completely determined by biology but rather the interactions that one has with the primary caregiver(s). From birth, parents interact differently with children depending on their sex, and through this interaction parents can instil different values or traits in their children on the basis of what is normative for their sex. This internalization of gender norms can be seen through the example of which types of toys children are typically given (“feminine” toys often reinforce interaction, nurturing, and closeness, “masculine” toys often reinforce independence and competitiveness) that parents give to their children. Education also plays an integral role in the creation of gender norms (Gerson *et al.*, 2004).

Gender roles that are created in childhood permeate throughout life and help to structure parenting and marriage, especially in relation to work in and outside the home. Despite the increase in women in the labour force since the mid-1900s, women are still responsible for the majority of the domestic chores and childcare. While women are splitting their time between work and care of the home, men are pressured into being the primary economic supporter of the home. Despite the fact that different households may divide chores more evenly, there is evidence to the fact that women have retained the primary caregiver role within familial life despite contributions economically. This evidence suggests that women who work outside the home often put an extra 18 hours a week doing household or childcare related chores as opposed to men who average 12 minutes a day in childcare activities. In addition to lack of interest in the home on the part of some men, some women may bar men from equal participation in the home which may contribute to this disparity (Friedman *et al.*, 2004).

However, men are assuming the role of "care giver" more and more in today's society. Education plays a major factor in this. The more education a male or female attains, the less likely they are to hold roles within the house distinctly based on one's sex. Males are doing more cooking, cleaning, and house-hold "chores" than they were in the 1950s. Education is universally acknowledged to benefit individuals and promote national development. Educating both females and males produces similar increase in their subsequent earnings and expands future opportunities and choices for both boys and girls. However, educating girls produces many additional socio-economic gains that benefit entire societies. These benefits include increased economic productivity,

higher family incomes, delayed marriages, reduced fertility rates, and improved health and survival rates for infants and children (Basic Education Coalition, 2004).

Over the years, education has focused on access and parity – that is, closing the enrolment gap between girls and boys, while insufficient attention has been paid to retention and achievement or the quality and relevance of education. Providing quality and relevant education not only increases enrolment and retention but also ensures that boys and girls are able to fully realize the benefits of education. To primarily focus on girls' access to education may overlook boys' educational needs. This approach also fails to confront the norms and behaviours that perpetuate inequality (Kane, 2004).

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in Eldoret Municipality using a limited, but justified, number of respondents. It is possible that the findings on the causes of under-representation of women in leadership in secondary schools may not be generalisable to other places in Kenya owing to different regional challenges. Nevertheless, the study provides a framework through which scholars can conduct similar studies and recommend for appropriate solutions to the problems facing female teachers in Kenya.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Eldoret town. The town is a major centre for industrial, commercial and agricultural activities. It has a well established infrastructure and a good geographical climate liked by many (Republic of Kenya, Uasin Gishu Development plan 1997-2001). It is cosmopolitan town and teachers who teach in the municipality come from different communities and majority of them are female teachers who happen to be trained and posted there by the teachers service commission (TSC). The author employed a descriptive survey design because the findings needed to be generalized over a large population. A survey design provides quantitative and numeric description of some part of population. The study used both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The target population of the study comprised Municipal education officials (TAC) tutors, head teachers, teachers and committee members as stakeholders. The municipality was chosen because female teachers are the majority of the teaching workforce yet they are under-represented in top headship positions.

This study employed stratified sampling, simple random sampling and purposive sampling. The research population was grouped into strata of officers, head teachers, deputies', senior teachers, assistant teachers and committee members. Since each member of the population had an equal and independent chance of being selected, simple random

sampling technique was used to select the representative sample. Purposive sampling was used as the author targeted a group of people believed to be reliable and would provide information with respect to the objectives of the study. The author therefore used a representative sample of 105 respondents of which 2 were Municipal Education Officials (TAC tutors), 8 were head teachers of which 4 respondents from each group of male and female head teachers, 80 teachers and 15 committee members from 15 public primary schools. The author also used a different percent to calculate representation of head teacher in order to have equal representation of both male and female head teachers. The study used questionnaire and interview schedule to collect data. All completed questionnaire from the field were cleaned, coded and key-punched into a computer and analyzed. Both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics included means, percentage, frequencies, range and standard deviation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Causes of Under-representation of Female Teachers to Headship Positions

From the findings, when asked whether women lack support from family to national level. It was noted that of the total respondents, 42(52.5%) agreed on a very large, 26(32.5%) agreed on a large extent while 2(2.5%) supported the statement on a very small extent. The analysis further revealed that both male and female agreed that women lacked the required support needed for them to progress in their careers from the family to the national level. According to Friedman *et al.* (2004), gender roles that are created in childhood permeate throughout life and help to structure parenting and marriage, especially in relation to work in and outside the home. Despite the increase in women in the labour force since the mid-1900s, women are still responsible for the majority of the domestic chores and childcare. While women are splitting their time between work and care of the home, men are pressured into being the primary economic supporter of the home.

When asked whether female teachers are undervalued because of African culture, 27(33.8%) of the respondents supported the statement on a very large extent while 34(42.5%) supported on a large extent; 7(8.8%) supported on a very small extent with the statement. It was further noted that both male and female teachers agreed with the statement. According to Lipman-Blumen (1984), women are followers, good in carrying out decisions and following others initiative. Further, Tamale (2000) agrees that domesticity ideology is historically and culturally constructed and is closely linked to patriarchy that is gender/power relation and the public private divide. This same ideology of patriarchy has drawn an

artificial wall to separate domestic private from public spheres with latter representing masculinity locus of valued activities, politics and economy whereas the private represent femininity, society and culture where women are trapped, ruled over by men. The Chi-square calculations showed that there was no significant relationship at 5% significance level between culture and society's perception of female teachers ($\chi^2=6.641$, $df=3$ $p=0.084$).

The respondents were further asked to indicate whether or not gender stereotype was one of the causes of under-representation among women. Twenty-seven (33.8%) of them supported on a very large extent; 23(28.8%) also supported on a large extent further 5(6.3%) supported on a very small extent with this statement. According to Jones and Montenegro (1982), many women have internalized the traditional gender stereo type to such an extent that they feel inferior and suffer guilt and shame when they have society's belief in male led organization and stereotype contributes to the gender imbalance in school leadership.

The respondents were also asked to indicate whether the split between work and family obligation adversely affect women's promotion. It was noted 36(45%) supported the statement on a very large extent further 29(36.3%) agreed on a large extent while 5(6.3%) refuted with the claim. The researcher found out that this statement is similar to null hypothesis which stated there was no significant relationship between dual role and women career development. Chi-square was calculated and it was noted that there was no significant relationship at 5% significance level between work and family responsibilities ($\chi^2=1.784$, $df=4$ $p=0.775$).

When asked to state whether or not sex stereotype leads to under-representation in most organizations, 37(46.3%) supported this statement on a large extent while 4(5%) refuted it. According to Dipboye (1978), the deeply entrenched stereotype view of women has accumulated through out history. Further, women are considered weak, passive, emotional dependent, fearful, unsure about themselves, manipulative and talk too much. These gender stereotypes form an intrinsic part of society's heritage and paradigm as well as it affects and determine women's positions.

The respondents were further asked to state whether or not male headteachers were better administrators than female headteachers. Of the respondents, 41(51.25%) supported the statement on a very small extent while 5(6.3%) supported on a very large extent. According to Shakeshaft (1989), the under-representation of qualified women in leadership positions has created a gender gap that exists not only in education but also in many areas of the workplace. Society has determined that only the male make good

leaders; therefore, it continues to deny easy access for women seeking leadership roles because they do not fit the norm. Women who seek leadership positions face barriers and many times give up because they become overwhelmed in dealing with obvious barriers.

The interview schedule administered to headteachers and TAC tutors cited several factors ranging from social cultural, family role, gender stereo type, phobia, inferiority complex, and lack of confidence as some of the causes of underrepresentation of female teachers to headship positions. Some cited that female teachers shy away from responsibilities and negative attitude. Most female head teachers cited that they put marriage and family first and that heading schools may break up their families, hence they took up the responsibilities after their children were fully grown up. According to Greyvenstien (1996), a woman's place is assumed to be restricted to the home where she is a wife, child bearer and homemaker whereas men are taken to be breadwinners and provides for family units.

The results give the frequencies and summaries of the findings on gender and leadership in relation to socio-cultural beliefs and its effect on participation of women into leadership positions. As indicated in the table, the respondents were asked to respond to the fact that female teachers lack the self confidence necessary to accept to perform headship responsibilities in schools. Out of the total population sample, 30(37.5%) supported on a very small extent with the statement while 4(5%) supported on a very large extent. According to Jones and Montenegro (1982), many women have internalized the traditional gender stereotype to such an extent that they feel inferior and suffer guilt and shame when they have society's belief in male led organization and stereotype contributes to the gender imbalance in school leadership.

When asked to state whether or not women are discriminated against in all realms of society, 13(16.3%) supported this statement on a very large extent, 30(37.5%) supported on a large extent while 14(17.5%) supported on a very small extent. According to Sibbons *et al.* (2000), discrimination plays out with networking and in preferential treatment within the economic market where men who typically occupy positions of power within the job economy, due to taste or preference for other men because they share similar characteristics are more likely to hire or promote other men, thus discriminating against women.

The respondents were further asked to indicate whether women tend not to progress in their career due to the role they play in the family. There were divided feelings among the respondents on this issue:

19(23.8%) supported the statement on a very large extent, 21(26.3%) on a large extent while 10(12.5%) supported on a very small extent. According to Gerson *et al.* (2004), women have traditionally been viewed as being caring and nurturing and are designated to occupations which require such skills. While these skills are culturally valued, they were typically associated with domesticity, so occupations requiring these same skills are not economically valued.

When asked to state whether or not women dislike responsibilities, 42(52.5%) of the respondents supported the statement on a very small extent while 1(1.25%) supported it on a very large extent. According to Fagenson and Jackson (1994), women fail to plan their careers, to build networks and support systems, to locate and maintain effective mentoring relationships and have been socialized to subordinate their career in favour of their families. When asked whether or not dual roles affect women in career development, 18(22.5%) of the respondents supported the statement on a very large extent, 33(41.3%) on a large extent while 14(17.5%) supported it on a very small extent. Chi-square was and it was noted that there was no significant relationship at 5% significance level between dual role and women career development ($\chi^2=5.429$, $df=4$ $p=0.246$).

The respondents were further asked to state whether or not female teachers lacked mentors in headship position to emulate from. There were divided feelings among the respondents on this issue: 15(18.8%) supported the statement on a very large extent, 24(30%) on a large extent while 20(25%) supported it on a very small extent. According to Gupton and Slick (1996), women lack both professional mentors and professional support; which contributes to the under-representation of women in the leadership position. A report by Glassock (1997) observes that women seem to have a less developed mentoring system compared to men. Mentors provide in-district mobility opportunities for women aspiring leadership positions. Mentoring and networking are systems that women leaders must have in place to be a successful leader.

Generally, the study indicated that few women tend to aspire to leadership positions due to family obligation hence they dominate lower levels of management despite being qualified and this situation is more pronounced at the top positions in most organizations (Mukaranga & Koda, 1997). According to Friedman *et al.* (2004), gender roles that are created in childhood permeate throughout life and help to structure parenting and marriage, especially in relation to work in and outside the home. The development of women therefore is intertwined with

the inferior political, social and cultural position in which they find themselves (Staudt, 1981).

Gender stereotype and discrimination still hinder women aspiring to positions as attributed by the African culture. Most of the respondents argued that women are discriminated against and disliked by male and fellow women. International concerns about the situation of the world's women have enhanced campaigns for more equitable distribution of the world's resources between men and women. It has been noted, all over the world, that women are under-represented and generally face discrimination and marginalization on the basis of their gender (Karim, 1995). Many respondents agreed that women did not have mentors because they are very few female head teachers to emulate from. According to Gupton and Slick (1996) women lack both professional mentor and professional support which contributes to the under-representation of women in the leadership position. Glassock (1997) supports this statement, arguing that women seem to have a less developed mentoring system as compared to men.

Most of the respondents said that women shy away from responsibilities despite their numerical strength and their academic and professional qualification they still are unable to access positions of leadership in schools and other organizations. According to Greyvenstein (1996) the scarcity of women teachers in higher ranks of schools leadership maybe attributed to the fact that most women have been stereotypically confined to the home where they are child bearers, mothers and home makers. Cole (2002) argues that women are still under-represented in middle and senior management roles and that they face difficulties in breaking in to what is still very much a male preserve that is 'the glass ceiling', an analogy to describe the subtly transparent barrier that prevent women from gaining access to the more senior roles in their organization.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the study, it was concluded that several factors contribute to under-representation of female to headship positions and some of these factors include lack support of women from family, to national level, women being undervalued because of African culture, gender stereotype ,split between work and family. From the findings, under-representation is not only common in Eldoret municipality, but a general trend in most Kenyan schools. The dual role of women in families as mothers and wives contributes greatly towards their career progression. Women are principally responsible for work associated with production and maintenance of the family like child care and control other assets in the family.

Despite the increase in women in the labour force since the mid-1900s, women are still responsible for

the majority of the domestic chores and childcare. While women are splitting their time between work and care of the home, men are pressured into being the primary economic supporter of the home. Most respondents argued that headship responsibility requires time which is limited to them because of the role they play in the family hence marriage and motherhood has been seen to slow down the process of career advancement among them. A variety of factors included, emphasis on domestic chores, influence of patriarchy, inaccessibility to education and task assigned to them by the norms and custom of the society.

That low participation of female teachers to headship positions is attributed to lack of support starting from the family to national level and other factors reinforcing each other like dual role, being undervalued as a result of African culture, societal perception, educational and political interference had all contributed in one way or another towards low career progression of women. It is recommended that women administrators should establish and strengthen mentorship systems for the young female teachers aspiring to leadership in future. Mentors provide in-district mobility opportunities for women aspiring leadership positions. Mentoring and networking are systems that women leaders must have in place to be a successful leader.

REFERENCES

- Abagi, J. O. (1993). Improving Access and Retention of Marginal groups within the school system. Basic Education Forum, 3, April.
- Basic Education Coalition (2004). Teach a child transform a nation. Washington, D.C.: Basic Education.
- Buchmann, C., DiPrete, T. A., & McDaniel, A. (2008) Gender Inequalities in Education. Department of Sociology. The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.
- Cole, A. G. (2002). Personnel and human Resource Management. London: DP Publication.
- Dipboye, M. (1978). Women Managers: Stereotype and reality in women in management. B Stead Eagle cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Dollar, D., & Gatti, R. (1999). Gender Inequality, Income, and Growth: Are Good Times good for Women? Mimeographed. Washington DC: The World Bank.
- Fagenson, E. A., & Jackson, J. J. (1994). The status of women managers in the United States. International Studies of Managements and Organizations, 23(2): 93-112.
- Friedman, E., & Marshall, J. (2004). Issue of Gender. New York: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Gentry, C. A. B. (1996). Women in educational leadership: The issue of under representation of women as secondary principals. Doctoral Dissertation. University of Mississippi.
- Gerson, K., & Jerry, J. (2004). The Time Divide: Work, Family and Gender Inequality. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Gupton, S. L., & Slick, G. A. (1996). Highly successful women administrators: The inside stories of how they got there. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Glasscock, G. (1997, April). Putting the web to work for women. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.
- Government of Kenya (1999). National Policy on Gender and Development. Nairobi: Government Printers.
- Greyvenstein, L. A. (1996). Woman: The Secondary Species Education. Potchefstroom: Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education.
- Hughes, R., & Mwiria, K. (1989). Kenya Women. Higher Education and the Labour Market. Comparative Education, 25(1): 179-195.
- International Labour Office (ILO) (1998). Tripartite meeting on Breaking through the glass ceiling. Women in management. Geneva: ILO.
- Institute of Economic Affairs (2008). Profile of Women's Socio-economic Status in Kenya. Kenya June 2008, Institute of Economic Affairs.
- Jones, E. H., & Montenegro, X. P. (1982). Climbing the career ladder: A Research Study of Women in School Administration. Arlington: American association of school administration.
- Kane, E. (2004). Girls' education in Africa: What do we know about strategies that work? Africa Region. Human Development Working Paper Series. n.p: World Bank.
- Karim, W. J. (Ed.). (1995). Male and female in south east Asia. Oxford.
- Kendall, N. (2006). Strengthening Gender and Education Programming in the 21st Century. EQUIP 2 Working Paper. Washington, DC: AED.

Kwesiga, J. (2002). Women's Access to higher Education in Africa. Uganda's Experience. Kampala: Fountain publishers.

Mukaranga, F., & Koda, B. (1997). Beyond inequalities. Women in Tanzania. Dar-es-Salaam. Research Documentation Centre.

Obura, A. (1992). The Girl Child. Opportunities and Disparities in Education Synthesis Report. Summary of the eight country studies in the sub region of Eastern and Southern Africa (ERNESA).

Onsongo, J. K. (2003). Empowering Women in Higher Education Management: The Case of Kenya. Paper presented at the 8th International Congress on Women, Women's World. Makerere University, Uganda.

Psacharopoulos, G., & Woodhall, M. (1985). Education for Development. An analysis of investment. Oxford University Press and the World Bank.

Lipman-Blumen, J. (1984). Gender Roles and Power. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Republic of Kenya, Uasin Gishu Development plan 1997-2001. Ministry of finance and planning. Nairobi: Government printers.

Shakeshaft, C. (1989). Women in educational administration. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Sibbons, M., Swamfield, D., Poulsen, H., Giggard, A., Norton, A., & Seel, A. (2000). Mainstreaming gender through sector wide approaches in education: Synthesis report. London: Overseas Development Institute/Cambridge Education Consultants.

Staudt, K. (1981). Women Politics. 16 Studies in third world societies: 1-28.

Tamale, S. (2000). Gender trauma in Africa. Enhancing women links to resources. Paper presented on 2nd-4th August.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. (1995). Document adopted by the 4th World Conference on Women, United Nations, pp 349-1378.

United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR, 2007). UNHCR Global Appeal. UNHCR.

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, UNECA, (2005). Meeting the Challenges of Unemployment and Poverty in Africa. UNECA.