COUNTERING THE EDUCATION BOG FOR THE GIRL-CHILD: GLOBAL PROGRESS TO BUILD ON THE UGANDAN CASE

By

Luwemba Musa
Islamic University in Uganda
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Department of Political Science
Email: luwemba20@gmail.com
Mobile: (+256)774386554/705295758

Aisha Aiseta
Islamic University in Uganda
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Department of Political Science
Email: aisetae2000@gmail.com
Mobile: +256704587473

Abstract

One of the primary rights that is required for progress is education. A county that invests in both the girl and boy child's education is one that is committed to long-term, dependable, and sustainable growth. In Africa, however, boys have a considerably better probability of getting enrolled, admitted, retained, and completing their education than girls. This is owing to educational stumbling blocks and cultural, economic, political, and social problems. These have a lengthy history, yet they are still relevant today. The question now is how long these obstacles will persist, and if so, how they might be overcome in order to attain the gender equality enshrined in Uganda's constitution, as well as many other international agreements.

Key Terms: Education bog, girl-child, global progress, Uganda, countering

Introduction:

Education is a right for both boys and girls and thus its benefits cannot be underestimated. Girl-child education is important and hence efforts should be on to eliminate discrimination at all levels of the educational system, to set minimum standards and to improve quality of education. Girl-child education should be directed towards the full development of the girl child as a human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The benefits are numerous. This is reported clearly by Beard et al (1977) and Bowen (1977) among others who list higher levels of objective judgement, broader views, and more ability to tackle

problems, improved rational thinking, flexibility, increased political awareness, independent thought and many more.

Education promotes a human being, since it gives as individual freedom, and it shown way of life, change the thinking, and it makes smart. This is why it's a key human right in many statutory instruments. Considering the Ugandan case, it's clear from Article XVIII. Educational objectives that:

(i) The State shall promote free and compulsory basic education.

(ii) The State shall take appropriate measures to afford every citizen equal opportunity to attain the highest educational standard possible.

(iii) Individuals, religious bodies and other nongovernmental organisations shall be free to found and operate educational institutions if they comply with the general educational policy of the country and maintain national standards.

In order to promote this, the Ugandan government has put in place a number of efforts. The Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports has since 1997 been pursuing the goal of universal primary education (UPE)through a series of education sector strategies and plans, the latest of which was a third revision of the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2003-2015. This has clearly come out in many other statutory and non-statutory instruments as well as key policy documents that include among others the Local Governments Act 1997;The Education Service Act 2002;Basic Education Policy for Educationally Disadvantaged Children, 2006,Strategic Plan for Secondary Education in Uganda 2008-2019 (2008);The Gender in Education Sector Policy, 2009, Universal Primary Education (UPE) Capitation Grant, Planning and Implementation Guidelines for District and Urban Councils, 2007:The Scheme of Service for Teaching Personnel in the Uganda Education Sector, 2008;Guidelines for Customised Performance Targets for Head teachers and Deputy Head teachers, 2008;Guidelines on: Policy, Planning, Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders in the Implementation of UPE for Districts and Councils, 2008;

Internationally, Article 28 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child(CRC), 1989 emphasises the right to education, it further states that every state has to ensure that education is accessible and available without or with less costs, states should encourage the development of secondary education and vocational education and also government have to provide financial support if needed. On the other hand article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1966 says about recognizes the right to education. "The States

Parties to the present Convenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. All these clearly clarify the need for education of both the boy as well as the girl child.

Regarding the benefits expected after massive girl child education, it's been Popularly said that:

- The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet. – **Aristotle**
- An investment in knowledge pays the best interest- Benjamin **Franklin**
- Education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope. Hope breeds peace."—**Confucius**
- Education is the key that unlocks the golden door to freedom."—**George Washington Carver**

The benefits of women's education in a developing society like Uganda take many different forms. Economically with education, women's participate in paid employment and in relation to their positions and types of employment, as Chapters 3 and 4 illustrate. There is also evidence to show that the education of women has higher positive effects on agricultural productivity than that of men (Jabre 1988, King 1990). It has also been demonstrated that women's education confers indirect benefits or externalities such as lower child mortality rates and improved family health status (T.P. Schultz1984, Fernandez 1984, Caldwell 1986 etc cited by Tucto 1988). Education of women reduces fertility rates and promotes acceptability of family planning practices (Cochrane 1979, 1980, Smock 1981, Jabre 1988, UNDP 1991). The effect of maternal schooling on increasing child school achievement and attainment has also been shown to be greater than that of men's (Wolfe and Behrman 1984, Jabre 1988, King and Hill 1991, T.P. Schultz 1991). It has also been pointed out that education of women brings about attitudinal changes that result in long term social benefits such as better self-image, capacity to analyse and solve problems, or increased participation in local settings (Smock 1981,Jabre 1988, Tucto 1988, Silliman 1987, Mwau in Wallace and March 1991 etc). All these positive effects are crucial for the well-being of the woman, her family and her community.

Despite of all the above mentioned benefits ,for quite a long time, women education in various communities has been ignored. If the level of female education and the gender gap in education are important determinants of family well-being and economic growth (King and Hill1991), why

are such social 'externalities' rarely cited as a reason for expanding public education for women (T.P. Schultz 1991)? It is true that many benefits accruing from education are not quantifiable (McMahon, in Psacharopoulos 1987,Psacharopoulos and Woodhall 1985, Becker 1964, Morris 1977, Ayot and Briggs 1988

The justification for increased participation rates for women in higher education becomes clear when benefits are grouped under "functional", "cultural" and "social" services (Piper 1981). The basic functional objective of higher education is to produce appropriate human resources for the various sectors of a country's economy. This is particularly important where only a fraction of the citizens get education (Beard et at, 1974). Higher education has long moved from "liberal education of medieval times when it sought knowledge and truth for their own sake", to utilitarian goals (Parnes 1964, Beard et al 1974, Tolley 1975, Barnett1990). Depriving women of higher education therefore means excluding them from participation in skilled and professional employment. It is at this level that women can move from their traditional lower levels and types of employment, and take up science, mathematics and technology-based occupations (Moore 1987,Sutherland 1987, Commonwealth Secretariat 1987). Governing and decision-making bodies which are often handicapped in developing policy because of inadequate information and interpretation from women wilt gain (Moore 1987).Role models of trained educators and workers will have a multiplying effect, with increased numbers of women in higher education. Since the 1960's the main objective of higher education in Uganda has been to produce high-level manpower without discrimination. However since women have been in most cases left behind in regards to higher education , it has not only deprived them the above benefits but also lowered their participation in matters pertaining their individual and general state development.

Tracing the Historical Trends

All the way from the pre to the colonial and post- colonial periods, the question of access to education by the girl child has been handled but not aggressively. This is because of the belief that the girl child is meant to be trained only for marriage, child upbringing and managing the home chores. This still happens till the present for most of the societies. Prior to the formal education, boys had chance to be informally taught by their fathers about how they can become men and would even have chance to join the public sector. Informal education, or what anthropologists sometimes call enculturation, was offered by each ethnic group to train young men and women

how to become acceptable and responsible adults in the eyes of their own group (Gibbs 1988). In 1886, formal Western education was introduced in Uganda by the Church Mission Society of London. Between 1886 and 1918 formal education was developed by religious organizations. They set the syllabi, wrote the curricula, designed an examination system, set standards of accomplishment for each grade, built and administered the schools, and trained the teachers who would later on teach in these schools. Missionaries sought to win souls as much as to cultivate minds. Their method was to educate an elite cadre who would demonstrate the advantages of Christianity and thereby attract additional converts. This type of education was objective based and thus was not to train Africans to be real Africans in the sense of conduct.

The British Colonial Office initially feared that training Africans might create unfulfillable aspirations (i.e., make Africans believe that they were equal to Europeans in a system based on the assumption of inequality). Educated Africans were often said to be "tragic Africans," because they thought themselves entitled to the same things that Europeans possessed. The colonial system was determined to deny them access to equality. As a result, the British Colonial Office did not begin building and controlling schools in Uganda until 1927.

Ownership of most schools remained in the hands of missionaries until independence, despite creation of a Ministry of Education in 1957 (De Bunsen 1953). Following independence, Africans felt that every place was potentially their place so they educated their children to fill every available position in the country in big numbers. Lack of education would no longer be an excuse to hold them back or hold them down. Acquisition of education would open doors of power, influence, and scientific discovery previously locked. Education became the key to self-reliance and self-actualization throughout Uganda.

During the colonial period, some schools were-owned and controlled by the Church of Uganda, some other schools were owned and controlled by the Roman Catholic Church, some others were owned and controlled by the Uganda Muslim Education Association (UMEA), some schools were owned and controlled by the Uganda Protectorate Government and by the local governments. The government though the Department of Education was responsible for the whole education system and for giving financial assistance to those schools except to the private schools, the above groups had a very great say in deciding as to which pupils and students should attend those schools and

the kind of ideology they should follow in terms of the groups which controlled the various schools.

For example, each group taught and admitted mainly the children of its followers. It was free to deny entry into its schools, children who did not belong to its religion. This therefore meant that some children could be denied opportunity of education. Yet such schools were being financed by the government. The controlling of schools by the above various groups could prevent the government ideology from being given to pupils and students such as the idea of "African personality" and the idea of "African identity." Yet the government was financing the education system to accommodate as many boys and girls so that they attain various qualifications and ideologies. By 1970 the government was spending about 28% of the national budget on education. This was quite high in terms of one item only.

By the 1963 Education Act, the Church of Uganda, the Roman Catholic Church, the Uganda Muslim Education Association and the various Asian communities lost control over the schools which they were formerly controlling. The government took over control and ensured its being in a position to do whatever it wanted in the schools.

However, by the 1963 Education Act, the religious groups and the Asian sections were not entirely excluded from the management of the schools which they had founded. Those groups were referred to in the Act as Foundation Bodies. They continued as they still do today to be consulted. The battle against denomination schools on all sorts of bases whether gender religion or otherwise was started by the Thomas Education Committee in 1940, and continued by the de Bunsen Education Committee of 1952, and by the Uganda Relationship Commission of 1961, alternatively called the Munster Commission, and by the Uganda Teachers' Salary Commission, also known as the Lawrence Commission of 1962, was finally resolved by the 1963 Education Act.

Girl child education scraped through the 1950s, 60s and the 70s. Even with the opening of girl's schools such as Gayaza Junior and Gayaza High School (1905), Mt. St. Mary's college Namagunga (1942), many girls were unable to go to school; largely because of prevailing unfavourable societal cultural attitudes of educating girls. In 1964 the government allowed Secondary Schools, Teachers Training Colleges and Technical Schools to establish students'

councils to work hand in hand with the administration. This gave the students some kind of boldness to the extent that in many secondary school's students felt that they had been allowed to run the schools themselves in disregard to the real administrators of the schools. However even at this point, the issue of culture would still linger in the minds of the parents with regards to who had to go or not to go to school. As reported;

"This was a time of intractable cultural attitude that girls were supposed to be homemakers; people to be married off and produce children,"

(Namirembe Bitamazire, Uganda's former minister of education)

Bitamazire was among the lucky girls to go to school in her time. "There were only 12 of us in class in 1949," she recalls. Its noted that the first attempts at promoting girl child education in Uganda were made by the 1963 Castle Commission.

"The Commission highlighted the need to expand girl's education in the country," notes Doris Kakuru Muwhezi, in her paper on gender sensitive education policy and practice in Uganda.

However, very little progress was made as the Government Education Plan (1971/2– 1975/6) formed to implement the suggestions did not have the manpower and facilities to accomplish the task of ensuring effective girl-child education. Serious reforms to boost girl-child education resumed with the Government Education Policy Review Committee of 1987 which sought to among other issues address inequalities in our education system. The subsequent 1991 publication of a Government White Paper on Education set out benchmarks against which important programmes to attain gender parity in education would be implemented with emphasis on the girl child.

"One of the key elements of this White Paper was the need to democratise education; to provide equal opportunities to Ugandan children regardless of age, gender, religion and other identities,"

Aggrey David Kibenge, former undersecretary in the Ministry of Education and Sports.

These reforms led to the introduction of Affirmative Action in University admission, ensuring that all female applicants get 1.5 points added onto their university entry marks. In 1997, Universal Primary Education was introduced offering more opportunities for girls to attend school. The

nature of educational expansion between 1962 and 1970 can be shown by figures. In 1962 there were 28 government grant-aided secondary schools. By 1970, there were 73 secondary schools. The enrolment of secondary schools at 0-Level was 1991 students in 1962. By 1970, there were 29,540 0-Level students. In addition , many private secondary schools were built thus proving more opportunities for many students to access education.

In the Ugandan case, the place of women in any society can be assessed by the level of their status within that society. The exact meaning of status is not generally agreed but the definition provided by Safitios-Rothschild (1985), seems to be very relevant in the case of Uganda. This refers to:

"The degree to which women have access to valued resources, such as food; health care; education and training; paid employment; credit; specialised training; memberships in special organisations, clubs or co-operatives that help increase their access to information and training; key services and inputs and marketing outlets; and access to political participation and decision-making power at different levels" (Ntozi and Kabera, 1989:92).

This definition is consistent with that of Andrews (1988:77) who proposes gauging the status of women through the law, economic status and social prestige, access to and control of material resources and the overall well-being of women in comparison with men. As Collier (1987) demonstrates, low status will reinforce the material disadvantages and hinder the process through which women can rid themselves of the asymmetry of rights, obligations and discrimination. Despite the fact that education was free to some extent,since thereU.P.E and U.S.E), 13 percent of girls between the ages of 6 and 12 didn't go to primary school in 2011. Of the girls that did go, only 53 percent actually completed the required seven years. In secondary school, which typically encompasses students from 13 to 18 years old, female attendance significantly drops; 30 percent of girls between these ages weren't enrolled in secondary school in 2011.

Situational Analysis:

Situationally from the past todate to the future perhaps, the issue of gender continues to be pertinent as one tries to understand/ answer the question of gender in access to service like education. Presently, at all levels of the education system in Uganda, the number of females is lower than that of males. The rate of enrolment as well as admission and drop-out is estimated to be higher for females, and increases as one climbs the educational ladder.

Female participation remains low. For example in 1988, Ministry of Education records showed that during the first year of primary school, girls formed 45% of total enrolment; dropping to about

37% by the end of the primary school cycle. At the end of the secondary school (Ordinary Level), girls formed just under 30%. For the final year at A-level girls constituted only 20% of the total group, dropping to just over 17% at higher education. In 1988, females made up 28% of students for all institutions (UNESCO: 1991). The progressive reduction of the number of girls in primary and secondary schools reduces the pool for higher education. In 1988 the number of students at the third level per 100,000 inhabitants was 81. Male students were 118, as opposed to 45 female students per 100,000 inhabitants, respectively (UNESCO:1991). Makerere University records show that the enrolment percentage of women students fluctuates between 17-20%.

Women's education has long been strongly associated with economic, health and social benefits. Education is linked to increased female labour force participation (heath and Jayachandran, 2016). Taking a case study, in Turkey, increasing compulsory schooling from five to eight years in 1997 increased enrolment among rural girls and the likelihood of women working outside the home and in jobs that provide social security benefits (Erten and Keskin, 2018:88). Women's labour force participation fell from 34% in 1990 to 23% in 2005 but rose to 34% in 2018. It remains among the lowest in the world (OECD, 2019).

From the records, it's been reported that in the 1989/90 academic year at Makerere, 104 male students were registered for Masters Degrees as opposed to 25 women (or 24%) and there were no females for the Master of Medicine as well as diploma and Ph.D in the same or related fields. The problem of low absolute numbers has been compounded by imbalances in the subject distribution among female students. When they enter higher education, female students tend to take non-science-based courses (due to culturally related beliefs that some disciplines are for males and others for females)and this restricts their future employment prospects. For the 1990/91 academic year at Makerere University, females formed 40% of the Arts intake and 18% of the Science intake. A projection by Makerere University is that female intake in the science-based professional courses is not likely to rise dramatically in the near future, even with the 1990 Senate decision to award an extra 1.5 points for admission purposes to every eligible woman applicant. Women are again outnumbered by men as academic staff in secondary schools and higher education institutions. As an example, in 1991 at the National College of Business Studies (NCBS) all 5 senior lecturers were men; only 1 out of 8 lecturers was female; and7 out of 20 Assistant Lecturers were female. At the Uganda Polytechnic Kyambogo (UPK) out of a total of 95 academic staff, only 4 were women. At Makerere University, there were 2 women Professors and 2 women

Associate Professors among 40 and 50 men respectively. This is not exception for all other levels from primary to university level.

The Girl-Child Education Bog:

Access to education by the girls has been bogged by political, social as well as economic factors. Schooling is more costly for girls. (Lloyd, Mensch, and Clark, 2000). The privatisation of the education sector has made it difficult for the girl child to enrol and access education as compared to the boy child. A girl child has lower chance of being educated. Investment in the education of girls is not considered to yield adequate returns. She may be enrolled in school, but when her work is needed at home to help in housework, to cater for the young siblings or fetch water and fire wood and prepare food for the men working in the field, she is kept back from school. A boy child's education is taken more seriously. Higher education and vocational education are often denied to girls, not always because of lack of resources, but more often because it may give her ideas of independence and make her unsuitable for marriage, or because higher education is not required to carry out housework or for her roles as wife and mother.

Poverty in the homes has an enormous impact on girl's chances of schooling. Such households allocate their limited resources to the education of sons because it is believed that is likely to bring larger benefit to the household in terms of future income. This is why in many rural households in particular, child labour is essential for the maintenance of the household. Like adult women they perform economic activities, plus they also perform household work like cooking, cleaning, fetching water and fuel and taking care of younger siblings. Thus, they are more likely to be taken out of school.

The distance of schools places girls' safety at risk and therefore it is a factor constraining girl's enrolment. Taking a case study of Egypt, it's been reported that,

· "In Egypt, for example, 94 per cent of boys and 72 per cent of girls were enrolled when a school was located on kilometre form their homes. When schools were two kilometres away, enrolment among boys dropped marginally to 90 per cent, but much more dramatically for girls to 64 per cent."

The other bog is that availability of female teachers can also determine enrolment. Many parents in traditional societies are more willing to send their daughters to school if there are women teachers

“In low-income countries, only one-third of primary, less than one-fourth of secondary and less then one-tenth if tertiary education teachers are women.” A study in Yemen found that girls' enrolment dropped to almost zero after grade three because female teachers were not available. These also equally apply to the Ugandan case.

Rigid school timing makes it extremely difficult for girls to perform their housework and attend school, especially in rural areas. In the same way, the curricula is not really relevant to the life style of rural women and the potential role of girls as wives and mothers in rural household. Curricula that help girls fulfil their traditional roles better, yet not keep them out of wider opportunities and curricula which are relevant and gender sensitive can make a significant difference.

Parents have also bogged the education of the girl child. Parental educational levels are linked to girls' enrolment and educational attainment. Uneducated parents are usually unaware of the benefits of educating girls and women in terms of current health and welfare of the family and in terms of its intergenerational effects. Improved educational levels among parents have a positive impact on girls' education. There is some evidence to suggest that the mother's educational level is more strongly linked to educational levels of daughters.

Public investment in education, especially in educating women, has been inadequate. In developing countries as a whole, Uganda not as an exception, expenditures on education averaged 15 per cent, of total budgetary outlays**.** Within the restricted financing, expenditure on girl’s education has been even more restricted. In large parts of the world, socio-cultural beliefs require sex-segregated schools. Yet, fewer schools are available for girls, and girls have to travel longer distances to school. Girls' schools experience financial difficulties, shortage of teachers and textbooks and have inadequate physical facilities such as toilets, play fields, classrooms etc.

Restricted space and expectations limit girls’ ability to reap the returns to education- key to this has been the fact that social norms are restrictive (Beaman et al. (2011). Most families and societies

feel that girls are better prepared for marriage and hence proper socialisation becomes vital for them as values get imparted into them to be better wives who can handle the needs of their husbands and thus earn their parents much more respect.

Early marriage and teen pregnancy keep girls out of school. This has largely been due to unconducive environment that is in place for girls as they yearn to achieve education. Moving long distances coupled with failure of the parents to provide the basic needs to the girls accounts for the early marriages. One in three girls in low and middle-income countries (excluding China) continue to be married before the age of 18 and one in nine girls are married before their 15th birthday.

Pervasive school-related violence harms millions of girls and young women- sexual abuse, exploitation, and bullying (Prinsloo, 2006). Girl children are vulnerable to sexual exploitation within the family and commercially. Incest and other forms of sexual exploitation of girls by family members go unnoticed and unpunished because these are covered up by the family. In large parts of the world, women and young girls have to carry the entire burden of family "honour" any deviation from the strictly defined norms, whether done willingly or under duress, is considered unacceptable. A girl who has brought "dishonour", often loses her place in the family.

Considering Financial Exclusion, one of the issues is lack of access to education scholarships as well as facilitation to help girls have the same access like the boys. These girls/women also have no access to support from banks in whatever way possible. It's been reported that thirty-seven percent (37%) of women worldwide have a bank account compared to 46% of men. Additionally, more women report using someone else's account than men, which may reveal key barriers women face in opening an account on their own. Despite the gender gap in global financial inclusion rates, research affirms that children's lives improve when women are more involved in money management in their households. The lack of access therefore denies women the same chances and support to facilitate their education. In most female headed households, these women have no option but to let their girls stay at home or engage in petty businesses like selling tomatoes, onions and other small house hold requirements to make ends meet as their colleagues go to school. This has been compounded by the increased levels of poverty.

The other bog is limited Educational Opportunities. Whereas the school-aged girls are much better off today than in years past, but there are still far too many who are not completing their education. There are 35 million girls and 31 million boys not attending school in the world's poorest regions. This number does not cater for those who enrol and drop out of school.

To overcome this bog, there is thus urgent need to create valid and reliable education finance initiative which can be used to equip students, families and schools with financial services that are designed to improve educational outcomes. The government can also organise school fee loans that can enable low-income families to afford sending their children to school. With access to such loans, parents can provide all of their children with an education instead of removing young girls from the classroom so they can marry or even help at home or earn money through petty businesses as reported above.

Another bog is insufficient Access to Sanitation Facilities. More than one billion people around the world practice open defecation. Though poor sanitation affects both genders, women and girls are particularly at-risk of gender-based violence when they do not have a private place to relieve themselves. Many adolescent girls also end their education early when they don't have access to a school bathroom or sanitary napkins. Such facilities are reflected in form of longer distances to access lavatories by the girls or sharing of urinals with boys.

Overcoming this bog requires provision and improvement of sanitation facilities and services in poor communities as well as at schools. Schools should be provided with improvement loans and funding to construct private bathrooms to protect the safety and privacy of girl child students. This can be in addition to creating partnerships with health-focused organizations to collaboratively improve public health. Such NGOs can extend loans for household and school toilets in partnership with the government. Such an investment in sanitation and hygiene facilities can help in keeping the girl child safe, healthy and stay in school.

In Uganda, there is also limited access to land and safe shelter. This has been because of Regressive social norms, discriminatory policies and weak implementation of equitable laws prevent women from owning land in developing countries. Coming from poor structures is a sign of poverty and

thus girls can't stay well in school well knowing that the social environment at home is not conducive for their wellbeing.

To cater for this bog it requires one to change social prejudices that perpetuate inequalities related to access to factors of production like land and shelter. However, there is need to advocate for systemic changes by offering housing microfinance tools. Taking Ghana as a case study, it has provided housing loans with construction technical assistance to help safely improve homes and offer property folios to facilitate the land title acquisition process. The goal has been to connect low-income people with valuable resources that equip them to legally own land and build safe, comfortable homes all geared towards creating a good atmosphere for the girl child to study comfortably while at school.

Education of the girl child has also been affected by Poor Medical Care and Access to Health Information. Women suffer from illness and disease in many poor communities because they lack access to vital health information and resources. The access to medical attention has issues of discrimination to girls as compared to the boys. Girls have less access to medical attention, health care facilities and routine immunization. A sick girl child is often ignored and taken for medical treatment when her condition is serious. In the case of a boy child, parents seek medical attention more promptly. Mortality rates for women are significantly higher than the rates for men in many developing countries including Uganda, shedding light on insufficient health systems that discriminate against women or fail to meet their medical needs. This has not been and is still not taken as a priority for the girls/ females.

Another key barrier to girls' education in Uganda is the traditional gender roles and male-dominated society. Women and girls are expected to do the majority of the domestic labour, often leaving little time for them to attend school and do the assigned homework. In some areas, girls are actively discouraged from attending school. Instead, they are told education is for boys. Female students are often stigmatized as being promiscuous. These beliefs can be perpetuated in the classrooms if they are held by teachers, peers and eventually the girls themselves. The desire to participate and even attend classes suffers as a result. Certain traditional practices are exploitative and harmful to the health and well-being of girls. Female genital mutilation, practiced in large parts of Africa and Uganda inclusive, has severe health implications and psychological trauma.

Dowry demands at the time of marriage, place a great burden on the parents of the bride. Birth of a girl child is dreaded by the family partly because of the dowry implications. The custom of paying a bride price in several African societies, make a woman or a girl-bride a virtual property of her husband. This is reflected in Ugandan cultures and traditions including among other practices the following:

- Sons look after their parents in their old age, while daughters marry out of their own families at a young age and join their husband's families.
- Sons are valued for their anticipated financial contribution to the household whereas the daughters economic contribution, if at all, and her fertility would benefit her husband's family.
- Prevalence of son preference, and certain traditional beliefs and practices results in neglect of girls in terms of health care and nutrition.
- When a society practices seclusion of women, girls may only attend sex-segregated schools which means that girls' access to education depends on the availability of Single Sex schools.

Gender bias starts even before birth. Foetal sex determination and abortion of female foetus is a growing menace in some countries. Infanticide of girl babies through deliberate neglect or withdrawal of food or by using some other means is not uncommon. In the same case while at school, the facilities and teaching style in some schools was not designed to accommodate girls. The lack of proper sanitation and privacy makes it difficult for girls to attend school while menstruating. Girls can also face risks associated with a lack of security at schools, such as sexual abuse. In other cases, many traditional families still make conscious or unconscious decisions on intra-family resource allocation. In the context of scarcity, they allocate their limited resources in a way that would give the best returns and hence do so to sons(boys). The daughters are discriminated against in access to food, clothing, health care and education. In the same way, it is well known that mothers give more frequent breast feeding and pay more attention to male infants. Boys get a larger share of the food than do girls. Even in well-off families, boys get the best in terms of food, clothing, educational materials, toys, equipment for games, and other goods.

Girls' education has also been bogged due to the society feeling that their labour is vital in addition to that of the female elders in agriculture. The work of the girl child in agriculture, in unorganized house-based industry and in the informal sector in general, goes unnoticed, non-quantified, unrewarded and therefore undervalued by society. This has been made worse with increasing urbanization, loss of traditional means of livelihood, loss of extended family support, the social evils of urban slums and growing tourism, have contributed to widespread trafficking in children and child prostitution. Girls are often forced into prostitution under debt-bondage, sold by their poor parents. These minor girls are forced to work under exploitative, coercive and unhygienic conditions without any access to health care or protection against sexually communicable diseases.

The above educational bogs amongst others have made girl-child education almost impossible and hence needs urgent interventions as discussed therein. The efforts to improve this girl child education needs a comprehensive contribution by all people ranging from the Government to the NGOs as well as well as sensitisation of the parents against the social cultural amd economic challenges that affect girl-child education.

Available opportunities worthy exploring:

The 21st century has been faced with the combined spread of literacy, the availability and promotion of public education for both girls and boys, the expansion of job opportunities for women as well as gender sensitive policies especially in education, health and employment

There has been an increased desire of girls and women for greater empowerment, equality and emancipation

Women have proven to be resourceful, creative and dedicated to claiming ownership and responsibility for their faith both individually and communally and upon this, they have joined key positions in government. These continue to be role models for the young girls showing them the need to attain education and how the future can be bright for them too. Religiously, today, Muslim women have been continously active in study circles, mosque-based activities, community services sponsored by different organizations as well as both students and teachers.

This has been followed by the increased activation of the reform process by re-examining the lives of the very first (Muslim) women who lived during Islam's formative period, not just as historical figures, but as modern Islamic models

Concerning the Legal guarantee -Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997, the government introduced free tuition at primary school education. The introduction of UPE in 1997 significantly increased access to primary education as total enrolment tripled from about 2.7 million in 1996 to 8.2 million in 2009.

For the curriculum, efforts have been on to revised lower primary thematic curriculum in 2007, and a revised upper primary curriculum, which was implemented in 2011, to address the problem of non-completion of school: there has been emphasis on literacy, numeracy and life skills and teaches through the medium of local languages. Uganda also provides a capitation grant to cover school costs. Uganda plans set up a differentiated allocation formula for capitation grants to schools that takes into consideration the differences among schools and the communities they serve so as to realise an improved allocation of the capitation grants.

There have been the Investments in classrooms through the School Facilities Grant and Classroom Completion Grant. This has been realised through an increase in classroom construction leading to an improved Pupil Classroom Ratio (PCR) from 106:1 (2000) to 72:1 (2009). Between 2000 and 2005, the total number of classrooms increased by 60 per cent as a result of the continued construction of classrooms under the School Facilities Grant (SFG) and Classroom Completion Grant (CCG). Approximately 80 per cent of the classrooms were built under SFG.

Globally, there is a multiplicity of voices in debates concerning a more empowering role for women, some conservative, others self-designated "progressive," who claim an equal position for both sexes, and others affirming certain unique roles for women in addition to aaggregate education expansion around the world as all evidenced in the education levels that have risen in most countries around the world.

In 1950 for example, the average number of years of school completed by individuals aged 25 and over was 6.1 in advanced countries and only 1.4 in developing countries and 60 years later, average schooling levels had risen to 11.1 years in advanced economies and 6.9 years in developing countries.

Societies can build on civil society and political momentum that have characterised the 21st century. There is a multiplicity of National policy debates, donor strategies, media campaigns, multilateral action, and initiatives who all agitate for girl child education in the world and Uganda specifically. Because of the profound implications of girls' education in Uganda, many

organizations are determined to continue improving its accessibility and quality. Some of the most effective are local programs, which were developed to address specific problems in Uganda.

Promote hiring of female teachers: Women teachers improve enrolment and retention of girls in schools because: In many societies, the presence of women teachers reduces the parents' worries about the safety and morality of their daughters and encourages girls' participation. Women teachers provide girls with positive role models, especially in the context of mothers being uneducated.

Qualified women should be given incentives to overcome certain cultural, social and economic constraints that prevent them from taking up teaching positions. Incentives may be monetary, such as lower tuition or scholarships to attend training programmes; non-monetary incentives may include hostel facilities for women teachers, housing arrangements, flexible schedules and crèches for children of teacher trainees etc.

Teacher training programmes should be brought nearer the communities. In Yemen, an UNICEF assisted programme involves primary school teacher training in existing secondary schools in rural areas. Transport and a monthly stipend is provided. The drop-out rate is less than 1.5 per cent.

Lower the costs to parents: In large parts of the developing world, little value is placed on girls education. This, along with the fact that educating children involves financial costs in terms of children's household and market related work forgone, explain why parents consider schooling girls less affordable. Therefore, costs must be reduced so that private returns on girl’s education in higher.

The other way is to provide pre-school or day care facilities for younger siblings. This would not only free girls for schooling but also prepare the younger children for schooling later. China for example has a comprehensive programme of day-care facilities at work sites and at schools. Another form of intervention is to introduce simple labour - saving technologies such as mechanical mills and water wells, which will give girls and women more free time to participate in educational programmes. There is need to modify the curricula to suit practical needs: School curricula must be made more relevant to the girls' lives. It should link education with agriculture, animal raising, health and nutrition issues, and use the local language. At the same time it should

avoid gender stereotyping. Expanding the formal curricula to include practical knowledge and skills that help girls to perform their daily tasks better would increase their chances of being enrolled and retained in schools.

In any country, participation of girls in the educational system depends on demand on the part of parents for girls schooling and the supply of educational services on the part of the public and the private sector.

- To improve the literacy and educational level of girls, the educational system must be able to:
- Increase the availability or supply of education by increasing the number of school places for girls.
- Improve the accessibility of education by increasing the benefits and lowering the cost of educating girls.
- Reducing the distance that girls travel to go to school will encourage their enrolment. Parents are less worried about the safety of their daughters when schools are located near the communities.
- The other way is to provide pre-school or day care facilities for younger siblings. This would not only free girls for schooling but also prepare the younger children for schooling later. China for example has a comprehensive programme of day-care facilities at work sites and at schools. Another form of intervention is to introduce simple labour - saving technologies such as mechanical mills and water wells, which will give girls and women more free time to participate in educational programmes. There is need to modify the curricula to suit practical needs: School curricula must be made more relevant to the girls' lives. It should link education with agriculture, animal raising, health and nutrition issues, and use the local language. At the same time it should avoid gender stereotyping. Expanding the formal curricula to include practical knowledge and skills that help girls to perform their daily tasks better would increase their chances of being enrolled and retained in schools.

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