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OF TEACHER EDUCATION**

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The Zimbabwe Bulletin of Teacher Education

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Editor: Attwell Mamvuto

Department of Teacher Education
University of Zimbabwe

Box MP 167

Mount Pleasant

Harare

Email: amamvuto@yahoo.co.uk

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Women's access to teacher education in Zimbabwe: A gender profile

Viola Machingura
Masvingo State University

ABSTRACT

Teaching traditionally is generally perceived to be a feminine profession, yet the situation on the ground in Zimbabwe does not indicate this perception. If anything, more men than women from the colonial period to date have been trained as teachers. This is a very sad state of affairs given the population female to male ratio of almost 2:1 that has always existed in Zimbabwe.

This paper gives a brief background to the historical and socio-economic factors inhibiting the enrolment of girls into teacher training institutions in Zimbabwe. The paper traces the issues and policies affecting the education of girls in general and their entry into tertiary education and teacher education in particular from as early as 1948 to 2003. Among others, the role played by Missionaries to battress traditional beliefs that mitigate against the education of girls, (Atkinson 1972), and the role played by the limited colonial Government spending on the education of Africans and how this adversely affected the education of girls (Tove 1992) is explained.

The paper goes on to highlight successes, though limited, of the post-colonial government to improve the entry of girls into teacher education through affirmative action. Recommendations are made which try to link the affirmative action policy to the current youth training service in an effort to positively discriminate in favour of girls' entry into teacher education.

INTRODUCTION

The last twenty-four years since 1980, when Zimbabwe attained independence, have been quite remarkable for Zimbabwean women, both in respect to changes in their status in the home and at work. The togetherness

between men and women during the war of liberation forced the new government to make a commitment to the cause of women. Women's contribution to the war of liberation was acknowledged, policies and laws were put in place to promote equality between men and women. The legal status of women was promoted through acts of parliament such as:

1. The Legal Age of Majority Act (1982) which accords Women, as well as men, adult status on reaching the Age of eighteen.
2. The Labour Relations Act (1985) which among other Things, outlaws discrimination on the basis of sex And incorporates improvements to maternity leave Conditions and equal pay for equal work and,
3. The Maintenance Act (1988) which strengthens the Position of women in accessing resources.
4. The Matrimonial Act (1985) which recognizes both the direct and indirect contribution of women to marital wealth.

However despite these seemingly positive moves in favour of women, twenty-four years after independence, most women are still excluded from entry into most areas. Women constitute more than 60% of the population, yet in the education system and in other sectors; there are generally less girls at all levels, than boys and the percentages get smaller as we go up the education ladder.

It is clear therefore that although Zimbabwe is not gender blind, twenty-four years after independence, equity in educational opportunity for men and women has not been fully achieved.

This paper seeks to contribute towards an understanding of the gender inequalities that have been prevalent in teacher education in Zimbabwe. The paper tries to fill the gap in our knowledge by giving a brief background to gender issues in teacher education in Zimbabwe. The exploration will relate to the historical and socio-economic factors, which are perceived to

have negatively impacted on women's entry into education and subsequently into teacher education.

METHODOLOGY

A historical approach was taken in investigating factors prohibiting women's entry into teacher education. Documents, both published and unpublished were the main source of information. These ranged from legal reports, statistical yearbooks, committee reports, memos, and institutional files to secondary sources like books and encyclopedias. The research strategy that was used was triangulation. Interviews were conducted with principals and vice principals of teacher training colleges and officials of the University of Zimbabwe's Department of Teacher Education. Qualitative analysis of the above stated documents was the other aspect of the triangle and finally observation of enrolment procedures in selected colleges completed the triangle.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Historical Factors Affecting the Enrolment of Girls into Teachers' Colleges

In this section account will be taken of issues and policies in the pre- and post-independence periods, affecting the education of Africans in general and how these in turn affected the entry of girls into teacher education.

Missionary Efforts in Teacher Education

State aided teacher education gained growth in the early sixties. Prior to that missionaries were wholly responsible for the training of teachers for the African

The Zimbabwe Bulletin of Teacher Education schools. The missionaries saw schooling for the African people as an opportunity to recruit adherence to their various denominations. This obviously created conflict with the state, whose policies of racial segregation and the consequent suppression of the indigenous people was central to the colonial administration. The apparent intention of the colonial administration was not to educate the African in a meaningful way, but to;

Give them such training as would enable them to become More efficient workers in agriculture and industry and Render more

efficient service to European employers.
(Atkinson 1972:91).

However despite this resistance from the administration, African education expanded and missionaries made substantial headway for African education. Thus in the period from 1908 to 1927, the number of schools increased from 33 to 1351 and enrolments from 86421 to 351 802. (Atkinson 1972:91) This expansion obviously created teacher shortages and this gave rise to the need to train Africans to teach their own kith and kin.

Missionaries such as Anglicans thus pioneered a move to train the brightest African children as catechists and schoolmasters. Institutions such as the Anglican St Augustine's in Penhalonga and at St. Faith's in Rusape were the pioneer teacher training institutions and other denominations followed suit.

Missionary educators were largely left to their own devices and they had to work out programmes of instruction as best they could. However, because of their rootedness in the Anglo-Saxon culture, they imported their medieval western European conceptions about the education suitable for males and females. Not so many girls were therefore afforded the chance to go to school except those with strong connections with the church. Formal education especially at higher levels was reserved mainly for male children. This kind of thinking found fertile ground in the African patriarchal culture that also generally removed women from the public limelight. The result was that the number of girls available for tertiary education, teacher training included, was very limited.

The following figures for 1948 illustrate this very well:

Table 1 Enrolment figures for Institutions training teachers in 1948.

	Male	Female	Total	% F
Number Presented	262	93	355	26.2
Number Passed	218	82	300	27.3

(Source: Compiled from the Secretary of Education's Annual returns of the Education Department 1948.)

The Anglo-Saxon belief then was that;

The role of women was specifically defined as that of Wives and mothers. They needed to learn to read and Write so that they could carry out religious and family Responsibilities. Women in the colonies both black and White, were not supposed to have career choices, so their Schooling was limited to the basics. (Levine 1984:153)

It must be noted that developments in Europe at the time, which were driven by the naturalist school of thought and thus viewed the mother as the best teacher, had not been felt as yet in the colonies. Later developments in teacher education were therefore going to be negatively affected by this thinking unless some drastic measures were taken to redress the situation.

In the Primary Teachers' Low (PTL) and Primary Teachers' High (PTH), programmes of 1962, the entry requirements were Standard six and Form 2 respectively. Not so many girls were going to secondary school that meant that not so many could qualify for PTH training. Enrolment figures for the programmes in 1962 were as follows:

Table 2: Enrolment figures for 1st and 2nd year students for PTL and PTH programmes in 1962.

PTL						PTH					
1 st Year			2 nd Year			1 st Year			2 nd Year		
M	F	%F	M	F	%F	M	F	%F	M	F	%F
514	314	37.9	632	339	34.9	503	105	15.2	315	57	15.3

Source: (The Judges Report 1962:117).

The few girls with Junior Certificate were also in demand to train as nurses at Harare Central Hospital and Mpilo Hospital in Bulawayo. Nursing was a job considered at the time, as wholly feminine. (The Judges report 1962:54).

Government Involvement in Teacher Education

In 1965, the Unilateral Declaration of Independence was issued, ending all ties between the Settler State and the British Government. This resulted in an international embargo, affecting all realms of life, education included.

Teachers from abroad stopped coming, churches also took a stand against the Government for its racist policies and education was brought directly under the Rhodesian administration. The dual system of education was thus upheld to an even sharper degree than before.

Although African enrolments continued to increase despite U.D.I., Government spending on African Education was set at 2% of GDP. (The Judges Report 1962:114). This placed the bulk of the cost of educating African children on their parents. Such a move was bound to affect the education of girls more than that of boys. Parents at times had to choose whom to send to school between the boy child and the girl child. It was, for economic reasons, considered more profitable to educate boys who would become breadwinners, than to educate girls who would get married and thus enrich their husbands' families. (Gaidzanwa 1989)

Post-independence expansion

Educational policies at independence in 1980 were largely reactive to the colonial legacy. There was vast expansion in the education and training systems for Africans with the express purpose of eliminating colonial inequalities. The new Government quickly took legislative and other appropriate measures towards the eradication of all forms of discrimination. The situation for girls however, is not very pleasing. At primary school, girls are 47,5% of the total enrolment and the figure progressively gets smaller as we go up the education ladder.

Table 3. Girls as a Percentage of school Population by level of Education

Level of Education	Girls as % of school Population
Primary	47.5
Form 1	46.6
Form 4	41.4
Form 5	34.0

Source: Unicef (Unicef: 3).

Thus the percentage of girls entering institutions of higher learning diminishes with increase in educational levels.

Teacher education on its part experienced considerable expansion after independence to cater for human resources needs of the rapidly expanding education system. The number of colleges increased from 8 to 14 and enrolments also went up by 458%. Total enrolments for girls also rose steadily from 1528 in 1980 to 6394 in 1989.

However, a look at individual colleges reveals different percentage increases with some colleges enrolling more girls than others. Primary school teachers colleges for example, appear to be more girl friendly than secondary teachers colleges. Seke Teachers' college for example has always had an affirmative action policy of enrolling 60% female students.

Belvedere Teachers' College had the following figures for 1982 to 1985:

Table 4: Enrolment figures for Belvedere Teachers' College according to gender from 1982 to 1985.

Year	Total	Male	Female	%F
1982	153	153	0	0
1983	315	311	14	4.4
1984	494	414	80	16.2
1985	524	376	148	39.5

Source: Gaidzanwa 1989:91

Table 5: Enrolment figures for Bondolfi Teachers' College for 1985.

	Total	Male	Female	%F
1 st Year	246	151	95	39.5
2 nd Year	159	106	49	30.8

Source: Gaidzanwa 1989:63

Reasons given by Belvedere Teachers' College for the almost absence of female students in their enrolments were that the college was offering subjects like metalwork, building and woodwork which are mostly male domains. Bondolfi Teachers' College accounted for her low enrolments on shortage

of accommodation. The existing facilities were said to be too crude for feminine occupation.

It is clear from the above that by 1985 girls were generally disadvantaged from enrolling in teachers' colleges. Colleges in Zimbabwe are autonomous and so are free to decide on their own enrolment figures. Primary colleges generally enroll more girls than secondary colleges and finally the subjects offered deter or promote the enrolment of girls.

WITHIN COLLEGE EFFECTS ON THE ADMISSION OF GIRLS

A lot of factors within colleges militate against the enrolment of girls, as is discussed below.

Staffing

There is an obvious gender disparity in lecturers in post in colleges throughout Zimbabwe. Table 6 exemplifies this.

Table 6 Lecturers in Teachers' Colleges by Gender 1992

College	Gender			
	Male	Female	Total	% F
Gweru	49	23	72	31.9
Hillside	41	20	61	32.7
Belvedere	59	25	84	29.7
Mutare	70	24	94	25.5
Gwanda	32	9	41	21.9
Chinhoyi	4	7	11	63.6
Marymount	23	11	34	32.3
U.C.E.	42	20	62	32.2
Masvingo	40	15	55	27.2
Mkoba	53	12	65	18.5
Morgan	33	22	55	40.0
Seke	44	22	66	33.3
Bondolfi	22	12	34	25.3
Nyadire	22	4	26	15.4
Morgenster	43	4	47	8.5
Total	577	230	807	28.5

It is the same almost predominantly male staff that is responsible for the admission of students. Although such discrepancies should ideally not affect the way professionals conduct their work, earlier studies have indicated that it is possible for males in decision making positions to be guided, unconsciously though, by cultural stereotypes on what girls can and cannot do. (Dorsey 1996)

However as has been noted already, primary teacher training Colleges have tended to be more girl friendly than secondary teacher training colleges. The following figures for Masvingo Teachers' college for the periods indicated illustrate this well:

Table 7: Enrolment figures for Masvingo Teachers' College according to gender for the years 1997 to 2003.

Year	Total	Male	Female	%Female
1997	1292	666	626	48.5
1998	1363	637	726	53.3
1999	1300	616	684	52.6
2000	1175	577	598	50.9
2002	1567	694	873	55.7
2003	1247	543	704	56.5
Total for 6 yrs	7944	3733	4211	53.0

Source: Compiled from the college's annual reports. It would therefore appear that some colleges, especially primary teachers colleges, have heeded Government's call to enrol more girls than boys. However the percentage increase where this has occurred is minimal (53% for Masvingo Teacher' College). A lot therefore still needs to be done to increase the number of female students into teacher education.

Policy Issues and Admission Procedures

The Ministry of Higher Education in conjunction with the University of Zimbabwe's Department of Teacher Education is responsible for teacher education in Zimbabwe. The Ministry is responsible for such issues as erecting structures, identifying teacher education needs in accordance with national plans, recruiting staff and allocating resources. For professional and academic matters colleges have been left to make their own autonomous decisions. Recruitment of students for training is one of the areas that colleges handle.

They do so by coming up with their own policies and arranging their own admission procedures. All that the Ministry does is to stipulate entry requirements which at the moment stand at 5 'O' levels at Grade C or better including English.

Most colleges use what has generally come to be known as the committee system to recruit students. This means that a selection committee is appointed either by the principal or nominated by the staff body to oversee the selection process. The duties and responsibilities of the committee are among others to:

- a) Shortlist applicants for interview.
- b) Invite those short-listed for an interview.
- c) Draw up policies to guide the interview as well as a selection instrument.
- d) Organize interviewing staff and oversee the interview process.
- e) Do the final selection based on the recommendations of the interviewing staff.

Generally committees in most colleges perform their duties as best they can, but the following weaknesses were noted in their procedures:

Individual colleges and their committees operate autonomously so a general government policy to favour girls in enrolments is generally not enforced.

With the exception of Seke and Masvingo Teachers' Colleges, the instruments that most colleges use in selecting students, do not include any gender policy that guides the selection process, so interviewing staff and the selection committee use their own discretion in deciding who to enroll. So one could safely conclude that it is probable that the gender disparity in staffing to have an adverse effect on the admission of girls. Most of the lecturing staff who are mostly men, might unconsciously be guided by cultural stereotypes on what girls can or cannot do.

The committee in most cases does not have the final say in the selection process. Principals in all colleges are having to accommodate more applicants due to pressure that is exerted upon them by people from outside the college, especially politicians to enroll friends, relatives and political associates. This obviously upsets whatever gender balances might have been achieved by the committee.

Cultural and Economic Factors

Cultural traditions about the roles of the female child often affect the girl child's access to education and her ability to continue to higher levels. The most important cultural factors seem to be parents' attitudes towards the education of the girl child and the self-image that girls have as a result of cultural conditioning. If given a choice between educating the boy child or the girl child most parents would prefer educating the boy child whom they believe will carry the family name and not leave the home upon getting married. It is also within the home, according to Dorsey (1996) that girls acquire an image of themselves and of their society as adults. Such an image made up of stereotyped ideas is a hindrance to girls' interest in higher education. They are conditioned from an early age to believe that the woman is inferior to man and that her place is in the home and field. Thus girls on the whole have social and psychological disabilities imposed on them, and this affects both their opportunity for education and their achievement. (Dorsey 1996:30).

Attitudes Towards Working Women

In various ways society perpetuates the myth or stereotype that the primary role of women is that of wives and mothers. When women deviate from what society views as their primary role and take up paid employment, it is often seen as secondary to their real role as wives and mothers. Unfortunately career women generally are late in getting married and some do not get married at all. Such women are looked upon as prostitutes and not respected. Rural women are held in higher esteem because they normally follow societal expectations. Such attitudes militate against women being educated at all, let alone going to college.

CONCLUSIONS

What emerges from this study is a gloomy picture concerning women's access to tertiary education in general and to teacher education in particular in Zimbabwe. Dorsey (1989:374) believes that;

That women do enter this male dominated professional
Field and succeed despite the handicaps, which bedevil
Them all along the way is undoubtedly due to ability,
Drive and ambition, but their numbers are still few.

History, especially Zimbabwe's colonial past, created a bad precedence, which is proving difficult to overcome. Zimbabwe's own traditional past is helping buttress a negative situation for our women. Although an upward trend in the enrolment has been noted especially in primary teachers' colleges, a lot still needs to be done to achieve a gender balance, which reflects the gender percentages in our population.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Zimbabwe is one of the few African countries, which has done a lot, which is positive for women. However, in education more needs to be done. First of all, the issues of girls' education and employment potential must be perceived as problematic and worth of attention. Hopefully this will open up debate and serious discussion in relevant fora. The need for women to be among those who make policies and decisions at all levels of government is critical if their plight is to be adequately addressed.

Advantage can also be taken of the current youth policy, which requires all youth to undergo a programme of national orientation and as a pre-requisite for enrolling into tertiary institutions. Such programmes can also have gender equity as part of what youths are conscientised on. Some affirmative action would also be possible if recruits into teachers' colleges are coming from the youth training institutions. Curriculum materials in schools and all training institutions should not have biased language, content and illustrations, which reinforce gender stereotypes. Teacher education itself should have gender equity as part of teacher preparation.

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