

**GENDER EQUITY IN MALAWIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A STUDY
OF CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS IN THREE SCHOOLS IN
ZOMBA URBAN**

**A Dissertation by
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Chancellor College**

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the text of this dissertation entitled: GENDER EQUITY IN MALAWIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A STUDY OF CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS IN THREE ZOMBA URBAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS is substantially my own work.

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DEDICATION

To my daughter Muwemi Msiska and her friend Linda Kachinjika whose love of play gave me time to work.

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ABSTRACT

As a member of the UNO (United Nations Organisation), Malawi has a mandate to give education to all her citizens as their basic human right. Realising that educating females brings about a number of benefits to individuals and the nation, The Government of Malawi through the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) has embarked on promoting the education of girls. MoEVT has set a target of raising secondary school enrolment for girls to 50% by the year 2012. It is also trying to equip teachers with skills so that boys and girls benefit equally from the teaching and learning that goes on in the classroom. National examination results indicate that girls lag behind in performance. This study therefore investigated the impact the knowledge of the gender equity policy is having on the interactions in the classroom.

The study used a mixed methods design in which the qualitative approach took an upper hand. Data was collected from three secondary schools in Zomba Urban using classroom observations, interviews with teachers, focus group discussions with students and a questionnaire with teachers and students.

The study found that five out of twelve targeted teachers knew about the gender equity policy. On the whole, the teachers interacted with male students more than female students. The study also found that knowledge of the policy was not a guarantee that those teachers would enhance gender unbiased interactions in their classrooms. Only one of those that had the knowledge tried to be unbiased. It further found that professionally trained teachers were less gender bias than the untrained. Thus, there is hope that if they were given training in gender equity issues they might improve their practices. The study

also found that the attitudes and practices of some teachers and students are such that they cannot promote female students' education.

It can thus be concluded that the gender equity policy has had very little impact on the way teachers interact with female or male students. This has been partly because many teachers have not been exposed to gender awareness issues and also because of apathy on the part of those who have received gender awareness sensitisation training. The students themselves also seem not to be ready to support one another in achieving the goal of having both males and females equally educated. The MoEVT therefore should ensure that all teachers are made aware of gender issues in education and help to reinforce practices that can bring about equity in classroom.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
ABSTRACT	vi
CHAPTER ONE	1
Introduction and Background Information	1
1.0. Overview	1
1.1. Background to the problem.....	1
1.1.1. An Overview of the Gender Policy in Malawi	2
1.1.2. The status of girls’ education in Malawi since colonial times.....	3
1.1.3. Gender equity and education	6
1.1.4. Rationale for increasing girls in secondary schools.....	10
1.1.5. Equity beyond access.....	14
1.2. Statement of the Problem.....	16
1.3 Aim and Specific Objectives of the study	17
1.4 The significance of the study	18
1.5 The delimitation of the study	19
1.6. Limitations of the Study	20
1.7. Definition of Terms	20
1.7.1. Policy	20
1.7.2. Gender.....	21
1.7.3. Gender equity policy.....	21
1.7.4. Gender equality.....	22

1.7.5. Gender bias	22
1.7.6. Gender balance.....	22
1.7.7. Gender parity	22
1.7.8. Gender stereotypes.....	22
1.7.9. Classroom interactions.....	22
1.7.11. Policy communication	23
1.8. Outline of the thesis	23
1.9. Chapter summary	24
CHAPTER TWO	25
Review of Related Literature	25
2.0. Overview	25
2.1. Policy Environment	25
2.2 Policy Implementation.....	27
2.2.1 Policy communication	27
2.2.2 Resources	31
2.2.3 Mobilisation of political support.....	35
2.2.4. Source of the Policy	37
2.2.5. Implementers' values	37
2.3. Gender equity and education	37
2.4. Classroom interactions.....	38
2.4.1. Learner centred teaching.....	39
2.4.2. Knowing the students.....	40
2.4.3. Teachers being friendly to students	40

2.4.4. Motivational talks	40
2.5. What influences success or failure to promote gender equity in education.....	41
2.5.1 Girls' attitudes.....	41
2.5.2. Stereotyping	42
2.5.3. Friendly Environment	43
2.5.4. Teaching/learning styles	44
2.6. Gaps in the Studies at National Level.....	45
2.7. Chapter summary	46
CHAPTER THREE	47
Research Methodology	47
3.0. Overview	47
3.1. The Overall Approach	47
3.2. Setting and Population of Interest.....	49
3.3. Sampling and sample size.....	50
3.4. Data collection	52
3.4.1. Data collection methods.....	52
3.4.2. Instruments:.....	53
3.5. Data analysis	55
3.6. Negotiation for access to schools.....	56
3.7. Ethical Considerations	57
3.7.1. Consent of the participants.....	57
3.7.2. Confidentiality	57
3.7.3. Observation of their human rights	57

3.8. Chapter summary.....	58
CHAPTER FOUR.....	59
Findings and Discussions.....	59
4.0. Overview	59
4.1. Knowledge of the policies on equity in education.....	59
4.1.1. Teachers' knowledge of gender equity policies.....	59
4.1.2. Students' knowledge of gender equity policies education.....	61
4.2 Perceptions of teachers and students on the gender equity policy.....	67
4.2.1 Perceptions of Teachers	67
4.2.2 Perceptions of Students.....	68
4.3 Classroom interactions.....	70
4.3.1 The seating arrangements	70
4.3.2. Student Participation.....	78
4.3.3. Teachers' and students' expectations of male and female students.....	88
4.3.4. Teachers' behaviour.....	91
4. 4. Teachers' and students' views on the implementation of the policy	93
4.4.1. Teachers views.....	93
4.4.2. Students' views	95
4.5. Chapter summary	98
CHAPTER FIVE	100
Conclusions and Recommendations (sp)	100
5.0. Overview	100
5.1. Main findings.....	100

5.2. Recommendations.....	103
5.3. Suggestions for further studies	105
REFERENCES	106
APPENDICES	116
Appendix A 1: Questions for interviews with teachers	116
Appendix A 2: Questions for interviews with Head Teachers and Deputy Head Teachers	117
Appendix B 1: Classroom Observation Schedule (adapted from Kabira & Masinjila, 1997 and VanBelle-Prouty & Sey, 1998)	118
Appendix B 2: Observation schedule for girls' school.....	121
Appendix C: Questions for focus group discussions with students.....	122
Appendix D 1: Questionnaire for teachers (tick the column appropriate to you)....	123
Appendix D 2: Questionnaire for students	126
Appendix E: 1: MSCE Pass rates for internal candidates by gender.....	130
Appendix E: 2: JCE Pass rates for internal candidates by gender	130

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Enrolment ratios of females from 1954 to 2004	5
Table 1.2: Examination results for PSLC and secondary school enrolments and transition rates by gender	8
Table 4.1: Teachers' awareness of gender policies and issues in education.....	60
Table 4.2: Sources of information for teachers.....	61
Table 4.3: Students' awareness of gender policies and issues in education	62

Table 4.4:	Sources of information for students	63
Table 4.5:	Seating plan for a Form One classroom in school A	70
Table 4.6:	Seating plan for Form Three of school A	71
Table 4.7:	Seating plan for Form One in school B	72
Table 4.8:	Seating plan for Form One class in the laboratory in school B	72
Table 4.9:	Seating plan of the Form Three science class in school B (with changes in numbers only during Social Studies)	73
Table 4.10:	A summary of sex composition in group work.....	75
Table 4.11:	Frequencies of interaction between teachers and male/female students.	78
Table 4.12:	Who are more intelligent between boys and girls in the classroom?	88

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Background Information

1.0. Overview

This chapter gives a background to the rise of gender equity issues in education in Malawi and the statement of the problem. It also outlines the aim and specific objectives of the study, significance of the study, delimitations and limitations of the study. The definitions of terms used in the study are laid down. The outline of the thesis is specified in this chapter.

1.1. Background to the problem

The issue of gender equity in education rises from the belief that educating both boys and girls brings about economic and social benefits to a nation. It also rises as a human rights issue that dates back to 1948 when the member countries of the United Nations Organisation (UNO) ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Education for All Global Monitoring Report: 2003/2004). As a member of the UNO, the Government of Malawi (GOM) is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and therefore has a mandate to put into practice this and other related declarations like the Education for All (EFA) agreement, the African Charter on the rights of Children, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) all of which see education for the masses as important for social and economic development.

1.1.1. An Overview of the Gender Policy in Malawi

The GOM recognising the importance of the participation of both males and females in the development endeavours came up with the National Gender Policy (NGP) in 2000. Five years earlier, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) had already come up with gender equity as a policy issue to be considered in a bid to promote girls' education. The NGP recognises gender as a cross-cutting issue on which all aspects that affect sustainable and human centred development have a bearing (GOM, 2000a).

NGP identifies education and training as one of the key areas in which gender has to be mainstreamed. The justification given for this is that firstly, education is a human right. Secondly, education is necessary if both males and females are to meaningfully contribute to the social and economic development of the country. The Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP [GOM April, 2002a]), Vision 2020 (GOM, 2000b), Policy and Investment Framework (PIF [MoE, 2000]) and the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (GOM, 2005) regard the education of both males and females as key to poverty reduction. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy paper recognises that women who constitute more than half of the country's population are socially and economically marginalised because of their low levels of education which prevent them from full participation in the development process. Hence there is need to boost female education.

1.1.2. The status of girls' education in Malawi since colonial times

Formal education was introduced in Malawi in 1875 by the Scottish Missionaries. Since that time, until the 1990s, there had been no attempts by either missionaries or the government to address issues of gender equity in education. The proportion of females enrolling for education at all levels was low. (See Table 1.1). This trend continued after independence in 1964. This was in spite of a general increase in total enrolments. At primary school level, the ratio of female students has been increasing more rapidly than in the higher levels and was almost at par with that of male students by the year 2004. However, gender disparities have persisted and are particularly pronounced at secondary and tertiary levels of education (Table 1.1).

The gender disparities that exist at secondary school level can be attributed to a number of reasons. One of the reasons was that up to 1972 there was no policy that addressed the issue of female students' education. In 1972, a policy to enrol 33.3% of female students was made (Hemenway, <http://garnet.acns.fsu.edu/dhh4266/Malawi.htm>), but was not put into practice as shown later in the chapter. This policy also played a part in limiting the number of female students in conventional secondary schools that were built with facilities allowing for only 33.3% of female students.

Another reason for gender disparities at secondary school level is that very few female students persist to the standard eight class in which students write examinations that qualify them for secondary school education. This is indicated by the small proportions of

female students that enrol for Primary School Leaving Certificate examinations. (Table 1.2).

Table 1.1:
Enrolment ratios of females from 1954 to 2004

Year	Primary		Secondary		University	
	Females	%	Fem	%	Fem	%
1954	90760	38.0	29	5.6	–	–
1958	95341	36	41	5.7	–	–
1964	–	–	–	–	–	–
1973/4	–	–	3821	27.7	–	–
1983/4	351103	40.9	6355	28.9	370	18
1993/4	912126	48.1	18179	39.1	860	23.3
2000	1458910	48.3	66205	40.3	1028	25.8
2004	1576593	49.7	77470	42.9	1776	32.0

Source: James, 1965, MoE Basic Education Statistics. 1981, 1982, 1986, 1992, 1996, 2001, 2004 & MANEB 2001, 2004

In the area of enrolment, GOM is doing well in that at primary and secondary education level gender equity has almost been achieved. At primary school level enrolment for female students has increased from 38% in 1954 to 49.7 in 2004. At secondary school level, female students' enrolment has increased from 5.6% in 1954 to 42.9%. At university level, female students' enrolment is increasing at a slow rate.

However, education of female students in Malawi has also been associated with higher failure rates (Kadzamira: 1996) and specialised subject areas (GOM: 2000a; MoE, 1995). Before 1995, male students were encouraged to take science subjects while female students were expected to study none science subjects. Furthermore, female students fail more in science than in other subjects (Kadzamira: 1996). Because of all these, bringing

gender equity in education has been associated with making efforts to promote girls' education in terms of numbers that enrol in schools as well as in terms of achievement at the end of their school cycle. For female students to be successful in their education they need to be given equal treatment and opportunities in the classroom as male students (FAWE, n.d). The kinds of interactions that go on in the classroom are among the factors that determine whether or not the female student will successfully complete her education. These can be interactions between teachers and students of both sexes or among students themselves.

1.1.3. Gender equity and education

The issue of promoting the education of women had been on the agenda of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) before the attainment of independence. The MCP Manifesto (1961) clearly indicates that it was the party's desire to have Universal Primary Education (UPE) and to pay particular attention to young women's secondary education. For the latter, they had even planned to expand the facilities at Lilongwe Government Secondary School for girls (MCP Manifesto, 1961: 7). But when the MCP was in government, they did not come up with a tangible policy to ensure gender equity in education. The first and second Educational Plans (MoE, 1973-1980, MoE, 1985-1995) did not have gender equity as an educational goal. One of the reasons was probably because of the economic implications it would have had as revealed by the Johnstone Report (Moyo 1992, Kadzamira & Rose 2001). This report discouraged the adoption of education policies which might have drained out government coffers and encouraged

only those that would lead to economic growth through the production of human resource which the country needed for economic growth.

Insisting on increasing the number of girls in education would have been expensive for the new nation. It would have meant building more schools for the increased school going population. It would have called for intensive campaigns in the nation which for a long time had not valued the education of females but males who were viewed as future bread winners (Chiuye, 2000). All these would have required the government to spend money. Since the main focus of the education system was to satisfy human resource needs for the national economy, gender equity issues were sidelined.

Although in 1972 a policy was formulated which allocated 33.3% of secondary school places to female students, it was not strictly observed (Hemenway, Educational inequalities for girls in Malawi: problems and solutions. <http://garnet.acns.fsu.edu/dhh4266/Malawi.htm>). Up to the beginning of the 1980s female students' enrolment in secondary schools was still lower than 30%. (Ministry of Education [MoE], 1986). This was probably due to the fact that female students who enrolled for Primary School Leaving Certificate examinations (PSLCE) and qualified for secondary education were by far fewer than male students. However the few that were selected represented higher transition rates for female than male students. It seems there was a deliberate policy that somehow restricted female students' entry into secondary schools which had few places available for the students. (See the table 1.2).

Table1.2:
Examination results for PSLC and secondary school enrolments and transition rates (T/R) by gender

year	Exam entries		Passes		Enrolments		T/R	
	Fem	%	Fem	%	Fem	%	Both	Fem
1970/1	3958	3.4	2756	14.2	–	–	14.9	–
1975/6	10307	25.2	6812	22.4	1417	32.2	10.8	13.7
1980/1	14218	23.9	9080	20.7	1655	30.5	9.1	11.6
1985/6	25779	29.1	16045	25.9	–	–	8.1	–
1990/1	–	–	–	–	2923	34.4	8.8	12.5
1996	–	–	–	–	3365	37.3	7.5	–
2001	53977	39.6	–	–	–	–	–	–
2004	56488	39.4	36711	38.7	23899	44.6	37.4	42.3

Source: MoE Basic Education Statistics. 1981, 1982, 1986, 1992, 1996, 2001, 2004 & MANEB 2001, 2004

Another reason why the number of female students remained low was lack of awareness of gender issues on the part of the stakeholders like policy makers, planners, implementers, parents and the girls. As Kadzamira (1996) notes, there was little research done on gender and the education of girls before the 1980s. Further, the early research on gender and girls' education was academic in nature, and it did not influence the GoM to address the problem of gender inequalities in education.

From the 1980s to the present, there has been a relatively steady increase in enrolment of female students in secondary schools. This increase has been from 29% in the early 1980s to over 42% in 2004 (MoE, 1986, 2004). The increase can be attributed to a number of factors. Some of these were the general expansion of primary school

enrolment and the policy of admitting female students into secondary schools with lower cut off points than male students. Another factor was the role played by the Girls Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education (GABLE) project which from the early 1990s helped to encourage girls to stay in school. GABLE did this by conducting awareness campaigns and paying tuition fees for female students. The conversion of Distance Education Centres to Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS) and the expansion in the numbers of the private schools also played a part in that it increased the number of students being absorbed in secondary education. Furthermore, the absence of boarding facilities in the CDSS could not restrict the selection of girls to 33% as the case is with long established co-education boarding schools.

The pregnancy policy might also have contributed to the increase. This policy stipulated that female students who withdrew from school due to pregnancy could be re-admitted after delivery. The policy helped those female students who might have lost their chance to continue with their education due to pregnancy to complete their education.

The above factors might have influenced the increase in the proportion of female students enrolling for national examinations (PSLCE) as it might have increased their hope of proceeding for secondary education. For example, while in the 1970s girls who enrolled for PSLCE accounted for less than 25% of total, between 2001 and 2004 they accounted for close to 40% of the total.

GABLE also helped to put female students' education on the national agenda. This, together with what was happening at international level, like the Education for All declaration of 1990, and the African Charter on the Rights of Child of 1991, helped in influencing the GOM to come up with policies that would promote girls' education. One of such policies was the pregnancy policy which was developed in 1993. This policy, as shown earlier, encouraged female students to return to school after delivering their babies (MoE/DANIDA, 2000, Global Campaign for Education, 2003). Another policy was the introduction of the 50:50 quotas by MoE for the enrolment of female and male students in secondary schools, which was to begin in the 1994/95 academic year in double-shift schools. This was later to extend to other co-education schools and all new schools that were in the plan (MoE/DANIDA, 2000).

The concern for female students' education was also shown in the recommendation of the education symposium in 1995 that male and female students should have access to all subjects instead of allocating subjects on gender basis (MoE, 1995). Initially female students were expected to study Home Economics while male students studied sciences. This was because female students were expected to become mothers (MCP Manifesto, 1961).

1.1.4. Rationale for increasing girls in secondary schools

The attempts to increase enrolment of female students in secondary have been driven by a number of factors. One of these is that education is seen as a tool for poverty reduction and economic growth (MoE 2000, GOM, 2002a, and World Bank paper cited in United

Nations' Integrated Regional Information Network [IRIN], July 9, 2002). Education imparts knowledge, skills and attitudes (World Development Report, 1980, cited in Psacharopolous and Woodhall, 1985) that can help people to improve their economic productivity. Increased economic production will improve people's welfare. For there to be a pronounced economic improvement, these skills need to be imparted to all members of the nation, both males and females so that they can all contribute towards social and economic growth in various ways.

Secondary education is important because without it primary education cannot expand and economies cannot grow (Vespoor, Mattimore & Watt, 2001). Primary education is regarded as very important in influencing social and economic growth (Psacharopolous, 1988 cited in Floro & Wolf, 1990). For this reason, the World Bank also expects investing in Universal Primary Education (UPE) to be given priority (Vespoor et al, 2001). Msiska, 2000, further explains that primary education is very important because it teaches to read, write, to make mathematical calculations and makes its graduates trainable. He also adds that denying people this education is denying them the chance to acquire knowledge and skills for self improvement. But for primary education to expand, or UPE to be achieved, it needs many teachers. In Malawi, it is a requirement that these teachers must be those who have secondary school education. Therefore the expansion of secondary education for both male and female students is necessary for increased numbers of people to acquire primary education.

For any country which aims at ending or reducing poverty, education attainment for all its citizens will be the key toward achieving this goal. This is so because good education imparts knowledge, values, skills, (Becker, 1993) and attitudes that improve productivity and contribute towards poverty reduction. It imparts citizenship skills which help to hold societies together and prevent national and international conflicts (Floro & Wolf, 1990, Johns & Morphet, 1969, Coombs & Hallak, 1972). All citizens can receive at least primary education only if there are many males and females who have received secondary education.

The education of the girl child is also associated with bringing a number of benefits to her, her family and nation when she becomes a woman. Such benefits include reduction in fertility rates (Herz, Subbarao, Habib & Raney, 1991, GOM, 2002b), reduction in child mortality rates and improvement of a child's health (Floro & Wolf 1990). Further, it improves personal and family health through good nutrition (Forum for African Women Educationalists n.d), and develops the women's potential to increase productivity in agriculture, trade, manufacturing as well as non market work (Floro and Wolf, 1990). These in turn contribute to national development (Miske & vanBelle-Prouty, 1997). A study by Benavot in 1989 (cited by Floro and Wolf, 1990) showed that education, especially of the girls has a positive effect on the growth of GNP per capita.

A study carried out by Wolf and Odonkor (1997) among the Dagomba in Northern Ghana showed that an educated woman is likely to send her children or wards to school, to desire to have a small family, to have healthy family and to be empowered socially and

economically. Good health will in turn help the woman and the family to have time and strength to engage in work that will bring economic change to the family and nation.

Education also gives women qualifications, ability and willingness to join the labour force. For instance Dorothy Remy, (1975, cited in Floro and Wolf 1990) found that among the sample she studied in Nigeria, women who earned independent incomes were those that had attended primary school. It is such benefits that make it imperative for governments to numerically increase participation in education by ensuring that both boys and girls go to school.

In Malawi, the Demographic and Health Survey Report (DHS) of the year 2000 shows that there are benefits to having the women educated. One of the benefits is that it reduces fertility rates. Fertility rate for the educated women was put at three children per woman while the fertility rate for uneducated women was 7.3 children per woman. Lack of education was also found to contribute to high child mortality rates. Education was also found to empower women to make decisions. The 1985 Malawi Against Polio Survey also showed that it was mothers that had some education that went with their children to hospitals for treatment (Hyde, 1992).

The education of the girl child is also necessary if the EFA and the MDGs are to be achieved. To eradicate extreme poverty, to achieve UPE, and to achieve gender equality and empower women need education of both males and females. The goals of reducing child mortality rates and improving maternal health especially need the education of all

women. Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, sustaining the environment, and developing global partnerships for development all need the collaborative efforts of both males and females who are educated. Hence gender equity at classroom level is very necessary so that female and male students graduate out of school as meaningful developments agents for their nation.

1.1.5. Equity beyond access

It is benefits like these cited above that have influenced the GOM to join other nations in promoting the education of the girls and women. To show commitment to the promotion of girls education in secondary schools, MoE provides that “Appropriate affirmative action measures shall be taken to increase the number of girls gaining access to and completing education from 39% in 1998 to 50% by 2012 (MoE, 2000). Although this statement seems to be concerned with the numbers only, it is clear that the Government is not just interested in increasing access and completion rates, but outcomes also. This can be inferred from statements and actions by MoE. For instance, one of the Malawi Integrated In-service Teacher Education Program’s occasional papers indicates that the GOM is trying to achieve greater attainment for female students as this has an impact on mortality and fertility rates (MoE/GTZ, August 1997: 9). From this statement, it is clear that it is the wish of MoE that those who have the chance of going through the education system will come out of it with necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes which will improve their well-being.

Also, the NGP, which recognises education as a human right and as important for women, stresses the necessity of both male and female students having equal access to and attainment of educational qualifications (GOM, 2000a). For equal attainment of educational qualifications to come about, teachers have a role to play at school and classroom level, to influence both male and female students to achieve what they joined the school for.

The MoE has also since 2001 been training school managers to equip them with skills for managing their schools. One component of the training is the promotion of female students' education in schools. This component deals with issues of gender role development, awareness of gender issues in education, gender issues in the classroom, sexuality issues and human rights and the girl child. For gender issues in the classroom, the MoE states that the aim is to share the fundamental routine and frequent gender differences that exist in schools and the classroom during instruction. MoE further states that gender issues in the classroom will assist trainees (teachers) in providing equity in education to both male and female students. At the same time, female students' performance, persistence, and achievement will be improved and encouraged (MoE, not dated). The school managers are expected to transmit the knowledge to teachers in their schools. This also confirms that MoE is concerned with both increasing access for girls and ensuring that they learn as much as their male counterparts.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Although the number of female students being enrolled in the secondary education system is slowly increasing and moving towards the 50:50 ratios for female and male students, there are unequal learning opportunities at the classroom level as revealed by the differences in the learning outcomes shown by national examination results. Pass rates for female students have persistently been lower than those of male students at Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) and Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) levels of examination (See appendix E). Studies done at primary school level in African countries including Malawi reveal that classroom interactions are biased towards male students. For example, a study by Biraimah in Nigeria found that in the upper levels of primary school, the teachers interacted with male more than with female students (VanBelle-Prouty & Sey, 1998). A report by Okojie, Chiegwe and Okpokunu (1996) also reveals that despite progress in access gender stereotypic biases still exist in schools in Niger.

In Malawi, studies done by Kadzamira and Chibwana (1999) and Davison and Kanyuka (1990) reveal more interactions between the teachers and male students than between teachers and female students. MoE also acknowledges this trend (MoE/USAID, n.d., MoE module 4, August, 2005). A study done by Hyde (1993) in secondary schools also revealed that teachers, especially those for Mathematics tended to interact more with male than with female students. The study also found out that most of the teachers had stereotypic views concerning female and male students. Female students were viewed by their teachers as lazy, lacking ambition and having a sense of inferiority complex. Such

kind of interactions and beliefs are bound to negatively affect the way teachers relate to the female students. Consequently, the performance of the female students in school will also be affected. The MS C E examinations written after four years of secondary school education have over the years shown that the pass rates for the female students are lower than those of the male students (see appendix E).

The economic implication of this is that the women, who represent 52% of the total Malawi population (GOM: 2005), are not proportionally represented in the labour market. Without good education, the small proportion of female students that pass through secondary education graduate from it without the human capital necessary to transform their lives and the nation socially and economically. That is, they leave school without enough knowledge, skills and values that can uplift their lives. The labour market would also normally not absorb such school leavers.

1.3 Aim and Specific Objectives of the study

The overall aim of this study is to investigate the implementation of gender equity policy by teachers at classroom level in secondary schools. In other words, the study wants to find out the extent to which the gender equity policy is influencing the interactions between teachers and male and female students in the classroom.

Specific objectives

The study sets out to specifically address the following objectives:

- To determine the extent to which secondary school teachers and students are aware of gender equity policy in education.
- To examine the perceptions of teachers and students on gender equity policy in education.
- To find out how the knowledge of the gender equity policy affects interactions between teachers and male and female students in the classroom.
- To enlist teachers' and students' views on the implementation of the gender equity policy in schools.

1.4 The significance of the study

The study will reveal whether or not teachers are aware of gender issues in education and whether they have been trained and equipped with enough knowledge and skills of how to handle their classes in the light of this gender equity policy. This may help those responsible for disseminating policies and imparting knowledge and skills to know whether the ways they use to reach implementers are effective or not. If they are not, this might further help them to think of new ways of doing so.

The study will help to show the extent to which the classroom interactions are equitable. If they are, a conclusion that female students' low achievement is entirely rooted in other problems than in classroom practice may be made. If they are not equitable, the study may help the teachers who will be observed and interviewed to adjust their classroom practices and probably influence others to do the same. The interview questions will act as a reminder of the practices they are expected to follow in class to ensure that male and

female students receive equitable education. The students too might be influenced through the same way. The study may be a reminder to them of the concerns of the government to have people of both sexes equally educated and hence boost their morale to work hard.

The study may boost the morale of those female students that will be involved in the study. Those that will participate in the focus group discussions may become aware of potentials they have and the problems that hinder them from performing like male students at class level. This awareness may help them to try think of ways of reducing the gender gap in performance. They may in turn influence others to work hard.

The results will also add to our understanding of why biased attitudes and practices of teachers towards students continue in the classroom in spite of the presence of gender policy as revealed by research (Kadzamira & Chibwana, 1999). It will further help us to understand why the performance of female students at national level continues to be lower than that of male students.

1.5 The delimitation of the study

The study was confined to two co-education schools and one girls' school within Zomba district. The co-education schools were chosen because of the need to establish whether or not the gender equity policies are influencing the nature of interactions between teachers and students of both sexes. A girls' only school was also used to compare the level and quality of classroom interaction between the two types of schools.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

Since the study was confined to few schools in Zomba district, the results may not be generalised for to the whole country.

Another limitation was that it was anticipated that my presence in the schools and classrooms as an observer might influence both teachers and students to stage up their interactions so that I may not get the true picture of the everyday classroom situation. In an attempt to get around this anticipated problem, interviews with the teachers and the focus group discussions with the students were used to shed more light on what goes on in the classroom. These were conducted after the observations to prevent the respondents from being influenced by the questions in their classroom interactions. Furthermore, a questionnaire was used to strengthen the trustworthiness of what was observed and said during interviews and discussions.

1.7. Definition of Terms

1.7.1. Policy

There are many definitions of the word policy. For example, policy has been defined as whatever governments choose to do or not to do (Dye, 2002: 1), or, as plan of action or statement of aims and ideals (Hornby, 1980). Haddad & Demsky (1995) define it as an explicit or implicit single decision or group of decisions which may set out directives for guiding future decision, initiate or retard action, or guide implementation of previous

decisions. What is clear from these definitions is that policy involves plans, decisions and actions to achieve a preset idea. For the purpose of this study, policy will be defined as government's statement of its ideals. This is because it is these ideals that normally direct what the government does. Gender equity in education is thus for the purpose of this paper a policy for it is one of GOM's ideals.

1.7.2. Gender

Gender is a term that describes behaviour and roles played by males and females which are in line with the peoples' social and cultural expectations.

1.7.3. Gender equity policy

Gender equity is the principle of fair and even treatment of males and females so that gender equality can be achieved. Gender equity policy is thus loosely used in the dissertation to mean what the government expects to be done in order to bring about fairness or equality between male and female students in school. That is, the desired equitable practices that MoE would like to see happen at classroom or school level. As Haddad and Demsky (1995) have stated, some policies are implicit. This is the case with the above policy which has been inferred from the statements, actions and expectations of MoE as indicated in the background information.

1.7.4. Gender equality

Gender equality means applying comparable standards of status, rights, respect and opportunities to both males and females.

1.7.5. Gender bias

Gender bias means showing favour to one gender as opposed to the other

1.7.6. Gender balance

For the purpose of this paper gender balance giving balanced attention in interactions between teachers and students of both sexes.

1.7.7. Gender parity

Gender parity means having equal numbers of males and females in any undertaking.

1.7.8. Gender stereotypes

Gender stereotypes are expectations of what one can do as a male or female.

1.7.9. Classroom interactions

This is about how teachers and students relate to each other during classroom activities. It also refers to interactions among pupils themselves.

1.7.10. Policy environment

Policy environment refers to the factors or situations that influence the processes of policy formulation and implementation.

1.7.11. Policy communication

This involves the stakeholders knowing about the policy either through their participation in its formulation or through being informed by the policy makers. For any policy implementation to be successful, it needs actions of large numbers of people (Blinkerhoff & Crosby, 2002: 51). These can contribute to the success of the policy only if they know about the policy. This calls for communication, or getting the message across to them.

1.8 Outline of the thesis

The thesis contains five chapters. The first chapter gives the background information to the problem for which the research was conducted and the problem is stated. It also outlines the significance, limitation and delimitations of the study. The second chapter reviewed literature related to the problem. This literature is about policy implementation, classroom interactions, and that related to girls' education. The third chapter is the methodology chapter. It shows the kind of data that was collected using qualitative or quantitative methods. It also gives the setting of the field study and the population that was targeted. The justification for each choice is given. The fourth chapter is a report and discussions of the findings. The fifth chapter is about the conclusions and recommendations made from the study.

1.9 Chapter summary

Chapter one has given the background to the problem that was investigated. Included in this background is the existence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international agreements which have influenced nations to promote the education of the girl child. The chapter has also touched on the social and economic benefits that the education of the girl child brings which have also influenced the Government of Malawi to attempt to promote the education of girls. It has also highlighted the role of GABLE, in helping to bring the education of the girl child on the national agenda. The chapter has established the gender inequities in classroom interactions as the problem for which field research was done to establish whether these are continuing in the presence of the gender policy.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

2.0. Overview

This chapter discusses the literature related to the study. It begins by shedding light on the policy environment in Malawi. Using Haddad's framework for policy implementation, the chapter highlights what has been written about policy implementation. According to Haddad, some of the things needed to successfully implement a policy are the availability of physical and financial resources; personnel to put the plans into action; and mobilisation of political support from the providers and consumers of the policy initiative. The discussion is supported by what other policy analysts have said about policy implementation. The chapter also reviews literature on classroom interactions and on girls' education. This includes the general views regarding what determines the success or failure of policy implementation. A review of international and national studies on policy implementation and on classroom interactions and girls' education is also included.

2.1. Policy Environment

(a) Policy actors

In Malawi, key education policy actors are MoE and donors. These are the ones that take a central role in the process of policy formulation. Though teachers are involved through the Teachers' Union of Malawi, they do not play a central role (SADC, 1998). Thus policies are passed down from the top to the bottom. This makes the implementation

process weak as the implementers may not identify with the policies (SADC, 1998: 86, 87).

(b) Communication

Once policies are made, communicating them to the people becomes a problem. Sometimes communication is made through the radio, television and newspapers. These are available and affordable mostly to the urban dwellers (GOM. 2004). GOM found out that only 12% of men and 5% of women are exposed to all the three types of the media and 13% of the men, and 31% of women have no access to any type of media. 67% of women and 85% of men listened to the radio at least once week (GOM, 2004: 31). Thus many rural and the poor masses miss out on such modes of communication.

Communication to schools is usually done through circulars which are sometimes not made available to teachers or some teachers may choose not to read. SADC (1998) notes that in Malawi communication is weak both ways-from the MoE to schools and from schools to MoE.

(c) Economic situation

Another problem which has an effect on policy implementation is the poverty situation in the country. Malawi is one of the poorest countries within the world and largely dependent on foreign donors and thus she does not have enough resources for all the plans (SADC, 1998). This affects implementation of policies in that even though the

government sees female education as a priority, it cannot raise enough resources to do all that is required, for example, raising awareness of gender issues in education for all teachers, improving teaching and learning materials in schools, and training more teachers all need resources. The SADC report (1998) confirms that due to inadequate resources, whatever resources might be available are thinly spread over the plans and programmes resulting in lowering of quality or failure to meet targets. For example, by 2004, many had not received gender awareness courses (Maluwa-Banda, 2004).

2.2 Policy Implementation

Literature on policy implementation reveals that the success of any policy is dependent on a number of factors. According to Hartwell (1994), one important factor for successful policy implementation is what he termed “policy communication”. Other factors identified in literature are the availability of resources, mobilisation of political support from stakeholders, availability of technical knowledge and personnel to carry out the plans (Haddad, 1995, Dye, 2002, Brinkerhoff & Crosby, 2002).

2.2.1 Policy communication

One factor, which is crucial to policy implementation, is policy communication. As shown earlier, this involves the stakeholders knowing about the policy either through their participation in its formulation or through being informed by the policy makers. In the second case the policy implementers and the beneficiaries at the grassroots may just be told about the policy and what they are expected to do. This is the case in Malawi

where policy formulation is the responsibility of the government, donors and non-governmental organisations (SADC, 1998).

For people to turn policies into actions the policy needs to be communicated to them. Lack of communication is one of the reasons for failure of implementation. As Hartwell (1994) puts it, failure of implementation begins with the failure in the process of policy formulation in the first place; the lack of communication, dialogue, consensus and acceptance by implementers. It is only where there is communication that dialogue can result and people can reach consensus if room is provided for such. This is in agreement with the ideas of Blinkerhoff & Crosby (2002:17). According to them, new policies come about because of the desire to solve socio-economic problems and for this to happen; people need to know what to do and how to do it. That is, the policies need to be implemented for them to solve the existing problems. Indeed for any policy to yield its results it needs to be translated into actions that will bring about what people desire or solve the problems they have. But this can happen only where some kind of communication has taken place.

Lack of communication leaves people in the dark. They may not know about a new policy or even when they know about it through the grapevine, they may not know how to implement it. The policy may end up failing. An example of such failure is the standard eight repetition policy in Malawi (MacJesse-Mbewe, 2004) which, because of lack of proper communication, was misinterpreted or ignored by the implementers; the teachers. The policy aimed at discouraging standard eight repetitions by limiting chances

of repeaters being selected to secondary schools. But pupils were still being encouraged to repeat by some teachers

.

Another example of a policy that was not properly implemented because of poor communication was the pregnancy policy which was made to readmit female students who left school due to pregnancy (MoE, 1993; Wolf et al 1999; United Nations Integrated Regional Information Networks [IRIN], 2002 July 9. <http://www.algis.com/new/irin/2002/IR020707.html>). GOM/UNICEF report of July 13, 2004 reveals that only 17% of parents in the primary schools where the study was conducted were aware of the readmission (pregnancy) policy. This implies that those who were not aware of the policy and had children who had withdrawn on pregnancy grounds still kept their female students at home after they had delivered their babies. In the same way, if the policy under study was not or was poorly communicated to the stakeholders, there is high likelihood that the implementers would either not know about it, or, would not properly implement it.

As regards the gender equity policy at secondary school level, it is not clear from literature whether or not there was policy communication to all the stakeholders at grassroots level. At primary school level the stakeholders probably benefited from GABLE, a project which aimed at increasing enrolment and retention of female students in primary schools.

The GABLE project conducted social mobilisation campaigns (SMC) aimed at changing peoples' attitudes towards girls' education. They brought awareness and appreciation of the importance of girls' education to many Malawians (Bernbaum et al, 1999). The campaigns were done mainly through focus group discussions with members of communities. There was also a weekly radio programme called 'Tsogolo La Atsikana', a comic book featuring issues around girls' education, T-shirts with GABLE logo with motivational slogans, calendars and books featuring women in traditional and non-traditional jobs to encourage female students to join non-traditional jobs (Robb, n.d).

Although GABLE mainly targeted primary school education, the attitude changes and knowledge gained could diffuse into secondary school education. This could be so because the targeted primary school female students would eventually become secondary school students as well as teachers. With the knowledge and attitude changes, one would expect such people to interact in a way that would promote the education of both male and female students. Whether this is happening or not is what the study wants to examine.

The secondary school teachers too, as part of a wider community, or as parents of primary school female students, are likely to be aware of gender issues in education. Apart from this, at secondary school level, gender issues were also disseminated through workshops that were conducted for secondary school managers (Head Teachers and Heads of Departments) from the year 2001 under the World Bank's Secondary Education Project (SEP). The workshops dealt with a number of issues, one of which was the

promotion of female students' education. The school managers were in turn expected to disseminate the knowledge and skills they had acquired to the teachers in their schools.

With all these initiatives, the assumption is that the teachers know something about the gender equity issues in education through either the SMCs or other means. One would thus expect teachers to have modified their teaching for the benefit of both female and male students.

Also, just knowing about the policy whether by diffusion or direct communication may not be a guarantee that the practice will change on the ground. This is why the study wants to investigate how teachers are responding to the policy by observing classroom interactions as well as asking about their knowledge and views concerning the policy.

Again, communications through radio, television or newspapers does not ensure that all the stakeholders at the grassroots level are communicated to. This is because most of the population (52.4 percent) is living below poverty line (GOM, 2005) and as shown earlier cannot afford such things. Even the circulars that are sent to schools may sometimes not be read everyone they target.

2.2.2 Resources

As indicated earlier, to put the gender equity policy into practice needs resources. To ensure equity in education for boys and girls, there is the need of not just equal enrolments, but also equity in terms of the numbers that successfully complete secondary

school education. To have both male and female students achieving this, a number of actions need to take place. Resources would be required for all the actions. These actions would include in-service training to equip serving teachers with skills, which would help them in the implementation of the policy (Stromquist, 1997). Without new skills of handling male and female students in the classrooms, the aims of the policy would be defeated.

Without new skills and knowledge of gender issues, the teachers are bound to use their old styles of teaching and interacting with students. Some of these might be those that do not encourage male or female students to learn. For example, past studies have revealed that teachers tended to be more supportive of male students and tended to interact more with them than with female students. (MoE/USAID, n.d; Kadzamira & Chibwana, 1999; Jomo, 2003). Although, as French (1990) argues that this might be something that is influenced by nature which makes boys more active than girls and therefore attracting more of the teachers' attention, it is for this very reason that teachers need skills to balance their approach to teaching female and male students.

Teachers also need training for them to be alert so that they do not carry society's stereotypes into the classroom. Gender differences in education are also seen as a reflection of the society (Colclough, Al-Sammarai, Rose & Tembon. 2003; Stromquist, 1997). Like many other societies, on one hand many Malawians believe that girls are less intelligent, emotionally and physically weaker than boys (MoE/USAID n.d.). Boys on the other hand are viewed as superior in all dimensions. As future leaders at household as

well as at society levels, they are given much more support than girls by their families and teachers to excel in education. Thus school is seen as an institution that perpetuates the social order by influencing female students to feel and accept that they are mentally inferior to boys. Teachers thus need training to have such knowledge to influence them to change the way they teach and behave.

Another action for which resources would be needed is the training of more female teachers to act as role models for female students. Hyde (1994) and MoE/USAID (n.d.) recommend more female teachers as role models if female students' education is to improve. The presence of female teachers would encourage female students to work hard to be like their teachers or even better than their teachers if these teachers encourage them to do so. However, it is clear from the yearly intake of education students into the University of Malawi that there are still more males than females being trained to teach. For example, in 2003/4 academic year, out of the 233 students that were enrolled for Bachelor of Education programmes at Chancellor College and the Polytechnic, only 54 were female. In 2005, there were 1906 trained male teachers and 617 trained female teachers in the field (MoE, 2005a). The study therefore is going to look at how the policy is being implemented in the absence of adequate female teachers.

Since it is a known fact that female students perform better in girls' only schools than in co-education schools (Hyde 1994, Hiddlestone, n.d.), resources would also be required to create more single sex secondary schools. Or, where possible, there would be need to provide separate facilities within co-education schools, a recommendation made by

MoE/USAID (n.d). The study also attempted to find out if schools were making attempts to provide separate facilities. If they are not in a position to adopt the recommendation the study investigated what other measures the schools are putting in place to achieve the objectives of the gender equity policy.

Malawi, as one of the poorest of the developing countries, with an average population growth rate of 6.3 per woman (GOM, 2002b) may indeed not be in a position to provide these needed resources. This is supported by the statement of Blinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) that it is clear that even if a policy is made, most developing or transitioning countries either have no resources to carry out the policy or they have resources in the wrong place. Malawi, which depends on donor funding to carry out her programmes is not spared from such a statement and a reality.

Writing on Multisectoral Support for Basic and Girls Education in developing countries, Tietjen (October, 2000), notes that although the education expenditures increased in absolute terms, unit costs decreased because of the increase in school age children and the growing demand for education. The situation was worsened by the structural adjustment programmes, which reduced donor funding. Again, Malawi is one of the countries affected by such issues.

In Malawi, the gender equity policy had an added disadvantage of being introduced after the introduction of the free primary education (FPE) a year earlier in 1994. The FPE used increased resources, which left other sub-sectors suffering (Kadzamira & Rose 2001).

MoE confirms this by stating that secondary education was negatively affected from 1994 because attention was concentrated on the primary sub sector and because of poor economic growth throughout the 1990s (MoE, May, 2005b: 5, 6). The implication of this is that little or no funds were set aside for the full implementation of the policy at secondary school level. Therefore the study needed to find out the bearing of this on the policy practice at the classroom level.

Also, MoE introduced the gender equity policy when it was not in any way ready for its implementation. MoE did not have proper administrative machinery and adequate trained personnel to help in effecting the policy (Kadzamira, Kunje & Semu, 2003). The three also note that of the few that had received gender training, a good number of them were not sympathetic to efforts towards improving girls' education and achieving gender equity. In the light of this, one wonders if the teachers were made ready to put the policy into practice. However, if teachers are committed to seeing both male and female students benefiting from education they may explore and adopt teaching strategies that will satisfy their commitment. The study also found out to what extent this is being done.

2.2.3 Mobilisation of political support

According to Haddad (1995: 35), one of the ingredients for successful policy implementation is planning for the mobilisation of political support from the providers and the consumers of the policy. In the case of the gender equity policy, this would involve making the teachers and parents aware of the benefits of the policy. If people are not made to see the goodness of the policy, they are unlikely to support it. For example, a

study by Orivel and Shaw (1994) in Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa showed that language and television policies failed because parents could not see anything good in them. As a result the parents could not support the policies.

People who are mobilised to see the value of the policy are usually ready to support it. An example of where such support has worked is in the implementation of the policies for the conservation of the environment and natural resources in Sub-Saharan Africa. Through the NGOs, governments successfully worked hand in hand with local resources users in the management of natural resources and the environment (Blinkerhoff & Crosby, 2002).

At school level, mobilisation would also involve influencing stakeholders to see the goodness of the policy. It would involve equipping the teachers and administrators with knowledge and skills necessary for putting the policy into practice. Without these tools, the implementation of the policy is likely to fail. Yet it is clear that few teachers have been given awareness on using gender sensitive approach (Maluwa-Banda, 2004)

Haddad also sees political mobilisation as necessary because it is through such action that the provision of materials needed for the planned activities as well as the approval for funding can be solicited. Without such support, the policy may not be successfully implemented. He prescribes the participation of those groups that will be affected by the new policy in the process of planning for implementation. This would be done to strengthen the support from the stakeholders.

2.2.4. Source of the Policy

Sometimes people may not or may poorly implement a policy because of the source of the policy. Policies that are from top (government) to bottom (implementers) may not be properly put into practice as people may not see their value. This policy originated from the work of National Commission on Women In Development and donor agencies (Kadzamira, 1999), which influenced the government to see the importance of girls' education. In other words, it is a policy that was pushed down from the top (government) to the grassroots. The research thus also looked at how this fact is affecting the implementation of the policy at school level.

2.2.5. Implementers' values

A study by Wolf, Lang, Beckett Mount, and VanBelle-Prouty (1999), in Malawi and Namibia and another by MacJesse- Mbewe (2004) found that sometimes teachers do not implement policies because they feel they are against their cultural or professional values. This is so because such policies do not originate from them. They are policies that are dictated upon them and they see nothing good in them.

2.3. Gender equity and education

As shown in the first chapter, gender equity in education faces a number of challenges. One of these is low female enrolment rates which affects most of the Sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2003/4). Low female pass rates are also problems experienced by some countries in the region. Examples are Malawi, (Kadzamira, 1996), Tanzania (Amuge

cited in Hyde, 1989), Zambia, (Mumba, 2002). Female students not performing well in science subjects is another challenge. Ndimbirwe (1995), found that girls in Zambia were not performing well in Mathematics. Kadzamira (1996) also reports similar findings among Malawian girls. At classroom level, problems include the gender biases that teachers show in their interaction with students. Studies by Braimah (VanBelle-Prouty & Sey, 1998) in Nigeria, Okojie et al (1996) in Niger, Mumba (2002), in Zambia, Kadzamira and Chibwana (1999) in Malawi reflect these challenges. These problems have been attributed to the influence of the society which either does not value the education of females (James, 1965) or have stereotyped jobs for females which have an influence on how they respond to education and perform in the classroom. Literature also shows that there is hope of having male and female students performing equally well depending upon how teachers handle their classes.

2.4. Classroom interactions

The nature of classroom interactions is one of the determining factors of whether students and in particular females will benefit from the teaching and learning processes that take place in the classroom. Within the classroom, there are a number of things that teachers need to take into account for both male and female students to benefit from the learning process. Above everything else, motivation seems to be the focal point of the students being able to learn from the lessons delivered in the classroom. Motivation for the learner can come in through a number of ways. (See 2.4.1 to 2.4.4)

2.4.1. Learner centred teaching

One way of motivating a student to learn is by making lessons to be learner centred. This is the process whereby the teachers' focus is on the child rather than the subject (Kochhar, 1985). The teacher must plan his lessons and teach in a way that will encourage and benefit his students. It is learning that encourages student's participation rather than the teacher seeing himself or herself as the only source of knowledge (Kochhar, 1985). Students can get involved through a number of ways such as group or class discussions, group activities or through asking or answering questions (<http://www.math.Isa.umich.edu/courses/Instructors/Guide/Classroom-Management/class-interactions.html>). Questions stimulate the students' thinking. A good teacher asks questions frequently and varies the difficult level of the questions. He calls on those who raise their hands as well as those who do not. He also gives time for students to think before calling someone to answer and students to ask questions (<http://www.math.Isa.umich.edu/courses/Instructors/Guide/Classroom-Management/questioning> technique.html). In a co-education school, a good teacher would also ensure that both male and female students are given chance to answer questions.

Another way of ensuring that pupils participate actively in the lessons instead of the teacher lecturing throughout is by encouraging them to read books (Megg, <http://www.math.Isa.umich.edu/courses/Instructors/Guide/Classroom-Management/read-book.html>). Megg emphasises that teachers should ensure that they assign a reading to students everyday. Advance reading helps pupils to participate in the lessons.

2.4.2. Knowing the students

How teachers relate to students is also important in having them motivated to learn. Knowing the students individually by name sometimes helps them to develop interest in learning what the teacher is teaching. It creates in students the feeling that the teacher cares and minds about what the students do.

2.4.3. Teachers being friendly to students

The learner's psychological security is regarded as one of the conditions of learning (Kochhar, 1985). One of the ways in which this can be achieved is when teachers are friendly to pupils rather than being authoritarian. Reed, (1961, cited in Kochhar, 1985) found that warm and considerate teachers generate a great interest for school work in their students. Teachers need to create an environment in which they can be liked by their students. However, teachers need to balance this friendship with proper control of the class for effective learning. When teachers are friendly to all students, it may remove fear which students might be harbouring and may encourage them to participate knowing that even when they fail to do things correctly the teacher will correct them in a friendly manner.

2.4.4. Motivational talks

Motivational talks are also an important factor in getting students to develop interest in learning as well as in liking their teacher. For example, a teacher can spend a few moments to talk to the class about their good progress (Classroom

Activities:http://www.math.lsa.umich.edu/courses/Instructors/Guide/Classroom-Management/classroom_activities.html). The teacher may also give verbal praise to individuals or groups in front of the class for good work done (Kochhar, 1985). Such actions will influence students to be eager to learn.

2.5. What influences success or failure to promote gender equity in education

2.5.1 Girls' attitudes

Literature has shown that policies and efforts to bring about gender equity in education usually fail to achieve their objectives. This failure is attributed to many reasons. One of such reasons is the attitude of the girls themselves (Delamont, 1996, Jones, 1991). These attitudes are usually influenced by society which stereotypes what males and females do. As Stromquist (1997: 23) puts it, beliefs that women's primary job is to become mothers influence the type and level of education they receive. They also influence how female students respond to education. Since they look at school as something that is secondary in importance, they are bound not to work hard.

Girls' attitudes to school are also influenced by what the society has stereotyped as jobs for males and females on the labour market. Since girls are expected to become mothers and keepers of the homes, they choose careers that are in keeping with motherhood (Stromquist 1997: 23). Although the trend is changing, the majority of female students still prefer careers that are traditionally regarded as females'. Such choices in turn influence the way they respond to schooling. For example, if a female student decides to become a typist, she might see no need to study Geography or Physical Science or any

other subject which has no direct relationship with typing. The students' expectations of what they are going to do with their education also influence the way they respond to education, (Delamont 1996, Herz, & Sperling, 2004).

In a study carried out by Delamont (1996) in which attempts were made to influence female students to aspire for non-traditional subjects and jobs, she found out that although in principle they showed that they had egalitarian and non-stereotyped views toward women and work, they still aspired for traditional jobs. Such aspirations are likely to have an impact on how they respond to classroom instruction.

2.5.2. Stereotyping

Another problem that stands as a challenge to fulfilment of the gender equity policy is the branding of girls as less intelligent than boys (Advancing Basic Education and Literacy [ABEL], 1992; FAWE & AAS, 1995), especially in Science and Mathematics. These attitudes are partly influenced by the society. For instance, a study done by Davison and Kanyuka (1990) found that many parents and guardians felt that girls are less intelligent than boys, a thing that affected the female students' perception of their ability. Where parents cannot afford the costs of educating all their children, such beliefs influence decisions to send boys rather than girls to school.

Once in school, this stereotype is shared by teachers (Jomo, 2003). It leads to teachers giving more support to male rather than female students. This practice may also be enhanced by the gender specific roles that the Malawian society attaches to being male or

female. Since the society regards males as bread winners and females as care takers of the homes (Chiuye, 2000), schools too may tend to support male students more than female.

With the gender equity policy, the attitudes of both the teachers and the female students need to change for the benefit of both sexes in education. For this to happen in the school and the classroom, the teacher needs to be the spearhead of this change. Teachers need to change their negative attitudes towards female students whom they regard as less intelligent than male students. They need to create attitudes which will make both male and female students to be encouraged to learn (FAWE Information Kit, n.d). This is in line with the suggestions by Hyde (1992) that for female education in Malawi to improve, there is need for the teachers to be aware of the behaviours that they indulge in that discourage or deter female students from learning. The idea here is that once they know what they are supposed to avoid, they may improve their attitude towards female students; a thing which Odaga and Heneveld (1995) suggest.

2.5.3. Friendly Environment

That girls learn better in a friendly environment is supported by a study by Papadimitriou (w.education-world.com/a.issues/chat121.shtml) which showed that High School female students who liked their science teachers had a positive attitude toward the science subjects. It is also in agreement with what Lindner, Dooley, and Hynes (<http://www.tjdl.org/article/1/engagement/introduction.-fm>) who feel that although success is partially controlled by students' behaviour, the instructor must establish the learning climate.

This friendly environment can be created by the teacher avoiding gender stereotypes in the way he or she handles his or her class. Where teachers treat male and female students in the same way, female students might be motivated to work as hard as the rest of the students. Where teachers' actions are biased towards the male students, female students are unlikely to be motivated to work hard. For instance, study carried out by Delamont (1996) found that one of the reasons female students disliked Physical Science was that they felt that their teachers favoured male students.

Friendly environment can also be created through the comments that teachers make to students. Negative comments tend to discourage students from learning. Positive comments tend to encourage students. A survey by Chanunkha (1991) in some schools in Zomba urban found that negative comments demotivated students while positive ones tended to motivate and positively affect performance. Thus if gender equity policy is to make an impact on the education of males and females, teachers need to be aware of such facts and adjust their language accordingly.

2.5.4. Teaching/learning styles

Apart from creating friendly environments for students, teachers also need to adapt their teaching methods to benefit both male and female students. These methods should include use of non sexist language by teachers, paying attention to students (<http://www.apa.org/pi/cyf/adolesgirls.html>). Teachers also need to realise that males and females learn differently and that generally females need more interaction with the

teachers than males (Lindner, et al. <http://www.tjdl.org/article/1/engagement/introduction.-fm>). Teachers thus would need to create a teaching and learning environment in which male and female students are given chance to benefit from the teaching and learning process.

How teachers teach male and female students has an influence on how students perform. A study by Kadzamira and Chibwana (1999) in some primary schools revealed that many teachers were still using non-gender sensitive methods in their teaching in which there was little participation from students, especially girls. This is a trend which existed before the gender equity policy came into being (Davison and Kanyuka, 1990. Hyde 1993). This research intends to find out if such practices as well as those of stereotyping female students as lazy and less intelligent than male students are phasing out among the secondary school teachers as they respond to the gender equity policy. (Forum for African Women Educationalists, 1995; Malawi: Girls Face Obstacles to Education, <http://www.algis.con/new/irin/2002/IR0200707.html>; ABEL Information Bulletin, March 1992, Hyde 1993)

2.6. Gaps in the Studies at National Level

The studies that have addressed gender issues in education have mostly focused on primary education and sometimes they have not been directly linked with the Gender Equity Policy. Among these studies are those by MoE and UNICEF (1998), and Chiuye, (2000) which looked at hindrances to girls and women's education. MacJesse-Mbewe's study, (2004), looked at Free Primary Education as a catalyst for inequalities between

boys and girls' education as well as for inequalities between the rural and urban students. Castro-Leal (1996) carried out a study which showed that girls are benefiting less than boys from the national spending on education. In 2004, UNICEF and GOM evaluated the intervention into the girl child education. Chimombo, et al, (2000) researched in some districts of Malawi to establish what hinders girls' education in those districts.

The studies that have addressed gender equity issues at secondary school level have either been based on document analysis (Kadzamira, 1999; Maluwa-Banda, 2004), or like in the case of Hyde's work (1993), it was done before the establishment of the gender equity policy. Those who have done field research have not looked directly at gender equity policy practice at classroom level. This is why it is necessary to do field research on classroom interactions.

2.7. Chapter summary

Chapter two has reviewed literature related to the problem. It has given an overview of the gender policy in Malawi and gender equity in education. The policy environment in the country has been highlighted. Issues affecting policy implementation, such as policy communication, availability of resources, political mobilisation, source of the policy, and the implementers' values have been discussed. The chapter has also reviewed literature that explains how classroom interactions affect learning. Literature on what affects female students' learning has also been highlighted.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

3.0. Overview

This chapter lays out the design and methods of the study. It gives the overall approach to the study, the setting and the population of interest, the sampling procedures, the sample size, data collection and data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations.

3.1. The Overall Approach

The study used the mixed methods design in which the qualitative approach took an upper hand in collecting and analysing data. A qualitative rather than quantitative method was used as the backbone of the research because the study aimed at getting a holistic picture of policy implementation in the selected schools. This, according to Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) can best be achieved through a qualitative research. Also qualitative research was suitable because the study was dealing with people whose voice, behaviour, beliefs, and attitudes are reflected in the report (Marshall & Rossman, [1980] cited in Del Siegle <http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/siegle/research/Qualitative/quqlqun.htm>, Lemmar, [n.d]). According to Marshall and Rossman, for such aspects of human life to be understood, it is necessary to understand the framework within which the people interpret their thoughts, feelings and actions. This can best be achieved through observing them in their places of operations, talking to and hearing from them.

Some quantitative data was used for two reasons. Firstly, it was used to establish that there was a problem of differences in pass rates of boys and girl at the end of their secondary school cycle. This is supported by Center for Organizational Leadership and Management Research ([COLM] <http://www.colmr.research.med.va.gov/mgmt->) who say that quantitative data can be used for background or to generate questions to ask informants. Secondly, it was used to help to strengthen the trustworthiness of the qualitative data that was collected as Kane (1995), suggests.

The research was approached as a case study. Rossman and Rallis (2003: 104) have defined case studies as those which seek to understand a larger phenomenon through intensive examination of one specific instance. According to Merriam (1988: 11), there are a number of features that define case studies. These include the research focusing on a particular situation, event, program or phenomenon. Also, the end product of a case study is descriptive and heuristic. Apart from this, COLM stipulates that case studies are preferred when the research is trying to answer the question why or how.

Since this study sought to understand how the Gender Equity policy is being implemented, all these features justified a case study approach. The research was particularistic in that its focus was on classroom interactions as a means of checking how the policy is being implemented. Apart from this, the study has resulted in a thick description of how the policy is being implemented in schools. This has shade more light on issues surrounding the Gender Equity policy implementation in the targeted schools.

3.2. Setting and Population of Interest

The research was carried out in three secondary schools in the Municipality of Zomba, within the South East Education Division. Two of these were co-education schools and one was a girls' school. The samples of schools used were Malosa which was used for piloting the instrument, and Masongola, Likangala and St Mary,s Secondary Schools where the main study took place. Masongola and Likangala were chosen firstly because they are co- education schools which offer both Science and Humanities subjects. Secondly, the choice of these sites was influenced by the limited availability of resources. Thirdly, the choice of these co-education schools was dictated by the need to find out if there are any gender differences in the way teachers interact with male and female students during lessons. St Mary's Secondary School was chosen because it is a single sex school with girls only and was used to compare the classroom interactions in the two types of schools. Since I had taught at this girls' school, I anticipated that my familiarity with some of the students and some of the teachers might have had influence in the way the study was conducted. To control for biases, I tried to be as objective as I could during observations, interviews and focus group discussions by sticking to the instruments.

Within these schools the population of interest was mainly the teachers and students in Forms One and Three. The study targeted Forms One and Three students because teachers in these classes were less likely to be influenced by the threat of national examinations in their teaching. From experience as a secondary school teacher for many years, many Form Two and Form Four teachers and students work under pressure as they get ready for national examinations. This makes them feel that outsiders are wasting their

time if they have to adjust themselves to the needs of the outsiders. The head teachers, deputy head teachers and an official from the South East Education Division were also interviewed. The reasons for this were firstly to verify some of the information collected from the teachers. Secondly, to find out from them how much support the MoE is giving towards the implementation of the policy.

3.3. Sampling and sample size

For teachers, a non-probability sampling was used. In particular, purposive sampling was used. This, according to Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight (2001), involves handpicking typical or interesting cases. Or, as Robson (1993) puts it, one chooses a sample that satisfies specific needs in a project. Therefore, in this study, only those that satisfied the research objectives were chosen. Thus for classroom observations, two teachers were chosen from each of the targeted Forms per school. One was a science subjects' teacher and the other was a Humanities subject teacher. Each was observed twice. The reason behind choosing the two subjects was to see if the nature of the subject had a bearing on the way teachers and students interacted in the classroom. The other reason was to establish if the policy had helped teachers not to bring gender stereotyping into the subjects. A total of four teachers per school were chosen. These same teachers were interviewed and they responded to the questionnaire.

The in-depth interviews were conducted in order to increase the trustworthiness of the information collected through observation. They were also used to clarify some issues

that arose during observations. In all, eleven out of the twelve targeted teachers were interviewed. One teacher could not be found for the interviews. He quit teaching.

For the questionnaire, four instead of the initially planned eight teachers were used. As indicated earlier, these were those that were observed. The reason for this was that they included recent graduates as well as the old timers who graduated from college before the making of the gender equity policy. Those who graduated before the policy was made were used to find out if they received enough in-service training to enable them to be gender-sensitive in their teaching. Those that graduated after the policy was formed were used to find out if they received training on gender-sensitive teaching methods during their training. And, in case they did not receive the required training, the group was also used to find out how much support they got from the school in implementing the policy.

For focus group discussions by students, stratified purposeful sampling (Rossman & Rallis 2003: 138) was used. Students were selected from Form Three. This was done on the assumption that they had been in the school long enough to know about the norms and values of the school unlike the Form Ones who had been in the schools for just a few months. There two groups in each co-education school divided on gender basis. The focus groups were separated by gender in order to avoid male domination during discussions. There was one focus group discussion in the girls' school.

This gave a total of five discussion groups for the three schools. Each discussion group had eight students. This number was decided upon because according to Rossman and

Rallis (2003), focus groups may be composed of as few people as four or as many as twelve or, according to Kane (1995), from six to twelve people. In this study, eight had been chosen so that every participant would have enough time to express his or her views. At the same time the eight people would ensure that a variety of ideas are given.

The eight in each gender sub-group were chosen through purposeful sampling. The choice was in each school done by the class teacher. He chose those that he felt would effectively contribute to the discussions. This was done to ensure that they were going to participate meaningfully in the discussions.

The head teacher and the deputy head teacher of each of the three schools were also targeted so that the information they give may increase the trustworthiness of the data that the teachers and students provided. This was done on the assumption that they know more about what happens in and around the school than any one else. It was also a way of checking if they know about the policy and if they pass this knowledge over to the teachers as implementers.

3.4. Data collection

3.4.1. Data collection methods

Qualitative data was collected from the schools through interviews, observations and focus group discussions. According to Rossman & Rallis, (2003), these are the main methods of collecting data in any qualitative research. The study also made use of documents that shed light on girls' education. However, in order to learn more about

whether or not the school norms and values conform to the policy, a questionnaire was administered to collect data from forty students and eleven teachers.

3.4.2. Instruments:

Interviews

From the interviews with teachers, I was finding out if they are aware of the gender policies in education. I was also finding out about the challenges they meet in school in trying to put the policy into practice as well as their views. Issues that arose during observations were pursued during the interviews. The interviews were conducted using open-ended questions. Information was tape recorded and transcribed later. Interviews were carried out because they have the advantage of revealing information on what cannot be observed, for example, feelings, and meanings they attach to what happens (Patton, cited in Fraenkel and Warren, 2000). Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted after the observations. The reason behind this was to avoid the influence the interviews might have had on the way the people conducted themselves in class. (See appendices A 1 & A 2).

For interviews with the head teachers, I looked for information that would establish whether or not there was policy dissemination by the authorities in the Ministry of Education as well as by the head teachers themselves. I also found out from them whether or not the teachers have been inducted into the gender sensitive teaching. This was done because I expected that the head teachers should be in a position to know if the policy is being implemented or not. Apart from this, the head teachers were asked to give

information on the level of policy implementation in their schools as well as the challenges that the implementers meet. The aim of this was to increase the trustworthiness of the data from the teachers and the students.

Observation Schedules

Observations were used because the focus of the research was the interactions which can be learnt mainly by seeing. Secondly, information that cannot be obtained through interviews or documents can be obtained through this method (Creswell, 2003, Kane 1995). Sometimes people may not say the truth about what they are doing or about their attitudes concerning the policy. This may be obtained through observations. Data for observation was collected through an observation schedule adapted from the ABC of Analysis (Mukabi Kabira & Masinjila, 1997). (See appendix B1 &B2).

Specifically, observations were used to check the level of policy practice in the classroom situation. Teacher-student interactions were observed to see if teachers interact equally with male and female students or favour one sex. I was also observing if teachers took into account learning differences between male and female students (Lindner et al <http://www.tjdl.org/article/1/engagement/introduction.-fm>) in their lessons. The seating arrangements were observed. This also shed some light on whether or not teachers were gender sensitive. This was followed up during the interviews so that the teachers could say why they have such seating plans.

Focus group discussion

Focus group discussions were used as a way of confirming the level of policy implementation in the schools that were studied. Students' knowledge and views concerning the policy and its implementation were enlisted through these discussions. From these discussions, I expected to learn about the roles the teachers and the students were playing in determining the success or failure of the policy. (See appendix C).

Questionnaires

The questionnaire was used to collect data that reflected the norms and values of the schools. Such data included what sex the teachers and students view as more intelligent than the other. The questionnaire also looked for data that show how the schools treat male and female students in the way they distribute subjects, chores, and punishments. It shed light on whether the school environment was conducive to policy implementation or not. This helped in understanding whether the policy is being practiced or not. (See appendix D1& D2).

3.5. Data analysis

The qualitative data collected through documents, interviews, focus group discussions and observations were read over and over and underwent the process of data reduction whereby unnecessary information was left out (Kane 1995). Then data were grouped according to themes and categories and coded and visual data displays were made to help show patterns and relationships within the data. After this, the coded data was interpreted in a story form so that the readers can understand the findings well.

The quantitative data generated through the questionnaire was analysed using the SPSS package and interpreted in a qualitative manner. This is supported by Fraenkel and Warren (2000: 506) who state that:

Data analysis in qualitative research...relies heavily on description; even when certain statistics are calculated they tend to be used in a descriptive rather than inferential sense.

A data table was created. Bar charts were created to visually show the frequencies of similar responses per item by teachers and students of either sex. These were then given a qualitative interpretation.

3.6. Negotiation for access to schools

A letter requesting for permission to access the sampled schools was written to the Education Division Manager of the South East Education Division in which the sampled schools are. It was given a positive response. Once permission was granted, letters were written to the Head Teachers who were also requested to negotiate with the desired sample of study. The sample was assured of the confidentiality of the information they gave. For classroom observation, special permission from the targeted class teachers in each school was sought through the head of the school.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

3.7.1. Consent of the participants

Getting informed consent of the participants was necessary. However telling them that the study aims at finding out how teachers interact with male and female students may have lead them to be unwilling to allow me to observe them. They may also have deliberately changed their way of teaching to suit my desires. To avoid this, I told them that I was going to check and compare students' level of participation in the science and humanities subjects. Rossman and Rallis (2003: 77) indicate that researchers who have learnt about inequitable classroom interactions would not have done so if they had told the participants the truth about what they were looking for.

3.7.2. Confidentiality

The participants were assured that their identities would be kept confidential. That is, that no name would be attached to any piece of information that they gave.

3.7.3. Observation of their human rights

Interviews with teachers and focus group discussions with students took place outside their class hours and at the times that were convenient to them.

3.8. Chapter summary.

Chapter three has explained the research methodology that was used in the study. It has explained that the study used a mixed methods design in which the qualitative methods had an upper hand. Justification for using such a design has been stated. Issues of the setting and population of interest, sampling and sample size have also been explained and justified. The chapter also explained how data was analysed. It has further elaborated the issues of negotiation for access to schools and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings and Discussions

4.0. Overview

This chapter presents the findings and discussions of the research whose purpose was to find out how the gender equity policy is influencing classroom interactions. The issues discussed in the chapter include teachers' and students' knowledge of the NGP and other policies on gender equity. The sources of this knowledge and type of knowledge are outlined and discussed. Their perceptions of the gender equity policy, classroom interactions and their views on whether the Gender Equity Policy can be implemented at classroom level are also presented and discussed.

4.1. Knowledge of the policies on equity in education.

4.1.1. Teachers' knowledge of gender equity policies

The first objective of the study was to find out if teachers and students were aware of the gender equity policy in education as defined in chapter one. Teachers were also asked if they knew the NGP and any policy that is aimed at promoting gender equity in education. The teachers were further asked about their knowledge of gender equity issues at classroom level. They were also asked about their sources of information.

It was clear from the findings that while all the sampled teachers knew about the gender equality issues, only six knew about the National Gender Policy, and four knew specific

policies that attempt to address the issue of equity in education. One of the four mentioned two policies. These were the pregnancy policy and that of equal enrolment of male and female students. Only five teachers said they were aware of gender equity issues at classroom level. Table 4.1 is a summary of the findings.

Table 4.1
Teachers' awareness of gender policies and issues in education
Number of teachers interviewed =11

Policy/policy issue	No. of teachers	%	Awareness level
Gender equality issues	11	100	Giving equal chances to males and females
National Gender Policy	6	55	Just hearing about it
Pregnancy policy	3	27	re-admission of girl mothers in school
Equal enrolment of boys and girls	2	18	Equal enrolment in all schools
Gender equity in classroom	5	45	Equal distribution of questions, balancing examples of males + females, boosting the girls' self esteem, encouraging girls in sciences

The study also revealed that their sources of information mostly included newspapers, the radios, FAWEMA, club. Only two of the eleven teachers had pre-service training as their other source of information on gender issues. Table 4.2 summarises the findings.

Table 4.2
Sources of information for teachers

Policy/policy issue	Source	No. of teachers	%
Gender equality issues	Newspapers, radio	11	100
National Gender Policy	Radio	2	18
	Other people	3	27
	Social Studies books	1	9
Pregnancy policy	Circular from MoE	1	9
	Social Studies books	2	18
Equal enrolment of boys and girls	Unnamed	2	18
Gender equity in classroom	Pre-service training	2	18
	FAWEMA	2	18
	Club in college	1	9

4.1.2. Students' knowledge of gender equity policies education.

The students were also aware of the gender equality issues. They were aware that the GOM wants equal participation of men, women, boys and girls in jobs and education and other social activities. Some talked about equal treatment and equal opportunities for people of both sexes as the purposes of the gender policy. Table 4.3 is a summary of the findings.

Table 4.3
Students' awareness of gender policies and issues in education

Number of respondents =40 (5 focus group discussions)

	No of groups	%	Level of awareness
Awareness of gender equality issues	5	100	Giving males and females equal job and education opportunities in life
Awareness of gender equity issues in classroom	5	100	Teachers giving equal attention to boys and girls, same subjects.

Their major sources of information were the radio, newspapers and television followed by teachers. The information from teachers was mainly for academic purposes. Social Studies teachers were often mentioned. Other sources included the schools which sometimes during morning assemblies encourage both female and male students to work hard. Church, friends, parents, activities of the non governmental organisations, village elders, were also mentioned as sources of information. Tables 4.4 summarises the findings.

Table 4.4
Sources of information for students

Policy/policy issue	Source	No. of groups	%
Gender equality issues	Newspapers	5	100
	Radio	5	100
	Other people	2	40
	Social Studies books/subject	5	100
	Church	2	40
	NGOs	2	40
	Television	4	80
	Parents	2	20
	Village elders	2	40
	School	3	40
	Human rights club	1	20
Awareness of gender equity issues in classroom	Unnamed	5	100

From the findings above, it is clear that the chief sources of information for the gender policy and the gender equity issues are bodies other than the mother body of the schools which is the MoE. Both teachers and students frequently mentioned the radio, newspapers and television. Although one official at divisional office of MoE and one Head teacher mentioned that MoE had trained school managers to train teachers under them about gender and other issues, none of the sampled teachers, both long serving and new indicated that they had ever received such training at school level. This situation is unhealthy to policy implementation especially so when some teachers that are teaching in secondary schools are not professionally trained. As indicated in chapter two, lack of

communication or poor communication may lead to policies not being implemented or being poorly implemented.

The two teachers that had gender awareness training in their pre-service training seem to have had it because of the nature of the subject they were trained to teach. Both were teachers of Social Studies, a subject that has gender as one of its main topics. Thus it may be assumed that those who were being trained in subjects other than Social Studies might not have had the chance to learn about gender issues. This view is supported by a science teacher who graduated around the same time with one of the two Social Studies teachers. He confessed that he learnt about gender issues through a club rather than as part of his pre-service training (June, 2006). The two other teachers that underwent in-service training by FAWEMA were science and mathematics teachers, subjects that the organization is interested in promoting among the female students.

The fact that many teachers have their own sources of information rather than the MoE might be an indication that most of the teachers have still not been trained in gender awareness issues which was the case by 2004 (Maluwa-Banda). Failure of MoE to inform the teachers about the policy may lead to lack of zeal on the part of teachers to implement it. This situation thus leaves the gender equity policy in potential danger of not being promoted at classroom level by most of the teachers. For instance, one teacher had this to say when asked about his knowledge of policies that promote gender equity in education

*I think I just know one where when a girl is found
pregnant, after delivery can come back to school...I think if*

there are others...I think we are not aware of. May be it is high time that those policies are made known to us.

(Teacher, June 5, 2006).

And in response to a question about what he thought or knew was his role in promoting gender equity at classroom level, the teacher said

I think in the first place if we knew or were actually told about the policy and what is contained in that policy... we would be in a position to know what role we should play as teachers or implementers. (Teacher, June 5, 2006).

The above quotations may reflect the ignorance of many teachers have concerning what they are supposed to do in the classroom to ensure that classroom interactions are equitable. If they do not know that equity is needed beyond the numbers which the pregnancy policy is trying to address, they may not consciously gear their teaching styles towards achieving gender equity. The type of knowledge about gender equity at classroom level that all shared is limited to fair distribution of questions to male and female students followed by encouraging female students to take sciences. Only one teacher talked about boosting self esteem for female students, a thing that is very important in a culture where females are expected to be inferior to males. No one talked about the need to create a friendly environment, or the problem of stereotypes, or teaching and learning styles which literature shows also affect female students' learning (FAWE, n.d, Lindner, et al <http://www.tjdl.org/article/1/engagement/introduction.-fm;> Delamont, 1996). The implication here is that some teachers may not address these issues

in their day to day teaching and hence continue to give education that is gender inequitable.

For students, lack of seeing MoE as the driving force behind the gender equity policy in education, they may as well be apathetic to it. The policy might not carry as much weight as it would have carried if MoE was seen to be in the forefront of its achievement. In a culture that is male dominant, the young males might not see the need to have females as educated as they themselves if MoE is not seen to be enforcing the policy. But if the MoE carried out awareness campaigns within schools, they would perhaps be encouraged to support the education of the female students.

Both teachers and students need to be made aware of the fact that GOM through the MoE want equity in education for both sexes. They need to know that this is possible only if each takes his or her rightful role in bringing this about. Their roles must be explained to them. For teachers, the skills they need for a gender equitable education must be imparted as well. Since the use of school managers seems not to be effective, MoE should find other means of training the teachers in gender equity issues at classroom level. This could be done by the Senior Education Methods Advisors (SEMA). As they visit schools, apart from just observing lessons of a few individuals, they should spare some time to meet all the teachers and give a lecture on how they can handle their lessons in the light of the gender equity policy. Their current system whereby they advise only those that they have observed teaching (Official, Education Divisional Office, September, 2006) benefits few

teachers at a time. But if they organised time to talk to all teachers and students separately then many will be aware of what they are expected to do.

4.2 Perceptions of teachers and students on the gender equity policy

The second objective of the study was to examine the perceptions of the teachers and students on the gender equity policy in education. The reason for this was that how one perceives the policy would have an influence on how he or she contributes to its implementation or lack of implementation.

4.2.1 Perceptions of Teachers

All teachers that were interviewed felt that the policy was good for a number of reasons. These included the nation having balanced economic development if the policy was properly implemented. It would help the nation to have educated males and females who would contribute to economic and social development. Others felt that equitable education would help both males and females to achieve their goals in life, to lessen the problem of discrimination in society, to ensure fair distribution of high positions in society after they complete their education. To others, the policy was one way of ensuring that students are accorded equal rights. One teacher felt the policy is very necessary because the population of women in Malawi is higher than that of men and that for a number of reasons there are many households headed by females. This being the case, if women could become as educated men, it would help female heads of families to be in a position to fend for their families.

4.2.2 Perceptions of Students

The perceptions of the students were gauged from the sentiments they expressed during the focus group discussions. There were some who felt that the policy was a non-starter because of the biological differences which influences differences in the way males and females interact with the environment around them. It was also clear from the discussions that male students still have the attitudes that females are inferior to males. Such attitudes may be signs that such people do not see the importance of the gender equity policy. Others, especially the female students viewed it as something that is good for them. Some even expressed their desire to become influential in gender equity issues after completing their education for the benefit of the future generation of males and females.

These findings indicate that there is great verbal support for the policy especially among the teachers and some students, especially the female students. This gives the hope that if teachers were properly trained in the gender issues, they would be capable of implementing the policy. However, what one male teacher and some male students said about female students during the interviews indicated that they felt the gender equity policy is futile. The teacher had this to say about female students

...when they fail, they don't complain like boys do. If boys fail, they try their best next time that they should not fail. Girls do not even complain. They just accept it. Girls, it is normal may be to fail. For them to fail when they are competing with boys, ...they look at boys as superior to them. So they don't complain when they lag behind boys.

Some male students from school B uttered statements like

...many girls these days do not have interest in school. They just think of marriage while boys work hard...their behaviour shows they are not keen on education. ...some girls only think of money, they have stopped thinking of school but money. They come to school for business (prostitution). They spend may be about 60% of their time on prostitution so that they can find what they need. ...boys work hard, knowing they will become heads of the families.

Such sentiments from the teacher and male students make it unlikely that they see the gender policy and gender equity in education as worthwhile. It was like they were saying that even if the policy can be there, it is useless for female students are not going to appropriate it. This being the case, it is unlikely that they would support its implementation. If teachers and male students feel that female students are not ready to learn, they are unlikely to support government's efforts to improve female students' education as the policy desires. This might explain why some teachers tended to interact with male the students more than with the female students and why some male and female students sit separately in the classrooms. In one class, two boys even expressed feelings of jealous when a pair of female students excelled in the exercise that the class was given.

4.3 Classroom interactions

The third objective set out to find out how the gender equity policy affects classroom interactions. The classroom observations in the two co-education schools focused on four areas. These were the seating plan, student participation, teachers' expectations of the male and female students, and the teacher's behaviour.

4.3.1 The seating arrangements

All the eight teachers I observed in four classes in the two co-education schools seemed not to be concerned about the seating plan. In all the four classes I observed, male and female students tended to sit separately. Very few males and females sat together. (See tables 4.5 to 4.9).

Table 4.5
Seating plan for a Form One classroom in school A

Door	Teacher								
	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G
	G	G	G	G	G	B	B	B	B
	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B

The seating pattern in the Form One class of school A remained the same during both the science and non-science lessons. The whole front row was occupied by female students. The second line was occupied by females on one side and males on the other. Due to

inadequate classrooms, the class was taking its lessons in a makeshift classroom which is a physical science laboratory. When asked why they had such a seating arrangement, female students said they don't like to sit next to male students for they make a lot of noise. The male students also gave the same response accusing female students of making noise. The implication on the gender equity policy is that the students of either sex may not be willing to support one another for a common cause.

Table 4.6
Seating plan for Form Three of school A

	Teacher		Door
B	GB	B	G
BB	BB	BB	GG
BB	B	GB	BB
BB	GG	BB	BB
BB	BB	BB	GG
BB	BB	B	BB

In Form Three the seating arrangement was slightly different in that although most of the female students sat together, they were scattered among the male students. Also, two female students sat with two male students. When asked why they sit separately, the male students said they do not want to mix with female students because they benefit nothing from them. The female students said that if they try to sit with the males, they chase them out of their places.

Table 4.7
Seating plan for Form One in school B

	Teacher		Door
BG	BG	GG	GG
B	GB	GG	GG
BB	BB	BG	BG
BBB	GG	GG	GB
BB	BB	BBB	GB

Table 4.8
Seating plan for Form One class in the laboratory in school B

GGG	GGGGG BB BB
GGG	GG BB GB BB
GGG	BB BBBB

Tables 4.7 and 4.8 show the same Form One class in the classroom and in the Physical Science Laboratory. As compared to Form Three of this same school, male/female pairs were more in the Form One classroom than in Form Three where they were almost non-existent. Commenting on how the school promotes gender equity, the head teacher said that one of the ways they do it is by encouraging interactions between male and female students. This, she said was partly done by making sure that they sit together side by side in the classroom. She said the Form Ones are the worst at implementing this. But on the contrary the Form Ones were better than the Form Threes.

While in the classroom there was an attempt for some male and female Form One students to sit together, in the laboratory the general tendency was for them to sit separately. This was probably because they were not allocated seats by the school, so they had freedom to choose where to sit.

Table 4.9
Seating plan of the Form Three science class in school B
(with changes in numbers only during Social Studies)

Door	Teacher		
GG	GG		GG
GGG	G		BG
GG	GG		
GG		BB	B
GG		B B	B
B	B	BB	BB
BB	BB	BBB	BB

In Form Three of school B, (Table 4.9), all the lessons that were observed took place in the classroom. The tendency was for female students to sit in two columns close to the door. The male students concentrated themselves in the two back rows and two columns on one side of the classroom. The only times they trespassed into each other's territory was when late comers found that all the good places in their territory were filled and they had no choice but to sit where there was still some good space. The number of students in a non-science class was smaller than the science class because the non-science class was an elective subject. But the seating plan remained the same.

It is clear from Tables 4.5 to 4.9 above that no teacher bothered about the seating arrangement. When teachers in the two co-education schools were asked why the female and male students sit separately, their answers were that students were the ones that decide to sit where they sit. Some teachers attributed it to the effects of culture which encourages females to sit separately from males.

The students however had their own reasons. As indicated earlier, the male students in school A said they do not want to sit with the female students because they benefit nothing from them academically. By saying this, they probably implied that the female students are less intelligent than they themselves. Female students in the same school said they are chased away by male students if they attempt to sit close to them. The male students in school B also attributed this separation to the behaviour of the males themselves. They said female students fear to sit close to them because when they do so, some male students propose love to them.

For group work, most of the groups that were formed during lessons to work together had more students of one sex in them. Five of the eight teachers in the co-education schools used either pair or group work or both. (Table 4.10).

Table 4.10
A summary of sex composition in group work

Teacher Id	Frequency of group work	Gender balance	Gender awareness training (teacher)	subject
1	2 times	nil	None	science
2	2 times	once	None	non-science
3	Once	nil	yes	Non-science
4	Once	nil	Yes	Non-science
5	Once	tried in vain	none	science
Totals	7 times	once	-	-

It is clear from Table 4.10 that none of the teachers that had received gender awareness training was sensitive to the fact that there was a disproportional representation of female and male students in the groups. Only two teachers tried to balance the students proportionally. The one in school A did it only during the second observation. The one in school B tried to mix them, but some students returned to their original groups as soon as the teacher's attention moved to another part of the class. The class ended up with seven groups. Two of these were single sex groups of five female and six male students each.

Whatever the reason for the separation of sexes in the classroom, it is clear that such seating plans as MoE (2005) indicates are unlikely to encourage interactions between males and female students. Lack of interaction may be detrimental to the success of the policy. If female and male students sat together they would be interacting with one another. This could help them to develop mutual friendships among themselves and dispel fears and suspicions that develop between them. This was in agreement with the

observations of one male teacher who said that separation discourages free interaction between female and male students and promotes fear and suspicion between them. This could have a negative impact on the implementation of the policy. This is so because instead of creating a collaborative group of people, lack of interaction may inhibit the support for one another which may in turn hinder the promotion of equal education opportunities for both sexes.

As indicated in Chapter one, the move to promote the education of the girl child comes in because of the need to make both men and women as partners in development. For this to be successful, this partnership needs to start in the school where all stakeholders can work toward improving the education of everybody. Good education for all will empower both male and female students as co-workers for development after they finish their school. This is in agreement with one of the arguments the supporters of the co-education schools put forward that such schools prepare students for the real world situations (Keating, <http://www.nd.edu/~frs/write/issues/1999/sp99/keating.shtml>, Winchester Thurston School, <http://www.winchesterthur>) where males and females interact. For this preparation to be effective, it is when the schools properly address the issues of gender equity.

In the school, such preparations have to start with interactions between male and female students in the classroom. Here, interactions can be facilitated by the seating arrangements if they are such that they will allow male and female students to interact. MoE (2005) acknowledges this when it says that separation by sex in the classroom

reduces the probability of communication, collaboration and friendly interactions between male and female students. It is through interactions that students of both sexes can learn from one another and can appreciate and respect one another. Otherwise if the arrangements are such that they discourage interaction it may be difficult for students of different sexes to benefit from one another. It follows therefore that any gender sensitive teacher will try to utilise such knowledge for the benefit of both male and female students in his or her class.

However, in the light of the observation made in school B that some girls worked better and harder in single sex groups, teachers should always be alert and find out what works best for their individual students. While encouraging interactions between them, teachers should give room for both male and female students to choose what works best for them.

Also the resistance to sitting in mixed groups as observed in school B shows that students too have their own part to play in influencing the implementation, or non implementation or poor implementation of the policy. For them to appreciate it they probably need some motivation that will influence them see the goodness of the policy and that of interactions between male and female students. Therefore teachers need to motivate their students in gender issues and encourage them to interact.

While there may be advantages of having male and female working with each other, it is necessary for teachers to carefully study their students and know who would benefit from working in mixed or single sex groups. They should thereafter encourage students to

work in situations which will allow them to acquire to the best of their ability the knowledge and skills they need.

4.3.2. Student Participation

4.3.2.1. Teacher-student interaction

This was another component of classroom observation. The aim was to look at how often teachers interacted with male students on the one hand and female students on the other. It also looked at the nature of interaction between them. Table 4.11 summarises the findings on pupil participation.

Table 4.11
Frequencies of interaction between teachers and male/female students

Teacher's sex and school	form	boy/girl ratio	times boys picked	girls picked	Gender awareness Training	Professional qualification	Remarks
Male, A	1 S	25/13	11	13	Yes	Dip.Ed	Girl bias
Male, A	1 Ns	25/13	10 + 2 reporters	9 + 8 reporters	No	UCE	Girl bias
Female, A	3 Ns	33/11	6	1	Yes	Dip.Ed	Boy bias
Male, A	3 S	33/11	34	20	Yes	B.Ed	Fair
Male, B	1 Ns	20/19	21	2	No	none	Boy bias
Male, B	1 S	20/19	11	7	No	B.Ed	Boy bias
Male, B	3 S	22/19	11	7	No	Dip.Ed	Boy bias
Female, B	3 Ns	17/14	26	15	Yes	Dip.Ed	Boy bias
Total		185/129	132	82			

Key: S=science. Ns = non-science. + reporters = group work reporters/secretaries

On the whole, in the two co-education schools, male students participated disproportionately more than the female students. Thus basically there was no difference with previous studies which showed that teachers tended to call on male more than female students. (Kadzamira & Chibwana, 1999). This was to some extent true of even the lessons by some of the teachers who had received gender awareness sensitisation training.

Of the four co-education teachers who had received gender awareness training, only two made efforts to involve both male and female students fairly though one interacted with females more than males. Both of these were male science teachers from school A and teaching Forms One and Three respectively. The other two who were biased towards male students were female teachers who taught non-science subjects. One was from school A and the other was from school B. They taught the subject which has gender as one of its major topics.

Of the teachers that had not received gender awareness sensitisation training only one male tried to involve male and female students proportionately. However during reports for group discussions, he was insensitive to the fact that eight out of ten of the reporters who were also secretaries were female students. Most of the questions that followed the reports were answered by female students on behalf of their groups. There was another male teacher in this category who, although biased towards male students visibly tried to involve female students. He picked a female student to answer a question after realising that most females were not raising their hands.

Another thing that was observed in some lessons was that some teachers used mostly lecture methods punctuated by questions. This in a way encouraged the male students to participate more than the female students in that they raised their hands more promptly than female students. This is perhaps one of the things that influenced the teachers to give them more attention than they did to the female students. The male students also many times answered without being picked by the teachers.

From these observations one may make a number of conclusions. The first one is that knowledge of gender equity issues has some positive influence on some teachers. As Table 4.11 illustrates, two of the teachers that underwent gender awareness training tried to actively involve both male and female students in the classroom. One of the two even went to the extent of involving females more than males. His actions may be interpreted as positive bias aimed at encouraging female students to be as active as their male counterparts. This therefore is a clear sign of the necessity of training people in the things that they are expected to know.

The second conclusion one may make is that although gender awareness sensitisation training is necessary, it is not a guarantee that a teacher will be gender sensitive in his or her day to day operations in the classroom. As shown earlier, not all teachers that received gender awareness training made use of it. This was shown by two of the teachers who were trained but did not handle their classes as people who had knowledge of gender issues. They were both biased towards boys. Perhaps as literature says, they were being

influenced by the boys' active nature (French, 1990) and forgot what they were trained to do. But as trained people, they should have exercised control over the situation and made efforts to encourage both male and female students to participate proportionally to their numbers.

The third conclusion is that although there has been an outcry for more female teachers as role models, having them in their large numbers in secondary schools may not be a guarantee that there will be gender equity at classroom level. Female students may not benefit as much as male students would simply because of the presence of female teachers. If the interest is having a girl child soundly educated then emphasis for the secondary schools should be on large numbers of soundly trained teachers whether male or female.

The fourth conclusion is that sound pre-service teacher training might be enough to enable a teacher to balance his or her interactions with students of both sexes. The teacher who had UCE may be an example here. Although he seemed blind to the fact that most of the group reporters were female students, he tried his best to interact with both male and female students on the whole. The worst of the teachers in as far as classroom interactions were concerned was the one who had no professional training as a teacher. His biasness was more pronounced than that of the professional teachers.

4.3.2.2 Questions asked by students

One way through which students enhance knowledge of what they learn in class is by asking questions on things that they have not understood or things they want to know more about. Lack of questions from students might either mean that they have understood the lesson or that they are afraid to ask. The fear might be as a result of an unfriendly environment created by the attitudes and actions of the teachers or their fellow students or both.

In the two co-education schools, few questions were asked by the students. Only in two lessons in two different subjects were students observed asking questions. One was where the teacher gave a dictation. Therefore the questions that were asked were basically about words that the students did not hear properly or spellings that they did not know. In the second subject, questions that were asked were those that showed that students needed understanding of some explanations that were not clear to them. Two of the questions came from male students and one from a female student. Yet even in this class there were times when the students needed further clarification but could not ask. One example was where male students in chorus said they had understood an explanation but failed to demonstrate to the female students who said they had not understood. Another example from the same class was that after the teacher had given them an exercise to be done individually, there were some students, both male and female who did not know what to do. One male student who had not understood and was having problems was being helped by another male student. Again, as the teacher went round marking, he was also helping the students both male and female who were getting the exercise wrong.

In school B, during a science lesson, students were given an exercise to work in pairs. Some groups of either sex worked it out quickly. Some male students seemed not to know what they were expected to do. Others seemed uncertain. In one group of three, the active member started to work on his own. The teacher encouraged them to work with others as a group. It was clear that a good number of male and female students had not understood the teacher's explanation, but for some reason they did not want to ask. Yet when the teacher was teaching they indicated that they had understood.

In the girls' school, students there were freer to ask or show that they did not understand than in the co-education schools. Many questions were asked during the science lessons in Form One and Form Three. The questions were on clarifications of the ideas they did not understand as the teachers explained, or what they were expected to do during experiments. One question was asked in a non-science subject in Form One. The teacher was asked to re-explain the task for one group. In Form Three, non-science subject, there were no questions from the students. This might have been partly because the students had done the work as a group assignment and were reporting the findings.

In the co-education male and female students seemed not free to ask. One of the reasons for this was fear of laughter from one another. In these schools, few had the courage to ask questions. The fear to ask questions in co-education schools might be because of an unfriendly environment created by the attitudes and actions of the teachers or students or both. In three of the four focus group discussions in these schools it was indicated that female students fail to ask questions when they don't understand partly because of fear of

laughter from the boys. However, it was clear that boys too were not asking questions when they need to. This was probably for similar reasons.

If students cannot ask questions in class, the danger is that they cannot fully understand what they are supposed to know. In this case where the female students seem to be the victims, the students themselves challenge gender equity. Instead of helping one another to receive equal education, they are making it difficult to acquire the knowledge they should have acquired had the classroom environment been conducive to learning for both sexes. An example here would be as shown earlier where boys failed to demonstrate that they had understood what they said they had understood. They had just accepted that they had understood the explanation likely because of pride and fear of being laughed at by the class. During the focus group discussions students alleged that some students, especially females do not ask questions because they do not want their boyfriends to know that they are dull. But as shown earlier, the male students also had problems asking, probably for similar reasons.

These results show that the presence of students of the opposite sex may be a factor that inhibits learning through asking questions in co-education schools. Teachers therefore need to create an environment where students of both sexes feel free to express themselves, an environment of mutual friendships. Helping them to develop self-esteem and respect for one another can do this. Such training needs to start as soon as they join the schools in Form One.

4.3.2.3. Classroom interactions among the pupils

4.3.2.3.1. Group work

For group work, there were differences noted in different subjects as well as from group to group. In school A, group work was observed in non-science subjects only in both forms under the study. In school B, group work was done in Form One science and Form Three science and none-science subjects.

In the co-education schools, male and female students tended to be active in the non-science subject. They all read from books and newspaper cut outs and contributed ideas to the discussions. However, there were some inactive male and female students. In Form Three, every student interacted with another because they were working in pairs. But most of the pairs were single sex. Those who interacted with students of the opposite sex were those that were already sitting together.

But what came out clearly in the science lessons in both forms of school B was that most of the female students did not fully participate in the group work. They tended to leave the group work mostly to male students. This was observed both in group discussions and practical work. Few female students worked hard in groups where they outnumbered the male students or where they were by themselves. For example, in the Form One class of school B, there were seven groups. Five of them had male and female students. Out of the five mixed groups, only two had active female students. A number of female students were idle, showing an attitude of total resignation to work. Others mixed seriousness with play. One female student played with a male student to the end of the group work. But

those in the single sex group worked very seriously. In Form Three the picture was the same

In the girls' only school where they had no 'brothers' to leave the experiments and the discussions to, they showed zeal for the work. There were few daydreamers who could switch off their minds as others carried on with discussions or experiments. But they would rejoin their friends and continue working with them. There were no signs of total resignation as those observed in school B. This was true of science experiments in the lab as well as classroom group discussions in the non-science subject.

The interactions in the co-education schools seemed to be confirming the beliefs that some teachers and some students have that science subjects are difficult and therefore not good for female students. This leads to female students' inactivity in science classes and in turn affects their performance and further re-enforces their negative attitudes towards the subjects. This makes gender equity a forlorn hope. On the other hand the situation in the girls' school and girls' only group paints the picture that female students work better on their own rather than with male students. This is in agreement with suggestions made by Hyde (1992) that gender streaming may be the answer to improving girls' education. MoE/USAID (n.d) echoes this suggestion by recommending the building of more school for female students or separate facilities for male and female students in co-education schools as some of the strategies of overcoming gender constraints. As recommended under section 4.3.2.2, in co-education schools it may be necessary for the teachers to help students of both sexes to develop self-esteem.

4.3.2.3.2. Interactions outside group work

Other interactions among the students included student to student chats, laughter and murmuring because of wrong answers given by others. For example, in Form Three of school A, during the non-science lesson, there was murmuring and laughter from male students when a female student asked for the spelling of 'legal'. Another female student, in low tone timidly asked for the spelling of 'initiation'. There was no laughter probably because many did not know the spelling but could not ask. When a male student asked the teacher to repeat the word 'technique' she had said, there was no laughter. But when she repeated and wrote it on the board some male students laughed for to them it was probably too easy for the teacher to bother.

Another female student had a problem but instead of asking the teacher, she asked a female student sitting next to her. The two then developed a survival mechanism whereby they continually helped one another in listening and writing in one notebook. This was probably as a reaction to the laughter from the male students which they feared.

In the same class during the mathematics lesson, there was laughter from the class when a male student failed to answer a question correctly, but he tried again and got it right. There was also murmuring and laughter from the male students when a female student failed to repeat a given answer. One female student talked to a male student behind her. One male student seemingly had problems and was being helped by another male student probably because of fear to ask the teacher.

From these descriptions, it is clear that very few of the interactions were those that could promote education. Actions such as murmuring and laughing at those who fail may be detrimental to the education of the students and especially that of the female student. An example is one that has been described above where two female students resorted to asking and helping one another after the male students had laughed at those who had asked before them. Such actions may hinder the promotion of gender equitable education.

4.3.3. Teachers' and students' expectations of male and female students

The responses to the question 'who are more intelligent between girls and boys' indicated that six out of the seven teachers in co-education schools and twenty-three out of thirty-two students who responded felt that boys were more intelligent than girls (Table 4.12). This shows that most teachers (84%) and students (72%) expected male students to do better than the female students. Two of the six teachers were women. This again, as noted earlier, stands as a challenge to the idea of women being employed as role models. Their belief that girls are less intelligent may have a negative impact on the way they interact with them in class.

Table 4.12
Who are more intelligent between boys and girls in the classroom?

Students' Responses			Teachers' Responses	
Both	7	22%	1	14%
Girls	2	6%	0	0%
Boys	23	72%	6	84%
Total	32	100%	7	100%

Also from the descriptions of classroom interactions between individual teachers and students, it was clear that six out of the eight teachers observed in co-education schools expected their male students to do better than female students. Five of these teachers directed most of their questions to male students. Although the sixth teacher distributed the questions proportionally, he tended to give difficult questions to male students and to make the female students repeat answers given by male students. These expectations were probably influenced by his belief that male students are more intelligent than female students. Also in the interviews, two of the science teachers talked about the female students not being active because of the nature of the subject they taught. That is, that the female students find science subjects difficult. One had this to say:

I think like the sciences, may be they are taken as tough subjects by the girls... the girls feel they wouldn't do better in sciences like Mathematics and Physical Science ...except few who are quite just good and they would do like boys
(Teacher. 5th June 2006).

Another teacher, in response to a question asking if there are any challenges he faces in trying to address gender equity issues in his teaching said

There are challenges ... because of the nature of the subjects I am teaching. They (female students) are usually reluctant or they are not ready to answer mathematical science questions in classes.

With such expectations, it may not be easy for such teachers to be equitable in their interactions with students. These expectations might influence teachers to give more attention to male than to female students. To get around this problem, teachers may need frequent in-service training geared at re-enforcing positive attitudes toward gender issues. They may also need to be visited frequently by the Senior Methods Advisors. They may as well need to work extra-hard to find ways of motivating the female students whom they feel are less intelligent than their male counterparts.

In response to whether he meets challenges teaching science subjects to female students, one of the science teachers in the girls' school said he does not meet any big challenge. He attributed this to continual encouragement he gives to the students which stems from his desire to see the status of females elevated and his belief that anybody can perform if given the opportunity and resources. He also felt FAWEMA is also helping in motivating female students to love science subjects. While he believes that science subjects are hard, he does not conclude that therefore they should be for male students only. Here some excerpts from the interview:

I don't meet any challenge because it matters the way you approach them (students). I tell them to be working very hard for them to increase their chances of going to the colleges of the university. ...male students have no upper hand of excelling in science, I mean subjects that are difficult. You know each and every person, given the opportunity and all resources can do very well.

These findings seem to indicate that the nature of the school might influence the teachers' expectations of the female students and consequently how they also interact with them. In co-education schools teachers believed male students were more intelligent than female students and interacted with male more than female students in general. In a girls' school, students are looked at as intelligent. Thus for female students in co-education schools to benefit as males do from classroom interactions, the teachers may need gender awareness sensitisation training.

4.3.4. Teachers' behaviour

As shown above, some teachers tended to direct most of their questions to the male students. The teachers that did this most frequently were the female teacher in school A and a male teacher in school B. Both were non-science teachers. This action was probably influenced by their belief that male students are more intelligent than female students. Sometimes the same male students were chosen several times to answer questions. This echoed what some of these male students said about teachers who give attention to only those that answer their questions well. Some teachers tried to give special attention to female students. For instance, two male teachers that used group work insisted that each group must have a proportional representation of female and male students. One male teacher tried to spread the questions proportionately to male and female students. Two male teachers directed their questions disproportionately more to female than male students. This could be attributed to the fact that both male and female students in this class were very active. However, this might have been deliberately done to encourage the female students because one of the teachers was the one who had learnt

about gender equity issues through a club. The other one may have been influenced by the nature of the subject he was teaching which has topic on gender.

There were also comments that were directed at female students or suggested something about them. One teacher made a comment that “we also have girls in this class” after male students had given a number of chorus answers. After the comment, he went ahead and chose a non-volunteering female student to answer the question he had asked. This may have been said to suggest that the male students should stop giving chorus answers so that the female students can also have the chance to participate. Or, he might have been suggesting that they are lazy or incompetent and therefore they need to be reminded that they need to participate in the lesson. The latter idea is supported by what this particular teacher said in the interview that female students are carefree. They do not get bothered with failing. With such attitudes, it may be unlikely that the teacher would encourage them to fully participate in classroom activities. Yet participation is crucial to their education (FAWE, n.d).

In yet another class, there were comments from the teacher about gossip, which followed after female students had failed to answer the questions correctly. The first comment was that it was easier for them to listen to gossip than to what is taught. This came after the teacher asked if the class had understood the explanation given by one of the male students and only female students said no in a chorus. The second comment was that human beings like to laugh and find it easier to listen to gossip than to what is going on in class; and that sometimes they even listen to gossip while the teacher is teaching. This

comment followed laughter by the class after a female student failed to repeat an answer given by a male student and already repeated by another female student. Such comments may make female students feel discouraged as they may create a sense of hopelessness in them. As Chanunkha (1991) found, negative comments demoralise students and affect their performance. This in turn may make them shun participation in class resulting into unequal interactions between the teacher and the male students on the one hand and the teacher and the female students on the other.

4. 4. Teachers' and students' views on the implementation of the policy

The fourth objective intended to enlist teachers' and students' views about the implementation of the gender equity policy in schools. This was done because research has shown that teachers' attitudes and beliefs have a bearing on their interaction with students and hence on their performance (Stromquist, 1997). The students' own beliefs and values also have an effect on the way they perform and interact in the classroom.

To find out this, an interview was conducted to hear their opinion on whether the gender equity policy can successfully be implemented or not. To increase trustworthiness of the data, questionnaire was also used to collect data about their opinion and the school culture.

4.4.1. Teachers views

Six out of the seven teachers that were interviewed in the co-education schools and all the focus group discussions seemed to see female students as a stumbling block to achieving

gender equity in the classroom. The reasons they gave were that female students feel inferiority complex, they refuse to mix and interact with the male students, they are shy and they fear male students. Some teachers attributed female students' inactivity in class to culture, which expects females to be quiet and humble in the presence of other people. Two of the six teachers and the seventh teacher also blamed it on the actions of the male students. These saw the female students' disposition as being a result of the actions of the male students who boo or laugh when female students fail to answer questions properly. This was also supported by three of the four focus group discussions that were conducted in the co-education schools. One of these groups was that of male students. The female students said they were discouraged from asking questions when they do not understand something because the male students murmur and say that what they are asking don't make sense.

One teacher also said that when they are doing group work, the male students are usually not ready to let the female students take leading role in discussions or practical lessons. The male students dominate in the discussions and practical work in classrooms and laboratories and reduce female students to secretaries (teacher in school B). Nonetheless, in his class it was observed that both female and male students played the role of secretary. He attributed this to his persistence in reminding his class that both male and female students can do the same work.

Another reason given for believing that gender equity cannot be achieved at classroom level involved the subject areas. Three of the seven teachers interviewed in co-education

schools said that female students do not like science subjects. Two of these were science teachers. They said female students do not participate equally in the classroom because they find the science subjects difficult. This was again supported by female and male students in the focus group discussions as well as what they had indicated on a question on subject preference on the questionnaire. In both of the co- education schools, they even alluded to female students leaving the classrooms when the Mathematics teachers come in.

4.4.2. Students' views

The male students also said that gender equity cannot be achieved because the female students are lazy, they dislike study and instead, they like chatting. They also said female students were affected by the intimate friendships they develop with people of the opposite sex. This makes them lazy for they say “*adzandisunga*” meaning that even if they fail, they will get married and will be looked after by the husband. As if to confirm what the male students said during the discussion, as I was waiting to conduct a group discussion during lunch hour, I saw four male students in a classroom solving a mathematical problem. In the adjacent room, there were two female students singing, dancing and chatting. However, there were also many other male and female students playing, running around and chatting outside the classrooms as they waited for food to be served

The female students themselves attributed their failure to participate equally with the male students as being a result of unequal time for study. At school A which has a boarding facility, the female students complained that they do not have as much time for

study as the male students because they are sent out of the study room ten minutes before the study ends, giving the male students an edge over them. Once in the hostel, they are not given chance to continue to study while the male students are allowed to go back to study after official study time has elapsed.

However, there are very little differences between the times the female students in school A and those in school C knock off from studies. The restrictions given to the female students after study hours are the same. Yet in school C a number of female students showed alertness and action in class. One may therefore conclude that the presence of male students might be one of the factors in female students' lack of activity in class. Fear of male students, as indicated earlier on, inhibits the female students' freedom of interaction, which in turn influences the gender insensitive teachers to direct their attention mostly to male students.

In school B where all students are commuters, female students complained that they do not have the chance to use the library after school because their parents want them to be home early for security reasons while male students stay out for as long as the library remains open. This, they said contributes to their not being able to participate as much as male students do in class. For these then one may conclude that they are affected by inadequate reading, fear of the male students as well as gender insensitive teachers.

Like their teachers, another reason given for believing that gender equity cannot be achieved at classroom level involved the subject areas. This came out clearly from what

the students said during focus group discussions as well as what they had indicated on a question on subject preference on the questionnaire. As indicated earlier, in both of the co- education schools, the students even indicated that female students sometimes leave the class when the mathematics teachers come in.

Data from the questionnaire indicated that twenty-four out of thirty-two students felt that if they were given preference to choose subjects for male and female students, they would choose non-science subjects for the females. These were twelve male and twelve female students. Both female and male students expressed this in spite of the fact that the same number of students had indicated that both should study science subjects. The reasons for preferring non-science subjects for female students were that these subjects are easy, the languages are needed for communication and Home economics tallies well with what they as females do in the home. They looked at sciences and mathematics as difficult for female students.

The hatred for mathematics and sciences gives chance to male students to have an advantage over female students in these subjects. On the other hand, in the girls' only school there were no reports of the students leaving classes because they hate the science subjects. All the students that participated in the discussion were very highly motivated. They confessed that they work very hard even in sciences because they want to hold important positions in society when they finish school. Nevertheless, they were also aware that there were students who underrated themselves in the school. I found out that their motivation was partly as a result of the activities of FAWEMA club at the school.

The students in the co-education schools also saw some of their teachers as being responsible for perpetuating the inequities between the female and male students. Some teachers were said to be giving attention in class only to students who answer their questions. These happen to be the male students in most cases. The reason given by students for this was that the male students have more reading time than the female students.

These findings show that teachers put the blame on students as the ones who would make it impossible for the policy to be implemented. Students too put the blame on the teachers and on each other. This finger pointing in a way is an indication of the need for these stakeholders to be made aware of their roles in the implementation of the gender equity policy.

4.5. Chapter summary

Chapter four presented and discussed the findings vis-à-vis the objectives that were set. The study has found that although the MoE has tried to communicate the gender equity policy to teachers through the school managers, none of the teachers that were sampled was communicated to. Those who knew about the policy did so through either FAWEMA, or a club and as part of their teacher training in a specific subject area. Their perceptions regarding the policy were varied. The teachers and some students, especially the female students perceived it as good for the well being of the women and their

families. Other students who were mostly male viewed it as something that is against the social order.

The study also found that knowledge of the policy through gender awareness sensitisation training had some influence in the way two teachers interacted with their students. However, two other teachers who had received gender awareness training did not reflect this in their interaction with students. One other teacher who did not have gender awareness sensitisation training interacted fairly with both male and female students. The study further found that teacher-student interactions on the whole favoured male students in the co-education schools. The male students' tendency to raise hands promptly and answering without being picked contributed to this. However, it could also have been influenced by the belief that male students were more intelligent than female students.

On whether or not the gender equity policy can be implemented, all seemed to agree that it cannot be achieved for reasons that ranged from female students' own faults to teachers and male students' faults.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.0. Overview

The study aimed at investigating how the knowledge of the gender equity policy affects classroom interactions between teachers and male and female students, and interactions between male and female students. Chapter Five is a summary of the main findings that have been discussed in Chapter Four. The Chapter has made some recommendations to address these issues. It has also suggested areas for further research.

5.1. Main findings

The study found that a total of five out of twelve teachers were exposed to gender equity issues in education. It also found out that MoE had attempted to train all teachers using their school managers, but none of the sampled teachers had received such training. Of the five who had received training only two had received it as a component of their pre-service training program probably because of the nature of the subject they are teaching. The two happened to be Social Studies teachers. Thus they might have tackled gender awareness topic because it is part of what they are expected to teach. Two other teachers received the training through FAWEMA workshops and the fifth teacher through a club when he was a student in college. This might thus be an indication that many have not yet been trained and thus may not be practicing gender equity in their interactions with students. Although the SEMA impart this knowledge to teachers, only the few that are observed benefit from this.

All teachers and some students, especially female students saw the policy as good while some male students felt that the gender equity policy was in conflict with the physiological nature of males and females and against the social order.

The study found that while knowledge of the gender equity policy and gender sensitisation awareness training are necessary, they are not a guarantee that teachers will put into practice the knowledge they have acquired. Only two of the four co-education school teachers who had received gender awareness sensitisation training in were making efforts to be gender sensitive in their teaching. This however, was only in the area of question distribution in the classroom. Comments that may discourage female students from learning were still being made.

The study also found out that, in spite of the expressed desire to have girls educated, some teachers' attitudes towards female students have not changed. Female students are still regarded as less intelligent than male students. As a result teachers do not try to explore ways of boosting female students' classroom participation and performance. Their attitudes may also be the ones that influence them to be biased in the way they interact with male and female students.

Some of the interactions among students themselves are a hindrance to equal participation between male and female students. Actions such as negative remarks, murmuring and laughing at those who fail may be detrimental to the education of the

students and especially that of the girls. The male students also look at female students as lazy people and less intelligent than themselves. With such attitudes, it is unlikely that they can create an environment that is conducive to learning for female students.

It was equally also found that having many female teachers as role models may not be a solution of having male and female students receiving equal attention and consequently equitable education. Two of the teachers that were among those biased towards male students were females who had received gender awareness sensitisation training.

Sound teacher education with frequent monitoring and supervision may be enough to help teachers interact fairly and proportionately with male and female students. The worst gender biased interactions were observed in the class of a teacher who had no professional qualifications as a teacher. The professionally trained teachers' degree of biasness was not as bad as that of the untrained teacher. Two of them even made attempts to call on girls who were not raising hands.

On whether the policy can be successfully implemented, both teachers and students expressed doubt. Teachers felt that the attitudes of the female students and the actions of the male students hinder female students' equal participation. The female students blamed it on teachers and the male students' actions. The male students also said the attitudes and actions of the female students and teachers would make it impossible to bring about gender equity at classroom level.

On the whole, the study found that the gender equity policy has had little impact on the way teachers of both sexes interact with male and female students in the classroom. This is partly due to the fact that few teachers have undergone gender awareness sensitisation training. Apart from this, some of the few that have received this training do not show the zeal to make use of it. The students' actions in the classroom also contribute to hindrances of the policy from being successfully implemented.

5.2. Recommendations

Since policy communication and necessary training through the school managers seems to be ineffective, the MoE should find complementary means of reaching the teachers with the needed information. This could be done through the use of the SEMAs. As they visit schools, instead of informing the observed teachers only, they should spare time to give this information to all teachers. The SEMAs should continue to monitor and advise those that have already received training.

The MoE should encourage the school heads to help in giving school based in-service training to the new untrained teachers as they join the school. This training should concentrate on avoiding gender biases and gender stereotypes when teaching. The study found that the most biased teacher was not a professional teacher.

Since sound teacher training seems to have a bearing on teachers' fair interaction with both male and female students, government needs to train as many teachers as are required in the field. These teachers should be those that are able to handle both male and

female students fairly and to promote the education of the girl child. In their pre-service training, the teachers should be made aware of the National Gender Policy and its expectations of teachers at the classroom level. As they go in the field, they should be encouraged to now and then evaluate themselves on whether their interactions with students of both sexes are balanced. In-service training should also frequently be provided in order to remind and re-enforce gender equity practices

Although some schools of thought suggest that seating male and female students encourages interactions between them which may in turn help to boost the performance, this may not always work in this way. In the light of the observation made in school B that some girls worked better and harder in single sex groups, teachers should always be alert and find out what works best for their individual students. While encouraging interactions between boys and girls, they should give room for both male and female students to choose what works best for them.

Teachers may need frequent in-service training geared at re-enforcing positive attitudes toward gender issues. They may also need to be visited frequently by the Senior Methods Advisors. They further need to work extra-hard to find ways of motivating the girls whom they feel are less intelligent than boys.

There is need for students and teachers to be made aware of how the education of females benefits the individual, the family and the nation for them to be motivated to support the promotion of the education of female and male students.

5.3. Suggestions for further studies

Since the study used a small sample and therefore the findings cannot be generalised, there is need for someone to conduct research using a larger sample. This study used only three urban secondary schools from one Educational Division. There would be need to sample rural and urban schools as well as conventional schools and CDSS from all the six divisions.

There is also need to find out why teachers who claim to have received gender awareness sensitisation training are not making use of the knowledge and why some school managers are not imparting to their teachers the knowledge about gender issues in the classroom.

Since this study did not involve finding out what is being done by teacher trainers on the issue of gender equity, further research is needed in the area of teacher training to establish if gender issues are being mainstreamed in the subjects that are taught at secondary school level. This would confirm whether or not those that are graduating after the policy was made are failing to reflect it in the classroom due to negligence or due to lack of awareness.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A 1: Questions for interviews with teachers

Teachers' Knowledge of the gender equity policy

1. What policies are you aware of that promote gender equity?

Probe (in case they are outside education): a) What about those in education?

b) What have been your sources of knowledge about the policy?

Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) and the National Gender Policy both express the policy of bringing about gender equity in education at all levels.

2. What do you know about the Policy Investment Framework?
3. What do you know about the National Gender policy?
4. What provisions are there in the policy to promote gender equity in education?
5. Have you ever received any gender awareness sensitization training?

If yes: a) when did you receive the training?

b) Who gave you the training?

c) For how long did your training take place?

d) Is the training still going at school Level?

Policy practice

1. What measures has the school taken to respond to the policy?
2. What measures have you taken to respond to the policy at classroom level?

(If you are not aware of the policy, what measures does the school and you take to promote gender equity at school and classroom?)
3. What challenges do you meet as you try to bring about gender equity in the classroom?
4. What has been your experience on the performance of girls and boys in your school?

How would you explain this situation?

If there are differences what could be the contributing factors?
5. What steps has the school taken to address the problems?

What steps have you taken to address the problem in your teaching?

Teachers views about the policy

1. In your opinion, is the policy necessary?
2. Give reasons for your answer in no. 1
3. What do you understand as your role in implementing the gender equity policy?
4. If you received gender sensitisation training, what comments can you give concerning its suitability for policy practice at school or classroom level?

Appendix A 2: Questions for interviews with Head Teachers and Deputy Head Teachers

School name_____

School type_____

Head teacher's sex_____

Date of interview_____

Time of interview _____

1. How long have you been heading schools?
2. How long have you been the Head Teacher of this school?
3. Do you have any gender policy documents in your school|?
4. How is the gender equity policy being promoted in the school?
3. From your observation, how are teachers trying to be gender sensitive in their teaching?

Probe: If not, what are their problems?

- b) Do teachers have access to the gender policy documents?

Appendix B 1: Classroom Observation Schedule (adapted from Kabira & Masinjila, 1997 and VanBelle-Prouty & Sey, 1998)

1. Sitting plan and classroom activity Class: ____ Subject _____ Teachers sex ____

Key: **B/G:** girl/boy. **V:** teacher calling on a volunteer. **N:** teacher calling on a non-volunteer. **Q:** pupils asking questions. **l/h:** lower/higher order questions.

2. Pupil Participation

	boys	girls	both
Who are more likely to be chosen to answer questions in class?			
Who are more likely to volunteer to answer questions in class?			
Who are more likely to volunteer to answer lower order questions?			
Who are more likely to volunteer to answer higher order questions?			

Who often need to be prompted before giving an answer? _____

How much time are boys given to answer questions? _____

How much time are girls given to answer question? _____

Who are more likely to respond to the question immediately? 1) boys _____ 2) girls _____

Who are more likely to ask questions? 1) boys _____ 2) girls _____

What kind of questions do boys ask? 1) lower order questions _____ 2) higher order questions _____

What kind of questions do girls ask? 1) lower order questions _____ 2) higher order questions _____

Who appears to expect questions more frequently? 1) boys _____ 2) girls _____

Who more likely answer or offer to answer questions that are perceived to be difficult?

1) boys _____ 2) girls _____

Who are asked most of the questions? 1) boys _____ 2) girls _____

3. Teachers expectations of the male/female students

Do teachers express surprise at girls doing well? _____

Do they reward girls while telling boys to work harder when they score similar grades?

How often do they direct questions to boys? _____

How often do they direct questions to girls? _____

What kinds of questions are directed to boys? _____

What kinds of questions are directed to girls? _____

How often are probing questions and questions seeking opinions directed to girls? _____

How often are probing questions and questions seeking opinions directed to boys? _____

4. Teachers' behaviour

Whom does the teacher ask questions more often? 1) boys _____ 2) girls _____

To whom are most of the jokes or anecdotes directed? 1) boys _____ 2) girls _____

What is the gender perspective of these jokes or anecdotes? _____

What forms of punishment and rewards does the teacher give to boys and girls?

For what reasons are boys punished? _____

For what reasons are girls punished? _____

For what are girls/boys rewarded? _____

For what are girls/boys rewarded? _____

How much time does the teacher give to boys to answer questions? _____

How much time does the teacher give to girls to answer questions? _____

What comments does the teacher give to boys? _____

What comments does the teacher give to girls? _____

What situations does the teacher knowingly or unknowingly use to call attention to the gender of the students?

Appendix B 2: Observation schedule for girls' school

Pupil Participation

How often do girls volunteer answer the questions in class? _____

When do they volunteer? _____

In what subjects do they often volunteer to answer? _____

How often are they prompted before giving the answer? _____

How long do they take to decide to answer the question? _____

Do they ask questions? _____

What kind of questions do they ask? _____

Teachers' expectations of the female students

Do teachers express surprise at girls doing well? _____

How do teachers respond to girls' failing to answer the questions correctly in class?

Teachers' behaviour

- Does the teacher tell jokes or anecdotes? _____
- What is the gender perspective of these jokes or anecdotes? _____
- What forms of punishment and rewards does the teacher give girls? _____
- For what reasons are girls punished? _____
- For what are girls rewarded? _____
- How much time does the teacher give to girls to answer questions? _____
- What comments does the teacher give to girls? _____
- What situations does the teacher knowingly or unknowingly use to call attention to the gender of the students? _____

Appendix C: Questions for focus group discussions with students

1. What do you know about gender?
2. What is your source of information?
3. Do you think gender equity (*that is, fairness to both boys and girls so that they are given equal opportunities and equal treatment*) can be achieved in this school?

Probe: a) how can it be achieved in a school like this one?

b) What are you as students doing to ensure that boys and girls have equal opportunities and receive equal treatment?

c) What problems are there in this school that can hinder girls and boys from receiving equal opportunities and treatment?
4. What explanations do you have for girls' lagging behind boys in performance at MSCE and JCE levels?
5. How do teachers show fairness or lack of fairness to boys and girls during lessons?

Appendix D 1: Questionnaire for teachers (tick the column appropriate to you)

A. Background Characteristics

1. Name of the School _____

2. Teacher's sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

3. How old are you? ☐

4. Teacher's Grade _____

5. Which of the following responsibilities do you hold in the school? *(Tick all that apply)*

1) Head teacher ☐

2) Deputy Head teacher ☐

3) Head of department ☐

4) Form teacher ☐

5) Guidance and counselling ☐

6) Other: specify _____

6. On what committees do you serve in this school? _____

7. What is your highest academic qualification? MSCE ☐ Diploma ☐ Degree

Other: specify _____

8. What is your professional qualification? Dip. Ed. ☐ B.Ed. ☐ UCE ☐ None ☐

9. For how many years have you been teaching since a) you joined teaching? ☐

b) at this school? ☐

10. Which of the following subjects do you teach?

1) Physical Science ☐

2) Mathematics ☐

3) Social Studies/Social and Development Studies

4) Biology ☐

11. What forms are you teaching? Form1 ☐ Form 2☐ Form 3☐ Form 4 ☐

12. What is your total number of periods you have per week _____

Instruction

From your experience as a teacher in this school, tick in the box that is appropriate to what you have observed in this school and the classrooms. You may give reason(s) in column marked E

	boys	girls	both	E
1. Who are more intelligent?				
2. Who volunteer more to answer questions in class?				
3. Who should be given preference to study science?				
4. Who should be given preference to study Social and Development Studies?				
5. Who volunteer more likely to answer questions in non-science subjects?				
6. Who are likely to volunteer to answer questions in Science subjects?				
7. Who are more likely to offer to answer				

difficult questions				
8. Who are more likely to ask questions when they need clarification?				
9. Who are likely to be given fairer punishment?				
10. Who are more likely to be given punishments?				
11. For whom is guidance and counselling often more required?				
12. Who should be given the work of cleaning the classrooms?				
13. Who should be given the work of slashing grass?				
14. Who should knock off from evening study Earlier?				
15. Who should help teachers do carry books to the staffroom?				

Instruction

In the table below, *tick* in the box that represents your views and observations on the statements provided. You may give reasons in column E

	Yes	No	E
16. Do you think it is appropriate for boys and girls to mix and interact?			
17. Should girls who are suspended due to pregnancy come back to the school after delivery?			
18. Should boys be suspended for being responsible for giving pregnancy to a fellow student?			
19. Does your school stream lessons by sex in certain subjects? (If yes go to question 20)			

20. Why does the school you stream by sex? _____

Appendix D 2: Questionnaire for students**Instruction**

From your experience as a student in this school, tick in the box that is appropriate to what you have observed in the school and the classrooms.

The information collected will be used purely for academic purposes. All information collected will be treated confidentially. No names will be attached to any information

collected. Therefore, feel free to express yourself as no names of any individuals will be attached to any information in the final product of the research.

	boys	girls	both
1. Who are more intelligent?			
2. Who are more likely to volunteer more to answer questions?			
3. Who should be given preference to study science?			
4. Who should be given preference to study Social and Development Studies?			
5. Who are more likely to volunteer to answer questions in non-science subjects?			
6. Who often offer to answer difficult questions?			
7. Who are more likely to ask questions when they need clarification?			
8. Who are more likely to be given fairer punishment?			
9. Who are more likely to be given punishments?			
10. For whom is guidance and counselling most required?			
11. Who should be given the work of cleaning the classrooms?			
12. Who should be given the work of slashing grass?			
13. Who should knock off from evening study earlier?			
14. Who should help teachers to carry books to the staffroom?			

Instruction

In the table below, *tick* in the box that represents your views and observations on the statements provided.

	Yes	No
15. Should boys and girls be encouraged to interact?		
16. Should girls suspended due to pregnancy come back to the school after delivery?		
17. Should boys be suspended for being responsible for giving pregnancy to a fellow student?		
18. Do teachers sometimes give different types of punishments to boys and girls for the same kind of offence?		
19. Does your school stream boys and girls for lessons in certain subjects (if yes, go to question 20).		

20. Why does the school you stream by sex?

Instruction

In the table below, write what subjects you would *prefer* for boys and girls. List them in order of priority.

Subjects for boys	Reason(s) for preference
Subjects for girls	Reason(s) for preference

THANK YOU FOR ANSWERING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Appendix E: 1: MSCE Pass rates for internal candidates by gender

Year	Number enrolled		Number passed		Pass rates	
	male	female	male	female	male	Female
2000	26321	15496	6482	2542	24.63	16.40
2001	28104	17558	7926	3071	28.20	17.49
2002	24829	16701	10412	4824	41.93	28.88
2003	22899	14342	11495	5297	50.20	36.93
2004	24726	16115	13418	6882	54.27	42.71
2005	26771	17721	16175	8310	60.42	46.89

Appendix E: 2: JCE Pass rates for internal candidates by gender

Year	Number enrolled		Number passed		Pass rates	
	male	female	male	female	male	Female
2000	40995	25326	35208	19366	8588	76.47
2001	36702	24607	27176	15069	74.05	61.24
2003	10434	23989	24144	15027	79.23	62.64
2004	33508	25763	25867	16069	77.20	62.27
2005	35169	26709	27698	16225	78.76	60.65