Free Basic Education and Gender Disparities in Tanzania: An Empirical Assessment of Challenges and Policy Options

Christopher Awinia

The Open University of Tanzania
Email: christopher.awinia@out.ac.tz

Abstract: *This article seeks to evaluate whether free basic education is contributing to the achievement of inclusive education for girls in line with the global Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 to achieve inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all as envisaged by the Education and Training Policy of 2014 (ETP (2014)). The study objective was toidentify key areas of gender disparities in free basic education. It investigatedwhat needs to be done in-order to restore gender parity and promote inclusive and equitable education in the public education system in Tanzania. The study is based on empirical analysis of published basic education statistics to arrive at correlation analysis between gender and key statistical indicators for education improvement mainly using excel worksheet and the statistical package for data analysis known as STATA. Empirical data analysis was supplemented by a review of secondary data and archival sources on basic education performance since 2016. The main conclusion of the study wasgender disparities were increasing with education level leaving females disproportionately deprived; and that social and cultural disparities impinged on gender parity in public education.1*

Key Word: Gender parity in education, basic education, education policy, girls' education, primary and secondary education

Introduction

This Article is based on an analysis of the manner girls benefit from the Education and Training Policy of 2014 (ETP (2014)) decision to re-introduce free, universal basic education provision in secondary-level education in Tanzania. Free education in public primary schools was re-introduced in

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2002 under the Primary Education Development Programme (PDEP) after school fees throughout the public education system from primary to university-level were scrapped in 1963 following attainment of independence in 1961 (Daven, 2008; Mbawala, 2017). However, the payment of school fees was retained for secondary education after they were re-installed in 1990s following an extended economic recession and ensuing structural adjustment measures (SAPs) to address it (Daven, 2008). In 2014, the Government of Tanzania issued a new education policy which among other things proclaimed the commitment to extend basic education from primary Standard VII to Secondary Form V (i.e. from 7 to 11 years) and make it fee-free, universal and compulsory.

On 27 November 2015 the Government of Tanzania made good on its policy commitment and issued Circular No. 3of 2015 and further elaborated by Circular No. 5 of 5 May 2016. Which brought ETP (2014) into effectual implementation by directing Government-owned schools to ensure the removal of fees and contributions paid by parents and guardians in the first four years of secondary education (year 8-11). Through the Circular fee-free basic education was extended from the first seven years of education to 11 years (i.e. from Standard VII to Form IV). Collectively this segment is now defined by the ETP (2014) as basic education. An addition shift was to make basic education free, universal and compulsory.

Although free primary education had already been introduced since 2002, voluntary and compulsory contributions were still allowed and widely practiced. Circular No. 5 of May, 2016 effectively banned contributions in Government primary and secondary schools.

This change in education policy was underpinned by Government commitment and obligation to achieve global sustainable development goals, stated policy to provide free secondary education in election manifesto, the new Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) Strategic Plan, and the desire for creating a critical mass of skilled population to service the national long-term goal of an industrialised export-led economy (URT-FYDP, 2016; MEST, 2018).

This Article is based on an analytical study that conducted a secondary analysis of available empirical data to identify gender barriers, challenges and obstacles which limit proportional access by girls to basic education Such challenges limit strides towards global sustainable goals aiming at *"ensuring inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."*

Implementation of Basic Education in Tanzania

Tanzania introduced free education policy for secondary education in 2016.[2] Free, universal compulsory primary education continued to be implemented in 2017 since 2002 when it was introduced for primary schools (URT-MEC, 2001; Blackden and Rwebangira, 2008; URT-TAMISEMI, 2008; URT-MEST, 2018).[3]

Prior to this, secondary education was subsidized but still not affordable to households, which constituted lowest income segments (Hakielimu, 2017; Mbawala, 2017). School fees in Government ordinal-level secondaryschools was set at TSh. 20,000 (approx. US$ 9) per year.

Pass marks attained by primary school girls alone were not sufficient to guarantee transition to secondary education. Available capacity in terms of Pupil to Class Ratio (PCR) was a crucial contributor to transition rate of girls from primary to secondary education.[4,5]

Significantly, any type of contributions in public schools were banned through Education Circular No. 3 of May, 2016 in-order to increase school enrollment especially for children from poor households, including girls (MEST, 2016). This must have come as a relief for school-going girls from poor and vulnerable households. School-based extra-budgetary voluntary and compulsory contributions were significant barriers to enrollment and retention of girls in secondary education. The contributions accounted for expulsions which disproportionately affected girls from poor families (HRW, 2017). According to HRW (2017) girls had previously had to pay various informal voluntary and compulsory contributions per student per annum in secondary schools as shown by Table 1 below.

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[2] Throughout this paper unless otherwise specifies, the term secondary education refers to ordinary-level secondary education and Forms 5-6 as "advance-level" secondary education. The term "basic education" refers to the first 12 years of formal education (Standard I to Form IV)

[3]The reference to universal and compulsory can be named as a misnomer or desired policy goal however in actual terms only those who attained the set pass mark in national primary education leaving examination (PLSE) were selected to join secondary education. In practice, there was a nearly universal pass rate/transition to secondary education. In 2017 out of 662,035 pupils who passed their PLSE in 98.31 percent passed and were admitted to secondary education (Msibira, 2017)

[4] In the long-term PCR is an important indicator to take into account since the lack of physical space to host girls risks a return to the situation that was prevalent in previous years where eligible pupils could not be admitted for secondary education because of low PCR capacity

[5] Although PCR is the strongest determinant to secondary school enrollment and hence transition rate, other important indicators are not being considered. These include overcrowding, pupil to desk ratio, pupil to teacher ratio, and pupil to toilet ratio. Cumulatively these contribute to low quality of learning environment and hence low achievement of relevant effective learning outcomes

Table 1: Voluntary and Compulsory Contributions Paid by Girls in Primary and Secondary Education Prior to ETP (2014)

School Item	Amount in TShs.	Amount in USD
School Fees per year	20,000	9
Boarding Fees per year	40,000	18
Payment of securityguard per year	10,000	5
Contributions for desks upon joining the school	50,000	23
For Purchase of school bag, uniforms and various materials (sometimes school organized)	75,000	34
Private tuition (sometimes school organized)	Between 10,000-20,000	5-9

Source: (HRW, 2017: 45-49)

According to Svec (2011), Hedges, Mulder, James and Lawson (2016) there was an entrenched preference among cash trapped poor households to educate male children over their female siblings, contributing to lower enrollment rate among girls, higher risk and exposure to early and arranged child marriages; early, unplanned and unwanted pregnancies; and long-term women disempowerment and gender inequality across the SDGs. HRW (2017) finds the decision to scrap-out contributions in public schools was a significant stride towards eliminating gender disparities in education (SDG 4 Target 5).

The study finds the decision to ban all forms of contributions had evident positive effect on enrollment of girls in primary school. Enrollment of girls to Standard I, for example, rose from 727,727 in 2014 to 1,012,969 in 2016 signifying an increase 39.19 percent (BEST, 2016). Girls represented 48.9 percent of children enrolled in Standard I in 2016. This was a slight decrease from 49.69 percent (of 0.79 percent) proportion of girls enrolled in Standard I in 2014 (BEST, 2016).

Government through the Ministry of Finance and Planning (MoFP) has been implementing basic education policy through the budget. MoFP has been sending subventions of capitation grants to support implement of free basic education and compensate for the voluntary and compulsory contributions that were repealed and banned after introducing free basic education. Although the question of capitation grants needs a separate and detailed study, the study found the implementation of basic education policy as envisaged by ETP (2014) can be challenged following inadequate envisaged capitation grant transfers to run education programmes in schools after fees, voluntary and compulsory contributions were abolished in 2016. This is evidenced by findings from the Government Controller and Auditor General (CAG) found capitation grants to public schools declined and were not disbursed in time to support basic education (NAOT, 2017).

Table 2: Status of Capitation Grants Disbursements in Primary Schools

Year	Amount of Capitation Grants Budgeted (Billion TZS)	Amount of Capitation Grants Disbursed (Billion TZS)	Amount Not Disbursed (Billion TZS)	% of Capitation Grants Not Disbursed
2016	32	8	24	75
2015	54	18	36	67
2014	81	43	8	47
2013	133	97	36	27

Source: President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government in NAOT (2017)[6]

According to MoFP (2017) a total of 15,195,852,000 (USD 7,597,926) was received as capitation grants by 3,593 Government secondary schools between January – June, 2017. This accounts for approximately TSh. 704,882 (USD 353) and TSh. 1,716 (USD 0.8 cents) per school and per student per month (MoFP, 2017).

A stable and steady flow of capitation grants to support implementation of basic education is described as essential since capitation grants,as they stand, have been widely reported to be inadequate to support basic functions of running a school and achieving quality education for girls as stated by the ETP (2014), , MEST Strategic Plan and SDGs (NAOT, 2017; HRW, 2017).[7]

Gender, Education and Development

Gender relations are culturally and location specific (Blackden and Rwebangira, 2004). That is why a short synopsis of the context of gender relations as stands in Tanzania is called for, and wanting in-order to put the gender disparities in basic education into perspective. Gender relations are culturally defined biological division of labour based on sex and other biological and social attributes (TGNP, 2007). According to URT-MCDGC (2011) gender is broadly defined as culturally and socially determined characteristics, values, norms, roles, attitudes and beliefs attributed to women and men through constructed identity in a society (URT-MCDGC, 2011:3). Sex in contrast refers to the biological difference of women and

[6] NAOT stands for National Audit Office Tanzania

[7]This has been a source of public dilemma as some parents in some public schools expressed in parent meetings and through school boards of their willingness to re-introduce voluntary contributions in-order to fill deficits created by insufficient capitation grants in-order to finance recurrent and capital costs needed for normal functioning of schools. The parents were concerned with whether their children were attaining quality education in the public schools. The Government has responded to this twice at the highest level by an order from the President that a total ban on pupil-based contributions should be maintained. The rationale given by Government was the need to adhere to NTP (2014) and the importance of ensuring education access by children from poor families is secured.

men. Achievement of gender equity and women empowerment (GEWE) has been an elusive goal in Tanzania despite constitutional guarantees and ratification of international instruments including United Nationals Convention on gender equity and human rights (HRW, 2017). The driver behind protracted gender imbalances in key human development indicators has been attributed to deeply rooted cultural relations that both favour, and are dominated by men (Blackden and Rwebangira, 2004; TGNP, 2007). Being embedded in culture, a two-prong approach has often been adopted to remove gender disparities in society. These have been to focus on girlseducation as a long-term transformative approach to break the vicious cycle of generation gender disparities (Lokina, Nyoni and Kahyarara, 2016).

The Tanzania Five Year Development Plan (2016-2021) which focuses on human capital for transformation of the economy into a middle-income semi-industrialised economy identifies gender equity and empowerment as key to enhance human capital development and participation in economic transformation for industrialisation (URT-FYDP, 2016). According to the 2012 Census 51.3 percent (more than half) of the population were female (URT-2012 Census, 2013). Ignoring gender parity in human capital development invariable means eliminating direct participation of the majority of the workforce in the economy. Achieving gender parity in education and lifelong learning opportunities for all is key to the long-term transformation of the economy through women economic empowerment (Wuyts and Kilama, 2014). However, as this paper shows there are many constraints girls face in attainment of education.

Study Methodology

The study used Government owned primary and secondary schools as the unit for analysis for examining gender disparities in education. Although BEST (2016) contained data for both public and private schools, public schools were the only relevant ones to the policy directive to implement the NTP (2014) on free basic education. The study conducted secondary analysis of data and information contained in the annual education census and basic education statistics for 2016.Basic education statistics in Tanzania are collected through the annual basic education census, which has been collected annually for decades in each primary and secondary school (NBS and PORALG, 2016). The annual education census is collected annually in all pre-primary, primary and secondary schools.[8]Data and information

[8]According to BEST (2016) the education structure in Tanzania is stipulated in the Education and Training Policy of 1995 as 2–7–4–2-3+, that is; 2 years of pre-primary education (year 1 and 2); 7 years of primary education (Standard I-VII); 4 years of secondary education (Form 1-4); 2 years of secondary advanced level education (Form 5 and 6) and 3 or more years of higher education (BEST, 2016: 17). This study focused on level 2 (7 years of primary

collected from the annual education census is then published as primary education statistics. The study used these data and information datasets as secondary and archival datasets to conduct analysis of gender disparities that presented themselves after commencement of implementation of free basic education in Tanzania. Data collection of the annual education census was conducted through administration of a quantitative structural institutional questionnaire containing 391 basic education statistics indicators (NBS and PO-RALG, 2016).

Being a census, the survey covered all public and private primary and secondary schools. The study instruments were institutional questionnaires meaning one respondent responded on-behalf of the institution. To this end, the questionnaires were filled by heads of school. The data collection process was supervised by Ward Education Coordinators (WECs) and data entry into the Basic Education Information System (BEIS) was conducted by district statisticians. BEIS is an online, web-based system linked to PO-RALG.

The study methodology included analysis of data was analysed to derive simple primary statistical tables on basic education statistics using 391 basic education statistics indicators. Secondary data analysis conducted by the present studywas conducted through Microsoft Excel to provide basic statistics such as rates, ratios, counts, percentages and average.

In addition to the basic education statistics, the study methodology also involved the analysis of other secondary data sources and archival data. The study analysed expenditure reports by MoFP on capitation grant transfers to public primary and secondary schools in financial year (FY) 2016/17. This involved an analysis of amounts transferred per school, per-capita transfers, and distribution of grants by priorities.

The study methodology also involved analysis of semi-processed data available on the Government Open Data Portal at opendata.go.tz which is available at the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data portal http://www.nbs.go.tz/. The study used Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to conduct secondary data analysis of empirical data contained in the NBS data portal.

The study conducted an in-depth analysis of the most current education sector budget to elicit policy commitments to support equitable and quality primary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes for girls. The budget analysis involved analysis and comparison of personnel

education) and level 3 (4 years of secondary education). Combined, the two levels have been termed as "basic education level"

emoluments (PE), other charges (OC) and development budget lines. The study also conducted in-depth Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) in MEST. Ethical considerations were applied as stated in endnote.[i]

Findings and Discussion

This paper provides an assessment whether the implementation of free and universal basic education was contributing to elimination of gender disparities in Tanzania. The SDGs have made a strong link between girls education and long-term gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE). They alsodraw a link between quality education and life-long learning opportunities and attainment of effective learning outcomes by girls which are both relevant for long-term elimination of gender disparities (SDG 4.1). The analysis presented in this study however show despite the policy commitments, there are still a number of factors that militate against gender parity in basic education.

Girls Enrollment in Primary and Secondary (Form 1-4) Education

Available archival data show a total of 4,225,976 girls were enrolled in Government owned primary schools in 2016.[9] This represented 50.66 percent of the total 8,341,611 children enrolled in primary schools.

The gross enrollment for girls in Government secondary schools in 2016 was 693,756.[10] This represented 50.37 percent of all 1,377,049 students enrolled in Government secondary schools. The proportion of girls enrollment in secondary schools was slightly lower by 0.29 percent compared to primary schools. Overall, arguably, gender parity was found to be achieved (and even slightly surpassed in favour of girls) in Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in basic education in Tanzania.[11]

[9]Primary Education in Tanzania is a 7-year education cycle after two years of pre-primary education. It is universal, compulsory and free to all children aged 6 to 12 years old (BEST, 2016). The extent to which students are enrolled in primary education is measured by the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER). GER in the context of Tanzania education statistics is defined at the total number of pupils/students enrolled in a given level of education expressed as a percentage of the corresponding school-age population. Tanzania has been sacksful in enrolling both sexes of school age children.

[10]Formal secondary education consists of two levels. The first level is a four-year programme of Ordinary Level (O-Level) secondary education. The second cycle is a two-year programmed of Advanced Level (A-Level) secondary education. The O-Level secondary education cycle begins with Form 1 and ends with Form 4 whereby Form 1 selection and enrollment in Government and Non–Government secondary schools is subject to the performance in PSLE

[11] Meaning (MDG 4.5 (a) "By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education" was achieved

Main Services Rendered in Fulfillment of Basic Education

The study conducted an archival and secondary analysis of a number of education quality improvement services that were accessed by girls and boys in Tanzania in 2016 as shown by Table 3.

Table 3: Service Provided to Further Equitable and Quality Education in Public Owned Primary Schools in 2016

Service Type	Primary	Secondary
Total No. of Schools	16,087 (0.9% increase since 2015)	3,601 (0.22% increase since 2015)
Total No. of Streams	182,645 in (2.8% increase since 2014)	32,595 (2.01% increase from 2014)
No. of Teaching Staff Available	Total: 191,772 Female: 99,676 7.05% increase from 2015	(Form 1-6) Total:.89,554 Female: 34108 16.1% increase from 2015
PTR (Pupil Teacher Ratio)	1.42	1:16
PQTR (Qualified Teacher Ratio)	(Qualified primary school teachers (teachers Grade A and above 1.42)	1.17
% of shortage in Teacher's Houses	81.1	-
Pupil Classroom Ratio	1:77	1:42
PLR (Pupil to Pit Latrines Ratio) for Female Students	1:56	1:31
% of shortage of Libraries	88	-
Desk to Pupil Ratio	1:5	1:1
% of schools with electricity	22.2	2,253 (62.56%)
% of schools with generator	1.5	567 (15.7%)
% of schools with solar	7.5	1,554 (43.15%)
% of schools with other sources of energy	54.6	114 (3.16%)

Source: BEST, 2016 (PO-RALG)

As it can be seen from Table 3 above, girls in 16, 087 primary schools and 3, 601 secondary schools across the country received various education services in 2016. School facility capacity for example, increased by 0.99 percent and 0.22 percent in primary and secondary schoolsrespectively between 2015 to 2016. This meant more capacity for girls to attend school and take advantage of available free basic education.

Data and information obtained by the study from archival and secondary data sources including BEST (2016) and NBS (2018) show more teaching staff had been recruited to support implementation of basic education in line with ETP (2014); and in-order to increase delivery of quality education especially in under-served areas (MEST, 2017). This is evidenced by data and information shown by Table 3 above that shows teaching staff increased by 7.05 percent and 16.1 percent for primary and secondary schools between 2015 and 2016. This had a positive effect on the Pupil to Teacher Ratio (PTR), a key indicator of quality education to girlswhich stood at 1:42 in

primary and 1:16 in secondary schools. Archival data analysed by the study showed the Pupil to Class Ratio (PCR) for primary schools was still high but an accepted level had been reached for secondary schools where the PCR was closer to the recommended level of 1:35.[12] The ability for teachers to provide quality education has been attributed to availability of houses for teachers. Consequently, a low proportion of teacher's houses contributes to less preparation time, late arrived, early departure and less presence, particularly female teachers, in schools to provide protection to girls. Table 3 above shows shortage of teacher's houses in primary schoolsremained high at 81.1 percent shortage (BEST, 2016).

There are other service provision and infrastructure indicators which continued to limit education provision, access to quality education and learning to girlsas shown by Table 1 above. According to BEST (2016) the pupil class room ratio (PCR) for example remained high at 1:77 for primary schools compared to 1:42 for primary and secondary schools. A high PCR leads to overcrowding which promotes discomfort and sexual harassment to girls (HRW, 2017). Overcrowding contributes to bullying minority girls in class. This contributes to a poor learning environment for girls.

It can further be seen from Table 1 that five girls shared a desk in primary schools. Girls in 88 percent of primary schools did not have access to libraries. School absenteeism for girls has been attributed to lack of toilets facilities in schools which can enable them to change and refresh sanitary towels. However clean and accessible toilet facilities in emergency situations were not available to girls due to overcrowding and inadequate toilets in schools. As it can be seen from Table 3 above that 56 girls shared one pit latrine in primary schools and 31 in secondary schools. The study respondents through KIIs argued long queues to girls toilets at short break-time sometimes forces girls to use nearby thickets which expose them to personal danger, low self-esteem, sexual harassment and abuse. These factors constrain education performance and retention among girls, especially in secondary schools where girls have already reached puberty.

[12]Information obtained by the study from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) revealed the more favourable PCR reached in secondary schools could be a result of both good and bad reasons. The good reason was the massive construction of secondary schools in each ward (approx. 1 secondary school for 4 villages) contributed to the observed decline in PCR. The bad part was, a low PCR could be a result of low transition rate from primary to secondary education; and high drop-outs by girls as they progress to higher levels of secondary education (a trend which will be demonstrated in subsequent sections as being more prevalent among girls). This creates another factor that contributed to gender disparities in secondary education. High drop-out among girls contribute to a classroom dominated by boys and not conducive to the minority remaining girls to learn.

The connection of schools to electricity in 2016 was impressive, particular for secondary schools, but more needs to be done. Connection of schools to electricity enabled girls to access information and communication technology (ICT) practical lessons, as well as practical lessons of other subjects such as physics. It also allowed them to attend night preparatory classes in boarding schools or hostels. Table 1 above shows 62.56 percent of secondary schools were connected to national grid electricity. 15.7 percent had a generator. 43.15 percent had a connection to solar energy.[13]

This was an impressive proportion taking into account more than half of secondary schools were connected to the national grid, and about a half to solar. This proportion is further likely to increase given the Government ongoing effort to connect all villages to the national grid by 2020 through the rural electrification programme under the Rural Electrification Agency (REA). Higher level of school electrification has the likely hood of increasing the application of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in basic education.

This being said, much more effort needs to be done to connect primary school to energy sources. Table 3 above shows connection to electricity and other energy sources was much lower for primary schools. Only 22.2 percent of primary schools were connected to the national grid. Only 1.5 percent and 7.5 percent of the schools had a generator and connection to solar energy respectively. Connection to reliable electricity and other energy sources to schools which are at early states of basic education will contribute to development of skills in ICT, science and practical studies which are essential in today's digitized learning environment and therefore promote gender parity in access to lifelong learning opportunities.

The majority of primary schools – 54.6 percent - depended on "other energy sources" which in most cases is wood fuel (compared to 3.16 percent secondary schools). This meant girls were most likely sent to fetch firewood either during or after classes, contributing to their time used out of classes in extra-curricular activities such as sports and playing during recess. Both are useful for sports and cognitive development.

Factors Militating Against Girls Education

While cognisance is made to the above service provisions towards furtherance of girls education in Tanzania, a critical gender analysis reveals the girl child was still negatively discriminated against fully realising intended learning outcomesin both primary and secondary education. For

[13] In some cases, the count is repeated in that the same school has national grid electricity and/or back-up generator and connection to solar energy

example, girls faced a higher rate of school drop-out compared to boys as shown by Table 4 below.

Table 4: Drop-out Rate among Girls in Primary and Secondary Schools

SN	Reason	Primary		Secondary	
		No.	% Dropout by Reason	No.	% Dropout by Reason
1.	Death	1,334	3.7	316	0.5
2.	Pregnancy	251	0.3	3,439	5.6
3.	Truancy	37,658	96	26,069	42.4

Source: BEST, 2016

It can be seen from Table 4 above that truancy was the leading cause denying girls of education at both primary and secondary levels. Pregnancy as a cause of dropout wasconsistently under-reported due to the unintended effects of the Sexual Offences and Special Provisions Act (SOSPA) of 1998 that criminalized pregnancy to any school girl and consensual sex with girls under 18 years by a male of any age as a capital offence (Awinia, 2008).

In-order to circumvent this and give girls a second chance, school authorities simply recorded pregnancies as truancy, and readmittedthe girls as repeaters to continue with their education after child-birth. The seriousness of the problem of pregnancy and adolescent sexual and reproductive health can be seen when combined with truancy as shown by Table 4 where truancy contributed to 96 percent of dropouts in primary and 42.4 percent in secondary education levels. Furthermore, there was 28.1 percent increase in dropout by girls in primary schools between 2013 and 2015 (BEST, 2016).

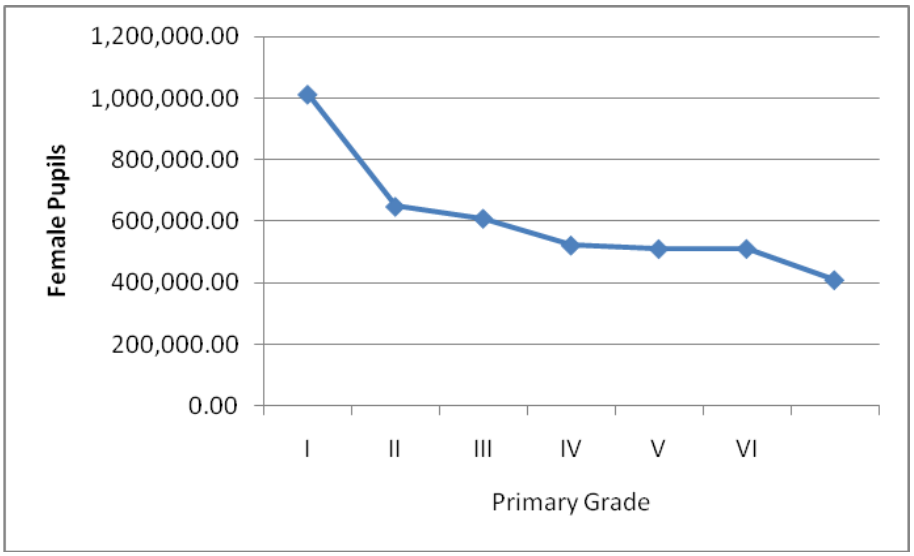

Figure 1: No. of Girls Enrolled in Public Primary Schools

Source: BEST, 2016

As a result of infrastructure and reproductive health challenges faced by girls in basic education, the cumulative impact of this wasthe observed incremental decline in girls enrollment across basic education. The higher the grade the lower the proportion of girls who remained in schools. This is evidenced by Figure 1 and 2 below show the proportion of girls enrolled in primary and secondary schools declined with grade/age.

The same decline patter can be observed for secondary education as shown by Figure 2 below.

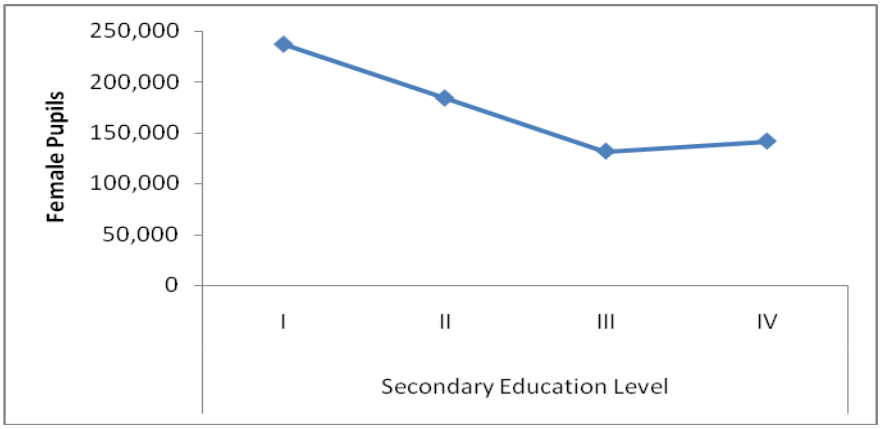

Figure 2: Number of Girls Enrolled in Public Primary Schools

Source: BEST, 2016.

It can be observed there was an increasing trend in dropout of girls as they advance upwards the education ladder in both primary and secondary education. This contributedto a declining Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) for girls.[14] The NER for girls in primary education was 85.8 percent in 2016. Although this may sound impressive on the surface; inversely, it also meantthere were 14.2 percent of school age girls (7-13 years) who were not in school (BEST, 2016).

The NER for public secondary education (Form 1-4) was only 33.4 percent in 2016. This was despite 2016 being the year when free, universal and compulsoryeducation was introduced in secondary education. While the global SDGs call for eliminating gender disparities in education, 66.6 percent of girls at the age of attending secondary education (14-19 years) were not in school.[15] Girls education and retention in primary and secondary is likely to be enhanced with a higher ratio of female teachers who can serve as role models and provide girl friendly services and protection against sexual abuse in schools. Girls were well served in this respect as 51.9 percent of teachers, the majority, in primary schools were female in 2016. The proportion of female teachers in secondary education (Government and Non-Government schools) was lower at 38 percent in 2016.

Gender Disparities in Education Outcomes

Education outcomes are the ultimate measure of the quality of education. School infrastructure, enrollment, retention, teachers and textbook availability is ultimately measured in terms of achieved education outcomes. The study has established that the cumulative impact of the aforementioned gender disparities worked against prospects to achieve SDG 4.1 which states *"by 2030, all girls and boys to complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes."* Ultimately, learning outcomes from an education system are measured by the pass rate. Pass rate is defined as the number of pupils/students who passed an exam expressed as percentage of total candidates who sat for the examination (BEST, 2016). According to URT-

[14]NER represents school age pupils/students enrolled in a given level of education expressed as a percentage of corresponding school-age population. A lower NER means there were more girls of school going age who were not enrolled in schools thereby missing on education

[15] Important to note that NER in secondary education was affected by initial dropout rates in primary and further dropouts in secondary education. There are various factors outside the education system which contribute to this including pregnancies, early/forced marriages, child trafficking as domestic workers and low education achievement which serves as an incentive for dropout

NECTA (2017) 909,950 students set for primary school standard VII examinations (PSLE) and 662,035 passed (Msibira, 2017; URT-NECTA, 2017). This translates to an overall pass rate of 72.75 percent. According to the same source, 480,784 girls set for the exams, which represented 52.8 percent of all pupils who sat for PLSE in 2017. Out of the 662, 035 students who passed, 341,020 were girls representing 51.51 percent among those who passed. However, reflecting critically, although girls were the majority of those who passed PLSE, the pass rate among girls was 70.03 percent, which was lower compared to 74.80 percent among boys.

Regarding the Secondary Education Examinations (CSEE) 385,767 students sat for the exams, 198,036 being girls representing 51.34 percent and 187,731boys; equal to 48.66 percent (URT-NECTA, 2017). Among those who sat for the exams 287,713 passed representing a pass rate of 77.09 percent. Among those who passed 143,728 were girls representing a pass rate of 75.21% among girls and 143,975 boys with a pass rate of 79.06% among boys.

Rouse (2017) argues there were persisting gender disparities in secondary CSEE performance. Only 67 percent of girls passed with Division I – IV compared with 73 percent boys. A greater disparity was also seen in the higher examination grades, with only 22 percent of girls achieving Division I – III compared with 33 percent of boys. Rouse (2017) argued these disparities did not happen in isolation but were a reflection that closer scrutiny and attention is needed on specific needs of girls when implementing basic education policy.

It can be observed that pass rates were significantly higher for boys compared to girls in both PLSE and CSEE. This reflects gender disparities in learning outcomes still persisted in 2017. Gender disparities persisted despite education improvements as the overall, pass rate increased between 2016 and 2017 by 2.4 percent and 7.22 percent for PLSE and CSEE respectively.

Opportunities to address Gender and special Needs of Girls Education

Despite daunting challenges facing the implementation of free basic education for girls the analysis provided by the present study show that budget priorities of MEST remained consistent since 2016. The most recent policy position by the Ministry are the instruments which created MEST stating its main focus is implementation of free, universal basic education, skills development through vocation and technical education, improving quality of education, expansion of enrollment at tertiary and higher learning; as well as increasing research and innovation to transform agriculture and industrialization.

However, the leadership and implementation of education policy was guided by the 1978 National Education Policy, ETP (2014) and the Ministry's Strategic Plan with its vision and goals. The education policy framework as a whole is implemented principally through the national and sector budget which interprets the different education policy instruments.

The goals of the 2018/19 education sector budget were (a) enlarging education opportunities at all levels, and (b) to improve quality of education and training at all levels.[16, 17]However as the saying goes the "taste" or rather the test of policy intentions is "in the pudding" i.e. budget details. This is where opportunities to steer ETP (2014) towards reducing gender disparities is reflected.

It can be seen from Figure 3 below the distribution of the 2018/19 education development budget concentrated on school supervision, teacher education, vocational and technical training and basic education development.

[16] 2018/19 had three objectives two of which are mentioned here, and the third was on strengthening national capacity in science, technology and innovation to support an industrialised economy

[17]Before proceeding in further analysis, it is important to define key concepts often used in budget analysis. The budget is an instrument to implement a country's fiscal policy, which involves a balance of revenue and expenditure to achieve budget objectives. The budget is principally divided into recurrent and development budget. Recurrent on the other hand is divided into PE and OC. PE is principally direct salaries and OC or other expendable and non-expendable ("office running") costs. The development budget is divided into domestic and international ("donors") sources.

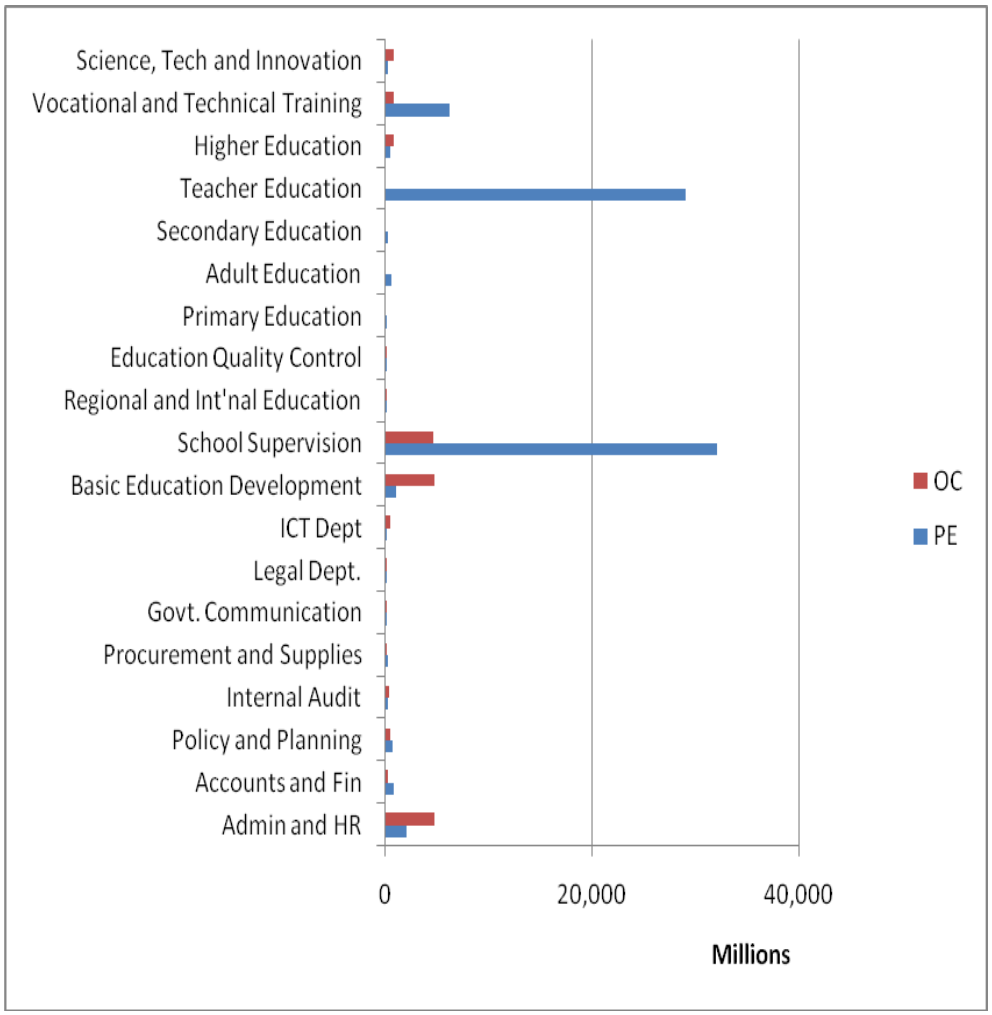

Figure 3: Distribution of PE and OC in MEST – 2018/19

Source: URT-MEST, 2018

Figure 3 clearly stipulates Government priorities in improving supply-side reforms in education implementation as reflected in teacher education and supervision. The strategy is plausible and will benefit girls if they remained in school.[18]

OC are operating funds which reflect education leadership decision to invest in development activities aimed at improving girls education as shown by figure 4 below.

[18] The study finds OC going into a combination of teacher training, school supervision, basic education and vocational and technical training demonstrates a careful and calculated balance, under present budget constraints and competing priorities to benefit girls education in line with the global SDGs

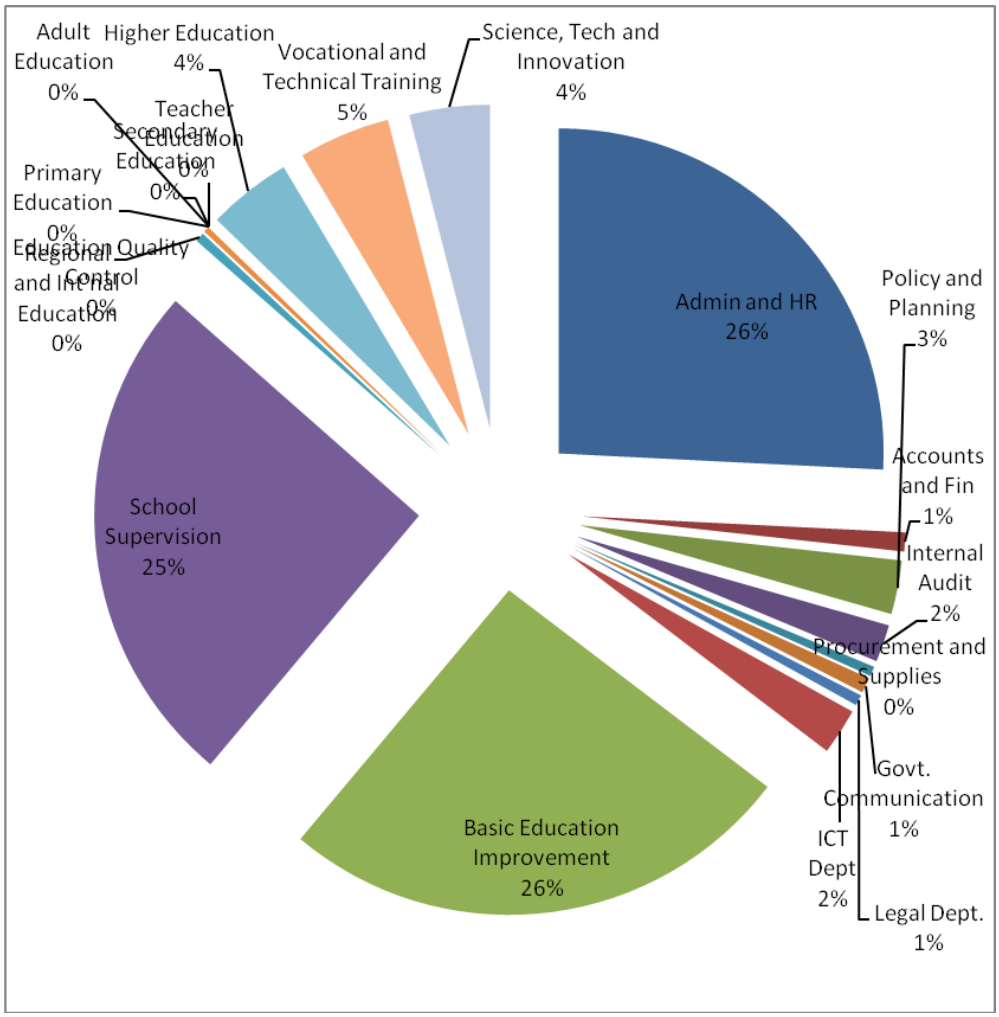

Figure 4: Distribution of Allocation of OC in MEST

Source: URT-MEST, 2018

It can be seen MEST had many policy choices and competing priorities. Many departments and sub-sectors were left unfunded but basic education improvement and school supervision received over 50 percent of OC allocations.

MEST priorities to basic education were not explicit partly because the development budget and implementation of basic education lies under a different Ministry under President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Government) (PORALG). A lion share of MEST development budget allocation went to higher education and the Ministry's own performance improvement, which includes strengthened Monitoring and Evaluation

(M&E), which will be good for identifying priorities for girls education as shown by Figure 5 below.

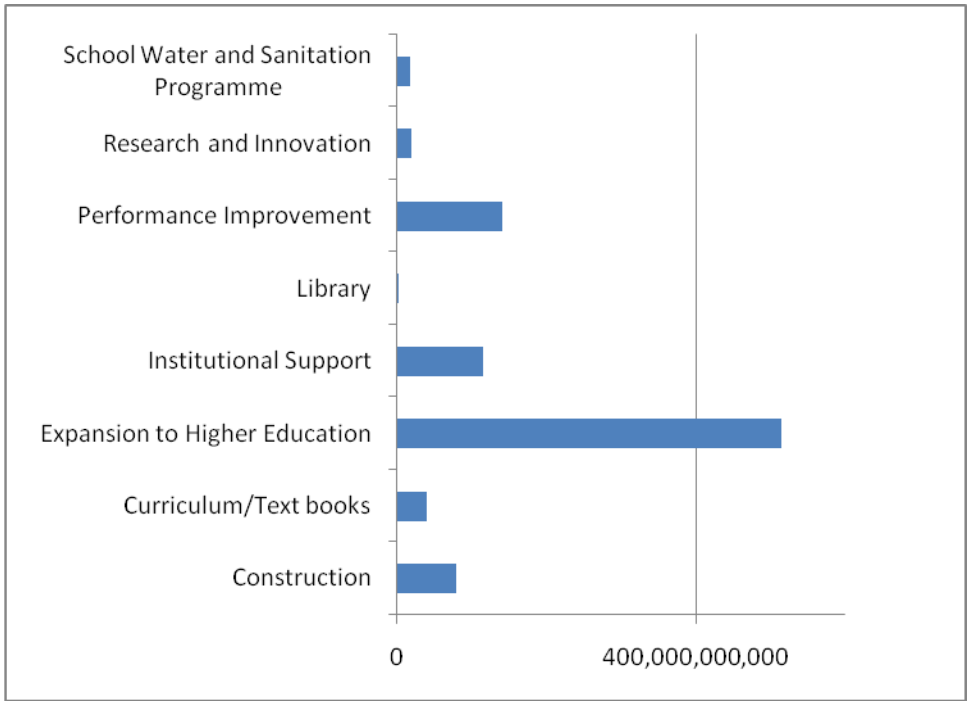

Figure 5: Distribution of MEST 2018/19 Development Budget by Key Expenditure Items

Source: URT-MEST, 2018

Expenditure allocated towards construction, curriculum/text books, performance improvement and school water and sanitation (SWASH) have high impact on girls education.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Despite the post-2015 SDG goal to attain gender parity in all levels of education, the prospect to achieve this goal remains bleak for girls in Tanzania. Girls faced a number of challenges that came in their way to achieve basic education in Tanzania. The rate of school drop-outs was consistently and incrementally higher for girls in both primary and secondary education levels. Girls performed less in primary and secondary exit examinations, which affected their transition rates to higher levels of education. School infrastructure stood-out as a key determinant factor to universal education. The analysis further showed the pupil class room ratio is a key determinant factor in increasing the proportion of students who pass primary education to be admitted in secondary schools. The analysis further revealed pregnancy was a significant determinant of drop-out among girls. Lack of toilet and sanitation facilities in schools was also found

to be a major contributor of absenteeism among girls. Cumulatively, these factors contributed to likeliness of Tanzania to miss SDG education targets. The analysis further showed the Government decision to scrap of formal and informal voluntary and compulsory contributions hadpositively contributed to girls enrollment and retention. Although the step was a positive move to increase enrollment of girls and reduce gender disparities in education; voluntary contributions from parents were insufficiently replaced by capitation grants from budget sources, putting at risk education quality and effective learning outcomes attained.

Despite the foregoing challenges, the implementation of basic education achieved positive developments. School classroom capacity and teaching staff, for example, significantly increased between 2015 and 2016. This move upgraded the pupil//teacher ratio to acceptable levels particularly for secondary education. However, the ratio is likely to deteriorate following dismissal of teachers following Government's crackdown on ghost workers. The study makes several recommendations. The first key recommendation relates to the need to embark on a national programme to construct infrastructure, which makes the school environment safer for girls. This includes construction of water, sanitation, incinerators and toilet facilities in schools. Secondly, the study recommends construction of hostels for girls who travel long distance to schools.

Third, the study recommends the amendment ofprovisions in the 1978 education policy, which calls for expulsion of girls from the education system after they get pregnant. There is a need to recognize reported truancy levels as proxy indicators of drop-outs due to pregnancy so appropriate levels of policy attention to provide second chance to girls can be given to giving drop-outs a second chance after delivery.

Fourth, the study recommends infrastructure expansion as part of a strategy to achieve gender parity in education. School infrastructure development should include construction of secondary education classrooms in-order to reduce the pupil to classroom ratio; and teacher houses. A reduction of the classroom to pupil to classroom ratio will allow higher proportion of girls to make the transition from primary to secondary education. Second it will contribute to retention due to safer classroom environment. Construction of teacher houses will attract posting of female teachers in remote schools. An increased level of female teacher to pupil ratio will contribute to a safer school environment for girls.

Finally, the study ends with a recommendation to MEST and the Basic Education Statistics to increase the level of gender disaggregation to cover

all basic education indicators so further analysis can be done on trends towards attainment of gender parity in education.

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