

**GENDER STEREOTYPES IN INFANT PRIMARY TEXTBOOKS  
AND THE POTENTIAL EFFECT THEY HAVE ON THE  
SOCIALISATION AND EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT OF THE  
GIRL CHILD. AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED PRIMARY  
SCHOOLS IN HARARE**

**Abstract**

Although the Zimbabwe government has, with the help of the NGO community, begun to issue some gender sensitive primary school textbooks, it still lacks the resources to replace completely those which reinforce gender stereotypes which discriminate against girls. The insidious influence of these pernicious stereotypes on the minds of young impressionable children, especially girls, cannot be underestimated. Almost from the first day they enter school, these young learners are typically bombarded with teaching literature and an environment that begin to close off their minds from later choosing career paths which are traditionally and unfairly offered only to their male counterparts. Relying on a wide range of documentary and human evidence collected using a variety of methods, this dissertation employs two main methodologies (i.e., the Women's Law and Human Rights based Approaches) to place this problem in its multiple contexts. These include the entire school environment (focusing on several sample schools); the ministerial/NGO environment (relating, *inter alia*, to the supply of books, curriculum development and budgeting) and the dynamics at play between the government and the international community in terms of several international HR instruments which require the State to eliminate all forms of discrimination in education against girl children. Finally, the writer proposes several legal and non-legal courses of action which she recommends should be taken to eliminate the various challenges faced within each of these contexts.

**BY**

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## **DEDICATION**

To my mother and father you have been a pillar of strength and you have made me to be what I am today. You are surely a blessing from the Almighty God.

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To God Be The Glory.

## **LIST OF STATUTES**

Constitution of Zimbabwe

Education Act Chapter 25:04

## **LIST OF POLICIES**

National Gender Policy

## **ACROYNMS**

ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights.
BEAM	Basic Education Assistance Module.
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child.
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women.
EAS: LOW	Environmental & Agricultural Science: Living in Our World.
EFA	Education For All Dakar Goals.
GEM	Girls Empowerment Movement.
ICESR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
MDGS	Millennium Development Goals
MoESC	Ministry of Education Sports and Culture
NZPE	New Zimbabwe Primary English
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
SDA	School Development Associations
SDA	School Development Committes.
UDHR	Universal Declaration on Human Rights.
ZPH	Zimbabwe Publishing House
ZIM :MoESC	Zimbabwe Ministry Of Education Sports and Culture.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

This research looks at the critical and complex issue of the elimination of sex and gender stereotypes in primary infant textbooks and their effect on the socialisation and educational advancement of the of the girl child. This research has been influenced entirely by human rights instruments, particularly, Article 10 of CEDAW which requires that state parties are obliged to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure that they enjoy equal rights with men in the field of education. Of importance article 10(c) provides that states parties are to ensure:

“ the elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programme and the adaptation of teaching methods”.

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa 2003 (‘the Women’s Protocol’) also, in Article 12, provides for the right to education and training for women and, in particular, states that states parties shall take appropriate measures to:

12 .1 (c) “eliminate all stereotypes in textbooks, syllabuses and the media that perpetuate such discrimination.”

Education is a well-recognized fundamental human right, enshrined in the UDHR 1948 (art 26). It was also restated and expanded in the ICESCR (art. 13) and the CRC (article 29). These treaties recognize that every child has a human right to education and that primary education should be compulsory and free. States must give primary education an immediate priority and ensure it is provided on a non-discriminatory basis. State parties are also to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to

complete a full course of primary schooling. Research has shown that there is a strong link between the school curriculum and gender issues. Thus there is a need to emphasize the importance of education and elimination of gender stereotypes as a means of empowering women. The overwhelming majority of States have accepted long-standing international human rights obligations to eliminate gender inequality and promote the empowerment of women and girls and Zimbabwe is no exception and has the same goal.

Thus the purpose of this research is to critically analyze the extent to which the Government of Zimbabwe in the education sector has done particularly in the textbooks and teaching materials to eliminate such stereotypes. Taking into account that Zimbabwe is a signatory to the major human rights instruments thus placing upon it an obligation to make these rights a reality.

The aim of education is to help the child to develop intellectually, physically, morally, socially and emotionally (Grant: 1996). Through education important values are promoted in children as they grow. Gender stereotypes are one of the most persistent causes of gender inequality. They are rooted in every aspect of life and are encountered at every stage of life. If not dealt with, gender stereotypes become easily imprinted in peoples' thoughts and are (re)produced from generation to generation. The elimination of gender stereotypes in textbooks and teaching materials is a process which can produce successful results only if supported by policy and political will by all concerned in the education sector and the society at large.

The elimination of gender stereotypes is not an impossible mission. For us the society and the world at large to achieve the gender equality and equity we are fighting for there is need to change the gender stereotypical curriculum children are exposed to. It is my submission that one of the major challenges advocates for gender equality and equity are having is the change of people's attitudes. I am also of the view that human rights advocates for women and children have been trying to find ways and means to change people's attitudes and ways but which they have found to be an uphill battle because of the gender stereotypes that they have grown to accept and keep.



However it is my view that that if we channel children in the right direction especially in the education sector on the elimination of gender stereotypes then our fight to change people's attitudes can be achieved in the long run. Education potentially opens doors to alternative occupations for women and girls and is an important tool for development. However there are obstacles girls face in receiving an equitable education and this includes the school curriculum and teaching materials which may have a potential effect on the socialisation of the girl child. Gender role stereotypes still persist because society does not actively challenge them. The research is also dedicated to answering the question of how gender stereotypes embedded in education influence the further education and career choices and opportunities of women and girls including their participation in public life. Gender stereotyping refers to stereotyped images of males and females. Images of males and females are sometimes difficult to see as stereotypes because they are strongly connected with deep-seated beliefs about the roles of males and females in our society. Many people find it disturbing when these roles are questioned.

In Zimbabwe, the meaning of curriculum is taken in a broad sense to mean all the experiences a child is exposed to through school, whether they be planned or unplanned, both in and out of the classroom as well as beyond the school (Ministry of Education: 1996). These experiences come mainly from three sources: (a) the formal curriculum that is planned by the school e.g. mathematics, languages, and sciences, (b) the co-curricular activities e.g. sports, clubs, games, athletics, cultural activities, and educational tours and, (c) the *hidden* curriculum that results from such elements as the manner in which teachers interact with each other, with the children and the community. (Chitiyo: 2004). This curriculum spans across pre-school to high school levels.

## **1.2 Background to the Study**

This study was mainly influenced during one of the human rights lectures when we analyzed the human rights components on the elimination of gender stereotypes in the major human rights instruments. This study was influenced most by textbooks and

teaching materials which are in use in most schools which are gender stereotypical. Children are exposed to learning materials which promotes negative values, attitudes and perceptions on the stereotyped roles of men and women. This made me reflect back in the 1980s when I did my primary education and on the textbooks that were in use that time which were gender stereotypical. Gender roles of boys and girls were emphasized where girls had to stick to their feminine roles and boys to their masculine roles. This impacted greatly to some extent on my socialisation and for some of the girls who I had an opportunity to interview, who were not fortunate enough, impacted greatly on their educational advancement. This inspired me to go out and research the situation on the ground how far we have gone in our own Zimbabwean context on the elimination of these stereotypes. So the research was also to interrogate what the Government through the Ministry of Education Sports and Culture is doing in terms of eliminating gender stereotypes in textbooks and teaching materials. Also interrogating the challenges that are hampering the effective elimination of gender stereotypes at infant primary level.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

The learning materials in most of the primary schools textbooks are not gender sensitive (Zimbabwe MoESC: 2000). Books which are mostly being used in schools tend to promote the gender inequalities that are prevalent in both society and culture. The teaching materials and the textbooks portray images of males and females in a gender insensitive manner which in a variety of ways develop in pupil's values, attitudes and perceptions which are not progressive (Stromquist: 1990). This goes against the major human rights instruments which Zimbabwe is a signatory and puts the child especially the girl child, in a disadvantaged position as far as her education is concerned. Young children absorb whatever they are taught by their teachers and do not often question what they read. Even as they are growing up, they are less likely to challenge the biases that do not immediately threaten them unless they are actively encouraged to do so. Whatever they learn is deemed normal and acceptable as I experienced in my schooling years as I looked upon my teacher as a role model and whatever was taught was easily embedded and accepted in my mind. As a result girls end up lacking in confidence and with a high

sense of insecurity because of the unequal portrayal of men and women in the textbooks. Even their aspirations and contribution to national development are curtailed. This is because of the way they are portrayed in textbooks as inferior and second class citizens as compared to their male counterparts. Thus pupils young as they are, need to develop positive attitudes and values which foster development, gender equality and equity. Thus the popular sayings “*catch them young*” and “*you can not teach an old dog new tricks*” are paramount as it is difficult to change peoples’ attitudes when they are grown up.

#### **1.4 Justification of the Study**

This study is significant in that it seeks to analyze the extent to which the Zimbabwean Government is in compliance with the major human rights instruments as regards the elimination of gender stereotypes in teaching materials and textbooks at infant primary level. This is also a critical area in the education sector as it affects the socialisation process of the girl child in that the school environment itself is very important when it comes to the elimination of these stereotypes. I chose this area of study because it is my argument that if we want to make meaningful gender equality and equity we have to start young as these children are the future leaders of tomorrow. We are what we are because of the things that we see, we learn and what we feed our minds on. So if pupils grow with the right perceptions then our advocacy for equality in society would be easier. Gender stereotypes are prevalent and present in each stage of our life. They shape our behaviour and our choices. They start from early childhood and are conveyed by parental expectations, literature, television, and the school environment. They predetermine and underpin the roles that boys and girls will hold. Later stereotypes will condition young girls but also young boys in their choice of studies and in their choice of career.

The struggle that we now have to conquer is the change of people’s attitudes from policy makers, parliamentarians, judges, magistrates, chiefs and the ordinary women and men on the street. So if children grow with the right attitude from the start then gender equality will be easier to achieve. Since gender stereotypes persist in the school

environment it can therefore have a long term effect on occupational choices and job prospects for both boys and girls. This comes along with the associated disadvantages for girls in so far as female and male occupations, professions and careers do not attract equal financial awards.

## **1.5 Objectives of the Research**

The following were the objectives of the research:

1. To critically analyze the content of primary infant textbooks and to assess whether they reinforce traditional sex and gender stereotypes and the potential effect this has on the socialization of the girl child.
2. To analyze the Education Act Chapter 25; 04 and the extent to which it seeks to eliminate sex and gender stereotypes in infant teaching and infant primary textbooks.
3. To assess whether at the curricula development stage efforts are being made to eliminate sex and gender stereotypes in infant primary level.
4. To analyze the role played by publishers and writers in the elimination of sex gender stereotypical roles at primary infant level.
5. To assess the impact of sex and gender stereotypical books on the socialization and advancement of the girl child.
6. To employ legal and non legal measures that can be used to eliminate sex and gender stereotypes in infant primary textbooks, teaching methods and curricula.

## **1.6 Research Assumptions**

The research was informed by the following assumptions.

1. The content of primary infant textbooks, curricula and teaching materials that reinforces traditional sex and gender stereotypes is gender biased and insensitive to the specific needs of girls.

2. The Education Act Chapter 25; 04 is silent on the elimination of sex and gender stereotypical books and teaching curricula contrary to the provisions of international human rights instruments that call for the elimination of stereotypical books and curricula.
3. At the Curricula development stage there is lack of awareness and no efforts are being made to eliminate sex and gender stereotypes at infant primary level.
4. Publishers and writers have a major role to play in the elimination of sex and gender stereotypes in the textbooks and teaching materials at infant primary level.
5. Gender stereotypical infant textbooks and teaching materials have a potential effect on the socialization and educational advancement of the girl child, such that discrimination on the girl child persists owing to gender biased teaching and infant textbooks which have a long lasting consequence on the girl child.
6. There is need to employ legal and non legal measures that can be used to eliminate sex and gender stereotypes in infant primary textbooks teaching methods and curricula.

## **1.7 Research Questions**

The research questions for the research were as follows

1. Does the content of primary infant textbooks, curricula and teaching materials reinforce traditional sex and gender stereotypes, gender biased and insensitive to the specific needs of girls and women?
2. Does the Education Act Chapter 25; 04 make provision for the elimination of sex and gender stereotypes as provided for in international human rights instruments.
3. Is there awareness on the elimination of sex and gender stereotypes at infant primary level at the Curricula Development Stage?
4. Do publishers and writers have a major role to play in the elimination of sex and gender stereotypes in the textbooks and teaching materials at infant primary level?
- 5 Do gender stereotypical infant textbooks and teaching materials have an impact on the socialization and advancement of the girl child, such that discrimination on the

girl child persists owing to gender biased teaching and infant textbooks which have a long lasting consequence on the girl child?

6. Are there measures that can be employed to eliminate these sex and gender stereotypical roles in infant primary level textbooks, teaching materials and curricula?

## **1.8 Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study was limited to Harare region and in urban Government schools both high density schools and low density schools. The ages of the children chosen were infants from grade 1-3 and their ages ranging on average from 5-7 years. However research was not undertaken in the rural areas for a comparative analysis. This is because of the limited financial resources and the limited time period. Be that as it may schools in Epworth proved to be a useful comparative analysis though they are located in Harare their conditions more or less match those in the rural. All of the primary textbooks were not engaged with. The subjects that were under study were English, Shona, Home Economics, Social Studies and Environmental studies. These subjects were selected as they are the main ones used in schools and form part of the core curriculum. Through the use of language as a means of communication it can be used to portray stereotypical perceptions and may reflect gender biases and gender insensitivity. These subjects also reflect the realities in our world, environment, society which may tend also to be gender stereotypical and deemed to be normal and accepted. Due to the limited time of the research a comprehensive analysis of all grades and textbooks which are equally important and also reflect gender stereotypes was not done and performed. A total of eight schools where research was done and this comprised of high density government school schools, low density government schools and a non Government school. This was to assess the kind of textbooks that are use in the various schools. Infants were chosen as a study group because children when they start school important values are put in them which have lasting consequences on them.

## **1.9 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

### **Sex**

Sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women. They are generally permanent and universal.

### **Gender**

Gender' refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. It also refers to the socially constructed roles and responsibilities of women and men in, a given culture or location. These roles are influenced by perceptions and expectations arising from cultural, political, environmental, economic, social and religious factors, as well as custom, law, class, ethnicity, and individual or institutional bias. Gender attitudes and behaviors are learned and can be changed.

### **Gender stereotypes**

These are unexamined images, ideas or beliefs associated with a particular group that have become fixed in a person's mind and are not open to change. It is the constant portrayal, such as the media or in books, of women and men occupying social roles according to the traditional gender division of labour in a particular society. Such gender role stereotyping works to reinforce the traditional gender division of labour by portraying it as "normal" and "natural". Thus society's perceptions and value systems instill an image of women as weak, dependent, subordinate, indecisive, emotional and submissive. Men, on the other hand, are strong, independent, powerful, dominant, decisive and logical.

### **Gender Sensitivity**

The ability to recognize gender issues and to recognize women's different perceptions and interests arising from their different social position and different gender roles. Also

the ability to recognize gender issues which remain “hidden” from those with a more conventional point of view.

### **Infants**

In this research infants are going to be taken from the ages of 5-8 years that will be the average of children from grade one to three as per information obtained from the MoESC.



## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

To augment the methodological consideration that underpinned this study, literature review was also considered. The purpose of this chapter is to review research and writings on the elimination of sex and gender stereotypes. The literature reviewed indicates that though Zimbabwe has made advances in educational development since 1980, there still remain challenges in realizing the goals of gender equality and equity in education, which are critical to the achievement of Education For All goals (EFA). Serious disparities and inequalities persist in the system with gender being a key component. In the education sector elimination of gender stereotypes is very crucial for the educational advancement of the girl as it is also a stepping stone in the realization of other pertinent human rights. Although females comprise 51% of the population, they are represented in less than that amount in pupil's textbooks. Psychologists and leaders of liberation groups affirm that gender stereotyping in children's books has detrimental effects on children's perception of women's roles. Therefore, illustrated children's books that view women positively can be used to eliminate these stereotypes. (Angela M Gooden).

### **2.2 The Zimbabwean Perspective**

The works of Rosemary Gordon are relevant as regards research done on a local level in the Zimbabwean education sector (Gordon: 2004). Much of the research done in the education sector is donor driven especially by UNICEF which is a positive development as regards the realization of gender equity and equality in Zimbabwe and a step forward in the elimination of gender stereotypes. She states in her abstract that:

Recent research in Zimbabwe, as elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa, is confirming that schools play a major role in socializing children into the adult gender roles

they will carry out both in the family and the economy. Boys are taught to be 'masculine' and girls 'feminine' according to the norms of their society .Such education cannot contribute to development an increased gender equality.

A study by Brickhill et al (1996) has shown that school textbooks also play a large part in perpetuating the exposure of Zimbabwean pupils to gender stereotypes. They studied 42 primary school textbooks used in Zimbabwe and they found, gender stereotypes in educational resources that:

..negatives representations of women as housewives who cook and clean and nag their children and husbands...an absolute preponderance of women associated with children and men associated with property ...In social studies teachers are openly advised to encourage gender stereotyping ...the father is the provider and takes important decisions .The mother is the housewife and supporter of the father. No other roles are even acknowledged.

However almost fifteen years since this research was done by Brickhill in 1996, current textbooks that are still in use in some of the schools are gender stereotypical which continues to impact negatively on the girl child and her educational advancement.

Rosemary Gordon a well known researcher and lecturer in the academic field in the education sector analyzed the formal and the hidden Curricula. She argued that an important aspect of education which channels children into gender roles is the curricula that they are permitted to study. The formal curricula inherited by Southern African States including Zimbabwe at Independence was modeled on the British education system ,in which girls were educated for domesticity (Wolpe ,1994) and boys prepared for employment in the public sphere ,fitting them the role of family head and bread winner (Davison and Kanyuka 1992; Gordon 1995a).

Prior to independence the Curriculum in Zimbabwe was gender differentiated, boys and girls being directed into different areas. Boys were offered subjects such as metal work, building and technical drawing and encouraged to study the hard sciences. Girls on the other hand were offered shorthand typing and home economics. Extra curricular activities such as sports were also gender differentiated. Participation in sports was considered essential for males, with rugby being considered the most 'masculine' and 'virile' of all sports (Gordon: 2004).

The situation has in the main, continued to the present day. Whilst some attempt was made at state level to encourage schools to offer boys and girls the same subjects, this has largely been left to the discretion of individual school heads. In general boys and girls continued to be directed into different vocational and technical courses. Where offered the same choices, girls and boys have been found to opt for those subjects traditionally offered to and girls and boys, respectively (Gordon, 1995a). This may be explained by factors in the school other than whether or not subjects are available to both sexes. These factors include the gender typing of subject as 'masculine', or feminine by teachers, parents and other pupils (MoESC, UNICEF: 2000), (Gordon: 2004). The typing of subjects in this way is also related to perceptions of masculine and feminine occupations in the wider society, and the gender differentiated nature of the occupational structure in Zimbabwe.

Thus while formal curricula may appear to be gender neutral, the hidden curricula may influence children to make gender specific choices. Subjects presently typed masculine or feminine by teachers and pupils include maths, building woodwork, physics, chemistry metal work technical graphics geography and history. The local languages Shona and Ndebele ,English Language ,religious Education ,Biology ,fashion and fabrics ,food and nutrition and commerce are typed as feminine ( MoESC:200). Those subjects typed masculine are seen as prerequisites for occupations typed as masculine, tradesman, scientist, airline pilot doctor for example. Feminine subjects are perceived as being useful to women in their roles as mothers and housewives and in occupations appropriate for women nurse, teacher, child minder, secretary.

It would seem therefore that the primary gender socialisation to which children are exposed in the home is reinforced in the schools and is further translated into anticipatory socialisation in relation to adult roles in the family and economy.

Gender stereotypes developed in the early years continue to be reinforced in school years by family, the school environment. Indeed research has indicated that whilst young

peoples attitudes may challenge gender stereotypes, these views are tempered by the inequalities that they observe around them in the worlds of work and in their own families resulting in their behavior gender typical (Tinkin et al, 2004). An important influence of young peoples behaviour is the school environment which perpetuates and reinforces existing gender stereotypes observed in the wider society rather than questions them (Holdsworth:2007). School books include images of gender stereotypes of behaviour of men and women boys and girls (Marinova; 2003) and teachers are themselves products of the wider society) hold their own ingrained stereotypes beliefs about the appropriate gender roles. These together influence the expectations of boys and girls and the future roles that they will play in society. Crucially they impact upon subject choice and level of achievement in different subjects.

The Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training in 1999 led by Dr C.T. Nziramasanga also had the same findings on lack of gender equity and equality in the education sector hampering the educational advancement of the girl child. This was also due to gender stereotypes that were prevalent in most textbooks. The Commission also had the findings that the main challenges in the education sector included the development of gender balanced curricula at all levels of education. This is also encompassed overcoming gender biases in educational materials like textbooks, audio visual aids and also in language, expressions, idioms, and characterizations. Overcoming traditional and other practices and stereotyping that impede equal access to education and achievement of girls and women in education at all levels was a challenge for the new millennium (Nziramasanga: 1999).

Thus the elimination of gender stereotypes in the Zimbabwean textbook is of paramount importance in making sure that girls' potential and educational advancement is not curtailed by gender stereotypes.

In Zimbabwe in 1995 a team of educationists from the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture carried out an analytical review of textbooks used in schools. Their review established that the learning materials in most of the primary school textbook in use at

that time were not gender sensitive ( ZIM MoESC, UNICEF 2000). Thus the promotion of such gender stereotypical values went against the major human rights instruments. One way of dealing with this problem was to withdraw all textbooks which are in use at present and then rewrite and reprint new textbooks which are gender sensitive. This however was found to be a time consuming and costly exercise which the Ministry could not afford. Thus the Gender Resource Book for teachers was produced and has two objectives. It helps the teacher acquire the knowledge and skills to recognize gender insensitive material when he or she comes across it in existing textbooks or other teaching and learning materials .Secondly it gives the teacher suggestions on effective ways of handling gender insensitive material in the classroom situation.

Through the international human rights instrument that promote gender equality and equity of women, policies, and research done in Zimbabwe has greatly influenced the change in curricula issues. This has made Zimbabwe in the education sector revise all its syllabuses and textbooks so that they eliminate gender stereotypes even at infant primary level.

### **2.3 Elimination of Gender Stereotypes on an International level**

The issue of elimination of gender stereotypes has been a topical issue in the international arena where most countries have taken it upon themselves to eliminate gender stereotypes in their school curricula (Gortna: 2008). International human rights framework also provides a standard and measures in which also states parties are to adopt. Efforts to meet the educational requirements of children by Governments have been hampered by economic factors. Accordingly at the World Conference on Education For All<sup>1</sup>, reaffirmed that education is a fundamental right for all people, women, and men of all ages, throughout the world and adopted a Declaration entitled '*Education for All :Meeting Basic Learning Needs.*' A key Article in the Declaration is Article 111 which provide for "Universalizing Access and Promoting Equity'. Article 3 provides that:

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<sup>1</sup> A Conference which brought together representatives of Governments ,international and bilateral development agencies ,and non governmental organizations. The Conference was organized under the auspices of UNESCO –Jomtien ,Thailand ,March 5-9 ,1990

The most urgent priority is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of education for girls and women and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation. This effectively means all gender stereotyping in education should be eliminated.

At an international level it is therefore trite that gender stereotypes in textbooks have to be eliminated.

## **2.4 Point of Departure**

However the point of departure of this research is really to intensively assess the extent to which the Government of Zimbabwe has complied with these international human rights instruments. Despite the research that has been extensively done by the NGOs and the Ministry itself what gains have been made as regards the elimination of gender stereotypes at an international level. I will also assess how far we have gone with gender issues and are teachers; the actors in the MoESC are really understanding gender issues. Also to assess after almost 15 years after the research on the elimination of gender stereotypes by Brickhill (1996) in 1995 and also by a team of educationists from the MoESC has been done what the situation is like on the ground as regards the elimination of gender stereotypes at infant primary level.

Elimination of gender stereotypes is a powerful agent of progress and is essential and a key to development. Gender stereotypes, like all other social evils, is something that is deeply ingrained in most, if not all, cultures, and will take a long time to truly defeat. However there is great need to address gender stereotypes as children are growing so that they grow with the right perceptions.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This Chapter summarizes and discusses the theoretical framework and the methods used in the research. The evaluation and limitations of the methods are also outlined. The methodological approach used drew mainly on six perspectives outlined below. The study consisted of quantitative methods of analysis. This method was also supplemented by reviews and synthesis of earlier research done at a national level and was designed to identify the main factors affecting girls educational advancement and the elimination of gender stereotypes in infant primary textbooks.

### **3.2 Women's Law Approach**

As this study was about elimination of sex and gender stereotypes in infant textbooks and teaching materials women and girls are the most who are portrayed in an gender insensitive way and subjected to their roles as mothers and careers. I embraced the women's law approach in so far as one of its facets is to critique the interplay between law and life. This approach helped me to assess how women and girls are considered in textbooks and teaching materials from a woman's perspective and whether they are getting fair treatment vis a vis in the way they are being portrayed in textbooks. This approach is a woman centered legal discipline which takes women's actual lived experiences and life situations based on sexuality, birth care and domestic work as a starting point for the analysis of the position of women in law and in society (Dahl :1987). This approach was useful to me as I collected empirical data about the lived experiences of women. I looked at critically analyzing the existing textbooks and teaching materials to verify what they provide for and then proceeded to hear from the

women and girls themselves what problems they face as a result of the way they are portrayed in the textbooks and the teaching materials.

Women and girls narrated their own stories and experiences in their own words as opposed to the views of the writers and publishers and curricula developers and their portrayal in the textbooks. Thus the women's law approach was useful as it records and analyses female life situations and values and reveals issues and dynamics that are seldom evident in the male dominated legal culture. Such a basket approach offered me a variety of tools to engage with in light of the lived realities of women and girls who are normally portrayed in a gender stereotypical way by the books that are in use in schools. The portrayal is based on stereotypical roles of women and men that are incorrect and inaccurate and do not reflect the current realities in our own society.

The women and girls spoke of their experiences and the impact of gender stereotypes in their lives. Women and girls could reflect back on their lived experiences how gender stereotypes had an effect on them as regards the subject they took in the school and their career choices.

### **3.3 Grounded Theory Approach**

The grounded theory approach as an iterative process i.e. a process characterized by involving repetition to get a desired result enabled me to constantly engage with data I had collected, sift and manage it, consider it and determine what to collect next( Bentzon :1998 ). This was a useful approach which was critical in as far as it allowed me to constantly engage with the data I had collected and determine what data to collect next. It was a useful method as it uses empirical data to define a problem and use this empirical data to propose appropriate intervention measures to address the problem. The knowledge of grounded theory helped me to see the situation on the ground and getting the meaning out of it and identify gaps and other new sources of data to help fill gaps identified. Before I went into the field my assumptions was based on the fact that the textbooks reinforced traditional gender stereotypes and there was lack of awareness at the CDU on



the elimination of gender stereotypes. However it came out during the research that the CDU was aware of the need to eliminate gender stereotypes though they were factors that hindered the effective operation of the department. As a result of their awareness they already had a new syllabus for the primary schools even at infant level that were eliminating gender stereotypes. Thus the old syllabus was no longer current though it was still being used in most of the high density schools. Thus in my research I had to take into account both the syllabuses the old one still in use in schools that was gender stereotypical as it still had a potential effect on the socialisation of the girl child using it and the new syllabus that had eliminated the gender stereotypes and also had a potential effect on the girl child.

### **3.4 Human Rights Approach**

Human Rights Approach was a useful method in so far as it assesses the extent of the states compliance with international human rights instruments in the elimination of sex and gender stereotypes in the educational system at primary level.

Human Rights provide a standard set of measures on the standards of rights that women and children are entitled to and specify state obligations as bearer of women's and children's rights. They ensure the implementation of these abstracts rights into real and substantive rights. The approach was useful as it helped me to assess the extent to which the state is complying with the human rights provisions in terms of elimination of gender stereotypes in textbooks. Whether these rights are being recognized as fundamental human rights or not. Thus the Zimbabwean government as a signatory to major human rights instruments whether in the textbooks and the teaching materials it has complied with the elimination of sex and gender stereotypes and whether the educational laws and policies are in line with the human rights instruments. Thus I had to look at the Education Act Chapter 25:04, the Zimbabwean Constitution and also the National Gender Policy 2004 to assess the states compliance with international instruments on the elimination of gender stereotypes.

Secondly, international human rights norms place an obligation on States to take *positive* steps to ensure that the right to gender equality is fulfilled. The State emerges as a key actor regulating and promoting educational processes and outcomes. It is not sufficient to provide increased access to education generally with the hope that girls will indirectly benefit when gender stereotypes are not being eliminated in the textbooks. For example, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has said that the duty to protect means that States should ensure that third parties, including parents and employers, do not stop girls from going to school.

### **3.5 Actors and Structures Perspective**

The educational system has institutions involved in it which interact with actors, thus there is need of an interrogation of these actors and structures as they have an impact on the girl child. In my research I scrutinized the role played by these structures i.e. the MoESC, the Curriculum Development Unit, The Gender Desk in the MoESC , SDA/C. Publishers, a writer, teachers, school heads, parents, girls, the SDA, NGOs as actors in the education system There was a need to look at these actors and structures that women and girls as actors also in the education sector engage with in their quest for education. This approach enabled me to interrogate the players and their experiences. Using this approach I managed to get the different perceptions and attitudes personnel in the Ministry and parents. It is an approach which allows the researchers and the women researched the opportunity to act as agents of change rather than as passive observers or victims (Bentzon :1998). It assumes that social and legal change takes place through interaction between human beings as individuals or groups and not through some seemingly abstract medium such as the law (Bentzon:1998 ). The actors and structures approach helped me to analyze the impact of the different actors and structures on the elimination of gender stereotypes.

### **3.6 Sex and Gender Analysis**

The education system itself is gendered especially at the infant primary level where children are made aware of their sex and gender where feminine roles and masculine roles are emphasized, through textbooks and teaching materials and the school environment. This approach was very useful in interrogating and establishing the reasons why the girls are portrayed in their feminine roles and boys in their masculine roles in the textbooks both current and old in use at infant primary level. Women are subscribed to their gender roles of child rearing and because of their gender and undervaluation of their roles as mothers they at times do not get fair treatment even in the education system. The gender roles of men and women result in girls being disadvantaged in the education system as regards elimination of gender stereotype.

### **3.7 Feminist Theories Liberal Feminism**

The liberal feminists argue that female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that blocks women's entrance and or/success in the so called public world (Dahl: 1997). This feminist approach was very useful in understanding why textbook portray women and girls in gender stereotypical roles. That even the curricula developers, writers, and publishers of textbooks has the false belief that women are, by nature less intellectually and/ or physically capable than men, thus excluding women from the academy, the forum and the market place. This is through the formulation of the syllabuses and the illustration that are portrayed in these textbooks which are largely gender stereotypical. As a result of this policy of exclusion, the true potential of many women goes unfulfilled. As liberal feminists argue that there is need to make the rules of the game fair and free women from oppressive gender roles. This includes roles that have been used as excuses or justifications for giving women a lesser place or no place at all. Thus in the textbooks there is need to eliminate gender stereotypes inter alia in professions, careers and portray women and girls in a gender balanced manner.

### **3.8 RESEARCH METHODS**

Quantitative methods were used in order to collect factual data. In addition to this method the following methods were used to provide insights into the underlying social processes and factors and challenges on the elimination of gender stereotypes.

#### **3.8.0 DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

##### **3.8.1 Primary and Secondary Data**

Both primary and secondary data were reviewed at the start as well as during the course of the study. Secondary data included a review of the available literature on theory, related research on elimination of gender stereotypes and those carried out in Zimbabwe. Data was also gathered from the internet. Primary data was gathered from respondents who were sampled for this study. This was on their views on barriers to girl's education in their locality, policy issues and on the elimination of gender stereotypes.

##### **3.8.2 Data Gathering Instruments**

The Questionnaire was used at the CDU (Annexure A) in the form of open ended questions to gather some of the data. Inclusion of open ended questions provided for the expression of respondents views and understanding of the issues by the respondents. As a data collection method photographs and video filming was also done at Chinamano primary school on the GEM club and its activities and posters in the classroom that have eliminated gender stereotypes.

### **3.8.3 Interviews**

In depth semi structured and unstructured but focused interviews were conducted with key informants. To ensure focus interviews schedules /guides containing categories of information (topics) to be covered were utilized. Semi structured and unstructured interviews gave room for deeper probing, and explanation of issues raised. Respondents were able to clarify answers to previous questions, to discuss the implications of issues or points raised and to raise points which from their own perspectives are important but which may not have been anticipated by researcher.

### **3.8.4 Key Informant Interviews**

Key informant interviews were conducted. The key objective of the interviews was to obtain information from individuals who are currently directly and indirectly involved with gender issues in the Ministry. Key informant interviews were helpful as I used unstructured questions as out lined above so that the respondents could explain liberally without any restrictions on the importance of eliminating gender stereotypes. Key informants had special knowledge about gender and were connected in some way with issues involved and narrated their story using their own experiences and observation. I had research questions and assumptions which helped in my line of questioning. The interviewees also provided useful information to the research as they were already in the education system. The interviews where conducted in schools, MoESC offices, in the community, at the market and at the respondents individual offices. In selecting the respondents care was taken to ensure equitable representation by gender, age, and area of residence.

The individuals interviewed were the:

- Personnel at UNICEF in the Education Department.

- MoESC staff, the Gender Focal person on the Gender Desk.
- Individual in-depth interviews were also held with parents, girls, women and men.
- Publishers and a writer.
- Teachers were asked to express their views on how they perceived the school and home /community environment and in terms of promoting gender equity and the gender stereotypical textbooks that are in use and address girl's safety and security needs and equitable treatment by teachers, parents and boys.
- Parents/ guardians not in leadership positions were also interviewed and problems they faced with respect to education of the children as regards elimination of gender stereotypes at infant level.

**TABLE OF RESPONDENTS**

RESPONDENTS	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
Curriculum Development Unit Personnel (Material Production Officers)	2	1	3
Gender Desk /Gender Focal Person (MoESC)	1	-	1
Headmasters	2	6	8
Deputy Headmasters	1	1	2
Teachers (Infant Primary)	7	1	8
UNICEF(Officers in the Education Department)	1	1	2
Publishers (Longman Zimbabwe, College Press, ZPH )	2	1	3
Writers	-	1	1
Parents, (including one male SDA Chairperson)	8	3	11
Girls	6	-	6
			45

### 3.8.5 Focus Group Discussion

One focus group discussion of pupils made up of only girls as it is only a girls club in Epworth expressed their views on the school, community and home environments. The questions centered on gender equity, problems that they faced when it comes to gender stereotypes and the groups of children ranged from Grades 4 to 7 and a few grade 3s. This was held at Chinamano Primary School with girls in a programme called Girls Empowerment Movement (GEM). Another focus group discussion was held with personnel from the CDU who were material productions officers for various subjects.

#### Focus Group Discussion

GROUP	Females	Males	Total
Girls Empowerment Movement (GEM) Epworth Chinamano Primary School	26	-	26
Curriculum Development Unit (CDU)	2	1	3

### 3.8.6 Discussions

This was also held with high school girls on how they perceived the gender stereotypes in textbooks and the effect these stereotypes had on their choice of careers, subjects and their educational advancement. Also a discussion was held with parents at an SDA meeting on the issue of availability of current textbooks that were eliminating gender stereotypes.

### 3.8.7 Documents

A content analysis of textbooks as shown below was also done to assess the extent to which the material that is in use in schools is gender stereotypical.

**List of textbooks Used**

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>TITLE OF TEXTBOOK</b>	<b>PUBLISHER</b>
	<b>ENGLISH</b>		
1		New Zimbabwe Primary English Grade 1 Books 1-3 1986, 1994,1995 Editions	Longman
		New Zimbabwe Primary English Grade 1 Pre-reader 1994	Longman
		Ventures English Alive Grade 1 Book 3 1997	Longman
		English Alive Grade 1 Books 1- 3 1994	College Press
		New Primary English Grade 1 Book 1- 2 2003	College Press
2		New Zimbabwe Primary English Grade 2 Books 1-3 1994	Longman
		English Alive Read and Do Book 1 Grade 2 1994	College Press
		English Alive Picture Zimbabwe 1994	College Press
3		English Alive 1994,1996	College Press
	<b>SHONA</b>		
1		Gore Rekutanga	College Press
2		Gore ReChipiri Bhuku Rekutanga 1993,1999	College Press
		Gore ReChipiri Bhuku ReChipiri 1993,1999	College Press
		Gore ReChipiri Bhuku ReChitatu 1999	College Press
		Pindikai 2 Bhuku 1 1989	Longman
		Pindikai 2 Bhuku 3 1989	Longman



3		Pindukai 2 Bhuku 3 1989 Pindukai 3 Bhuku 3 1996 Nhaka Yeupenyu 1989 Gore ReChitatu 1994	Longman Longman ZPH College Press
	Home Economics		
1			
2		Home Economics Grade 3 1995	Longman Zimbabwe
3		Home Economics Grade 3 1996, 1995	Longman Zimbabwe
	Social Studies		
1		Living and working together Stage I Book 1 1994  Ventures Living Together Social Studies Stage One Book 1 (Grade One) 1997	Longman Zimbabwe  College Press
2		Ventures Living Together Grade 2	College Press
3		Ventures Living Together Grade 3, Stage 2  Living Together ,Stage 3	College Press  College Press
	Environmental Science		
1		Environmental & Agricultural Science: Living in our World. Grade 1 (EAS:LOW) 1994	College Press
2		(EAS:LOW) Grade 2 1994	College Press
3		(EAS:LOW) Grade 3 1994	College Press

### **3.8.8 Observation**

These were in the form of class observation of lessons and an observation of an SDA meeting at a school in Chitungwiza. These were conducted in order to obtain information about the actual class process and problems encountered by teachers as they were teaching gender issues and how the pupils responded to gender stereotypes. Thus teacher's attitudes towards gender issues were observed. Observation was also done on the roles of both boys and girls in the classroom when lessons were ended. In most high density school pupils themselves clean the classroom, pick up papers to prepare for the next class since most schools are characterized by hot sitting. It was one of my findings that both boys and girls participated in the cleaning of the classroom.

Observation of lessons conducted at various primary schools, observing an SDA school development association meeting to get what parents think, budget allocation as regards school textbooks. At first I attended an SDA meeting posing as a parent to get information without revealing my identity as a researcher. My main aim was to get what the parents view were generally and if any one of them could raise issues that affected the girl child. Most importantly was the issue of budgeting itself to assess if there was any gender budgeting at all especially on issues that affected the girl child. The issue of textbooks was also raised in the meeting. After observing the meeting I then interviewed the chairman on the issue of the budget.

Throughout the data collection process, great care was taken to ensure that confidentiality and individual privacy of the participants were upheld. Most teachers did not want their names to be revealed as they feared for their jobs as they were skeptical on where the information was going. This was despite my assurance that it was solely for academic purposes. In order to gain the consent of the participants, I first explained the objectives of the interviews and entertained questions to clear any suspicions. Clearance letters from the Ministry to enter schools was very useful as every headmaster wanted to know if I had authority to interview them and do research at their schools.

### List of Schools Visited

NAME OF SCHOOL	TYPE OF SCHOOL
Budirirai Primary School	High Density Government School
Seke 8 Primary School	High Density Government School
Epworth Primary School	High Density Government School
Chinamano Primary School	High Density Government School
Groombridge Primary School	Low density Government School
St Martins Convent	Trust School
Shiriyedenga Primary School	High Density Government School
Moffat Primary School	Middle Density Government School

### 3.9 Limitations of the research methods

I had planned to interview the secretaries of MoESC on the policy issues but because of their busy schedules, this was not possible. It was not also possible to interview all the SDA/SDC in all the school especially on their budgeting standards and the buying of current textbooks that are eliminating gender stereotypes. Only one SDA meeting was attended in a meeting where I had to pose as one of the parents. Thereafter I had to interview one of the chairpersons who is a lawyer by profession who was not aware of a gender sensitive budget and did not have access to the book on gender sensitivity on SDA/SDCs.

I also had to research if there is any particular policy in the MoESC particularly dealing with the elimination of gender stereotypes. However it was also difficult to access the MoESC policies as I made frequent visits to the Ministry where I was referred from one office to another as the people responsible in the registry stated that that they was no policy specifically dealing with elimination of gender stereotypes. Further, most of the policy circulars were very old. The officers in the Registry department were not aware of the policies as they only complained that they were a lot of circulars and some are written

as Directors, Secretaries or Ministers Circulars which they were not filed in the registry where policies are kept and might have something on gender stereotypes. At the same time they were not quite sure if the policies on gender stereotypes existed or not. As regards my class observations I had also to be wary of the teachers attitudes which were artificial as they were aware of my research topic and acted in a positive way.

The methodological and research methods were useful in data collection and provided a useful insight into women's and girls lived experiences in the elimination of gender stereotypes.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS and ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the main findings on the elimination of sex and gender stereotypes at infant primary level and its effect on the socialisation of the girl child. Emerging issues that came during the research period that were not anticipated are also included as part of the research findings. These findings are being informed by the assumptions that I had before I went in the field to research. The gender stereotyping and perceptions of roles and activities appropriate for men and women in the wider society were cited by teachers and school heads as responsible for gender differences in attendance and performance patterns that disadvantaged girl's education. Girls are socialized into feminine domestic roles in the expectation of marrying and being supported by their future husbands. This diminishes the value and utility of education for them affecting their educational advancement and socialisation (ZIM MoESC, UNICEF: 2000).

As regards gender stereotypes in the home and which are also reinforced in schools some teachers and some parents agreed that some negative attitudes against girls and women in general were responsible for girl's poor performance at school in the urban areas. It should also be taken into account that women and men were created equal beings physically and spiritually to complement each other for the common good. Thus they need to ensure that gender stereotypes are not to be allowed in material that children have access to in schools.

### **4.2 CLASSIFICATION OF STEREOTYPES**

Most works on stereotyping classify them into positive and negative stereotypes. According to Saville-Troike (1982:182), stereotyping is positive when it is a necessary and inevitable process "for establishing preliminary relationships" and for socialisation.

But when stereotyping is based on incorrect and inaccurate information and is used in defense of a position in society, or disaffiliation or for propaganda, then it is negative. Stereotypes that are found in most textbooks below do not portray the realities in our world. Women are still depicted in their gender stereotypical roles yet times have changed and have women who have made it in the so called male dominated fields and as such textbooks need to be gender balanced.

#### **4.2.1 What are these gender stereotypes?**

There was need to interrogate the kinds of stereotypes that were most prevalent in the textbooks. As I analyzed the textbooks contents and teaching materials the following stereotypes below were found to be prevalent. Previous research has shown that gender stereotypes have a major effect on the socialisation and educational advancement of the girl child (Gordon: 2004). Since stereotyping is the creation of fixed impressions about the roles and relationships between men and women these were found to be the case in the textbooks. What is reflected and portrayed in the textbooks is also the lived reality of the girl child who is viewed in a gender stereotypical manner by the society and the world at large. Examples are given below to illustrate the gender stereotypes that are prevalent in the textbooks. They are many examples but cannot be covered in this research.

In the discussion of the types of gender stereotypes I will also discuss the effect of gender stereotypical infant textbooks and teaching materials and the potential effect on the socialization and educational advancement of the girl child, such that discrimination on the girl child persists owing to gender biased teaching and infant textbooks which have a long lasting consequence on the girl child.

#### **4.2.2 The home as a model for stereotypes**

The stereotypes commonly found in most textbooks were stereotypes that mainly emanate around work in the and around the home. Books largely drew their content from real life and the world of work is one important area frequently written about. Thus in

most books that are in use in schools they categorizes men's work and women's work. Women's work is usually characterized to be in the home and men's work in more challenging outdoor activities. More over naturally the pictures which support the text also give visual impressions of women performing tasks which are different from those associated with men. Pupils mostly learn by observing as one teacher had to say that the look and say method was one of the most important teaching methods they used in their teaching, such that pupils learning is made easier. Since most of the work in the home is done by women most pictures in the textbooks show women and girls cooking and confined to the kitchen. This gives the impression that men are unable to perform such kinds of work and women are only good at cooking.

This can be illustrated by the textbook on Environmental & Agricultural Science: Living in Our World (EAS; LOW 1994) for grades 1-3 where women are portrayed cooking eg pg 42 of the Grade 1 textbook. The New Zimbabwe Primary English Grade 1 Book 2 (1994, p.12) portrays a mother giving tea to her children. Living and Working together Grade I Stage I (1994, p.61) women are portrayed doing work in the kitchen. However this in contrast to the boys who are doing construction work in Pindukai Bhuku 3 (1996: p.94).

This has an implication that women and girls are good at domestic chores and thereby have to occupy the lower position than men. This scenario has negative implications in that girls perceive themselves as only important in providing comfort to others and be care givers in the home. They aspire not to achieve in intellectual activities and to contribute to the development of a community or a nation, but are satisfied only to play a subservient role and be home makers. Women I had a chance to interview some of whom I learnt with at primary school expressed the view that textbooks indeed had an effect on them as they perceived themselves only to become housewives as this was portrayed as the ideal situation in the books. Indeed some of them stated that the books portray the fact that women should be dependant on their husband for survival. One woman had this to say:

I wish that textbooks should also portray men doing household chores and women going out also to work to provide for their families. I would not want my boy child to think that he cannot do domestic chores. I want him to be a jack of all trades.

Thus the textbooks are very crucial in the socialisation process and should ensure that stereotypes are eliminated.

### **4.2.3 Boys' and girls' abilities**

They are certain abilities that are stereotypical that boys are presumed to have and also the girls too. For instance it is usually said boys are good at herding cattle and girls are good at cooking and playing with dolls. Such biases have an impact on the girl child in that her potential, dreams is thwarted by what society's limitations. This will also affect the girl child later in life where she has to make career choices and choice of subjects and will tend to choose that which is presumed to be good at which is usually mediocre and less challenging. Even books portray such abilities of boys and girls.

This can be illustrated by for instance in English Alive Grade 1 Book 1 (1994, p 20) where the father is repairing the roof and the boy is under the car, maybe trying to look at the mechanisms of the car. In such instances it gives the boy child the impression that his world is around the mechanical side and might opt for a career in mechanical engineering. This is in contrast to the book Ventures Living Together, Grade 3 Stage 2 (1994 pp 71-72) where boys are exchanging toy cars and women are exchanging vegetables. This can be seen that career choices of the girl child can be curtailed by gender stereotypes that are prevalent in textbooks. This also explains why generally women are found more in the Arts subjects than the science subjects which are largely dominated by their male counter parts.

### **4.2.4 Society's expectations on behavioral patterns and characteristics**

They are expected social behavioral patterns and characteristics which are imposed by society through mainly by socialisation in the home and in the community. This is also



evidenced where girls are given dolls to play with and boys are given cars to play with. Thus society perpetuates certain behaviors among boys and females through the way they are brought up. Girls are often expected to be weak physically, boys to be strong, girls to be service providers and lag behind their male counterparts. In the home a girl is taught to work hard with little rest and should not expect her male counterparts to help her with such work (Gortina: 2008). Boys are expected to be physically strong, aggressive, and brave, display emotional strength, adventurous and risk takers. Unfortunately this is transferred even in the textbooks.

In Home Economics Grade 3 (1996, p 42) the mother is pictured giving Bob some medicine thus ascribing women to their prescribed gender roles of care giving. Thus a woman is portrayed as caregiver and having nurturing qualities. If men would also be portrayed in the same scenario the children will learn to grow in society where there is gender equity and equality. In Living and Working Together Grade 3 (1994, p 109) men are being involved in boxing and wrestling thus again portraying men as physically strong and risk takers. In the same book on page 23, a man who is drunk and perceives himself as strong and brave and can still drive. However later he is involved in an accident. This is because men have been perceived as risk takers thus by society and at times have to prove this though it might cost ones life.

The society at large, family and community have certain expectations on the behavioral patterns of both boys and girls. There is a certain way in which boys and girls are expected to behave. Any girl who does not conform to society's expectations is considered to be deviant, and will face disapproval and a lot of social pressure or social punishment.

Such socialisation has negative implications for girls and women. It leads to lack of confidence, lack of courage, low self esteem and indecision. This type of socialisation also makes the girls develop feelings of incompetence where they encounter challenging situations. This also makes the men to grow up with attitudes that regard women and girls as providers and not as partners who have valuable contributions to make in society. Thus

the textbooks and the teaching materials reinforce these stereotypes yet they are women who have made it in and around the community and were able to do what society thinks they were unable to do.

#### **4.2.5 Stereotypes in careers, professions and occupations**

Current books of the new syllabus that are being published have eliminated gender stereotypes. However most textbooks in use in high density schools are of the old syllabus and they tend to stereotype professions, careers, occupations. Since the school environment it and the books that pupils are permitted to study prepare girls and boys for a variety of occupations. However the textbooks place barriers to certain career choices and opportunities. Certain occupations, careers tend to be associated more with males and other type of occupations more with females.

As I was doing a content analysis of the textbooks, most women because of the stereotypes in textbooks they are portrayed as primary school teachers, nurses, nurse aids because women and girls are ascribed to their role of care giving. This can be illustrated in the textbook Ventures Living Together Social Studies Book 1 Grade 1 (1997, p 5) where the man is pictured going to work leaving behind the wife and children at home. On page 6 of the same textbook a woman is pictured doing laundry. Such illustrations imply that a woman's place is in the home taking care of the family whilst a man goes out to work.

In Living and Working Together Stage 1 Grade 1(1997: p 15), shows a female nurse and a dentist is portrayed as male (p 31) of the same book. In Living and Working Together Grade 2 Stage 1 (1996: p 54) shows a male doctor. In reality however we have male nurses and female doctors. Thus textbooks need to eliminate gender stereotypes and also portray women occupying the so called male dominated fields such as medicine.

In New Zimbabwe Primary English Grade 2: Book 2 (1986, p25) under the heading "Work" pictures are illustrating women as a nurse, a dressmaker, a gardener. On the other

hand on the same page pictures are showing men, one as a doctor, and the other as a painter. These illustrations are characteristic of the textbooks that are of the old syllabus. The pictures together with the context state as follows *she is a nurse, she is a dressmaker, she is a gardener, he is a painter, and he is a doctor*. Thus there is need to eliminate such stereotypes so that careers and professions cannot be stereotyped.

In reality in all the primary school where I conducted research most of the primary school teachers were female. These careers are taken as an extension of the household chores which women usually perform. Most men in the textbooks are portrayed as doctors, school heads, drivers etc. Because of the stereotypes that are prevalent in the textbooks this has an effect on the girls and the women.

The results can be seen where the social status of women and girls will remain low in the world of work in the formal employment sector when compared to that of men. When women have a low position in society they do not have the power and influence needed to take full control of their own lives and events around them. When females' career aspirations are low they opt for low status jobs which give them very little and influence. Women will command fewer resources and will therefore have limited participation in the development of the nation.

#### **4.2.6 Language Used**

Language is often used to portray stereotypical situations and the old textbooks use of language is stereotypical. Language is one of the major tools in socialisation .Words are used to label individuals and some words reflect gender biases and insensitivity. Of course in the past such words were relevant to that particular time and event. For instance in NZPE Grade 2 Book 2 (1986, p27) they is the use of such words as policeman. Also in Living Together Grade 1 (1997, p24) there is also the use of the words policeman, fisherman, headmaster. If gender neutral names could be used such as police officer, school head, fire fighter instead of fireman, and other names this would go a long way in eliminating stereotypes that certain occupations are for males.

Such sexist terminology tends to reinforce stereotypes though nowadays we have women who have succeeded in such male dominated fields. Most textbooks state the use of such words as headmaster, matron, sports master. Such words are even prevalent everywhere in the media and suggest it's a men's world.

Thus there is need to use gender neutral names because language is used in a complex and subtle way which reflect gender insensitivity. Because of the language used girls continue to have their self concepts and self esteem eroded and they will no think much of themselves. They will learn to play subservient roles and to aspire for low status careers and jobs.

#### **4.2.7 Elimination of gender stereotypes in textbooks: How far have we gone?**

Before the research commenced I had in mind that nothing much had been done to eliminate gender stereotypes at the infant primary level. However as the research was in progress it was apparent that a similar research was done in 1995 by a team of Educationists from the MoESC who carried out an analytical review of textbooks used in schools. Their review established that the learning materials in most of the primary school textbooks in use at that time were not gender sensitive (MoESC: UNICEF). Be that as it may I also did a content analysis of textbooks in the various schools in all the textbooks published by the three major publishers. Since fifteen years have almost passed since this last was done my main aim was to assess the extent to which the review of the textbooks was done and to analyze the new content of textbooks if any.

My assumption was that the content of primary infant textbooks, curricula and teaching materials reinforces traditional sex and gender stereotypes is gender biased and insensitive to the specific needs of girls. As the research progressed I found out from the CDU that they were now new syllabuses for the various subjects that eliminated gender stereotypes even at infant primary level. This in effect meant also textbooks from the

various publishers which had to comply with the requirements of the new syllabuses and publish textbooks that are gender balanced and are eliminating gender stereotypes. In the new syllabus in use at the CDU there are Evaluation Guidelines on gender to ensure that the textbooks published are gender balanced and are eliminating gender stereotypes.

It is also important to note that despite the new syllabus that eliminated gender stereotypes, the old syllabus was currently in use in all the high density schools that I visited and the old textbook are still gender stereotypical. This effectively means that these gender stereotypes in textbooks are still there and still have an effect on the socialisation of the girl child. Despite a new syllabus that is now in use teachers have no access to the new syllabuses. An official from the CDU had this to say.

Our main duty is to make and revise syllabuses but the problem is that we do not have resources to go out in schools and make a syllabus interpretation to teachers and to assess whether the new syllabuses we are making are being understood and used by the schools.

From the research conducted most of the current textbooks that have eliminated gender stereotypes are in use in non Government schools as they can afford to purchase the new textbooks that are currently published. Non Government Schools as per section 2 of the Education states that:

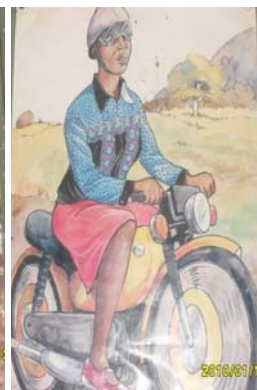
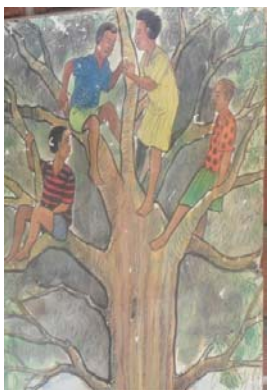
Non-Government school” means any school which is not a Government school, whether or not it receives aid from the State.

Thus such schools are at a greater advantage as the pupils are introduced to current textbooks that have eliminated gender stereotypes and this has a positive effect on the socialisation and educational advancement of the girl child.

As regards teaching materials and posters a development has been done in terms of eliminating gender stereotypes. Both men and women are portrayed in a gender balanced way in relation to stereotypes in careers, professions, and work in and around the home, the abilities of both boys and girls. However these posters were not available in all the schools visited. Only one school in Chitungwiza Budirirai Primary School had these posters. However the main reason of availability of these posters was attributed to lack of

resources by the Ministry and the CDU to produce enough materials on a continuous basis.

These are some of the posters that have eliminated gender stereotypes at infant primary level which are produced by the CDU in conjunction with UNICEF. It is important to note that in general these pictures play a very important role in gender sensitization and they have far reaching effects as they create positive long lasting impressions on the mind of pupils in class.



In essence the pictures are portraying that a woman can also be a doctor, ride a motorcycle, be a farmer thus eliminating the stereotypes in pupils that these are only male dominated fields. Men can also weave baskets which are usually seen as a female's job.

Boys can also fetch firewood; play with dolls which is normally associated with girls and women as productive and reproductive roles. Girls can also herd cattle which is the reality in most rural communities though the books portray it otherwise. Girls can also climb trees thus also experiencing the same adventure as boys. Such pictures are important in that they portray the reality in our society and for the girl child impacts positively on her educational advancement and socialisation.

A positive development again that has been made as regards elimination of gender stereotypes, the MoESC together with other donors developed primary school readers which feature Zimbabwean women in non stereotypical /non traditional jobs. (ZIM MoESC: 1995). The book *There is Room at The Top* and its aim is to address the importance of role models in the healthy development of children. It features Zimbabwean women who have made it in the so called male dominated fields. This book which is of paramount importance as it positively influences the girl child in terms of socialisation and career aspirations. However it is not available in the high density schools that I visited. If the book could be easily available in all schools then the girl child would have role models who can positively influence her and her educational advancement.

### **4.3 ACCESS TO RESOURCES: TEXTBOOKS and TEACHING MATERIALS**

#### **4.3.1 Importance of books and other reading material**

In this section I will discuss the importance of textbooks as a tool of influence in the elimination of gender stereotypes at infant primary level. It is my view that if pupils have access to the new syllabus and the new textbooks that are eliminating gender stereotypes then our fight for gender equality and equity would be enhanced.

Taking into account of the new textbooks that are current and have eliminated gender stereotypes which are in use in schools such as St Martins Convent Primary School. Such pupils are at an advantage as they are exposed to teaching materials that are gender balanced and are promoting gender equity and equality. Thus their perception of the

world at large as regards the equality between men and women would be at an advanced stage than those students in the high density areas who lack access to the current textbooks.

It is important to note that the international, national and local goal for EFA has been to provide every student with a complete set of books in every subject free of charge. The target has been at least to reach one book for each pupil. Books and other educational materials (as well as other print media) are the basis of further learning and social participation. Textbooks in particular are essential learning tools, especially in print-poor environments where they may be the only reading material a child or adult may use to acquire literacy skills ( Limage: 2005).

Access to the most important resources, current textbooks and teaching materials that are eliminating gender stereotypes is a major problem in all the schools especially government schools where research was conducted. Most of the books were torn and tattered. The textbook ratio at most was 1:10 or 1:15 which impacts negatively on the quality of education that the girl child receives. At times copies are only meant for the teacher who has to either write on the board or move around the class and circulate the book so that pupils can have sight of it. As one teacher had to say at a Government school:

Textbooks are really a problem we last received a new set of books I can say a long time ago. The school itself has no money to buy textbooks because of the harsh economic times we were facing for the past years. This makes my teaching difficult as it cumbersome writing the days work on the chalk board. If pupils had their own textbooks at least this would make our life much easier as pupils have a first hand access to books.

Despite the lack of textbooks teachers are bound to teach the content of the old textbooks that is largely gender stereotypical and will affect the girl child in a negative way. However most private schools have the capacity and ability to buy textbooks due to their stable financial resources and the fees that they charge are able to sustain all the activities in their schools. This puts them at an advantageous position as they are influenced by the current textbooks that are gender sensitive. Also parents in the private schools could



afford to buy textbooks for their children and pay the required book levies. As one of the school head at a private school who is a female had this to say.

We have more than enough textbooks to use at this school. We work closely with parents who are more than willing to buy books for their children. Such that when new editions of textbooks are published we are the first ones to buy. We want quality education for our kids.

This is in quiet contrast to the views of a local parent who has children at a Government school. He said :

As much as we desire quality education for our kids and that they may have the relevant textbooks we always look upon the school and the Government to buy textbooks for our children. This has always been the trend that the Government has a responsibility to provide educational materials. I am overburdened with other responsibilities. I struggle to pay school fees and levies for my children. Telling me to provide textbooks is beyond my means.

Because of the unequal access to textbooks we now have a group in the poor backgrounds that is being excluded because of their poor economic background. Thus the gender stereotypes in the old textbooks will continue to curtail the educational advancement of the girl child and her socialisation process.

While the actual sustained availability of quality print learning material has not received the international attention it merits, the importance of textbooks to learning achievement has been recognized. Heinemann et al (quoted in Searle, 1985, page 1) wrote in 1978:

From the evidence we have so far, the availability of books appears to be the single most consistently positive school factor in predicting academic achievement.

Thus there is need to ensure accessibility of current gender sensitive textbooks to the intended recipients so that our quest for the educational advancement and socialisation process of the girl child may be fulfilled.

#### **4.4 ACCESS TO RESOURCES BY TEACHERS**

For the effective implementation of the new syllabuses and the current text books that are gender sensitive and even the old text books there is need to provide teachers with adequate resources to assist them in their teaching of gender issues vis a vis elimination of gender stereotypes at infant level.

One of the main problems raised by teachers is that they lack the relevant teaching materials such as textbooks, teacher's resource books which assist them in syllabus interpretation. Thus at the end of the day they end up being frustrated coupled with the poor working conditions they are having they have to devise ways and means to teach with the meager resources that they have.

Textbooks should normally be accompanied by teachers' guides to explain ways of conveying the syllabus, further activities in relation to a particular lesson or how to explain concepts in more learner-focused ways, especially for teachers with limited or non-existent pre-service training. This also encompasses elimination of gender stereotypes where the teacher might have his or her own gender stereotypical views.

As regards gender stereotypes and the elimination of gender stereotypes at infant primary level, most teachers expressed the view that though they are aware of these gender issues and the elimination of stereotypes the problem is how to address these issues. They are aware through the media and the newspapers and reading materials from NGOS about gender issues which they get as fliers. Most stated that they did not have any formal training on gender sensitivity issues. If they are gender sensitivity seminars only the headmaster goes and they are not given a chance to attend such workshops especially if the workshops are giving them money and incentives. One teacher lamented the fact that she has not attended any gender sensitive training,

Despite so much research done by NGOS that have produced useful books for use by the Ministry and the teachers themselves. These books are part of the Gender Equity in Education project whose background dates back to the studies by the Ministry of

Education in 1986 and 1991 which showed significant disparities between boys and girls. (UNICEF 1998) Other supportive activities on this project reflected in the following documents .

- There is room at the Top (1995-1999) Books 1-5 (Readers for primary school on Zimbabwean female role models)
- Gender Sensitization of School development Committees /Associations SDCs/SDAs:1997H
- Gender Sensitivity Handbook for School heads (1998)

However it is interesting to note that such books are not available in the schools where research was conducted. Since these are crucial for teachers and taking into account that most of the textbooks that are in use in most schools are still gender stereotypical.

As regards elimination of gender stereotypes The Gender Resource Book for teachers is of paramount importance to every teacher in the classroom. Its main aim is to help the teacher acquire the knowledge and the skills to recognize gender insensitive material when he or she comes across it in existing textbooks or other teaching/learning materials. It also gives the teacher suggestions on effective ways of handling gender insensitive material in the classroom situation.(ZIM MoESC, UNICEF :2000)

#### **4.5 THE ROLE OF THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT UNIT (CDU)**

##### **Objectives of Curriculum Development**

The CDU is a division within the Ministry of Education responsible for the development of the Curriculum for primary and secondary schools. The function of the Curriculum Development Unit is to translate government policies on primary and secondary education into measurable objectives, programmes and activities. (MoESC: UNESCO 2000). Personnel at CDU interviewed stated that the objectives of curriculum development are to:

- Develop and revise syllabuses.
- Develop teaching and learning materials that support the syllabuses.

- Promote creative teaching and interactive methodologies.
- Organise courses on curricular matters.
- Test and evaluate the curriculum.
- Research into curricular issues.

#### **4.5.1 The Curriculum Decision-making Process**

The curriculum constitutes the legal framework for the development of teaching/learning activities. It should respond to the needs of the society and to the needs of individuals. The following came up from the personnel at CDU on the processes involved in coming up with a curricula. The curriculum development process, they said, involves close co-ordination between a variety of stakeholders and institutions. Curriculum development work cannot be done in isolation. Because of this, decisions about curriculum issues are made in close consultation with the learners, parents, teachers, heads of schools, education officers in the regions, the examinations council, subject specialists, commerce and industry, teachers colleges and universities.

Decisions on content and methodology are made in consultation with Teacher Education and Teachers' Colleges. This takes place at several levels through the Heads of Sections meetings and subject panels. The Standards Control Unit (SCU) is responsible for setting and maintaining standards in classroom practice and school administration. The Unit makes decisions over curriculum implementation, syllabus interpretation, assessment, in-service courses and curriculum evaluation. In all cases, the decision-making process takes place through informal meetings and through formal tours and meetings at senior management level. Decisions made at all levels are implemented through syllabus review and revision. They are disseminated to schools through circulars, teacher education guides and seminars. New decisions on curriculum issues are evaluated through regular trial testing by curriculum developers through questionnaires, interviews and observations.

Thus the curriculum development unit's core business can be summarized as follows:

1. To develop teaching and learning materials.

2. To develop and distribute syllabi to school.
3. To monitor and to ensure that materials reach school.
4. To staff develop school heads and parents on teaching vocation.
5. To ensure that every material that goes in the school is relevant to syllabi and is of good quality.
6. Helping teachers on the implementation and content of the syllabus.
7. Core reproducing of books under the auspices of CDU.
8. Research on curricula issues.
9. Evaluation of materials by publishers and writers.

When the CDU is properly functioning they do a syllabus interpretation for teachers. As regards the issue of gender stereotypes, Mrs Musakana said that they have evaluation guidelines on gender so that the final textbook that will be produced is gender balanced. However she went on to say that for the entire syllabus they are for every boy and girl in the class and they have tried to eliminate all gender stereotypes in the textbooks, she had this to say:

The syllabus is meant for everyone it is all encompassing and can be used for every child whether boy or girl. It Is now open to everyone. For instance the language itself has been changed to being gender neutral for instance headmaster has been changed to school head.

It is also important to note that syllabuses have a time span and they are reviewed after every five years unless there is an urgent need. The CDU when designing syllabuses also stated that they also look at the age of children and also using the learning theories as children cannot absorb everything and some of the complicated things. She also confirmed that they are different definitions of curricula ie there is the hidden curricula which can be defined as the culture of a particular school and differs from school to school. These curricula can mould a child into what she can become and is the one which distinguishes a school child from school A and that from school B. The formal curriculum ie the intended curricula or the written curricula also has an impact on the socialisation of the girl child.

## **4.5.2 The CDU and gender stereotypes**

When it comes to gender issues the CDU has evaluation guidelines which they use to assess whether the books that are about to be published are gender balanced. The personnel at CDU had this to say as regards gender issues and stereotypes as it affects the girl child. One personnel at CDU a material productions officer echoed the following sentiments:

Do we need to incorporate issues of gender at primary level? Are we not going too far with these issues? Are we not feeding our children with too much knowledge at such a tender age? Do they have to know everything? Why can't we leave things as they are –Is there anything wrong with it. Some times you people you go to extremes with these gender issues. We are overwhelmed with a lot of issues at CDU as everyone is fighting that all things be put into the syllabus e.g. HIV/AIDS, corruption, cholera.

However though the personnel at CDU are aware of gender stereotypes they stated that for gender issues to come out properly in the syllabus they was a need of a gender specialist. She also gave an example of a syllabus that there were designing on the hierarchy of courts in Zimbabwe. However they did not have any materials or expertise in such complicated issues.

## **4.5.3 Challenges hampering the effectiveness of the CDU**

However they are challenges that are hampering the effectiveness of the CDU. These ranged from financial issues to have workshops with relevant stakeholders on syllabus evaluations. Lack of equipment such as photocopiers, they are no library facilities, internet facilities and current materials that can enhance their work. They is lack of staff development and human resources as most personnel resigned due to poor working conditions. Since their role at CDU is to do syllabus interpretation for teachers and move around schools and also evaluate the effectiveness of the syllabuses that they make. The department has no money to carry such important work. Most importantly their working conditions are not conducive due to poor remuneration. As one of them stated that:

We are ordinary classroom teachers and we are not paid according to our qualifications though we are specialist in our own right.

It is important to not that this important department is operating under stringent conditions. It is mainly relying on the donor community such as UNICEF such that if they are no donor funds it is virtually non existent.

#### **4.6 THE ROLE OF THE PUBLISHERS**

##### **Attitudes to Gender Stereotypes**

Publishers also have a major role to play in the elimination of sex and gender stereotypes. I engaged with the major three publishers ie Longman Zimbabwe, ZPH and College Press. They expressed the same sentiments on the importance of eliminating gender stereotypes. Though a female publisher at ZPH emphatically stated that it was not easy to convince the other male counterparts on the elimination of stereotypes that are presumed to be normal and as a woman she has to fight it through in the boardroom to make sure that such stereotypes are eliminated.

Publishers contract their own writers who mainly write the content of the syllabus following the requirements from the CDU. Before these books are published they are also evaluated by the CDU to assess whether they meet the requirements of the syllabus and are gender balanced. I had a chance to interview one renowned writer since 1980 Mr. CJ Ngwaru who stated that as publishers and writers they indeed had a major role to play in the elimination of these stereotypes. This was also echoed by the other publishers. Since they are the ones who write the content of the textbooks and have artists who do the illustrations they had to comply with the Ministry policies and guidelines on coming up with a gender balanced textbook for the reader. They also had to move with the changing times and trends which are influenced by, policies and human rights issues. This also was to market their books to produce what is required by the Ministry as they are in business and competing with other publishers so they had to produce the best.

Female writers are also coming up in all of the publishing houses. One female publisher also highlighted that most schools have changed their policies on the allocation of prefects where everyone is given an opportunity to become a prefect. Now its done on a rotational basis to give each child an opportunity to lead. Thus this is a positive move in so far as it encourages the girl child to aspire to be a leader.

It is trite that book publishers should also play a very crucial part in this process of addressing gender issues in the education system. They should encourage women to write textbooks and novels, not only so that female students will have role models, but so that female authors and authority figures will then be featured and quoted in the written works of students. The book publishers have to extensively advertise textbooks and novels written by female writers through publicity workshops, radio, TVs, magazines, newspapers and other various media. A movement like this would fill in the missing female input in scholarship.

Due to the economic conditions that where bedeviling the country most of the publishers had relegated from their corporate social responsibility of supplying textbooks to schools to ease the shortage of textbooks and in the light of the new textbooks that are gender sensitive that are being published. However most of the textbooks are very expensive and beyond the reach of many pupils. Such that even though they are eliminating gender stereotypes and they are published they do not get to the intended recipients. If the situation is as bad as it is in urban areas what more of the girl child in the rural areas, she is in a precarious position. Be that as it may publishers and writers of teaching and learning materials have been made to be aware of the need to write materials that are gender sensitive.

#### **4.7 MINISTRY OF EDUCATION SPORTS AND CULTURE: GENDER DESK**

Mrs Gweme is on the Gender Desk and is the Gender Focal Person in the Ministry of Education. She stated that the Gender desk coordinates all the gender activities in the Ministry and they work in partnership with the NGOS. Their role was also to review the



Ministries policies, to engender all policies because Zimbabwe does not have an Education Policy.

It was also her assertion that there was lack of resources to cater for gender issues in the Ministry. Since there is no comprehensive Education Policy and most policies were in bits and pieces' numbering about seventy five this was making their life difficult as regards gender issues. However of most importance as the Gender Desk in the Ministry there is a programme that they are running as a Ministry initiated by UNICEF on Girls education life and education skills. The programme runs a club called the Girls Empowerment Movement (GEM) which is an ongoing primary school programme. The main aim of the club is to empower the girl child on her rights and issues that affect her such as child sexual abuse. Thus their role as a Ministry on the socialisation of the girl child was the initiation of such a programme. Her role was also to monitor and evaluate the programme. From her experience she stated that this was an excellent programme for all children and if possible they was a need to introduce it in all schools. She had examples of pupils who had passed through that club from primary school in Epworth to Secondary School who had made it and proceeded to the major Universities in Zimbabwe. Since Epworth is one of the areas which can be safely said is a disadvantaged community where issues of child sexual abuse and violation of child rights are rampant such a programme was relevant.

#### **4.8 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GENDER FOCAL POINT SYSTEM/ GENDER DESK**

From this research that I carried out it was one of my findings that like any government department the GFP was also facing its own challenges which affected its operations. Though there is a national Gender Focal Education Officer at the Ministry's head office the research revealed that the operations and effectiveness of this office was weakened by the following factors that : The position was not a substantive one according to Public Service Regulations and structures but an in house arrangement within the Ministry and with UNICEF this affected the seriousness and pace with which gender issues are

articulated throughout the Ministry from head office down to the school. The Ministry had no budget set aside for the programme of the GFP. As the gender focal person rightly pointed out:

That one might have the passion but with no support it does not help at all. All your efforts to help the girls out there are not supported by the Ministry and yet you are not paid for that extra job.

The Gender desk is a crucial component within the ministry as far as gender issues are concerned. Its effectiveness is hampered by a lack of human, financial resources and support from the Ministry itself and has shouldered the burden on the donor community.

#### **4.9 THE ROLE OF NGOS**

NGOs have made a major contribution to the education system in Zimbabwe and much of the research done on gender issues have been mobilized by them. I had the opportunity to engage with UNICEF during this research and a lot of work has been done by them in terms of carrying out research on the elimination of gender stereotypes and producing resource books for use in schools on gender issues. Because of the shortage in textbooks which is serious the Government and UNICEF has launched the Educational Transition Fund. I had an opportunity to interview one of the UNICEF officers who is dealing with this programme. He stated that the donor community established a funding for learning material from Early Childhood Development to High schools. This was launched last year in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance. The target is to assist all primary schools in Zimbabwe. Their initiative is to increase the textbook ratio to 1:1 from the previous 1:15 on average. UNICEF is assisting schools with core subjects i.e. English ,Maths ,Environmental Science, Shona, Ndebele also taking cognizance of marginalized groups eg Binga. It is also engaging with publishers to print minority languages such as Venda, Tonga, Kalanga, Shangani, Suthu and making sure that these subjects are taught up to Grade 7. UNICEF has already flighted a tender to publishers on this project.

This in effect means textbook shortages are to end soon as the Government will in the next four months distribute 10 million textbooks to primary schools country wide as this

was said by the Minister of Education, Sports Arts and Culture David Coltart.<sup>2</sup> The programme will ease textbook shortages and reduce the textbook ratio from 1:17 to 1:1 or 1:2. UNICEF also initiated the Girls Empowerment Movement which is also relevant in empowering the girl child in the elimination of stereotypes. This is a great opportunity for all schools to be provided with the current textbooks that are eliminating gender stereotypes.

Books became the increased focus of donors and investment because of the central role they are recognized to play in effective educational achievement. It is widely accepted that the provision of basic textbooks in poor countries is the most effective means to improve learning. It is also recognized that, since textbooks are likely to be the sole print material available, they are likely to have much greater impact in poor developing countries than elsewhere in the world (Heyneman: 2004). The importance of supplementary reading to sustain basic literacy skills and apply them for individual and social well being is also increasingly recognized, if not actually acted upon in a systematic, sustained manner.

Thus in essence most NGOS such as UNICEF are providing commodity aid: the provision of free textbooks, stationery, technical assistance and training in partnership with the MoESC which is a positive move in the realization of EFA.

#### **4.10 GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT MOVEMENT (GEM)**

I also had an opportunity to attend one of the GEM meetings in Epworth at Chinamano Primary School to see and assess the effect that gender stereotypes that are prevalent in textbooks had an effect on the socialisation of the girl child. Most girls at the school expressed the view that what is portrayed in the textbooks to some extent is the reality in their day to day lives and to some extent the books do not portray the reality. One girl had this to say:

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<sup>2</sup> The Herald Thursday ,February 25,2010

Men are always portrayed as the ones who are going to work in most books from grade one even up to seven. But for me I do not know my father so my mother is the one who goes to work and provides for our day to day needs. If books could also portray more women who are also going to work I think that will help children a lot.

Most of the girls in the club however were really aware more of their feminine roles that they performed at home such as domestic work, cooking and washing. They could not comprehend that what the boys could do they could also do. The reason given by one girl was that:

Our families expect too much from us that we have to be perfect always. Even in school teachers expectations from us are also too much, than the boys'. We can not afford to fail them. What is portrayed in books places limitations on us as we have to conform to what the books are saying about us.

However the girls could express the rights that they were entitled to such as the right to health, education and right to identity.

A discussion with a few high school girl revealed that because of the gender stereotypes that they are growing up with this has also affected their choices in terms of the subjects that they choose as most of them are mostly inclined to take arts subjects. The textbooks also played a major role at primary level as they viewed themselves at a lesser status than boys because the textbooks portrayed boys having better jobs than them. One gave an example of the grade 1 textbook that always portrayed the school head as male and the teachers as female. Thus she had the impression that only males could be school heads.



The GEM Club at Chinamano Primary School Epworth.

#### **4.11 OTHER FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE SOCIALISATION OF THE GIRL CHILD**

During the research it also emerged that apart for the quest to eliminate gender stereotypes at infant primary level there was also need to eliminate stereotypes in the societies that children live in. Also they are other factors that affect the socialisation and educational advancement of the girl child. Thus there was need to address such issues such that when the school environment and the textbooks are eliminating gender stereotypes then the home environment should also be conducive to eliminate stereotypes. Thus elimination of gender stereotypes in textbooks can also be complimented by the elimination of stereotypes in the community and society.

##### **4.11.1 Social Factors**

Through primary socialisation in the home, both boys and girls are made to accept socially determined roles characterized by male domination and female subordination which contradicted girl's performance at school. Society plays a major role in socializing the girl child into subservient roles. Where as in the home girls generally do not have

freedom of speech and space to express them, the school demanded them to participate, speak out and express themselves freely for educational success.

Through the class observations in most schools girls participated more than boys in the infant classes and were more active in all the class activities. Although acknowledging that the more urbanized home environment was becoming more open for the girl child due to the mass media, political and human rights ideas from various organizations, most teachers expressed that there were contradictory demands for the girl child at home and school which disadvantaged her academic success. Mrs. Sweto had this to say which was common in most schools where research was conducted:

Girls are quick to learn and mature more quickly especially at infant level than boys.' The top ten in this class is dominated by girls. However the performance of girls up the grades deteriorates and boys take over. However when boys pick up they pick up for good.

She attributed this to the increased domestic roles the girl child has to do as she is growing up which curtails her performance in school. Most school heads and teachers especially in urban areas reported that girls generally performed as well as or could even out perform boys in all subjects but pointed out that certain parental practices and beliefs militated against girls retention and performance as they get to upper grades.

#### **4.11.2 Teachers' attitudes and their lack of gender sensitivity**

If a total elimination of gender stereotypes in textbooks needs to be effectively implemented there is need to adequately remunerate the teachers. Their attitudes towards elimination of gender stereotypes and gender issues may depend on whether they are well remunerated or not. This may have an effect on how gender stereotypes will be conveyed by the teachers.

#### **Teacher Attitudes and Motivation**

Whereas all teachers and heads were aware of gender as an issue in education in the urban schools participating in this study, very few had actually undergone any gender

sensitivity training either pre- or in-service. In general, teachers' understanding of what gender means or what a gender sensitive school environment encompasses was very limited. A number of heads had attended workshops either on gender issues in education, or on other issues that had included a gender component. Most had reported back briefly to their staff on the workshops they had attended, but thereafter nothing further had been done to sensitize their staff or to begin the process of creating a gender sensitive school environment.

All school personnel felt that much more has to be done if teachers are to become gender sensitive and aware of how to apply this sensitivity in their teaching and to the school environment. Although acknowledging Government efforts to pay adequate salaries, teachers felt that their low salaries had eroded their status. While in the past teachers served as role models that children could look up to, now children do not see the value of education if it cannot reward their teachers with good salaries. They argued that this is a major barrier to children's education. It has diminished the status of the teaching profession and negatively affected children's attitudes towards education.

Teachers have responded to low salary and unattractive working conditions and related issues with de-motivation and some of them are no longer giving of their best. They are de-motivated particularly by low salaries that cannot sustain them and their families. Some teachers however maintained that in spite of the challenges they face they remain committed to their profession. However one female teacher Mrs Mungomezi in Epworth who is so committed to the GEM said:

I love the girl child, and will make sure that she is socialized in the right way. I can not just watch her standards deteriorating, and despite the low salaries I am passionate about gender issues. Here in Epworth they are high incidences of child sexual abuse such that at this school we have to make sure that the girls know of their rights and are empowered. Recently a girl child eloped because she was pregnant I can not watch such things happening.

This is contrary to one teacher at the same school who had this to say:

I am not even concerned about these gender issues. Even the GEM club at this school I do not care about it. Do I get paid for that, it does not help me in any way it is better to go

home and rest than spend my time in these clubs. I want my salary to be increased that is when I will be concerned about gender issues.

It was further observed that if teachers are not gender sensitive and do not question their own gender biased attitudes and expectations, such gender biased socialization originating in the home and community can be reinforced in the school. Thus the need for complementary gender sensitive and girl friendly home and school environment was found to be apparent especially. Teachers and school heads in both rural and urban settings concurred that socialisation in the home and community negatively affected girls' self-concept esteem and the choices they made at school and life in generally. Thus gender stereotypes in the textbooks can be effectively done away with if teachers have the right perceptions about gender issues and are equally well remunerated.

#### **4.11.3 Negative parental and community attitudes**

I also had a chance to interview women on their own perceptions about gender stereotypes in the textbooks and if it had any effect on them in terms of their career choices and educational advancement. Most women expressed the view that during their day's things were different in terms of gender stereotypes. Women and girls in the education system were supposed to conform to their feminine roles and it was acceptable though few women made it in terms of educational advancement. However times have changed and these stereotypes have to be eliminated. One Mai Tomu had this to say:

I only went to school up to Grade 7 because my parents could not afford to send me to high school. I would have loved to pursue further studies. I cannot really recall the textbooks and their contents but what I know is that we were taught to be women and my inspiration was to get married I never saw the importance of education up to now. It is good that our children are taught the right way so that they can make informed choices in terms what they want to do.

Most teachers expressed need to eliminate gender stereotypes especially when it comes to the portrayal of women in terms of careers and professions. Most parents and the communities had the view that once a girl child finishes her secondary education she had to go for a "course" and that meant either teaching or nursing even though the girl child



had other options she qualified for. This was to guarantee job security especially when one works for the Government. One female school head had this to say about her own experience in terms of career choices which was affected by her parents' negative attitudes towards other careers. She said;

I wanted to be a banker after I finished my A Levels even though I had got a job at one of the prominent banks but my parents insisted that I should go for teaching where they was job security . Teaching was seen as a woman's job and it was even portrayed in the books as such. I could have been somewhere now in my banking career.

Though there is nothing inferior in being a school head or a teacher but denying one a choice of career one wants to pursue is unfair to a girl's educational advancement. This in effect means gender stereotypes by books, parents, and teachers have to be eliminated such that the girl child can explore her full potential.

#### **4.11.4 Per capita budget and beam**

The government allocates a budget for the Education sector under goods and services refered to as the per capita budget which is not enough to cater for the schools needs<sup>3</sup>.The money allocated for the 2009-2010 budget for the education sector is not enough to even buy a full set textbooks for a single school. Thus there is need to have a gender sensitive budget to ensure that current textbooks that have eliminated gender stereotypes are available in all schools in Zimbabwe.

#### **4.11.5 BEAM assistance**

Due to the increasing cost of education and the realization that inability to pay for school fees and levies was among the main reasons why children dropped out of school the government through the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare put in place BEAM to cushion low income families by assisting them to pay for fees at primary and secondary

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<sup>3</sup> Herald 4/12/2009 Budget for 2009-2010

school levels. However this programme is not being implemented in schools because the Government has no resources to assist needy children. Thus in such cases where the girl child and other vulnerable are to benefit they are disadvantaged.

#### **4.11.6 The Role of the SDA/SDC in budgeting**

The SDA/Cs has a major role to play especially when it comes to budgeting in the schools. I found out that levies were determined by all parents in a general meeting at the beginning of each year. Although all parents acknowledged that they were consulted before levies could be changed or raised, they complained that failure by many parents to pay in time was clear testimony that the levies were determined by a few who were influential at school. Some of the parents were shy to speak against the increase in the school levies which they could not afford. As for the urban schools' tuition fees, were fixed by the government.

I had a chance to attend one of the SDA meetings in Chitungwiza as I posed as one of the parents who had come for the meeting. Prior to the meeting parents were complaining how the SDA itself was overspending the levies and using it for their own benefit yet there was no tangible developments at the school. In that SDA meeting it was surprising to note that the money allocated to the buying of textbooks was the least though textbooks forms the core of the education system. I also interviewed one of the chairpersons of the SDA a lawyer who stated that he was not quite aware of a gender sensitive budget as he was still new in office but was willing to go for gender sensitive training to improve the quality of education at that school and a conducive learning environment for the girl child.

As well as levies, parents and children disclosed the high cost of textbooks, stationery and school uniforms posed also to be quite expensive for them. In the past the government provided textbooks and stationery as part of its social responsibility. Lack of stationery and other school necessities particularly affect orphaned and vulnerable children (OVCs) who are already at a disadvantaged position.

#### **4.11.7 CONCLUSION**

For gender equality in education to become a reality, there is a need to pay more attention to the socialization process that takes place at home and in the community. Not only does textbooks and teaching materials affect the socialisation process of the girl child but other factors outlined above. There is need to make sure that the rights of the girl child are no tampered with by the school, home, community and that her full potential is realized by being gender sensitive and eliminating the gender stereotypes. Such stereotypes hamper the educational advancement of the girl child and her choice of career.



## **CHAPTER 5: AN ANALYSIS OF THE STATE'S COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS**

### **5.0 INTRODUCTION**

Zimbabwe is a signatory to major human rights treaties which are tools of accountability which advocates for the right to education and more importantly on the elimination of gender stereotypes. These human rights instruments provide a legal framework and a standard in which state parties are to conform and comply with. State parties by ratifying such instruments have to take appropriate measures for the rights to be implemented. All human rights are interdependent, interrelated and indivisible and as such the denial of the right to education and the elimination of gender stereotypes in textbooks and other teaching materials is a gross violation of other human rights. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) highlights the contribution that gender equality in education makes to the well-being of children generally, as well as maternal health, reduction in the incidence of HIV/AIDS and malnutrition, and to other key Millennium Development Goals.

In this chapter I am going to briefly assess the extent to which Zimbabwe has complied to these instruments in light of its international obligations. The Millennium Development Goals are also pertinent in so far as there are linkages between the targets set in them and human rights instruments. In particular Goal 2 is to achieve universal primary education and the target is to ensure that, by 2015, all children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. This is closely linked to the right to education. Goal 3 promotes gender equality and empowers women and the target is to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education not later than 2015. This is also linked to women's and girls' right to equality. The Beijing Platform for Action which is an agenda for women's empowerment on education and training of women states that:

Curricula and teaching materials remain gender biased to a large degree, and are rarely sensitive to the specific needs of girls and women. This reinforces traditional female and male roles that deny women opportunities for full and equal partnership in society.

It also sets out actions to be taken by Governments, educational authorities and other educational and academic institutions and in particular that they elaborate recommendations and develop curricula, textbooks and teaching aids free of gender based stereotypes for all levels of education, including teacher training, in association with all concerned –publishers, teachers, public authorities and parents associations.

### **5.1 Human Rights Instruments on Education**

These instruments provide the right to education and that education shall be free and compulsory to all and are all closely linked with the elimination of gender stereotypes and to the socialisation of the girl child.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 Article 26 provides for the right to education more importantly Article 26 (2);

‘Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms’

The UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Article 13 provides for primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all

The UN General Assembly Declaration on the Rights of the Child, 1959 states that primary education shall be compulsory and available for free to all.

The UN General Assembly Declaration on the Rights Of the Child, 1959.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 28 and 29 more importantly article 29 1(d) that states parties agree that the education shall be directed to:

the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding peace, tolerance, equality of sexes and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups .

General Recommendation of the CRC and ICESCR are also important to measure the states compliance and whether Zimbabwe as a signatory to these instruments are making the rights a reality.

The general recommendations stated that Article 29 (1) on right to education not only adds to the right to education recognized in article 28 a qualitative dimension which reflects the rights and inherent dignity of the child; it also insists upon the need for education to be child-centred, child-friendly and empowering, and it highlights the need for educational processes to be based upon the very principles it enunciates. The education to which every child has a right is one designed to provide the child with life skills, to strengthen the child's capacity to enjoy the full range of human rights and to promote a culture which is infused by appropriate human rights values. The goal is to empower the child by developing his or her skills, learning and other capacities, human dignity, self-esteem and self-confidence. "Education" in this context goes far beyond formal schooling to embrace the broad range of life experiences and learning processes which enable children, individually and collectively, to develop their personalities, talents and abilities and to live a full and satisfying life within society.

But children should also learn about human rights by seeing human rights standards implemented in practice, whether at home, in school, or within the community. Human rights education should be a comprehensive, life-long process and start with the reflection of human rights values in the daily life and experiences of children

The effective promotion of article 29 (1) requires the fundamental reworking of curricula to include the various aims of education and the systematic revision of textbooks and other teaching materials and technologies, as well as school policies. Approaches which do no more than seek to superimpose the aims and values of the article on the existing system without encouraging any deeper changes are clearly inadequate. The relevant values cannot be effectively integrated into, and thus be rendered consistent with, a broader curriculum unless those who are expected to transmit, promote, teach and, as far as possible, exemplify the values have themselves been convinced of their importance. Pre-service and in-service training schemes which promote the principles reflected in article 29 (1) are thus essential for teachers, educational administrators and others

involved in child education. It is also important that the teaching methods used in schools reflect the spirit and educational philosophy of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the aims of education laid down in article 29 (1).

ICESCR also made a general recommendation that fundamental education includes the elements of availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability which are common to education in all its forms and at all levels.

## **5.2 Elimination of Gender Stereotypes and Human Rights Instruments**

CEDAW article 5 provides for the elimination of prejudices and customary and all practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women. Further more in Article 10(c) it specifically provides for the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods. The Women's Protocol Article 12.1(c) also provides for the elimination of gender stereotypes in all textbooks and teaching materials. The World Declaration on Education for All (EFA), Jomtien, and 1990 Article 3 (Universalizing Access and Promoting Equity) paragraph 3 states that,

*“The most urgent priority is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of, education for girls and women, and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation. All gender stereotyping should be eliminated.”*

Thus the human rights instruments are cognizant of the fact that all gender stereotypes curtail the educational advancement of the girl child, her socialisation process her choice of subjects and her career and therefore have to be eliminated.

## **5.3 COMPLIANCE**

Zimbabwe through the MoESC and the donor community to some extent has made efforts to eliminate gender stereotypes in textbooks. Textbooks that are eliminating



gender stereotypes are being published. The CDU also embarked on the revision of syllabuses thus the new syllabus is taking into account the elimination of gender stereotypes. The Government has allowed the NGOs such as UNICEF and other NGOs to work hand in hand with the MoESC in providing resources such as resource books for teachers and other supplementary books that are in use in some of the schools on gender sensitivity. Through the donor community most educational personnel have been trained on gender sensitivity through workshops and seminars. These funding partners have also been useful in providing financial resources to build the capacity of the CDU. UNICEF also came up with the establishment of the Gender focal persons in the MoESC where in the past it never existed. The Educational Transition Fund which has been set by UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Finance to improve the textbook ratio to 1:1 from the previous one 1:17 and to provide all schools in Zimbabwe with the current textbooks that are eliminating gender stereotypes is also commendable (The Herald 25/02/2010). To this extent by allowing the donor community to take measures and interventions in the education sector the Government can be commended for that as it has realized that on its own it does not have the resources to do it.

In so far as the Education Act upholds and provides for the children's fundamental right to education and provides as follows in section 4(1) that:

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in any other enactment, but subject to this Act, every child in Zimbabwe shall have the right to school education.

Section 5 also provides for compulsory education that:

It is the objective in Zimbabwe that primary education for every child of school-going age shall be compulsory and to this end it shall be the duty of the parents of any such child to ensure that such child attends primary school.

Furthermore section 10 states that children are entitled to be enrolled at schools. These sections cited above are crucial in so far as the right to education and compulsory education is concerned and Zimbabwe has put in place legislative measures that

recognize the right to education. However they are underlying social and economic factors that are hindering the full realization of the right to education in Zimbabwe.

On the other hand the Act is contradictory in itself in that it states that:

Every child in Zimbabwe shall have the right to school education And on another note it declares that: a child can be sent away for failure to pay fees.

This effectively means there is no right to compulsory education in the Zimbabwean educational laws as children who have failed to pay their fees can be sent away. However there is no mechanism in place to enforce that policy of ensuring that education is compulsory.

## **NON –COMPLIANCE**

### **5.4 The Education Act Chapter 25:04**

One of my assumptions was that the Zimbabwean Education Act Chapter 25: 04 is silent on the elimination of sex and gender stereotypical books and teaching curricula contrary to the provisions of international human rights instruments that call for the elimination of stereotypical books and curricula. The human rights instruments call for legislative and non legislative measures to ensure the elimination of gender stereotypes in textbooks. While the government's stance on the language question and health in schools has been clearly laid down, the Act is silent on gender issues in schools. Section 4b provides that no child shall:

Be discriminated against by the imposition of onerous terms and conditions in regard to his admission to any school; on the grounds of his race, tribe, place of origin, national or ethnic origin, political opinions, colour, creed or **gender**.

The Education Act places all children into a single category suggesting, as it were, that the education system is a gender-neutral space through which the girl child can freely sail. The girl children, in fact, belong to a category of their own; they have their own

needs that must be accommodated, which, if not acknowledged at policy formulation level, might not be addressed at policy implementation level.

Thus there is need to provide a legislative framework that specifically calls for the elimination of gender stereotypes such that there is a gender balance in the textbooks.

## **5.5 The Zimbabwean Constitution**

The Constitution is the Supreme law of the land and the mother of all laws. Our Zimbabwean Constitution provides only for civil and political rights at the expense of economic, social and cultural rights. Thus the Constitution as a first step in achieving gender equality and equity should expressly provide for the right to education to make it a justiciable right and more importantly specifically providing for the elimination of gender stereotypes in this instance in textbooks, teaching materials and the curricula so that discrimination of the girl child will not persist.

## **5.6 Education Policy**

There is no comprehensive education policy in the Zimbabwean education system. Most education officers lamented that the education policies were in bits and pieces and numbered about 75 and some end up being forgotten. Some policy circulars were hidden somewhere in the Ministers or Directors offices which were called Ministers circulars or Directors circulars. Mr Mabvakure stated that they need for a comprehensive Education Policy like the Tanzanian experience where they have an education policy that is comprehensive. However efforts to have one in Zimbabwe are hampered by lack of financial resources by the Ministry of Education. Though we have the National Gender Policy that address gender issues in Education and Training.

## **5.7 The Education Act's Provision on the Curricula, Section 63**

Section 63 which stipulate that all schools shall have common curricula and examinations. Thus the curriculum also needs to eliminate gender stereotypes that are prevalent in the textbooks and the education system. Section 63 of the Act gives unlimited authority to the Secretary on what children should learn without exception. Decision making by the Secretary in this regard should be after wide consultation so that there is a broad choice of curricula elements and examinations. Thus, the Act should provide such in order to avoid limiting children's access to information on alternative career paths as enshrined in the CRC.

Generally the Act has no specific clauses that address problems that militate against achievement of universal basic education, namely gender inequality, poverty and the plight of vulnerable children like orphans, children with disabilities, children heading house holds and out of school for reasons beyond their control. In particular addressing the needs of the girl child in the education system.

## **5.8 Equitable Access to Educational Resources**

From the information gathered in this research no policy measures in general are in place to ensure equitable access to education resources. Accessibility of textbooks in most of the schools is a major problem. Government is relegating its duty to educate its citizens. If the situation is as bad as this in the urban areas what more of rural areas. The government has shifted the burden to the donor community which has the effect that if the donor community decides to pullout then none of the rights will be made a reality. Instead of prioritizing the education sector the government is jeopardizing its citizens.

Efforts on the part of governments to meet educational needs have been hampered by such factors as mounting debt burdens, rapid population growth. The government is failing to provide free and compulsory education. The Per Capita Budget is not enough to cater for all the needs of the education sector. It is trite that elimination of gender

stereotypes at infant primary level should be give the first priority as it is a stepping stone to the achievement of other pertinent human and children's rights.

Through the legislative framework the Government of Zimbabwe is not in compliance in so far as they are no specific provisions that address the elimination of gender stereotypes as called for by international human rights instruments.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 CONCLUSION

Mandela (1994): p155 in his autobiography aptly remarked that

*“education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor....It is what separates one person from another.”*

In order for development to occur, for gender equity to be achieved and for men and women to develop their full potential as individuals education provided in the schools must contribute to the eradication of gender stereotypes. Textbooks play a major role in the socialisation and educational advancement of the girl child. Thus gender biases as they are encountered in textbooks needs to be addressed so that pupils can grow up with positive attitudes and values on gender equity.

To achieve gender equality and equity this requires society to actively challenge gender stereotypes at every stage of life – at the earliest ages to ensure that assumed gender roles do not persist throughout the life cycle; at school age so young people are channeled into future roles in line with gendered norms and in adulthood ultimately to prevent the transfer the of gender role stereotypes in children.

Though efforts have been made by the NGOS such as UNICEF to eliminate sex and gender stereotypes the educational system is still facing a lot of challenges as regards the elimination of gender stereotypes. The process of gender equality and equity and the elimination of gender stereotypes have been characterized by the Ministry working in partnership with the donor community which is a positive development. Thus the MoESC has to strengthen its capacity and make sure such stereotypes are eliminated in the school curricula.

From the research findings it can be concluded that the textbooks that are still in use in mostly high density school are gender stereotypical despite there being a new syllabus and new textbooks that are gender sensitive and have been published which some non Government primary schools are now using. If pupils could have access to the new textbooks that are eliminating gender stereotypes then our road to gender equality and equity will be a smooth one. The quality of education is also hampered by the lack of adequate resources for both pupils and teachers at large. The legislative framework itself ie the Constitution and the Education Act has no provisions that specifically deal with gender issues especially when it comes to the elimination of gender stereotypes.

At the curricula development stage there is need for the Government to strengthen the department in terms of financial resources such that their work ie the syllabuses that are gender sensitive are made accessible to all teachers. The curricula developers are aware of the need to eliminate gender stereotypes at infant primary level though much more can be done if conducive conditions are available to them. The girl child at infant primary level is at a compromised position as gender stereotypes that affect her at home are also reinforced in the textbooks. This hampers her educational advancement and her socialisation process. Thus there is need to challenge gender stereotypes at an early age, at home and the community at large.

## **6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are targeted towards law reforms to the policy makers, non legal measures to be employed and administrative measures directed to the MoESC and other stakeholders. This is to achieve total elimination of gender stereotypes in the primary infant textbooks and the curricula in use in schools. It should also be taken into account that elimination of gender stereotypes is not an isolated aspect in itself. It is my view that they are actors and structures that also need to be targeted in the education system who are crucial in the elimination of gender stereotypes. These include the teachers, parents, publishers, writers, the schools, the CDU, the Gender Desk in the MoESC inter alia as they can activate social change in their respective departments and areas towards the elimination of gender stereotypes in infant textbooks.

### **6.2.1 Legal Measures**

- **The Zimbabwean Constitution**

Thus the Constitution as a first step in achieving gender equality and equity should expressly provide for the right to education to make it a justiciable right and more importantly specifically providing for the elimination of gender stereotypes in this instance in textbooks ,teaching materials and the curricula so that discrimination of the girl child will not persist.

- **The Education Act Chapter 25:04**

The Education Act itself is silent on the elimination of sex and gender stereotypical books and teaching curricula contrary to the provisions of international human rights instruments that call for the elimination of stereotypical books and curricula. The human rights instruments call for legislative and non legislative measures to ensure the elimination of gender stereotypes in textbooks. It is therefore recommended that they is need to amend the Act so that it has an express provision that all stereotypes in textbooks, syllabuses, teaching materials and curricula that perpetuate discrimination especially of the girl child should be eliminated.



There is also need to have a specific provision that specifically addresses the needs of the girl child as the education system itself is not a gender –neutral space through which the girl child can freely sail as regards gender stereotypes.

### **6.2.2 Non Legal Measures**

- **Publishers and Writers**

Since publishers and writers have a major role to play in the elimination of gender stereotypes it is recommended that more women writers should be encouraged to write so as also to offer role models to students. Since most new textbooks are being published that are eliminating gender stereotypes but these are not accessible to the intended recipients. Publishers are also encouraged to enhance their corporate social responsibility in providing textbooks to schools. Though publishers are in business and are there as well to make profits books should be easily available and accessible at a an affordable price even to the poor in the society .

More gender sensitive awareness programmes should be available to publishers and writers so that they can eliminate gender stereotypes in the books that they write and publish. The content of the text books and teaching materials should reflect a gender balance so as to promote gender equality and equity thus ensuring the elimination of gender stereotypes.

- **Schools**

The school is one of the primary socializing agents and one of its main roles is to pass on societal norms and values to learners (Haralambos: 1995).The textbooks that are gender stereotypical also pose as an example of the socialisation process of the girl child in the school system. Thus it is recommended that the schools should offer extra curricula activities and programmes that assist both boys and girls to develop new orientations about the roles and capabilities of both men and women in addition to elimination of gender stereotypes. These are to be introduced at infant primary

level as children at an early age would realize that they are equal and as they grow up no sex group would feel superior or inferior to the other.

This includes the introduction of GEM clubs in all schools that have a positive aspect on the socialisation of the girl child as evidenced by the positive development of girls at Chinamano primary school in Epworth.

Schools are also encouraged to do a gender sensitive budgeting and most importantly in the purchasing of current textbooks that have eliminated gender stereotypes which have a potential effect on the socialisation and educational advancement of the girl child. Thus the textbook ratio needs to be improved to the ideal 1:1.

Thus the SDA/Cs needs to be sensitized on gender budgeting through workshops and provision of relevant materials on gender issues on stereotypes by the schools themselves and also the Ministry.

- **The Curriculum Development Unit**

Since curricula developers are crucial in the elimination of gender stereotypes at infant level there is need to enhance the effective functioning of the department so that issues of gender and gender stereotypes are dealt with effectively. Since this department is also incorporating gender issues from an international and regional perspective there is need for internet facilities, library facilities for research so that the best practices in the elimination of gender stereotypes in the syllabuses can be incorporated to suit the Zimbabwean context.

Financial assistance by the Ministry and the donor community should also be provided to the department to enhance its effectiveness in the implementation of the new syllabuses that are in use. Since the CDU officers are not stuck only in office work but should also hold workshops with teachers on go out in the schools and do a syllabus interpretation for the teachers especially on issues of gender stereotypes.

More gender sensitive training for the staff in the department is also required and provision of a gender specialists who can best deal with the elimination of gender stereotypes.

There is also need for more staff as the department is hampered by a lack of human resource in the various subjects. This will entail a faster development of syllabuses that will eliminate gender stereotypes as some subjects do not have the required staff as they is a massive staff shortage.

### **The Ministry of Education Sports and Culture**

There is need for a gender sensitive budgeting by the Ministry as regards the Per Capita Budget so that it will take into account the needs of students in regard to the adequate purchasing of textbooks which are current and have eliminated the gender stereotypes. Thus this will ensure the accessibility of textbooks to every pupil even in the remotest parts of Zimbabwe.

Even the BEAM assistance should be enough to cater for the needs of the orphaned and vulnerable children in providing current textbooks that are eliminating gender stereotypes. This will ensure that the socialisation and educational advancement of the girl child is not curtailed by the lack of gender sensitive school material in infant primary school textbooks.

More gender sensitive training is needed for all teachers, headmasters on how best to deal with gender stereotypical school materials and on how to address the textbooks that are eliminating gender stereotypes in their teaching methods. This also entails adapting to teaching methods that are eliminating gender stereotypes.

Gender sensitivity and human rights training should be part of the teacher training curriculum in colleges so that teachers have the right perception towards elimination of gender stereotypes in the textbooks and are not influenced by their own gender stereotypes and perceptions.

There is need to provide gender sensitive materials such as the posters that are eliminating gender stereotypes as they are not available in most schools visited.

There is need to enhance the Gender Focal Person on the Gender Desk in the MoESC as this is a strategic position in coordinating gender issues in the Ministry. This entails making it a substantive post.

Teachers also need to be motivated through conducive working conditions and salaries so that at least they can teach gender issues without grumbling and feeling short changed by their employer.

### **6.2.3 Other Measures**

#### **Gender Sensitization of Parents and Communities**

Elimination of gender stereotypes in infant primary textbooks is not an isolated process in itself in impacting negatively on the socialisation and educational advancement of the girl child. However society and parents need to sensitized on the need to eliminate gender stereotypical attitudes in the home and the community so that the full potential of the girl child and her educational advancement will be realized and will not be curtailed.

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## **ANNEXURE 1**

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT UNIT**

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What is the Curriculum Development Unit.?
2. What is its role?
3. What are the other departments within it?
4. How is the curriculum developed?
5. How is the content of infant primary education textbooks and teaching materials made?
6. What is it that is looked into when the curricula for infant primary textbooks and teaching materials is being made.
7. Does the CDU work with publishers?
8. If so what is their role and how are they involved.
9. Is the aspect of gender incorporated in the curriculum development stage?
10. In the curriculum development unit is there a differentiation between gender roles of boys and girls.
11. Is there awareness at the Curriculum Development stage on the elimination of gender stereotypes in school curricula as called for by human rights instruments?
12. Is there a component of a gender syllabus that is relevant and is specific to the needs of girls and boys at primary level?
13. What other organizations does the CDU work with?
14. Are there measures being taken at the curriculum development stage to eliminate gender stereotypes?