Women in Education sector: Monitoring and Evaluation of the Impact of Education Policies on Women Empowerment

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Abstract: - One of the perspectives of delving women in academia is by using Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) goal 4 '*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*', to measure the SDG number 5, '*Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*' - and the vice versa. The extent of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) realization provides lessons that the current and future education policies and programs are/ will be founded on. To achieve a thorough analysis, consistently accurate and relevant data is requisite and essential to monitoring and evaluating the real effects of education policies on women empowerment. At a glance, the average children enrolment in primary education rose remarkably between 2000-2015 in most developing countries indicating the extent of achievement of MDGs. Shifting from these quantitative evaluation results, this study outlines qualitative perspectives of measuring women in leadership in the education sector as an approach of empowerment. A key concern is how the generation of data through monitoring and evaluation enables fast-tracking of the effects of the policies on women empowerment in the education system. In this article, we focus on three school management variables as measures of women empowerment: 1) the nature of both internal and external audits to ensure accountability and transparency; 2) professionalism enhancement (nature of the In-service education training), and 3) the analysis of resource needs in empowering women. While doing the monitoring and evaluation of SDGs achievement, there is a need to deepen the analysis and consider the processes that determine which gender elevates to leadership.

Key Words: Women empowerment, leadership, education sector, SDGs, monitoring and evaluation

I INTRODUCTION

There exist significant gender-based stereotypes of who ascends to leadership, especially in the Developing World. Education is not an exceptional sector. There is thus a need to develop analytical strategies to measure the level of equality and the quality of women's performance in educational leadership, which is currently dominated by men. Practically, it is through the development of monitoring, evaluation, and learning frameworks, gathering of appropriate data, conducting comprehensive data analysis that policymakers are able to measure the extent of women empowerment in academia. There has been increased global advocacy for women empowerment that appears to be both parallel and complementary to the MDGs (i.e the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender Equality 2005–2015 and CEDAW Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995–2015). Data from UNESCO indicates that sub-Saharan Africa has the least number of female teachers in every education level. The lower levels of

education have a higher fraction of female teachers as compared to the higher education levels. On average the percentage of female teachers in primary education in Sub-Saharan Africa is around 44% while those in secondary education are approximately 30%. The figures are even much lower in tertiary education. In the context of leadership in the sector, the number of women is further disproportionally smaller [1]. Thus, gender equality in educational leadership does not mean 50-50% between men and women but rather a proportionate representational leadership.

Different arguments have been put forth about gender and leadership. The conventional notion is that men are better than women in leadership. The 'female advantage' in leadership arguments are also in the debate. The female advantage arguments are founded on the belief that there is a greater possibility that women adopt empowering leadership styles while men are more disadvantaged because their style of leadership is dominated by commanding-and-controlling the behavior of subordinates as well as the assertion of power. Contrary to these arguments, a meta-analysis conducted by Samantha et al. [2], after considering all the leadership contexts found out that the effectiveness of leadership styles of men and women does not differ. Thus given the same opportunities for professional development the leadership output of both men and women has no significant difference [3].

1.1 Transiting from the MDGs 2 and 3 to SDGs 4 and 5

MDG number 2 was concerned with the most fundamental level of education, i.e., achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE). One principle and an obvious measure of the extent of achievement of this goal was children's enrollment rate in primary schools. Various countries localized and operationalized this goal in different ways. The most common policies introduced by African governments included: reducing the cost of primary education or free and compulsory primary education; free provision of teaching and learning materials; expansion of schools; employment of more teachers; promotion of non-formal (adult) education as well as special education to children with special needs. Some countries like Lesotho introduced school feeding programs[4]. In Kenya, the introduction of free primary education saw the primary school enrollment increase from 5.93 million in 2003 to 10.2 million children in 2013. This was translated into a gross enrollment rate of 117% [5].

In common parlance, gender equality refers to not only equal representation but also the active participation of both men and women in decision-making positions. The analysis of women in leadership in the education sector draws focus to both gender equality in the sector and the creation of an attractive or unattractive picture to girls whose dream is to occupy those positions in the future. Regarding gender equality, we refer to the formal processes and procedures that determine the women's acquisition of leadership within the educational sector as 'women empowerment-oriented education policies'.

Various agencies have been active in promoting women's leadership in the education sector. For example, UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) encourages education policymakers to engage in broad-based participatory processes. UNESCO-IIEP has contributed to raising awareness by providing training targeted at women as part of professional development to enhance their participation in the formulation of policies, plans, programs and projects related to the SDG 4. In 2017, IIEP hosted a Summer School for female planners. Its theme was, "Policy, Planning and Leadership for Sustainable Educational Development" to empower them to identify information needs better and make policy recommendations concerning women and leadership[6]. The training, among other achievements, draw women participants from various countries, to enhance competencies, which are essential requirements for leadership positions while promoting intercultural dialogue.

II PROBLEM FORMULATION: A SHALLOW ANALYSIS OF WOMEN IN EDUCATION

The analysis of UNDP's country reports conducted for this paper [4, 5], indicates a minimal interaction between the evaluation of the MDG number 2 and 3. The only apparent point of intersection between the analysis of the two goals is the comparison of the enrolment rate of girls and boys. This was despite the clarity of target 3a of MDG goal 3 - *'Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015'.* A narrow understanding of the concept 'gender disparity' might have shifted the analysis to the pupils and students and failed to include the educators.

Contrary to the distinct goal analysis of the above two MGDs, we therefore find it necessary to shift from such a strategy of analysis, in examining the same agendas under Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This analytical approach combines the monitoring, evaluation, and learning of SDG 3 and SDG 4 to generate a complex and integrated causal-effect analysis on each other. It is through this integration of analysis that the meaning of sustainability as 'the ability to sustain' is achieved to its fullest. Moreover, a close reference to UNDP reports on the attainment of the MDGs indicates that there seems to be an analytical gap by overemphasizing on quantity (numbers) and missing out or inadequately addressing the quality issues.

Nevertheless, as the MDGs focused on eradicating extreme poverty, SDGs emphasized more on long-term, inclusive, and sustainable development. While still acknowledging the importance of quantitative data, unlike the evaluation of MDGs 2 and 3, in the following section, we shall discuss the need to raise the level of analysis of SDGs 4 and 5 and strategies to measure the impact of education policies on women empowerment.

III PROBLEM SOLUTION

SDG 4 states, '*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'*. Although there are some efforts towards narrowing the gender gap in education [7,8], gender inequality still remains a big challenge, especially in the most vulnerable regions in Africa. The increasing women representation in the parliament needs to be translated into increased interest and effort in establishing policies that aim at more inclusion of women in educational leadership. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, inclusive refers to '*Including all the services or items normally expected or required.'* On the other hand, equitable refers to '*fair and impartial'.* Thus, a broader conceptualization of the term 'inclusive and equitable' in this SDG focuses not only on the recipient (either a boy or a girl) but also on the teachers/educators. Gender-based inclusiveness and equitability are key perspectives to ensuring the quality of education.

On the flip side, is the SDG 5 '*Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'.* A key concern is how to measure the impact of policies that promote the quality of education on women empowerment. The policies under examination are generally managerial and thus the analysis adopts three major administrative tasks within the education sector. Although there could be other parameters that reflect the rate of women empowerment (inclusivity and equality) in the education sector, our analysis is limited to: 1) the nature of audits as a measure of accountability and transparency of who gets into leadership, 2) Professionalism enhancement - nature of in-service education training 3) and the analysis of the resource needs of women empowerment programs in the sector. We thus conducted a literature review and discussed the three agendas

from both the policymakers' perspective and practitioners' perspective.

3.1 Accountability: the audit of the job promotion procedures and processes

Accountability is not arbitrary. It should be evaluated against a particular goal [9,10,11]. There are a wide range of challenges that hinder accurate measures of accountability in education systems such as lack of or inadequate records, the inefficiency of the systems deployed, poor governance of the sector, among others. In most education systems, decision-makers tend to emphasize more on performance-based accountability i.e. the children's performance in exams. Nevertheless, a strategy can yield both positive and negative effects depending on the context. A study in Wales indicated that accountability reforms might lead to increased general accountability but reduced trust and a negative impact on academic excellence [12]. In the contemporary world, teachers live under a huge pressure to account for the performance of their students. In general, their teaching capabilities are evaluated based on student performance in a standardized exam. The education systems link poor teacher's performance to personal limitations such as absenteeism, poorly managed lessons, lack or substandard schemes of work and lesson plans, lack of proper understanding of the subject, poor teaching methods, lack of exam report forms/books to track the child's performance, etc. Therefore there is a possibility that quantitative indicators such as formative assessment and evaluations fail to capture the varied impact of education policies on individual and societal empowerment in the long run.

A study by McCaffery et al. indicates the positive impact of digitalization on tracking the child's performance. For instance, the Value-Added Modeling (VAM) is an essential statistical tool that offers an approach to monitor students' test scores and over time and model teacher's effectiveness and therefore analyze the accountability [13]. Although VAM provides a good link between teachers and students it does not factor in teachers' demotivation (especially among females who are victims of patriarchal systems) which would originate from unfair and vague processes of rising to leadership.

When analyzing the women empowerment in the education sector, problems and their solutions will differ widely by context. According to the Global Education Report, the accountability tools used might work in some contexts while in other cases, they fail to deliver any positive impact in improving the behavior of actors towards achieving SDG 4 [14]. Institutions such as Ministries, Commissions, and Unions in the education sector can promote transparency and accountability by holding each other to account for non-compliance with the existing laws and regulations (internal auditing). Internal auditing is more preferable in the assessment of teacher's classroom work due to trust-related reasons as opposed to audits by external institutions.

The auditing should nevertheless not be narrowed down to the financial matters or human resources to capture the possible ghost workers. It should adequately evaluate gender-based stereotypes that significantly hinder the growth of women into leadership positions. Trust in the auditing systems as themselves being transparent is paramount. Factors such as teachers' professional status, promotion of collaboration with other professional teaching communities contribute to harmonizing the expectations of different actors in the education system. These harmonized expectations help shape and build clarity and transparency not only on job promotion policies but also on the audit outcomes. The lucidity of responsibilities at the individual level yields a positive feeling of fair and unbiased treatment [15]. Furthermore, effective communication enhances accountability and transparency by ensuring equal access to

information on professionalism enhancement opportunities to all relevant individuals. The auditing system should thus be subjected to the educators' professional advancement as a principal determinant of who gets into leadership.

3.2 Professionalism enhancement (In-service education and training)

If the patriarchal nature of the society gives men an upper hand in rising to the leadership, so which women empowerment policies should be put into place to curb this? Rising through the career ladder to leadership is a process that is largely determined by professionalism. Morris refers to professionalism as efficiently offering a specialist service based on a body of knowledge [16]. Thus, building professionalism is a preparation for leadership. The determination of who ascends to the leadership position itself is an end of a process of continuous professional development. Up to date, most leadership positions, especially in Africa, are dominated by men. Therefore, it is necessary to deepen the analysis of how men meritocratically rise to the leadership effectively as compared to women. If men rise to the leadership by merit, then policymakers in the education sector need to establish the aforementioned 'women empowerment-oriented education policies' and integrate them into professional development programs so that women can equally be competitive.

The skill-needs analysis is the beginning point of the in-service professionalism enhancement. In this rapidly changing world, it is important to map not only the incompetencies that hinder or qualities that promote women climb into leadership but also the systemic challenges that distress the effectiveness of professional development. These systemic and multilayered bottlenecks in the education system such as the lack of proper policies on women empowerment and their comprehensive monitoring frameworks are the key causes of non-inclusiveness or gender inequality of

women in leadership. Corruption has been cited as one of the limitations of women in leadership [17, 18]. Transparency in who gets an opportunity for professional enhancement is necessary.

Some of these systemic hindrances underpin the nature of personal development systems such as the pre-service training; in-service education and training; the ability to detect and enhance the performance of struggling teachers [19]. A study by OECD indicated that female teachers, especially in public schools, were more likely to report unsatisfied demands on in-service professional enhancement. In the same study, 42 percent of the respondents indicated a lack of suitable professional development as the reason for not enhancing their professionalism [20]. Although the other highly quoted reason for not engaging in professional development was the conflict with the classwork schedule and family roles, it is crystal clear that unsuitable professional enhancement programs have a greater negative impact on female teachers as compared to their male counterparts. Depending on the nature of the in-service professional enhancement adopted and according to the redirection of the existing resource deficit, injection of new resources drawn from either the government or other sources is essential to promote and sustain these women-empowerment education policies.

3.3 Resource-needs analysis

A comprehensive needs-analysis of in-service professional development is an important process of bridging the identified accountability gaps in building a gender-balanced leadership in the education sector. In most remedial interventions particularly in the developing world, funds are usually the major challenge. However, to execute these non-negotiable improvements a major concern is how to redirect the existing financial and more importantly human resources to achieve these policies.

Gender mainstreaming factors such as gender sensitivity in the overall education management, leadership capacities at the school level, and most importantly the networks of professional teaching communities are essentials that help determine the resources needed to empower women into leadership. Collaboration and trust are usually reciprocal processes [15]. Although the collaborations of teaching professional communities play an important role in sharing experiences and building trust and transparency within the education system [21], they mostly occur on the same level (horizontally) and fail to share experiences across different cadres of education (vertically) including industrialists, or even across the countries. Yet, the strategies to women empowerment have a relatively diverse effect on all these levels. Already these collaboration networks exist both formally or informally and publicly or privately in different education systems. The major task is then re-aligning them with the broader vision and monitoring them as resources of women empowerment in the industry.

Although most education systems have the right resources, one of the limitations in most countries would obviously be the ineffectiveness of their implementation to create a feedback-rich culture regarding women empowerment. In efforts to create norms of hard-edge feedback, a top-down approach to change at times proves to be problematic where there is no political goodwill. The alternative approach, the bottom-up approach to reforms is usually incoherent due to the lack of formal structures. A well-structured across-level networking can thus be crucial in transferring positive experiences from the pockets of success into the entire system change. These collaborations can aid implement change in the education system when controlled under well-framed monitoring and evaluation framework. Collaboration can also occur between different government bodies. As such, there is a need to transform the political representation of women into a critical mass that shapes resource allocation into areas that address the challenges of women rising to leadership.

3.4 Operationalization of monitoring, evaluation and learning variables

Auditing aids in evaluating accountability and transparency. Some of the variables commonly used to measure accountability and transparency include first, measuring the fraction of women that join the top leadership in the education sector through appointments. This would necessitate scrutiny of the public service department to examine gender imbalanced state appointments in the education sector. Secondly, measuring the openness and formality of communication on professionalism enhancement opportunities to all targeted staff.

The measure of in-service professional enhancement is determined by a specific intervention program. For instance, the multidimensional collaboration among the teaching professionals gives two-way feedback necessary to develop the SWOT analysis for policies that empower women in academia. Among the relevant measurement variables of women empowerment policies in the education sector include the leadership skills that a program targets to enhance; the number of women involved; the number of women that participated and eventually rose to leadership. Besides, as mentioned above, the unsuitability of the professional enhancing program is one of the major reasons quoted by the female teachers as a hindrance to their professional development. There is the need to measure the extent of centralization, decentralization as well as the online provision of professional enhancement programs as a determinant of suitability among the female teachers in different localities.

The resource-needs analysis is a variable derived from auditing outcomes i.e. the accountability and transparency gaps identified and the empowerment programs proposed as a

remedial action. Overall, the measure of the digitalization of job promotion processes is vital. More computerized systems and processes enable faster and ad hoc data analysis. It also enables time series analysis of women empowerment in the education sector. In every resource needs-scrutiny, cost-benefit analysis of an intervention program is necessary.

Different bodies within the education system including the ministries, teachers' commissions, and unions need to establish a multi-task force to review the accountability and transparency of the whole process that hinders women climb to leadership relatively to men. In this regard, one of the key sub-process is the in-service professional enhancement lack of which limits educators' rising to higher career levers [22]. It is through conducting gender disparity auditing in the entire system that the source of gender imbalance in education leadership can be identified and quantified in the Sustainable Development Goals Framework.

IV CONCLUSION

There is no any societal issue whose sustainability can be analyzed comprehensively without engaging other related social fields. This is factual for women empowerment and quality of educational leadership as well. There is thus a need to develop an analytical strategy that captures the sustainability of women empowerment and how that empowerment enables them to rise to leadership. Further, there is a need to rethink qualitative approaches of monitoring and evaluation of SDGs in a broader and deeper extent compared to the ones used to measure the extent of achievement of MDGs.

To achieve a re-energized women empowerment in the education sector, there is the need to re-examine practices and structures that hinder gender equality in the sector. This paper has examined the empowerment of women and the resultant inclusion into the education sector leadership. An interdisciplinary and complex analysis of double-edged benefits between women empowerment and quality education is taking shape. On the one hand, education policies promote women empowerment and inclusion in leadership. On the other hand, gender-balanced leadership has a positive impact on the overall quality of education. To overcome limitations of women rising to leadership in the education sector, the professional development programs need to be linked to the broad conceptualization of equity and inclusivity in SDG 4, and further monitored and evaluated against the achievement of SDG 5 *'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'*. The collaboration of teaching professional communities is one of the strategies that bring out the real manifestation of challenges that hinder women climb to leadership. The findings of such networks and other related research studies form the grounds of more intervention strategies to increase women in educational leadership. There is a need realign the international development agenda related to gender equality and women empowerment with the reality of the specific needs at the regional and local levels. By so doing, development actors will be able to measure the qualitative aspects of the achievement of SDGs in a multi-dimensional manner. In addition, it will become possible to understand how women empowerment programs translate to women rising to leadership in academia.

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Contribution of individual authors to the creation of a scientific article

Samuel Mwangi initiated the research agenda, designed the study, contributed to the development of the study
Annie Karobia contributed to the development of the study by providing a practitioner's perspective. She also did the proofreading.
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