

CULTURAL EXPECTATION AS A HINDRANCE TO GENDER EQUALITY: GHANAIAN GIRL-CHILD IN FOCUS

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ABSTRACT: *Boys and Girls in less developed countries like Ghana face different levels of cultural expectations. Cultural expectation from a Ghanaian Girl-Child appears to be a hindrance to Gender equality – equality of intellectual resource. To ascertain the intensity of the effect of subjecting school girls in Ghana into ‘domestic slavery’ as they do the house chores alone at the expense of their time to study, the study looks at the extent to which cultural expectation relating to house chores stands as an impediment to Ghanaian Girl-child basic education. The study employed both conflict and cognitive theories in explaining how societies make inequality inevitable and manage to categorise some members in the society into groups of subordinates and superiors. In relation to gender and how girls are suppressed through their cultural expectations, the theories serve as the theoretical framework for the study. The study adopted a heuristic case study which afforded me the opportunity to dive into the extent to which girls’ education are affected by their cultural responsibility of doing the household chores, leaving the boys untouched. I used observation and interview guide in collecting the data. One of the main findings is that about 52% of the time available for the girl-child to revise her school notes (what is taught in school) goes into such responsibilities whilst her male counterpart gets almost 98% of his time for revision. Another significant point noted is that leaving the house chores into the hands of girls as the boys have freedom to revise their studies makes gender inequality persistence and durable. Thus, gender inequalities associated with intellectual skills will continue to be persistent and durable.*

KEY WORDS: cultural expectation, gender, girl-child, intellectual resources equality, revising-time loss.

INTRODUCTION

Every society in the world contains cultural norms which regulate the conducts of men and women. According to African Development Bank-AfDB (n.d) the contribution of women to the African’s economy is so high. However “African women are held back from fulfilling their potential by many constraints, whether as leaders in public life, in the boardroom, or in growing their businesses”. Ghana as an African country follows some of these norms and cultural expectation religiously. The nexus of cultural expectations and gender equality needs to be critically examined if we really want to have gender equality. Gender equality as a concept also needs to be properly redefined to ascertain what we should aim at in embarking such equality. In 1991, Dereke Parfit

of Harvard University gave Lindley Memorial Lecture at University of Kansas, on 21st November, 1991 on the topic, “*equality or priority?*” and laid emphasis on the value and the kind of equality that should be accepted and believed (Partfit, 1991).

Partfit (1991) stated that the value of equality is very important and the kind of equality that is acceptable and he believed in, is what he termed as “*equally well off*” equality. Egalitarian doctrines also express the idea that all human persons are equal in fundamental worth or moral status (Moreno-Ternero, and Roemer, 2010). AS Sen (1980) put it, “*equality of what?*” In other words, what should we interested to equalize? In an attempt to answer this question in relation to Gender equality makes me concern about how culture in Africa poses challenges in attaining any form of acceptable gender equality. Ghana as a nation in Africa holds on to some of her cultural aspects that seem to relegate women to the background. Socialisation processes are known to be a contributory factor that led to various forms of gender inequalities (Kyei, 2019). Rawls (1971) stated that if men take a certain pleasure in discriminating against one another, or subjecting others to a lesser liberty as a means of enhancing their (men’s) self-respect, then the satisfaction of these desires must be weighed in all related deliberations according to the intensity of these acts.

To ascertain the intensity of the act of subjecting school girls in Ghana into ‘domestic slavery’ as they do the house chores alone, it is important to look into how such act affect “*intellectual resources equality*”. As seen in human capital model described by some authors include Todaro and Smith (2009), the intellectual capital aspect of the model is necessary for producing wealth, multiply output of physical assets, gain competitive advantage, or adding value to other types of capital such as machines and plants through education. Inferring from Dworkin (1981a and 1981b) assertion, women are to be held responsible ‘for the outcomes of their own choices’ unless the outcomes of their choices are borne out of unchosen circumstances. Since school girls, between the ages of 12 to 17 years in Ghana are always subjected to unchosen cultural expectation obligations, their inability to compete well in the academic sphere needs to be investigated to ascertain the extent of damaging to their intellectual resources in order to be well compensated or neutralised the situation. As culture is dynamic, there is the need to feel such dynamism in the area of Ghanaian culture which sees house chores duties as girl-child’s cultural expectation at the expense of her intellectual development. The available literature shows that Ghana, like other Africa countries, still hold on to the culture of ‘house chores’ being a sole cultural responsibility for the girl-child (Kyei, 2019). According to Emmanuel, (2015) parents in Tanzania assigned more household activities to girls than boys because of their traditions. This study therefore looks at how the girl-child suffers from this cultural obligations – house chores duties, as she combines her domestic cultural obligations with her academic work. Thus, it is expected that the study would suggest an alternative approach to change this ‘girl-child cultural expectation’ that subjects school girls into domestic slavery. So far, the only available solution known from available literature which is also shared by many gender equality advocates is the use of well held chorus, “*encouraging boys and men to assist girls and women*” in domestic duties. It must be stressed that this well held appeal to society has yielded no result. Hence, the significance of this study is that it would provide a road map for cultural change that allows both male and female children voluntarily and equally part-take in house chores assignments right from infant. Thus, the ensuing questions including:

1. To what extent does the girl-child in Ghana loses her time for revising academic work per year as she performs house chores as her cultural obligation?
2. Could there be any policy direction to change the culture of “girls are born to perform house chores alone” in Ghana?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study employed both conflict and cognitive theories in explaining how societies make inequality inevitable and manage to categorise some members in the society into groups of subordinates and superiors. In relation to gender and how girls are suppressed through their cultural expectations, the theories serve as the theoretical framework for the study.

Conflict and Cognitive Theories

The inevitability of inequality in the society is best explained by Conflict theorists. This sociological approach does look at how social patterns can cause some people in the society to be dominant, and others to be oppressed. These theorists argued that those who are given the most reward and influential position are able to apply the greatest power resources they possess (Collins, 1975; Gluckman, 1968). Conflict theorists argue that there are no assurances that the most qualified individuals will actually occupy key societal roles. They asserted that if society were one in which equality of opportunity such as opportunity to acquire ‘*intellectual resources*’ were truly a reality, it could be concluded that the only determining factors are people’s skills and talents (Collins, 1975; Gluckman, 1968). However, the system by which the *most capable* ones are chosen to fill the most important positions is rigged in favour of those closer to the *power* in terms of political, economic or social attainments makes it unfair. As culture gives upper hand to male child in Ghana than the female child, one would agree that girl-child in Ghana faces the hurdle of acquiring all forms of equality

However, it has been noted by some authors in the field that conceptualizing gender inequality as a conflict based behaviour limits the concept of gender inequality. The main reason given is that conflict theory lacks the explanation to other *causes* of gender inequalities. Reskin (2000) for example argued that we cannot identify the proximate causes of gender inequality that results from other processes since theoretical approach (conflict theory) that many sociologists embrace intellectually has not generated explanatory scheme, for example, to the causes of employment discrimination. Reskin, (2000) stated that “I argue that we should turn our attention to *how* as well as *why* discrimination occurs, and I propose that social cognition theory can answer both these questions” (p.32). According to Fiske, Lin, and Neuberg (1999) Social Cognitive theory holds it that people automatically categorize others into ‘*in groups* and *out groups*’. The visibility and cultural importance of sex and race and their role as core bases of stratification make them almost automatic bases of categorization. Thus, generally, having categorized others or people into the same category turns to automatically push them to feel, think, and behave alike. It is also well noted that categorization is accompanied by stereotyping, attribution bias, and evaluation bias. These, in turn, introduce sex, race, and ethnic biases into people’s perceptions, interpretations, recollections, and evaluations of others. These biases, some authors say, are more of cognitive rather than motivational (Reskin, 2000:320-27; Fiske, et al 1999:231-54; Krieger 1995: 1188). In

this way, it can be said that Cognitive theory explains the genesis of gender role as it claims that gender identity forms the basic organizer and regulator of children's gender learning since children develop stereotypic conception from what they see and hear around them (Bussey and Bandura, 1999). Thus, cultural norms and heritage plays very vital role in answering *how and why* questions in gender identity formation (Reskin, 2000).

Othering – Theorising Others to Create Gender Inequality

There are other generic interactive processes that create gender inequalities. These interactive processes, according to Risman (2004) include othering, subordinate adaptation, boundary maintenance, and emotional management. From literature, *Othering*, simply means actions by which people are mentally classified into superior and inferior groups. Jensen (2011:65) for example defines othering, as:

discursive processes by which powerful groups, who may or may not make up a numerical majority, define subordinate groups into existence in a reductionist way which ascribe problematic and/or inferior characteristics to these subordinate groups. Such discursive processes affirm the legitimacy and superiority of the powerful and condition identity formation among the subordinate

In sociological terms, there are three dimensions to the concept of othering. First, making the subordinates aware of who holds power – through interactions and socialisation processes, some *others* are produced as subordinates. Second, some others are constructed to be pathological and morally inferior. Third, knowledge and technology belongs to 'the powerful empirical self, and not the colonial other' (Jensen, 2011: 65). From these aspects of *othering*, it could be deduced that the main thing that form out of *othering* is identity. People in the subordinate group such as women are seen as people with limited knowledge in all things that matter most and they must adapt to the rules; they are morally and pathologically unfit to be allowed to lead and have access to resources; the world is not organized to benefit them or suit their needs; and they have to find a way to accommodate themselves to the world since they are under privileged, or face serious consequences and have a harder time, or controlling their own behavioural options (Seidman, 2013; Jensen, 2009, 2011). Thus, gender inequalities such as 'identity gender inequality'; status inequality – relationship between different types of people who distinguish themselves by personal characteristics and exclusionary practices; positional inequality – relationships between social positions defined by people's roles and functional identity within some social structure; and human right and right to have access inequality are created (Jackson, 1998). It must therefore be noted that the moment people begin to cite others as people with repository of knowledge, these people have preferences in who should go to school to the highest level and who should not – in order not to waste the limited resources. If the source of the prevailing gender inequality is traced from *othering and we desire to correct it*, then we must do well to tackle the inferiority complex created which is created through cultural expectation and its processes.

Processes and social interactional sources of gender inequality

The conflict theory approach to the formation of gender inequality, according to Reskin (2000) explains discrimination and inequality as strategic and self-interest action by those with power to exploit the subordinates. Conceptualize interactional cause of gender inequality as the result of conflict based behaviour, the beneficiaries of the system of inequality protect their privileges by using the resources they control to exclude members of the subordinates (Reskin, 2000:319-21). Strategically, men always use interaction processes through subversive ways such as politeness norm, and opening of doors for women to signify that women are weak, to preserve their power and privileges (Risman, 2004: 438). Ridgeway (1997) asserted that the form of gender inequality that is created by social interaction is gender *status belief* which has been given a meaning as a widely held cultural belief that evaluate one sex as generally superior and diffusely more competent than the other. If women are disempowered through processes of social interactions, then our approach to empower women especially, intellectually, must deal with socialization processes to compensate the women in such a way that they will not be *worst off* due to the disadvantages these processes put them.

Status Expectation and Cognitive biases as sources of Gender Inequalities

According to Haselton, Nettle, and Andrews (2005) *cognitive bias* is a pattern of deviation in judgment whereby inferences about other people and situations may be drawn in an illogical fashion. Bless, Fiedler and Strack (2004) also had it that individuals create their own "subjective social reality" from their perception of the input. These cognitive biases sometimes lead to perceptual distortion, inaccurate judgment and illogical interpretation leading to stereotyping which, Bodenhausen, Macrae, and Garst (1998) explained as a cognitive schemata that in any occasion influence how people process information about others.

How people process information about others has a strong link with the formation of *status beliefs* and as such, status expectations create cognitive bias towards privileging those of already higher status (Risman, 2004). In the work place for example where there is mixed-sex context, a number of gender interested behaviours are created through gender status expectation which include the expectations that male employers, employees, or managers are more competent, more worthy of reward than the female counterparts (Ridgeway, 1997). Such situation, according to Tomaskovic-Devey, Avent-Holt, Zimmer, and Harding (2009) creates economic inequality since there would be class differences in the organisational earnings based on the perceived competences and one's status. Tomaskovic-Devey et al. (2009) then concluded that economic inequality become persistence and durable because the upper handed actors always create wage inequality as a result of their attempts to claim resources.

Therefore, the main privilege people in the upper class gain as they create cognitive bias is to have control over resources. This is evident in popular book, "*Destined for Inequality, the Inevitable Rise of Women Status*" that in attempt to control resources, people create positions and status. Jackson distinguished between positional inequality and status inequality which trace their roots from status expectation and cognitive biases. He defined *Positional inequality* as relationships

between social positions that exist between two individuals or groups defined by their roles and functional identity within some social structure. He explained that the characteristic feature of positional inequality is that since it is structural, it does not depend on the identity of the people who occupy the positions. Therefore, positional inequality persists even when the people change. Some of the examples given on the structurally unequal groups include managers and machine operators, government officials and ordinary citizen. “Sometimes the structures define the inequality between positions indirectly, by attaching variable amounts of resources (for example, income, authority, influence, and visibility) to positions” (p. 3).

Cognitive bias therefore creates many forms of gender inequalities. It leads to economic inequality. The conclusion Ridgeway (2014:4) made out of the presumption of greater competence was that people with higher status “have fairly won their better jobs and higher incomes on the basis of their own superior merit. It thus provides an especially powerful form of legitimation in an ostensibly meritocratic society”. According to Liversey (2014) inequality from meritocracy is desirable as long as it is based on merit. What merit? Merit that stems from cognitive bias must be properly differentiated from merit that stems from competent and skills that are not mere perceptions but well developed talents, taste and preference. From the principles of equality there is even a question of conditions and factors that account for people’s preferences and tastes as well as the development of talents. Thus, equal opportunity for both the girl-child and the boy-child to education for intellectual development must go beyond mere school attendance.

It must be noted that controlling of resources through identity creation always cements economic, political and educational gender inequalities. Tilly’s (1998) *durable inequality theory* suggests that most inequalities are based purely on the controlling of resources and power such that it gives rise to a constant struggling between the dominant and subdominant individuals. For inequality to be persistent, controlling of resources and power by the bourgeoisie (ruling class – men) needs to be solidified and protected to the extent that it creates class and *status difference* between the proletariat (the subject class – women) and the ruling class. This was observed by Ridgeway (2014) when it was stated that controlling of resources and power stabilize inequality because it transforms the situational control over resources and power into a status difference.

Therefore, it is clear from these authors that there are strong linkages that exist among the formation of cognitive bias, status expectation and the controlling of resources. The formation of cognitive bias, either through cultural adaptation or towards the certain groups or individuals fuels identity formation – either inferiority or superiority, and as a result the *significant others* – those who ‘own knowledge’, power and dignity always control all the resources and are always on the *driving seat*.

Cultural expectation causes gender inequalities

It seems that the most popular definition of culture is what Kluckhohn (1951) defined as an acquired and transmitted pattern of shared meaning, feeling, and behaviour that constitutes a distinctive human group. Culture can be used to mean intellectual and creative products, including literature, music and drama. It is a way of life of people which includes customs and beliefs. For the purposes of this study, culture is used to describe the beliefs and practices of societies particularly in relation to traditions, educational environment and religions. To borrow words from

Kambarami (2006), culture and gender are two variables which have been “interwoven intricately to the extent that any efforts to separate them are fruitless”.

Cultural expectation that enforces that women are simply responsible for the children and, should be limited to the household work, must be submissive to men in order to be seen as more cultured and civilized among others, are often justified through what Feinstein, Feinstein and Sabrow (2010) termed as *naturalisation*. They explained culture of naturalisation as people’s attempt to justify the gender disparity as natural. Hence, this justification concludes that gender inequality problem that exist, as a result of what women and men are culturally expected to be doing, is insignificant. According to Feinstein et al (2010) one aspect of gender inequality that is perpetuated through gender norms is sexism. To Healey (2006), there are two types of sexism: hostile – agreement with all forms of negative stereotypes against women and, benevolent – the use of positive attitude of protection and affection to insubordinate women. In each form of sexism, Healey (2006:99) asserts that it does “promote stereotypical views of women and serve to justify and rationalise their lower status”. This is because when either form of sexism is used, individuals are expressing traditional attitudes towards gender norms.

It has been said that culture constructs gender roles and that gender roles vary from culture to culture. Various cultural norms, activities, conducts and beliefs have contributed a great deal of gender inequalities such that women do most household work across all the societies, cooking and dishwashing are the least shared household chores (Risman, 2004; Williams and Best, 1990b). A research conducted by the Local Community Competence Building – LCCB an organisation in Tanzania shows that some of the gender norms in Tanzania like the expectation that women will work harder and longer hours than men as well as serve the men contribute massively to gender inequality in all dimensions. For instance, as both boys and girls return from farm work the study showed that the girl is obliged to either fetch, draw or collect water and cook whilst the boy will be resting waiting for food. Also, boys in Tanzania are taught how to become men and perform men’s duties while girls are socialised to perform ‘mothers duties’. Confirming Roger’s (1983) assertion, LCCB’s (2006) as cited in Feinstein et al (2010), the study did indicate that these and other social norms in Tanzania affirm men to have control over women’s labour and as supervisors, men control the finances. Feinstein et al (2010:102) in their study in Tanzania stated that since female respondents did indicate that they (women) needed cultural change for men to take part in household job equally, the problem is either “due to the men’s desires to deny or ignore how the women are feeling or it could possibly come from an inability of the women to express themselves due to the strong traditional culture in Tanzania”.

As stated in Okome (2003:71) Custom in Africa is stronger than domination and religion. Patriarchal society is built through the socialization processes, which begins in the family and supported massively by religion, education, economy and politics (Kambarami, 2006). It has been said that parents are the primary influence on the gender role development in the early stage of a child’s life (Kaplan, 1991). According to Kambarami (2006), enculturation processes always make the society accept that male children rule females right from birth to the extent that even if the male child is not the first born in a family, he is automatically considered the head of the household who should protect and look after his sisters; and also ensures the survival of the family’s name as he brings additional members into the family. However, the girl child is seen as one who marries

out and joins another family. This attitude, according to Kambarami (2006) “has seen some parents preferring to educate boys to girls”. As a result, apart from UNAID’s (2004) study which stated that Zimbabwe secondary school enrolment is only 42%, Kambarami’s (2006) study also revealed that the educational system in Zimbabwe is structured in a way that maintains the inequalities that exist between girls and boys. This is because the textbooks that are used in schools depict boys as tough, rough and mentally skilled and adventurous whilst girls are painted as soft, gentle who have to handle household duties. As boys and girls each wants to do what they are ascribed to, cognitively, their conducts are designed to confirm their gender identity. “Once children establish knowledge of their own gender, the reciprocal interplay between one’s behaviour (acting like a girl) and thoughts (I am a girl) leads to a stable gender identity” (Bussey and Bandura, 1999:4).

It has been said that western culture has promoted gender inequality on Africa soil. In Africa, some writers have attributed women inferiority to the introduction of Christianity and formal education by the Europeans. For instance, Uchem (2003) stated that the silencing of the women’s voice and limiting their exercise of leadership in Igbo communities within and outside Nigeria today are not intrinsic to Igbo culture. The acts were aftermaths of the introduction of Western Christian notions of women’s inferiority into Nigeria by British colonial masters and Christian missionaries. Uchendu (1995) did compare and contrast the pre-colonial status of women in Igboland with that of European and American women and concluded that women were barred from certain professions in Europe and the U.S. on account of their gender, whilst women had no corresponding socio-economic restrictions in Igboland. Thus, Uchem (2003) opined that the introduction of western education sought to favour male elite and relegated women to the background as it changed the old traditions where Igbo women had great say in the economy, politics and worship. Uchem was with the view that many people in present generation Igbos have no idea of these empowering traditions and as such they “wrongly accuse Igbo women who resist male oppression of not knowing their culture or of having lost it through exposure to the Euro-American women’s movement”. Kambarami (2006) studies in Zimbabwe also found out that the favourite quotation Zimbabwe men use to support their argument that women are subordinates is ‘Colossians 3:18’ which states that a woman is expected to “submit to her husband”.

Sen (1980) was with the view that the question we need to ask ourselves is “Equality of what?” Rawls (1971) and Dworkin (1981a and 1981b) preferred equality of resources to equality of welfare in order to avoid the problem of dubious preference satisfaction. Having read equality of resources argument, the stand I took was that one cannot be blamed for her taste, whether champagne or beer taste, until the *variables of equality for resources* are carefully examined.

METHOD OF THE STUDY

The study adopted a case study research design. The study was carried out in two Basic Schools in Kumasi, in Ashanti Region of Ghana. As this study adopted case study and focuses on the effect of cultural expectation of the School Girls on their education, it was a bounded study and heuristic (Yin, 2003). As Brown (2008) cited Merriam (1998), a heuristic case study throws more light on the understanding of a phenomenon; offers extended experiences and meanings; and gives reasons

and background to a problem. Thus, the design afforded me the opportunity to dive into the extent to which girls' education are affected by their cultural responsibility of doing the household chores, leaving the boys untouched. I used observation and interview guide in collecting the data. A total of 10 girls were randomly selected from two Junior High schools in Kumasi, Ashanti Region of Ghana.

These girls were observed for two days each as they perform house chores. Three activities were observed. These were cooking, sweeping, and washing. The average time spent on each chore was recorded and used in the qualitative analysis. The main objective was to ascertain the extent to which these girls lose their revision study time as they perform their cultural duties at home. To determine if the findings of my study can be applied to other participants and get the same figures and results, replication was used. A total of 5 girls were observed in a day as they perform the same duties in different environment. The average time spent on each chore was almost the same.

The interview guide was made up of eight (8) semi-structured items for the ten (10) girls and their parents (mothers) to solicit information on these girls' relationship with their parents or the people they stay with, and how their cultural duties at home have effects on their formal education and, whether or not parents give equal opportunity in education to both the girl-child and the boy-child. Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection desk officers in Ashanti and Greater Accra Regions were interviewed to seek their views on how best boys and girls can share household chores. Data analysis was done by the use of both descriptive and interpretative techniques based on the themes derived from the data collected.

Ghanaian Girl-child Education and her Cultural Expectation

Girls whom were observed during this study are likely to suffer from '*cultural naturalisation*' in their adult stage as opined by Feinstein et al (2010) which suggests that naturally women are supposed to be seen doing certain things assigned to them by the society. The study tried to assess how girls' cultural duties affect their basic education. The parent respondents were asked if their daughters were given the equal learning opportunities as boys. The answer given was 100% yes. The respondents were also asked to confirm whether duties such as sweeping, cooking and the washing of cooking utensils, the most time consuming work at home, are normally done by girls. The answers given indicate that nearly 99% of the respondents' daughters do such work alone whilst the boys pound '*fufuo*' and fetch water from the stand point or well. As the parent respondents (mothers) confirmed that the '*tradition goes on*' they did say that they were also subjected to similar duties when they were young like these girls. The result of the observations made is presented below:

Table 1 Time Girls Spend (Average) on their Evening House Chores

Activity observed	Average time spent per act
Washing of cooking utensils	50 minutes
Cooking of fufuo with light-soup	2 hours 10 minutes
Sweeping	6 minutes
Total	3 hours 6 minutes

The figures in Table 1 show the average figures compiled from 10 girls from two Junior High Schools. From Table 1 above, averagely, girls spend 3 hours 6 minutes on their house duties in the evening. This means that when Junior High School girls close from school and they are to do such work, as the observation did indicate, between 3:30 pm to 6:36 pm, these girls would be working. When this act continues for the whole year, a total of 47 days is spent on the evening house chores. The calculation is done as in box 1 below:

Box 1:

Using 365 days per year

3 hours 6 minutes = 186 minutes

Minutes spent per year = 186 minutes per day \times 365 days in a year = 67,890 minutes

67890 minutes into hours spent per year = $67890 \div 60 = 1,113.5$ hours

1,113.5 hours into days = $1113.5 \div 24 = 47$ days.

From Ghana Education Service School Calendar, Junior High Schools (JHS) spend 40 weeks each year in school. It is therefore true that 200 days are spent in school every year. Thus, using the above scenario, a JHS girl will spend 26 days out of the 200 days (around 13%) allotted for studies in a year on her '*house assigned duties*'. This is possible only when she works continuously for 26 days (during nights and days hours). Because this is not possible, when the possible study hours period alone is considered— twelve and half hours (that is, six and half hours of school contact hours – from 8am to 2:30pm, and six hours after school – from 3pm to 9pm) to calculate the *time lost*, girls lose learning periods of 12 hours 30 minutes for 52 days out of the 200 days learning periods (see the box 2 below). Fatigue effects were not considered. Her male counterpart does not go through such ordeal yet they all write the same examination. The average time a boy-child spends, using the same method and measure to ascertain what most boys do in the evening, is less than two days.

Box 2**A. Learning days loss within 200 days in one academic year,**

- 3 hours 6 minutes = 186 minutes
- Minutes spent per year = 186 minutes \times 200 days = 37,200 minutes. Change 37,200 minutes into hours spent $37,200 \div 60 = 620$ hours
- 620 hours into days = $620 \div 24 = 25.8$ days (26 days)

B. Revising period loss within 200 days in one academic year

- However, available hours to be spent is 12 hours, 30 minutes
- Change 620 hours spent into days, based on available days to be spent.
- $620 \div 12.30$ hours = 52 days approx.

Loss of Revising Hours:

- $620 \div 6$ hours = 103 days (loss of revising hours per 200 days)

It is important to narrow it down to number of hours these girls lose to revise what is taught in schools. Using the 6 hours intervals (from 3 pm to 9 pm) available to these pupils within which they can revise what is taught in school, the girl child who handles the above mentioned house duties regularly will lose at least 6 hours revising time for 103 days (52%) within the 200

educational days in a year (see box 2). Thus, only 97 days (48%) can be used by the girl-child to revise her notes whilst the boy-child can get a maximum of 200 or 198 days revising periods. The extent of educational inequality could be seen in GSSL 5 and 6 reports which suggest that as 80.2% of male gender are literate, only 67.1% of female gender are likely to be literate (GSS, 2008; 2015). A new direction which needs further study is the effect of household chores on the girl-child absenteeism as well as the fatigue house chore exerts on the girls and its consequent effects on her education. This finding confirms what Williams and Best, (1990) and Risman, (2004) had ever found that dishwashing and cooking are the least shared house chores. Also, a study carried out by LCCB (2006) in Tanzania pointed to the fact that boys are taught how to become men whilst girls are to serve boys and socialise to perform mothers' role.

One of the significant points noted in this study is that leaving the house chores into the hands of girls as the boys have freedom to revise their studies makes gender inequality persistence and durable. As Tomaskovic-Devey et al (2009) noted, gender inequality becomes persistence and durable as a result of one actor attempts to claim over resources. From this study, girls are likely to lack enough time and space to compete well with the male counterparts despite any move to allow all to go to school. If the time available for girls to revise what is taught in school is curtailed due to cultural duties expected from girls, no amount of investment in them could be meaningful. According to LCCB (2006) cited by Feinstein et al (2010) in Tanzania, girls do the cooking whilst the boys relax for food cooked. The Cultural expectation from Ghanaian Girl-child as seen in this study is similar to that of Tanzania. The two countries are likely to experience poor level playing field to achieve equality of educational opportunities. Looking at it from Todaro and Smith's (2009) explanation of human capital investment perspective, the investment on males and females students in basic schools in Ghana cannot yield the same true capital cost because due to cultural expectations – house duties that lead to loss of time and space to acquire required skills, the expenses cost incurred through education on these girls could not be equivalent to depreciation costs of physical assets. This suggests that due to this phenomenon of revising time loss, capital investment spent on these girls could lead to waste in the national scarce resources. Thus, males are likely to possess intellectual resource more than females in Ghana irrespective of Free Senior High School Education for all.

The Tanzania study shrew that women requested for cultural change as means to have gender equality on that score. This current study on girls in Ghana tried to quiz the stakeholders on the possible means to change the culture of leaving the house chores on the hands of girls. The respondents were asked to share their views on a policy direction where the employers shall include house chores such as sweeping, washing and cooking as experience requirement for jobs such as teaching, nursing, and all security services. Thus, apart from one's academic qualification, if one fails to exhibit high sense of better experience in all of the house duties mentioned, the prospective applicant will be turned down. If this directive is adhered to, boys in Ghana will voluntarily learn how to wash, cook, and sweep in order to gain employment to these services. The suggestion received 100% endorsement from the respondents. The major stakeholder such as Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection desk officers were with the view that such move will help but they were quick to say that it would be difficult to be implemented in Ghana due to the long cultural orientation on patriarchal society.

CONCLUSION

This study fundamentally argues that the girl child faces challenges of revising her notes and doing her academic homework as the society subjects her into ‘*domestic slavery*’ as she does the house chores alone. It further argues that since girls do not have equal time opportunity in revising academic work, the end result of such situation is gender inequality of intellectual resource. Thus, gender inequalities associated with intellectual skills will continue to be persistent and durable. Hence, Free Secondary School Education initiative in Ghana could yield low returns in girls’ education in the country if such inequality is not checked. This is because such inequality could lead to some girls ending their education before the age of 18 years. What the study concluded to be the best option for such cultural change is through policy direction, a policy that provides a road map to initiate both boys and girls to involve themselves willingly and voluntarily in household duties right from their infants. The study concluded that what both parent respondents and Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) agreed to be a way out is to include house chores such as sweeping, washing and cooking as *experience requirement* for jobs such as teaching, nursing, and all security services. The thinking is that apart from one’s academic qualification, if one fails to exhibit high sense of better experience in all the house duties mentioned, the prospective applicant will be turned down. This policy direction has two dimensional benefits. First, if this directive is adhered to and boys voluntarily learn how to wash, cook, and sweep in order to gain employment to these services, the house chores as a girl-child cultural responsibility shall die out. Second, if the male child refuses to part-take in these household responsibilities, there is possibilities that they would fail in test on such responsibilities and young women who manage to acquire intellectual skills shall dominate in these paid services mentioned to limit inequality in such paid jobs in Ghana.

Recommendation

Obviously, the recommendation is that there should be inclusion of a test on House Chores as part of requirements for some selected Government employment opportunities. To change the culture of girls doing the house chores alone, the well held chorus of ‘to urge the boys and men to understand the plight of women and get involved in those duties’ needs to be repackaged to change the status quo. Such posture will not yield the needed result especially in patrilineal inheritance state like Asante State.

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