THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL MATRONS ON GIRLS’ EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN TANZANIA

By

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ABSTRACT

A commitment to gender equity is reflected in Tanzania’s educational development policies many of which are geared towards preparing all citizens to participate fully in the civic and economic life of the nation. Despite these government aspirations, the social, economic and educational status of women remains low. In this study, I seek answers for these ongoing inequalities by investigating girls’ experiences of education, focusing specifically on the influence of school matrons on educational outcomes and social participation for girls.

This qualitative case study was informed by a combination of theoretical frameworks associated with African transformative feminism and social justice philosophies. Interview and focus group data were collected from multiple sites in rural and urban areas in the Manyara and Dodoma regions of Tanzania. In the course of the study, the perspectives of key players in the education contexts of these areas were sought. These included secondary school girls and their school matrons as well as School Principals and members of women’s local community groups and national organisations. In addition, data were drawn from key educational policy documents and reports relating to the education of girls.

The findings identify school matrons as having a major influence in the education of Tanzanian girls. In particular, these women are responsible for creating safe educational environments for girls and many do this by assuming a nurturing role, known in Kiswahili as ‘Malezi.’ However, the significant structural challenges facing girls and young women combined with a severe and widespread shortage of educational resources and facilities places constraints on the ability of matrons to provide the sort of ongoing care that girls need. The matrons’ role is further complicated by socio-cultural and traditional expectations placed on girls and women in Tanzanian society.

In light of these findings, I critique neoliberal approaches to Tanzanian education, arguing that understanding the impact of the psychosocial support systems on the engagement of learners within the nation’s educational institutions cannot be under-estimated, I conclude that it is time to develop a new way of thinking about gender equity and educational quality that departs from current human rights and human capital approaches.
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I thank you Jehovah God almighty, for health, strength and great support from human agents throughout my PhD study journey: “Lord God of the Heavenly armies, who is as mighty as you, Lord? Your faithfulness surrounds you, righteousness and justice make up the foundation of your throne; gracious love and truth meet before you”. Psalms 89: 8, 14 [ISV]. Credits to you oh El Shaddai1! My provider and protector.

To my supervisors: Dr. Sue Cornforth and Dr. Joanna Kidman. You crossed the boundaries of your work to support me through it all. Apart from your primary role as supervisors, you advised, taught, critiqued, guided and counselled me. As mothers, at times you offered tough love when you had to; although such times reduced me to tears, it was for the best. I respect the wisdom with, which you have worked with someone like me, who came to you loaded with many personal problems. Your willingness to work with me significantly helped me grow as a person. All that you did, saw me through this journey. Nothing I can say here is sufficient to articulate my innermost gratitude for all you have done. I am greatly humbled. Thank you, and May God bless you abundantly.

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1 This is one of the many names of God referred in Hebrew as YHWH in English meaning ‘I am’ ‘El Shaddai’ refers to the absolute power in God’s nature that also mean ‘Almighty God; the ‘all sufficient one’ with absolute power to nourish, supply and satisfy. These attributes are accounted for in numerous books of the Bible including Genesis 42:24-25, Isaiah 60:16, 66:10-13 among others.
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DEDICATION

To my children: Musa, Glory and Grace.

This is your gift. Like tulips emerge from the ground faithfully every spring, so has been the emergence of your great resilience and strength throughout my many years of study. Each time you defied the sting of challenges facing you, just like the tulips defies dry seasons only to rise again in due season. Each time I recall your common question, ‘When will you come back mama?’ and how it gradually changed to, ‘Will you come back mama?’ I shed tears. As you became almost certain things changed for the worse in our family, you still found comfort under the wings of our father in Heaven.

You made me determined to complete this work. I pray that I find favour before God to give you the best possible quality of life in the remaining time of my life. The prayers you said on my behalf have carried me through to the destination of this journey, and the distance proved nothing because you dwell right in my heart. Thank you for standing the test of time by staying strong despite the turbulence that life has brought. Your minds still too young to understand everything; your years too few to go through the challenges you overcame without me. You missed a shoulder to cry on, a timely and reassuring voice that only a mother can provide. I owe you more than I can give in this life.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFs  African Feminisms
ATFs  African transformative feminists
BRN  Big Results Now
DSEO  District Secondary Education Officers
ESA  Education Sector Analysis
ESDP  Education Sector Development Programme
ESR  Education for Self-Reliance
ETP  Education and Training Policy
FAWE  Forum for African Women Educationalists
HEDP  Higher Education Development Plan
LGAs  Local Government Authorities
MDGs  Millennium Development Goals
MoEVT  Ministry of Education and Vocational Training
MSTHE  Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education
NSGRP  National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty
PMO-RALGs  Prime Minister’s Office-Rural and Local Governments
SEDP  Secondary Education Development Program
SEMP  Secondary Education Master Plan
SJ  Social Justice
TANU  Tanganyika African National Union
TAWLA  Tanzania Women Lawyers Association
TEMP  Teachers Education Master Plan
TDV  Tanzania Development Vision
TIC  Tanzania Investment Centre
TIE  Tanzania Institute of Education
UPE  Universal Primary Education
URT  United Republic of Tanzania
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Imagine, children born of the same parents but don’t get the opportunity to live with them, let alone a chance to grow up together as siblings. I was born in a polygamous family and I am the 19th born of my father’s 22 children in total, and the 11th born of my mother’s 12. Aside from being many children in the family, both my parents’ poor health meant that as children we depended on support of all kinds from social others throughout our lives. Indeed, more often than less, one or more of my sisters and brothers were away in school or living with an uncle or an auntie or some other relative somewhere. My mother’s poor health complicated our living arrangement as at times she was admitted for months in the hospital. Given that state of affairs, I was psychologically prepared earlier on in life to adjust to different life circumstances as they unfolded in different relatives’ households.

Despite my family’s situation, my mother encouraged us to work hard in school wherever we were. She tried everything within her ability to get all her children to school as her father strictly emphasised. My grandfather (mother’s father) was a pastor who departed from the traditional polygamous practices as he was a man of one wife. Paradoxically, despite departing from some traditional social values, he educated all his five sons very well, but not so much of his four daughters. One good thing was that my educated uncles who were well socially and economically positioned loved us dearly. Later on, they became a very significant support for my mother’s wellbeing and her children’s education.

It is noteworthy that my kind of story is not uncommon for the majority of families that hold similar cultural values to those of my tribe across Tanzania. The difference today could be a lack of extended family support in modern Tanzania in comparison to when I grew up. That family experience prepared me career-wise for one major mission, finding solutions in ending gender oppression and protecting the vulnerable members of a society.

1. Career development

I was fortunate that my uncles and my brothers encouraged and supported my education and I became a classroom teacher. Part of my work was of a school matron, a role that was challenging for lack of specific guidelines to follow. A school matron is known as *mwalimu mlezi wa wasichana* – meaning, the teacher in charge of girls. I occupied this role for six years.
in three different government schools and felt an urge to do something about gaining the necessary skills pertaining to the matron’s role. With that experience of a previous role as a school matron in mind, I decided to begin a personal and educational development by pursuing an MA in Education and Development studies in order to improve my social status, and to enable me execute the plans I had in mind. These plans included helping the orphaned boys and girls through their educational processes in Tanzanian schools.

The above plan led onto my MA in Education and Development dissertation which focused on ‘How Inclusive Education concept can be incorporated as a vehicle to address HIV/AIDS orphans’ and vulnerable children’s educational needs in Tanzania: The case of selected civil society organisations’. It was then that I dreamt of establishing an orphanage and later on went ahead to purchase a piece of land for that purpose. In my personal statement to do MA in Education and Development, I had requested for an opportunity for a professional training as a counsellor. After completing MA in Education and Development studies, I therefore applied to do MA in Counselling and I was offered the opportunity to pursue the degree at the same university. At the time, I thought that my quest to support most vulnerable children finally found an answer; only to discover that the more I studied, the more I needed more understanding. During my clinical practice as a trainee-counsellor, one of the places I volunteered to practice was at the Voluntary Counselling and Testing of HIV/AIDS unit in one of the government’s regional hospitals in Tanzania. It was then that I realised that the scope of the problem that I was looking to solve was much bigger than I initially imagined.

This was following my encounter face to face with the reality of the personal stories of typically abused women in the Tanzanian social context. I heard stories that much moved me as I spoke with the women who were my clients during my counselling practice. As a result of that experience, I decided to direct my focus on developing something that would be helpful in reproducing the skills necessary to improve social status of girls. I needed to find ways of involving others by providing them with the necessary skills as an educator, an approach that could be more productive in attaining the goals I had in mind. I became more interested in the problems that girls and women faced while reflecting on my own life and the life of those women who were close to me. When I completed my counselling clinical practice, I was much troubled and I kept asking myself ‘where is justice in the society? Many ideas developed in my mind at the time.

Two of the other ideas that I thought about included conducting a research to find out whether counselling is something that could work to alleviate the pains of many in every social
institution in Tanzania including within families. The other was the need to listen to other counsellors’ stories and experiences within the Tanzanian social context. The second idea was also to satisfy my curiosity of my counselling practical experience. The second thought shaped my MA in counselling dissertation topic which focused on, ‘Counsellors’ experience of voluntary counselling and testing of HIV/AIDS clients: The case of selected counsellors in Tanzania’. When I completed writing my MA in counselling dissertation, I was still thoughtful about how to find ways to improve the social participation of future women in Tanzania. I wanted to find a way to eradicate the abuses, the oppressions, the demeaning and the suffering of some women whose stories I heard as I did my clinical practice. The constant search for remedy to social-cultural nightmares that I only understood partially from my own family, culture, and some work, study and life experiences provided a new outlook. After completing my MA in Counselling degree, my desire to find possible ways that could help women tackle the challenges effectively by stepping into decision making platforms themselves grew even more. Obviously education was key to assist women acquire skills to participate in the economy.

2. The unfolding of this study’s topic

Before I came to Victoria University of Wellington, the above ideas had developed into finding how to impart skills to Tanzanian women in rural areas so that they can find better ways of utilising the existing socio-economic activities within their own environment to improve their livelihoods. The idea was to help this particular social group improve their general wellbeing and become more self-reliant even if they lacked advancement in formal schooling. However, I soon dropped the idea when I thought that a better action-plan would be one that inform policies that affect women in the first place. I thought that self-awareness of the target group has got everything to do with that kind of plan. This is in recognition that it is more realistic to empower a mind that is set for some sort of change. For that reason, I shifted my thoughts from working with women at a local communities’ level to working with girls’ within schools where they were already being mentally prepared for the world of work. These girls are the ones that would eventually change things for future Tanzanian women. Therefore, counselling had a lot to offer in that respect.

When I walked into Victoria University of Wellington, during my encounter with my supervisors, I developed the ideas I initially had even further. I thought of doing a PhD in
educational counselling because I now needed another career as a researcher in addition to being a teacher, and a counsellor. I desired to use my acquired education broadly by researching on issues that would inform and empower others. My professional counselling and teaching skills was a good start with an aim to effectively support others psychologically and intellectually. The two combined were better but best of all, was the ability to conduct independent inquiries and disseminate the findings for educational purposes, and for the public use. Indeed this last was most useful within and across the Tanzanian borders.

3. The ultimate study topic

Given all the development of my thoughts, my initial intention to investigate school counsellors’ experience in the Tanzanian government schools turned into investigating the influence of school matrons on girls’ education. Part of the primary reasons for this was based on the fact that the Tanzanian education system is as complex as it is in many other countries across the world. Therefore, like many other countries, the Tanzanian government cannot afford to train and employ school counsellors as in-school support system within its many schools. However, investigating the potential of the available in-school support system for girls’ educational experience would in the long run improve their educational experience and eventually equip them well to get involved in decision making in the future. This would be part of the solution to improve the majority of girls’ social positions across the country. The focus was much broader not only in addressing gender equity in education, it also promises a possibility for a sustainable personal, social-economic and political development of Tanzanian women and the nation as a whole. This is how I came to my study topic that investigated the influence of school matrons on girls’ educational experience and social participation in Tanzania that you are about to read.
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

“If real development is to take place, people have to be involved”. (Nyerere, 1973, p. 71)

1. Background to thesis

Tanzania is categorised as a low income country. It has a geographical area of 945,087 square kilometres and a population of 44.9 million people in total according to Tanzania’s National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2015). Figure 1 below is a map of Tanzania that locates the country within the African continent with marked regions, Manyara and Dodoma, where this research took place.

![Figure 1. Locations of the research sites. Source of map: (Nationsonline, 2016).](image-url)
There are two specific policies that guide the Tanzanian government that are of significance to this study. One is the Tanzania Development Vision 2025 (TDV2025), and the other is the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP). Issues of gender equity and youth employment are among the important issues in these policies. These are critical issues in a country with a large population of young people. For instance, the proportion of the population aged 15-35 is the second highest age group and comprises 34.6% and 36.2% of the mainland and Zanzibar population respectively (Davids & Maliti, 2015). However, despite these demographic figures and the government’s commitments to gender equity, youth unemployment is among the critical challenges Tanzania is facing in its efforts to improve the quality of life and affect positive change in the country’s economy (Davids & Maliti, 2015).

Within the two guiding policies mentioned above, the government shows its commitment to equality in secondary education through the Tanzanian Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) and the Secondary Education Development Programmes (SEDP). The commitment to gender equity involves ways of imparting life skills to teachers who should equip girls to deal with common challenges existing within the Tanzanian society. This is intended to include the training of school matrons and patrons\(^2\) in guidance and counselling. Matrons and patrons are, in this sense, expected to raise awareness among girls and boys in tackling enduring problems within the society such as child abuse, HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence as stipulated within the ‘Cross-Cutting Issues (CCIs) (MoEVT, 2010). However, despite this government’s commitment to train matrons and patrons to enhance educational experience and equity for boys and girls, the stated training does not happen to affect this aim.

The CCIs are defined as: “Gender; Human Rights as enshrined in the constitution and other international conventions; Patriotism, Rights of Children; the Environment; care and support services for the orphans and other vulnerable children, fight against malaria, HIV and AIDS” (MoEVT, 2010, p. 42). Addressing these issues is critical in improving the quality of education rendered to all children. In addition, addressing them is fundamental in dealing with the educational experience of girls who are socially disadvantaged in many ways (URT, 2012b).

\(^2\) Patrons are the male equivalent of matrons for boys
These Cross Cutting Issues are therefore important issues directly related to gender equity in, and through, the educational processes.

Gender equity is noted as needing attention in most guiding policies in education such as The Education and Training Policy and Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP) which outlines secondary school education initiatives that are in line with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) goals (Davids & Maliti, 2015; URT, 2012a). However, effective implementation of realistic programmes to address the problem of girls’ educational achievement, and social participation across Tanzanian secondary schools remains a challenge as does participation in the workforce (Machumu, Makombe, & Kihombo, 2011).

The implementation of gender equity initiatives is an enduring governance problem in Tanzania. This situation robs the country of the human resources and capital needed to develop its people and the economy (Sumra & Katabaro, 2014). The government previously committed to address many other issues within the previous education policy of 1995. However, the implementation of gender equity initiatives to achieve the set goals was not effective. It is now attempting to rectify these failures noted through its newly launched education policy of 2014 (MoEVT, 2014). The re-launching of this new policy, which continues to emphasise the importance of gender equity, is an indication of its importance. A serious review of effective implementation of this new education policy could be a step forward in the country’s efforts to improve social participation of its youth in the economy. Indeed this could steer the country’s efforts towards becoming a middle income country by 2025.

Bearing in mind the country’s ambition above, we all as Tanzanian men and women, together must critique our position concerning education for all. Nyerere’s (1967) statement that “We have never really stopped to consider why we want education and what its purpose is” (p. 383) is a statement more true for girls’ than boys’ educational experience in the Tanzanian society. Such a statement begs more urgently the reviewing of Education as a tool for social liberation in this modern era. In this study, I concur with Nyerere’s (1967) line of thinking in reference to girls’ education “…we have to look at the tasks it has to do. …in our present circumstances… whether we need a change in the whole approach” (quoted in Sumra & Katabaro, 2014, p. 1).

Therefore, as highlighted in the preceding paragraphs, the Tanzanian government needs to consider ways of improving girls’ social participation. This cannot be possible without addressing their educational experience, social-cultural roles and positions. It is with the view
that true education must consider the whole being in which there is harmonious development of the social, the physical, the mental, and even the spiritual intellects (E. G. White, 1977). All of these are essential in realising girls’ overall potential if we are to address Tanzania’s economic growth and social wellbeing in line with the Tanzanian Development Vision 2025 and the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty.

1.1. Personal motivation

What motivated me to do this PhD comes from both my personal and professional life experiences. As a child, I grew up in the care of many people other than my own parents. These were my sisters and brothers, cousins, aunts and uncles at different stages of my childhood. These childhood experiences exposed me to many things that shaped my world view concerning my desire to help other children. My Christian faith has also strongly shaped my desire for influential education, and my world views about human oppression.

Concerning gendered social positions in my Luo culture, being someone’s wife is equated to being a man’s property like any other properties in his possession such as cattle, a car, a house or a farm. A man is free to do whatever he wants with these things without serious questioning by others. Even when elders meet to resolve domestic disputes, the man’s position is generally favoured. In fact, the Luo tribe have sayings differentiating social position of a girl at a family or clan level from that of a boy. Whereas a girl is referred to as, ‘ogwang’—meaning, a civet; a boy is ‘sibuor or ondiek’—meaning, a lion or a leopard. A girl is therefore considered weak and meant to be ruled and silent because literally, ‘nyako ongwang ‘agwan’ga’—meaning, a girl is a mere African-civet.

The deeper meanings behind the above metaphorical references that differentiate the gendered social positions relate to girls’ cultural temporary living with their parental families in patriarchal households. This leads to their lower social value compared with boys who eventually grow up to own and look after the parental homestead. Although I had not experienced life out of the African continent, I knew the mentality of my social others was not right. This was partly because I grew up in a Christian family and had experienced what it meant to be valued. Indeed, my Christian faith and the knowledge of the Biblical story of the creation compelled me to refuse oppression for any reason based on Biblical perspective:
And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness … So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. Genesis 1: 26-27 [King James Version]. (Daiches, 1968)

Even where the Bible instructs women’s submission to their husbands, it comes double sided with instructions for husbands to love, not to oppress their wives. My Biblical world view recognises our distinctive biological functioning as men and women. In the sense that a woman has to be in an equal relationship with the man to fulfil the meaning of the phrase, ‘help meet for him’ in reference to Genesis chapter 2:18. As such, I found ‘complementarity’ as a concept perceived within African feminism practically what I desired although I had no idea about the perspective before my journey to writing this thesis. I understood in that view that both genders are equal before God, being created in his image despite the different biological functioning of either gender, which are purposefully designed for specific need to complement each other. Such perspectives reflect social justice and that God is a just being who does not practice oppressive partialities.

Therefore, my faith, personal and professional experiences together with my world view of what is just and right before man and God steered my desire to do this research. My quest to do otherwise is not by any means a deviance from, or a desire to depart from my culture or gendered roles as a woman in an African social context. However, I wish that these roles be practiced in mutual agreement and exclusive of any forms of oppression and harmful effects to girls’ future social positions. In this context, I maintain that one should not be denied other opportunities in favour of biased cultures in the name of playing gendered roles. My perception of doctoral research as a plan to tackle universal problems is among the major driving forces that prompt my desire to advocate for unoppressive cultural and traditional norms in favour of girls’ education and active social participation.

Professionally, I have witnessed the struggles and the harmful choices that girls made due to reasons that are culturally and economically related, hindering their further education. I have witnessed their struggles through the stories that they shared with me in my previous role as a classroom teacher and as a matron. I have witnessed cultural gender stereotyping and the suffering of people due to the systematic limitation of opportunities, resources, and support resulting in knowledge-poverty and disempowerment. These practices have more often led to needless human suffering that would otherwise be preventable. As a result of my interaction with girls in my teaching career and with women through HIV/AIDS counselling during my practicum as a counselling student in 2009, I have developed an interest in supporting
vulnerable groups, such as orphans and women. Young girls are very vulnerable, more so when they are orphans. This is also my understanding partly because I grew up as a single parent orphaned too from the age of ten.

I have had a keen interest in understanding how social and educational policies within my own community contribute to girls’ and women’s livelihoods and choices. In my role as a school matron I often wondered whether or not there were different approaches to specifically empower women. Due to feeling inadequate in my own practice as a school matron, I thought of making myself better with a hope that by doing so, I would pave the way to making others better. I therefore decided to become a professional counsellor, thinking it would fix the problems I perceived to exist among young girls while I was a school matron. My passion to fully understand what was entailed within the role of a matron from different perspectives led to my desire to conduct a research in order to find out more from others who play this role.

My focus has been to improve girls’ education in order to avoid future oppression by making sure they were well empowered by the education they attained. This is because I strongly believe that women hold a banner in the development of their communities as they usually have the first contact with family, especially the children and youth who are the investment in the future of any nation. In this aspect, I believe in education as a tool for social liberation and I know that any realistic development demands that those reinforcing it are in every way stable and can actively make decisions. They must understand issues that would liberate them if they are to be more assertive and confident in dealing with any developmental aspects at personal, national, or international levels.

A doctoral qualification does not only mean that I can participate in decision-making regarding issues that affect people like me in my society, it also means that I am well equipped to participate with substantial level of knowledge and understanding of the matters needing such participation. The skills, knowledge and capability at this level of education are all essential tools in enhancing meaningful and realistic inquiries that may help broaden the understanding that leads to sound decisions regarding challenges affecting women in my society. In a broader sense, doing doctoral research means that I become a channel to enable others around my life, wherever that may be, to acquire knowledge about conducting inquiries on various issues affecting them.

For Tanzania, the opportunity to add to this knowledge by opening forums that can pave the ways through which other women and girls can take part is key to social liberation to
millions of culturally stereotyped and oppressed women. One needs to be equipped to knowledgeably influence the political ways of decision-making regarding developmental aspects that have a realistic impact on the policies affecting daily social lives. Doctoral research opens avenues for provision of consultancy and capacity to offer training to others who can equally contribute to solve other social problems, especially in developing countries where opportunities outside the education circle are much more limited.

1.2. Significance of the study

This study is important for a number of reasons. In particular, I focus on the women’s role in the Tanzania’s economy in subsection 1.2.1, the situation of girls’ education and social participation and women’s overall social position within society as shown in sub-section 1.2.2. I conclude this section by discussing the significance in terms of this study’s contribution in sub-sections 1.3.

1.2.1. Women’s role in the Tanzanian economy

It is important to understand the economic situation of Tanzania in relation to its efforts to become a middle income country by the year 2025 in order to compete in domestic, regional, and global markets (Tandari, 2004; URT, 2012a). This is because, like any other country, Tanzania’s economy depends on the social participation of its active population in providing the required labour and skills to develop it. Currently, Tanzania’s economic growth ranks 110th globally and 17th in Sub-Saharan Africa according to the World Bank Group’s (2016) index of economic freedom. The total population living below the poverty line is 28.2% of the total, and only 15.6% of the total population has access to improved sanitation (WBG, 2016). Women and children are the main water carriers for families and they spend hours looking for water (García-Valiñas & Miquel-Florensa, 2013).

Water quality is a determining factor in human poverty, education and economic opportunities but only 6.2% of the total population in Tanzania has access to improved water sources (WBG, 2016). This resource is also significant as there is a lack of supplies on school grounds, mostly in rural areas, and the unaffordable nature of sanitary materials leads to girls missing schools during their menstruation periods (Sommer, 2010; URT, 2016). Such situations affect girls’ educational experience. Moreover, lack of water among the rural population is a
serious factor for economic set back. This is because water is significant in the agricultural sector, which is the country’s main economic income generating activity in Tanzania as, the sector accounts for 40% of the country’s GDP (Wedgwood, 2010).

However, water resource management decisions in Tanzania alienate Tanzanian women (Michael, 1998). This alienation involves how it is controlled on both its access and related policy implementation in the management of all significant economic resources including, land use and ownership (Kudo, 2015). This situation does not account for the fact that women contribute between 60% and 80% of labour required for farming activities in the country comprising 80% of patriarchal communities (Kudo, 2015).

Besides the economic situational realities in the country, and although gender equity is mentioned as needing attention in the SEDP, effective implementation of realistic programmes that address the problem of girls’ educational achievement and social participation across Tanzanian secondary schools remains a challenge (Makombe & Machumu, 2012). This is a serious problem for the country’s workforce where women comprise over fifty percent of its total population (NBS, 2016). Apart from other possible contributory factors to this failure, the matter remains a serious governance problem concerning policies that can steer the country’s efforts towards becoming a middle income country by 2025 and to its full commitment to gender equity initiatives. This is partly a problem associated with top down approaches inherent within the neoliberal policies that affects the political environments including the education sector. Some theorists link increasing inequities to global tendencies to favour neoliberal, market driven policies, see for example Samoff (1994).

In recognition of the above challenges, the government of Tanzania launched another policy initiative in addition to the National Strategic Growth and Reduction of Poverty in the effort to achieve the development vision by 2025. This is called Big Results Now (BRN) launched in 2013 by the fourth government under President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete. The key priority area in this policy initiative includes the improvement of educational outcomes at all levels, water supply, transport, and the agricultural initiative commonly known as ‘Kilimo Kwanza’ –meaning, ‘Agriculture First’ (Davids & Maliti, 2015). According to Davids and Maliti (2015), the latest was in recognition that the main economic activity in Tanzania is agriculture, which ensures food security for the majority of the country’s rural poor population.

However, the agricultural sector remains problematic and has not changed for the past two decades (Davids & Maliti, 2015). In an attempt to improve the situation, The BRN
initiative is “fast-tracking the land acquisition process, with a total of 80,000 hectares entrusted to the Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC) for fielding expressions of interest from investors for land grants” (Davids & Maliti, 2015, p. 39). In this move, it is noteworthy that about 80% of the mainland rural population depends on agriculture. Agriculture also plays a critical role in Zanzibar’s economy where 37.3% of the population is employed within the sector (Davids & Maliti, 2015). About 71% of Tanzania’s population live in rural areas, a third of them categorically poor. Due to the role of agriculture in supporting the rural poor and in reducing malnutrition, the industry has the greatest potential to lift many of the poor out of extreme poverty and hunger (Davids & Maliti, 2015).

However, the sector faces many challenges that contribute to its poor growth. These are highlighted as, “poor infrastructure to support agriculture, inadequate extension services, low level of production technology, low value addition” (Davids & Maliti, 2015, p. 40) all of which, reflect skill deficiency by the sectors’ main actors who are women as noted in the preceding paragraphs. Overall, the significance of agriculture cannot be emphasised enough within the scope of this thesis. However, according to the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) it is noteworthy that subsistence modes of farming and the use of a hand-hoe, which is a woman’s job, is nevertheless unsupported due to inability of women to own land (SIGI, 2016). For example, although the Tanzanian national land policy of 1995, the principal Land Act of 1999 and the amended Land Act of 2004 give the women right to land ownership, these policies are self-contradicting as they also state that family land will continue to be governed by custom and tradition. However, in patriarchal societies, such traditions favour men in all decision-making.

In addition to the identified challenges in the agricultural sector, and similar to the education sector, there is a lack of appropriate financing mechanisms. This is accompanied by unreliable markets, unfair and uncompetitive farm gate prices, and environmental degradation (Davids & Maliti, 2015). The latter particularly can be associated with lack of social education in environmental conservation awareness. This is a significant situation that is partly due to the poor social participation of women in their working lives reflected in laws and regulations that govern land use and ownership within the wider Tanzanian cultural and traditional values (Kudo, 2015). Since women are key players in domestic food production and small scale farming as a result of their socio-cultural positioning within the largely patriarchal Tanzanian society, the upbringing of girls to become active participants in the country’s future socio-economic activities is a matter of urgency.
1.2.2. The situation of girls’ social participation in Tanzania

There are many efforts taking place across Tanzania through awareness-raising campaigns by various non-governmental organisations to boost out-of-school girls’ social participation. See for example the UNICEF and Restless Development programme called ‘Girls let’s be leaders’ as one example by UNICEF and TACAIDS (2014) in East African countries. Likewise, the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) instituted the TUSEME meaning ‘Let us Speak Out’ programme in Southern and East African countries, including Tanzania, with the intention to teach girls how to speak out in an effort to break free of traditional gender constraints (Rust & Jacob, 2015). However, the NGOs’ efforts and the various peer education based programs such as TUSEME’s efforts help us understand the patriarchal assumptions with limited easy measurements of variables such as access and parity while leaving out careful examination of degrees of the existing inequities through the schooling processes for girls (Rust & Jacob, 2015).

Moreover, the girls who get back to school through the various non-governmental organisations’ efforts end up in a vicious circle of female gender socio-economic dependency due to poor educational outcomes as a result of a poor educational experiences and lack of voice in decision-making platforms. This is because there are no well supported and effective within-school advocacy programmes to improve girls’ retention; counter gender discriminations or promote a better educational experience to match such efforts in ensuring girls’ equal educational experience to that of boys. Concerning the type of schools in this study, it means that most girls remain poor academic achievers at the end of their secondary education (URT, 2012a). Consequently, the situation hinders their chances of achieving higher levels of education, while maintaining their low social participation.

The Tanzanian government has indicated a willingness to improve girls’ social participation through education for many years. The matron system is one measure taken by the government to improve situation for the in-school girls’ situation. Other measures include the establishment of various education policies. The Primary Education Development program (PEDP), which aimed to achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE) for children of both genders, is one success that followed previous efforts through Education for Self-Reliance in the 1970s. Then, SEDP, aiming to address issues of access to education, especially of girls in hard to reach rural areas (MoEVT, 2010), succeeded in improving parity of participation in
secondary education for girls. Indeed, measures taken through SEDP boosted the enrolment of girls in secondary schools across Tanzania with the building of ward secondary schools in most parts of the country. Ward secondary schools refer to those built at the local community level with a joint agreement between the government under SEDP and support from the Local Government as well as contributions from the local community (Machumu et al., 2011). These schools were built in response to the vision of improving access to secondary education and in order to provide rural communities with day schools (Wedgwood, 2007). The Higher Education Development Plan (HEDP) then followed with a commitment to access, equity and quality of educational attainment (URT, 2010). However, to date, less than 35% of girls who succeed beyond secondary education attain higher levels of education (NBS, 2016; URT, 2012a).

It is worth noting that despite the recent moves aimed at boosting girls’ social participation through education, girls’ poor performance in their examinations prove the failure of such moves. For example, Bangser (2012) analyses the reality of performance in the secondary education examinations for both boys and girls, where he reports on the position of girls in the examination results. He argues that over 90% of both girls and boys receive a failing grade of Division IV or O, and only 7% of girls and 12% of boys score between Divisions I and III across the country (Bangser, 2012). The earlier grades do not qualify students to advance to high schools, and those who have lower points at grade III rarely gain admission to any college while the latter is the standard required pass rate to enable students’ transition to advanced levels of secondary and higher levels of education.

Such a situation is critical for girls, particularly because they are a minority group within the education system in a country with low secondary enrolment ratios compared with most African low-income countries (Bangser, 2012). As a result, girls tend to end up in the informal employment sector which often exposes them to vulnerabilities of all sorts. It is noteworthy that the rate of informal youth employment is much higher for young women than men (89.1% and 70.5% respectively) because of low levels of education (Davids & Maliti, 2015).

The examination results noted above indicate systemic educational barriers to young girls’ future social participation and wellbeing. This is because the purpose of education in Tanzania cannot be isolated from its socio-economic development as indicated within the guiding education policies and the country’s common slogan, ‘Maarifa ni ufunguo wa maisha’ – meaning, knowledge is the key to life. Research shows that secondary education in Tanzania affects both income and fertility for girls (Wedgwood, 2007). Due to the commitment to stay at school, girls are less likely to have early pregnancies and their childbearing age is delayed
Therefore, equal access to a better education experience remains a bigger challenge affecting Tanzanian girls’ social-political participation than it is for boys (Meena, 1996; Wedgwood, 2007). These challenges exist in both secondary and higher levels of education across Tanzania (Machumu et al., 2011; Rihani, 2006). Due to their poor performance in education, graduating girls’ future income, social participation and wellbeing are considerably compromised.

The above means that women’s social participation in all the other sectors of the economy and in the country’s decision-making platforms is negatively affected. An example is in the context of ‘special seats’—meaning, reserved seats meant for women in order to increase female representation in the National Assembly (Yoon, 2013). In Tanzania, it is in this context where one would expect to find the majority of women involved in decision-making platforms. However, their appointment is not perceived with due respect. This is because the women appointed to serve in this capacity often lack an autonomous voice of representation in the National Assembly due to being accountable to the political party that places them in those special seats (Yoon, 2008). Unlike contested positions where members of Parliament are elected through votes by the citizens in various constituencies, the party with the majority of votes in the national assembly nominates individuals to serve to that capacity within the reserved seats (Yoon, 2013).

Furthermore, gender discriminatory laws and policies, accompanied by women’s limited community participation in decision-making, further limits their access to and ownership of productive resources such as land, technology and markets (Davids & Maliti, 2015). As a result of these barriers, they are at the bottom of the agricultural value chain. At the same time, women remain constrained by nurturing roles like care for children, the sick and elderly alongside other domestic duties (Davids & Maliti, 2015). Due to these domestic roles of female in most of Tanzanian households where parents or guardians are still alive, the matrons in schools could be useful option for girls in schools where their mothers are too busy to sit down and listen to their everyday challenges away from home.

1.3. Contribution of the study

The study contributes to the understanding that social participation goes beyond successful parity in participation. This needs to go hand in hand with the educational experience of a given social group. The social, economic and political situation of the majority of
Tanzanian women indicated in the above sections 1.2.1 and 1.2.2, provide reasons for the need to conduct studies that contribute to a knowledge and understanding of these issues. This study is, in this sense, a stepping stone into further exploration of girls’ social participation. This is because it intends to empirically contribute towards an understanding of the role of school matrons in improving girls’ learning experience and their future social-economic roles in the country.

There is a gap in the literature about research that looks at the potential of school matrons as role models and as a useful support system for girls’ educational experience, especially in less privileged areas in Tanzania. This gap indicates a need for a new perspective to address gender equity in education, especially within the African social context. In addition, the assumptions that African men and women exist together in a society defined by their gender roles in mutual understanding and decision-making are challenged by African feminists’ perspective. Until this time, educational problems have, within the African continent and elsewhere, been addressed without paying keen attention to support systems that play a vital roles in psychological preparedness for effective learning and social participation.

Hence, I argue that where engagement is improved, learning takes place and there is a potential for a better educational experience, even with minimal resources. When this happens, the learning outcome is increased parallel to active social participation. As such, this study will hopefully provide insight to the policy makers concerning the significance of psychosocial support programmes within the educational processes as one way of improving the engagement and experience of girls’ education within the study contexts and other related contexts in developing countries. Furthermore, it poses a critical perspective that challenges the implementation of educational policies that do not take into consideration the forces behind their formulation such as gender, culture, and global influences.

1.3.1. The statement of thesis problem

My study argues that the low status of women in Tanzania is unacceptable and reversible. Improving the psychosocial support systems within educational institutions is one way to effectively improve girls’ educational experience. The existing literature and my personal experience as a matron shows that attempts to address girls’ educational problems in Tanzania do not pay keen attention to educational support systems. For example, attempts to address overall schooling problems for both boys and girls do not seriously account for the recognition
of the vital role that school matrons and patrons might play in enhancing the psychological preparedness of the learners. In this study, I focus on girls, hence school matrons.

While that lack of recognition is indicated in the Tanzanian education system, there is also a lack of empirical research studies to support a knowledge and understanding of the problem of students’ engagement in learning and related potential solutions. In order to generate knowledge, and attempt to contribute towards filling the lack of understanding in this area, I argue for the need to break the silence surrounding the lived experience of girls and women in educational contexts. This involves giving a voice to girls and women who are potentially affected by this lack of recognition of relevant educational support systems. For my study, it concerns the impact of secondary school matrons. The improvement of this system will not only improve the visibility of women’s real educational experience, it will also promote new ways of understanding the real problematic issues related to lack of effective gender educational empowerment and the resulting gloomy social participation of women in Tanzania.

In general, this study explores how the participants’ educational experiences and subsequent social participation have been shaped by socio-cultural aspects and institutional structures that fail to recognise their potential in the Tanzanian society. The new insights from this study will significantly assist in developing the prospects of a better secondary education experience for many girls from low socio-economic backgrounds who attend the government mixed gender day secondary schools. In particular, the research problem is the need to understand the matrons’ roles and their impact on girls’ educational experience. In order to explore this, the following sub-questions were employed to guide this investigation.

1.3.2. Main research question

Following the stated problem of this research in the preceding section 1.3.1, this subsection presents the central research question that guided this investigation. Therefore, the study seeks to answer the following main research question:

*What is the influence of school matrons on girls’ educational experience, and social participation in Tanzanian mixed gender government day secondary schools?*

In order to respond to the central research question stated above, I formulated investigative questions to guide this study as listed in the following sub-section 1.3.3.
1.3.3. Sub-research questions

1) What are the roles of school matrons in Tanzanian secondary schools?
2) What are the challenges that matrons face in their roles?
3) How are the matrons equipped to deal with the challenges that girls face in Tanzanian secondary schools?
4) What are the contributions of matrons in helping girls achieve active social participation and general wellbeing?
5) What are the challenges girls face in achieving active social participation and general wellbeing?
6) What are the school matrons’ suggestions for improvement?
7) What are the girls’ suggestions for improvement?

The next section, 1.4, outlines the structure of this thesis.

1.4. The structure of the thesis

This thesis has nine chapters. In this first chapter, I have provided the background of the research and my personal motivation behind my decision to undertake this PhD as outlined in the introduction followed by the significance of the study and its contribution. Chapter Two provides a historical overview concerning the framing of education in Tanzania from pre-colonial to recent times. The reviewed literature focuses on girls’ social participation and attitudes to their education in developing countries, including Tanzania. Barriers and challenges to girls’ education are identified and enablers such as the importance of female role models emphasised as important in improving engagement of girls. Following this, the position of secondary school matrons within the SEDP is established and various ways of addressing gender equity in developing countries reviewed.

Chapter Three outlines the two theoretical frameworks adopted for this study: African Transformative Feminism and Social Justice. A focus on the relevance of African feminists’ approaches with a specific adoption of the African transformative feminist model is reviewed. Then, the significance of applying a social justice framework to address gender equity in African educational environments. The study’s philosophy and methodologies applied are discussed in Chapter Four.
Chapters Five and Six present themes that emerge from the field data. Chapter Five describes the concept of ‘malezi’ and the challenges associated with enacting this. A lack of resources is another key theme in relation to the matrons’ role. Chapter Six focuses on various effects of gender and culture on girls’ education with consequences that led on to the final theme, ‘serous nature of girls’ problems’. Chapter Seven analyses how these themes together relate and overlap and reveals conflicts in relation to the provision of secondary education for the Tanzanian girls. Participants’ suggestions for transformation are also presented within the chapter.

Chapter Eight discusses the findings in Chapters Five, Six and Seven in relation to the reviewed policy documents and other research reports where various issues such as, ‘ways of dressing’ and the ‘value of udugu’ were presented using various perspectives and in relation to gender oppressive behaviour inherent within Tanzania and other similar social contexts. All of the discussed issues employed my reflexivity throughout the stages of data gathering, presentation and analysis in relation to the data and documents analysed.

Finally, Chapter Nine provides the synthesis of this research and the lessons learnt by looking at ways of addressing equity and quality of education through psychosocial support for girls within the study context. These are highlighted through implications for policy makers and implications for the implementation process. The study limitations are pointed out and recommendations provided.
CHAPTER TWO: Literature review

2. Introduction

This chapter reviews various literature and policy documents in education in relation to this study’s topic – namely, exploring the influence of school matrons on girls’ educational experience and social participation in Tanzania. First, I review the development of the education framework in Tanzania since the pre-colonial period to the present time. Then I review the barriers and challenges to girls’ education in developing countries, especially in Tanzania. Documents relating to the attitudes to girls’ education across the developing countries, including Tanzania are also reviewed.

In order to look at how different scholars have written about the various challenges, I review literature that offers suggestions for possible solutions and which encourages enablers to promote girls’ education in developing countries. Among those enablers, I focus particularly on female role models as this relates to the problem under investigation. A lack of research looking at the potential of school matrons as role models and a useful support system for girls, especially in less privileged areas across Tanzanian mixed gender government secondary schools, justifies this study. This leads on to a review of the Tanzanian Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP) as a relevant programme for facilitating the matron system within Tanzanian government secondary schools. To that effect, this review leads on to looking further into the way gender equity, equality and quality of education have been addressed in developing countries, including Tanzania. Before I present these, the following section provides specific explanation of the literature review strategy.

2.1. The framing of education in Tanzania: A historical overview

This section looks at traditional education in Tanzania before the colonial period, then during the colonial period (by briefly focusing on the German and British education systems), and finally the country’s education system after Independence through to the present.
2.1.1. Tanzania traditional education: The pre-colonial period

In the country that is now known as Tanzania, education in the pre-colonial period was delivered largely through oral traditions (Nyerere, 1967). Community elders passed on practical skills such as blacksmithing, woodcarving and painting, farming and other activities related to economic production. These varied from one community to another depending on the unique cultural and traditional values, and general lifestyle. The absence of formal schooling meant that children learnt by living and doing (Nyerere, 1967). Generally, according to the URT (1995), the aims of Tanzania’s traditional education promoted good citizenship by ensuring learners acquired life skills that perpetuated the values, customs and traditions of a given society (p. 6).

In line with other forms of African traditional education, the key issue that characterises Tanzanian education in relation to girls and women is that the kind of education rendered was very gender based. Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2002) summarize the key issues that characterised African, including Tanzania’s, traditional education in relation to girls’/women’ position and participation in the society as follows: “Male education thus produced farmers, warriors, blacksmiths, rulers and other male-dominated occupations from which women were excluded. On the other hand, female education was predominantly designed to produce future wives, mothers and home-makers” (p. 231). Consequently, traditional education prepared girls to succeed within their future gender roles, while boys received an education that enabled them to fulfil socially defined masculine responsibilities.

2.1.2. The colonial education system

The German colonisation of Tanzania, which was then called Tanganyika, began in 1885 when there were very few Christian mission and Koranic schools (Mushi, 2009; Wedgwood, 2010). Most of these schools were restricted to the coastal areas. Furthermore, the few schools the colonial government deliberately built aimed at fulfilling specific manpower needs of the colonisers (Mushi, 2009; Wedgwood, 2010). This meant that most of the country continued to practise traditional and indigenous education, which did not involve formal schooling. The

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3 Tanganyika, which is now mainland Tanzania, got its Independence from the United Kingdom in 1961. In 1964 Tanganyika and the islands of Zanzibar decided to join and become one country, the United Republic of Tanzania (URT)
The objective of the German colonial education system was to provide trained staff for the administrative needs of the colonial rule. Following the 1918 defeat of Germany in the First World War, Germany lost Tanganyika as a colony. In the same year the Tanzania mainland became a British protectorate (Iliffe, 1969).

The British established a formal education policy in 1925 which became effective in 1927 and was therefore known as the 1927 Colonial Education Ordinance. Under the British colonial power, formal education became important although its main objective remained the same as that of the earlier German colonisers – namely, to meet specific manpower needs of the colonial administration (URT, 1995). For instance, the education content and mode of delivery were based on racial lines that promoted an inhumane attitude of inequality which, in turn, encouraged the domination of the weak by the strong (Nyerere, 1967). Accordingly, different forms of education were offered to Africans, Indians and Europeans (Wedgwood, 2010). During this era, Asian migrants, specifically Indians, migrated in large numbers to Tanzania for business. Their trading activities were encouraged by the British administration which categorised them as British protected persons (Heilman, 1998). Therefore, they occupied an intermediate position in colonial Tanzania – specialising in commerce, middle administration positions, as well as being professionals such as lawyers, doctors, accountants and engineers (Heilman, 1998).

Hence, Indian education was considered a priority by the British rule at the time. Their education, unlike that of the native Africans, was encouraged and many Indians were given the opportunity to advance in those areas that served the then British colonial interests. African Tanzanians were identified more as subjects of the British colony, occupying the lowest position in the colonial hierarchy, where they provided cheap labour serving as town labourers and peasant producers of cash crops (Heilman, 1998). As such, the 1927 Education Ordinance spelt out clearly how the education system was to be framed to serve Tanzanians and Indians, and prepare them to play different social roles as determined by the British colonial masters.

Considering the forms of education at this time, education for girls followed these colonial aims with women mostly taught good house-keeping skills and hygiene. Thus, the colonial education system strengthened the domestication of women. It did so partially with a view to respecting the cultural practices that perpetuated the confinement of women within the home. According to Vavrus’ (2002) study that investigated the relationship between girls’ education and traditions in the northern part of Tanzania, the colonial education system purposely impeded girls’ education, and it did so, (in Vavrus’ view) as a result of sexism. In
other words, the rules and procedures that link power and knowledge as coexisting in male domination formulated education policy and procedures in most developing countries (Vavrus, 2002). Further discussion on Tanzanian girls’ education is reviewed under attitudes to girls’ education in developing countries including Tanzania in sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3.

2.1.3. The education system after Independence

After Independence in 1961, the Education Ordinance of 1962 was passed. Primarily, this Act aimed to abolish racial discrimination in education and ensure unity in matters of examinations, curriculum, administration, and financing of education (URT, 1995). Moreover, the Ordinance aimed to promote the use of Kiswahili as the national language, alongside the English language, as the medium of instruction at the primary education level. Additionally, it aimed to ensure that the local authorities and communities were responsible for constructing primary schools and providing primary education. It also planned for a unified training service for all teachers. Education thus began to be perceived as a fundamental human right (URT, 1995).

Despite the efforts following Independence to make the education system fairer for all Tanzanians, there were no changes to its goals until 1967 with the establishment of ‘Azimio la Arusha’, known in English as the Arusha Declaration (URT, 1995). The 1967 Arusha Declaration marked the emergence of Tanzania’s socialist ideology, with its main guiding philosophy of self-reliance in all development efforts, agricultural economy, and readiness to work as the overall purpose of social and economic development (Wedgwood, 2010). The Arusha Declaration influenced the framing of the education system in Tanzania through its Socialism and Self-Reliance policy. For example education reform, which included an Education for Self-Reliance policy, was one of the four key areas of the Socialism and Self-Reliance policy; the other three key areas were Ujamaa (socialist-based) villages, industrial strategy, and foreign aid (Mbilinyi, 1989).

The Education for Self-Reliance policy specified various development projects at all levels of education and was intended to address weaknesses in the colonial education system. The colonial curriculum was mainly criticised for being “‘elitist’ and ‘highly academically oriented’” (Mbilinyi, 1989, p. 737). For that reason, the policy linked education plans and practices with national socio-economic development (URT, 1995). For example, farm work became an integral part of education because the policy focused heavily on agriculture (URT,
1995) which formed the country’s economic back-bone. After the global recession, which led to the reduction of donor funding in the Tanzanian economy, curriculum reform was needed even more, so that theory and practical skills acquisition were integrated in order to revive the weakened economy (URT, 1995). The policy thus responded to the liberation processes and the recession that hit the country in the late 1970s and early 1980s (URT, 1995).

In response to the above initiative, each pupil at primary school was required to own ‘tuta la mchicha’ – meaning, a bed of spinach, that is, a small vegetable garden at the school compound where students learnt practical production skills. The establishment of secondary school farms was also encouraged. Students and teachers tended to these farms. I remember as a trainee teacher at a teachers’ college in Tanzania, we produced our own cereals and vegetables for student-teachers’ meals at the college, and the government education budget subsidised what we could not produce as a college. Hence, education was to be part of community and social life (Galabawa, 1990; URT, 1995).

Several other interventions to increase access to education followed the Arusha Declaration, including the Musoma Declaration of 1974 which saw the establishment of Universal Primary Education (UPE). While the quality of education was important, the top priority of the government of Tanzania’s UPE intervention was access by all to education, including eradicating adult illiteracy (Sifuna, 2007). Following these interventions, Tanzania enacted the Education Act No. 15 of 1975, which brought about specific changes to education and the schooling systems. The most prominent of these changes was the formalisation of continuous assessment in the examination system for both secondary and teacher education (URT, 1995). Some of the changes made by the introduction of the various education acts included compulsory enrolment of 7-13 year olds in primary schools.

In the 1990s, the government of Tanzania decided to establish a central administration of schools under the Ministry of Education. This came in conjunction with a 1992 submission of a report that formed the basis of the Tanzania Education and Training Policy which in 1995 became the country’s official learning and training policy. This 1995 education policy was recently replaced by the Education and Training Policy of 2014 (MoEVT, 2014). Hence, all education changes from Independence through to the present aimed to improve social and economic development in Tanzania (MoEVT, 2014; URT, 1995).

In recent years, the government of Tanzania identified education as a national priority in two key policies. The first is the Tanzania Development Vision 2025 (TDV 2025), and the
second is the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP), (Davids & Maliti, 2015; Okkolin, Lehtomäki, & Bhalalusesa, 2010). Both policies are in line with the Millennium Development and Education for All goals. The policies indicate the government of Tanzania’s commitment to equity and the eradication of discrimination of all kinds in education, including the discrimination affecting girls and people with disabilities (Davids & Maliti, 2015; Okkolin et al., 2010). Essentially, the two policies reflect the growing influence of global moves towards equity in education provision.

However, Tanzania still has a long way to go concerning equity and quality of education provision due to the government’s long-term dependence on external funding for education. This dependency has affected the economic and social policies of the country as it has in many other poor African countries leading to a considerable and longer lasting consequences such as heavy external debts as pointed out by Glennie (2008). The dependency on aid funding has not carried the country through the difficulties it still faces within the education sector among many other sectors, as was foreseen by the founder of the nation of Tanzania who asserted that:

> It is stupid to rely on money as the major instrument of development when we know too well that our country is poor. It is equally stupid, indeed it is even more stupid, for us to imagine that we shall rid ourselves of poverty through foreign assistance rather than our own financial resources. (Nyerere, 1968,Pp. 238-239)

This dependency affects education policy and planning and has, in effect, been a transition from colonial dependence to foreign donors’ dependence (Evans, 1994). To this effect, McGinn (1997) reports that the consequence of global impact on national education policies results in reduced and increasingly unequal access to education affecting gender equity, and a decline in educational quality. For example, the third MDG was to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment by 2015. However, this has not happened despite the improvement of access to secondary schooling for girls (MoEVT, 2014). While Tanzania and other developing countries have incorporated Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in their development policies, progress towards achieving goal three – to promote gender equality and empower women – is particularly, disappointingly slow (Sifuna, 2007). Therefore, the growing influence of global aspirations such as the MDGs, the global Sustainable Development Agendas goals to be attained in the next 14 years (UN, 2015), directly and indirectly concern the current study’s problem. All of these international organisations together with the national influences in policy formulation affect the way education has altered things for girls.
According to Kabeer (2005), one major reason for the slow progress in achieving the third MDG in developing countries is the narrow translation of the goal into simple elimination of gender disparities in education provision. Overall, education provision is challenging in developing countries as indicated by other scholars in other developing countries outside the African context. This often makes it difficult to achieve many regional educational goals. Coxon and Cassity (2011), for example point out the complexity of the challenges associated with a dependency on funding due to a clash in cultures whereby governments attempt to juggle commitments to global and regional education agreements. For Tanzania, the elimination of gender disparity in education provision is considered as an “intrinsic rather than an instrumental goal, and explicitly valued as an end in itself rather than an instrument for achieving other goals” (Kabeer, 2005, p. 13). Therefore, while efforts to increase the number of girls starting primary and secondary education should be appreciated, several socio-cultural and economic factors have remained as a hindrance for girls completing their studies.

In connection with the negative impact of foreign aid, Semali (2014) reports problems associated with foreign policy influence through aid conditionality. These often affect local education policies which inhibit culturally responsive curriculum implementations including, but not limited to a significant lack of available, accessible, acceptable, and adaptable knowledge disseminated through local languages (Semali, 2014). Furthermore, such global policy influence is not accompanied by effective resourcing of education (Rust & Jacob, 2015). It is noteworthy that the effective use of external aid depends on realistic support for education that will provide skills needed for other economic activities. Coxon, Tolley, Fua, and Nabobo-Baba (2010), report that this is possible if there is incorporation of long-term approaches to research and training to affect the necessary changes that can reduce dependence on technical assistance for various economic activities. In the case of Tanzania, the issue of language of instruction has seriously affected the quality of education (Marwa, 2014; Sumra & Katabaro, 2014), especially in government secondary schools where students are introduced to English as a medium of instruction for the first time in their schooling life. Meanwhile, teachers are not well trained to effectively deliver knowledge in the foreign language. As such, the problem with understanding concepts through the learners’ native languages has grossly affected African countries, and Tanzania is no exception as it directly relates to resourcing (Brock-Utne, 2010), and language education policies in a colonial context (Brock-Utne, 2015).

To sum up, the framing of the education system in Tanzania after Independence has been influenced by the government of Tanzania’s emphasis on educating self-reliant individuals who
will then contribute to national development and eradicate poverty. As noted earlier, under the traditional aims of education in section 2.1.1, the education system aims, among other things, to preserve the social, cultural and traditional values of its unique and diverse ethnic groups that comprise the nation of Tanzania. Within this continuum of the aims of education in Tanzania, girls’ social participation is still a major problem, and substantial problems with resourcing and policies are evident. The next section reviews some of the barriers, challenges and enablers necessary to affect change.

2.2. Girls’ social and economic participation: barriers, challenges and enablers

Due to socio-economic barriers to girls’ education already inherent within most developing countries, the existing educational funding dependency on donor countries impedes girls’ social participation. This is because there are already significant cultural existing barriers in favour of boys over girls’ education that already affect the way policies are implemented. The global influence in policy and planning of education in these countries merely reinforces inequities (Samoff, 1994). As such, socio-cultural barriers and challenges to gender equity in education are sustained in Tanzania and other developing countries as reviewed henceforth.

2.2.1. Girls’ social and economic participation in developing countries

The challenges facing girls’ education in developing countries is often attributed to their minimal social participation. Rihani (2006) highlights the barriers and challenges facing girls’ education in Sub-Saharan Africa as “household responsibilities; child labour; higher opportunity cost to the family; long distances to schools from girls’ homes; early marriage and/or pregnancy” (Rihani, 2006, p. 29). She provides further reasons for the lack of progress towards increasing girls’ rates of social participation to include sexual harassment, violence in schools and communities, as well as the lack of girl-friendly sanitary facilities (Rihani, 2006). Other barriers are gender discriminatory teaching and learning methods as well as parents’ and communities’ lack of awareness about the value of education for girls (Rihani, 2006).

The improvement in girls’ social participation and wellbeing is minimal as evidenced by the small number of women in the skilled workforce in comparison to men across many developing countries (Nyar, 2007). Where there is any form of participation for girls, there is
a heavy price associated with it as evidenced in Nyar (2007) and based on the life stories of various participants to be found in Morley, Leach and Lugg’s (2009) study of Tanzania’s and Ghana’s higher education. Other factors for girls and young women’s poor educational participation and achievement in most African countries involve educational management (Gergel, 2009).

Concerning that, Gergel (2009) observes a lack of adequate funding and attention as well as a gap between policy and practice in addressing girls’ education policy initiatives. An instance of this is where many governments across Africa set up girls’ education units which he states “are often staffed by one or two people who don’t have the skills and capacity to influence overall education policy” (Gergel, 2009, p. 6). Other studies identify further barriers that affect both the teachers’ role and the teaching process, thus contributing to girls’ low rates of participation in education. Morojele’s (2012) analysis in South Africa, for instance, reveals how Basotho culture and language promote these gender inequalities in schools.

Like Morojele (2012), Mungai (2012) employs human social and financial capital frameworks, which involve family and school factors as the categories where barriers to girls’ education are situated. They identify family factors as involving the direct cost of schooling, the domestic labour market, and the social customs. School factors, on the other hand, include physical facilities, such as laboratories, classrooms and books (Mungai, 2012). In addition to school factors, she cites discrimination in the education system and female under-representation which negatively influences education practices for girls in rural areas (Mungai, 2012). Mungai’s (2012) arguments about barriers to girls’ academic achievement in Kenya resonate with those in other developing African countries (Figue, Marphatia, Djitrinou, & Parkes, 2010; Walker, 2012). In the case of Tanzania, the shaping of a woman’s past, present and future social position has gone hand in hand with the division of labour between men and women (Mbilinyi, 1975). This was the case during pre-colonial days, during the colonial administration, and at present in the education systems as reviewed in section 2.2 and as we shall see through various examples beginning with key issues within SEDP.

The Cross Cutting Issues policy in the SEDP is one of the key protocols in addressing gender inequalities in education. However, the policy was allocated very little funding for the 2010-2015 period compared to the other key areas. At present, there is no indication of any future improvement in funding allocation for girls’ education initiatives (MoEVT, 2010). In addition, the ETP of 1995 highlighted barriers to the growth of participation of women at various levels of education. The main barrier cited was the cultural preference for educating
male children. Other related barriers included high drop-out rates due to early marriages and pregnancies as well as low levels of academic performance by girls in comparison with boys (URT, 1995). In connection with this, Mushi (2009) identified several factors explaining the slow progress of Tanzanian women’s participation at different levels of education compared to men’s. These include, but are not limited to, the cultural preferences of educating male children, and high drop-out rates due to early marriages and pregnancies. Others are, relatively low performance in assessments, and economic hardship which normally affects girls more than boys (Mushi, 2009).

Walker (2012), points to the effect of early marriages across Africa, including Tanzania, as one of the main factors in the low participation rates of girls in education. Unterhalter (2012), has also highlighted barriers to girls’ participation in education citing factors such as pregnancy, early marriage and poverty topping the list. Other barriers noted are parents withdrawing their daughters from school, a widespread lack of education facilities, ill health, and distance from school (Unterhalter, 2012). Overall, financial barriers and poverty quite often translate into an inability to pay for girls’ education, especially in rural areas (Posti-Ahokas, 2013). Some of these barriers still hinder the progress of those girls who gain access to the secondary education system, leading to their dropping out of school or to poor performance in examinations. It is worth noting that despite recent moves aimed at boosting girls’ social participation and wellbeing through education, girls’ poor performance in secondary school examinations is still a major concern (Bangser, 2012).

Overall, Bangser (2012) shows that girls’ Ordinary level secondary school examination performance is still relatively poor compared to boys’. Girls’ under-achievement at this level of secondary school normally translates into failure to proceed to Advanced level secondary school. This, consequently, proves to be a barrier preventing them from proceeding further in higher levels of education, like attending college and university. This situation is critical for girls’ future social participation and wellbeing, particularly because girls are already a minority group within the Tanzanian education system, with low secondary school enrolment ratios compared with most low-income countries in Africa (Bangser, 2012).

In general, equal access to a quality educational experience remains a major challenge affecting Tanzanian girls’ wellbeing and social participation more than it is for boys (Davids & Maliti, 2015; Meena, 1996; Wedgwood, 2007). This is true for both secondary and higher levels of education across Tanzania (Machumu et al., 2011; Rihani, 2006; URT, 2012a). It follows, therefore, that the graduating girls’ future income, social participation and wellbeing is more
likely to be considerably compromised by the barriers and challenges Tanzanian girls experience early in their secondary education life. To this end, it is important to first review the attitude to girls’ education within African developing countries’ social context and specifically within Tanzania.

2.2.2. Attitudes towards girls’ education in developing countries

An understanding of social attitudes towards girls’ education in developing countries is important here as it leads to a further understanding of the problems of educational inequality faced by girls. This is because the willingness to welcome social change is driven by social attitudes. For instance, some psychosocial researchers, such as Maio et al. (2007), report that there is an existing relationship between social attitudes and policy formulation. In this regard, it can be argued that the social attitudes that prioritise economic development and human rights have for many years influenced the formulation of education policies. As a result, the theoretical lenses and methodological approaches used to address barriers and challenges facing girls’ education more often focussed on economic benefits and broad discussion on human rights rather than addressing the full spectrum of women’s social participation in their daily lives.

Concerning the human rights agenda, Unterhalter (2005) argues that education for women does not empower them to live on an equal basis with men because the ‘rights talk’ is not able to address the complexities of power imbalances in which the majority of women live. In that aspect, the priorities for women’s education are based on the economic development agenda, which is largely an outcome of post-colonial politics (Vaughan, 2010). Vaughan (2010) refers to this as the “education-economic growth black box” (p.416) theory, which is central to the human capital framework. This perspective focuses more on economic productivity as a primary justification for educating women while ignoring the full functioning aspects of women in their societies. She argues that the theory does not pay attention to the content and quality of what girls learn. Neither is there much attention directed towards girls’ learning process, thus the concept of black-box. Moreover, there is no consideration as to whether girls face gender inequalities in their later lives (Vaughan, 2010).

In the case of Tanzania, Meena (1996) provides a detailed situational analysis of the status of women, and of the education for girls and women in Tanzania up to the late nineties. She highlights gender discrimination and fewer opportunities for women in education, due to
unequal access to secondary and higher levels of learning. In addition, she notes that women also get less quality education compared with men, as is revealed by examination results, a situation that has consistently prevailed in Tanzania. Moreover, she identifies a gender-stereotyped curriculum, which filters females out of higher education hence undermining their future position and social participation, specifically in the world of work. According to Meena, all of these are a result of socio-cultural and political values legitimised by the patriarchal system in most societies in Tanzania (Meena, 1996).

Another perspective in favour of girls’ education is that it helps to enhance the development of the nation by stressing that the need to heed hygiene and childcare is part of girls’ eventual domestic roles. It is generally believed that educated girls become better parents who will look after their families’ health (Obrist, 2004). Hence, to this very day, Swahili language metaphors and sayings that are coined to match this social attitude towards girls’ education, and the concept of hygiene in the home, still exist. For example, ‘mwanamke usafi’ – meaning that for one to be a proper woman, she must embrace cleanliness. Another is, ‘mtu ni afya’ –translated, a man is health, a saying used to emphasise the importance of hygiene in society. Therefore, education for girls is largely expected to enable them to carry out their domestic duties well, as both the first educators and also as the health care givers within their families.

Overall, the Tanzanian education system embraces the concept of national development through the Education for Self-Reliance (ESR) vision, one of the socialist ideologies according to Nyerere (1962). This education ideology aimed to enabling the country to develop through its own people’s effort while avoiding intervention from outside as much as possible (Wedgwood, 2010). Therefore, the primary goal of education was to prepare all children as self-reliant future citizens in an agricultural economy (Wedgwood, 2010). Subjects taught in schools, such as ‘Maarifa ya Nyumbani’ –meaning, Domestic Science or Home Science, were compulsory in all girls’ schools with common topical areas like, ‘Chakula bora’ –meaning, ‘healthy food’ ‘afya njema’ –meaning, ‘good health’ and more of such concepts. Hygiene was part of domestic skills and was integrated in the syllabus for girls’ schools (Obrist, 2004).

Hence, in Tanzania like other African countries, schooling and education for girls is very complex and tends to focus more on traditional social roles of women. These attitudes are often stronger in rural areas, where girls are responsible for carrying out domestic duties, than in urban areas (Okkolin, Lehtmäki, & Bhalalusesa, 2009). Tanzania is a predominantly patriarchal society that favours segregated gender roles, and women are traditionally looked
upon as mothers and wives who should not normally engage in politics or leadership positions (Yoon, 2008). Drawing examples from political leadership among Tanzanian women during and after the colonial era, gender roles and constraints attached to womanhood did not allow for their political participation. Even educated women were encouraged by political leadership at the time through the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) to unite women’s groups to promote domestic science among other things. Thus, domesticity was seen as the appropriate goal for women’s development (Geiger, 1987). The colonial state promoted women’s domestication by using educated women to perpetuate the trend of women’s domestication. This was enhanced by perceiving ordinary women to be the target to whom educated women would render services. Thus, educated women “were now called upon to offer their ‘less fortunate’ sisters sewing lessons in place of politics, and domestic science and adult literacy in place of personal conscious-raising” (Geiger, 1987, p. 25).

Social barriers to girls’ education experience and the attitudes towards girls’ leadership have barely changed from former times. For example, some African countries, including the Tanzanian government, adopted a special-seat system to recruit women members of Parliament as a way of closing the gender leadership gap and as a strategy for the empowerment of women (Yoon, 2008). However, the system does not effectively create gender equality (Okkolin et al., 2010). The system simply does not favour the sustainable development of leadership attitudes which would include future women leaders as part of the country’s development. This is because the system does not promote or nurture leadership attitudes among women at an early age.

Women holders of special seats lack not only autonomy in conducting their business outside the Parliament as has been noted earlier (Yoon, 2008), they also are often seen as people who are only favoured and have yet to prove their leadership abilities in order to qualify in their own right as candidates for parliamentary election in their constituencies (Yoon, 2008). It is noteworthy that these are the majority of women representatives in the Tanzanian Parliament. For example, the 2014 National Assembly, which was dissolved due to the new government elected into power in October 2015, had a total of 28 women Members of Parliament. Among those, only four were elected, four were nominated by the President and the remaining 20 represented special seats in both the Tanzanian mainland and Zanzibar (NBS, 2015). Overall, cultural and resource barriers are still a dilemma and hindrance to most women who aspire to participate in leadership positions in Tanzania.
Access to a well-defined system within educational institutions to specifically prepare girls for active social participation through education is still lacking. However, secondary education policy documents do make it clear that preparing students for the world of work is among their major aims (MoEVT, 2010, 2014). This is especially the situation in the sample of schools chosen for this study. Although enrolment is gradually increasing for secondary and higher education institutions, the social participation of women is still not improving (Morley et al., 2009). In reality, the socio-economic situation of the more marginalised groups of women who are living in rural areas across Tanzania is of major concern. As a result of this, and the social, cultural and traditional roles of women in Tanzanian society, education for girls is only reluctantly encouraged after primary school. An exception to this occurs in some cases where parental educational levels, often resulting in their own appreciation of education and/or economic situations, contribute to girls’ educational advancement. For this reason, some scholars advocate for the placement of enablers, such as of female role models in schools. This is reviewed in the next section.

2.2.3. The importance of female role models

This section focuses on the importance of female role models in improving the quality of girls’ education across developing countries, including Tanzania. Existing literature indicates that exposing women to successful role models is important, and can restore girls’ impaired performance (McIntyre, Paulson, Taylor, Morin, & Lord, 2011). In connection with the influence role of female educators is a suggestion by Goldspink and Foster (2013) regarding students’ engagement as a key to enabling positive educational outcomes. As girls are usually the most affected by poor education outcomes, there is even more need to engage them (Bruce, 2011). Studies arguing for the importance of female role models identify this as one of the key approaches in improving female students’ engagement as this enables girls to identify themselves with aspects of education and with the presence of other educated women like teachers and in the context of this study, the school matrons.

Based on this study, it is important to understand and to improve the influence of matrons as educators, role models and providers of guidance and counselling for girls in secondary schools. In Tanzania, I argue that matrons are potential role models in helping to alleviate the challenges facing girls’ educational experience. The concept of student engagement and the use of role models like matrons to help improve the quality of girls’ education requires well-
informed political will, decisions, and implementation strategies. In this regard, this study provides empirical evidence about the importance of school matrons, to better inform those responsible for secondary education policy, formulation, and implementation. These are the politicians and the government of the day.

The role of secondary school matrons in supporting female students is not new (MoEVT, 2010). However, their influence on girls’ educational experience has not been investigated in Tanzania although studies exist that speak in support of the significance of female role models for girls. Hartwig’s (2013) study, for instance, argues that there is a need for further research to investigate the influence of school matrons in girls’ boarding schools. Using a social justice framework approach which involves the principles of inclusion, relevance and democracy, Hartwig illustrates a situation where the government emphasised the construction of more schools and the enrolment of more students but ignored what he called, “the democratisation process of community ownership and governance to assure that students receive a quality education” (Hartwig, 2013, p. 487). He reports the public’s concerns about the lack of female teachers or matrons in Tanzanian girls’ boarding schools (Hartwig, 2013).

In line with the Hartwig (2013) study, Archard (2012) asserts that the presence of role models in girls’ schools can boost their educational experience and outcomes as much as their self-confidence. In recognition that role modelling can be an informal arrangement or a deliberate action (Archard, 2012), secondary school matrons, as teachers, stand a chance of being either of the two with a positive impact on girls’ educational experience. However, the concept of deliberate action calls upon the role of political will in support of such systems. In connection with this, Walker (2012) suggests positive role modelling be done through school enrolment and retention programmes, school clubs and career guidance programmes for acceptable service sector roles in education. Thus considering recommendations and the indicated need to address challenges for equal access to quality education, exploring the influence of school matrons on girls’ educational experiences and social participation is very significant. Furthermore, the lack of research looking at the potential of school matrons as role models, and the usefulness of appropriate educational support systems for girls in less privileged areas across Tanzania makes this study a timely research project.

Despite the above historical review of the education system in Tanzania and despite the barriers and the suggested possibilities to improve things, there is still no effective access, gender equity, and quality of education for girls in mixed gender government secondary
schools. Therefore, in the following section, I review further other key policy related areas that indicate the need for improvement in the light of SEDP.

### 2.3. The Tanzanian Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP)

Soon after independence in 1961, the Tanzanian government centralised the running of education across the country by nationalising even those schools that were run by private sector. The situation changed significantly in the late 1970s due to the global recession in the early 1980s. As the public education system was weakened due to lack of donor funding throughout the 1990s, liberalization of the economy led to the rise of private sector secondary education system (Wedgwood, 2010). Gradually, because of that funding flow cut by the donor countries as reported in Wabike (2015), secondary education system has become as complex as it is in most part of the world and can broadly be categorised based on how the system is managed and financed. Based on these categories, there are private and public secondary education provided across Tanzania. In the case of private schools, the ownership are further categorised under individuals, missionary or religious organisations such as Islamic or Christian and sometimes collective partnerships among individual members of a local community in which, the education services provided depends on tuition fees paid by parents. Public schools on the other hand are categorised into two major groups depending on how the schools are solely government or government-community run (Wedgwood, 2005). Based on my experience of teaching in the government schools, the solely government schools are managed entirely by the government. This includes the recruitment of teachers, payment of their salaries and building of structures alongside other costs. In the case of the government-community schools, parents are required to contribute towards the building of structures and some contributions depending on how the school is run. For the latter, the recruitment and payment of teaching staff, and some costs are subsidised by the government.

SEDP is well recognised by the government of Tanzania and international organisations as one of the major contributors to the achievement of the MDGs and poverty reduction (Makombe, Kihombo, Sesabo, Hodgson, & Spours, 2010). The Secondary Education Development Programme II (SEDP II) follows (SEDP I) that was implemented in 2004 to 2009. It builds national goals for secondary education provision as well as the international reforms concerning the education sector to date (MoEVT, 2010). However, several empirical studies
about secondary schools in Tanzania highlight a number of problems concerning the implementation of education programmes under SEDP (for example, see Machumu et al., 2011; Makombe et al., 2010; Makombe & Machumu, 2012). While it is generally accepted that ‘access’ to secondary education has increased in recent years, the findings in these studies highlight such problems as a shortage of teachers and a lack of housing for staff, negative relationships between education leaders and the public, as well as between Members of Parliament and teachers (Makombe & Machumu, 2012).

Arguably, in response to these findings, and the fact that the existing education policy was about 20 years old, the government of Tanzania, through the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT), launched an updated version of Education and Training Policy of 2014 in February, 2015 (MoEVT, 2014). The ETP of 2014 embraces the Tanzania Development Vision 2025 which sees education as a strategic agent to transform people’s mind-sets as was previously noted in (Tandari, 2004). This is an effort to create a nation of well-educated people who can cope with the new global development challenges facing the nation.

In line with the TDV 2025 aims, SEDP aims to create well-educated and knowledgeable Tanzanians with skills that enable them to complete and cope with, “political, social, cultural, economic and technological development challenges at national and international levels” (MoEVT, 2010, p. 13). As such, the policy emphasises the promotion of social participation of each individual citizen in all spheres of life within and beyond the national borders. However, such a goal has not been achieved across gender to date due to problems that are traceable through poor policy implementation.

Concerning the implementation of various educational programmes and policies, MoEVT and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education are responsible for preparing development programmes and master plans. These set out specific programmes and plans for implementing particular policy statements for each school sector. In my study, the relevant programme and plans are the SEDP, the Secondary Education Master Plan (SEMP) 1998, and the Teacher Education Master Plan (TEMP) 2001. However, although the TEMP 2001 aims to strengthen the machinery for policy formulation, professional development, monitoring and evaluation of teacher training and learning (URT, 2001), before the launching of ETP of 2014, the ETP 1995 continued to guide teacher education development in the country.
As a result of the above situation, the TEMP 2001 seemed to be an end product in itself. For example, the SEDP stipulates training for teachers with specialist roles like guidance and counselling, which are roles normally played by school matrons and patrons (MoEVT, 2010). The problem is that such training is very limited within the mainstream as stipulated in the teachers’ training curriculum but not as specialist subjects as indicated in the Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) (TIE, 2009). The training of teachers to acquire specialist knowledge and skills relevant for such specialised roles as school matrons and patrons should have been implemented under the TEMP 2001. This is because the TEMP 2001 is the appropriate plan for such training as it identifies the need for multi-sectorial strategies and actions which are central to overall education development efforts (TIE, 2009).

Problems in policy implementation are a common phenomenon in Tanzania as observed by Evans (1994). Similar problems have been experienced with the implementation of key teachers’ training and development-related policy statements prior to the TEMP 2001. An example is the Education for Self-Reliance (ESR) policy in the 1967 Arusha Declaration, and in the 1990s where some of the teachers’ training curriculums were never implemented. The tendency has been to move these policy statements from one policy formulation to another without necessarily undertaking any serious implementation to achieve the intended policy objectives. For example, some of the key teachers’ training and development issues articulated in the ESR were moved to the ETP 1995, then to the TEMP 2001, and now recently into the ETP of 2014 (MoEVT, 2014).

Given this rather problematic history of policy implementation, and the fact that the new ETP of 2014 was launched in February, 2015, around the time of the Tanzanian general election that took place in October, 2015, one could arguably be sceptical about whether the policy statement in the ETP of 2014 will effectively be implemented in the near future. Such repeated chains of failure in the implementation of supposedly significant education development policies aimed at changing people’s lives for the better raises equally significant questions regarding the politics behind policy implementation in a society.

In connection with this study, however, secondary education has some achievements that are worth mentioning. The strategic priority areas of the SEDP were improvement of access, equity and quality of education at all secondary school levels. Since inception of SEDP I (2004–2009), which was followed by SEDP II (2010–2015), some achievements in the provision of secondary school education have included access and some quantifiable equity (Makombe &
Machumu, 2012; URT, 2012a). In the light of this success, credit must go to the Government’s efforts to empower the grass-roots in the provision of secondary education services.

The recent decentralisation made it possible for the MoEVT, in collaboration with the Prime Minister’s Office-Rural and Local Governments (PMO-RALG), to transfer the supervision of secondary schools from Central Government to Local Government authorities (LGAs). For example, the MoEVT appointed District Councils’ Secondary Education Officers (DSEO) that became the heads of Secondary Education Departments. These were established in all councils. DSEO provide a quick link with the Central Government – for example, the MoEVT which is directly answerable to the Permanent Secretary through the PMO-RALGs.

Figure 1 below represents a simplified structure of secondary education units under SEDP, and shows the hierarchies of responsibilities and the Central Government’s delegation of management to councils (LGAs) in line with the review of documents in the two paragraphs above.

![Figure 1: Secondary Education Units Structure](image)

**Figure 2.** The reviewed structure of Secondary Education units under SEDP.
The decentralisation of the day-to-day management and administration of secondary schools to LGAs in 2009 led to the enhanced efficiency and effectiveness of the overall running of secondary schools. However, the findings of the Education Sector Analysis (ESA) for mainland Tanzania identifies areas for further improvements (URT, 2012a). The ESA proposes that the way forward should involve more balanced and efficient sector policies, some of which are relevant to note in the context of this study as follows:

a) Improved secondary school access and retention.

b) Support for pro-poor schooling, starting from primary school.

c) Affirmative action to enhance girls’ participation in school and ensure gender parity at post-primary levels.

d) Reduce disparities in the allocation of education inputs between regions, districts and schools.

e) Strengthen the development of literacy programmes targeted at parents, women and active adults. (URT, 2012a, p.9)

The SEDP decentralisation of responsibilities enabled schools to be directly answerable to councils with regard to key school and education development decisions like school budgets and how secondary schools are run. This was very beneficial in several ways. First, it relieved the MoEVT of the difficulties of managing numerous ward secondary schools that were established across the entire country in recent years. For example, before decentralisation, it was very difficult for the MoEVT to send necessary help to these many, and remotely located ward secondary schools in a timely manner. In that sense, the government’s efforts are commendable.

Second, because in the decentralised framework the DSEOs are supervised by the councils (URT, 2012b), as shown in figure 2 above, the distance between secondary schools and the MoEVT is minimised, and the accountability is improved. Third, both the mushrooming of ward secondary schools and the decentralisation of responsibilities from the MoEVT to the LGAs generated local employment opportunities while maximising secondary education accountability to the citizens at the grassroots. The improvement of accountability was also made possible because the relevant local communities, where the ward schools were established under SEDP, had direct involvement. The local communities had the responsibility of building the schools through time, energy and money contributions up to a certain level before the government would subsidise the remaining costs of finalising the establishment of these ward schools (Machumu et al., 2011).
Despite the successes, there is a lack of empirical knowledge to suggest whether the ongoing efforts to improve secondary education in Tanzania have gone far in creating a conducive environment to ensure the provision of quality secondary education. Furthermore, there are a number of problems in relation to secondary education for girls across Tanzania. For example, the review of SEDP II in MoEVT (2010) and other reports indicate the finance/budgetary allocation for cross-cutting issues is very minimal and some of the problems associated with gender remain untouched as a consequence. These are problems mostly associated with the mushrooming of ward secondary schools which serve the majority of Tanzania’s poor population. Tonini (2010) and Kayombo (2011) identify similar problems with financial budgeting of some of the other priority issues within the SEDP. Therefore, the decentralisation was a move that favoured the Government’s accountability to the citizens at grassroots levels, although Kessy and McCourt (2010) argue that the achievements seem to have fallen short of the reformers’ intentions in some ways.

In addition to resource constraints, it appears that the Secondary School Units within SEDP are experiencing difficulties in setting their priorities. They are arguably lacking clear strategies, and there is evidence of inconsistent implementation of the SEDP (Sumra & Rajani, 2006). Therefore, the role of ensuring equity of participation in secondary education remains a theoretical ambition rather than a practical reality. Furthermore, the examination results since the establishment of SEDP show no evidence that students are getting education of the good quality emphasised in the EFA goals (Bangser, 2012). As a result of poor performance, secondary school leavers are left with very limited capacity for employment, further training or participation in skilled jobs in and out of the country (Mlyakado, 2012; Wedgwood, 2005).

In summary, most of the roles of the Secondary School Units under SEDP are practically unrealistic, mainly because of lack of funding, but also because of a seemingly lack of political will to improve the active social participation of the mass of people (Davids & Maliti, 2015). Most of these are women based in the country’s total population. However, the enduring failures to implement some good policies cannot only be attributed to lack of accountability or funding. I theorise that the historical gendered nature of social participation across the country even in areas other than education needs careful examination. In order to better understand the disappointing outcome of SEDP in addressing gender equity in secondary education provision I shall now review other scholars’ work in connection with gender equity in developing countries, including Tanzania.
2.4. Addressing gender equity in developing countries

Various scholars have investigated the gendered nature of education provision in many developing countries in an attempt to find better approaches to address the problems of equity and access. For instance, Figue, Marphatia, Djitrinou and Parkes (2010) have identified a need to understand the way education for girls and women is delivered in developing countries, and whether it really promotes their human dignity and their potential. Others suggest the need for gender equality to be central to the understanding of the practices of education for women. For example, Aikman, Halai and Rubagiza (2011) argue against the way education for women has been treated as just an add-on. They identified one enabler for education quality and for girls at the classroom level. This concerns moving beyond a focus on the fairness of resources distribution to an understanding and consideration of the nature of pupil’s educational experience. According to Aikman et al. (2011), making this move would require a deeper questioning of the gendered nature of schooling.

Consideration of the gendered nature of schooling requires the understanding of the wider context of girls’ schooling, and the need to rethink the way education researchers generate knowledge about education access and quality (Aikman, 2011). In this regard, Tikly and Barrett (2011) present a critique of the human capital and human rights approaches in framing the debate and policies related to improving education. As a better alternative, they propose a social justice approach for understanding education quality. Tikly and Barrett (2011) argue that the focus on wealth and earnings as a measure of development; common in human capital approaches and/or the emphasis on legal rights only, which is common in human rights approaches do not adequately capture the extent to which education systems provide equal access to quality education.

In their social justice approach, Tikly and Barrett (2011) suggest, among other things, two ways of addressing the parity of participation in education and the quality of education. The first is the politics of reframing, which is described as the “transformative approach” (p. 12). In applying the transformative approach, they suggest a need to address all the barriers to parity of participation in education by recommending simultaneous actions at the national and global levels (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). Secondly, they suggest a new regionalism, which is the opportunity for grassroots’ movements on the African continent to influence regional and global agendas, some of which are issues specific to social justice in gender and education (Tikly & Barrett, 2011).
The social justice approach for understanding access and quality issues in education equality, as suggested by Tikly and Barrett (2011) above, is supported by other studies (see Aikman, 2011; Ainsworth & Filmer, 2006; Wedgwood, 2007). These studies suggest the need to rethink education for girls in developing countries as a way of improving not only their economic status, but also their social participation and general wellbeing. Ainsworth and Filmer (2006), for instance, have gone beyond economic factors to health reasons in their attempt to show the urgency in educating women.

Others have argued for the elimination of barriers to girls’ education when reporting that orphan girls’ social status is much lower than boys’ because they face much more equity challenges in education (Aikman, 2011; Wedgwood, 2007). Other scholars have taken into consideration the effect of mental and psychological barriers for children and young people generally, recommending counselling as an appropriate intervention. Pattison and Harris (2006), for instance, reviewed the research evidence on effectiveness of counselling for children and young people in addressing emotional problems in order to improve their behaviour, self-esteem and academic performance. They found that some counselling interventions such as Cognitive-behavioural therapy helped youngsters develop their thinking skills, helped them become more interactive and improved their problem solving skills (Pattison & Harris, 2006). There are many other forms of therapeutic interventions such as narrative (M. White & Epston, 1990) and solution focused therapy De Shazer (1982) which have been found to be equally effective (e.g Lethem, 2002) giving positive results in school contexts.

Pattison (2009), further reports the usefulness of counselling in schools generally, although issues of cultural relevance, the type of clients, the nature of problems and the specificity of therapeutic approach applied are also important. In the report, a range of activities that are important within the school environments, and which relate to healing in the African social context, are identified by Naidoo and Sehoto (2002), cited in Pattison (2009). These can significantly improve students’ engagement and therefore address gender equity. Nolte (2001), also (cited in Pattison, 2009), lists those activities to include, “guiding, enabling, facilitating, planning, organising, motivating, educating and training the client in self-help skills” (p. 2).

In African social contexts, the above activities are relevant to specific social norms (Oluwatosin, 2014). Oluwatosin (2014), refers to the Nigerian social context in defining counselling practice by pointing out that the inherent social norms govern the distinctive gender roles, which in turn govern the feelings and patterns of interpersonal counselling relationships.
in these contexts. The presence of different social norms, therefore, promote the need to identify how effective school counselling might look like within the African school context. Owino (2015), writing from the East African social context – namely Kenya, reports on research identifying the usefulness of guidance and counselling units in Kenyan secondary schools. She notes that students who have used guidance and counselling services within the school environment are well prepared to enter in the world of work, and have been reported elsewhere to make a greater contribution to society (Owino, 2015). Thus, the component of guiding young people within the counselling practice in schools is arguably significant in the context.

Many activities that are incorporated into the counselling of adults are relevant within school counselling (Pattison, 2009). However, the consideration to use school counselling as a strategy to address emotional problems related to sexual abuse among many other challenges facing girls as a way of addressing gender equity in education, may not be an affordable option for poor countries such as Tanzania. This is because even in the western context where there are fewer resourcing related problems in schools, there are still many challenges pertaining to training and resourcing of the counselling services within the learning institutions (Pattison et al., 2009). Besides, due to the challenges associated with resourcing in low income countries, research shows that although school counselling is a crucial part of supporting students’ learning, the extent of the challenges may require extra collaboration between parents and counsellors (Grothaus & Cole, 2010). Grothaus and Cole (2010), argue that this is due to the fact that students from low income countries not only face educational and academic challenges, they are also faced with mental, and numerous physical challenges on top of economic struggles.

Thinking of ways to improve girls’ wellbeing and social participation, Figue et al. (2010) argue that girls themselves should be placed at the heart of any transformative process as part of a strategy to encourage their empowerment into an active social life. This idea is echoed by Posti-Ahokas (2013) who argues for the importance of including girls’ voices in improving their educational experience. She insists that in order for girls’ voices to be included, it is important to consider the forums where they might be heard.

In the same way, Aikman (2011) call for a close examination of the complexities of gendered power relations in local, regional, and global settings and forums. They argue that the provision of meaningful education needs be responsive to different gender identities. This should incorporate the needs of individuals in different contexts, including social, ethnic,
linguistic and economic backgrounds (Aikman, 2011). In connection with this, Aikman and Rao (2012) emphasise the importance of understanding how gender inequalities in education are involved in issues of power and identity and how educational processes are influenced by social, cultural, and historical contexts. Unterhalter (2012), comments on the shortcomings of ‘rights talk’ in addressing education for women, reporting that education should address more than human rights or socio-economic matters. While not ignoring those, she suggests that there is a further need to address social participation, well-being, adaptability, and child poverty (Unterhalter, 2012).

Altogether, the above writers highlight the importance of education for girls in improving their social participation and wellbeing. The suggested directions are also helpful in thinking about the situation in Tanzania in promoting better life outcomes from the education that people have access to (Mlyakado, 2012). Since learning environments and educational conditions differ greatly across and within countries, it is difficult to find a single best way to improve learning outcomes for all learners (Chinapah, Cars, & Grinberg, 2013). Research shows, however, that improving the learning environments, is essential for sustainable progress towards better quality in education. Learning environments include both the physical school environment and school infrastructure, the learning process and the interaction between students and teachers (Chinapah et al., 2013). In addition, adequate facilities in the school environment as well as the need for parental enlightenment, are identified as necessary to address girls’ participation in education, and transition from one level of education to another (Posti-Ahokas, 2013). Posti-Ahokas (2013), particularly recommends girls’ sponsorship as resources for parents who would like to send their children to school but face financial constraints.

Other commonly identified areas needing attention to improve gender equity that relate specifically to Tanzania are distance from schools, early marriages, pregnancy, and the need for qualified teachers as well as strong school committees (DeJaeghere, Parkes, & Unterhalter, 2013; Unterhalter, 2012). These studies have identified ways of addressing these barriers and suggestions for improving girls’ wellbeing and social participation through schooling processes.

Machumu et al.’s (2011) assessment of Tanzania’s Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) highlighted the launch of ward secondary schools as a measure to alleviate barriers to accessing secondary education. However, little effort has been made to ensure quality education. Concerning this, Machumu et al. (2011) recommend the implementation of
more realistic education programmes in order to ensure that quality in the provision of secondary education. More realistic education programmes would normally consider the context and the demands of the local area in which the programmes are implemented, the allocation of more resources to under-served areas, and an increase in the supply of human resources including both teachers and support personnel like school matrons. Given the mushrooming of new ward secondary schools, which fall short both in terms of teachers and resources, more research is required to improve these learning institutions. The improvement needs to cater for all students’ gendered needs in promoting equity and quality of education (Hartwig, 2013).

There are more movements and thinking towards increasing girls’ opportunities towards social participation and well-being through education in the country. For instance, a study by Unterhalter (2013) notes a proposal by Cabinet Ministers in Tanzania to reconsider girls who have to leave school because of pregnancy. The proposal argues for re-admission to complete their schooling (Chatterley & Thomas, 2013). The new Education and Training Policy of 2014 proposes the same. However, given the past experiences where policies remained more evident in theory than in implementation, this comes as a leadership challenge for the newly elected Tanzanian Government that stepped into power following the October 2015 general election.

In order to implement the necessary changes, Unterhalter (2013) argues for a need to advertise widely and to seek endorsement for the Tanzanian policy. In comparison with other African countries, she suggests the country needs to expand secondary school provision. This would involve intensive work with, “teachers, education officials, school committees, girls and young women, boys and young men, and families, households and communities to confront the relational dynamics that have maintained gender inequalities” (Unterhalter, 2013, p. 15). This suggestion and my review of the ETP of 2014 indicate urgency for joint effort across different government sectors. The ETP of 2014 indicates cross-sector collaboration is its intention based on both the national guiding policies TDV 2025 and NSGPR and itself (MoEVT, 2014). However, the challenge comes in implementing these promises as it was with the previous education policies such as the ESR and ETP of 1995. The reality is that the majority of girls are observed to be stagnating educationally. Therefore, hindering their quality of social life because of their gender is inhumane, unacceptable, and unethical. From the highlighted studies, it is evident that there is increasingly more recent thinking into finding ways in which girls’ social participation and wellbeing can be improved in developing countries.
Given low levels of education quality as observed by Roche (2013), it seems that the importance of education throughout the country’s history has not matched the insistence of its benefits in practice. Relevant to this study are the benefits of secondary education, which include the preparation of students for the world of work. Therefore, there is urgency for social justice and transformational theorising in addressing girls’ better educational experience that should consequently improve their social participation in their future lives. As Fanon (1967) has argued, it is not possible to attain a sense of dignity, equality, and justice if oppressive gendered acts are legitimised. These are also issues that invite what Freire (1970) refers to as, the need for critical recognition of causes of situations that can make it possible to enhance a fuller humanity which, for this study, relate to girls’ educational experience and social participation.

2.5. Conclusion

This literature review has provided an overview of how education is framed in connection with its importance in socio-economic development activities in Tanzania. Some studies have identified barriers to girls’ equal access to education in developing countries and in Tanzania. These studies argue that education should lead to social participation, wellbeing, adaptability, and girls’ full functioning. They draw on critiques of earlier studies of both international and national policy initiatives in the country and their approaches in addressing women’s education. Other studies have reported on the significance of female role models which, for this study, would include school matrons.

In reference to a study by Hartwig (2013), a number of issues pertaining to education quality were raised. These included the growing inequities between private and public schools as learning environments despite some progress in education for both primary and secondary schools across Tanzania. Their call for radical transformation of the current curriculum, strategies, and accountability systems is responded to by the recent government’s announcement of the changes in education policy in 2014. Even so, historical evidence shows policies may simply serve as an end in themselves without real practical results accompanying the statements in these policies. Matters of gender equity are still only remotely considered and attitudes to girls’ education in developing countries continue to revolve around cultural expectations of the girls’ gendered roles.
In reviewing specific policy in relation to this study, I have highlighted some of the issues relating to SEDP in the context of education and training policy. I also reviewed other plans, such as TEMP, which is responsible for preparing and disseminating guidelines in relation to the role of matrons in influencing girls’ educational experience at this level of education. In addition, I pointed out some strengths and weaknesses of the SEDP in reference to the cross-cutting issues, which include minimal budget allocation to address gender issues. To respond to this lack of understanding of the role and influence of school matrons to girls’ educational experience and social participation is one of the main motivations for this study.

The literature that is reviewed here, highlights the need for a transformational education that can enhance a fuller humanity to be achieved in developing countries. This is important in addressing social participation of everyone in these countries, and takes into consideration the applicability of relevant counselling strategies within the school environments. The knowledge generated by education researchers must also account for contextual factors in respect to these countries. This review took on board the points raised in the findings based on this study’s central research question: What is the influence of school matrons on girls’ educational experience, and social participation in Tanzanian mixed gender government day secondary schools? In the next chapter, I review literature on how Feminism, African feminism (s) (AFs) and specifically African transformative feminists’ (ATFs) and social justice (SJ) theoretical perspectives adopted are relevant in this investigation.
CHAPTER THREE: The Theoretical Frameworks

African Feminism[s] and Social Justice

3. Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed literature, and Tanzanian policy documents, relating to this study. In this chapter, I introduce the two theoretical lenses that have guided my thinking which are [i] African feminism(s) and [ii] social justice theory. These two lenses influenced my choice of the research questions, directed the study in its setting and focus, and helped to interpret its findings. Since several writers have argued for the need for transformation, I also include a discussion of the African Transformative Feminist (ATF) perspective specifically, showing how it is relevant within the context of this study. Later in the discussion chapter, I will show how dealing with issues of cultural values contradicts various theoretical assumptions within African feminism(s).

3.1. The African Feminism(s) Theory

3.1.1. Defining feminism

There are many forms of feminism. This study adopts a definition developed by Lather (1988) who describes feminism as “a form of attention, a lens that brings into focus … the centrality of gender in the shaping of our consciousness, skills and institutions, as well as in the distribution of power and privilege” (p. 571). Upon this description rests the ideological goal of feminist research, which is to correct the unequal social position of women. This entails trying to understand the existing gendered social order, viewing the world from the women’s position (Lather, 1988). Since feminism comes in different forms, it is important to understand the broader issues relevant to feminism, to identify the relevant feminist conceptual framework suitable in a given social context, and to understand why this study adopts it. In the following sub-sections, I provide an overview of the trend of the development of feminists’ texts struggle as I single out the one relevant to my study.
3.1.2. The trends and the development of feminists’ text struggle

Figure 3 illustrates the trends of different waves of feminism based on the American model, according to Bailey (1997). For years, there has been much debate concerning feminists’ perspectives as they represent women from different historical and geographical contexts. For instance, women in New Zealand were the first to achieve votes for women under the 1893 legislation. Australia followed in 1902. Women’s voting rights were then extended to some smaller European states between 1900 and the 1930s (Ramirez, Soysal, & Shanahan, 1997). Therefore, although the figure below simplifies the complexity of different feminist perspectives at different historical times, it is useful in that it locates the rise of the Afrocentric ideologies and the African feminisms, according to Mazama (2001).

![Diagram showing the three waves of feminism]

**Figure 3. Trends in the development of feminisms.**

There has been feminist debate since the early days of the rise of the politics of identities through feminist scholars across the globe during the third wave as shown in figure 3 above.
Bailey (1997), observed this struggle which includes a number of theoretical perspectives in approaching problems of female gender oppression. Some of the examples of the perspectives she referred to include Radical Feminism, Marxist Feminism, Womanism, Lesbian Feminism, and so on. She points to the idea of ‘waves’ – that is, a certain perspective being “one among the others” (p. 18) in trying to make sense of what really defines a feminist perspective – thus suggesting that the definition of any form of feminism is only possible in context. In addition, Bailey emphasises the need to embrace the idea of ‘Third Wave Feminism’, both as an acknowledgement and, as a way of utilising the conceptual tools of earlier feminists. However, it is noteworthy that there is ongoing debate about the nature and number of these waves that are not only based on differences, but similarities of histories, experiences and cultural contexts that take on board the effects of gender, race and class (Ampofo, Asa Adjei, & Kyerewaa Brobbey, 2015; Budgeon, 2011; Mama, 2011).

The recognition of earlier feminists is important in linking the current studies of feminism within the broad context of the women’s movement, and in associating them with their origins (Bailey, 1997). In this study, I agree with Bailey’s (1997) view that the study of earlier feminism provides valuable knowledge relating to the origins of issues relevant to today’s feminist researchers. For example, while the challenges faced by today’s Tanzanian school girls are issues related to the country’s current education system, recognising the historical background of Tanzanian women’s emancipatory struggles in line with Afrocentric ideologies is important. This recognition provides insight that improves our contextual knowledge of the current problems. Accordingly, this knowledge facilitates the process of looking for possible solutions necessary to address gender equity in the Tanzanian education system. Furthermore, it helps to locate the relevant African feminist approach favourable to the Tanzanian social context from within the diverse Afrocentric paradigm.

3.1.3. The Afrocentric paradigm

According to Mazama (2001), African feminisms exist within an Afrocentric paradigm and can be used to link ways of knowing, world views, meaning-making, and beauty in connection with one’s historical and cultural context. The Afrocentric paradigm places the socio-cultural experiences of people of African descent central to understanding the challenges and problems facing them. Figure 4 summarises the contents of the Afrocentric paradigm.
AFROCENTRICITY

Epistemology, cosmology, axiology and aesthetic characterises African culture

Respect of tradition    Centrality of the community    High level of spirituality and ethical concern    Harmony with nature

Veneration of ancestors    Unity of being

Figure 4. The Afrocentric paradigm based on Mazama (2001, pp. 393-394).

Various African feminist scholars that I review below have found common ground in defining African feminism. These include: Mikell (1995), (Kolawole, 2002), Ntseane (2011) and Ampofo et al. (2015). These scholars have identified historical and cultural backgrounds as relevant to the definition. Concerning this, and in line with Figure 4 above, the relationship between the physical and spiritual, as well as the interconnectedness of all things within one’s environment, is essential to the self-consciousness of one’s place in the world (Mazama, 2001). The cultural identities shape the manner of generating knowledge in relation to a specific historical background. This consequently shapes how people put meaning to the social worlds in which they exist and therefore, the epistemology, which characterises cultural identities, is centred within the social values and ideas of African life (Mazama, 2001).

Ntseane (2011), presents Afrocentricity from a methodological perspective while emphasising contextual cultural values. She contends that it is “the only paradigm that not only gives African researchers a means to analyse correctly the situation, but it also proposes an
alternative in the form of a conscious reconnection to one’s African core cultural values” (p. 312). However, despite these common identifying features of African feminism as presented within the Afrocentric paradigm, Nnaemeka (2004), noted that the diverse cultural contexts of the vast African continent and its habitats gives this branch of feminism its fluidity and dynamism and therefore, its differences. These rest upon different cultural, social norms and historical forces that call for local relevance. As such, Nnaemeka (2004), contends the usage of the term African feminism[s] rather than African feminism as outlined by a number of other scholars in the next section.

3.1.4. The African feminism(s)

The struggle for feminists’ identity through text struggle has been global in that identifying and naming what constitutes African ‘feminism’ has been similarly controversial. Mikell (1995), for instance, explains her reluctance to refer to the African women’s movement as a feminist movement prior to the 1990s. This was due to what she refers to as the then recurring issue of hegemony and her resistance to project ideological ‘dichotomy’ or rather a dividing line marking various differences. These differences include those between the Western versus the African as well as the educated versus the rural/ordinary African women (Mikell, 1995). According to Mikell, “African communal, historical, symbolic, and experiential constructs” (Mikell, 1995, p. 407) are the key points in defining African feminism. Mikell (1995), bases this on her observations while working in various African countries where aspects, such as Western individualism and competition, are less prominent. The reality of the collective nature of women’s actions on the African continent is significant for these scholars attempting to define African feminism.

More recent African feminist scholars have specified cultural constructs as what shapes the purpose of the feminist agenda at different historical times (Ampofo et al., 2015). Despite this agreement on contextual and cultural constructs, these scholars attribute the existence of controversial definitions of African feminism to two things. First, the difficulty to date it. Second, due to the specific gendered struggles that women experienced before colonialism and that they continue to experience after Independence across the different countries within and outside the African continent (Ampofo et al., 2015). They define African feminism as “an intellectual and activist movement, rooted in the experiences of slavery, colonialism, and patriarchy and striving to end interlocking systems of multiple oppressions resulting from these
experiences and their conditions” (Ampofo et al., 2015, p. 909). It is important to understand the establishment of such a definition of African feminisms by looking at the trend of reasoning done by a number of other scholars in the 2000s.

Kolawole (2002), for instance, observes the impact of Africa’s diversity on various receptions and rejections of feminism. In settling the problem, she urges African gender researchers to go beyond issues of feminism’s irrelevance. She highlights that gender struggles should not be a reason for eroding other principles of self-definition. Rather, gender struggles “should enhance meaningful dynamic womanhood without being ahistorical or acultural” (p. 97). ‘Ahistorical’ and ‘acultural’ are concepts that highlight the significance of history and culture in defining identities within the feminists’ agenda. Therefore, she reports the need to contextualise cultural matters as well as to carry out analysis of its historical background.

Mangena (2003), on the other hand, points to the historical and cultural displacement ‘diaspora’ dimensions of the feminism agenda when she positions African feminisms. She observes that although Africans in diaspora may not regard themselves as African in the cultural sense, “they are still in many ways reminded that Africa is their ancestral homeland in terms of geography, history and culture” (p. 99). Mangena (2003), bases her perspectives on the unique experiences of humiliation and oppression of African women in diaspora, which she argues to be, among other grounds, the distinctive features of African feminism. Therefore, she contends that African women’s experiences go beyond geographical boundaries of nationality and ethnic affiliation, and these unique experiences, although negative ones, essentially bind African women together (Mangena, 2003). These experiences mobilise African women for a shared common purpose to realise their freedom under various conditions of injustice and inequalities through political structures, social and economic systems within and outside their own countries (Kolawole, 2002; Mangena, 2003).

The above reasoning is a development of prior Afrocentric theorists who created what black feminists termed African Womanism. Dove (1998), for example, points out that the expression signifies the concept of motherhood. Womanists bring forth the role of African mothers as leaders who are responsible for creating cultural integrity based on the principles of “reciprocity, balance, harmony, justice, truth, righteousness, order, and so forth” (Dove, 1998, p. 535). Concerning this, Mangena (2003), asserts that “one of the responses of the African woman’s continued humiliation and oppression has been to distance herself from western feminism and to consciously embrace Womanism” (p. 100) Womanism focuses on freedom and healing that is wholesome to communal human life and any struggle for freedom must
mean freedom for the good of the entire nation (Chigwedere, 2010). The philosophy of African Womanism emphasises “consensus, compromise and cooperation between the sexes” (Chigwedere, 2010, p. 41). In this light, most African feminist scholars have attempted, through the work of literature, to contextualise what they can comfortably call African feminism.

African writers for instance, have objectified African women through their literary work as either knowing or taking the oppressive situation as acceptable or normal, given the tradition and culture of the patriarchal system so common across many African people. Chinua Achebe, for instance, in his novel ‘Things Fall Apart’ – is a good example where the literature has depicted an African woman’s role as subordinate to a man’s role. The African continent itself is objectified by metaphorical references by African male writers as both a mother and wife, denoting her role of reproduction (Chigwedere, 2010). Chigwedere (2010), observes this role as, not merely complementary but a responsibility and an obligation. In simple terms, a woman’s role is symbolised as belonging to the servitude of her husband. In that sense, an African woman as a mother is metaphorically worshipped and honoured greatly, but as a wife is objectified by the same African man (Chigwedere, 2010). Hence, African feminism builds upon the foundations of Afrocentric ideologies where motherhood is paramount in both metaphorical and literal meanings.

The above associations further our understandings about how some commentators have defined African feminism. Ntseane (2011) offers a description of African feminism stating that it “…emphasizes the importance of challenging the oppression of women without alienating African men, as well as questioning features of tradition without rejecting the African culture” (p.10). This discourse takes care to delineate those concerns peculiar to the African situation with the understanding that these might appear differently to different classes of women. It is also a definition recognising men as partners in the struggle against gender oppression rather than as enemies (Ntseane, 2011). Therefore, based on African cultures, the gender equality struggle emphasises the necessity of complementarity rather than conflict between African men and women.

Another distinguishing attribute of the African feminist position is the epistemological approaches that African female writers use in their writings. In particular, they tend to use proverbs and folk tales. According to Nnaemeka (2004, p. 365), the African way of theorising is the narrative forms such as, “in the stories we create, in the riddles and proverbs, in the play with language, since dynamic rather than fixed ideas seem more to our liking”. For example, in an effort to highlight the complexities, dangers, and possibilities of understanding feminist
struggles in past colonial Africa, Ntseane (2011), presents a Setswana mythical story about a hen scratching the ground for *a lost needle*. The story refers to the need for African women to have a thorough consideration of negotiation processes, not only with the male gender, but also within the female gendered context in acknowledging one central agenda ‘*finding the lost needle*’ – symbolic of the aims of feminist struggle. As such, Ntseane (2011) manages metaphorically to reveal how deeply we are all trapped in patriarchal systems as African women and the need to understand how the African feminists approach gender issues.

### 3.1.5. African feminists’ manner of dealing with gender issues

Most African feminists employ literary works and various tribal language sayings such as African proverbs to emphasise the traditional educational value in promoting a sense of community. For example, Tswana’s proverb, “it takes a village to raise a child” (Ntseane, 2011, p. 8) has a similar Swahili language version in the Tanzanian context as, ‘*mkono mmoja haulei mwana*’, – meaning, a single hand cannot nurse a child. The proverb emphasises a sense of community and the need for social participation in the issues that matter to all. In this context, Ntseane states that, “the voice that I know is individual and collective, personal and political reflecting the intersection of my unique biography within the larger meaning of my historical times” (Ntseane, 2011, p. 8).

According to Nnaemeka (2004), a sense of participation, and hence collectiveness is necessary in acknowledging the communal voice in the act of theorising the emancipation of African women within the Afrocentric paradigm. In connection with this, she explores the politics of representation in feminist scholarship by revisiting the processes of theory making and knowledge construction in an environment of unequal power relations and cultural differences. Therefore, she argues for “the possibilities, desirability and pertinence of a space clearing that allows a multiplicity of different but related frameworks from different locations to touch, intersect, and feed off each other” (Nnaemeka, 2004, p. 362). This collectiveness needs to be in a way that accommodates different realities and histories where she bases her argument for suitable theorising generally (Nnaemeka, 2004).

The Afrocentric paradigms thus puts emphasis on collectivity or togetherness that enhances the human wholesomeness within a community. These are extensively discussed through the elaboration of ‘*utu*’, a Swahili version of ‘*Ubuntu*’, meaning, ‘humanness’ as, a Pan-African concept that considers the promotion of African feminist research approaches
These approaches include drama for emancipatory and participatory data collection as well as role-play in consideration of the complex nature of activism for the African feminists. Therefore, how we deal with gender issues is what make us different feminists. However, the varying degrees of social and national composition present some common elements in the early African traditions and values that this study will critically analyse and challenge through the African feminists’ perspective relevant to the Tanzanian social context.

3.1.6. The relevance of African feminism(s) to this study

The power imbalance between men and women existing in Tanzanian society as in most African social contexts, heightens the significance of negotiation processes in solving social problems. Nnaemeka (2004), emphasises that African feminism challenges through the processes of negotiating and accommodating, and through making compromises in recognising these processes as relevant means in which women can demonstrate their social circumstances culturally. The objective of the social participation of everyone within the Tanzanian society that defines my study problem necessitates acts of negotiating the grounds in which to address social justice in education for girls. Therefore, I position my views within the feminist agenda. This is in line with Bailey’s (1997) views on the feminists’ purpose of addressing gender oppressive behaviours. However, I am specifically linking my views with the African feminist scholars in recognition of the relevant and contextual challenges facing the Tanzanian society. As such, I agree with Steady (1987) as cited in (Nnaemeka, 2004) below:

The male is not ‘the other’ but part of the human same. Each gender constitutes the critical half that makes the human whole. Neither sex is totally complete in itself. Each has and needs a complement, despite the possession of unique features of its own. (Nnaemeka, 2004, p. 379-380)

Nnaemeka (2004) emphasises building on the indigenous epistemologies, which, in her view, are capable of providing what she calls, ‘a theoretical rack’ on which to hang African literature and which, is of relevance to this research. This considers the sources of information, the participants’ voices and their social contexts. Nnaemeka’s (2004) views on the necessity and wisdom of building on the indigenous in the construction of African feminist theory is of importance. She suggests and provides examples of how, and why, indigenous knowledge is useful in addressing issues of negotiation and social utility. Consistent with Nnaemeka’s (2004) idea of suitable theorising is Smith’s (1999) views on the significance of indigenous voices.
The empirical evidence for this study is in Africa, hence making African feminism an appropriate candidate as a conceptual framework in informing the methodological approach and interpretation of the findings in this study. Such evidence echoes Nnaemeka’s (2004) use of the Igbo saying, “…‘adiro akwu ofuebe enene nmawu/one cannot stand at a spot to watch a masquerade’ – a proverb that raises profoundly the issues of perspective and subjectivity” (Nnaemeka, 2004, p. 369). Issues of perspectives are extensively discussed in the context of educational research methodologies within the post-colonial Africa by Chilisa (2005). She emphasizes the significance of indigenous sources of information to understand crucial social problems in order to find possible solutions for them (Chilisa, 2005). This justifies my focus on the Tanzanian social context in choosing a theoretical perspective relevant in addressing this study topic.

The metaphorical language used within the African social context, and the feminist frame, is in line with consideration of, and respect to the social needs, feelings and emotions of others. In other African contexts, as with the case of Yoruba, the use of proverbs is associated with wisdom where ancestors are the storehouse of such expressions. Thus, they are friendly, and “considered to be traditional and originated from the observation of natural phenomena and human relations” (Agbaje, 2002, p. 238). Ntseane (2011), observes their importance in social matters where one gender has more power over the other, such as within the predominantly patriarchal societies across the African continent.

In addition, Nnaemeka’s (2004) views on linking academic work to policy, advocacy and other development enterprises to the development of women draws attention to this work. This is due to the study’s focus on enabling girls’ better educational experience and social participation in the light of African feminism and social justice theoretical stances. The examination of the education policy implementation and its impact on girls within the Tanzanian context is a challenge that invites a gentle approach to social negotiations. This is important in dealing with gender oppressive behaviours in a social context where gender power imbalance is a tradition.

The African feminists’ methods of conducting an inquiry pertaining to the symbolic use of language can enhance the desired negotiations since it is less antagonistic when social problems are conveyed in a humorous, aesthetic way, yet as powerful as possible, as evidenced in Askew (2015). Such language use is very common within the Tanzanian social context where I considered the use of proverbs and other linguistic expressions to formulate research questions for this study. In relation to this, the late Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe said that
proverbs make words palatable as in Igbo they are called “the palm-oil with which words are eaten” (Shelton, 1969, p. 86). Within the Tanzanian social context, the metaphorical and proverbial methods of communicating messages are effective traditional and cultural ways of conveying even controversial messages with both tact and politeness (Beck, 2005) and which leaves the listener/reader reflective.

Furthermore, preserving and distributing knowledge through educational processes does not alienate people along gender lines. Therefore, it is important that deliberate creative language use can be an effective way of demonstrating that men and women together come from a communal past where they shared responsibilities collectively. The sharing of roles and knowledge preservation through educational processes for the sake of the community concerned is also important. In this way, it is possible to view gender oppression as a concern and a threat for the entire livelihood of the societies concerned. The late Tanzanian President, Julius Nyerere, demonstrated such use of language in many of his speeches to the nation where, as a teacher, he often used humour and contextual examples to deliver his messages as illustrated below:

[A]t present our pupils learn to despise even their own parents because they are old-fashioned and ignorant; there is nothing in our existing educational system which suggests to the pupil that he [she] can learn important things about farming from his [her] elders...And from school he [she] acquires knowledge unrelated to agricultural life. He [she] gets the worst of both systems! (Nyerere, 1968, p. 278).

In the quote above, the inherent confusion concerning the valuable traditional knowledge and its relevance is portrayed as being prevented by post-colonial curriculum content and knowledge transfer (Rust & Jacob, 2015). Nyerere’s (1968) expression, “gets the worst of both systems” in the context of the above quote captures the seriousness of the message though humorously, namely, the perishing of valuable traditional knowledge within the country’s education system. As a result of such a situation born out of external dependence, there is a significant impact on the content of the national school curriculum (Mbilinyi, 1975). Although the above statement is a critical reference to the Tanzania’s education system a few years after Independence, the situation has not changed much through the various policy implementations in recent years. Indeed, it captures the effects of globalisation and foreign policy within the Tanzanian education system. While such dependency restricts the delivery of culturally relevant knowledge, it also continues to restrict women’s social participation, which is already minimal due to other factors (Mbilinyi, 1975).
Nyerere’s (1968) quote, elaborated in the paragraph above, aids the understanding that the aesthetic use of language within the social context of Tanzanian people is an effective way of delivering important issues as well as promoting a sense of community. In line with this, the common use of Swahili sayings and proverbs in Tanzania has been a comfortable way of dealing with emerging social problems despite there being across the country ethnic groups of over 120 tribes with varying cultural traits, customs and traditions (Davids & Maliti, 2015). An example in the saying, ‘Mchuma janga hula na wa kwao’—meaning, he who earns calamity consumes with his family, is an illustration of the usefulness of culturally sensitive transformative theorising and the application of symbolism is a useful literary tool within an African feminist perspectives.

Going back to the application of aesthetic language use in the context of Nyerere’s (1968) quote above, the emphasis on the disaster awaiting future generations if valuable traditional knowledge is continuously ignored within the education system is gently highlighted. In this study’s context and indeed for both boys and girls educational experience, there are individual social calamities and misfortunes that will have an impact on the entire society if things are not improved. There is an urgent need to emphasise on the consequences of the social negligence in addressing girls’ educational experience. This is due to the fact that such negligence leads to a general national developmental calamity. To this end, I now focus on one theoretical stance within the feminists’ approaches that is suitable for this study.

3.1.6.1. A theoretical stance: one among the same

There are many forms of feminisms as I have previously highlighted in section 3.1.2. Kitunga and Mbilinyi (2009), present seven forms of feminisms. These are Radical, Liberal, Western, Black, Marxist, State, and Transformative feminisms. I do not intend to define or discuss all of these forms of feminisms. However, I will employ one commonly used form – the African liberal feminism – as an example of the limitations certain forms of feminisms have. I will also argue for my specific choice of the African transformative feminism as one of these forms, which is suitable in this study.

African Liberal feminism has for many decades been thought to be the best approach in line with both the international development agendas and educational policy making in Sub-Saharan Africa (See Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010). In general, Liberal feminism focuses on addressing the problem of subordination of women through unequal opportunities. These
opportunities are institutionalised through the legal, political, social and economic structures. The various versions of liberal feminism insist that, “women’s opportunities should be equal with men’s and that policies, legislations and statutes should be put in place to address social injustices between the sexes” (Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010, p. 622). However, for decades now African liberal feminism has not yet been able to produce holistic means to address the enduring gender oppression. This is because like other forms of liberal perspectives, it does not address problems related to a focus on market forces that affect service delivery within the education sector. Such a focus do not take on board the socio-economic status of every person who is in need of educational services.

Thomas and Rugambwa (2011), challenge the use of the Liberal feminist approach in the context of Tanzania where it focuses on economic or political development within the existing social systems. As such, enrolment and achievement in examinations was the main target of the Women In Development approach (WID). However, this approach “do[es] not necessarily challenge gendered norms and relations of power in societies stemming from structural inequalities” (Thomas & Rugambwa, 2011, p. 156).

In this regard, I agree with Ntseane’s (2011) suggestion concerning transformative learning. In her criticism of liberal feminism she suggests that, “African values and many others from other cultural contexts elsewhere can be used to develop transformative learning to theorize and build models of research and learning that are owned by the people” (p. 320). This is similar to Nyerere’s (1968) reference to subject content relevance in the preceding section and that simply means theorising and building knowledge based on the local context in which the research subjects (girls and women) live. Nsteane (2011), highlights further that the marginalisation of gender, and its diverse cultural contexts, denies new insights into the positive development of a useful critical theory in education. As such, I find the African Transformative feminism suitable in this sense. I now review its relevance to this study in the following section.

3.1.6.2. The African Transformative Feminism: Relevance to this study

African transformative feminism takes a holistic approach to emancipatory practices in all spheres of life according to Kitunga and Mbilinyi (2009). They argue that the private and the public must collaborate to make sure that the key players in social structures who are involved in making policy decisions support the abolishing of male supremacy. In this respect,
African transformative feminists focus on how social structures strengthen male supremacy in order to change that. This approach includes a concrete struggle for change where there are challenges to the “dominant top-down structures” (Kitunga & Mbilinyi, 2009, p. 439). These structures are perceived as undemocratic within the society. Challenging these structures is possible by promoting ways of organising transformative feminists in this struggle. Instances of such approaches are group-centred leadership and not leader-centred groups. The African transformative feminists perceive a possibility of liberation through collective participation in decision-making in democratic structures with the potential to produce appropriate collective revolution (Kitunga & Mbilinyi, 2009).

African transformative feminism’s perspective on the holistic approach to emancipation, pays attention to ownership of things like land and labour, emphasising the significance of emotions, psychological and self-identity aspects of people within the economic, political and cultural spheres (Kitunga & Mbilinyi, 2009). The additional emphasis on the psychological aspects is necessary in addressing oppression of any kind. Moreover, African transformative feminism’s holistic perspective therefore recognises the human subjective side of life as important as the logical and analytical side in scientific inquiry (Kitunga & Mbilinyi, 2009). This includes the perception that the creative and artistic sides of the human brain are both crucial in making transformation happen in any social environment.

Along the above line of thinking, the need to transform the educational environments for better learning experience for girls within this study context calls for such holistic perspectives as advocated by Bone et al. (2007) in their discussion of spirituality and the significance of the ‘Montessori Casa’ –meaning, children’s house. Although their study focussed on the significance of a holistic approach in the pedagogical practices of early childhood, their approach provides further thinking in connecting learners’ spirituality with everyday learning within the learning institutions. The fact that spirituality is a core value that African feminists uphold, Bone et al’s (2007) holistic views could be contextually adoptable in addressing the overall attitude change concerning girls’ education in Tanzania’s educational environments, particularly, within the classroom settings. This could be applicable using the African transformative feminism’s main approach and philosophy, which is animation, involving the application of cartoons in depicting real life situations with a focus to change gender oppressive social behaviours in the classroom settings as illustrated in HakiElimu (2005). *HakiElimu* is two Swahili words coined as one to mean justice in education. ‘*Haki*’ means justice, and ‘*elimu*’ means education.
In the African transformative feminism’s approach, the oppressed are key leaders in the struggle for liberation and in the context of Tanzania, their stories form the basis of animation in order to educate and transform the society (Kitunga & Mbilinyi, 2009). As such, African transformative feminism challenges the perpetrators and creators of power dynamics in relational aspects in all spheres of human life by challenging the dominance of men, academic professionals, and various corporations in different ways. These include the research methods used in the process of knowledge generation. African transformative feminists also believe in the use of both quantitative and qualitative means in the process of knowledge generation (Kitunga & Mbilinyi, 2009).

Below are some of the key features of African transformative feminism reviewed in this section and whose applicability I further discuss in Chapter Eight in relation to my study findings:

a) African transformative feminism has a holistic approach to emancipatory practices in all spheres of life.

b) It challenges the dominant top-down structures in its concrete struggle for change.

c) It stresses the significance of emotions, psychological and self-identity aspects of people within the economic, political and cultural spheres.

d) It challenges the dominance of men, academic professionals, and various corporations regarding methods used in the process of knowledge generation.

e) Its main approach and philosophy is animation, where it embraces both the creative and artistic spheres of the human brain in causing transformation.

In line with the above African transformative feminism perspective, I concur with Kitunga and Mbilinyi’s (2009) argument for an African transformative feminism as the most appropriate theoretical framework for studies addressing the feminist agenda within the educational systems where power imbalance across gender is inherent in predominantly patriarchal societies across Tanzania.

3.1.7. The application of African Transformative Feminism in this Study

I am seeking to foreground the voices of African women. For this reason, I present these voices based on the differences and similarities of the histories, experiences and cultural contexts of African women that affect Tanzanian girls within this study’s context. I present all
these points in connection with the above key features within African transformative feminism. I particularly present the participants’ voices with a view to challenging, and changing, the dominant top-down structures in order to enhance the understanding of the inherent structural inequalities that are ultimately due to the dominant power imbalance in decision-making.

In order to do that, I looked at the research question through several different perspectives. These include different methodological approaches such as the use of local sayings particularly prevalent within the Tanzanian social context. For example, Girls’ focus group discussions voiced how they perceived the school matrons in response to the following question: ‘Which, proverb, saying or idiomatic expressions or narrative can you use best to describe your experience of your school matrons?’ Their responses did not only generate a deeper understanding of the relevance of the matron system as a whole, but also contributed to the general understanding of the perceived roles of secondary school matrons as opposed to what they actually do on a daily basis. This knowledge was important in order to explore further the possibilities of improving girls’ educational participation through this support system in Tanzanian secondary schools by using their suggestions rather than those of the government. It was possible in this way to challenge how the top-down structures continue to fail girls’ educational experience across government mixed gender day secondary schools.

I interviewed the research participants in Kiswahili, this being the Tanzanian national language and therefore suitable within the social cultural context of this research. This was theoretically important, as the use of local sayings is one of the media of communicating cultural experiences within the African social context. In association with this and bearing in mind that as a researcher, I am a non-native speaker of English language involved in the interpretation of my participants’ data, I will employ the use of long narrative quotes. This is essential in order to bring about the contextual meanings of the participants’ perspective in line with the contextual meanings drawn from the Kiswahili interview transcripts in the findings chapters five, six and seven. This is of methodological significance in that while it helps promote language context sensitivity, it elevates the participants’ views. At the same time, it helps address the problem of generalisation and considers construct validity in research (Long, 1997). At the same time, it is possible to keep closer to the original meanings intended by the participants based on the interviews’ original language.

Based on African feminisms’ relevance in this study as reviewed in section 3.1.6, the understanding contextual meanings that research participants bring is vital. This is because such meanings enhance the possibilities of addressing gendered-research problems. Adhering
to this is the need to adopt a holistic approach to emancipatory practices within the context of African Transformative feminism. In this regard, the inherent use of symbolism and figurative language in the daily lives of Tanzanians is reflected as well within the study findings. As previously illustrated by the use of proverbs in section 3.1.6, the use of figurative language is an effective way of communicating sensitive issues that girls’ face. This can help address problems pertaining to support needed for girls within mixed gender secondary schooling in order to review possibilities of changing things for them.

Therefore, I position the research on underlying African feminisms’ beliefs and values, particularly the methodological aspect as reviewed, in generating certain types of knowledge needed for answering this study’s questions. This provides a means of challenging the top down approach to social structures in order to affect the necessary changes. In doing this, I will emphasise the significance of emotions, and the psychological and self-identity aspects of people within the economic, political, and cultural spheres which is an important aspect of African transformative feminism. Moreover, since African transformative feminism supports mixed, quantitative and qualitative research, it is a suitable theoretical perspective in this, qualitative research.

Finally, with consideration to power imbalances across genders within the African social context, I have broadened this theoretical lens in making sense of girls’ educational experience and social participation in a mixed gendered secondary day school context in Tanzania by including the social justice theoretical framework in interpreting the study’s findings. In addition, I asked the participants for their suggestions for change.

3.1.8. Concluding remarks

This section has reviewed literature on the relevant features of African feminisms within the Afrocentric paradigm. I highlighted how these ideologies are relevant to this study in connection with the African and Tanzanian ways of dealing with gender issues. This was in consideration of the existing male-dominated socio-political structures. It is possible to understand the subordinate nature of women by linking the deep-rooted African patriarchal social systems with the complex nature of African historical and cultural contexts. This combination depicts the typical situations of the social context of this study. Therefore, my argument for the relevance of African feminism(s) is based on the methodological applicability and the existence of the many forms of feminisms with which African feminist researchers can
consciously or unconsciously identify themselves, as illustrated in Kitunga and Mbilinyi (2009).

Hence, based on the above reviews, I have made a conscious choice to apply African transformative feminism based on cultural relevance to interpret this study’s data. In the next section 3.2, I review literature on the social justice theoretical perspective and point out why it is a necessary complementary theoretical perspective in this study.
3.2. Social Justice Theory

This section provides the definition of social justice and highlights its application in addressing social equity, participation, quality and equality in education. I review the constructs of social justice perspective, which sets the ground for presenting its functions in conjunction with its relevance to this study.

3.2.1. Defining social justice

Various scholars have defined social justice in different ways to encompass the idea of social equality, which includes the fair distribution of resources and opportunities (Fraser, 2009b; Honoré, 1961; Reid, 2008; Young, 1990, 2011). The idea of social equity includes fair decision-making in the socio-political structures that shape opportunities around the social lives of people (Honoré, 1961). Although the ideas of ‘equality’ and ‘equity’ are both synonymous to impartiality and/or fairness, they are differentiated by the processes entailed in social power relations when it comes to the decision-making pertaining to resources distribution in various social political structures. According to Honoré (1961), the principle of social justice requires that everyone claims equally “all those advantages which are commonly desired and which conduce to human well-being” (p. 105), with participation being a crucial part of any decision-making.

Social justice’s inclusive nature allows it to address the issues of justice in a way that is gender neutral. It emphasises fairness – a reasonable concept that others cannot reject (Rawls, 1999; Sen, 2009). For this study, addressing issues of girls’ educational experiences as a means to enhance their future social participation is a matter that a socially just society cannot ignore. Based on such definitions, social justice is a relevant theoretical approach suitable to address gender oppressive behaviour. Furthermore, it is a suitable approach in societies where women and men’s communal lifestyle is presumably in existence. Furthermore, due to its emphasis in everyone’s equal claim to those things that improves a person’s wellbeing, it is an approach suitable in challenging unequal power relations such as in predominantly African patriarchal societies.

According to Fraser (2009a), the social justice perspective relates to parity of social participation by different groups in a given society. This is because social justice is blended
within political processes that are important in achieving the fair distribution of resources and equity in social participation. According to Fraser (2009a), the realisation of social justice in most cases is challenged because subjectivity and partiality dominate the situation of most supposedly ‘just acts’ (Fraser, 2009a). It is therefore worth noting that equality and equity cannot be achieved without fair recognition of the needs of different and various groups in a given society (Fraser, 2009a; Honoré, 1961). In this regard, Fraser (2009a) emphasises the responsibility of the state, or those in power, to do more to achieve equality and equity in a society. This understanding permeates the need to review the constructs of the Social Justice perspective in order to establish its application within this study.

3.2.2. The constructs of social justice perspective

According to Lizzio, Wilson, and Hadaway (2007), the social justice perspective is made up of the following constructs: distributive, procedural, and interactional. The projection of these social justice constructs is based on the interplay of power relations within social structures. I review various scholars views on these followed by a summary in Figure 5. After that, I will explain the summary, then present further review of literature on these constructs.

3.2.2.1. Distributive justice

Distributive justice, as the name suggests, is associated with the way resources and opportunity are made available across each member of a given society (Young, 1990). In Young’s (1990) terms, distributive justice is a paradigm focusing on the distribution of material things such as resources, income, wealth, or social positions as well as equality of opportunity, access to resources, and participation including the distribution of cultural and social capital (Young, 1990). Lizzio et al. (2007), discuss this in the light of the deprivation of educationally relevant resources. In demonstrating it, they describe students’ sense of dissatisfaction with the outcome of education in comparison to the effort they put in leading to psychological distress. Thus, when there is inequitable distribution of resources necessary to improve their educational outcome, they will experience inequity (Lizzio et al., 2007). For this study, as in most African social contexts, an example is the distribution of educational resources along gender lines within the socio-cultural structures. This denies girls equal opportunity to education because, unlike boys, they are raised in societies that do not value their education. Such unfair
distribution of resources discourages their educational efforts with long lasting impact on their educational experience.

3.2.2.2. *Procedural justice*

Procedural justice, on the other hand, involves the experiences of inequity in interactions with others. This happens in association with specific important events and elements that are unfairly handled through various procedures (Lizzio et al., 2007). According to Tyler and Blader (2003), procedures are crucial in shaping people's social identity within groups. The social identities such as a ‘hardworking’, ‘lazy’; ‘responsible’ or ‘irresponsible’; ‘careful’ or ‘careless’ persons in groups such as schools, organisations or any other social institutions therefore determines the relationships of the members within a particular group. Consequently, the identities that are created and the resulting relationships in turn influence how people behave towards one another.

3.2.2.3. *Interactional justice*

Behaviours that are born out of such relationships between those who hold the power and their subordinates in an institution are factors that help us describe group members’ attitudes and values arising from within processes of interaction (Tyler & Blader, 2003). In the context of this study, this involves the manner of the handling of girls’ educational services at the school or institutional level. This study’s focus is on the tradition, culture and norms pertaining to how the matron system functions within the government’s mixed gender day secondary educational institutions. At the classroom level, the social-cultural stereotyping of girls throughout the learning process rests upon the traditional norms in a specific society. This can result in lack of self-worth or low self-esteem, which eventually damages girls’ confidence to function effectively as members of a particular school, class or subject in contrast to boys.

3.2.3. The relationships between the constructs of social justice

The balance of power between entities within these social structures that are accorded the governing responsibilities of goods and services to the larger society creates or curtails access to resources and opportunities. Those who hold the power also improve or deter social
relationships based on the inherent organisational cultures, traditions and norms. Similarly, those who possess influential power determine the nature of social participation depending on the positive or negative endowment of attitudes, values and behaviours towards the subordinate members of a social unit. When the social structures’ practices are perceivable as impartial by the society in which they act upon, these affect not only the performance but also the quality of the product or output of every member of a society.

The governing responsibilities exist in forms of public and private organisations, institutions, and in individuals. Examples of these are International and National organisations, business companies, government ministries and departments, learning institutions, financial institutions and so on and so forth. Within these social structures are employees at different levels. For example, teachers in schools where heads of schools, heads of departments and school matrons and administrators co-exist to perform different roles in accordance with the organisational specific structures and objectives.

The public consumers of the above identified institutional outputs include, for example, students in schools. For my study, this comprises girls in mixed gender government secondary schools. As consumers, girls become part of the active participants in the public’s welfare system in and out of schools in terms of their involvement in various socio-economic activities and involvement in politics. Their educational, socio-cultural and even spiritual participation depends on how they are accorded access to resources relevant to a respective sections of human functioning. For instance, (educational functioning) access to an academic text book for specific subjects, (socio-cultural) access to a piece of land for cultivation and, (spiritual) access to a Bible or a Quran for a Christian or a Muslim respectively. All of these must be accompanied with specific corresponding supports such as teachers.

Social access depends upon the existing relationships between social structures and the society. In those relationships, the adherence to codes of practice that include; culture, tradition and norms of the social structures in which the consumers/society are members determines social values, behaviours and attitudes. Based on inherent relationships, these social members’ characters are affected either negatively or positively in the process of shaping the end product. Social participation is determined by the extent, and the relative degrees of negativity or positivity imparted to the subordinate members of a given social structure. This is evidenced within their respective spheres of influence during the interaction with their superiors. As a result, the performance and outcome of the social participation is determined whether in terms of quantifiable measure or the nature of performance as well as the quality of their
products/outcome. Meanwhile, the nature and social identity of what the society becomes in the end is also determined.

CONSTRUCTS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. Distributive
2. Procedural
3. Interactional

Organisations/Institutions/ Individuals

Resources, Opportunities and participation
Traditional, Culture, Norms
Values, Attitudes and Behaviours

Society

Nature/Quality of performance or product

Figure 5. Summary of the relationships of the constructs. Figure source: Own creation.

In reference to the constructs of social justice noted earlier and the way these constructs relate to each other as summarised above, Tyler and Blader (2003) contend that if people experience stereotyping within the social entities to which they belong, their sense of self-worth is damaged. As a result, they may, “maintain a psychological distance between their identity and group membership” (Tyler & Blader, 2003, p. 358). In relation to this and based on the above example of girls in the Tanzanian social context, their sense of worth within the general society and within the educational structures is significant. Their specific individual and group experience can decide their day-to-day involvement in the society based on whether they experience justice or inequality. Their response to this experience of justice in turn affects their performance and educational outcomes.
Finally, it is noteworthy that interactional equity links with procedural equity. However, as noted earlier, the two are distinguishable from each other through the processes of decision-making that are based on interpersonal and informational equity between individuals within a given institution. In the case of a school, for instance, this can extend to the type of knowledge and information given to a specific social group. Although not the only determinant factor of performance; where there is inequitable dissemination of knowledge and information based on specific individual desire, academic performance within the same school can differ significantly among students and between genders. Hence, the interplay between the distribution of resources and ensued attitudes determining that distribution within the educational processes, determines the outcome and performance of an institution, organisation, or individual members within the same society.

In this aspect of interactional justice, Lizzio et al. (2007) contend that teacher-student “relational aspects of an educational organization’s procedures are likely to be strongly associated with students’ sense of psychological engagement or connection with a school” (p. 198). This can affect their general academic performance negatively or positively. In a study investigating the leadership dimensions on subordinates’ work performance for instance, Wu, Huang, Li, and Liu (2012) found that trust-in-supervisor had positive impacts on work performance and general organisational citizenship behaviours. For this study, this relates to the impact of support systems such as the matrons’ role in ensuring girls’ engagement and how that relationship enhances relevant connections with their schools.

The review of these constructs indicate that if properly designed and implemented, improving the quality of girls’ educational experiences and future social participation does not have to remain theoretical, it is a practical possibility. Therefore, according to the social justice perspective, it is possible to address problems of equity, quality and equality in education. This can happen through the realisation of all of these social justice constructs. For this study, it depends on improving the school matron’s psychosocial support role in ensuring distributive, procedural and interactional justice to girls within the school environments.

3.2.4. Competing approaches to social justice in education in the Tanzanian context

There are other approaches that help us to understand quality and equity in education. I reviewed two that are commonly adopted in Tanzania. These are the human capital and human
rights approaches. I have earlier reviewed and critiqued these in the literature review, Chapter Two. According to Tickly and Barret (2011), the social justice perspective provides an alternative theoretical framework for analysing and assessing education policies that is broader and beyond the commonly adopted human capital and human rights perspectives. This is because the social justice perspective in its broader sense highlights the significance of looking into the politics behind the educational processes through its various constructs. This can reduce, and perhaps eliminate obstacles to girls’ educational experiences. In this respect, the social justice perspective is an appropriate theoretical lens for this study, as it does not only emphasise gender neutrality. Like feminism, it also addresses gender oppressive behaviours because it has a focus on both social equality and social equity. To this end, I now demonstrate the functions of a social justice perspective and its relevance in addressing this study topic.

3.2.5. The relevance of a social justice perspective to this study

The social justice perspective provides considerable utility in explaining aspects of behaviour such as girls’ perceptions of the importance of education and how they choose to engage with it (Lizzio et al., 2007). Understanding the role of school matrons in influencing girls’ educational experience and social participation calls for the need to consider the importance of improving engagement within the learning environment. Accordingly, Lizzio et al. (2007), “A social justice perspective may contribute to a fuller understanding of factors that can influence students’ engagement with their learning environment” (p. 195).

Young (1990), contends that the term social justice is excessively infused with the idea of distributive justice, which exclusively focuses on the way in which goods, services, and burdens are properly distributed among members of a given society. According to Young (1990) and Gewirtz (1998), if social justice is conceived as such, it is likely to overlook the social structures and institutional contexts that often determine the distributive patterns of resources. For my study, the idea of distributive justice is not the only way of addressing social justice. Young’s (1990) point of view is in line with my thinking in challenging exclusive emphasis on parity of participation through distributive justice. Such an emphasis cannot yield the desired educational outcomes while there is little or no attention given to effective engagement and support for other psychosocial aspects of girls within the social structures and educational institutions to improve their educational experience. As such, Social justice
constructs consider, in totality, decision-making structures and procedures, division of labour, and culture in affecting desired outcomes (Patton, Shahjahan, & Osei-Kofi, 2010).

In this study, I emphasise the need to look at how resources are distributed across genders within the home and school environments; the way the matron system is facilitated to support girls’ educational engagement, and the way gender oppressive behaviours are addressed within the learning process and environment. Therefore, social justice is particularly relevant in addressing the nature of the influence the matron system has on girls’ educational experience and, in a much broader way, their later social life. Furthermore, Social Justice also focuses on the social attitudes and values the society attaches to resource distribution in affecting girls’ educational experience.

The social justice perspective concerns the extent to which society upholds conducive and necessary conditions for all individual members of society in order for them to exercise capacities, express experiences, and to participate in decisions and actions affecting their lives (Reid, 2008; Young, 2011). According to Young (2011), although it is not possible to avoid group diversity as, indeed, this is desirable in modern social processes, a social justice perspective “requires not the melting away of differences, but institutions that promote reproduction of, and respect for group differences without oppression” (p. 47). In this sense and in connection with the examples given in the preceding paragraphs, Reid’s (2008) and Young’s (2011) description of the social justice perspective is useful and relevant to this study.

However, both culture and the shaping of social and economic opportunities for girls through equality and equity in schools across Tanzania are very much dependent on the nature of the political processes that influence such issues. Some examples of ‘social unjust’ legal provisions because of political processes concern the Tanzanian Law of Marriage Act of 1971: An act which allows for the marriage of 15 and 14 year old girls to marry with parental consent (URT, 1971)4 and the customary laws regarding land ownership. The former law takes away from girls their childhood and valuable time for attaining educational privileges, which are important in preparing girls/women for effective social participation in their later lives. Similarly, the latter denies them choices of ownership of assets that can improve effective social participation in later lives. Taking the idea of ‘justness’ from Osmani’s (2010) analysis of Sen’s (2009) views of justice, I embrace the fact that we live in an imperfect world. However,

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4 This is the United Republic of Tanzania Government Law of Marriage Act of 1971 document in current use.
although not always, it is possible to achieve a particular social justice position in this imperfect world as Osmani (2010) states:

…the justness of a state of affairs should be judged not exclusively, and not even primarily, by the justness of its institutions, but by the justness of the realization of a social state as determined by the interaction of institutions with social norms and the behaviour pattern of individuals living in a particular society. (p. 604)

Contextualising the above statement to this study’s problem – namely, advocating for a better educational experience for girls – is something that needs the involvement of social consciousness. This includes the respect accorded to girls in and out of the educational environments with which they interact, as different social groups with different kinds of needs. It requires the socio-political realisation that girls are in need of achieving some degree of wellbeing within these environments. It also requires recognising that girls deserve an equal share of social participation during and after schooling years. Tanzanian society, along with the government, like other societies and governments across the globe, needs to be responsible in supporting the necessary conditions for each person to use their potential and be able to participate in self-determining action (Reid, 2008).

In a Tanzanian and Nigerian based study, Unterhalter et al. (2013) argued that for many decades the issue of gender in national and international education policies has emphasised distributive inequality. They also argue that recent literature that criticises distributive injustice views, emphasises procedural and interactional injustice, but give less attention to distributive injustice. They point out that such literature emphasises “the significance of examining the ways in which structural gendered inequalities in the political economy and socio-cultural formations constrained the capacity of girls inside and outside school to claim the rights promised by education” (Unterhalter et al., 2013, p. 566). Therefore, they suggest an analytical approach, which takes into account all the elements of the social justice perspective – that is, distributive, procedural and interactional justice. In this way, it is possible to understand better the factors that constrain the capacity of girls to thrive during and after their school years, and be able to claim benefits promised through educational attainment.

Adopting the social justice perspective in its broader sense provides a wider theoretical lens through which to understand the wider educational needs of girls in a mixed gender social context, along with their active social participation during and after school. As such, I concur with Unterhalter et al.’s (2013) argument in adopting and implementing such an analytical approach. Through a social justice perspective, my study attempts to address the obstacles
relating to inequality, inequity and lack of quality in education affecting Tanzanian secondary schools today, where girls are being more negatively affected than boys. The aim is to explore the possibilities of dealing with obstacles for girls’ education in Tanzania based on the study context.

3.2.6. The application of a Social Justice Perspective in this Study

Social justice perspective are used in this thesis to address this study’s problem. Like the African feminisms that take on board the complementarity between men and women in social daily lives, I have taken the application of social justice into consideration in the following manner.

Similar to the application of African transformative feminism, I seek to place in the foreground, the voices of African women who dwell in a largely patriarchal society. Whereas African transformative feminism finds its relevance within an historical and cultural context – that is, where women’s experiences are paramount, social justice permits a perspective that do not favour men or women only and therefore, gender-neutral perspective in communities such as those in Tanzania. Therefore, I have considered cultural and traditional values that are inherent in such societies concerning gender roles, and I have looked at how these impact on girls’ educational experiences in mixed gender schooling contexts. Girls in this category of secondary schooling are in a better position to voice their experiences from their day-to-day learning experiences. Moreover, they have a better, and first hand, encounter with the constraints of what they perceive as limitations to the support that is needed to improve their educational experiences. This is because they have a first-hand experience born out of their competition for resources with male students.

I have framed the research question through several different perspectives in order to have a deeper understanding of the difference between boys’ and girls’ educational experiences – especially from a girl’s perspective. For instance, one of the questions I asked the girls in my study was, ‘Do boys face the same challenges as you? What are the differences?’ Their responses had significant implications not only for the issues of social justice but also for issues of persistent cultural practices within the Tanzanian society that maintained gender oppressive behaviours. Some of the behaviours that the participants mentioned in relation to challenges that girls faced, included excessive domestic chore allocation that had an adverse impact on their educational experience within the mixed gender day secondary school contexts. As such,
the participants well understood such questions from a social justice perspective as, supposedly equal members of the Tanzanian community, but also from African women’s cultural and historical perspectives.

In order to create a deeper level of understanding and add contextual meanings to what the participants gave in response to various research questions, I interviewed the participants in Kiswahili – a national language – although they were also at liberty to use the English language, which is also a medium of instruction in Tanzania. Therefore, the formulation of research questions adhered to this aspect of a social justice perspective in allowing the participants to use the language in which they were most conversant and comfortable. The use of the Kiswahili language helped to justify the local social context of the research while allowing for social cultural language applications such as the use of proverbs and various Swahili sayings, which enriched the participants’ meanings when it was necessary.

In addition, I used long ‘narrative’ quotes within the findings to bring about the contextual meaning of the participants’ perspectives. This is important because the Kiswahili language tends to use many words that are relational in creating meanings. As such, contextual meanings interweave within these words. Although I interpreted the meanings to the English language contextually, it was important to keep some of the quotes as originally spoken by the participants in order to retain the meanings that might have otherwise been lost in the process of interpretation. Doing all these things was important from a social justice theoretical stance. This is based on the methodological perspective and the fair representation of the participants’ voices, and so underlies the validity of this research.

Since social justice supports qualitative research in line with this research, the issues under investigation fell in line with all the constructs of a social justice perspective being distributive, procedural and interactional in addressing research questions. Therefore, I position the research in underlying social justice beliefs and values as reviewed in the above section and based on the advice I sought from participants concerning what to change. To this end, I argue that improving girls’ educational environment should include the improvement and the establishment of socially just educational support systems such as the matron system.
3.2.7. Concluding remarks

There are many simultaneous questions of equity, equality, and quality in secondary education in Tanzania. All are central to the idea of social justice in education affecting active social participation of girls in their later lives. Based on the review above, the role of school matrons in influencing the educational experience and social participation of girls’ needs improvement. This is a possibility if all the constructs of social justice are considered, and the system is understood to have the potential in providing psychosocial support to improve girls’ engagement in education. Given the current situation of school matrons in the Tanzanian schools in this study, I argue that this undertaking is lacking. Therefore, the application in this study of the social justice perspective will contribute towards the implementation of this undertaking.

3.3. Conclusion

My review of the Afrocentric knowledge paradigm and the African feminists’ literature argues for a contextually sensitive approach to research in Tanzania as an African country. Education as a matter of social justice draws attention to this theoretical lens in view of gender neutrality and, in considering the nature of social life in a very patriarchal African social context. In addition, the social justice perspective provides a viewpoint on both social equality and social equity in recognising the social role of others, social structures/institutional environments, and the government, in realising justice in education. In the case of this study, knowledge and understanding are generated through the analysis of the perceived influence of school matrons on the educational experience and social participation of girls. The next chapter discusses the methodology and philosophical approaches adopted to analyse the findings in connection with the previous literature review, and this current review of the theoretical approaches.
CHAPTER FOUR: Methodology

4. Introduction

Chapter Three presented the theoretical approaches –namely, African feminisms and social justice employed in this study. This chapter presents the philosophical and methodological approaches that guided my data collection and analysis process. This is followed by the explanation of this study approach and design before addressing how I considered the ethical questions. Then, I explain the geographical setting, methods, the characteristics of the participants and the selection process and discuss how the research questions shaped the interview questions. Finally, in the analysis section, I discuss how I analysed the data.

4.1. The Research Approach and Design

4.1.1. Qualitative approach

Qualitative approaches suit the nature of the problems under investigation in this study. In particular, the interpretative nature of qualitative research facilitates an understanding of the views and perceptions of participants concerning the influence of matrons on girls’ educational experiences and participation in Tanzanian secondary schools. Qualitative research draws on a broad range of methods in the social sciences, making it a flexible tool for data collection. However, its tendency to borrow techniques from other approaches also makes it difficult to define. In this study I define qualitative research, according to Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, and Ormston (2013), as established materials that can be practically interpreted to help us transform and visualise the world. They help us visualise the world through a chain or series of representations that include the following:

…field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to self …qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Ritchie et al., 2013, p. 4)

This approach allowed me to use flexible methods to generate data that are well suited to the social context of my study. In addition, the qualitative methods provided me with detailed
and rich complex data which retained the complexity of the participants’ stories. This was important because the analysis draws on data gathered from people who came from a wide range of cultural and economic backgrounds, and qualitative analysis made it possible to identify a series of themes that cut across all the data sources (Ritchie et al., 2013).

4.1.2. Epistemology and ontological positions

In this study I have positioned myself within an interpretivist framework. Ritchie et al. (2013) describe interpretivism as a frame that is revealed from practices that “emphasise the importance of understanding people’s perspectives in the context of the conditions and circumstances of their lives” (p. 23). The findings in this study include detailed descriptions of the role of matrons that emerged from interviews and from observations recorded in my field notes. My own reflections during the field work were shaped by my ontological stance in this research and were brought into play as I sought to make sense of what the participants had to say. In this respect, I follow Ritchie et al. (2013) who contend that the construction of meaning is central to interpreting the phenomena under investigation.

A qualitative research approach also fits well with my focus on social justice (Barrett, 2011) in education, which is a central theme in the theoretical framework of this study. Ritchie et al. (2013), further suggest that the commitment to social justice within the research context is enhanced by the notion of multiple realities in the data collection and analysis process which opens up spaces to hear the voices of participants who have diverse understandings, views, experiences, and perspectives of the phenomenon or process being investigated. The notion that there are multiple understandings of reality works well with the African feminist approach that also guides this investigation. This is further affirmed by Cannella and Lincoln (2004) who state:

… Examining the complex and dynamic contexts of public education in its many forms, sites, and variations, especially considering the … subtle social difference produced by gender, race, ethnicity, linguistic status or class. Indeed, multiple kinds of knowledge, produced by multiple epistemologies and methodologies, are not only worth having but also demanded if policy, legislation and practice are to be sensitive to social needs. (p. 7)

Hence, what the participants believe to be “the nature of their social worlds and what can be known about it (Ontology), the nature of knowledge and how it can be acquired (Epistemology)” (Ritchie et al., 2013, p.1), together with the goals and purposes of this research and the characteristics of the research participants, jointly, shape the understandings of the
phenomenon for this investigation. Indeed, understanding of my participants’ experiences, perspectives and histories (Ritchie et al., 2013) of my research participants in the exploration of the influence of matrons on girls’ educational experiences and social participation is central to my investigation. Hence, these approaches have guided the research methods selected for this study and have shaped the analysis and interpretation of data.

4.1.3. The case study design

In this project, I have taken a case study approach. I define case study according to Yin (2003), who notes that, “[a] case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2003, p. 13). The phenomenon under investigation in this study centres on the role of matrons’ influence in Tanzanian government mixed secondary day schools. Further, a ‘case’ can be defined as “the focus of interest in its own right… the researcher is concerned to elucidate the unique features of the case” (Bryman, 2012, p. 68, 69). The unit of analysis in this study is what the matrons do, perceived through the eyes of girls, Heads of Schools, and women, as well as how matrons perceive themselves in relation to girls’ educational experience. In this respect, it is a single case that draws on data gathered from government secondary schools in different parts of Tanzania.

The differences that emerge between participants in different regions are a result of the highly diverse cultural values of the people of Tanzania. Regardless of these differences, there are certain similarities across these groups. One example of similarity relates to the way that government schools are managed across the country; whether they are solely government-run or government and community-run schools, they are all staffed and run by the government (Wedgwood, 2010). Another is that the participants in my study were predominantly from low socio-economic backgrounds. These similarities created a series of patterns within the data, which made them more manageable.

In line with these similarities, all the groups of participants were embedded cases, which refer to the different units of analysis as noted in Scholz and Tietje (2002). Therefore, drawing from these units of analysis, these similarities informed the case study during this analysis procedure at different stages. It was for this reason that I chose to collect data in several different sites. Six sites, with a mix of urban and rural schools, were included in this study. Participants from the women’s groups were from local and central Government. In writing
about my study, I employed an exploratory multisite-case study. “Multisite qualitative studies address the same research question in a number of settings using similar data collection and analysis procedures in each setting” (Herriott & Firestone, 1983, p. 14). Thus, the exploratory multisite case study approach was suitable for the four schools and the two focus groups with women from local and central Government. All of these together provided me with insights about the matrons’ influence on girls in the mixed day government secondary schools in Tanzania.

This study takes a social justice theoretical perspective, but also embraces values that are articulated by African feminists. This view is based on a critical positioning of the liberal feminism which identifies gender inequality as a major problem in Tanzania. According to Bryman (2012), “a case study tends to take an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research” (p. 69). To this end, I follow writers such as Kitunga and Mbilinyi (2006); (2009) who argue in favour of a holistic approach to social transformation in promoting “women’s equality with men in all spheres of life” (Kitunga & Mbilinyi, 2009, p. 436).

4.2. Data Collection Methods

Data collection methods included the selection (sampling) of research sites, and participants, and fieldwork. These involved the collection of data through interviews, reflexive journaling, and document review and analysis. The main sampling approach for this study is purposive. In a purposive sampling technique, “the researcher aims to sample cases (for example, research sites) and/or research participants in a strategic way so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed” (Bryman, 2012, p. 714). The following subsections present these data collection methods for both the secondary schools and community women’s groups’ participants.

4.2.1. The selection of research sites

The research sites for this study were selected from secondary schools and community – based, women’s organisations as detailed in Figures 6 and 7 respectively. Therefore, this sub-section presents the main factors that influenced the selection of the research sites in this study.
4.2.1.1. Secondary schools research sites

Several factors influenced the choice of schools as research sites. First, as the study aims to explore girls’ experience in schools, it was appropriate to select mixed gender and day schools where girls and boys compete for resources. Second, the selected schools were government and/or community-run schools. This is because, in comparison to most privately run schools, the majority of students in these schools are from low income families or backgrounds. Those established through SEDP provided access to the most vulnerable students from rural backgrounds (MoEVT, 2010). Third, the school had to have a school matron, because not all government schools employ matrons. Fourth, the selected schools had, to a certain degree, to represent school girls in the rural area and those in the urban areas. This is because I wanted samples of participating schools that would provide insights into typical government co-educational day schools across Tanzania.

In addition, it is worth noting that the economic and educational experiences of secondary school girls in Tanzania vary between rural and urban areas. Therefore, it was important to capture this variation in experiences because of rural-urban contextual differences. Finally, after the preceding four factors were taken into account, the research fieldwork costs were also a factor to be considered. As such, the selection of research sites was purposely based on ease of access to the research site, and a consideration of travel, living and lodging expenses. All the interviews took place at the respective school buildings, rooms, or offices.

4.2.1.2. Community women’s-groups research sites

I made initial contact with community women when I visited various women’s organisations located in two of the major cities in Tanzania, Dar es Salaam and Dodoma. I managed to establish contact with leaders of four women’s groups, two of which were interested in my research. These two groups subsequently agreed to participate in my study. I also managed to negotiate the time and day of the focus group interviews, which was appropriate for the participating women. The two focus group interviews with the women took place in two hotel lounges of their choice.
4.2.2. The selection of research participants

4.2.2.1. Secondary school participants’ selection

At the secondary schools, research participants were School Principals, school matrons, and school girls. The sampling of research participants involved School Principals who helped to identify prospective research participants including the school matrons and girls. In order to minimise the School Principals’ influence in the recruitment of participants, I asked if they were willing to allow me to contact other participants directly and give them the necessary information regarding the purpose of my study. All the School Principals agreed on this. Therefore, in addition to the participants who were identified by the School Principals—that is, 4 school matrons, I identified 21 volunteering girls with the help of school matrons.

School Principals were included in the sample of participants because they are responsible for appointing the school matrons. Therefore, for example, they informed this study on how they appointed the matrons and the challenges they faced. In addition, they were the main source of information on the relevance of matrons in their schools (see interview questions for heads of school in appendix (4B1). The girls I invited to volunteer for the interviews came from different ethnic groups and had an average of three years’ experience in secondary schooling. Therefore, they were able to comment on the roles of matrons from direct experience.

Figure 6 is a summary of a thick description of the selected research sites and participants in terms of geographical locations and the nature of research participants at the secondary schools.
4.2.2.2. **Community women’s group participants’ selection**

In the case of the women participants, a general criterion was that they should be women who had gone through secondary schooling. These women needed to be locally and/or centrally
grouped so that it was possible to run focus group interviews. They also needed to be able or have the potential to provide perspectives or insight on women’s lives within the various communities. For example, women who were able to provide insights on Tanzanian women as partakers in social responsibilities, locally and in the government. The selected women were members of social groups with an interest in women’s related social issues. As already introduced in subsection 4.2.1.2 above, the leaders of the two participating women’s groups helped me to identify suitable participants in their respective groups. They also helped me by inviting the selected women volunteers to take part in focus group interviews. In selecting these women participants I provided the group leaders with information about the study and talked to them about what I needed from them, for example, indicating how many women could volunteer to take part. Group leaders and their group members discussed among themselves and negotiated on this, before giving me the list of those who agreed to participate.

The following figure 7 is a summary of information of the types of participating women groups and respective women participants’ characteristics at the community.

**Figure 7: Research site setting and participants in the community women’s groups.**
4.2.3. Fieldwork and data collection methods

As indicated in subsection 4.2.2.1 above, I approached four School Principals in urban areas and three in rural areas requesting permission to conduct research in their schools, seeking their help in identifying other research participants such as matrons and girls, and inviting them to be interviewed. One rural school that I identified was not able to take part as the school did not have a school matron. The other two were willing to take part and it was confirmed through the School Principals that I could visit again and invite school matrons and girls for interviews. In the urban area, one school matron declined to be interviewed so I did not conduct interviews in that school but three other urban schools in that area were willing to take part. Among the three schools that were willing to take part, one ward school did not have a matron; therefore, I visited the other two that had school matrons.

All the individuals’ and Girls’ focus groups interviews took place within the local school environment with permission from the respective School Principals. Their cooperation allowed me to negotiate with them about data gathering activities in their respective schools. For practical reasons, however, School Principals had to make the final decision as to when and where interviews were conducted, which was in consideration of the daily school timetables. The aim was not to interfere with the main activities in the school timetables.

Data collection methods in this study included one-to-one individual interviews and focus group interviews. Other methods included the analysis of documents in the public domain, such as education policy reports and journal articles. The interview data gathering instrument was an in-depth semi-structured interview guide; a qualitative research technique involving few interview participants with an aim, “to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, programme or situation” (Boyce & Neale, 2006, p. 3)

I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with four School Principals and four school matrons. I also conducted four focus group interviews with 17-18 year old secondary school girls in groups of five in three schools and six girls in one school. The other two focus group interviews I conducted were with the two community women’s groups presented in the preceding subsections 4.2.1.2 and 4.2.2.2 (See the central research questions and specific interview questions in appendix 4B). One of the women’s groups was from a local community and the other was from the Central Government. For each of the two women groups, I recruited
eight women to participate in the focused group interviews. Therefore, I conducted a total of 14 interviews altogether which included a total of 45 participants.

In-depth interviews were suitable for seeking the views and perceptions of participants based on their experience of the matrons system. Using the interview questions, I was able to probe further in order to understand what they understood in relation to the research problem. Focus group methods were used in this study because they provided the opportunity to observe how individuals’ perceptions were shaped and influenced by the other group members in making sense of the research topic (Thien, 2009).

Each of the individual interviews with school matrons and with School Principals lasted between thirty and sixty minutes. The focus group interviews with the girls and with the women’s groups lasted between sixty and ninety minutes. All data were recorded by audio recording and then transcribed for later use. I also took notes during the interviews. All interviews were conducted in the Swahili language although respondents spoke both in English and Swahili at various points during the interviews. The participants had a chance to listen to the recorded data and were invited to make amendments or elaborate on what they had said before I saved the recorded data. At the transcription stage, I transcribed the interviews into Swahili generating transcripts that maintained the integrity of the participants’ comments. This was done in order to keep the original data sources in the original language in which the data were generated.

During the translation of the transcripts into English, I carried out the translation myself which maximised the potential for retention of meanings. Furthermore, because I am an English language teacher and a native Swahili speaker, it was possible for me to translate the Swahili transcripts into meaningful concepts in English while keeping track of the original meanings retained in the Swahili transcripts. Occasionally, I checked the meaning of sentences I translated, verifying concepts with colleagues who are native speakers of Kiswahili. Additionally, I used the original Swahili transcripts alongside the translated ones in the analysis process in order to keep track of the actual concepts and meaning making in the coding process throughout this stage.

In addition to documents and interviews, reflexive journaling throughout the data gathering phase and during the analysis process was another method that I used in this study. Reflexive journaling is a focus and recording of the effects of researchers’ values, emotions, and perspectives throughout the research process. The process involves the consciousness of
power relations with research participants and how that may affect the research process. Reflexive journaling also entails being aware of the choices and decisions one makes regarding the research topic (Glaser, 1965; Malacrida, 2007). Reflexivity therefore involves the awareness of our “subjective understanding of reality as a basis of thinking” (Cunliffe, 2004, p. 407) and critiquing or examining the impact of our assumptions, values and actions and how all of these affect others in the research process (Cunliffe, 2004).

During the whole process of data gathering and my initial assumptions prior to going into the field, I was aware that I brought certain subjectivities into my interpretation of the field and took note of these. I was very involved throughout, and therefore, the reflexive journal became a source of data and an aid for the analysis of data as well as a means of interrogating my own assumptions and perspectives of the field. In this sense, I was not able to “theorise problems of this study in a detached manner” (Siraj-Blatchford & Siraj-Blatchford, 1997, p. 11) but as part of it.

4.3. Data Analysis Procedures

4.3.1. Thematic analysis

Throughout the analysis, I used a thematic analysis strategy. A thematic analysis process involves searching for and identifying common threads that extend “across an entire or set of interviews” (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013, p. 3). I employed a mixture of data analysis procedures. Firstly, I used NVivo5 mainly for qualitative data management in phase one of the analytical process to be discussed in section 4.3.1.1. Secondly, I manually analysed the data at a later stage.

Thematic analysis was suitable as a flexible method that can be used across a range of epistemologies and research questions. In addition, the method was useful to me because I could use it within “an existing theoretical framework that anchors the analytic claims that are made” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 22). Thematic analysis interpretive power may be limited if not grounded on any theoretical framework. In this case, it was rooted in African transformative feminist and social justice perspectives.

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5 NVivo is one of the commonly used software for management of qualitative data, and qualitative analysis.
In this line, I viewed girls and women participants as the experts of the knowledge they shared given their experience. Also, since it is women and girls who are the centre of my investigation, their perceptions were seen to disrupt traditional ways of knowing especially where they challenged some of the cultural values and traditional practices such as early marriages. For example, they expressed such practices as not being in favour of the female gender’s general wellbeing, even within the existing educational system, and, that the practices were harmful to the socio-economic participation of women in their later lives.

The views that were articulated by the participants created a rich and a systematic understanding of the gendered nature of lives of those girls and women (Johnson & Parry, 2015). Analysing the culture and gendered nature of society created themes to explore with a view to inform and transform, bringing about questions such as, ‘why and how are things the way they are?’ Such questions contribute to the need for understanding the whole concept of equity and fairness between the genders in a broader sense.

The need to address gendered injustices is therefore a matter of social justice. In this sense, my own position as a woman and a former matron, who shares similar experiences to my own participants places me within their agenda. I am sharing the communal agenda for justice but as a spokesperson, advocating for causes and issues that bother those with whom I share the same views through gendered experience (Johnson & Parry, 2015), as an African, a Tanzanian and a woman. In articulating such marginalisation through research, I feel the need to bring to light enduring problems such as a lack of sustainable systemic support in education for girls. The analytical process in the context of this study aimed to shed light, and contribute towards efforts in realising equity in education as well as striving for girls/women social participation in other spheres of life, essentially for the benefit of the entire country.

With this basis, rooting my analysis within feminism and social justice frameworks, my research can be examined and judged by “its authenticity, its fairness, and its ability to provoke transformations and changes in the public and private spheres of everyday life-transformations that speak to the condition of oppression” (Denzin, 1997, p. 275). Feminist scholarship recognises women as the experts of their experience. Moreover, women’s ways of knowing therefore places them and other marginalised groups at the centre of inquiry as is the case in this study. This recognition raises new questions that disrupt traditional ways of knowing to create rich, multifaceted and wholesome ways of understanding the systematic gendered nature of a society (Johnson & Parry, 2015).
In the thematic analysis approach that I developed, I used framework analysis during the first phase and then constant comparison in the second phase as shall be described in the next section. Framework analysis provides a matrix in a form of cases and codes which can be put in rows and columns and summarised in cells (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013; Srivastava & Thomson, 2009). In employing the framework analysis at the first stage, I provided a systematic way of reducing data in order to analyse in detail such as case by case or code by code as suitable at every stage (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009; Vaismoradi et al., 2013). The name, ‘framework analysis’ comes from the thematic frame used to organise data. Framework analysis is therefore an analytical tool that supports key steps in the data management approach but adds one further step identified by Spencer, Ritchie, Ormston, O’Connor, and Barnard (2014) as data summary and display. Thus, I used transcripts translated from Swahili to English in key concepts which formed codes that I placed in rows and columns with sources and contents based on interview questions on one side and responses to specific interview questions asked on the other. Then, I used diagrams instead of cells to summarise and display themes.

Figure 8. Overview of data analysis.
Figure 8 summarises the major stages of the adopted thematic analysis. The main stages were framework analysis and constant comparison analysis. According to Figure 8, the first phase included the translation of data from Kiswahili transcripts into English which were then entered into computer software (i.e., NVivo) for data management and the initial coding process. Based on the interview questions, I used a within and cross-case analysis to generate sub-themes and themes as explained in section 4.3.1.1[i]. In the second phase, I used a constant comparison method as defined and as explained in section 4.3.1.2 [ii]. Constant comparison looked for the relationships between themes drawn from the first phase. In conjunction with the constant comparison method, I employed the affective methods also explained in section 4.4.1[ii] and connected these to my reflexive journal and document analysis in comparing the findings and triangulating the data.

4.3.1.1. First phase of thematic analysis

Initially, I used the transcribed Swahili transcript to code sentences and paragraphs using different coloured marker pens to highlight texts that meaningfully addressed the questions asked for in each case while adding my initial ideas about those codes on the page margins. I did this for each individual question across all the responses against questions that I asked for each case and I worked line by line to translate these sentences and paragraphs into English while doing open coding according to Braun and Clarke (2006). Then, I applied the use of computer software, NVivo which is a type of “computer-assisted qualitative data analysis or (CAQDAS)” (Bryman, 2012, p. 591; Gale et al., 2013) for individual interview data in all the sites and manual coding for focus group interview discussions in all sites. The individual interview data were many. As such, the computer software NVivo provided an effective way to manage data from the eight individual interviews with four heads of schools and four school matrons. However, despite the ability of NVivo software to code data for analysis, I concur with other scholars’ opinions that using computer programmes to retrieve coded segments of data texts can hardly be called analysis other than an essential part of organising data in order to search them (Baškarada, 2014; Ritchie et al., 2013).

Therefore, the NVivo was useful in tracing the usage of words and phrases coded across the data depending on their contextual reference across the data sources. This was because the software speeded up my ability to scan through all the data sources for easy display of the coded texts at a particular node in all of my documents (Bryman, 2012, p. 603). The NVivo
also helped with easy traceability of repeated concepts which I developed manually across the transcripts in my focus groups’ category in order to display the coding stripes. This was to enable the reader to link the conclusions reached in theme development as supporting evidence to the case study process and the original research questions (Bryman, 2012). I analysed the context of the coded concepts and phrases in relation to my research questions, forming sub-themes and themes for further analysis and discussion of the findings.

Following the generation of sub-themes and themes in this phase using computer software for data management, I found it more meaningful to carry on manually because, even though using the software had its strength in data management, it also “carries the danger of the researcher becoming detached from the findings and missing some of the less immediately obvious themes that came out of interviews (such as contradictions within the account of a respondent)” (Bryman, 2012, p. 608). In line with this, I took care of the possible loss of meaning through continuous revisiting in verification of the context of the concepts used in English transcripts as codes from the original Swahili generated transcripts. The manual process helped in refining themes and refining my analysis methods to perceive deeper meaning of the field data, a task I carried out in the second phase of the analysis.

4.3.1.2. Second phase of thematic analysis

At this stage, I looked at the deeper meaning drawn from similarities and/or different views and perceptions across the themes from all data sources and in relation to the research questions as advocated in Boeije (2002). This was a refining stage and I adopted constant comparison with a concept that, “As events are constantly compared with previous events, new topological dimension, as well as new relationships, may be discovered,” according to Goetz and LeCompte (1981, p. 9). I used a constant comparison approach to avoid falling into the pitfall of quantifying data by continuous use of the framework analysis as noted in (Gale et al., 2013). Constant comparison can be defined according to Tesch (1990), cited in Boeije (2002) as:

Forming categories, establishing the boundaries of the categories, assigning the segments to categories, summarizing the content of each category, finding negative evidence, etc. The goal is to discern conceptual similarities, to refine the discriminative power of categories, and to discover patterns. (pp 392-393)
Therefore, constant comparison was useful in organising pieces of data from across the themes to form categories which I compared and contrasted based on a set of criteria that I created in order to discover new patterns.

In line with the thematic analysis frame, I used constant comparison with the aim of capturing important ideas in relation to my overall research questions rather than just having a number of themes to compare as noted by Braun and Clarke (2006). Constant comparison was a suitably complementary method of analysis at this stage where I already identified the themes and needed to look deeper in their relationships, and the meanings they carried in relation to my research questions.

In the process of comparing, I combined the affective methods of data analysis according to Saldaña (2012) as a technique in enriching the understanding of the relationships between the themes drawn from the first phase of data analysis. Affective methods were also suitable in further exploring the “subjective qualities of human experience (e.g., emotions, values, conflicts, judgements) by directly acknowledging and naming those experiences” (Saldaña, 2012, p. 105) in situations where the participants did so. In this way, I was able to further group themes in relation to respondents’ suggestions for transformation in line with the African feminist theoretical framework within transformational feminism (Kitunga & Mbilinyi, 2006, 2009). The inclusion of transformational feminism favoured my quest to inform and transform the use of the matron system in addressing gender issues in line with the study findings.

I applied the affective methods to identify values in relation to culture, such as ways of dressing; and emotion in relation to challenges faced, such as matrons’ expression of how they dealt with difficult challenges that girls face like sexual harassment and abuse. Other affective methods deemed relevant were evaluation in relation to transformational thoughts and suggestions such as participants’ views on improving the matron system to enhance girls’ educational experience; and versus in relation to conflicting values and practices such as dealing with problems of ‘udugu’6 within Tanzanian society, among other conflicts. All of these were suitable in categorising all the themes in this phase. A specific example of themes that were coded in line with evaluation coding processes and which judged the merit and worth (Saldaña, 2012) of the matron system was the overall ‘suggestions for transformation’ by all the participants.

6 All of these are discussed in Chapter Eight.
Sometimes, the data across themes overlapped. In such cases, this combination of constant comparison and the affective methods helped uncover possible underlying meanings to contextual respondents’ data. Because the initial data were analysed within the framework approach, it was easy to trace the respondents’ data in whichever categories needed for further analysis. Doing this was a useful basis for triangulation of data sources for validity based on comparison with findings reported by other researchers. This benefited the realisation of transformational paths in line with the theoretical approach I adopted in support of girls’ educational experience and social participation through the matrons system in government secondary schools across the country.

Therefore, in this phase of data analysis, it was possible to look at the data using all the three data sources. This made it possible to conduct methodological triangulation in ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the findings in phase one. The application of the reflexive journal helped in attaining rigour (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2008; Tobin & Begley, 2004), and in assessing trustworthiness of this research as I adopted Murphy and Yelder’s (2010) example on reflexivity which registered with my methodology as I illustrate further below.

The following Figure 9 shows the positioning of reflexivity at the heart of data source triangulation in ensuring credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability.

![Figure 9. Reflexivity at the heart of data source triangulation. Figure adopted from: Murphy and Yelder (2010p. 66).](image-url)
4.3.2. Reflexivity, trustworthiness and rigour in thematic analysis

Figure 9 above highlights reflexivity at the centre of trustworthiness of this research. This is because reflection directly involved my position as a researcher, who created a data source through reflexive journaling and as an interpreter throughout the analysis process in this inquiry. In addition, I am positioned as an outsider listening to participants’ views and perceptions and as an insider bringing my own experience to the research topic. All of these in turn influenced my own interpretation of the findings and is ethically sound practice in conducting an inquiry. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) “demonstrate how the notion of reflexivity can be used to ensure rigour in qualitative research to reconceptualise ethical practices in research with human participants across the range of research philosophies and methodologies” as indicated in Cannella and Lincoln (2004, p. 7) in their discussion regarding the production of liberatory investigation.

The use of a reflexive journal was a vital and important category of my data source given my experience as a matron in Tanzanian secondary schools, and as a researcher, it meant that I could express my personal experience of the field (Ritchie et al., 2013) as acknowledged within this study approach. Indeed, given the subjective nature of qualitative research, reflexivity established the interpretive nature of my study while shaping both my epistemological and ontological stances. According to Murphy and Yelder (2010), reflexivity is directly embedded within dependability, transferability and credibility of this study, taking on the “circular dynamic process” (p. 66) as I engaged in the entire process of analysing the findings from across the sources.

In that process, there were issues of power relations concerning what I could or could not do as a researcher. I was aware of my professional roles as a teacher and counsellor, especially during the data gathering process. When girl participants voiced sensitive issues that I would have otherwise dealt with, I passed the role to others such as their matrons. All of these in turn shaped the trustworthiness as illustrated by Figure 9 above and as I explain further below.

4.3.2.1. Credibility

At the field, I provided information sheets to my research participants explaining my role as a researcher and as a part of the research in the sense that I had previous experience in the
role of matrons I was researching about. I also used member checks during the data collection process where participants had the opportunity to listen to the recorded interviews in order to provide feedback, to add to or change what they had said during the interview process (Tuckett, 2005). I also provided contacts through which the participants could come back to me any time throughout the four months during field work and after the interviews took place, should there be any change they would wish to make to the data they provided. Finally, a methodological triangulation of data sources was carried out as a means of cross-checking documentary evidence against individual interviews and focus group discussions as well as my field notes to see the relationship of the findings (Murphy & Yelder, 2010; Tuckett, 2005).

4.3.2.2. Transferability

I have provided a thick-description of the characteristics of the research participants showing the criteria used to identify the research sites through figures 6 and 7 in section 4.2 in accordance with Tuckett (2005). He maintains that including the research setting and information about participants, in context data, accompanied by credible interpretation in the thick description, authenticates the generalisability of knowledge (Tuckett, 2005). In addition to the information in figures 8 and 9, the findings, which have included triangulated data, address transferability concerns. However, it is also important to note that case to case transfer is possible when the findings can be used based on the similarity of the described characteristics of the participants such as their socioeconomic backgrounds as well as the nature of the research sites.

In this study context, generalisation to the wider Tanzanian population is not realistic given the wide range of cultural values and geographical locations where some situations allow for better educational experiences than others. However, the unique lived experiences shared by the participants give “impetus, strength and rigour” (Murphy & Yelder, 2010, p. 65) to this study in relation to its focus, aims and objectives, which is to eliminate gender oppressive behaviours, improve the matron system and consequently improve girls educational experience and social participation overall.
4.3.2.3. **Confirmability**

Confirmability is defined as the degree whereby it is possible for others to establish findings (Murphy & Yielder, 2010). In this case, the obtained balance from looking at other documents, raw data and my own field notes established the interpretations. In looking for that balance, my attempt to find evidence to contradict my interpretations (Schwandt, Lincoln, & Guba, 2007) was part of confirming the findings. Through reflexivity, I became aware of individual subjectivity or possible biases, including my own, which in turn guided how I related and interpreted the data to inform my research findings.

4.3.2.4. **Dependability**

Given the associations within the processes involved in this methodology, analysis and discussion in this research, I was able to assess the assumptions I made against the evidence provided. By the use of the raw data, field notes and summaries, as well as theoretical notes in all forms, the emerging theory was apparent, in particular connecting frameworks that informed the interpretation at all stages in support of the knowledge and documentation (Murphy & Yielder, 2010). Together, all of these things revealed the dependability of the work.

4.4. **Research Ethics Considerations**

I was given ethical approval to conduct my study by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee. When I arrived in Tanzania, I used the letter of approval together with the information sheets to contact the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) for permission to approach the schools across the country. The Prime Minister’s Office Rural and Local Governments (PMO-RALG’S), also known in Swahili as–TAMISEMI, central office issued me with permits to conduct research in five regions in Tanzania. Once they had issued the permit, I requested, and was granted, further permits from the Municipal and District Executive Officers to conduct my study in urban and rural schools respectively. At these stages, the education officers in charge used my research information sheet to identify and invite schools within their areas by providing introduction letters to the School Principals in those areas. All the letters of research permits are in the appendices section, [Appendix 1: Research permits].
Before the fieldwork began, I provided information sheets about the study to the participants, [see Appendix 2: Information sheets]. I also provided the consent forms to participants, seeking their consent to participate prior to conducting the interviews as shown in Appendix 3: Consent forms. The consent forms stated that participants were at liberty to withdraw their consent at any point before the completion of the data collection period, which was four months, should they wish to discontinue their participation in this study. Participants’ identities have been kept confidential in this study as have the names of the participating schools.

Consent for participation of secondary school girls under 18 years of age was given by the School Principals rather than by their parents. The reason for this is that in Tanzania, School Principals have the mandate to accept or decline whether their schools can take part in the research. As such, if they give their consent, students who are under the age of 18 years who volunteered to participate are considered to be under the guardianship of the principal. The girls’ role in consenting was to sign consent forms once they agreed to volunteer following our discussion of the information sheets together. However, although I prepared the information sheets and consent forms for parents or legal guardians of participants under the age of 18 years, these became unnecessary because this aspect of the process is delegated to the School Principals – acting in loco parentis – whose consent addressed this concern.

During the dissemination of the information sheets and throughout the data collection period, I made the participants aware that should they wish to have moral support with regard to the sensitive issues they were sharing, they could speak to specific faith-based chaplains for the case of schools. Participants from the women’s groups had community faith-based support depending on their faith or belief systems, should the need arise. However, there were no issues arising from what was shared in need of my direct moral support or referral although in some situations, I informed the matrons to try to be close to the girls given what they shared with me, in order to help them appropriately if need be.

I informed the participants that the published work would be available to the public and for academic purposes. Copies of the executive summary of the study result would be issued free of charge to all the participating institutions for their records and future references, should they require one, and links to the electronic copies would be provided. Finally, I notified all the participating schools and research participants of the availability of one meal arrangement in the information sheets in situations where the need to collect data at certain times of the day required that participants stayed beyond meal times.
The process of seeking authorisation letters to visit schools from the educational offices concerned, and permissions from School Principals as well as from women’s groups were all done in person as I travelled to the offices concerned, or groups in case of women, for negotiations on how to go about each stage. Some of the processes went quickly while others took at least a day or two to process due to the involvement of more than one person in processing the permits. I disseminated all information sheets at least a week before I discussed them with potential participants in order to negotiate the place and time to carry out the interviews. I delivered the permits from Regional and District Education officers to the School Principals in two of the regions. Then, I gave information sheets and consent forms to the School Principals and asked them to help me identify prospective research participants such as the school matrons who in turn assisted in identifying suitable girls to volunteer according to the criteria for this study.

4.5. Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has described the research approach applied in conducting this study which sought the views and perceptions of school matrons, girls, and School Principals in two rural and two urban government mixed gender secondary schools. Other participants were two women’s groups from local and Central Government communities. I have highlighted the methodology and the philosophical approaches employed. A qualitative approach with a case study design was adopted to suit the research aims and the theoretical stances in investigating the influence of matrons on girls’ educational experience and social participation in Tanzanian mixed day government secondary schools. Individual interviews, and focus groups discussions as well as document analysis and reflexive journal were the primary sources of data within the study and the manner of their application was discussed.

The data collection procedure as well as ethical measures undertaken prior to field work were described and the relevant documents attached in the appendices section 11. Data analysis, which was conducted using NVivo as an assistive tool in data management, was illustrated and the manual analysis of the data was explained in phases one and two of the analysis stages. An illustrative figure 8 summarising the analysis stage was given. Two theoretical lenses, which included social justice and African feminism with special mention of the Tanzanian transformational version of feminism are highlighted and interpretivism as an epistemological
position as well as the ontological nature of this study have been discussed. The central role of reflexivity to ensure trustworthiness of this research was illustrated.

The next two Chapters, Five and Six, present the findings from the emerging themes in the study. These findings are based on the analysis of various data sources as identified in this chapter. The presentation of findings captures the following features of the interview data source: the category of participants and the interview type, the location of the interview, and the year the data were collected. For instance, girls from Rural School One are identified as (Girls’ focus group: Rural School One, 2014). Individual interviews are treated as a single voice, and common issues across the same category are presented with reference to participants’ categories. For example, the participants’ categories could be ‘all matrons’ or ‘all School Principals’. Group voices, on the other hand, are not discussed in isolation. I present these according to Smithson (2000) as a single voice in consideration of the interactive nature of the focus group interviews in which issues that are discussed often lead to other issues.

In the course of data analysis four main themes emerged, which are gender and culture, the serious nature of girls’ problems, problems with enactment of malezi, and the lack of resources. Chapter Five presents two of the four main themes – gender and culture, and the serious nature of girls’ problems – which express participants’ views on the barriers to girls’ education in Tanzania. The second findings chapter, Chapter Six, covers the other two main themes: problems with the enactment of malezi, and the lack of resources. It indicates that participants think support for girls is lacking. The third findings chapter, Chapter Seven, synthesises the findings presented in Chapters Five and Six. As a whole, Chapter Seven shows how complex girls’ education is by presenting several contradictions and overlaps between and among themes. It demonstrates how these contradictions are related to girls’ education and indicate potential pathways to transformation if appropriate policies were not only designed, but also implemented.
CHAPTER FIVE: Gender and culture and the serious nature of girls’ problems

5. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the philosophical and methodological approaches that guided my data collection and analysis were presented. I discussed how the research questions shaped the interview questions and described the methods, geographical setting, and the characteristics of the participants. I explained the analysis process and described how I considered the ethical questions and introduced the findings chapters.

The themes presented in this chapter address research sub-questions two and five. In addition, the participants’ responses to the questions included the suggestion to address the challenges within the issues identified. In this regard, their suggestions address research sub-questions six and seven (see appendix 4 for research questions). Based on the overlapping nature of the overall analysed themes, some of the issues illustrated provide answers across a range of questions as evidenced in the next two findings chapters. Figure 10 below provides a summary of key issues found in the themes: gender and culture and the serious nature of girls’ problems.
Figure 10. The summary of key issues found in the themes: ‘Gender and culture’ and ‘the serious nature of girls’ problems’
5.1. Gender and culture

Throughout my interviews with the participants, gender roles and culture were often referred to as important influences on girls’ upbringing in the Tanzanian society. On one hand, several participants noted that the traditional upbringing of girls entails respect for and obedience to elders. Other participants, however, portrayed this traditional upbringing as being under threat because of advancements in technology. For example, easy access to mobile phones, televisions and the internet, gives young people much greater exposure to foreign cultures. In particular, these participants commented on the ways that young girls dress.

On the other hand, the consideration of gender and culture in the traditional upbringing of girls was negatively perceived by the participants in situations where it negatively affects girls’ education. For example, the practice of forcing girls into early marriages reflects traditional gendered expectations that their primary role is being prepared to become future wives. This problem was noted by all the participants who spoke of the time consuming and often, very physically challenging nature of girls’ domestic chores with little or no emphasis on their need for education. The participants spoke of the important influence of parents’ attitudes towards the value of girls’ education over their daughters’ futures. In traditional family environments, parents’ influence over their daughters is expressed in the expectation of early marriage, often following their involvement in the performance of ‘jando na unyago’ – a traditional term that means ‘rites of passage’.

In the international literature, education for girls is recognised as being important for various reasons such as lower infant mortality rates and better health (Lutz & Samir, 2011), but the findings in this study indicate this recognition of girls’ education clashes with some deeply embedded traditional values. In this regard, my findings are consistent with other research of Tanzanian education sector analyses (Daniels, 2015; URT, 2012b). The most commonly identified clashes between gender equity in education and the pressure to maintain culture and traditional practices were revealed by all my participants as affecting girls’ education in most parts of the country. The following sub-sections outline the main issues that emerged within the key theme: gender and culture.
5.1.1. Girls are perceived as family assets

In the course of my fieldwork, most of the participating girls and two of the matrons mentioned that girls are often seen as a source of family income. For instance, a girl from an urban school focus group expressed her shock after holidaying in her rural village. She reported having met girls with children who often had older brothers still attending school, as she said:

...in my own Chagga tribe, [...] girls are seen as source of income to their families. Most of them [...], mere children will tell you they are married and introduce you to their husbands or showing you their own babies. You [...] will find that they have elder brothers who are still schooling [...] Parents do not understand the value of giving a girl an education ... You will hear them saying, “should I educate someone who is going to get married and leave the one who will be staying in the family?” (Girls’ focus group; Urban School One, 2014)

A lack of social awareness regarding the value of girls’ education was perceived by many of the participants as being part of the mind-set of most parents in rural areas. Once girls reach puberty in these villages, they are trained to become future mothers and wives, a duty that brings a dowry to the family. As a result, girls’ time at school is reduced or ended. In many situations, this is a major barrier to girls’ education, as noted by one matron:

There are those traditions, which require keeping girls indoors when they reach puberty, the, ‘Jando na unyago’ or ‘rites of passage’. She is supposed to stay indoors for a period of three months in the case of this region. You will find that a parent removes the girl from school to do that. This means that for all that time, this girl will be missing her education. Moreover, the government regulations concerning this is that when a student misses classes for ninety days, she has naturally terminated herself from school. Therefore, most girls at this age will end up not continuing their education (Matron; Urban School Two, 2014).

In many cases, this leads to parents coercing their daughters into early marriages in the name of culture and tradition. A further example that notes the effects of these cultural and traditional practices on girls was provided by the women’s focus group from the local government as follows:

[...] there are some tribes for instance, when girls reach puberty, [...] they must stay at home for more than one month in order to fulfil the requirement of their culture. Morogoro and Singida regions, have these traditions. Therefore, [...] they are ‘kept indoors’ waiting [...] ‘kuchezeshwa ngoma’ a ‘traditional drum dance’. And what usually follows [...] is men choosing wives for themselves ... sometimes they will report at the school that she is sick. She will be told that it is their culture and has to be honoured, they will tell you, ‘mwacha mila ni mtumwa’ meaning, ‘whoever abandons his culture is a slave.’ (Women’s focus group; Local Government, 2014)
Sometimes, because of the coercion to yield to these traditional practices and the obligation to obey their elders, girls will cooperate with the wishes of parents at the cost of their education. The situation can be very unfortunate if the girl is already pregnant, as one School Principal illustrates:

[...] if you try to help the girl, [...] getting her out of marriage, she threatens to commit suicide so using suicide as a shield against further action. However, if you dig deeper [...] you will find [...] there is coercion of the child into accepting the situation they find themselves; once the person responsible with the pregnancy or the suitor has collaborated with the parents’ arrangements. (School Principals; Rural School Two, 2014)

Where a girl threatens to take her own life, the Head of School states that it is difficult to advise the girl about how to get out of the situation. This leaves teachers feeling very frustrated and unable to help.

5.1.2. The relationship between poverty and cultural practices

The women’s group participants made particular mention of poverty as a contributing factor to cultural practices such as early marriages. The women talked about how some of the parents have schemed with teachers and even some local government authorities and community elders to marry girls off as soon as they complete their primary education. A woman in a local focus group gave a personal account concerning this in the example below:

Culture and tradition is a very big problem right across the Tanzanian society. In case of the Dodoma region, [...] what parents do ..., they divide up the dowry and give some of the village leaders and the councillors so that they can also gain from it. There will be no report or follow-up by the teachers and matrons. [...] it is some kind of business. Some of the parents will take their daughters to the cultural and traditional practices like female genital cutting. That is very common in this region ... and no one will follow up [...]. (Women’s focus group; Local Government, 2014)

The prevalence of these traditions is harmful to girls as illustrated in the above example and this is complicated further by the high expectations that young people will obey their elders. Although obedience to elders generates a culture of submission which is intended to help children learn from their elders, it becomes a problem when the parents’ wishes are contrary to a girl’s wellbeing as evidenced in the next section.
5.1.3. Girls especially are expected to be obedient to elders

Obedience to elders and submission to parental guidance is a dominant traditional practice in almost all cultures across Tanzania. As illustrated in the preceding section 5.1.1, this has, at times, made girls vulnerable by jeopardising their educational advancement and general wellbeing. Hodgson (1996), notes that tensions mount when obedience to the elders is challenged and describes an incident where a girl opposed arranged marriage before the Tanzanian court of law. A matron in Rural School One related the problem of obedience to parents with values attached to girls’ education in her school. This matron describes how some parents threaten their daughters to obey them at the cost of their education:

*In case of this school, I think the parents should acknowledge the importance of the schooling of their children and especially girls. [...] If you observe them, they prefer their children getting married than coming to school. It reaches a time when parents influence [...] these girls to come and say they do not want school. “Tell the teacher you do not want to come to school, I want to get married”. When the parent is gone home, the same student says to you, “He told me to say that I do not want school so that he may not pay my school fees. However, I do want school” I then ask, “why did you not say that is not the case that time?” then she says, “because I said that I wanted school at home and he said to me that if I say so here, he will beat me’. (Matron; Rural School One, 2014)*

On the contrary, disobedience to parents is a source of frustration when this has led to children into danger or to people who groom them to behave in ways that are culturally unacceptable. One matron and both focus groups of women discussed how this can be a problem. One group of women, quoted below, describes:

*Our girls know how to put on make-up without us teaching them how to. In our time, we were respectful and afraid of doing anything without parental consent. It is not so today. We used to threaten boys who tried to advance to us sexually by saying we would report to their parents and they were afraid [...] and stopped. [...] sexual intercourse tools are filling our shops and they can get them whenever they want to. It is in my opinion that technology, internet, televisions and social networks have become an enemy of the family. (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)*

The above illustration goes beyond the lack of obedience to parents to discussions about problems associated with the use of modern technology. Several participants in the women’s group viewed technology as a contributing factor towards the break-down of traditional values, such as obedience to parents. Parents feel the tensions that come from their lack of control over their daughters because of modern lifestyles. The younger generation is perceived as having a sense of independence and an orientation to social and cultural norms that are contrary to their parents’ traditional ways of doing things. This challenges parents and older family members as
is demonstrated in the previous example. Despite these challenges, obedience to parents has more often become an unfortunate negative force to girls’ education in relation to early marriages as further shown in the next section.

5.1.4. Early marriages are often thought to be beneficial

My findings suggest that many of the reasons for early marriages are associated with the economic situation of the families and communities concerned. A focus group of girls in an urban setting illustrates how the Maasai particularly, prefer to keep a large group of livestock, not only as a traditional practice, but also as a valuable asset. This has an impact on girls in such communities as they become a means to a higher social economic status. Therefore, early marriages are preferred over the education of girls as a way of escaping poverty as illustrated below:

*Among the Maasai people, even if their daughter is going to school... once she reaches puberty they stop her[...] because traditionally Maasai people [...] possess... large number of livestock, they know she will increase their livestock and they will just stop her education and get her into a marriage situation. [...] Another thing related to these traditions is poverty. In such communities, a girl needs to be given in marriage in order for the families to get some money or wealth.* (Girls’ focus group; Urban School Two, 2014)

Giving girls away in marriage is how contemporary Maasai increase their flock. They have an oral traditional narrative of their existence as being from those who descended from the sky with the cows and created a pastoralist and partly nomadic way of life (Berntsen, 1976). The Tanzanian Villagisation policy, popularly known as ‘Ujamaa Villages,’ confined this kind of expansion (Ndagala, 1982) as they strongly believe in expanding themselves and their wealth, through traditions of polygamy and being good warriors. The confinement into ‘ujamaa’ villages disrupted these traditional practices, thus instead of fighting neighbouring tribes to conquer land and livestock, giving their girls to early marriage remains a way of maintaining the tradition of both keeping many cows and expanding themselves as a people. For many of these communities, education is not as important as maintaining culture and tradition (Hodgson, 1996). The practice of this aspect of culture where girls’ early marriage is perceived as beneficial to the tribal community can be viewed as a form of sacrifice that girls must make for the sake of other family members. A focus group of girls from one of the rural schools in this study spoke emotionally of this practice, stating that girls’ education is not
considered important. This is because they are often culturally obliged to forgo their own desires and opportunity for an education for the sake of their brothers and as previously noted, to obey parents.

Most parents force their daughters to get married once they see them a bit grown up. They will say, “You must get married”. Opportunities to study are for boys. [...] For instance, when a person decides to marry the girl have more money, parents become attracted to get rich [...] So they will say, “You must get us a big dowry in order to help us here at home”. Sometimes they will tell you that you must get married to help your brother or other siblings get an education. (Girls focus group; Rural School One, 2014)

Apart from the perception of girls as income-generating assets through cultural duties which oblige them to enter into marriage at an early age, boosting the family’s income is also seen as their duty and responsibility. In situations where there are large families to look after, parents are sometimes eager to marry their daughters off in order to reduce financial pressure on the extended kinship network. Fathers, especially, often insist on early marriages. I happened to have a personal encounter with such a family during my field-work where a father of nine children who were between the ages of one month and fourteen years, had already given the first-born girl who was a fourteen years old to marriage soon after completing her primary education. The women’s focus group illustrates this in the following example.

Economic burdens can mean that, parents, especially fathers will force their daughters to get married because of their quest for wealth, better life or feeling that it is a burden to educate a girl. It may reach a point where the father is overwhelmed by a large family; he decides to force a girl to get married before she reaches her educational goals. (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

Forcing girls into early marriages is also associated with parents’ attitudes as they do not see the point of educating a girl who will be getting married young. This also explains how girls are prepared for their gender roles through such expectations by allocating the majority of domestic chores to them as I present in the next section.

5.1.5. Girls are expected to do the majority of domestic chores

The number of domestic chores allocated to girls is related to traditional and cultural practices. Female domestic labour is also evidenced through other cultural practices as noted earlier. The high level of domestic labour performed by girls is directly linked to poor academic performance at school. This is because it deprives them of their private study time and leads to
both physical and mental exhaustion. Both women’s focus groups reported this. I cite one example below:

Another significant challenge to girls is associated with their family responsibilities and domestic chores when they come back from school. [...] she cannot sit down to rest [...] She has to enter the kitchen and help with meal preparations, wash up dishes, assist to bathe siblings if there are any, check there is sufficient water in the house for the whole family use and such things. A boy will go and play football or watch the television...
(Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

In addition, in most situations, before girls leave to go to school they are assigned domestic chores as well as when they return from school. These chores interfere with both their school timetable and their private studies at home. The expectation to do so many domestic chores was reported by both school matrons as having an impact on girls’ education. Below is one lengthy example of a typical domestic scenario, and different ways in which these affect girls’ educational experience:

...For instance, before a girl leave home in the morning to come to school ... She will be required to make sure she has prepared the baby’s porridge, do the dishes, mop the floor, sometimes fetch some water where water is scarce, and even make sure the surrounding area around the home is clean. In such a situation, you will find that this girl will wake up at five in the morning, from then up until seven o’clock will be the time she eventually finishes doing all of the assigned chores. By the time she prepare herself and come to school she will obviously be late. The teacher on duty will be waiting at the school gate getting rid of the latecomers; this student will be a victim of late coming [...] Most of the times she will be given punishment, the nature of punishment might be humiliating and sometimes may mean that she will be getting late to class. In addition, perhaps one or two lesson periods will have elapsed and in any case, she will be tired. This alone is such a challenge for a female student and it has consequences in their educational experience and academic performance in the end. (Matron; Urban School Two, 2014)

As a result of a lack of consideration of the effect of these domestic labour on girls’ education shows they are not expected to perform well academically. The next section illustrates this.

5.1.6. Girls are not adequately educated

The impact of girls’ domestic labour illustrated in the preceding section in itself implies a lack of adequate training in an academic cycle, even where girls do attend schools. There are low expectations for them to actively participate socially in other areas as well. Within the
school context, participants mentioned the selective knowledge girls are expected to possess, and the patronising of their abilities in some subjects by peers and teachers. This too implies they are not expected to participate in some academic related social decisions. One of the girls’ focus groups stated their experience concerning this in the example below:

*Sometimes you have passion and the determination to study, however some male teachers and some of our fellow male students will discourage you. For instance, should a teacher provide a challenging academic task to the class, he may ask, and “who can do this question?” if you try to come forward, you will hear boys saying, “Will you solve that question a mere girl? Leave such to us boys”. These are very common comments in the school environment and they really discourage us girls* (Girls focus group; Urban School Two, 2014)

In line with the way females are treated within the classroom is a lack of priority in equipping and facilitating ward mixed day secondary schools, even though these are the schools that most girls from low socio-economic backgrounds can attend. One of the women’s focus groups pointed this out as a lack of motivation for girls in this category to do science subjects as cited:

*Thinking about our local schools where the very poor parents send their children, sometimes children are not motivated because of lack of science equipment, girls who face other challenges are worse off. The girls should not just be blamed for not opting to do science subjects when they are not supported to do them.* (Women’s focus group; Central Government)

Apart from a lack of academic training or bias against girls in science subjects, girls’ focus groups, women’s focus groups and matrons all pointed out a lack of awareness and a failure by parents to talk to girls about sensitive matters in order to avoid risk of diseases such as HIV/AIDS. In this regard, the women’s groups and one matron pointed out that some cultural values hindered parents from talking to girls about these things. The matron emphasised the importance of parents helping girls by providing common examples from their own marriages when they tolerated domestic abuse because they had not been fully trained to cope with life. The participants in the women’s groups admitted they needed to make girls fully aware of things that could prepare them to cope with sexual relationships that could lead to other serious consequences as cited:

*Sometimes these girls are just ignorant of what is going on around them. This is because of our cultural values, we find it sometimes difficult to be open to our girls and talk to them about sensitive things in life. We, as parents, are generally too shy to talk about things like sexual relationships with our children. We fail to tell our girls how to cope with these situations in order to avoid dangerous incidences when they engage in things*
like sexual intercourse. We fail to make them aware that these things can cause diseases such as HIV/AIDS, pregnancies and that such lead to their discontinuation from school. (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

In addition, one matron commented on the influence of spiritual leaders, teachers and parents in educating students about sexuality. In this regard, the women’s focus groups pointed out that the lack of this education for girls, leads not only to social disadvantage but also to that of the children they are likely to have in the future:

This lack of preparation of a girl educationally at an earlier age is the cause of most domestic violence and abuse. Even when it comes to family planning, a man will decide how many children he wants. Some of the women do not even have family planning education because they just got married after primary education and there is not much exposure to relevant life skills apart from knowing how to write, read and count. They have the knowledge of just the basics and nothing beyond that, they find themselves so naïve and with many children who they cannot look after. (Women’s focus group; Local Government, 2014)

The women’s group participants acknowledged that they are living in a rapidly changing society. This realisation calls for an awareness of these changes and what they mean to people’s general wellbeing. The participants mentioned that some of cultural and traditional practices do not prepare girls to deal with the changing world. As such, girls’ overall social participation is constantly limited.

5.2. The serious nature of girls’ problems

The nature of the problems that face girls in Tanzania reflects a range of issues within and beyond school. The challenges highlighted by the participants are very serious and indeed, sometimes life-threatening. These include sexual harassment from males or/and social others, and teenage pregnancies often leading to the end of a girls’ education, especially those coming from very poor family backgrounds. Distance from school is another difficulty that was identified by all the groups as a major contributing factor to missing classes and heavy punishments. The distance from school may also result in risks, such as rape, if girls pass through unsafe neighbourhoods. In rural areas, encounters with wild animals on their way to and from school was also mentioned as a significant risk by the participating girls. Sanitation during girls’ menstruation period is another challenge for them as there is an economic cost attached to female hygiene products, a situation that is much more serious for girls in rural areas. The following subsections present the main issues within this theme.
5.2.1. The problems facing girls are serious and can be life threatening

The girl participants in rural areas in particular mentioned the lack of transport which forced them to leave home very early in the morning in order to be on time for school. For this reason, they are often in danger of their lives due to the possibility of encountering dangerous wild animals during their long journey to school. Porter et al. (2010), note that this problem is also common in other Sub-Saharan African countries. Sambo, Cleaveland, Ferguson, Lembo, and Simon (2013), have similarly reported the danger of encountering rabid dogs in some Tanzanian communities. Like Porter et al’s (2010) research findings, both girls’ focus group discussions from rural and urban areas commented on the high possibility of encountering life threatening situations on their way to or from school, such as swelling rivers. Examples below illustrate:

You know it is very difficult during the rainy season when rivers are swelling full. Some of us pass through very dodgy corridors on our way to school, at times around 5 or 6 in the morning. You will find hyenas on the way, you can endanger your life on your way to school. (Girls focus group; Rural School One, 2014)

... But you know you cannot start your journey, a mere girl, when it is still dark because you are afraid something might happen to you on the way. (Girls focus group; Rural School Two, 2014)

In addition to the fear associated with long distance travel to and from school, often in the dark, in order to make it to school on time, the girls from Urban School One also reported other dangers, such as rape, as they pass through unsafe neighbourhoods on their way to and from school. They pointed out that a lack of reliable and safe transport to school can lead to encounters with drug users, for example:

They can even rape you and cause you pregnancy or diseases consequently leading to discontinue your education, or even harm you in different ways. (Girls focus group; Urban School One, 2014)

In addition to the problems they reported relating to transport and travelling to and from school, other serious problems were linked to poverty. Such family situations contribute to children involving themselves in dangerous groups and activities like drug abuse or unsafe sexual activities that cause pain, and sometimes death in their families. The same harmful activities bring about economic disadvantages to the entire nation. A women’s focus groups discussed this as illustrated below:
Girls and boys these days get involved in very dangerous groups involved in things like sex, drugs and mostly because of poor family backgrounds. When a family is poor, it fails to provide basic needs. As a result, these children end up with even psychiatric problems associated with drug abuse, some of them put themselves at risk of HIV/AIDS infection. These consequently lead to discontinuation of their schooling. Sometimes, some families have lost their children to death [...], and this has detrimental consequences to the country which loses human resources. (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

The example above indicates much deeper problems associated with widespread poverty in Tanzania. The inability to provide basic needs directly links to young people’s looking for alternative means of survival where the girls sometimes end up being involved in drugs or prostitution as well as risky sexual behaviours. These problems impact on their educational experience, performance and advancement. Other problems reported by participants were associated with sexual harassment by male teachers. The girls and matrons who participated in this study, in particular, mentioned that this problem is mainly associated with the temporary teacher trainees who come for teaching practice in these schools. I provide examples of these problems in the following section.

5.2.2. Sexual harassment from teachers

Problems of sexual harassment from teachers were mentioned by nearly all the groups of girls as being responsible for causing emotional distress to the victims and their families. Even girls who did not necessarily mention it during the group interviews still agreed with the others who spoke about these matters during the focus group interviews. The women’s group participants pointed out that in circumstances where sexual harassment is prevalent, girls cannot fully engage with the teachers’ concerned during their lessons. They also talked about the need for teachers to behave like responsible parents, giving examples where male teachers were known to use their position to sexually abuse girls. They stated these things as cited below.

*Some teachers sexually harass our children, instead of teaching them and helping them, you find them influencing them into having sex with them. [...] When such teachers get into class, the concerned girls cannot pay attention to what they teach [...] they are ruining our girls' future.* (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

The girls, on the other hand, spoke about how sexual harassment is especially prevalent in situations where they face problems with transport to school. Such teachers use their position to take advantage of their situation of living far from school to make life difficult for them. In
such situations, they often give heavy punishments to intimidate girls into accepting their sexual advances. A girls’ focus groups from one rural school illustrates what happens:

**Sometimes you will arrive late to school and the teacher will provide punishment and some of these male teachers will tell you, “you are always late, if you do not want to get punished, you have to be my lover.” Because you do not want to do that, he will have reasons to give you very heavy punishments and that is very difficult. In addition, there are teachers who come for teaching practice. [...] they contribute to spoil students so much. [...] they take advantage to chase after girls and punishing girls who do not accept their sexual advancement. They are a big source of trouble for ruining other people’s daughters. (Girls focus group; Rural School Two, 2014)**

In addition to teachers who take advantage of girls’ problems such as the long distances from school, and the position of temporary trainee teachers who harass them sexually as seen above, some teachers are reported to use their position to rape girls as illustrated below.

**Some teachers [...] might ask you to run some errands at his home. [...] but then he will follow you behind [...] closes the door behind and will tell you, “I am your teacher, you must do as I say.” Therefore, using their authority to force us to have sex with them. If you refuse, he will be punishing you so much [...] for small mistakes. Even if you sit for his exam paper; he can fail you to tempt you into agreeing to have sex with him. (Girls’ focus group; Rural School One, 2014)**

This concern was reported by the women’s focus group’s discussion where they said that teachers should be as responsible parents but instead they sexually harass the girls. The women’s group illustrated how the helpless situation of sexual harassment has far reaching effects in the example below:

**Teachers should be like parents, they need to change. You hear a teacher telling a student, “please go sweep my house, cook oh do for me this and that [...]” Some of these teachers are responsible for getting our girls pregnant. They send these girls to run errands for them and once they are in their homes, they make them wives. There was a case I heard about a male teacher who hid a school girl in his home and made her pregnant. The girl was nowhere to be found by the parents because she was not at school. By the time she was found, the damage was long done and it was too late to help. (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)**

In line with the sense of helplessness associated with sexual harassment and abuse, Lalor (2004) reports that this problem is a result of a perceived decline in morality and neglect of Tanzanian traditions and customs where upbringing and care for children is a community responsibility. These findings evidence such a decline of moral duty even by the professionals, such as teachers, who should protect girls but fail to do so, as reported by the women’s group.
in the example above. According to these findings, the same moral obligation is lacking among social others as illustrated in the next section.

5.2.3. Sexual harassment from others

Sexual harassment is a very common problem for girls in mixed gender day schools. Those who harass them sexually include fellow male students, people they meet to and from school, and even some family members, as was indicated by both girls’ focus groups, women, and one Head of School. Their vulnerability is related to the lack of safe, affordable transport where schools are located far from their homes, as is illustrated in the preceding section. Other reasons include a lack of safe places, such as dormitories and hostels. Poverty and naivety of girls were also given as evident part of what contributes to sexual harassment from others.

In line with problems of distance from school and lack of government-run hostels or boarding facilities within the school environment, girls from Rural School Two illustrated challenges associated with rented accommodation. In these living arrangements, they mentioned that sexual abuse and harassment can lead to them contracting sexually transmitted diseases, getting pregnant, and ending up in the streets:

*When a girl rents, she is very vulnerable [...] and sometimes you may not have money for rent in time due to family financial difficulties. [...] Some of these men or even the landlords where you rent will ask you to have sex with them so that they can let you off paying the rent for a year. However... you risk diseases such as HIV/AIDS and you may fall pregnant. If you have to go home because you are pregnant, your parents will never trust you again. Some parents will even reject and banish you from home, you may end up in the streets.*  (Girls focus group; Rural School Two, 2014)

Furthermore, the risks to girls who live with non-family members, who cannot afford to provide basic needs or simply do not care much about their education, may lead to them falling prey to sexual abuse hence dropping out of school. One Head of School cited an example of a situation of one girl who happened to drop out of school because of such sexual abuse:

*Sometimes we find out that children live with people who are not so keen on their needs, they have no family members sometimes; girls do not even get time for studies in these families let alone get their basic needs. [...] One girl used to live with a woman who brewed alcohol locally. The woman had just one bedroom which she shared with men and this girl [...] She left school and has not come back.*  (School Principal; Urban School Two, 2014)
This example illustrates how serious sexual abuse both physically and psychologically affects girls’ educational experience. In some instances, girls are obliged to use the public service vehicles where the circumstances they find themselves in each day when commuting to school make them vulnerable to sexual harassment. All participants in the girls’ focus groups in rural and urban schools reported this problem. I cite one example from Rural School Two below:

...Because it is not easy to get into the public service vehicles, some people yield to a relationship with the bus conductor or the driver. Because when a girl goes to stand there, they will just say, that is so and so, let her in. Let her come and sit in the front seat. Then, the driver will start telling her all those words “[...] I love you”, and the student will just find it easy to get a ride to school and avoid punishment for being late. (Girls focus group; Rural School Two, 2014)

Besides sexual harassment on the way to and from school, other sexual harassment girls face result from the very nature of their schools as illustrated below:

Because this is a mixed gender secondary school, there is a lot of challenge regarding sexual relationship [...] These things are not allowed and he could be expelled if you report him, or he can decide to beat me, if I refuse when we are not around the school environment. (Girls focus group; Urban School One, 2014)

These examples of the effect of sexual harassment create enormous challenges for girls in their day-to-day school lives. These tensions spread to their wider social, cultural and educational contexts. Other challenges that seriously affect girls’ educational experience cited by every group of participants included teenage pregnancies. I illustrate these in the next section.

5.2.4. Teenage pregnancies and associated problems

All the participants commented on the emotional stress and life-long consequences for both parents and girls from poor social economic backgrounds that is caused by teenage pregnancies. For parents, teenage pregnancies oblige them to meet the costs of paying expensive tuition fees in private schools so that their daughters could continue with their education, if they can afford to do so. The participants in the women’s groups expressed their anger about how the problem of teenage pregnancies is handled, mentioning the biased nature of the penalties that affects girls and their families as opposed to boys and their families. They discussed the associated economic burden that teenage pregnancies brings to girls’ parents, as follows:
Problems associated with teenage pregnancies is very unfairly handled. Sometimes a girl can become pregnant and get terminated from school, however those responsible with her pregnancy are not made responsible in any way. If they are students, they will be continuing their studies [...] sometimes, if they are outsiders, even when they are well known, they are not punished at all [...] they are being covered up instead, to protect them against any legal action while this girl’s future is ruined just like that. (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

One woman in the group cited above gave an account of a personal experience where she mentioned the injustice to girls who become pregnant when they are not married. Contrary to boys’ general lack of responsibility for these pregnancies, she commented that the government also fails to consider the girls’ parents’ economic situation while the boys’ parents are favoured:

The boy should be [...] expelled like the girl and the parents should suffer just like the girl’s parent in looking for an expensive private school [...] because the government schools do not give second chances with pregnancies. And if possible, the boy should be made responsible to help in bringing up the child while he is schooling so that they can experience how difficult it is. These things hurt me because I have experienced them. (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

The participants in the girls’ focus groups noted the unfairness when pregnant girls’ education is discontinued but that of the boys responsible for causing such pregnancies is left untouched. They cited an incident that occurred to one of their fellow students as follows:

There was an incident with one Advanced level student who got a girl in Ordinary level pregnant. [...] Now, someone’s daughter is no longer schooling while he is continuing with his school, he has already spoiled that girl’s life. You know at least at Advanced you have some openings but for this girl, her future life is a total darkness. (Girls’ focus group; Rural School Two, 2014)

Furthermore, the poor socio-economic backgrounds of most of the girls in this study context significantly affects their behaviour when they try to find coping mechanisms to deal with their economic situations. In their naivety as young people, they sometimes end up in serious difficulties. Participants in the women’s focus group from central government reported that because of poverty, most girls end up dropping out of school for lack of basic school needs, and some are given to marriages to much older men.

Most children from poor families do not often have all the basic needs [...] Therefore, they are easily influenced into doing things that are dangerous to them such as early sexual relationships, peer group pressure, often leading them to use drugs, most become pregnant and consequently perform poorly academically. Sometimes they become truants or completely drop out of school with some ending up in early miserable marriages. (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)
Apart from the presented problems such as travelling through dangerous environments and sexual harassment and abuse that sometimes result in teenage pregnancies, there are other serious problems facing girls as we shall see in Chapter Six.

5.3. Chapter Conclusion

This chapter introduced the first two themes that emerged from the data. These themes are: the serious nature of girls’ problems, and gender and culture. The two themes were briefly described and illustrated by extracts from focus group interviews. It is evident from the themes that the problems facing girls are very serious and some are life threatening. The examples provided here show that some of the gender and cultural barriers, such as domestic labour and early marriages for girls, greatly impact on their academic experience. It is also evident that the serious nature of girls’ problems within the school environment is associated with gender and cultural values, and the attitudes to girls’ education in Tanzanian society. This accumulation of problems has a profound effect on girls’ education and has a corresponding impact on their ability to actively participate in the social and economic spheres. In line with these findings, the next chapter present the next two themes namely: the challenges associated with the enactment of malezi and lack of resources.
CHAPTER SIX: The challenges associated with the enactment of malezi, and lack of resources

6. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I identified some of the problems that girls face. In this chapter, I consider the role of matrons and how they deal with these problems. The chapter presents two more of the four main themes emerging from this study namely, the challenges associated with the enactment of malezi and the lack of resources.

The Swahili word malezi literally means ‘upbringing’ and is an important cultural concept in Tanzania. Many participants referred indirectly to the concept of malezi as they discussed the socialisation of girls according to existing cultural and traditional values. However, malezi is a concept that can be interpreted in many different ways. For example, for some participants, malezi was something they associated with counselling and befriending, which requires a slightly different approach than those who saw this in terms of conformity with tradition. Arguably, the multiple meanings or interpretations of malezi are a cause of complexity or contradictions in how matrons’ roles and girls’ education is understood by different groups within Tanzanian society. This chapter focuses on the participants’ perceptions of malezi. Contradictions between these views will be discussed further in Chapter Seven. The two themes presented in this chapter impact each other. In this regard, the lack of resources affects school matrons’ abilities to play their role of implementing appropriate malezi for girls.

Figure 9 is a summary of the key issues within each of the two themes. The participants referred to three key aspects of malezi: the parental function, a cultural bridging function, and educational/professional functions. The lack of resources was expressed in relation to infrastructure, facilities, time, and teacher training. The two themes are presented in the following subsections 6.1 and 6.2 respectively.
Figure 11. Summary of key issues within themes: ‘Challenges associated with the enactment of Malezi’ and ‘Lack of Resources’.

6.1. The challenges associated with the enactment of Malezi

In this section, I discuss the concept of Malezi in the Tanzanian context. I elaborate the nature and complexity of the concept of Malezi according to participants’ views and explain why it has been adopted in this study. Using the participants’ interpretations, I define the concept of Malezi within the Tanzanian social context as ‘a careful act of nurturing children to acquire the expected social-cultural values with respect to the diverse, and the commonly unifying traditional practices existing within the wider society’. Malezi is one of the central concepts of this study. Lexical gaps between the Swahili and English languages concerning the meaning and usage of some words or concepts by the participants made it necessary for me to borrow the Swahili word Malezi and a few others in this thesis. This approach is advocated by Sure, (2002) cited in Tibategeza and du Plessis (2012).

The meaning of mlezi – a noun for the act of nurturing, describes what a school matron is. The act of Malezi is perceived by the participants to be the primary role of the school matrons. At the same time, all the participants identified limitations relating to the matrons’
malezi role. Consequently, participants suggested the ideal component of what would be best practice for a school matron as mlezi (singular) or ‘walezi’ (plural) in helping girls. Overall, the concept of malezi is associated with the view that school matrons act as ‘guardians,’ also referred to within the Tanzanian community as walezi.

In the context of the participating schools in this study, apart from being teachers and role models, matrons act as girls’ counsellors, guardians and custodians. Matrons’ malezi roles are additionally associated with being in loco parentis or in the place of a parent within the school environment. This means that matrons have a responsibility to impart relevant skills and socio-cultural traditional and educational values that are necessary for girls’ participation in society. Although not all participants used the term malezi to describe the matrons’ roles, all of them described a matron as ‘mwalimu mlezi’ meaning a teacher concerned with malezi. This indicates that matrons’ responsibilities include identifying and nurturing girls’ capabilities so that they function and behave as expected in Tanzanian society.

The participants in this study provided numerous examples of what comprises malezi in association with, for example, supervising girls’ hygiene. In addition to these components of malezi, other roles associated with it include: advising, disciplining, counselling and befriending, all of which are perceived to link home and school social cultural values in preparing girls for their future roles.
Figure 12 summarises and condenses how the participants interpreted the concept of malezi. It shows how this idea can be enacted in different ways and for that reason, its challenges. The sub-sections below present the key issues as shown in the above figure.

6.1.1. Cultural bridging: collaborating with parents/guardians, custodianship and advocacy

Cultural bridging involves a collaboration between matrons and parents or guardians where in some instances, matrons play the role of custodians or advocates. However, sometimes they encounter problems associated with gender and culture in this role as the examples in this section will show. It is evident that malezi can be effective where parents do their part of malezi in helping girls understand how to deal with various challenges they are likely to face both at home and at school. The following quotes from girls and women represent a range of views about the nature of malezi. The women’s group participants’ views in the first example provide the Tanzanian women’s/parents’ perspectives on what they generally expect of malezi for girls in the society:
We as parents need to be at the front line to educate our girls; I think in this way, they can cope with many things. They can deal with influences; we must do so early enough to equip them with the need to achieve their goals in life. Where parents are still alive, we should not leave the responsibility solely in the hands of teachers and these matrons. (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

In line with these views, the girls’ focus group from Urban School One shows how matrons, as walezi, play an essential role in socialising them to fit into their respective communities. They show the significance of collaboration between parents and matrons:

Matrons are keen on our personal hygiene and general cleanliness and they emphasize this. They remind us to be respectful so that we can live peacefully in the school community. They eliminate inconsistencies of our behaviour between home and school when they cooperate with our parents and guardian. I have never seen another teacher making such an effort. (Girls focus group; Urban School One, 2014)

The above quotes illustrate the significance of the collaborative nature of malezi that participants perceived and they all considered that these efforts must involve parents, teachers and matrons working together to ensure that girls’ social and educational aspirations are nurtured. Even so, this does not always happen, especially when there is confusion and conflicting guidance between home and school as evidenced in the next two examples. The first quoted below comes from a matron in Urban School One:

We tend to think we are training these children in the right direction and acceptable moral standards as expected by the larger community. [...] However, sometimes we confuse these girls when they get very contradicting guidance from their homes. Although they respect what we tell them as their teachers and guardians here at school, they must respect their parents at home and accept the values instilled in them from home. When they spend time home during the weekends, they learn other values. (Matron; Urban School One, 2014)

The cultural bridging role of matrons through collaboration with parents can be problematic if there is a lack of cooperation and common understanding of action by each party in helping the girls. Women from the central government focus group illustrated how the nature of this problem with malezi occurs within the collaboration continuum as shown below:

A child comes to class with a mobile phone and they are not allowed. When the teacher prohibits this, the parent comments, “That teacher has no money, you know these teachers aren’t well paid and cannot afford such things, which is why he doesn’t want to see you with it.” [...] some parents are such a problem and yet parents have such a big part to play in the moral behaviour of their children, they need to cooperate with the teachers [...] to help these children. (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)
The examples above illustrate some of the problems that matrons face in their work. These problems are complicated because matrons are not the only key players who provide malezi to girls. The nature of challenges they face revolve around the need for balance between their professional roles and the extent to which they can intervene in girls’ affairs depending on the nature of their problems. This is crucial in keeping the boundaries within their share of malezi practice from that which girls bring from home in order to positively influence girls’ educational experience. This is seen as necessary in maintaining respect for girls’ from different social backgrounds. A lack of boundaries around this role makes it more problematic when matrons are in loco parentis as I show in the next-section.

6.1.2. Parental functions: supervision, guardianship, advice giving, and disciplining

All the participants in this study were familiar with the in loco parentis role of matrons. In this role, they supervise and guide. They also advise and discipline girls to ensure their upbringing adheres to social expectations such as respect for elders, for example:

*Her responsibilities are to guide students as well as advise them. Although we have parents at home, they do the same here to ensure we are well brought up at school as well as at home. So that we go according to what is socially expected of us and not just do whatever we like because we can go astray. They look into discipline so that we respect others, our parents as well as the teachers.* (Girls focus group; Rural School Two, 2014)

According to these girls, these roles equate with those played by their parents at home. However, as noted earlier, these roles are difficult to negotiate when parents do not play their part or emphasise the need to respect teachers. When this is the case, matrons’ practice of malezi becomes a dilemma for them. The girls’ in Urban School Two, described their understanding of malezi during the focus group interview. Their description reveal the complex nature of malezi as they highlight a list of functions comprising the matrons’ role. In addition, they indicate their expectations of matrons as advisors about cultural protocols. Hence, to them, a matron as a ‘mlezi’ deals with everything. Her position is to help them deal with challenges within the school environment, and also to deal with the challenges associated with caring for students from diverse family backgrounds, as illustrated below:

*She is a ‘mlezi’. She knows how to help us aside from academically, even psychologically so that we understand things. There are many things going on here at school. We cannot deal with everything on our own; we need their help to remain focused in what we need...* (Girls focus group; Urban School Two, 2014)
to do here at school. [...] You know we meet people with different behaviour, and from different family backgrounds at school. Matrons have the ability to find out how to help or advise us when we encounter challenges because of our differences here. (Girls focus group; Urban School Two, 2014)

The matrons’ parental role is to advise and carry out disciplinary measures as well as to socialise and educate girls about their personal hygiene. Participants in the girls’ focus group above also showed how the matrons implement these things to support them in that capacity:

*In case of our school, girls have meetings with them collectively once every year for guidance and counselling session. The matron and other female teachers talk to us about various things, how to look after ourselves and they advise us on our general hygiene. Regarding the whole idea of ‘malezi’, they are our teachers who teach us other subjects too. They often tell us to be well behaved and that we must not be negatively influenced by imitating bad behaviour. That we should wear decent clothes even when we are not in school. They play a big parental role in that they are the ones who spend most time of the day with us here at school. (Girls focus group; Urban School Two, 2014)*

The above quote indicates that these girls perceive matrons as standing in for their parents and, as well, having an educative role. Furthermore, matrons are expected to act as a cultural bridge between different value systems where they are in the role of guiding girls from diverse cultural backgrounds. Other problems associated with performing a malezi role by the matrons concern difficulties in keeping girls focused in their schooling because of the distractions of being in mixed gender day schools. Large student numbers means that it is difficult to protect girls against sexual relationships with their peers. It is similarly difficult to protect them from this when they interact with people on their way to and from school. The examples below represent similar problems associated with the implementation of malezi by matrons as viewed across the respondents in relation to the nature of schools involved in this study:

*Another thing is that … we do not know what happens in between school and home; even within the school itself some of the time it is not easy to understand what they go through all the time. [...] There are too many students and the school is too big. It is mixed in every way, in terms of education and gender-wise. (Matron; Rural School Two, 2014)*

These examples show the constraints on the matrons’ roles. These cause frustrations from not knowing what happens to girls between school and home, what they may be going through without the courage to bring it to the attention of matrons for help if and when needed. The example above indicates a sense of helplessness for both matrons and the girls. In addition, there is evidence of peer groups’ influence leading to truancy which may lead to dropping out of schools and the difficulty of effecting discipline of girls. This is complicated by all sorts of
things going on in the environment in which they interact on a daily basis. The quote below illustrates:

They also have groups of all sorts. Therefore, some of the reasons for coming late to school or truancy is not easy to know; we do not even know the kind of people they meet every day. [...] their discipline depends a lot on the influence around them and from the environment surrounding them. (Matron; Rural School Two, 2014)

This example furthers an understanding of the overlap between what matrons need to deal with both within and out of the school environment. This extends to show the complex relationship between problems associated with parental function and the professional role of matrons as educators. Concerning the professional role of matrons, participants throughout the findings identified the educational and psychological help aspects of malezi. In the next section, I provide illustrations related to matrons’ roles that incline more towards educational and/or professional functions.

6.1.3. Educational/professional functions: teaching, counselling, health education

The educational and professional functions of matrons were presented as being problematic by the participants. However, their views suggest that these roles are essential and desirable in improving girls’ educational experience. The connection between the need for educational malezi and lack of resources is illustrated in the following representative examples from girls’ and women’s focus groups. The example below indicates that girls have numerous problems that they face as a result of unskilled matrons lacking the time needed to fulfil educational malezi within the school environment. The girls’ view is:

It would be good to have matrons who come daily to teach us non-school subjects. [...] They should be teaching us frequently not just once a year. There should be more life skills lessons offered by them, skills to personal studies and be close to us in comparison to other teachers. There should be a specific subject allocated a lesson period for matron to come and teach just like we have religion programmes, it should be added. (Girls focus group; Urban School One, 2014)

However, it is perhaps a little unreasonable to expect untrained matrons to fulfil the demands of the girls as cited above. In emphasising the need to have matrons attending to their special needs within the school environment, the girls in this particular focus group also
suggested that matrons have fewer responsibilities in order to have more time to attend to those needs as cited below:

*I think they should be given fewer responsibilities around the school so that they can be more attentive to girls’ needs. For instance in some boarding schools, a matron does not teach; her main responsibility is to look after girls.* (Girls focus group; Urban School One, 2014)

Similar to the first example, it is not possible to imagine how matrons can perform educational/professional roles, even if they have fewer responsibilities. In relation to girls’ needs within the school environment, the women’s group participants mentioned that they preferred matron-teachers who are not also classroom teachers. They gave reasons for the need to train matrons while emphasising the significance of reducing their workload in order to implement only malezi in helping girls educationally, particularly day scholars as cited below:

*They should be identified as specifically matrons who are not responsible for other teaching roles. This is because more often you will find her busy with classroom periods, supervise students’ disciplinary matters. It becomes difficult especially in government day schools to be effective both ways. [...] even for those government schools with hostels and boarding facilities, matrons base mostly to help girls who board and most day scholars are much neglected without a matron leaving them with no such support.* (Women’s focus group; Local Government, 2014)

The lack of training, particularly with regard to malezi practice, overlaps with problems with resources. The participants’ explained that educational malezi are not facilitated to suit the needs of girls. This indicates a confusion between how girls should be educated within cultural malezi or educational counselling as further presented in Chapter Seven section 7.2.2.

Despite the complex nature of the presented challenges to the matrons in performing their malezi roles, the participants in the girls’ groups used Swahili proverbs and sayings that they thought described their perceptions of their matrons. These sayings conveyed the meanings of how deeply girls appreciated guidance and counselling in education from matrons as their walezi as also shown in Table 1 down below. Many examples were similar across different focus groups of girls but I will illustrate using one proverb from each of the four girls’ focus groups. Therefore, in response to the specific group interview question number 3.8 in Appendix 4B that asked, ‘*which proverb, saying, idiomatic expressions or narrative can you use to best describe your experience of your school matron?’* The girls’ responses were numerous and came from each individual girl, and sometimes they expressed their appreciation in more than one proverb or saying. Below are the few cited highlights in the following table 1.
### Table 1

**Girls’ Appreciation of the Role of Matrons**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girls’ focus group</th>
<th>Swahili proverbs</th>
<th>Own-translation</th>
<th>Girls’ illustration of the meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural School One</td>
<td><em>Asiyesikia la mkwu, huvunjika guu.</em></td>
<td>Whoever ignores an elder’s advice breaks his/her own leg.</td>
<td>If there was no matron, girls would be making their own decisions. If they make wrong ones, they could end up in serious problems even leading to suspension or expulsion from school. However, whenever we heed the matron’s advice, we are safe from losing the benefits of our education if we are able to complete school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural School Two</td>
<td><em>Samaki mkunjie, angali mbichi.</em></td>
<td>Bend the fish while it’s still fresh.</td>
<td>We are still young and naïve in life experience and matrons guide us to reach our educational goals before we end up making mistakes that are harmful to our education. If we become adults, it may be too late to help us complete our education because of many distractions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban School One</td>
<td><em>Haba na haba, hujaza kibaba.</em></td>
<td>Little by little, the measure fills up.</td>
<td>It is not only parents who are expected to nurture us students. There must be cooperation between the government, teachers and parents. In the same way, the matrons’ advice, guidance and counselling joined with our efforts as students, together lead to our educational success here at school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban School Two</td>
<td><em>Ushikwapo, shikamana!</em></td>
<td>When you are held for your own safety, hold tight!</td>
<td>Some of our classmates did not get upgraded to form four because they lost focus of why we are in school. Those of us who were corrected and listened have left some of our friends a grade behind. Matrons help us focus by reminding us all the time, to focus on our studies. If they keep following you, don’t say they are boring you, you need to cooperate because they have been where we are now.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2. Lack of Resources

This section presents the theme; Lack of resources is presented. I have divided this theme into four sub-categories namely: infrastructure, facilities, time and training. The lack of infrastructure refers to the absence of guidelines for the matrons’ malezi role on one hand, and shortage of transport to travel to and from schools on the other hand. In addition, I discuss the low socio economic status of most families and the need for better living conditions, school fees and lamp fuel during personal study or homework for many girls. The problems are especially acute in rural villages.

In addition, the participants identified problems with the lack of time to implement malezi for girls and the impact of staff shortage. In many schools, matrons care for a large number of students and this reduces their effectiveness. This affects the girls whose needs are left unmet. At the same time, lack of time to implement malezi causes both lack of accountability and motivation by the matrons who incline more towards fulfilling their primary role of teaching. The identified lack of resources is summarised in Figure 13 below.

Figure 13. The key issues within ‘Lack of resources’.
6.2.1. Infrastructure

School infrastructure is important. It is the foundation upon which the resources available can be utilised. The absence of a clear and transparent infrastructure creates many problems as is discussed below.

6.2.1.1. Lack of useful and specific guidelines for matrons

The School Principal participants in this study commented on the absence of job descriptions and guidelines for matrons. They noted that malezi is associated with matrons’ roles in the old official guidelines that heads of schools use to appoint members of staff for different roles within their school. While one School Principal found this a helpful guide in the appointment process of school matrons, he reports that it does not address specific or the more current challenges facing girls.

There is the Head of School’s guideline although it is such an old guideline of (the 1970s) it does not really have a specific guide on ... guidance and counselling [...]. However, there is something called ‘malezi’ which can be translated as ‘upbringing’ in English. Therefore, if you asked me about a guideline from the Ministry other than the Head Teacher’s guide, there is no such document. Although [...] things are now changing a lot, there is nothing available in a way of guideline to accommodate such changes. (School Principal; Rural School Two, 2014)

The School Principal in Rural School One, on the other hand, said there were no such guidelines concerning the matron’s role:

We just appoint as we think appropriate. I have never seen specific books to help. There are no guidelines. Sometimes out of personal interest, one can purchase any book that is relevant to counselling. (School Principal; Rural School One, 2014)

The head of Urban School One also said there is a lack of specific guidelines. He noted the traditional reason for appointing matrons was a result of boundaries defining girls’ or boys’ only boarding schools. According to him, the reasons for having matrons was inclined more to the fact that there were girls in the school. There was no further evidence in showing how matrons’ presence was relevant to supporting their educational experience. Hence, he stated that he was not aware of the existence of any guidelines to that effect:

...I have not come across any. Speaking of the context of our school, this was originally a boys’ only school. However, if there was a guideline for getting a patron, I never was aware of that. Nevertheless, even when girls were first enrolled at the school, they were just brought, and because we had them, a matron was introduced [...]. However,
concerning a particular guideline, I am not sure there is any. (School Principal; Urban School One, 2014)

The lack of clear guidelines for matrons makes their role of malezi ambiguous and often undervalued and unrecognised as one matron said:

*I do not even have a job description. [...] Other teachers have guidelines, the discipline teacher has one, and the classroom teacher has one, Physical education teacher the same, academic teacher and so on, but a matron. I was just told to be a matron whatever it means is up to me I suppose (Laughs).* (Matron; Rural School One, 2014)

These examples show that the institution of malezi does not usually take into consideration the unique problems facing girls in mixed gender day schools since the Heads of School guidelines were not produced with such mixed gendered schools’ needs in mind. This creates confusion, not only for the matrons, but also for the School Principals who have the task of appointing school matrons. One School Principal illustrates how the lack of specific guidelines for school matrons are dealt with.

*You know, long ago, they considered malezi and ‘counselling’ to mean the same thing. Apparently, these are two different things. Because when we talk about malezi we are dealing mostly with disciplinary issues [...] however, counselling elements might be present but not as it is today. In today’s guidance and counselling unit as we know it, the teacher must be friendly and very close to listen to the students so they can figure out their problems. Malezi is what matrons do essentially from looking at the School Principal’s guidelines because that is what we use to appoint them although some elements of counselling is there in what they do.* (School Principal; Rural School Two, 2014)

Matrons, on the other hand, illustrated how their role is expected to be part of the school system in helping girls. One matron spoke of her own experience during her schooling days when matrons had little understanding of what their roles entailed.

*Most matrons do not even know their responsibilities, and I am one of such, I do not know what I should actually be doing. We are just told, “You will be counselling these girls”. It is up to you to reflect back on your school days and think, “what did our matron actually do? [Laughs], was she just advising us? Or counselling or what?” You recall how she used to say, “do not be deceived by these boys, concentrate on your studies.” I apply the same thinking. I remember how she used to sit and talk with us under the tree before we closed the school to go back home. When we come from home at the end of our school term vacation, she conducted and organised pregnancy tests for girls, yes like that. I just recall. In addition, she emphasized our personal hygiene as well the general cleanliness of our surroundings. She would tell us, “Make sure you are clean”, and such*
things. Other than that, [...] you just think of any useful thing to do. (Matron; Rural School One, 2014)

The examples above illustrate the ambiguity associated with the role of matrons, whether it is offering malezi or whether it is guidance and counselling. In the next section, I discuss issues relating to a lack of resources, poverty and the challenges in connection with the malezi role.

6.2.1.2. Lack of safe transport to and from school

Another serious problem facing day secondary school girls, as discussed previously, is the lack of safe transport. In the following example, members of the focus group of the local government women’s group spoke of the dangers of living far from school in unsafe accommodation. In these circumstances, there are many dangers that girls must face.

Sometimes [...] the school is located far away from home and sometimes even “daladala” (a common term in Swahili used within the Tanzanian context for public service vehicles) is not there. In my own case, I used to walk about seven kilometres to and from school. You are obliged to stay in ghetto housing in order to be close to school. However, there are many temptations in a ghetto, if parents are poor, it means they cannot provide all your needs to sustain you there. Sometimes [...] if you happen to meet a man who just “beeps” telling you they can provide your needs, you tend to accept their advances [...] pregnancy follows quickly, and then expulsion from school. (Women’s focus group; Local Government, 2014)

When girls are physically or sexually assaulted on the way to school, matrons need to act quickly. Schools need private counselling rooms where girls can be given care and support. Alongside the necessity of safe transport to and from school, all participants viewed the need for good working conditions for matrons as important. I illustrate this in the next section.

6.2.2. Facilities

A range of school facilities are needed for girls. The following needs were identified:
6.2.2.1. Counselling rooms/office space and health-related activities for matrons

Widespread and entrenched poverty in Tanzania means that the kind of schools where many families send their children are likely to be government secondary schools where tuition fees are minimal in comparison with private schools. However, these schools are often poorly resourced. There are usually few or no private spaces to talk in the very under-resourced day government secondary schools in Tanzania and girls cannot get appropriate emotional support to help them cope with the many challenges they face. One matron in Urban School Two stated that she sits with girls under a tree, but also points out that everyone else can see them so there is no confidentiality or privacy. In addition, one School Principal commented:

Another thing is that there is no counselling room. Where to talk with individual girls when they have problems. There is no room to do that. (School Principal; Rural School One, 2014)

Other than the lack of counselling rooms, there is also a lack of sanitation facilities, as elaborated below.

6.2.2.2. Lack of sanitation

Most of the participants noted that many schools do not have water. It is worth noting here that the establishment of ward schools was primarily to deal with the lack of access to secondary education by the majority of Tanzanian poor, especially in rural areas. However, the lack of clean running water in most schools compromises the commitment to educate the poor. A lack of water limits girls’ comfort and dignity while at school, especially when they are menstruating. The example given by the women’s group below illustrates this aspect:

You will sometimes find that the school does not have electricity or water supply and sometimes transport. In cases where the school does not have a water supply, it is very difficult for female teachers and girls. There should be electricity for private studies in case of girls staying in the school hostels. Poor school infrastructure heavily affect educational experience of students. (Women’s focus group; Local Government, 2014)

Most students who are enrolled in government mixed day schools live in poverty. Poor school infrastructure often means that sanitation facilities are inadequate and some offer none of these facilities. As a result, a few girls will bring this up as a reason for not attending school because it is also associated with personal dignity and privacy as illustrated in the following
examples. The first example was given by a very poorly resourced urban ward secondary school where even the School Principal did not have a suitable office space:

Some girls [...] dropped out of school because of poverty. [...] Because of this reality, we really need sanitary towels for girls who are poor, but you find that in our schools, even incinerators are not available. So, even if they provide such facilities for girls, where will we store them? (School Principal; Urban School Two, 2014)

Poverty is not restricted to rural areas. In the following example, members of the women’s focus group discussion described in detail how the lack of sanitation facilities affected girls’ school attendance and consequently their overall educational experience. They perceived extreme poverty to be part of this problem where parents were unable to meet many of the needs of their daughters:

Poverty is to be blamed mostly [...] when a parent cannot fulfil various basic needs, and you know, students, especially girls, have many needs, because there are the extra four days when they are in their menstruation period. You then find that a girl does not have the necessary equipment to keep herself clean. That means she may lack concentration while in the class during this time because she is worried she might soil herself because she has no sanitary towels. In some of the instances, some girls will decide to miss classes for four days because parents cannot afford to provide these sanitary towels to help keep them clean while at school. (Women’s focus group; Local Government, 2014)

Members of the women’s focus group from central government, on the other hand, illustrated how lack of sanitation facilities for girls affects them in the classroom setting as cited below:

Another problem is biological in nature, [...] You will find them afraid of standing up to answer a question in the classroom for fear that they have perhaps soiled themselves and may be male students will see that. (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

From the above examples, it is clear that a lack of sanitation facilities hinders girls from effectively participating in education. This starts with their concentration in the classroom, and can lead to their not attending school. As stated earlier, only a few girls will speak of not having sanitary pads as a reason for not attending school as it is also associated with personal dignity, and even family dignity. That means that the problem is not given proper attention by the education authorities. Women’s focus group participants explained the consequences for the future social roles of such girls as cited below:

Most parents have no income or have very low incomes. They fail to send their children to higher levels of education. As a result, this has a very bad effect on girls who end up getting married at a young age. They decide to work in bars and restaurants as bar maids
or even as sex-workers, their opportunity for better lives is denied. (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

6.2.2.3. Lack of boarding facilities

Every group of participants had something to say about how the availability of girls’ boarding facilities could solve numerous problems discussed in the previous sections. I cite one representative example regarding the lack of boarding facilities in the following quote:

This lack of boarding facilities is a source of many challenges facing day secondary school girls. This is the reason they encounter bad influences to and from school as they encounter many things along the way. They meet boys and men and business men, and public service vehicles’ drivers and conductors as well as motorcyclists telling them all sorts of things. Things like, “you look thirsty […] can I buy you a soda?” Therefore, they meet such challenges. If there were enough boarding facilities, these girls could be under the guardianship and care of a school matron within the school. (Matron; Urban School One, 2014)

In addition to the lack of necessary resources in schools, a lack of motivation of matrons/teachers is cited by all participants as a great limiting factor in implementing malezi. This is perceived as an additional hindrance to improving girls’ educational experience even if they overcame other barriers to their education. Because of poor resourcing, even the quality of teaching is identified as being poor with some of the teachers’ living standards and upgrading perceived to contribute to lack of teachers’ motivation. As a result, these things together complicate the problems facing girls. I illustrate this in the next sub-section.

6.2.2.4. Lack of motivation of matrons/teachers

Members of the focus group of women from central government commented about poor living standards and low wages in Tanzania. They mentioned problems that some teachers experience in remote districts. These include travel and accommodation costs in areas where banks are far away as cited below:

I need to mention the importance of improving the teachers’ standards of living as a way of motivating them. Their salaries are very small and still there are deductions made on the small salaries besides being paid very late. Some of the teachers live in remote places where they teach. They have high transport costs to get their salaries […] wandering
about in the town centres spending nights in guest houses where you will also find many things. (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

Aside from the problems noted in the above example, a teachers’ motivation to perform their duties is perceived to be complicated by problems with teachers’ promotion. Where promotions happen, it is often followed by a delayed payment of their arrears. The women’s group participants noted that these kind of problems are demotivating for the teachers’ morale to perform their duties as cited below:

The teachers are not even promoted in time, some of them stay at the same salary scale for many years and when they eventually get promoted, the arrears are not paid in time. These things discourage and kill the morale of teachers let alone those with additional roles like matrons. She will not be motivated to teach or help girls when at the same time her family is suffering. She cannot even fend for herself, the enthusiasm for teaching is completely destroyed. (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

It is worth noting that a matron’s role is usually an addition to her teaching, a role that they are not paid to perform, and they volunteer to help out. Therefore, given the above example, a lack of proper consideration by the government to support their professional role of teaching leaves them much more demotivated to implement malezi for girls. The combination of problems with resourcing discussed in this chapter contributes to the difficulty in implementing malezi for girls.

6.2.3. Lack of time

6.2.3.1. Inadequate teachers/matron in relation to schools, and student numbers

Participants report the effect of teacher shortages and the relationship this has with lack of other resources, such as text books, poor infrastructure in ward schools. The end point is poor quality of teaching, not only for girls but for boys as well. I use two quotes in the following examples to illustrate this issue:

The lack of teachers and even of matrons is a big challenge in our government day schools. They are often few and there are no books, infrastructure is poor or completely lacking in some schools especially in our ward schools. As a result even teaching quality is poor; all of these affect our girls and even boys’ academic performance. (Women’s focus group; central government, 2014)
Furthermore, the nationwide teacher shortage leaves girls in a much worse situation compared to boys especially when matrons are not available in a school. The situation is exacerbated in government mixed gender secondary schools because the existing problems of resources are not addressed, and the platform to voice these is non-existent where there is a lack or complete absence of school matrons. In addition to these problems, the participants reported problems of large student numbers that the matron cannot adequately serve:

Another thing is the high student numbers cared for by only one matron. At least if they were around forty to fifty per class, she could even know them by names but they are far more students as you can see. I have nine hundred and eighty five students. Only one hundred and eighty six are ‘A’ level and the rest are ‘O’ level and day scholar. Among the day scholars, sometimes up to fifty of them might miss school at once sometimes for as long as one month without a teacher’s or matron’s knowledge. (School Principal; Rural School Two, 2014)

In addition to this, some members of the girls’ focus group discussion stated that where possible, there should be many matrons. One girl used a Swahili proverb, “Ngoja ngoja huumiza matumbo” (Girls focus group: Rural School One, 2014) –meaning, waiting too long hurts the stomachs, a metaphorical expression of the possible devastations that might be, whenever the matrons’ help is not timely. Another illustration was from girls’ focus group in urban area as indicated below.

I think these ‘malezi’ teachers should be many at least five in a school because there are emergency cases for both the teacher and the girls. Because the current situation, just one who has to teach and look after us. (Girls focus group; Urban School One, 2014)

The above examples are an indication of the need to have more than one matron in their schools to match student numbers, and are illustrations of both staffing shortages and the issue of high workloads. The girls discussed the impact this situation has on the matrons’ ability to focus on the academic progress of students and other matters that affect girls’ wellbeing within the school. These examples indicate that matrons cannot focus on malezi when their primary role is that of classroom teaching. As such, there is a lack of motivation to fully implement malezi. This means minimal support for girls for a better educational experience within and outside the classroom. Furthermore, a large number of students versus few teachers and matrons results in a lack of time to perform malezi as further illustrated in the next section.
6.2.3.2. Lack of time allocation for matrons to perform malezi

The fact that the malezi role of matrons is performed by teachers is seen as a problem in itself by the participants. The few available matrons lack the time to effectively concentrate on malezi for girls. This is because there is no time scheduled into the school timetables, where matrons can attend to girls’ needs. The quote below illustrates:

"It is a heavy burden, very heavy; I can just about do both but I am inadequate in both at the same time. In reality, I will focus on my teaching rather than ‘malezi’ [...]. Because my classes and lesson periods are always there waiting for me, I have to attend to these and if I don’t, I will be accountable to provide an explanation [...] why I did not teach a particular class. As a matron, I can easily tell these children to see me later whenever [...] Moreover, none will ask me why I did that. However, it will affect them personally depending on the nature of problems they may be facing at the time. In that sense, I find myself always based on teaching role than that of being a matron. Therefore, it is difficult to balance these as it is." (Matron; Urban School One, 2014)

In addition to the above account, a lack of time for matrons to perform malezi is further complicated by the disproportional number of matrons against student numbers. This means that matrons often ask for help from other teachers.

"It is because of lack of time that sometimes we prefer to talk to them as a group. However, we understand that we need to talk to them considering their different levels of understanding for example, their age groups, their class and sometimes nature of problems faced. For instance, it is not possible to address a Form One the way you address a Form Five. [...] time deficit limits the possibility of talking even to a whole class of form one today and tomorrow Form Five! That availability of time is not guaranteed when all other things are also competing for the same time. You are only one matron because all these other teachers have their own timetables, you cannot ask them every now and again to do that either." (Matron; Rural School Two, 2014)

The school matron quoted above points out this time deficit and the difficulty associated with trying to seek help from the rest of the teaching staff. The time and skills deficit is also evident in situations where an understanding of the various individual needs of diverse students is needed as discussed in the next section.

6.2.4. Lack of training for matrons

All the participants pointed to the necessity for formal training for matrons. The women’s focus group participants from central government, for instance, associated the need to train matrons with their accountability in the role. According to them, the training of matrons should
equip them with the skills they need to effectively do what they are called upon to do. Despite the significant roles that matrons play, they are not formally trained for such roles other than the training as teachers with components of guidance and counselling in the teacher training syllabus. One Head of School illustrates the process of appointing school matrons regardless of lack of training, which indicates a lack of value for the role:

*What we do here, we just look at the teacher’s experience, maybe if our school was a girls’ only training could have been given more consideration. There is no matron appointed by the government. Nobody comes here that is employed as such.* (School Principal; Urban School One, 2014)

There is a lack of value placed on matrons, and a few or no professional development opportunities. The government leaves the responsibility of running the matron system entirely in the hands of School Principals:

*The Heads of Schools in this region were called for a workshop called, “Family life Education.” It involved making us aware and providing us with essential knowledge of a child’s family life which is necessary in bringing them up when they are at school. This was in 2007. It was then that we were asked to make sure as School Principals when we get back to our schools to establish counselling departments in our schools.* (School Principal; Rural School Two, 2014)

The above example shows that there have been initiatives to establish counselling departments in schools. However, the information rendered in the seminars such as cited cannot benefit the implementation of malezi by the matrons. This is because, such seminars cited do not involve matrons who are primarily responsible for implementing the initiatives within the established counselling units. This is evident because although the example was a 2007 government initiative, participants reported a lack of training of matrons to date. In addition to the lack of training, some government mixed day schools do not have school matrons and sometimes where they exist, student numbers outweigh them as noted earlier in this chapter.

### 6.3. Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has explored the themes of challenges associated with the enactment of malezi and lack of resources. The role of matron as malezi is a challenging one but was perceived as significant by all the participants. However, it is also evident that although the matrons’ role of malezi is to improve girls’ educational experience, the poor resourcing of government secondary schools creates problems. The lack of matrons in some schools, the lack
of sanitary facilities, and the lack of professional training for matrons restricts in performing their duties. I discuss the contradictions that emerge as a result of these problems in the next chapter.
CHAPTER SEVEN: Conflicts and transformation: A discussion of key themes

‘Ukiona vyaelea, vimeundwa’ – meaning, ‘Vessels are built before they can float’.

7. Introduction

This chapter explores the ideas on what it takes to succeed by giving voice to the participants who believe that transformation and change are both possible and desirable. This chapter has two sections. The first section shows how all four key themes interact, often in contradictory ways, to further complicate the girls’ situation. In this first section I bring together the themes analysed in Chapters Five and Six, namely, the challenges associated with the enactment of malezi, the serious nature of girls’ problems, gender and culture and lack of resources. The second section shows that participants are not without hope and outlines their suggestions for transformation. These include: the significance of political will in the provision of necessary resources for girls’ education; the need for social attitude towards change concerning the value of girls’ education; and the need for training matrons in support of girls’ education.

At the same time it was evident that the participants’ suggestions for transformation included a sense of helplessness in relation to the need to change some cultural values, attitudes and practices that the participants thought devalued girls’ education. Their suggestions particularly focussed on teenage pregnancy, which they viewed as an excuse to exclude girls from further education. As such, they sought systemic and political/government supported change to re-write policies for the employment, role and responsibilities of the matrons. The next section provides the brief overview of the relationship between major themes in Figure 14.

7.1. The Relationship between Major Themes

This section presents the relationship between the major themes that emerged in the data analysis phase of my research and the conflicts that emerged between themes. This relationship contributes to an understanding of the conflicts that lead to the problems facing girls. For
example, the presence or lack of malezi determines the extent and quality of psycho-social support girls are able to access. However, malezi provision by matrons and parents is significantly influenced by the resources that are available, such as the necessary skills and time needed to look after young girls. It also depends on the availability of resources to meet girls’ basic needs and other necessities that affect their educational engagement.

Figure 14. The relationships between the major themes and the emerging conflicts.

Figure 14 illustrates the complex interactions between the major themes in this study and the conflicts that emerge in schools and communities which have a major impact on girls’ access to, and experience of education, as discussed below.
7.2. Emerging conflicts between themes

Various factors create a series of conflicts for girls in Tanzania. These include heavy cultural expectations and obligations on females and the desire for education, and the confusion about how girls should be educated in relation to cultural malezi or educational counselling. In addition, the participants had different views about the usefulness of education for girls. The aim of this section is to explore the complex nature of these conflicts, the ways in which they overlap and how they affect girls’ educational experience and social opportunities.

The participants spoke of limited government involvement in providing the support and resources needed for girls’ education in mixed gender government day schools. This complication is related to the fact that the majority of children attending government mixed day schools come from poor families. As such, there is a consistent interplay between girls’ immediate economic needs, the existing gendered power relations in patriarchal societies, and the significance of schooling over long-term economic benefits.

Immediate economic needs are traditionally fulfilled through cultural practices where girls are brought up with expectations to fulfil gendered roles. This creates conflicting values competing with the education for girls. Participants identified practices such as giving girls away to early marriage in exchange for a dowry as being favoured over their education. In such situations, families who must choose between educating a son or a daughter are often more inclined to educate a boy. In situations where girls are unwilling to yield to a call for early marriage in favour of education, this causes pressure on both the families concerned. In circumstances where parents understand the value of educating their daughters, there are frequently financial challenges in meeting the cost of girls’ education.

The participants also commented extensively on cultural values and practices which linked to the traditional means of livelihood in many tribal societies in Tanzania. These traditions come into direct opposition with the very purpose as to why the government established the ward schools under the Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP). The aim of the SEDP was to improve access to secondary education for every child (MoEVT, 2010). This is an aim that is supposed to increase the social participation of every member of the society. However, the tendency to bring up girls to fulfil the traditional cultural and gendered roles, and a lack of support through education contradicts this aim and further questions the
processes leading towards its achievement. The following sub-sections illustrate these existing contradictions/conflicts using some examples from participants’ data. In presenting these conflicts, I summarise how these relate to themes in Figure 15:

Figure 15. Summary of the emerging conflicts.

Figure 15 summarises the interconnectedness of the conflicts girls experience with the circular arrows showing how each overlaps onto the others. Based on this summary, the participants’ views show that the general values attached to cultural gender roles in various families contradict the perceived need for girls’ education in modern Tanzania. Similarly, contradictions exist within the educational environment where there is a perceived need for the matrons to train girls in cultural malezi or educational counselling that inclines more towards supporting their future educational prospects and psychological wellbeing. In connection with these needs, a lack of resourcing contributes to different views concerning the economic
usefulness of girls. This consequently influences the way opportunities are shaped based on the relationship between gender and culture. Therefore, the impact of gender and culture together contribute to the barriers to girls’ educational experience and social participation. I draw a few representative examples from the participants to illustrate the conflicts summarised in the sections below.

7.2.1. Gendered cultural expectations conflict with a desire for education

There is great pressure on girls to perform traditional roles. However, my participants wanted something different for these young women. On the one hand, most saw that girls’ education contradicts the cultural and social traditions.

My mother comes from Sukuma tribe [...] the cultural perception of a girl in that tribe is that of a source of income. [...] in fact, when they have many daughters then their thoughts shifts to the number of cows they are likely to possess when they get married. [...] They rarely send their daughters to school in fact, they have a traditional drum, “ngoma”. [...] an occasion to start teaching a girl about marriage, even when her age is very young, they don’t care, they just want her to learn how to be a mother and a wife. (Girls’ focus group; Urban School Two, 2014)

On the other hand, other participants presented mixed views that suggested the need to balance traditional malezi with the need for girls’ education. This was observed by girls, matrons and women participants as discussed previously in Chapter Five. The examples show aspects of malezi, culture and traditions in direct opposition to the desire for girls’ education. The tendency of parents to deny girls the opportunity to advance their education, promotes the domestication of girls.

A further example provided by one women’s focus group discussion participant illustrates the contradiction between cultural expectation for women to perform domestic roles and their desire for education:

The majority of women who are married but have no substantial income to contribute to the family [...] will be treated unjustly most of the time by their husbands [...] because they have no income, they resort to silence [...] when she suggest they buy clothes for their children, she is being told to contribute when she has nothing to give. Because you are not educated, you have not been prepared from the beginning to be able to economically participate in contributing something in the family, you remain so dependent, abused and silent. (Women’s focus group discussion; Local Government, 2014)
The example above highlights the contradictions for women in the domestic sphere within the Tanzanian cultural context. It indicates a conflict in that many women wish they had a better chance to help the family economically rather than remaining confined within the traditional gender role. The conflicts between husbands and wives in this context is a further indication of the conflicting values between the modern socio-economic needs and the traditional gender role. In this case, while the practical aspect of a gender role is desirable, the women’s inability to participate economically is not. On the contrary, it depicts the economic vulnerability of women in the kind of relationships illustrated. The implications of the above example contradict social justice as much as the African feminist theoretical assumption and beliefs in complementarity between men and women and mutual decision-making in matters that socially affect every member of the society.

The above illustration suggests a need to retain aspects of tribal culture and traditions through the malezi of girls that prepares them to be mothers and wives on the one hand. On the other hand, this is in opposition to the changing lifestyle of modern times where these very same girls are expected to participate in domestic roles and in wider social economic and political spheres. Based on these data, some of these opportunities can only be extended through a better educational experience and acquiring leadership skills in order to participate actively in making decisions for the development of such women’s immediate families, their societies and the country. Furthermore, the illustrations suggest secondary education for girls and beyond is not seriously considered by communities whose cultural values incline more towards traditional values and practices as opposed to the economic demands of the modern lifestyle. Based on this study I argue that extending opportunities through better educational experience calls for a careful examination of the potential ways through which girls can be educated.

7.2.2. There is confusion about how girls should be educated: By cultural malezi or educational counselling

The nurturing and socialisation aspects of malezi that align with traditional gender roles and culture are complicating factors concerning the way girls should be educated in this modern era. For instance, some matrons and women participants held the view that matrons should train girls into traditionally accepted cultural roles, while others argued that matrons should be more concerned with supporting equal educational opportunities. Girls participants, on the
other hand, viewed school matrons as being *in loco parentis* with expectations that they are supposed to socially train them to fit within the cultural norms of the wider society; at the same time, they preferred that matrons help them educationally.

Cultural bridging and parental functions are noted to cause many problems with malezi for a number of reasons. For instance, some matrons stated that where parents do not play a malezi role, or where they contradict the matrons, it confuses the girls, creating further ambiguity and dilemmas associated with the matrons’ role of malezi. In this respect, the matrons commented on problems of negotiating boundaries in practising malezi in the area of parental roles. This was associated with the urgent need for professionalising the role through some training in performing educational and professional functions, a view held by all the participants.

However, in the area of specialisation, different groups of participants had different views about how to address this. Some of the women and girl participants, for instance, held the view that someone should be trained and sent to these schools to specialise in the role of matron just like it is in other areas like sports or specific subjects. Others were in favour of matrons being professional teachers who taught specialised subjects other than just being matrons. In the category of participants who favoured matrons being professional teachers were all the School Principals. Like matrons, School Principals emphasised the value of understanding youth psychology, noting the sensitive nature of malezi work. One School Principal’s view concerning the professional training of matrons in practising malezi educationally stated:

> [...] teachers who have studied psychology, [...] a matron should be a teacher, not anybody, [...] that helps these matrons to know how to deal with these students and how to handle them in their schooling environment. They also help to provide information and report on sensitive and critical issues that they are unable to handle for further action, for instance, they cannot decide to expel a student, and they will take the matter to the disciplinary committee for further action. (School Principal; Urban School One, 2014)

As a result of this confusion, the participants reported a lack of guidance which in turn impacts on girls’ social participation. This is because malezi, both at school and at home, plays a major part in girls’ cultural and social ways of being in relation to their traditional social and gender roles. For instance, the need to prepare girls as future wives and mothers influences the manner in which cultural and traditional malezi is given within the home environment. These traditional and cultural expectations were perceived to stand in the way of girls’ better educational experience by the participants.
Since respect for elders is a cultural norm that is expected of every child, malezi practices can cause tension between girls and their parents, as well as teachers. All the participants noted that this causes contradictions for girls with aspirations to progress further in education. They pointed out that while girls must obey their parents, the girls found this a contradiction that often led to them inclined towards pleasing their parents at the cost of their education. The girls’ focus groups in both rural schools, and one matron, cited an incident where girls were forced to withdraw from school in order for their parents to give them away for marriage as discussed earlier in Chapter Five section 5.2. The same sentiment was echoed in one women’s focus group discussion:

*I think some parents contribute a lot with regard to the early marriages of their daughters. Because some parents tell their children, “don’t perform well in the exams”. Just so that she fails and marries her to get money.* (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

The general upbringing of children to obey parents becomes a stumbling block for girls’ education when they are called upon to terminate their studies in respect of their parents’ call for marriage. While obedience to parents is perceived as a positive outcome of cultural upbringing by the matrons as much as parents, in such cases it creates further confusion about the matron’s role if they are expected to practise cultural malezi such as emphasising obedience to parents. In this scenario, the conflict is infused within the matron’s malezi role that is in conflict with itself. This depends on whether matrons’ practice promotes culture or whether it promotes girls’ equal educational opportunities. At the same time, whereas such situations entail conflicting values of culture against girls’ education, the matrons who instil such values to girls now become a negative force against better educational experience for the same girls.

Since both home and school environments contribute to the confusions discussed above, the cultural and traditional economic usefulness of educating girls creates further tension against their education as I illustrate further in the next section 7.2.3.

7.2.3. There are different views about the economic usefulness of education for girls

When financial resources are scarce, girls often miss out. This is because there are different views in Tanzania about whether a girl is more economically useful if she is educated or married. For example, girls, matrons and women participants witnessed predominantly
negative attitudes towards girls’ education in their communities. They described the existence of tensions between parents and their daughters and between home and school. This happens where parents do not understand why they must let their daughters attend school. The different views in connection with economic usefulness of educating girls have been discussed previously in Chapter Five section 5.2.4.

The participants stated that the low socio-economic status of many parents contradicts the demands made by the government to send children to school. In such situations, there are conflicting messages relating to the meaning of access and equal secondary educational opportunities for every child through the many established government ward schools through the SEDP as noted by the women’s focus group:

> Despite the availability of these ward schools […], you are sometimes told to pay up to two hundred thousand Tanzanian shillings. However, that is not all when it comes to school needs. And most parents cannot afford all of these things because of lack of income and the children will remain at home and just wait to get married. (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

The consequences of poverty means that gender equity and access to secondary education is compromised for many girls in Tanzania. Some participants state that this economic situation leads parents to incline towards their traditional role of malezi of girls which reinforces traditional gendered and cultural ways of life. Concerning this, some participants offered their views on how girls are perceived and expected to be, not only as a source of income, but also their social place within the domestic sphere as mothers and wives. Since the perception of girls’ economic usefulness often works against girls’ education, sometimes gendered and cultural expectations extend to the classroom as illustrated in the first example in Chapter Five section 5.1.6

The instances described suggests that the way girls are prepared to become socially active and engaged depends on the culture and gender roles in relation to the future resource allocation. While there should be equal opportunity for educational access and experience, the situations cited contradict that supposition because of the expected academic engagement and the type of knowledge acquisition expected of girls. Such a gendered nature of shaping opportunities for girls through education within the educational environment means that even at the family level where the resources are scarce or lacking completely, boys are culturally preferably supported as cited below:
It is that they will not let girls get a higher education. They will force girls to get married so that they can get their needs at home. [...] parents become attracted [...] giving the girl away in marriage because they get dowry. (Girls’ focus group; Rural School One, 2014)

The Girls’ focus group discussion from Urban School Two, on the other hand, reported these negative attitudes from people other than parents as a hindrance to their successful acquisition of relevant skills for active social participation in their future lives. Their view provides an opportunity to understand how girls’ economic usefulness is perceived by people other than their own parents. In this case, it indicates there is a widespread negative attitude and a lack of full understanding of the economic benefits of educating girls, alongside the belief that it is a waste of family resources. These girls’ views explain the perceived low social position of women in such communities and how they are not expected to be educationally capable of performing well in order to change this situation. For these girls, the attitude cultivates a minimal opening for their opportunities for participation beyond the domestic circle. The denial of opportunity beyond domestic participation contradicts the interests that girls might have in furthering their education as further illustrated below:

Some of these guardians also do not encourage students to study. You can hear them comment, “You are just a girl, where will studying get you? When a girl completes her form four she just gets married. What are you studying? You will just fail”. They can be very discouraged academically. Some of these expect that a girl will just get married and some will just not send them to school because it is not their own child, they treat them like house servants. Paying their fees pains them. (Girls’ focus group; Urban School Two, 2014)

School Principals perceive this aspect of the wider social outlook concerning the usefulness of education for girls in light of the serious widespread poverty. This has a severe impact on every student’s learning, not just girls as cited below:

There are variations in economic status of parents. In relation to this, I can advise a child to work hard trying to explain the outcome of doing that. However, when they go back to their homes, you find that their living condition is very poor. The income is so small so that their learning is very minimal and only at the school environment. Once they are home after school, they tend to engage in income generating activities in order to buy things like books and perhaps other basic needs. In that case, you will find that even parents do not encourage them to study, or to come to school. Instead, they tend to encourage them to look for money to contribute in fending for the family. (School Principal; Rural School Two, 2014)

School matrons echoed the same view as the School Principal with the view that girls are mostly affected because of cultural values and the overall lack of value accorded to women in
most Tanzanian communities. They linked this perception of the lack of economic usefulness of girls’ education to the challenges they face in their role to guide girls in their educational processes:

*Economic hardship affects my efforts in trying to guide these girls.* (Matron; Urban School One, 2014)

There are many situations where the value placed on traditional cultural practices outweighs the value of education. In situations where parents are aware of the benefit of schooling, they remain standing at the cross-roads between supporting their daughter’s education and embracing traditional gendered roles with the view that their daughters do not miss out on becoming the kind of women they are socially expected to be. Parents who want the best of both worlds for their daughters are torn between these conflicting values. Women’s focus groups as participants and parents of some of the girls themselves stated the tensions felt by parents in relation to the need for maintaining culturally expected practices pertaining to rites of passage. During such practices, girls are kept indoors for some period of time ranging from one to three months depending on the variation of individual tribal cultural practices that create such conflicting values:

*There are some tribes for instance, [...] girls [...] must stay at home for more than one month in order to fulfil the requirement of their culture. When a girl reaches puberty [...], she does not have a choice because she will be ordered to stop going to school.* (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

The above example emphasises that the values attached to cultural practices contradict the values attached to the educational practices aimed at enhancing girls’ opportunities. This means that where other opportunities are shaped by one’s level of education, girls who find themselves in the situation described above are disadvantaged. In these situations, deeply rooted cultural practices places values on indigenous ways of life on one hand, they also reveal the helpless state of the girls’ situation regarding their need to realise equity in education on the other. At the same time, female children are automatically excluded educationally in the processes of such cultural practices.

The situation discussed above suggest that even though culture is something that can be changed, there is no adequate driving force behind changes to social attitudes. The education policy does not provide the impetus or encouragement to oppose unfavourable cultural attitudes that hinder equity in education for girls. Moreover, the poor socio-economic background of most parents does not help in changing the cultural perception of girls as family assets in
promoting the understanding of the economic benefits of educating girls. This social state of affairs leads to the gendered nature of resourcing for girls as illustrated in the next section.

7.2.4. Gendered nature of resourcing

Because the majority of communities in Tanzania are predominantly patriarchal in nature, women have little or no say in most decision-making roles. As such, although education is essential, delivering equal and quality education remains a challenge because of the power imbalance across gender and resource allocation within Tanzanian society. The low socio-economic social status of the majority of Tanzanians plays a significant role in maintaining this power imbalance across gender. The following paragraphs include a number of issues pertaining to gendered resourcing in relation to poor socio-economic status of the majority of people in Tanzania perceived through the views of the participants in this study.

The gendered nature of resourcing affects girls from poor socio-economic backgrounds more than any other girls across Tanzania. The nature of the schools in this study falls within those facing discriminative resourcing that goes hand in hand with gender biased resourcing at the family level. The widespread poverty in Tanzania permeates the way educational services are delivered for both boys and girls across the social spectrum. Where girls and boys come from very poor backgrounds, the provision of basic needs is limited. The participants reported that the problems in basic school resourcing are serious where parents are no longer alive and the siblings have to fend for themselves. As illustrated below, even where girls may be interested in schooling, a lack of basic needs both at home and at school seriously limits this opportunity which sometimes leads them to give up schooling altogether:

*Sometimes you will find that parents are unable to buy for their children the basic school needs leading to them giving up going to school. [...] she realizes that she has no exercise books or text books and uniforms are not in good shape, let alone what she is going to eat when at school. Where parents or guardians die, sometimes of HIV/AIDS [...] much common these days, children are unable to continue schooling because they lack basic needs including school fees. They are at times left to look after their siblings and that marks the end of school if nobody comes along to help them.* (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

It is worth mentioning prevalent diseases like that of HIV/AIDS in the above example, although parents/people die from various other causes. As pointed out, HIV/AIDS is still a big problem across Tanzania. The disease ranked top in causing deaths claiming 18.2% of all
reported deaths in comparison to all reported deaths from other diseases in 2012 (TACAIDS, 2013). In line with the HIV/AIDS crisis in Tanzania, a personal experience as a counsellor trainee in one of the government hospitals in Tanzania in 2009 broadened my understanding of the impact of the disease based on a personal communication with the women I worked with. The problem with this disease is another contributory factor to women’s social position being worse than that of men. This is first and foremost connected with the tensions and challenges it creates as a result of poverty related to children being orphaned, which the Girls’ focus group discussion described:

You find that sometimes these relatives do not provide for your basic needs but they do that to their own children. So you are just like a burden to them. And for that matter, sometimes you have to find another way of getting money for the things you need to be able to look like other girls. This can lead to girls getting involved in sexual relationships. And sometimes finding themselves doing things that they did not anticipate because of lack, poverty, perhaps she has no parents and therefore an orphan. (Girls’ focus group; Urban School Two, 2014)

Second, the participants pointed out that where poverty is paramount, the resource allocation of the family often favours boys over girls. This is sometimes evident in the girls’ need for private studies according to matrons, girls and women participants. The women’s focus groups based this on a combination of the poor socioeconomic situation of most parents, and negative social attitude to girls’ education. Consequently, boys tend to benefit from the resources available while girls are deprived of the same:

Where there is such problems like electricity, and therefore perhaps they are obliged to find other means of getting light to study at night in the home, in most cases you will find that parents will favour supporting a male student than a female one. (Women’s focus group; Local Government, 2014)

Third, the cost of education is prohibitive for many families. The example below is a detailed account of a complex nature of the challenges associated with the cost of education and its impact on malezi within the wider societal context of the majority of families across Tanzania. Until the year 2015, before the newly elected government came to power and announced free education for all government primary and ordinary level secondary education in Tanzania – a change that is still in transition; the government has been responsible to set the cost of a family’s contribution to their child’s education at 20,000 Tanzanian shillings, which is approximately 20 New Zealand dollars per year while it subsides the remainder. However, the participants report the reality when it comes to implementation as being very different. I
use the view of one women’s focus group as a representative voice for other parents in connection with various heavy contributions by parents that need reviewing. They state that the cost of education denies opportunities to the majority of the poor, especially girls, given the gendered nature of resourcing. In order to show how this is a problem, they point out a need to support education that extends to all levels of education:

*The government should review its policies on education and reconsider the cost of educating children like it was during Mwalimu Nyerere’s era, education was free even up to college, but not anymore. Where are the priorities? The costs are too high and too many contributions stop most students from advancing to higher levels of education. Generally, the cost of tuition fees is said to be twenty thousand Tanzanian shillings but there are so many other contributions that parents are required to pay which hikes it up to over two hundred thousand.* (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

In some situations, where children do not end up as child labourers, according to one School Principal participant cited in the previous section 7.2.3, other options are sought. In some cases, parents will opt to marry them off in order to contribute to the family’s economic needs:

*Someone ends up not attending school but she passed her exams. [...] Our children are getting married silently and a parent’s excuse is that they cannot afford the cost. Because [...] there are a lot of things to complete [...] for children to go to school. It is difficult for subsistence farmers with no other means of income to meet these costs.* (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

The participants also reported under-resourcing in schools as an additional cause of tension in addition to the poverty-related lack of resources that is combined with the gendered nature of resource allocation. This kind of resource allocation overlaps with a lack of infrastructure as discussed in the next section.

7.2.5. The seriousness of issues facing girls means they have extra unmet needs that are not recognised in resourcing

Since all the points discussed above create problems for girls, they are more vulnerable. Even if resourcing was equal, girls still have unmet needs. For example, one matron narrates her experience in connection with the cost of education and how it affects girls in her school. Her view supports the fact that reducing the cost of education is vital to include everyone despite their economic backgrounds. However, in this case, she cites the reality of serious obstacles facing the girls, the schools, and the majority of homes. Her views reveal the
desperate nature of matrons’ efforts to improve girls’ educational experience with limitation of resourcing of the malezi system within the school contexts in this study:

I once discovered one child who used to be late every day. She was walking nearly three kilometres to come to school. So she was always late for classes. One day I asked her why she was always late. She said to me, “I do not always have the fare for public transport from home to school. I usually have to walk and that is why I am always late for classes. Moreover, she was so unkempt, her blouse was very dirty. She said to me, “I do not even have soap that I can use to wash my clothes that often.” So I called a meeting with some of my fellow teachers and the School Principal and explained this girl’s situation. [...] I explained to my fellow staff members that these things are so humiliating for a girl to look unkempt because she does not have soap to wash her uniform. So we tried to raise some money although sometimes it clearly does not help much as they share whatever little we give them with their siblings. (Matron; Urban School One, 2014)

The example quoted above provides insights into the complex nature of the problems that girls face. These range from under-resourcing, poverty, distance from school and the need for time for malezi by the matrons. Other participants, including members of one focus group discussion of girls in Rural School One and the local women’s focus group discussion expressed the challenges facing girls in relation to lack of resources and its implication on girls as future women in Tanzanian households. Their views indicated conflicts as a result of the influence of gender and culture that promote gendered roles for girls as opposed to promoting their education. The girls in question explained the differences in chore allocation for them as opposed to the boys who are mentally supported to carry out private studies at home while they are often too exhausted to carry out private studies for lack of similar support:

The main difference is whereby when we are back from school, boys are allowed to go out and walk or play with friends in order to refresh their minds then come back home and continue with their studies. [...] By the time we finish everything we are already tired we can no longer have private studies. (Girls’ focus group; Rural School One, 2014)

A Local Government women’s group discussion provides specific examples of domestic chores that the girls have to do, pointing out the inevitable consequences and what this means for girls’ education in a similar example as illustrated below:

As soon as a girl steps in the house, she has to make cooking fire, cook, wash siblings if there are any, mop the floor and this and that. She may decide to rest in order to wake up sometimes later in the night but sometimes there is shortage of electricity and if the brother has used up all the paraffin oil... it is not fair at all. (Women’s focus group discussion; Local Government, 2014)
Furthermore, the resourcing problem is perceived as a contributing factor to girls dropping out of school. My findings suggest how this affects girls who generally come from poor family backgrounds as one female Head of School pointed out:

*Some girls have just drop out of school because of poverty [...] because of this reality, we really need sanitary towels for girls who are poor, but you find that even incinerators are not available in our schools. So, even if they provide such facilities for girls, where will we store or destroy them?* (School Principal; Urban School Two, 2014)

The reality of the example provided by the School Principal above is that poverty is a very significant educational barrier for girls within this study context. In relation to the above quote, girls’ menstruation periods is identified by all participants as a big problem in schools where most parents are poor, and where some children have no parents. A lack of parents for girls means they struggle to get basic needs such as food, clothing and proper shelter. This is mostly the case where those who happen to be their families or care-givers are not well positioned economically themselves. It follows that they are not able to supply essential school needs let alone the biological needs of girls under their care. In such situations, girls are seen as a burden and are drawn into temptation to find other means of surviving, and in order to socially fit in with the rest of the girls who are seemingly better off at school. Girls in these situations are torn between the attempt to get the essential things and the need to fully commit to attaining quality education as illustrated in the following Girls’ focus group discussion:

*Some people do not even have parents, some are brought up by their aunties, and some live with grandparents. You find that sometimes they are not given everything they need in comparison to other girls at school.* (Girls’ focus group; Urban School Two, 2014)

In such situations, the need to look like other girls they interact with in their day-to-day school life creates anxiety in their struggle to socially belong as well as survive. It is in such situations that most girls end up losing every opportunity to widen their chances for a better life through education. The situations can be confusing for those girls who happen to depend on non-supportive guardians who have no interest in their studies, as one Girls’ focus group participant said:

*Sometimes [...] they often do not find any food left when they come back from school. She is hungry, yet she has to do some house chores, perhaps cook and serve everybody else. She gets tired mentally and physically. [...] this contributes to girls’ poor academic performance and some drop out of school.* (Girl’s focus group; Urban School Two, 2014)

Poverty is a big problem in Tanzania affecting girls both at home and within the school environment. As such, most girls whose parents would otherwise wish they went to school, end
up being vulnerable to early marriage, as illustrated in Chapter Five section 5.1.4. This causes serious and multiple social conflicts where girls’ education is concerned as identified across the data.

The conflicts I have identified in this area involve the government’s call to send every child to school without the necessary facilities or adequate resourcing in the schools. This means that parents who cannot afford even basic needs such as contributions towards their meals while at school encourage their daughters to get married. In cases where this happens but the girls concerned prefer schooling over early marriage, the lost opportunity for schooling leaves the girls concerned socially struggling to survive economically later. Where parents are obliged to let their daughters get married in order to alleviate poverty, they end up in a vicious circle of fulfilling the harmful traditional practices that undermine their own children’s future lives. A women’s focus group member illustrates:

*Some families are very poor even if they wanted to send their children to school. [...] These costs are difficult to be met by subsistence farmers with no other means of income for instance, and they have no choice but to let the girls get married at least to contribute to the family economic needs.* (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

Poverty has an impact on such things as transport as well for girls’ daily travel to and from school. When there is no school transport or if parents cannot afford it, girls are exposed to all sorts of dangers that interfere with their education. The girls’ focus groups illustrated the danger they faced as a result of lack of transport to and from school:

*Sometimes when you are on your way to school you will hear a bus conductor saying, “No student is allowed to board unless you pay five hundred shillings” but you know at home your family is not well off. That means you remain standing at the bus stop for a long time and yet they want you to get to school at seven o’clock in the morning for roll call. [...] Once you get to school, you get punished for coming late while the others are already in class studying. And sometimes when you tell the teacher you live far away from school, he will tell you, “You should get up at five in the morning.” But you know you cannot start your journey a mere girl when it is still dark because you are afraid something might happen to you on the way.* (Girls’ focus group; Rural School Two, 2014)

The illustration above corresponded with the account of girls in another rural school who related the problem of transport to life-threatening risks and all sorts of dangerous encounters on their way to school.

*They could get us a hostel [...] you know it is very difficult during the rainy season when rivers are swelling full, some of us pass through very dodgy corridors on our way to
school, at times around 5 or 6 in the morning. You will find hyenas on the way, you can endanger your life on your way to school. I think we could get some transport or we just stay here at school. (Girls’ focus group; Rural School One, 2014)

From the account given by girls in the above examples, the lack of transport and hostels contradicts the very ideas of equal access to schooling evidenced through the dangers that girls face. The resourcing problem of these schools contradicts the expected educational experience and outcomes for the majority of Tanzanian girls in similar situations. Girls in secondary schools in urban areas share the same resourcing problems associated with poor transport to school which often creates further problems such as rape and teenage pregnancies. In such instances girls have been forced to deal with the most immediate problems of escaping punishment from teachers while risking their entire future prospects. In the previously cited example three in Chapter Five section 5.2.3 and the second last from the examples above, there is an indication that some of the girls’ teachers are not aware of the serious nature of their transport problems to school, which is, an unrecognised need itself.

Despite the problem facing girls, it is hard to tell what teachers can do to alleviate the problems for girls even if they were aware of them since most of these problems do not have immediate solutions. Overall, the contextual nature of educating girls is built upon the foundations made of tensions between the society and the government decrees concerning education. Illustrations provided here include the contrast between the government’s call to send every child to school through implementation of SEDP and the socio-cultural and economic demands that relate to the value of girls’ education. The participants suggested a number of ways to improve girls’ educational experience as analysed in the next section.

7.3. Suggestions for transformation

This section focuses on the participants’ hopes for potential change. I acknowledged the situations where the data overlapped across the content issues in describing the emerging conflicts. In spite of these complexities, participants provided suggestions for improvement with political will seemingly at the core of transformation. Therefore, I identified three overall themes in relation to the suggestions for improvements as summarised in Figure 16 and presented with detailed illustrations from the participants’ data in later sections.
7.3.1. The significance of political will in provision of necessary resources for girls’ education

The need for transformation noted by the participants requires an understanding about whether the school matron system is needed in the first place. In this regard, all my participants favoured the presence of matrons in schools as I illustrate citing one School Principal:

Matrons are very important, they encourage girls to study, giving them reason through constant talk as to why that is important, why they should aim for division one and not two? What education is all about, they assist students understand life generally not only in their schooling environment but socially. Even in terms of character building mostly with emphasis on how we expect girls to conduct themselves as students. They [...] create better learning platform for girls; they are role models to them in many ways. (School Principal; Urban School Two, 2014)

Similarly, girls in the focus group discussions gave reasons associated with time that matrons need to attend to their complex gendered problems as illustrated under the problems associated with enactment of malezi in Chapter Six. Their suggestions indicate a need to strengthen and expand the matron system in ways that require the rewriting of educational policies and guidelines. This also implies politicising the gender agenda and girls’ interests in
education. The girls’ suggestions pointed to the existence of inadequate attention to their problems by the matrons and they suggested more attention be given towards their needs.

The participants also pointed out that a lack of political will to alleviate the problem leads to frustrations and emotional experiences. The focus group members recounted how, as parents of female students in these schools, they have struggled with unfair treatment of their daughters. They pointed out problems associated with situations where girls who fall pregnant are denied the opportunity of continuing with their education in government schools. Therefore, they suggested a need for the effective recognition of parity of participation in education. This is in the sense that giving opportunity to girls depends on both the availability of opportunities and relevant rules and regulations that protect their interests. These are perceived as lacking. Below is a lengthier and part of the illustration in Chapter Five section 5.2.4 (Teenage pregnancies and associated problems) that provides more detailed account of this problem:

"… when a boy at school has made a girl pregnant. Why is it that the girl is the only one made accountable by discontinuing her education? [...] “...but why? [...] What is it that stops the government from doing justice to both? It angers me so much to witness what happens”. The boy [...] should be expelled like the girl and the parents should suffer just like the girl’s parent in looking for an expensive private school that will allow them a second chance, because the government schools do not give second chances with pregnancies. “And if possible, the boy should be made responsible to help in bringing up the child while he is schooling so that they can experience how difficult it is.” These things hurt me because I have experienced them. (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

In line with the need for more attention to girls’ problems, the two women’s focus groups’ discussions pointed out the ‘unfair’ gendered nature of existing policies and practices where they frequently mentioned pregnancy as an example in which girls received unequal treatment in comparison with the males who happen to cause those pregnancies. Both the women focus group discussions mentioned the presence of oppression and demeaning of girls while the male perpetrators remained untouched. See for example Chapter Five, section 5.2.4 the first example. Members of the Girls’ focus group discussion made suggestions for transformation concerning this problem but also agreed that there is a lack of political will in protecting girls’ educational rights and in doing justice to both genders through their schooling process:

In the whole relationship issue, all those who are found to cause pregnancy for girls, the government should have in place a severe persecution measures against them for doing that. [...] The government should take charge, about the required law for this. The
challenge of female students becoming pregnant, if she has safe delivery then they should be allowed to come back to school and have a second chance so that they may fulfil their dreams because many would have liked to continue schooling but they got badly influenced and became pregnant. (Girls’ focus group; Rural School One, 2014)

In line with the above and previously cited examples, where there is no political will for implementing regulations in support of girls’ right to education, the participants indicated the need for social attitude change towards, and public valuing of, girls’ education. This is perceived as a crucial measure for any meaningful transformation in favour of girls’ educational experience and social participation. This is with the perception that the national policy makers are part of the Tanzanian society in which negative attitudes towards girls’ education prevails. I present the participants’ suggestions regarding this need in the following section.

7.3.2. The need for social attitude change and public value regarding girls’ education

School matrons, School Principals as well as the girls themselves, commented on the existence of negative or unhelpful attitudes in the wider community and sometimes within these girls’ own families. The School Principals suggested that in order for a social attitude change to occur in favour of both the girls’ and the boys’ educational experience, the education of parents, their valuing of girls’ education particularly was vitally important:

Some parents or guardians are actually discouraging these children. Therefore, telling them that, “instead of going to school, it would be best to stay at home and help me as a parent to look after our livestock.” They clearly tell these children that, “as you can see, I am not educated myself, so I have no income so if you go to school, you will still need to eat, how will you eat? You will not get food. So as a result, she or he may just disappear from school just like that. Part of that has to do with the parents’ level of education, and the value, they put on education. Sometimes they tend to see education as a luxury. Therefore, they think it is not necessary and so, it would be best if their children stayed at home. (School Principal; Rural School Two, 2014)

However, despite the School Principal’s perspective on the need for parents’ education above, the statement further indicates that economic hardship of the parents is a determining factor that affects not only their priority for girls’ education, but also the value for education of their children regardless of their gender. Thus, economic hardship is seemingly a catalyst for the negative view of education since it does not have an immediate return in comparison to other socio-economic activities such as tending for livestock that provides immediate needed
food needed for poor families. On a similar note, the school matrons illustrate that negative attitudes affect girls’ educational experience, especially in comparison to boys, as they offer suggestions for improvement:

There is also the general attitude in most communities to see girls as assets. [...] To them, this girl will eventually get married and when they do, they will get some livestock in exchange for their daughters. Therefore, you will find a parent not so keen on a girl’s education. Once the girl is at that puberty stage, that is it or some just refrain from sending them to secondary school altogether with an excuse of not being able to afford the cost of her education. [...] Primary education is sufficient so long, they can write their names, count, and read somehow. They will focus on their male children than girls because boys will stay at home and look after the home even when they get married. Despite the fact that things are changing a lot ... the mentality is still very strong in some communities. Girls are always brought up in the light that they are an asset. (Matron; Urban School Two, 2014)

Considering the above quote, seeing girls as an economic asset is a common familial attitude and it outweighs any valuing of education for girls. The fact that girls are brought up thinking that they are an asset offers a psychological preparedness for them to accept their gendered social position as they grow up. This is what the participants identified as being in need of changing. The members of Girls’ focus group discussed this at length, noting that the attitude of some parents is not in favour of their daughters’ educational advancement. In fact, teenage pregnancies tend to give them an excuse not to bother any longer with their education.

Corresponding to the above matron’s example, the girls cited below provided a detailed scenario of what happens. They directly blamed the less educated parents who favour their daughters getting married instead of supporting their education, and especially if the person responsible for their pregnancy is wealthy. According to these girls, since such parents do not value education, their daughters seem to follow suit. In fact, their daughters’ role is to influence their parents, especially mothers, to accept the situation. In such cases, the parents do not make any effort to encourage their already pregnant daughters to continue their education. If anything, they think that marriage of such daughters is a much better option:

I personally think the problem lies with parents’ desires. [...] And in most cases it is those whose level of education is low that can be influenced by their daughters who have already become pregnant. They would tell them, “Ah, you know, this boy’s family is wealthy” and it is mostly women who will fall into such traps. If she hears that, she will be happy then they [...] keep quiet about it. But if they reported these things, the boy can face legal actions too. But you know they will say things like, “if the boy is from a wealthy family, then that is our child’s luck, she will not have any problems”. There are such types
of parents. They don’t really care that their daughter should get some education. They know that someone should be educated in order to have money. But you ask yourself, if that is their argument, then why is it that the boy who is already coming from a wealthy family is needing to continue his study? They think because their daughter already knows how to write and read and count, she can sit down as a shopkeeper and life will go on. They do not look at other potentials that education can provide in the society. I greatly blame parents for some of their children’s life consequences, they need to be more educated on some serious things concerning life and education. (Girls’ focus group; Rural School Two, 2014)

In line with the previous quotes by the Head of School and school matron, girls expanded their point of view regarding the way some parents value girls’ education. The fact that mothers often favour marriage of their pregnant daughters instead of education says something about their own levels of education and the value they put on education itself. A women’s focus group also pointed this out in the following example:

Some of the parents’ attitudes towards girls’ education is just very negative. The child will say, “I want to study” the parent will say, “what study, you must get married.” A suitor comes knocking the door saying, “I want to marry the girl” and the parents permits. They do not value education, all their focus is to get money, cows, goats, some suitors will hand over a house in exchange for a girl and the parents cannot resist because of their poor living conditions. (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

Based on the accounts above, equating marriage to earning an income is seen as the same as getting an education to do the same only more favourable due to its attachments to traditional and cultural practices and immediate economic returns. This places the problem as a more economic one rather than associating it fully with the lack of value of education for most families. As a matter of fact, the economic needs become more urgent at the expense of other potential benefits that education can offer, not only to the girls and their families, but also to the wider community and the nation as a whole. I refer back to a whole example that I gave in part in Chapter Five section 5.1.2 under the relationship between poverty and cultural practices by the Local community women’s group’s discussion below. The detailed illustration below indicated a frustrating incidence that sometimes takes place within the society where some leaders get involved in hindering girls’ educational advancement for economic gain:

In case of Dodoma region, for instance, there are areas where once the girl reaches puberty, even if she is attending school, she will be stopped. Teachers and even the matrons are bribed with some money so that they do not follow up. The Local Government leaders such as village leaders and councillors who are expected by the Central Government to follow up that all children go to school; and where that is not happening.
a valid reason be given share these values and traditions. What parents do, once the marriage dowry is paid for the girl, they will divide some and give them to the village leaders and the councillors so that they can also gain from it. Therefore, the girl is getting married and at school there will be no report or follow up by the teachers and matrons. That is what they do here, it is some kind of business. (Women’s focus group; Local Government, 2014)

The account indicates the extent of the problem of culture and tradition and how girls are seemingly trapped in every way partly because of the poor socio-economic situation of a larger society. Besides these problems, the matrons, women and girl participants stated situations of helplessness in the school environments where sexual harassment was a huge concern. I illustrated these previously in Chapter Five section 5.2.2. The girls particularly mentioned the behaviour of some of their male teachers concerning this with some suggestions in a bid to change this harmful practice that hindered a better educational experience for them:

*I think the morals and values should be emphasized in teachers’ colleges. Teachers who come to school should be thoroughly checked for character and behaviour appropriate for teaching because of being in contact with young boys and girls. Their discipline over all, this will help too.* (Girls’ focus group; Rural School Two, 2014)

The above suggestion by the girls point back to the role of government and the political will. Since key players in these government platforms in decision-making are a part of the Tanzanian society, this suggestion calls for a great need for a change in social attitude. The change is not only necessary at the family level, it must involve the society at large for any change of direction in reviewing key policies and regulations relevant to finding a transformative attitude to help girls’ education. In finding ways to transform the mentality and attitude of the wider society, one Girls’ focus group discussion suggested the need for specific and relevant education necessary to help them in the process of awareness raising as quoted below:

*First of all, looking back at the challenges facing us girls, I suggest and request that relevant education be made available to us. This is because, when you know how to deal with certain challenges when you are in contact with teachers, parents of fellow students or anyone in the streets who challenges you in any way. It can be greatly helpful, just knowing what to do and what can be done.* (Girls’ focus group; Rural School Two, 2014)

The examples above indicate both the possible suggestions for change in favour of girls’ education as well as the helplessness of the current situation where power and decision-making are involved. The section below presents further possibilities suggested by the participants in relation to the professionalization of the matron system in support of girls’ education.
7.3.3. The need for training of the matrons in support of girls’ education

Part of a possible solution was presented in Chapter Six where the lack of resources was addressed and its connection with the enactment of malezi evidenced. Overall, participants noted that the programmes for guidelines used are outdated and irrelevant to the matron system specifically. There was an impression that the system does not matter that much due to the extent to which a lack of the needed resourcing and support for those appointed to carry out the matrons’ role of malezi indicate. As such, two women in one focus group discussion presented a mixture of views for the best way forward as cited in the following suggestions:

If there can be a training institution to train them ‘ulezi’ and health, instead of assigning a teacher who has another heavy responsibilities like teaching, preparing lessons, I think it is not right or fair: [...] she should have a separate employment and as a matron, she should not be involved with other things, she should train as a matron. (Women’s focus group discussion; Central Government, 2014)

However, while the participants in the group cited above tended to agree with the above illustration, one woman within the group stated that she was in favour of separate employment but added that emphasis be put on close cooperation between the teachers and the matrons:

I think separate roles for a matron and a teacher can be helpful. There is a school I know in Usagara where a matron is a matron and a teacher is a teacher. Most cases go to the matron. The teacher will approach a matron and tell her she has noticed a problem with a certain girl and request her to follow it up. [...] My emphasis is that the roles be separated with close cooperation of teachers and matrons. (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

However, some of the participants reasoned that a matron who is a teacher by profession stands a better chance of helping girls than one who is not. In favour of matron teachers, the reduction of the matrons’ workload was a suggestion as cited below:

It would be best if it were a teacher matron because of the fact that a teacher will understand students better from classroom experience as well. [...] Perhaps reducing other responsibilities such as those of teachers on duty for matrons can help. Or perhaps they should teach fewer number of lesson periods, let’s say just eight periods per week, so that they can do more of the malezi roles. (Matron; Urban School Two, 2014)

In conjunction with the above quote which favours teachers playing the role of matrons, the women’s focus group discussion pointed out the need for matrons to gain special skills in dealing with gender specific needs for girls around the school. This was also with the view that such training would bring about accountability to the role:
Education for matrons is important because for most schools, matrons are teachers who have only completed a teaching course but not training of malezi. Therefore, even if you place legal action against them, it will not be effective because they are not trained as walezi. (Women’s focus group; Local Government, 2014)

In this discussion, the group also identified what I could relate to as a former secondary school teacher and matron. Based on my personal experience in situations where a school has a limited number of female teachers or none at all, sometimes the Head of School is obliged to find someone to help the girls. Some situations can be urgent depending on the school’s needs. This can force the School Principals to recruit the people they know and think can help. In some cases the immediate person they can find to recruit is their relative. When that happens, they stand a chance of accusations against nepotism. Such appointments can turn against these principals if it happens that the person they appoint as a matron is not passionate in helping girls. Where the matrons appointed have limited or no understanding of dealing with problems of young girls which is more often the case, the problem associated with such an appointment can be very serious for the School Principal as well as for the girls. In this kind of scenario, the women’s group suggested that, if possible, there should be a training college for school matrons in helping girls around the school environment:

I think there should be an intention to have a school or a college for matrons. In the same way training colleges for teachers exist, hence matrons must go through these colleges with a specific identification as matrons who are not concerned with classroom teaching and this can somehow help most problems associated with the girls. (Women’s focus group; Local Government, 2014)

I identified three themes in this section in relation to participants’ responses regarding suggestions for transformation. In addition, the participants’ responses implied that they experienced a sense of helplessness in thinking about how to change the wider social attitude and value for girls which, in their views, devalued education for girls. Their particular focus was on teenage pregnancy which was taken as an excuse to exclude girls from education. Therefore, participants sought systemic, political or government supported change in order to re-write policies for the employment as well as roles and responsibilities of school matrons if they are to be part of key players in improving girls’ educational experience and social participation.
7.4. Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the relationship between major themes drawn from Chapters Five and Six. The overlap between themes entailed conflicts between themes that were summarised in Figure 12. The participants provided evidence of the existing conflicts between the deeply rooted cultural practices such as rites of passage, the emphasis on gendered roles in most of the Tanzanian societies, and the values attached to girls’ education. These practices were supported by some parents and the wider society who harbour girls’ active social participation. The poor socio-economic background of most parents intensifies the existing cultural practices that are used as coping mechanisms. Such mechanisms are socially constructed and accepted as norms but are perceived to go against girls’ educational experience and social participation beyond the domestic circle. This situation contributes to conflict/tensions partly because the desire to educate every child as stipulated in the education policy in some families collides with the availability of resources.

Participants’ representative quotes from across the data were used to illustrate the suggestions they made for improvements based on problems that were mentioned facing girls and the matron system overall. I analysed those according to the views of all the participants. Three major themes emerged out of the analysis to find possible ways of improving the matron system so that it becomes a useful tool for girls’ educational experience. These themes were: 1. the significance of political will in provision of necessary resources for girls’ education, 2. the need for social attitude change and public education regarding girls’ education and, 3. the need for training of the matrons in support of girls’ education. Although there were three themes, participants were mostly articulate about ways in which the role of matron could better be supported in terms of making it more professional.

In Chapter Eight, a discussion of the overall themes in this study in relation to the literature reviewed alongside my reflective journal is presented.
CHAPTER EIGHT: The discussion of the findings

8. Introduction

The previous chapters presented the themes that emerged from my data analysis. These included: the challenges associated with the enactment of malezi, the prevailing influence of gender and culture in Tanzania, the lack of resources, and the serious nature of girls’ problems. The findings show a complex interconnection between themes that give insights into the limitations surrounding the educational experience of girls. In this chapter, I discuss the findings based on the reviewed literature and my reflexive journal, and identify the changes that are needed if the educational experience of girls is to be more equitable.

8.1. Good policies exist but there are problems implementing them

The conflicts discussed in Chapter Seven raise questions about the implementation of educational policies aimed at building a fairer and more equitable nation. According to Roche (2013), across time the importance of education has always been parallel to the value accorded to its benefits in practice. In connection with this, there are tensions that are created as a result of problems with the implementation of policies concerning active participation of girls in education in Tanzania.

Based on the reviewed literature in Chapter Two under Secondary Education Development Program (SEDP) in section 2.4, it is evident that the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education (MSTHE) are responsible for preparing development programmes and master plans. These set out specific programmes and plans for implementing the particular policy statements for each sector of education (URT, 1999). However, there is evidence of fragmentation in accountability concerning teachers’ professional development. These uneven levels of fragmented accountability mean that there is a delay, or even a complete absence in the implementation of teachers’ professional development and in-service training. This situation creates tensions that are evident within the findings in this study.
Some scholars have previously identified tensions concerning educational policy implementation in Tanzania that create inequity in the knowledge acquisition process depending on whether learners are based in rural or urban areas (Brock-Utne, 2010; Sumra & Katabaro, 2014). Despite the measures taken by the current government to ensure the implementation of equitable educational policies in the areas identified by these scholars, effective outcomes of such measures are still theoretical. This is the case despite the processes involved in supporting those measures. Moreover, the government’s tendency not to act on some of its own formulated policy statements – such as the training of matrons and patrons – continues to maintain the existing tensions within the country’s education sector.

In relation to these findings, the Heads of Schools and matrons in my study confirmed that there is a lack of training of matrons and patrons especially, in matters of guidance and counselling. This is despite the fact that this training need was stipulated in the SEDP II under the cross-cutting issues that comprise statements aimed to address gender equity in education (MoEVT, 2010). Moreover, the MoEVT (2010) does not clarify how this training was going to happen to exclusively benefit the malezi role of matrons; neither does it clarify whether the mentioned training is considered an integral part of the teacher training curriculum. Given this state of affairs, it is arguable that strategies to alleviate gender specific problems in addressing equity and the wellbeing of girls through the matron system have not yet been well thought through.

8.2. Gender equity needs attention

The participants in this study stated that education is an important element in promoting gender equality. Improving access to education involves addressing both the recruitment and retention of girls throughout all levels of schooling. According to Wedgwood (2005) and Mlyakado (2012) for instance, the numbers of girls who advance from one level of education to the next is very low in Tanzania and therefore very few of them reach university. Although enrolment is reported to be gradually increasing for secondary and higher education in Tanzania, the social participation of women is still not increasing (Losindilo, Mussa, & Akarro, 2010; Mkilanya, 2011; Morley et al., 2009). This is contrary to the secondary education policy statement on preparing girls in the world of work (MoEVT, 2010; URT, 1995).

My findings parallel various research reports on barriers to secondary education for girls in a country where secondary education provision and enrolment are the lowest of all sub-
Saharan African countries (Machumu et al., 2011; Posti-Ahokas & Lehtomäki, 2014). I will argue that current problems are associated with the approaches adopted within the education sector as much as other sectors within the country’s economy. An example is the neoliberal approach defined in Dixon (2012) as, “… an economic, social, and political philosophy, which … places supreme trust in the marketplace and in the omniscience of market forces” (p. 1). This is problematic for a number of reasons.

First, a focus on profit making cannot make room for investment as a long-term solution to social problems. The current situation in the case of Tanzania is that education aims to prepare individuals for citizenship in the light of neoliberal perspectives. This is happening through entrepreneurship within the context of private secondary education in Tanzania (DeJaeghere et al., 2013) and is morally problematic. Taking the Secondary Education Development Program as an example, the policy statements within the policy documents are by large not implementable due to a number of reasons in relation to this approach. The major reason is associated with the government’s dependency on the financing of education. As a result, education of good quality is only accessible and attainable by those who can afford it. Therefore, the majority of the country’s rural dwellers with very little income cannot by default send their children to private secondary schools because these are expensive.

In addition, neoliberalism is arguably a threat to social cohesion in the sense that its adoption in education is widening the gap and creating classes of the rich and the poor between rural and urban populations in terms of the education quality they can access depending on their income (Rust & Jacob, 2015). It is also widening the gap between the skilled and the unskilled depending on the type of education and training they can access. This is because the majority of private schools and institutions are affordable to a specific social class with higher incomes but those who are struggling to sustain themselves economically are left out. The situation is worse for the rural population that depends mostly on fewer means of income generating activities, hence having low incomes (Machumu et al., 2011). The rural population thus becomes mostly isolated in the skilled labour market due to its inability to compete with those who have had access to quality education in well-resourced schools.

As a result of the neoliberal perspectives that have been adopted in Tanzania’s education system, the society is continuing to go through what I call an ‘educlassification’ process. The process I call so because the social position of the majority is determined not only along gender lines, but is at large categorised based on the ‘educated’, the ‘not so educated’ and the
‘uneducated’. This kind of social class formation is unethical since education as a fundamental human right must incorporate social justice and access to opportunities for everyone to obtain the quality of life desired (Rust & Jacob, 2015). Women’s low social position across Tanzania confirms this process of ‘educlassification’ that happens depending on individual’s access to schooling that is ‘well resourced’, ‘not well resourced’ or ‘completely un-resourced’. The isolation of some people from attaining skills necessary to survive within a country’s education system is harmful to its economy and especially if those isolated are the majority (Rust & Jacob, 2015). For the majority of poor families across the country, their most likely choice of secondary education for their children is the ‘completely un-resourced’ government ward secondary schools where problems with resourcing are rampant (Machumu et al., 2011). In this sense, the adoption of neoliberal perspectives in the governance of education in the country isolates the poor who are the majority and, is morally and ethically not acceptable. As a result of this, the limited social participation of most Tanzanian women is partly the outcome of embracing neoliberal thinking in the country’s education provision.

The nature and process of implementing educational goals in the light of neoliberal perspectives cannot therefore address gender equity for the very same reasons that it fails to cater for the needs of the economically impoverished population in the context of poor countries. According to the findings of this study, educational practices are gendered in nature where issues of equal access to secondary schooling for girls focuses more on parity than equity per se (Rust & Jacob, 2015). Parity is a focus on quantifiable achievements such as attaining an equal number of boys and girls in school without necessarily addressing accompanying needs to retain them or address their actual learning experience. Equity covers all aspects of the learning process and includes a range of things. These include, but are not limited to, access to basic school needs, availability of resources and infrastructure to facilitate the actual learning process, and the levels of engagement of the learners.

In recent years, the focus and emphasis has been on enrolling more girls in secondary schools to match the number of boys. However, this does not include the fair distribution of resources that cater for the specific needs of girls such as the sanitary facilities in schools. For example, all heads of schools in this study reported enrolling more girls than boys in form one although more boys than girls completed the ordinary level. At the same time, they all mentioned a lack of gender specific resources such as private/counselling rooms to help the school matrons better address the problems girls face. Based on these findings, the biological
development of girls strongly influences their educational opportunities and participation in various social dimensions in later lives.

In order to address gender inequity, there is a need to improve existing procedures and develop a new process for implementing current education policies relating to girls’ educational experiences. This would require a review of education policies that are intended to improve the quality of girls’ education, increase educational access, and improve retention rates. In this context, some scholars suggest rethinking the liberal, neoliberal and human capital approaches that are more often based on a top-down approach to developing regional and global educational agendas that predominantly focus on wealth and earnings (Aikman, 2011; Ainsworth & Filmer, 2006; Wedgwood, 2007). An example of this top-down approach is the Structural Adjustment Policy (SAP) imposed by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund on developing countries including Tanzania (Samoff, 1999; Vavrus, 2005).

The Structural Adjustment Policies aim to help developing countries that have large outstanding debts to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to repay their debts and balance their budgets at the same time (Vavrus, 2005). In most developing countries, these policies are implemented within microeconomic sectors of their economies. In Tanzania, the affected three areas are – namely, “access to schooling, opportunities for employment, and the risk of HIV/AIDS infection” (Vavrus, 2005, p. 174). These foreign policies relating to the economies of developing countries were accompanied by advice that promoted specific projects that attracted foreign assistance (Evans, 1994). As such, these poor countries, burdened with debt, tended to comply with the requirements stipulated within the Structural Adjustment Policies due to their continued state of financial dependency in order to run most sectors of their economies.

To date, the Structural Adjustment Policies have continued to influence national and Local Government policy in a range of social programmes, including education, where the privatisation of national industries and assets has led to a reduction in government spending (Evans, 1994; Rust & Jacob, 2015; Samoff, 1994). This situation affected in multiple ways the manner in which economies of developing countries are run. These various ways are beyond the scope of this thesis and will not be dwelt on here except for one area of economic development that is relevant to this study – the education sector. One major way in which SAP has affected the country’s education is through the privatisation of secondary school education as I pointed out earlier. As a result of this, and in line with my findings, parents and students
incurred heavy costs that the majority of poor could not afford. Since this is a problem that has affected the majority of Tanzanians, the current government aims to make changes in educational provision in favour of the poor majority.

In more recent times the newly elected government, as soon as it was sworn into power in November, 2015, announced the scrapping of school fees for both government primary and secondary levels of education in Tanzania. However, there are a lot of other consequences that the country is not prepared to deal with financially. One such problem is the upgrading of the infrastructure to match the massive enrolment of pupils in primary school following the announcement of the scrapping of school fees. There are also ongoing debates by various education stakeholders concerning the possible repercussions of making free education a reality, especially given the current majority of under-resourced government schools. These debates take into consideration the continuing depreciating value of the national currency and the soaring national debt as reported in BoT (2016).

Today, top-down agendas are set in the name of globalisation. The World Bank is the main actor in setting these agendas (Tarabini, 2010) that affect the regional and national social policy initiatives in which education has become an instrument of economic policies (Rust & Jacob, 2015). However, active social participation is necessary to transform various decisions within the Tanzanian politics which, will promote the necessary economic growth and social wellbeing (Evans, 1994). Accomplishing this requires a different approach. African transformative feminists such as Kitunga and Mbilinyi (2009), advocate for change away from these kinds of top-down approaches in favour of both parity and equity. This is to say, quantifiable representation, and most importantly the quality of representation, both matter in addressing social justice and therefore equity in education and elsewhere.

In order to achieve equity, Kitunga and Mbilinyi (2009) advocate for policies that take a holistic approach to social wellbeing. These ideas challenge the dominant top-down approaches that continue to contribute to the inhibiting of the social voice of the already culturally silenced voices of the masses in Tanzania. The top-down approaches silence the social voice in the sense that the governing power is withdrawn from the state with its lost autonomy in policy making and its increased dependency on other agents (Rust & Jacob, 2015; Tarabini, 2010).

In line with the preceding perspectives, my participants focused on ways of tackling barriers to girls’ education in a comprehensive manner, arguing that everyone needs to participate in finding solutions. For instance, the girls suggested mobilising the parents and
female teachers in order to establish a specific budget that would take care of their sanitation problem while calling for every education stakeholder to participate in supporting such a move. The girls reported a lack of two main things – a nurturing physical environment as well as emotional support within the school to cater for their needs. All the other participants voiced their suggestions concerning proper resourcing of schools along the same line as the girls.

The matron’s role needs to be better understood and the challenges they face addressed in realising equitable power and identity along the lines of gender within the schooling process for girls. The provision of private spaces such as an office for the matrons where girls’ privacy and dignity is protected and matrons roles recognised are ways of addressing such challenges. Lack of such basic resources contributes to silencing the voices that reveal the serious nature of girls’ problems. Some matrons cited examples of situations where girls experienced sexual abuse, rape and harassment from peers, in the communities, and sometimes from their male teachers, but were unable to speak with matrons because of the presence of other staff members. The need for such private spaces is clearly essential.

In addition to the lack of resources in supporting girls’ educational experience, I argue that the situation described contributes to a lack of distributive justice. Hence, there is an unequal distribution of opportunity for girls’ social participation in comparison to boys. This thesis provides evidence of a lack of social equity which includes a lack of fair decision-making in the socio-political structures that shape opportunities around the social lives of people (Honoré, 1961). If we consider a social justice perspective, the emphasis on gender neutrality in the equal distribution of resources is not realistic given the study findings and the Tanzanian social context for that matter. This is because the education system at large is depriving girls of the opportunity they so deserve and need.

The lack of recognition of the need to improve girls’ engagement through a psychosocial support system depends on the government’s exercise of power in decision-making pertaining to three things: Firstly, the value it attaches to the matron system as part of the integral social structure with the potential to improve and support girls’ engagement within all its educational establishments. Secondly, the socio-economic, and cultural values it attaches to girls’ education; and, thirdly, political will power to address matters pertaining to the distribution of resources and opportunities in supporting girls’ educational processes. In reference to these three things and in my assessment of the matron system, I concur with Lizzio et al. (2007) on ideas concerning procedural justice and Fraser’s (2010) elaboration of participation parity in
her discussion of the scales of justice. Based on the findings of this thesis, the key players in implementing gender policies through the matron system unfairly handle this useful social structure as I illustrate further below.

First, one Head of School [male], in acknowledging the low value attached to the matron system in government mixed gender secondary schools, stated that the system was perceived as more relevant during colonialism. He explained why they appoint professional teachers for the matron’s role stating that the system is mostly relevant in girls’ only schools. This perceived lack of value for girls’ psychosocial support system within government day secondary schools by policy makers indicates little commitment to gender equity in education.

Second, these findings echo ‘the silenced’ female voices based on the fact that all the participants in this study were women except for two heads of schools. They all reported the complexity of girls’ secondary educational experience, giving evidence of limited equal social participation that aligns with Morley et al.’s (2009) report. Their report emphasises the need for social participation beyond secondary school, and essentially this goes further beyond the school and home social contexts. This is in consideration that economic and social obligations underpin the need for higher education, which is significant in skill development (Morley et al., 2009). A limitation of active female voice within the Tanzanian social context is significantly proliferated in Yoon (2013). She reports the limitations on the decision-making platforms where women’s leadership autonomy is lacking in special seats in the Tanzanian House of Representatives. The same is reported in Local Government in Mkilanya (2011). Such systematic silencing of female voices in the Tanzanian society seriously affects their social participation in comparison to males.

Furthermore, this limitation of the female voice in decision-making marks a significant lack of opportunity to understand gender specific problems within the Tanzanian society in order to effectively address them. Throughout the findings, all participants reported that matrons were an important part of girls’ overall socialisation and educational support. This is surprising because apart from a mere mention of the need to train matrons, there is very little emphasis on how the process of training is to be implemented within the SEDP II (MoEVT, 2010). To date, the training of matrons remains a possibility only in theory.

Furthermore, due to the barriers identified within the findings of this thesis and also in various research reports fewer numbers of women advance academically as mentioned earlier in Morley et al. (2009). Mlyakado (2012); (Morley, 2010; Posti-Ahokas & Lehtomäki, 2014;
Sumra & Rajani, 2006; Thomas & Rugambwa, 2011; Tonini, 2010); and Unterhalter and Heslop (2011). All report barriers related to culture, the poor social economic status of most parents, patriarchy, and lack of political will which together result in unequal social power relations. As the situation stands in Tanzania, the future agenda of most women significantly lacks effective equity of representation as the space for listening to gender specific concerns at the decision-making level is blurred or completely blank.

8.3. A sense of helplessness concerning change in girls’ education

The sense of helplessness that the participants showed in addressing the need for change in the education of girls is linked to the deep roots of historical and cultural values within the Tanzanian society. I mentioned some of these briefly in the preceding sections. I have also identified two other social cultural features in relation to the evidenced state of helplessness. These are now discussed below.

8.3.1. Valuing ‘udugu’

The values attached to ‘udugu’ – a term that means ‘brotherhood’ – are constructive for reinforcing social unity and the maintenance of hospitality amongst Tanzanian people (Nyerere, 1962). However, the concept can also be destructive when it is clouded by nepotism and corruption within the public service. The concept of udugu was significant in understanding the responses of participants in one women’s focus group discussion. I will now discuss these responses, paying special attention to the destructive side of udugu.

The group of women mentioned above addressed the challenges associated with the role of matrons within the complex context of teaching professional relationships. In these relationship issues related to policy and practice in the context of the Tanzanian government, employees’ rights, and employers’ responsibilities all surfaced. In the discussion of employment rights, participants revealed tensions as they discussed the possibility of professionalising the role of matrons, which they all agreed was challenging and not well supported.

In that discussion, one participant, an employee of the Teachers’ Service Division (TSD), a division within the MoEVT, responded by explaining the new procedures introduced
by the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) in 2013. These new procedures concern the right for training, upgrading and annual salary scale increments, and give directives on how to apply for accrued arrears. These procedures are part of a government system called the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS) (URT, 2013). The system phased out the automatic upgrading system that took care of a number of barriers to the communication of information to remote places, such as rural areas.

As such, the use of udugu, a socially friendly system created with good intentions, colludes in the silencing process when it prevents people from asking questions or calling people to account in the public service. The participants in the women’s focus group discussions talked heatedly about their discontentment within the new procedures under the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System. One particular Teachers’ Service Division employee defended the system overall. However, she rightly argued according to URT (2013) that it was the responsibility of each individual teacher to understand the terms of service and employment rights as spelt out in their contracts of employment when they first accepted the offer of employment. In response, some group members resorted to silence, while others objected to what she stated, arguing that they had never set eyes on the detailed terms of service.

It was my impression, based on the discussion, that the recent changes have not yet been effectively communicated to teachers, especially those in rural areas. At the same time, considering the circumstances where the government has failed to implement most of the policies in education (MoEVT, 2014), this failure in communication came across as another government strategy to delay implementing some of its obligations to its employees and to get away with it. Barriers to accessing vital information affecting employment rights evidenced a state of helplessness for those who avoided conflict by resorting to silence. This state of helplessness is often devastating due to the existence of a complex and wide-ranging bureaucracy within Tanzanian society (Carlitz & McGee, 2013). Consequently, an inability to fit within the bureaucratic system in order that one’s rights are granted leads to individuals remaining victims of oppression. It follows that the destructive outcome of valuing udugu, where some employees strongly defend the systems they are part of, create a culture of silence where important issues are inadequately discussed, discussions are delayed or they are completely abandoned. This situation demotivates the subordinate staff-members which include teachers and considerably affects their productivity.
8.3.2. A culture of silence

In order to avoid conflict in the process of discussing problems associated with demanding employment rights as described in section 8.3.1, the participants opted to discuss other social matters that do not question the accountability of individuals in the position of authority. Instead of discussing how the lack of training of matrons challenges efforts to seek solutions to support the system that has a bearing on girls’ educational experience, they appeared to find it easier to discuss other things such as the way girls dressed, which I further discuss in section 8.4.2.

Such situations where people resort to silence over some issues may or may not be as a result of the value of udugu all the time. In this case, a lack of information regarding the procedures to ensure things happen in favour of the employees may be another reason. However, where the employment procedures are clouded by bureaucracy and nepotism, it can bar individuals from seeking employment rights even if the procedures are well known. In the latter situation, people tend to resort to silence because they cannot afford the time, and they are not well positioned to pay bribes either for moral reasons or because they lack money to do so.

Moreover, matrons volunteer to perform the malezi role and are not paid to do that. According to the findings in this study, they do not receive any relevant training before they accept the role when they are ‘appointed’ by the School Principals. Since they are appointed by the School Principals to whom they are answerable, in practice, the concept of ‘being appointed’ contradicts the idea of voluntary service. For instance, all the matrons reported that they do not have the skills needed to perform their malezi role in helping girls. They also reported that they have identified a number of barriers to girls’ educational experience alongside their own lack of skills and guidelines within their roles. However, the response is slow or non-existing and they carry on with their role silently though discontented with their overall working environment leading to poor outcomes.

There are some identified forums for girls to speak up established within the schools across Tanzania to minimize the overall sense of helplessness in girls’ education. These are clubs such as TUSEME (meaning let’s talk) in secondary schools as reported in URT (2012a). However, they have their limitations when it comes to the significance of effective advocacy to raise awareness of the needs of youth, and especially of girls, throughout their schooling process. The role of effective advocacy is reported to be urgently needed and valued (Posti-
Ahokas & Lehtomäki, 2014). Girl participants gave one example of the advocacy aspect of the role of matrons by explaining how matrons bridged the misunderstandings that occur among them, between them and teachers, and between them and their parents. Matrons fill this advocacy gap as – walezi, a plural form of malezi and this improves their learning experience. However, due to a lack of gender specific guidelines that matrons can use, their advocacy role is not clear and this leaves them in a state of dilemma concerning not only what they should do, but also the intended scope of their role.

8.4. Confusion concerning matrons’ role of malezi

Despite the value placed on matrons by the participants, there was a degree of confusion about what matrons actually do. Although the School Principal has a guideline that he uses to appoint teachers for various roles including malezi – the term malezi is generic and is used to refer to other teachers as well. For instance, there is ‘mwalimu mlezi wa darasa’ – meaning, the teacher in charge of a class. Others are described as ‘mwalimu mlezi wa wavulana/wasichana’ – meaning, the teacher in charge of boys/girls and, ‘mwalimu mlezi wa nyumba’ – meaning, the teacher in charge of a house/hostel. The latter two roles concern school matrons and patrons. In the case of boarding schools, the matron’s role is often more clearly defined whereas this is not the case in day schools. Matrons are talked about in this study as being teachers who have been given additional malezi – meaning upbringing, responsibilities.

8.4.1. What should matrons do?

“Prepare a dish for special guests... equipped with ‘only’ a bag of tomatoes”. (Matron; Rural School One, 2014)

The participants agreed that there is a degree of ambiguity in relation to defining the various roles of matrons within educational settings. In connection with this and the description in the preceding paragraph, such ambiguity leads to the role appearing cumbersome to the extent where the matron does not always understand the boundaries. One matron described the frustration accompanying her experience of professional inadequacy by describing the manner in which she was equipped to perform her malezi role. She stated that she felt unprepared, just like a cook asked to prepare a dish for special guests, going to the kitchen equipped with only
a bag of tomatoes but without all the other necessary ingredients. My previous experience in the same role resonates with her frustration. Such feelings leave matrons uncertain regarding their various duties within malezi roles. Speaking from experience, the personal feeling of inadequacy led to my desire to have professional counselling skills, which I hoped would equip me for future encounters with girls facing problems. However, although all the responses of participants indicated that counselling skills were necessary for the role, professional counselling does not necessarily fit in exactly with the concept of malezi as the study findings reveal.

One matron narrated how she coped with the ambiguous nature of the role by stating how she tried to improvise ways of helping girls. Due to the absence of a job description, she decided that she would do what her school matron did years ago when she was a student herself. Others talked about how they responded to problems and also sought assistance from the other female staff members or the School Principal when necessary. Matrons talked about feeling overburdened by the malezi role and not having enough time to attend to girls’ needs. They explained how they felt obligated to use their own money to help out the girls who could not afford basic necessities such as sanitary towels or a school uniform, and even basic needs such as soap for washing their school uniform. The matrons often paid for these items themselves rather than see girls going without. Other matrons mentioned the challenges they faced in dealing with abusive male teachers. Generally, the malezi role of matrons covered a wide range of care for girls who were in difficult, dangerous or impoverished circumstances. Further, they performed this malezi role alongside their other teaching duties.

All the Heads of Schools admitted having no document specifically outlining the job description for matrons other than the general malezi guideline which was written in the 1970s. This anciently dated guideline was intended for all students regardless of gender. However, it is what they follow when appointing school matrons. In relation to work guidelines, the participants in the women’s focus groups discussion emphasised the need to train matrons in order to make them accountable when things went wrong. The group pointed out the lack of specificity with regard to the responsibilities of a school matron. Although this view is debatable, the women participants associated the lack of training with a lack of accountability because there was no basic standard by which matrons could be questioned in their line of work.
The girls, on the other hand, saw matrons in a role of *in loco parentis*, and standing in for their parents within the school environment. In this respect, they saw matrons as people they could confide in when they faced problems that they found difficult to talk about with their own parents, or for when they had no parents at all. For girls, matrons were seen as their care-givers, counsellors and teachers. They reported they would feel unsafe if there were no female teachers around the school. Overall, they appreciated the presence of matrons as their role models within the school environment.

8.4.2. How much should matrons support tribal cultures and traditions?

Many participants focussed on the way young girls dressed. There are several ways of interpreting this focus. One is to perceive it as a way of supporting Tanzanian culture. Another is to perceive it as a form of unconscious collusion with gender oppression as I discuss further below. In the various views of the women’s groups, girls’ ways of dressing was foreign and was essentially a threat to social cohesion already threatened by liberal economic ideas and globalisation. To them, this was a national problem. The unsuitable ways of dressing which they described as the wearing of ‘small tops and miniskirts’ dishonoured the Tanzanian cultural values where attires such as ‘kanga’7 and ‘vitenge’8 were perceived as cherished alternatives. They blamed parents, teachers and ‘the educated lot’ for showing ‘bad examples’ to the girls within society at large, and called for the State to address the dressing problem with urgency.

The challenging conflicts between modernity and traditional norms challenged the role of matrons in a number of duties that matrons performed and which were highlighted in the findings of the thesis. Some of these duties crossed the boundaries between the academic school environment and the wider communities that were preserving the traditions and cultural values in which the girls daily interacted socially with others. Examples provided showed the volatile nature of the matrons role as walezi – plural of malezi, guardians and disciplinarians, torn

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7A traditional wrap-round piece of mostly cotton-cloth, very commonly used by women across Tanzania, much more common around the coastal regions of the country, usually with some messages around one end of the edges.

8Similar to ‘Kanga’ just bigger and usually the material is thicker than the one used to make the ‘kanga’ used in the same way but with no such messages as in the “kanga”. Such wrappers are common across the African continent, and are called different names by different countries and tribes.
between the need to preserve traditional values whilst accepting the changing cultural values in modern Tanzania.

There are overlaps between the two sections 8.4.1 and 8.4.2 that together address the ambiguous nature of the role of matrons. All the matrons, for instance, described part of their role as supporting the social and cultural upbringing of girls. This support included checking whether girls dressed modestly, in ‘the right school uniform’ and according to individual schools’ code of dressing and specific guidelines. However, drawing the boundaries in this aspect of guidance of girls was difficult. According to one matron, there was uncertainty about the extent she was expected to go to in guiding girls under her care when issuing warnings about social-culturally unacceptable ways of dressing. This included ways of dressing outside the school environment. Another matron described an incident she encountered with one of her female students in the street. The student in question dressed in a culturally undesirable way, and she decided to call her parent who turned up dressed in the same manner. This matron described feeling perplexed, awkward and unsure of the right course of action to take. Such incidents indicate the limitations in the general understanding of matrons’ malezi role in supporting culture and traditions.

The girls, on the other hand, gave mixed responses regarding ways of dressing with some viewing whichever way as a matter of choice and lifestyle that did not necessarily describe their characters as ‘bad or immoral’. Other girls maintained similar views to those of the women stating that how they dressed was partly responsible for putting them at risk of sexual harassment both at school and in the streets. The latter group of girls supported the role of matrons in checking that girls were properly dressed according to the cultural expectation. The discussion on ways of dressing emerged strongly as it directly links with valued culture and traditions, as well as being a firmly rooted gendered act within the Tanzanian society. Below I cite one woman’s comment in a focus group discussion:

... Young college girls dressed [...] in miniskirts and small tops showing everything we grew up told to keep for our husbands... (Women Central Government, 2014).

Such an example illustrates the value of a traditional woman and wife in the Tanzanian society. The desire to uphold this tradition is evident throughout the findings of this thesis and the Tanzanian society in general. It is supported to the extent that the government has been historically responsible for legally protecting this valued culture and tradition. In the current state of affairs, the desirable ways of dressing do not necessarily refer to a compulsory wearing
of kanga or vitenge. It involves the encouragement of wearing non-tight fitting clothes that do not reveal one’s private body parts on entering government owned public offices across the country. The emphasis is based on the concept of being ‘decent’ where decency is associated with proper wearing of fully covering clothing in public places. This is in harmony with social cultural values and practices associated with ways of dressing. The participants also pointed out culturally unattractive ways of dressing for both boys and girls. However, there was more emphasis on women’s clothing in comparison to men whose clothing is not very controversial within the Tanzanian social context.

The Central Government women’s group participants were particularly assertive in their discussions about the challenges that girls face and what matrons can do. These women gave specific examples of the ways of dressing expected of a Tanzanian woman. The women raised their concerns about the role of matrons in correcting the ways of dressing, which, they perceived as crucial in protecting the traditional and cultural values of Tanzanian people. In doing this, they disapproved of some ways of dressing of the very female teachers and matrons who were supposedly role models to the girls. In their view, one of the duties of a matron was to help monitor the girls’ dress codes according to the school guidelines and by showing them by examples how they themselves [matrons and female teachers] dressed.

Nonetheless, the emphasis on ways of dressing can be seen as symbolic of resistance to globalisation where traditional values are being eroded. In order to prevent that from happening, gendered norms and expectations [ways of dressing within the Tanzanian culture] are enforced by those in authority (Lorber & Farrell, 1991) such as parents and the government. Therefore, such emphasis by the respondents was in line with the social construction of gendered ways of being as discussed by Lorber and Farrell (1991). These traditions or processes of gendered acts performed through ways of dressing are perceived as good and valuable within the Tanzanian society. Therefore the women – that is, teachers including matrons and the girls themselves – indicated that adherence to culturally acceptable ways of dressing was important.

The participants’ emerging conflict with regard to aspects of the ways of dressing could be interpreted as supporting the struggle to preserve the diminishing cultural values because of the changing modern lifestyle. Rwegelera (2012), has shown the effect of globalisation on Tanzanian cultural values through a study of the clothing worn by both men and women. She broadly shows that through language, songs and dances, food and drink, the domestic market is negatively affected. This means that the introduction of foreign tastes through these things
is market oriented, which in turn, pushes the local producers and their products out of business because most consumers are attracted to foreign tastes that are well marketed in comparison to local products. As a result, the social engagement and participation in the local community has no mutual benefit to Tanzanian culture which broadly covers music, eating and drinking habits all of which are communicated through language (Rwegelera, 2012). Regarding the effect of globalisation through clothing, she reports how people have accepted modern fashion trends blindly, describing this sense of blindness as wearing “Black skins white masks” (Rwegelera, 2012, p. 179), a description of a sense of identity loss.

Fanon (1967), in his work – ‘Black skins white masks’, suggests that the struggle between identity and authenticity can lead to a sense of destiny that denies the existence of cultural differences, without which a sense of dignity, equality and justice cannot be attained. In this respect, and in line with Rwegelera (2012), I support the view that although culture is not static, it should continue to integrate “the individual, into society which is specified by norms and values” (Rwegelera, 2012, p. 179). This includes their ways of dressing. Taking this stand is not the same as judging or blaming a particular gender for challenges facing them; neither does it criticize one culture in favour of the other. Rather, it is a view that shares more understanding of social identities and of those values that are significant to a people, in protecting their social cohesion and identity, even when change is contemplated in other harmful traditions within the same society. It is on this basis that matrons are perceived as those responsible for protecting valuable cultural and traditional mores, to the extent of being role models to the girls through the manner in which they dress.

However, there is another way of thinking about this focus on the way young girls dress. The participants’ discussion on this sheds a different light, which I perceive to be a result of a different branch of the culture of silence. For instance, it is considered taboo to openly talk about sensitive things of a sexual nature within the Tanzanian social cultural context (Lorber & Farrell, 1991). Therefore, instead of stating that girls revealed private body parts in what they chose to wear, suggestively a contributory factor to sexual vulnerability that might lead to harassment within the Tanzanian social context, women referred to the wearing of ‘kanga’ as being respectful as opposed to modern foreign dress. This is despite that the same ‘kanga’ can be embroidered in such a way that reveal one’s private body parts.

Considering the above mind set, the negative attitude towards girls’ way of dressing is a vivid portrayal of how deeply men’s dominance of women is systematically supported socially
and culturally. This is the case even by the women themselves, consciously or unconsciously as they referred to state control over the matter. According to Lorber and Farrell (1991), cultivating such attitudes towards the processes of doing gendered acts can be harmful. This is in situations where culture becomes destiny and what is taboo for the people is well known and followed to the disadvantage of one social group. A good example of the systemic support of that which disadvantages Tanzanian girls concerns forced early marriages. This is within State control, but is left untouched within the Tanzanian law of marriage act of 1971 (URT, 1971).

The above systemic social position raises a paradox associated with gendered norms. The paradox here is that State power is sought in dealing with certain culturally unattractive values and practices such as ways of dressing, yet the same is not called upon loud enough to eliminate gendered oppression through harmful cultural practices such as, for example, the enduring forced early marriages or female genital mutilations. This is even where the latter practices are more harmful to the wellbeing of most women in Tanzania. Such systemic social position results in processes that deal differently with different aspects of culture in the same social group. Something that is really not too harmful is treated in a hostile manner, while something else that is much more harmful is treated leniently. In reference to the above examples, consider girls’ ways of dressing, on the one hand as a lenient issue dealt with harshly, and early marriage as the opposite in the Tanzanian society. This complicates efforts to address social justice in vital areas such as in education in the same society.

In line with the stated paradox concerning gendered norms, the same participants suggested that failure by parents to talk to girls about sensitive things in life jeopardises the realisation of their wellbeing. Examples they included was a culture of silence around sex education which, if it were prioritised, would help girls avoid risks of sexually transmitted diseases and problems with pregnancies. In the classroom context, the selective knowledge girls are expected to possess, and the demeaning of their abilities in some subjects by peers and teachers, implies that girls’ identities and social roles are constantly culturally determined.

As such, while social efforts in maintaining cultural identity though cultural practices such as ways of dressing are important, I argue that the debate around ways of dressing by the participants was culturally expected. Such debate partly confirmed the existence of the elements of oppression. Thus, where girls’ social status, position and expectations in society is undermined and subject to traditional forms of control, this indicates a firm cultural resistance to globalisation. Spark (2015) has explored the effect of globalisation in the social contexts of Papua New Guinea (PNG) where she reports similar resistance to women’s need for autonomy.
through their ways of clothing, behaviour and financial independence which is perceived within the PNG social context as “asking for trouble” (p. 45). This very much echoes some of my women participants’ views:

Matrons can be responsible to send these girls back home with very indecently tailored school uniform [...] This can be a way of protecting these girls against things like sexual harassment or advancement, they need to cover up more and they sometimes do not realize they are causing problems to themselves by how they dress. (Women’s focus group; Local Government, 2014)

The view that girls do not realize they are causing problems to themselves by how they dress indicates the acceptance of sexual aggression and coercion as something of entitlement to men perpetrators. At the same time, it paints the image of girls as provokers of men’s sexual aggression, because men cannot control their desires as noted in Tavrow, Withers, Obbuyi, Omollo, and Wu (2013). In line with my views concerning the women participants’ unconscious or unwitting justification of sexual harassment against girls as a result of how they choose to dress, Tavrow et al. (2013) report on similar scenarios in their research in Kenya, which shares some similar cultural values with Tanzania concerning male domination. They report that in the societies where men are expected to be sexually aggressive, some female provocation may be accepted as socially normal. When this is the case, Moffett (2006) reports that perpetrators may not feel the guilt of remorse if they construe their actions as justified. This line of thought applies to some of my findings concerning women’s perception that girls are responsible for sexual harassment as a result of their dressing in culturally undesirable ways, as illustrated above.

Moffett (2006), commented on the rape problem in relation to sexual violence where women are perceived as property of male domination. However, she reports how the problem of sexual violence has received more attention where children of both sexes become rape victims within the South African social context. Indeed, her insight, in addition to the findings of this thesis, and the report by the latter scholars cited, calls for urgency in the transformation of the mind-set concerning real equality in its totality. The women participants quoted below illustrates further the depth of the sub-conscious attitude concerning ways of dressing in the Tanzanian social context:

Young school girls see these teachers as an example to follow in their ways of dressing and how they carry themselves around. [...] our primary and secondary school girls and boys copy their sisters and brothers and sometimes their parents [...] therefore, we cannot attack them without looking at the nation entirely. Even parents wear mini
clothing [...] even ... the supposedly educated lot [...] these are the image of the nation, children cannot know something is not right there, they envy and copy them they need to know there is another way. (Women’s focus group; Central Government, 2014)

In this regard, and with regards to the feminist fight for equality against oppression, I uphold Spark’s (2015) views concerning equality in gender relationships, workplaces and even in public domains, in asking a significant political question as to whether the investment in appearance represents an assertion of power or evidence of subjection to it (Spark, 2015). Such a question calls upon individual members of a given society to reflect on how their attitudes to women’s dressing in relation to social and economic relevance within the global culture maintains, or erodes, the specific cultural identity of any society. It would be more liberating if equality within private and public spaces in various social-cultural practices was perceived as a natural entitlement rather than something to be permitted by the opposite gender as noted in Moffett (2006). This calls for transformation.

8.4.3. Training and support for matrons is needed

All the participants responded positively regarding the need to support the matron system in schools as well as for specific training, possibly the professionalisation of the malezi roles. Likewise, training of matrons and patrons in guidance and counselling is considered valuable as stipulated within the SEDP II (MoEVT, 2010). Furthermore, categorising this training need under the cross-cutting issues within the plan, indicates its urgency. However, the reality suggests the opposite. The matrons and heads of schools in this study report that no gender specific training has happened to date. Even so, the mentioned aspect of qualifications identified within SEDP II resonates with participants’ suggestions as necessary for matrons’ roles in supporting girls. Indeed, it is one way in which girls’ engagement with learning can be improved and their educational experience enhanced.

Other scholars uphold the value of training in improving gender equity by pointing out the need for qualified teachers (Unterhalter, 2012; Unterhalter et al., 2013). The same can be said for the matrons who are teachers and part of the support system within the study context. Addressing gender equity without addressing the need for the training of matrons is arguably, a weak approach in the government’s effort in this aspect. Its reluctance, reflected through the minimal education budget projections through the years under the cross-cutting issues (MoEVT, 2010) do not indicate determined efforts in addressing gender equity. Therefore,
concerning the training needs of matrons, the current state of affairs leave implementation procedures very unclear. MoEVT (2014), admits failure to implement a number of educational programmes since the establishment of the Education and Training Policy of 1995. Based on these realities, policy implementation procedures are crucial.

8.4.4. Procedures for implementing policies need developing

The participants discussed the need to raise awareness of the significance of girls’ education in order to change the attitude of the Tanzanian society where problems such as early marriages still exist. Historically established and valued cultural ways of life in tribal communities are threatened by the current generation’s desire for change. In addition, these values seem to obstruct policy implementation. For instance, participants reported that the desire to train girls in social gendered roles as future mothers and wives is a traditional income-generating practice where girls are raised in the light that they are assets to the families upholding such values. As such, where families cannot afford the cost of educating their children, especially girls, they improvised ways of stopping them attending school altogether. Some of the ways mentioned by the participants include bribing teachers so that there is no follow up on the girls’ whereabouts. Some parents force their daughters to say that they do not want school in order to fulfil cultural practices:

*It reaches a time when parents influence [...] these girls to come and say they do not want school. “Tell the teacher you do not want to come to school, I want to get married.*  
(Matron; Rural School One, 2014)

Sometimes parents force girls out of school when they reach puberty:

*Among the ‘Maasai’ people, even if their daughter is going to school... once she reaches puberty they stop her...*  
(Girls’ focus group; Urban School Two, 2014)

In some instances, parents cooperate with Local Government officials and even teachers as well as matrons who hold the same values as them (See my findings Chapter Five under the section 5.4 on ‘gender and culture’). Sometimes, girls who complete primary school are prevented from reporting to secondary school altogether because their marriages are arranged long before their primary school exam results are out. The demand by the government in line with Education For All and Millennium Development Goals through the education policies (MoEVT, 2014; URT, 1995) to send every child to school in efforts to address equity in education threatens such deeply held values and cultural traditions. The above instances
indicate the urgency for developing processes that are effective and culturally responsive. Likewise, Posti-Ahokas (2013) reports on the need for parents to support girls’ participation in education.

The participants’ suggestions for change require a political will and minimal dependence on external support to develop or improve the existing systems in education. Furthermore, the suggestion aligns with Education for Self-Reliance (ESR), still favoured within the new Education and Training Policy of 2014 (MoEVT, 2014) in which preservation of social values and gender equity are clearly stated goals. It is noteworthy that some of the donor’s interests, which influence some aspects of the education policy such as Tanzania’s Vision 2015, do not adhere to the preservation of some valuable social and cultural educational aims such as the emphasis on equality among Tanzanians (Otunnu, 2014).

It can be argued that the above situation exists because the government has been grossly alienated from the responsibility of funding education due to the increased privatisation in secondary education provision as mentioned earlier in section 8.2. Brock-Utne (2015), in her report on the aspect of language as a barrier for active learning in the context of Tanzania, points out the role of donor countries, which sometimes affects the implementation of various education policies in developing countries. For instance, DeJaeghere (2013) has shown how the international influence through the market economy has dragged the Tanzanian government away from her responsibility to provide rights and justice for all through the funding of education. As such, quality secondary education is side-lined towards the wealthy few. In turn, this means that the majority of parents with poor socio-economic status can only send their children to poorly resourced schools, especially ward government secondary schools. At the same time, the favoured liberal and neoliberal approaches to educational emphasis incline towards liberal citizenship and to the universal market economy with resultant high unemployment (DeJaeghere, 2013).

The above shift of educational aims threatens the values of citizenship and the purposes of education for liberation in the context of both the Tanzanian traditional, and the current commitments to gender equity in education. This is a serious setback for the majority of girls, who already face a number of barriers to educational attainment, which curtails their liberty to actively participate in society. As such, national, regional, and international efforts, must function collectively to improvise culturally friendly ways in effecting the implementation of education policies in order to improve girls’ educational experience overall.
However, despite the miseries within the government employment relating to problems with udugu and the culture of silence as well as the confusion concerning matrons’ malezi role, all the participants suggested possible practical ways of improving the matron system to benefit girls’ educational experience, as I discuss next.

8.5. Signs of Hope

‘Penye nia hapakosi njia’ – meaning, where there is intent, there is a way.

The suggestions of participants generate a sense of hope. This is because all were themselves educated and valued the presence of matrons in schools. This is evidenced in the findings Chapter Five in sub-sections 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 below illustrates this possibility.

8.5.1. Perceptions about educational change

The participants offered suggestions about transforming the current state of affairs in Tanzanian government mixed day secondary schools with a particular focus on the lack of resources. They argued in favour of professional training for matrons and explored ways of making this happen. For instance, some suggested in-service training while others suggested making use of retired nurses as an affordable alternative. This was probably because retired nurses have the necessary skills in relation to challenges regarding girls’ health, and at the same time they would not demand costly payments while providing the service as retirees who might take this as an opportunity for employment at an old age.

In addition, most of the participants mentioned that it was important that the role of matrons be clarified, which would involve the provision of gender specific guidelines for carrying out the malezi role. They perceived such measures as necessary to ensure both accountability of the matrons, and efficiency in improving girls’ educational experience. Girls particularly suggested the need to have more than one matron to cope with large student numbers and their specific gendered needs in schools. All participants pointed out the need for matrons to have physical spaces allocated for counselling and health related activities to respect girls’ privacy.
8.5.2. Participants value girls’ education

All the participants saw education as an important instrument for change. Participants in the women’s focus groups, for instance, talked about situations where uneducated women faced abuse because they are not well positioned socially or economically to fend for themselves. In such situations, the participants perceived education to be the best way forward. In line with Wedgwood (2007), all the participants believed that education is a pathway to social participation and poverty reduction.

Even so, all participants appreciated that ward secondary schools provided an opportunity for secondary education for very poor people. For instance, the secondary net enrolment ratio doubled from 6.3% in 2003 to 13.4% in 2006 (Sumra & Rajani, 2006) because of the availability of ward secondary schools under the Secondary Education Development Plan in Tanzania, even though this percentage included very few women as evidenced in the background Chapter One section 1.2.2. Since the inception of SEDP I for the years (2004–2009), followed by SEDP II for the years (2010–2015), achievements in the provision of secondary school education have included access to schooling and some quantifiable equity (Makombe & Machumu, 2012). Moreover, half of the participating school-girls in this research were from ward schools, a product of the SEDP. Girls from rural areas especially believed that these schools gave them an opportunity to have access to a secondary education despite their poor socio-economic backgrounds.

Girls from the ward government secondary schools talked about their hopes for their future lives and getting a good education, but they also bitterly described how some teachers destroyed their aspirations through sexual harassment and abuse. Matrons and heads of schools mentioned occasions where they tried to follow up on girls who had dropped out of school due to arranged early marriages, teenage pregnancies or for various other factors. They also talked about how they sometimes supported poorer students to remain in school by providing basic school needs. Overall, the participants accorded high value to the importance of education and they were eager to discuss ways of reducing the barriers to girls’ education. In so doing, they hoped to improve girls’ social participation in the long run.
8.5.3. All the participants valued the work of school matrons

All the participants appreciated the support of matrons in relation to their overall malezi roles as described previously in chapter seven. They especially noted that malezi is significant in cases where girls are orphans and have lacked a mother’s guidance. They also mentioned various examples of social problems that girls faced and which needed the support of matrons in schools.

The girls also appreciated the work that matrons and female teachers do in schools, particularly in helping them to deal with sexual harassment by male teachers. The participants said that matrons played a vital role in keeping them in school by supporting them at the onset of, and during, their menstrual periods. They noted how once girls had reached puberty, they faced a series of problems both at school and at home. Problems reported included teenage pregnancies, use of drugs, being forced into early marriages, and becoming victims of cultural practices involving rites of passage. Clearly, a girl’s time at secondary school is a critical stage where guidance and counselling is vital to ensure that girls are retained in schools, and are assisted to engage with their education for a successful outcome of their learning.

As such matrons’ guidance, aside from being girls’ role models, was highlighted as significant. This aspect was also reported in Gergel (2009) as crucial in helping girls to engage with their learning. However, critiques of role modelling such as Crichlow and Armatage (1999), cited in (Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2012) argue that role modelling leads to an illusionary reform and equity, insisting that success depends on access to social, economic and political resources. This position of Crichlow and Armatage (1999) however is questionable in societies where the imbalance of the power relation between genders is intensified by the existing cultural and traditional norms such as within the developing African countries. In this sense, the access to economic and political resources can also be illusionary if the only image presented to a particular group of people is situated within the cultural norms and traditions that do little to facilitate such access. For example, the prevailing customary laws that restrict women’s ownership of things like land mean that they are left with minimal social participation when resources are limited. In the context of Tanzania, this is because of the women’s lack of control over resources and decision-making (Rust & Jacob, 2015).

My findings suggest that girls are rarely encouraged to advance educationally, and so to possess the means to ownership and access to economic and political resources. Instead, they are brought up understanding that they are just family assets in the majority of Tanzania's
patriarchal societies. This explains the sustained dominance of the male gender over access to education and other resources across the country. Indeed, the current situation of women’s educational advancement, which is very low compared to most developing countries, supports the need for the attitude that perceives women as assets be changed. Therefore, the significance of the role model, which according to Gergel (2009) is important in reversing things for girls in such a stereotyping environment, is highlighted. Accordingly, where gender stereotyping still exists, access to social, economic and political resources as well as role modelling are vital to ensure girls’ successful educational experience and equal social participation.

All the participants saw the matrons’ malezi role as crucial. This was partly because Tanzanian society, like many other African societies, relies heavily on emotional support from immediate and extended family members. These are mothers, sisters, aunties and so on, whom girls consult about problems in confidence. However, because problems sometimes occur that separate girls from their families, such as the death of a family member or parent, then people outside the immediate and extended family circle become very important to these young women. In this study, I found that a common problem concerned the impact of HIV/AIDS in Tanzanian society. It is worth noting that the disease ranks as the leading cause of death in Tanzania, claiming 18.2% of all reported deaths in 2012 (TACAIDS, 2013). According to Davids and Maliti (2015), women are particularly at risk of HIV infection in their transition to adulthood. This is more often the case where their immediate economic needs is a bigger driving force towards the decisions they make and actions they are likely to be involved in. At this young age their ability to fully judge the consequences of their actions in the longer term is still limited. It is notable that, “HIV prevalence amongst the 15-24 age group has not declined significantly in the last five years” (Davids & Maliti, 2015, p. 115). HIV prevalence in Tanzania is 5.7% among the 30% of tested adults aged 15-49 and an estimated 1.3 million people were living with HIV in 2012 (TACAIDS, 2013). This situation explains why HIV/AIDS was a commonly cited threat associated with girls who are orphans, in order to support the view that the presence of matrons in schools was part of the solution to help such orphans.

8.6. Questioning African Transformative Feminist [ATF] thinking

The complexities of the conflicts discussed here raise questions about the practicality of elements of African transformative feminist thought that I reviewed in Chapter Three (section 3.1.6.2). In particular, the holistic approach that African transformative feminism
embraces towards taking emancipatory action is challenging when the actual circumstances of women’s lives in Tanzania are taken into account.

8.6.1. Participants’ views that question African Transformative Feminist perspective

While the African Transformative Feminist notion of collective participatory decision-making is appealing, the reality of Tanzanian women’s lives is that they live in a deeply patriarchal society that does not provide many opportunities for them to open up these kinds of decision-making spaces in either the private or the public spheres. In the educational domain, for example, there is currently no dialogue or negotiation between policy makers and key educational stakeholders, such as matrons or female teachers, who have ‘real-world’ knowledge and experience about the difficulties that face school-age girls, nor are there any plans to remedy this. At the same time, there are no channels available for public discussion and debate about some of the cultural values and practices that prevent girls and women from taking decision-making or leadership roles within their communities. The holistic approach to emancipatory action that African Transformative Feminists advocate does not fully take into account the enormous challenges that women face in their daily lives. In the fractured and under-resourced environments of most schools, for example, matrons simply do not have the resources to mount political challenges to such deeply entrenched gender divides. In this case, African Transformative Feminists’ attention to the emotional and psychological aspects of girls’ overall well-being is not entirely practical given the current state of affairs within the matron system.

Furthermore, while African Transformative Feminist activists seek to dismantle male supremacy in social and political decision-making (Kitunga & Mbilinyi, 2009), this study’s findings show this is not culturally practical in the daily lives of most Tanzanian women who are mainly located in the domestic and family spheres. The women’s groups participants that I interviewed during this study demonstrated how at the family level, most women remain silent, and many are physically or psychologically abused. At the same time they do not have access to an education that would both empower them to make different, and more emancipatory decisions or to make a more independent contribution to their families’ economic needs. My participants explained to me, that in most situations where and, when women do speak out,
they often become a target of male violence and in this respect, the actions taken to silence women can place them at considerable risk.

In line with this argument, the aims of traditional education in the Tanzanian context generally provide little choice for boys and girls beyond fulfilling pre-defined masculine and feminine roles (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2002). While African Transformative Feminist theorists advocate for negotiation and accommodation between men and women (Nnaemeka, 2004; Ntseane, 2011), the practical reality of including female voices in educational decision-making for girls is an ambitious aim in the context of the Tanzanian education system.

Another example that questions the practical aspect of African Transformative Feminist theory in relation to my study concerns the criteria for the appointment of matrons that are based on their gender as female teachers. Educational policy makers assume that matrons are able to practice malezi whether or not they are trained for the role. In this case, the African Transformative Feminist idea of collective participatory decision-making processes between policy makers, school principals and the teachers who are appointed as school matrons to implement malezi is curtailed and it is at this point where African Transformative Feminists’ theorising concerning collective decision making lacks harmony with practice.

A further example within the findings that contradicts African Transformative Feminists’ theorising of holistic emancipatory activism was given by the women’s group participants, many of whom are themselves mothers of young girls. They recounted the struggle they face on a daily basis concerning the difficulty to strike a balance between providing the time needed for girls’ study and their social and cultural obligations to train them in social gendered roles. These views bring to light the concerns related to the experiences of parents and mothers of girls in the Tanzanian social context. Their accounts complicate African Transformative Feminists’ advocacy for negotiation and collective decision-making (Kitunga & Mbilinyi, 2009) in the sense that the adherence to some traditional cultural practices in maintaining gendered roles such as training girls in domestic chores is perceived as good on one hand. However, these practices challenge the changes necessary to realise gender equity in education on the other hand. It follows therefore that deeply entrenched gendered behaviours and values inform the highly differentiated aims of education for boys and girls in Tanzania and the level of opposition to changing these existing cultural and gendered norms creates challenges for implementing African Transformative Feminist theory in practice.
The difficulty in applying African Transformative Feminists’ ideas above in the family – private sphere – also extends to the public sphere, where there is an expectation that women in Tanzania who are public figures through representation within the National Assembly have substantial autonomy in making decisions. However, Yoon (2013) reports the opposite is the case in the context of women members of Parliament who are granted special seats status in the very name of ‘gender equity’. The freedom of these women to make decisions in their areas of jurisdiction is significantly reduced by the system that places them in these public service positions (Yoon, 2013). Their ability to exercise power is limited because they tend to support their political party that places them in these positions; in the case of Tanzania, it is the support of the ruling party since their selection process follows the votes won by the ruling party (Yoon, 2013). Furthermore, Yoon (2013) reports that a lack of resources for capacity building is needed in training and employment of support staff to help women special seat holders with research on issues that curtail their active participation in debating in the National Assembly (Yoon, 2013).

Taking into consideration the above situation in which a special seats system operates, and considering the fact that this is a top-down policy initiative that aims to address gender parity rather than equity per se at the governance level, the future of Tanzanian girls’ social participation in any sphere of life is hard to guarantee any time soon. This is because of the recurrent poor exam outcomes for the secondary examination results, which affect girls more than boys (Okkolin et al., 2010). Further, such poor outcomes in exams is not the only problem girls have; rather, it is an addition to the numerous barriers already limiting their chances to be positioned as key players in making decisions in their later lives.

In addition to the above, it should be noted that a pervasive culture of silence permeates the social lives of people who live within patriarchal systems that operate in most Tanzanian communities. This culture of silence is evidenced in those aspects of life that are identified as taboos, such as discussions about sexuality, or the reporting of sexual violence which is strongly discouraged (Oduro, Swartz, & Arnott, 2012). In relation to my findings, the participants talked about the prevalence of sexual abuse of girls perpetrated by male teachers, other male students, and those with whom they interact on a daily basis. In some instances where the matrons attempt to uncover and report the situations to the school administration, it causes enmity between them and the male-teachers who are the perpetrators.
At the same time, the described situation above often make life within the school environment harder for the girls who are victims of sexual abuse. The girls’ participants reported that it can reach a point where they are intentionally failed in the subjects taught by the teachers who they report to have sexually abused them. Despite the existence of such situations, the absence of properly designed, resourced and facilitated psychosocial support systems within the school environment means that girls’ voices are constantly silenced. Lorber and Farrell (1991), point out the reason for this kind of scenario within a given social context to be as a result of alienation of subordinates’ voices by those who have assumed power and who have silenced them.

In the case of Tanzanian social context, the culture of silence emerges from gendered power relations and has adverse effects on girls’ educational experience. Taking the patriarchal dominance of most Tanzanian societies into account, Freire’s (1970) reference to the culture of silence as a “direct product of the whole situation of economic, social, and political domination—and of the paternalism” (p. 30), directly contributes to problems faced in creating a safe negotiation platform for girls in both private and public spheres as theorised within the African Transformative Feminists school of thought.

Contrary to the reality of these findings, and according to Nnaemeka (2004), the African model of feminism advocates for gender inclusiveness and social relevance where it views human life from a totality when it comes to gender equity. In order to consider such perspectives, it is important to link academic work to policy, advocacy and other development enterprises (Nnaemeka, 2004). In demonstrating this importance, some of my findings support the other aspects of the African Transformative Feminism’s ideas previously listed in Chapter Three section 3.1.6.2 and more specifically points a) discussed above and c) namely: It challenges the dominant top-down structures in its concrete struggle for change Kitunga and Mbilinyi (2009). I now discuss these by providing examples from the participants’ data as illustrated in the following paragraphs.

8.6.2. Participants’ views that support African Transformative Feminist perspective

The value of matrons was endorsed by all the participants in this study, and they particularly praised the way that matrons dealt with some of the distressing social problems that girls face. This kind of endorsement supports the importance that African Transformative
Feminists place on the emotional and psychosocial aspects of the self and relationships that cut across the economic, the political and the cultural spheres of women’s lives. In this regard, the matron participants talked about the difficulty they experienced in dealing with the struggles girls face when they live in poverty. They explained how sometimes they have tried to involve other teachers and the school administration to help them to intervene in distressful situations. An example that all the matrons I interviewed faced was a lack of basic needs for girls. They mentioned for example, a lack of soap for washing uniforms or having no sanitary towels to give to girls who were too poor to afford basic hygiene materials. The lack of these resulted in girls staying away from attending school for fear of embarrassing themselves when interacting socially with others around the school. In these situations, when matrons intervened by taking care of these girls, their implementation of malezi embraced the aspect of paying attention to girls’ physical and emotional needs with a hope of enhancing the girls’ educational experience and improving their active social participation.

The African Transformative Feminist promotion of emancipatory activism in challenging dominant top-down structures within society echoes some of my participants’ suggestions for transformation. For instance, the participants perceive the matron system as a vital tool for advocacy as an established support for girls in Tanzanian day secondary schools. However, matrons-participants, and girls’ focus groups, as well as one of the women’s groups, particularly challenged the lack of time allowed between teaching and malezi duties within the school timetables.

Additionally, the participants recognised the importance of the government and other educational stakeholders in support of the matrons’ system, they called for these educational stakeholders to join in the efforts needed to advocate for girls educational experiences. Matrons particularly suggested the need for the government to rethink ways of supporting them at the policy levels where there were issues arising pertaining to time in relation to the role generally. This went as far as the school timetabling of the malezi activities and extended to the time that matrons need in order to occasionally meet together as matrons from different schools, to share experiences and expertise in finding ways of dealing with girls, and their specific gendered problems. These ideas that support some of the ATF’s theorising indicates a need to engage with the ATF’s thinking in order to address gender oppressive behaviours in the social contexts such as within Tanzania. To this end, I discuss the significance of engaging with the ATF and Social justice perspectives.
8.7. The importance of engaging with African Transformative Feminism and Social Justice Perspectives

African Transformative Feminist ideas offer a consideration of cultural values in the development of procedures for implementing policies that can address specific issues that hinder equity and social opportunities in all spheres of life for everyone. As such, the ideas need to be engaged with, in theory and practice, in response to the findings.

Using the African feminist transformative and social justice perspectives, I embrace Bailey’s (1997) view that feminism provides valuable insights about the origins of issues relevant to today’s feminist researchers. According to Nnaemeka (2004), the African model of feminism inclines towards gender inclusiveness and social relevance. Likewise, African transformative feminist ideas emphasise a holistic approach to research that considers every aspect of reality, focusing on ways of addressing social participation in every sphere of social life (Kitunga & Mbilinyi, 2009).

This would mean that girls should be expected to learn while in school and not to run errands for teachers who sometimes take advantage of their vulnerability, and sexually harass them. Full participation in education would also mean long-life education, not just when they leave secondary schools as reported by Bangser (2012). The need for social participation goes beyond merely attending school; these girls must be encouraged to speak up in class and do mathematics and science subjects in order for them to get involved in their chosen future careers. They must be respected and this must be reflected through the way resources are allocated alongside gender, both at the family level and within the education system and through the educational processes.

The interpretation of the overall findings theoretically contributes to addressing quality and equity issues in education within the boundaries of this study. This is an attempt to find a comprehensive approach by including support systems that can potentially improve the learning engagement of girls through educational processes and make social participation in their later lives more realistic. The African Transformative Feminism and Social Justice ideas draw us close to the heart of exploring solutions to the educational problems facing Tanzanian girls today. For example, while the challenges facing today’s Tanzanian schoolgirls are issues related to today’s education system in relation to culture, recognising the historical background of Tanzanian women’s emancipatory struggles improves our knowledge of the current
problems of, and potential solutions to education quality and gender equity in improving girls educational experience. This echoes Freire’s (1970) statement which I quote,

… To surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity. (p. 45)

The perceived conflicts within the findings suggest that the lack of equity in education is situated deep within the general attitude towards girls’ education in Tanzania. A female child is perceived and expected to be different to a male child based on their future distinctive socially constructed gendered roles. Meena (1996), associates such attitudes to socio-cultural and political values legitimised by the patriarchal system in most societies in Tanzania. As such, there is a need to investigate the relationships between policy making, implementation, and the social-cultural attitudes within the patriarchal systems.

According to some psychosocial researchers, there is a relationship between existing social attitudes and influences in policy formulation (Maio et al., 2007). For instance, the current social attitudes to policy implementation prioritises economic development and human rights, and belongs to post-colonial politics in most African countries as it is in Tanzania. These politics have, for many years, influenced the formulation of educational policies in Tanzania without necessarily looking at how they impact on girls’ overall wellbeing and social participation. In view of that, the major themes in this study evidenced contradictions between the goals and the aims stipulated within the guiding policies in education. As a result of these contradictions, I argue that when the educational guidelines do not serve a purpose for self-improvement, human rights and the economic development of Tanzania, they become a hindrance and a loss of opportunity for girls to meaningful citizenship that could potentially benefit the country’s socio-economic development.

Based on the relationships reported by Maio et al. (2007) and the evidence from my study findings, a number of contradictions regarding gender equity surface within the education policy in Tanzania. One contradiction is the resourcing problem, which is associated with the attitude towards girls’ education. Another one concerns the positioning of theoretical perspectives such as African Transformative Feminism and Social Justice, assumed to be inherent in the processes that lead to social decision-making. In this view, and in relation to Freire (1970) cited above, I perceive the voice of the oppressed as key in the dialogue between them and the oppressors. In this case, matrons, girls and women, should be the principal players in making decisions on gender policies in education. Following this, holistic perspectives such
as those advocated by Kitunga and Mbilinyi (2009) are considered to address challenges that are gendered in nature within various communities and government institutions across Tanzania.

Until this time, educational problems have for centuries within the African continent, and elsewhere, been addressed without paying keen attention to support systems which play vital roles in the psychological preparedness of the learners in order for effective learning to take place. While the matron system is unsupported, MoEVT (2014) emphasises the relevance of ‘malezi’, guidance and counselling, at all levels of education. This contradiction needs to be addressed. I argue that where engagement is improved, learning takes place. Consequently, potential increase in a better educational experience, even with minimal resources, is possible. At the same time, the learning outcome is increased in parallel with active social participation. These are all lacking for girls in the context of Tanzania, according to these findings and other research reports.

8.8. Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the major themes analysed within the findings Chapters Five, Six and Seven with reference to Tanzanian education policy documents and research reports. The findings identified a lack of implementation of some good education policies in Tanzania. The limitations in supporting the matron system were discussed in relation to problems with resourcing. With regard to the resourcing problems, the international influence in the policy implementation was noted within the complexity of financing education in Tanzania. This in turn conflicted with the global initiatives concerning gender equity in education. Various problems in relation to valuing ‘udugu’ that led to a sense of helplessness and a culture of silence in every sphere of Tanzanian social life were discussed.

The discussion about the way forward included the need to engage with African Transformative Feminists’ thoughts which embrace a holistic approach in addressing challenges within the various government institutional and communities across Tanzania. Furthermore, recognising the place of support systems within educational settings in psychological preparedness for learners to engage with the learning process was emphasised. This is in accordance with the view that such preparedness paves the way to better educational experience and outcome for girls, affecting their social participation, and consequently, leading to an eventual possibility of addressing gender equity in education.
CHAPTER NINE: Conclusions and Recommendations

9. Introduction

This chapter outlines the overall lessons from this research. I also discuss the implications of my finding for education policy makers and make suggestions for implementing change. I conclude by presenting the limitations of this study and make recommendations for further research on girls’ education and social participation.

9.1. Synthesis of the Research

In this thesis I have looked at the economic climate in Tanzania and its effect on girls’ social position and participation. While economic factors disadvantage girls’ educational progress, the thesis demonstrates that the level of girls’ education is highly likely to positively influence their socio-political and economic roles. For example, various groups of participants gave views about the way girls’ active participation in education is impeded by some cultural practices and excessive domestic chore allocations. In addition to that, the girl participants particularly pointed out how their abilities in some subjects have been patronised by peers and teachers within the classroom contexts as illustrated in Chapter Five section 5.1.6. All of these issues demonstrate how girls’ identities and social roles are constantly culturally, and systematically determined and have impact on their socio-political and economic roles. I also examined other barriers to the social participation of girls. These include, discriminatory laws and policies that have limited women’s participation in decision-making concerning land management and tenure and other natural resources (Davids & Maliti, 2015). I argue that these barriers heighten the exclusion of women’s active role especially in the agricultural sector where they are key players.

I contend that the low status of women in Tanzanian society is unacceptable but reversible. This thesis contributes to an understanding of how the low status of women in Tanzania, and other societies in similar socio-economic contexts, could be reversed. Based on the findings in this study, I argue that girls’ educational experiences and active social participation could be significantly improved if psychosocial support for girls’ education
was clearly articulated in the education policies and effectively implemented in schools. In particular, by prioritising further development of the matrons’ system. In this way, the study addresses the main research question which sought to explore the influence of secondary school matrons on girls’ educational experience and social participation.

My study generated various themes that emerged during data analysis. Overall, the emerging themes reflect conflicting views and values in relation to girls’ education, culture and traditional values within the patriarchal social contexts in Tanzania. As such, while the study finds an absence of social justice in the educational processes for girls, the findings also highlight some of the difficulties relating to the practicality of some of the African feminist theoretical perspectives, despite the African-centred nature of these ideas. Evidence of these injustices are eminent within the participants’ data as well as the reviewed education policies documents that report on the recurrence of unimplemented policies concerning the overall resourcing in support of quality education over the past years (MoEVT, 2014). Although such reports and my findings include the state of the Tanzanian nation’s education quality overall, the girls’ educational experience remain mostly, negatively affected because of the social-cultural value of their education.

In addition, the study finds that in order to achieve non-discriminatory girls’ educational experiences, educational stakeholders and policy makers who are responsible for the implementation of education policies must face, and overcome broader challenges. For example, there is a need to purposefully seek to change the global social mind-set that discriminates against women in the economic sphere as well as in other socio-political decision-making. This is possible by looking at all the aspects of development as comprising, fundamentally, the full functioning of everyone. This would mean adopting the value of people, and especially of women as the reasonable perspective on real development (Nyerere, 1973). Looking at the cultural underpinnings of African societies, such change was found to be essential in making a realistic move towards social relevance. This move is a critical aspect of African transformative thinking pertaining to negotiation and complementarity that becomes a lived experience within the societies concerned (Kitunga & Mbilinyi, 2009). Embracing such attitudes would address, and correct the view of girls as being mere assets in some societies within Tanzanian social cultural contexts, and consequently lead to their improved social participation.
9.2. Implications for Education Policy Makers

This study contributes to the argument that addressing gender equity and social participation requires a critical approach to the way policy statements in education are designed and implemented across Tanzania. It is evident from the study findings that effective policies relating to gender parity cannot be separated from those that adhere to the resourcing of useful support systems, such as the matrons’ system. Adopting this holistic approach to policy implementation is important in increasing girls’ educational engagement and experience. The voices of the participants in this study echo the need for gender equity, as indicated in Tanzania’s major initiatives such as the Tanzania Development Vision 2025. These can be found specifically in the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP) and the Big Results Now (BRN), which aim to boost the economy so that by 2025 Tanzania will be a middle income country. This is a possibility if a number of issues are taken into consideration. One major issue is an urgent need for policy makers to review and establish culturally appropriate, but also safe structures that do not hinder the educational aspirations of girls.

Government strategies have been laid out to address the quality of education in Tanzania through various curriculum content reviews at all levels of education. However, these reviews are seldom effectively monitored. My research shows that many of these strategies are also difficult to implement largely due to a lack of resources in many schools. This study also urges a review of psychosocial support systems in schools including evaluating the matrons system. Such efforts must include the possibility of having clearly defined training goals for the matrons’ malezi role. This could be a response to the need for gender specific support systems within the mixed gender secondary schools. In turn this could help address a range of gender issues in education and at the same time increase awareness about ways to bridge the educational gap between the genders in Tanzania.

In line with the findings of this study, I view the improvement of the matron system in secondary schools as an opportunity and a path towards addressing girls’ engagement in education and their learning experience. The provision of training and more resources for implementing an effective matron/patron system will lead to a potential increase in the possibilities for a better educational experience for girls and as well as other marginalised social groups in the context of mixed gender day secondary schools. The data suggest that
this could have a consequential increase in girls’ learning outcomes and eventual influence on their improved social participation.

Finally, these initiatives would mean that the lack of parity of educational participation, education quality, access to schooling and gender equity by educational stakeholders are tackled simultaneously. Since education is a crucial element of a country’s economic development, the government needs to review the ways in which it is financially involved in the education sector. Concerning this, the currently elected government showed its intention to issue directives on the amount of fees that private primary and secondary schools can charge last December, 2015. However, there has been a lot of opposition from private education stakeholders on various social and mass media platforms in this matter.

Following the ongoing debate concerning these matters in the national Parliament in April, 2016, the Tanzanian government, through the Ministry of Education Science and Technology, announced during the debate for the education budget for 2016/2017 its intention to continue with research on how well to monitor fees directives for private primary and secondary schools. See for example the Mwananchi —meaning citizen — Communication Limited (MCL) podcast produced concerning this in MCL (2016). This was strongly opposed by some members of the Parliament who argued that the government must focus on improving its own schools and the state of Education (MCL, 2016). As there are still ongoing debates concerning this, in May 2016, the ministry of Education Science and Technology issued a statement that the commission for education and school inspection departments will be responsible to monitor any contributions and any increase in tuition fees by private primary and secondary education.

These departments will provide licence to private education providers depending on service rendered, location of the school whether urban or rural, level of education service provided among other factors. This is with a view that education is a fundamental human right and must not focus on profit making like other businesses, rather the private education providers should intend to offer service to the people. Further argument concerning this is that some private education providers fees are unrealistically expensive for the majority of citizens with low income leading to deny the majority of poor but well deserving students the opportunity for quality education.

Since the government intends to continue to monitor the amount of fees that private schools charge parents by issuing warranted permits to any institution that wishes to raise
school fees beyond what they are currently charging in exchange of their education service; I argue that the best way of doing this is within the education policy reviews and various policy directives. This is because the problem with various contributions especially, is not an isolated problem for private education providers alone. This study’s findings suggest similar high cost of secondary education grievances in connection with various contributions required of parents to contribute as evidenced in findings Chapter Five sections 5.1.1 to 5.1.4. The same is reviewed in Chapter Two section 2.2.1 and discussed in Chapter Seven section 7.2.2. This was further demonstrated in the same chapter, section 7.2.4 and Chapter Eight section 8.4.4. The problem is very severe and has huge implications for girls who drop out of secondary education because of pregnancy, and are obliged to find alternative private education in order to continue with education as was demonstrated by women participants who are representative of typical parents in Tanzania.

Although the current Tanzanian government has announced free education up to lower secondary education, there is still no sustainable solution concerning various costs that parents are required to contribute. As such, I argue that the review of secondary education policies might include the establishment of legal control over the maximum amount of fees that any private educational establishment could charge in exchange for secondary education service provision. In order to achieve this, the government must allow for extensive dialogue with all educational stakeholders in order to explore the impact of such a move, how such decisions could be implemented with constant reviewing and, depending on the pertaining issues arising. There is a promising indication through the ongoing debates that including the views of education stakeholders in this matter can yield better results that will benefit the majority poor to access quality education in the country than if the government maintains a top down approach in dealing with the problem.

9.3. Implication for the Implementation Process

The rate of social participation of girls in higher education is extremely low in Tanzania. The poor educational outcomes for girls have been discussed in this thesis and educational policy documents reviewed to explain the lack of parity of participation at higher levels of education. The findings from the field data, the documents analysed, and my reflective journal all reveal that there are three broad areas that will need serious review
in order to improve the implementation of gender equity across Tanzanian secondary schools.

At the secondary school level, there is an urgent need for dialogue concerning specific support systems for girls within the educational establishments. This dialogue should involve education stakeholders, such as the government and NGOs, as well as the public who are at the consumer end of the educational services. The public, and the government, need to work together to establish the means by which barriers to girls’ education can be eradicated, plans laid out, and key players in the implementation process identified through mutual dialogue. Where matrons must be used, the government needs to source and facilitate the system in its schools. At the same time, the policies affecting psychosocial support systems should be reviewed to better cater for girls’ needs. In effecting significant change within the schooling environment, forums such as school clubs that are already existing, for example TUSEME (Rust & Jacob, 2015), should be utilised by the educational providers as effective tools to amplify girls’ voices so that gender specific concerns are heard. By listening continually to the voices of the girls, it is possible for the education providers to assess the effectiveness of the established psychosocial support systems such as matrons and hence, to improve these and even establish new systems if need be.

In line with the above suggestion, it is important to apply the transformative approaches through the adoption of a holistic curriculum that does not only respect cultural relevance but accepts differences. Such a curriculum should in that sense incorporate spiritual aspects and that recognises the significance of body, mind and spirit – what Bone et al. (2007) perceive as the allowing of “the extraordinary in the ordinary” (p.344). This can only be possible by including the community. The inclusion of the community to create such a curriculum can enhance responsible ways of practicing cultural rituals such as the ceremonial rites of passage that are not harmful to girls’ educational experience in the Tanzanian social contexts. Such a move can significantly enhance the support systems such as the matrons’ to support girls’ education better.

The limited social participation of girls in higher educational levels and in later lives in Tanzania is alarming (NBS, 2016; URT, 2012a). The poor educational experience and outcomes revealed by this study’s findings, alongside the documents reviewed together explains the narrow pyramid in terms of parity of participation at higher levels of education. The current social position of women necessitates the urgency with which to address this problem. This means that mass education through media, community awareness
programmes and ongoing professional development is important if the implementation of development plans are to be successful. In regard to this matter, the socio-cultural values that hinder the implementation of such plans through maintaining gender oppressive behaviours must be addressed at the same time as the policies affecting psychosocial support systems are reviewed.

In connection to gender oppressive behaviours, much greater changes are needed in curbing sexual harassment and abuse. Alongside the established police stations’ gender and children desks – services for gender-based violence survivors – in Tanzania (McCleary-Sills et al., 2013), these gender desks can be expanded to include community counselling services and safety nets such as refuge places to protect the victims who come forward to expose the offenders. These safety nets and refuge places are lacking at the moment. If such measures were effectively implemented, then over the long term, this would ensure that the country’s most populous group would not only be empowered, but also protected to contribute to the human capital necessary to achieve the country’s ambitious plans of the TDV 2025. It would also mean that gradually gender equity could be achieved.

Finally, there is urgent need for the donor countries to rethink the possibility for the governments to take over complete responsibility in the financing of education through the nations’ internal sources of income and revenues. This responsibility is curtailed by the donor countries through aid conditionality that often mean that the recipients of aid cannot make decision on key priority areas to have a positive impact on gender equity in education. This is important in order to give the developing countries more authority in affecting the changes needed to break down class divisions that threaten national cohesion through what I referred to in my discussion Chapter Eight as the ongoing ‘educlassification’ of the masses because of the impact of neoliberal market forces within the education sector. This will further enable governments and local communities to have a chance in playing active roles in monitoring and managing educational financial resources that will ensure better accountability. In this way, facilitating schools within the study context can be treated with its due urgency. All of these things are possible if genuine political willpower and social inclusion are created through awareness-raising campaigns at every level of the Tanzanian society.
9.4. Limitations of This Research

Given the fact that Tanzania is comprised of more than 120 ethnic groups with different cultural backgrounds, participants’ views were a limited representation in respect of these diverse cultural and traditional backgrounds. In addition, some emerging issues brought forward by the girls participants such as encounters with dangerous animals while going to and from school, could well be investigated using ethnographical methodologies. This might have been a better way of generating a detailed account with necessary impact to shed light on the nature and dangers surrounding education for Tanzanian day scholars of both genders.

My major dilemma as a researcher was how to distance myself from the women and the issues presented at various times, some of which resonated with my own personal and professional life experiences. Hence, the need to separate my own experiences as a Tanzanian woman during the data gathering and analysis stages. As a researcher, this was challenging and might have given my interpretation of the data some position that would have been viewed differently by a researcher who did not have similar life experiences to those that emerged in the field. On the other hand, being an insider as previously introduced in my prologue, I had an additional advantage of previous experience from direct observational understanding of certain issues which, according to Ritchie et al. (2013) was important in interpreting albeit, to some extent, the participants’ subjective meaningful experience.

I learnt that although there are many advantages in sharing some cultural backgrounds with those being researched, this does not mean that you are fully knowledgeable about the matters the participants present such as their meanings, feelings and values or practices (Delgado, Fox, & Altmann, 2015). For instance, in the case of my encounters with women participants, sometimes I wondered how to distance myself from their points of view concerning girls’ ways of dressing. These views included issues of modesty, women’s rights and the expression of femininity through ways of dressing and religious practices, some of which appeared controversial.

Sometimes, my participants thought I was required to directly report to the government on some of the issues. In these cases I applied a culture of silence, particularly in those situations where I could not argue with them, and this was especially so with regard to views on ways of dressing as a local researcher. However, despite these limitations, this
study’s findings proved that it is still possible to bring forth honestly the views and experiences of women even if it is at the expense of questioning one’s research agenda.

9.5. Recommendations

In line with the participants’ suggestions to improve girls’ educational experience and social participation as seen in Chapter Seven, there are a number of other things that can be done. First, more research is needed in this area. One of the key aims in conducting this study was to explore if the matrons system was relevant and useful as a significantly available psychosocial support system that could provide the possibility of addressing gender equity in education. As the findings reveal, the school girls’ gendered needs, especially those from poor socioeconomic backgrounds and even more so those who attend government mixed day secondary schools in Tanzania, need to be more understood and addressed. This would require similar investigations in other areas in Tanzania with different cultural practices to those within this study’s context.

Second, looking at the overall education system and need to improve the quality of education across the country, it is unrealistic to concentrate on increasing the enrolment of children in schools in order to meet parity of participation without giving special consideration to the mechanisms that can support their retention and improve their learning experiences. Therefore, while it is a good start to have children in schools, there is a need to ensure that learning engagement and outcomes are meaningful for children of both genders. This may call for further thinking on diverse culturally relevant support systems at the community level.

Third, if the government recognises the significance of matrons and patrons in its educational institutions, then the challenges associated with the enactment of malezi need to be critically examined. The application of malezi needs to be adopted to suit the needs of girls in the day government secondary school context. In line with the need to rethink culturally appropriate support systems, this would mean involving diverse communities with a range of cultural values in order to create dialogue about the best way to implement malezi for the benefit of girls at school. In doing this, those specific policies that entail relevant statements concerning this within the SEDP must clearly provide for practical guidelines on how malezi is to be implemented. This will promote not only a sense of
inclusion of girls; it will also ensure that, unlike the present situation, the malezi role is manageable and meaningful.

Fourth, there is a need for continuous ongoing adult education that can be implemented throughout the use of mass-media and community awareness programmes to create a gradual change in the mind-set of the wider society concerning the benefits of education for girls. This is especially important for the most remote areas of the country where cultural and traditional practices are still critical barriers to girls’ education. Although Tanzania aims to be a middle income country by 2025, the barriers to girls’ education mean that this economic improvement will take only a section of the country’s urban population with it. This is with consideration that Tanzania’s rural mainland hosts the majority of the country’s population and that 80% of its rural population depends on agriculture while, as noted throughout the thesis, the traditional cultural practices such as perceiving girls as assets are still very much rooted.

Fifth, there is need for a continuous and vigorous war against corruption. This is especially so in situations where collusions happen between teachers and parents and Local Government officials barring girls who complete primary school from proceeding to secondary school. In line with this is the need for mutual dialogue that can involve the school boards – whose members are mostly parents – on ways to resolve the sensitive cultural and traditional practices. The government, as the one with the mandate to monitor the implementation of the existing laws to protect against child abuse, must work hand in hand with the community to ensure there is a realistic implementation of these laws. This could help to prevent child abuse by the perpetrators who sometimes include abusive teachers among other members of the wider society. These actions, if taken, may help curb other notorious problems, such as teenage pregnancies that hinder girls’ educational progress.

Sixth, the out-of-school efforts by other non-governmental organisations such as ‘Girls let us be leaders’ by the Tanzania Commission for AIDS in conjunction with UNICEF, and the in-school efforts such as school clubs that aim to improve girls social participation could include a strong collaborated support mechanism that is communally devised. The mechanisms such that would ensure that girls who are brought back to school through such efforts are retained through continuous guidance and counselling if need be. This is possible using a bottom up approach in line with the advocacy role of school matrons. In this case, the community can be invited to suggest new ways that go hand in
hand with the changing needs of the modern social contexts similar to the ‘Teu le va’ – implying ‘directive action’ – recommended within the Pacific educational context (Airini, Mila-Schaaf, Coxon, Mara, & Sanga, 2010). Airini et al. (2010), report this to be one way of recognising a holistic transformation within communities and, where the decisions reached can be valued and acted upon.

In my study context such directives could entail ways of utilising the available pool of resources within the community including the community’s decisions upon where to find, and how to utilise those resources. Further research using contextually suitable methods such as African transformative feminist’ focus on the grassroots level participants could inform policies and provide the needed human resource at the same time. A practical example can take into account the training of volunteer school matrons who can work in areas found to have problems of acute shortage or complete absence of female teachers. This can address the problem of heavy dependence on the government to solve every single problem that faces the educational sector across the country while democratising the educational processes for girls.

The introduction of school counsellors in government day secondary schools who can work hand in hand with school matrons who perform malezi could also be useful. This would recognise that traditional social systems have been disrupted in many parts of Tanzania where the care of younger generation was primarily conducted by immediate families and clan members. Although the existing traditional support systems such as faith-based patrons and matrons, and the extended families, are still assumed to help, there are emerging psychosocial problems facing girls that these people are not specially trained to deal with. Besides, globalisation of the socio-economic structures is a reality for many people in Tanzania with the spread of advanced new technologies. This reality comes with all sorts of problems, which means that girls deal with various problems beyond the scope of help available to them.

Sometimes girls deal with various psychosocial problems in the absence of parents or guardians that they might have lost through common problems, such as HIV/AIDS, within the Tanzanian society. Examples of such psychosocial problems include situations in which girls have experienced rape, or when they do not know how to protect themselves from the negative impacts of social networks and exposure to drugs and substance abuse. Therefore, the existence of support mechanisms for girls in low socio-economic schools,
such as those in the context of the study, can save millions of the country’s perishing – but valuable – human capital to improve its economy while addressing the general social welfare of its population.

In connection to the above, the first and most harmful practice that has hindered girls’ educational equity for years is to do with the Tanzanian Law of Marriage Act of 1971. It is now time the government took a bold step to review and change this law in order to help abolish child marriage in reference to the Law of Marriage Act of 1971 among the societies where this is still a critical problem across the country. The ongoing debate for constitutional amendment in Tanzania must now involve the amendment of this that has continued to deter and undermine girls’ educational advancement and consequent social participation in their later lives.

There is also urgent need for the government to address the regulation of land ownership. Although it is making a positive move in this area, most communities are guided by the customary laws that favour family possession of land where women have no say over ownership. This is a very serious setback that affects decision-making over family financial spending on girls’ education in the majority of patriarchal societies. The regulation of land ownership can be extended to public policy on assets and property ownership, which still favours most males rather than females. The continued inability to fairly regulate land ownership aggravates the condition of women’s low social participation overall. This is in the sense that where women cannot participate socially through higher educational attainment, their social position is otherwise, continuously undermined and lowly maintained. The consequence is a vicious circle with low social participation for the majority of women.

In addition, all the educational stakeholders, led by the government as a regulating body, can consider establishing specific training institutions to train matrons and patrons in educational specific malezi. Learning from other research findings such as that conducted by Pattison et al. (2009), provide insight that helps the educational stakeholders to share knowledge that can help invent culturally relevant and affordable mechanisms in order to provide alternative ways of training of matrons to support girls’ education across the country. This training can be used effectively and uniformly across educational institutions at different levels and in different social contexts, while giving room to review and improve where, and when necessary over a certain period of time. This can be one significant
measure to improve engagement in learning by girls and is one possibility to consequently improve their learning experience even in an environment with limited resources.

The findings reported and discussed in this thesis emphasised the significance of a holistic approach to address gender equity and social justice through the theoretical perspectives adopted in this study. Based on the participants’ suggestions, the need for further research in this area cannot be emphasised enough. Furthermore, the need for effective reviews and implementation of various education policies that will realistically address the problems associated with girls’ educational experience is now the task at hand for all educational stakeholders in Tanzania. Indeed, the reviews need to pay special attention to the potentials that psychosocial support systems within the educational establishments – the matrons system for this study – can play to contribute towards addressing equality, gender equity and education quality.

Finally, as a nation we must not forget our ancestors’ wisdom simply expressed in the saying, ‘fimbo ya jirani/mbali haiuwi nyoka’ – meaning, a neighbour’s/distant stick doesn’t kill a snake, also meaning that a stick in the hand is the one that kills a snake. That is to say, continuous dependence on others to tackle immediate social problems is inadequate. The common human enemies identified in the Tanzanian context by the founder of the nation, Mwl. Julius Kambarage Nyerere, as hunger, ignorance and poverty must be tackled holistically and together through negotiations at different socio-economic levels; communally, nationally and even internationally. Alongside my study findings, the various educational research reports conducted in the country pertaining to the low social position of women present an overdue plea that must now be addressed by every education stakeholder to match and meet the new global Sustainable Development Agendas goals 4, 5 and 10 in improving socio-economic lives of all Tanzanians. These goals (4, 5 and 10) concern quality of education, gender equity and reduced inequalities respectively (UN, 2015). Striving to meet these goals by all means, including active application of bottom up approaches to social justice through the educational processes may significantly reverse the low status and social position of Tanzanian women. It is indeed possible to apply the same recommendations to other developing countries that share similar social contexts to this study.
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11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Research permits

13 December 2013

Milka Otieno
PHD student
Victoria University of Wellington Faculty of Education
C/- School of Educational Policy and Implementation
Donald Street
Wellington

Dear Milka,

RE: Ethics application SEPI/2013/82 RM 20429

I am pleased to advise you that your ethics application "The Perceived influence of School matrons on Girls' educational experience and social participation in Tanzania", with the required changes, has been approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Faculty of Education Ethics Committee. Please note that the approval for your research to commence is from the date of this letter.

Best wishes for your research.

Yours Sincerely

[Signature]

Dr Judith Loveridge
Co-Convenor
Victoria University of Wellington Faculty of Education Ethics Committee
RE: REQUEST FOR RESEARCH PERMIT

I am seeking your permission to carry out research in rural and urban secondary schools in Tanzania as part of my PhD study.

I would like permits for Manyara region; Babati district council, Mara region; Serengeti district council, Dodoma region; Dodoma Municipal council, Kagera region; Ngora district council; and Mwanza region, Mtwara Municipal Council. My research topic is “THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL MATRONS ON GIRLS’ EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN TANZANIA”. I am hoping to interview school matrons, school girls and heads of schools. The data will contribute to the understanding of the role of school matrons and how they influence girls’ educational outcome in the Tanzanian society.

I would appreciate your kind help with regards to this as it enables me to contribute towards educational processes to function at the best interest of all Tanzanians, for the development of Tanzania. I intend to provide the Ministry with a link to my thesis and a summary of my findings to help inform secondary education policies in line with this study. Attached here with, is a copy of ethical approval from the faculty of Education at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand.

Kindest Regards,

Milka Venance Musa Otieno
THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

Telegrams “TAMISEMI” DODOMA
Regional Administration
Telephone No. (026) 2322568, 2321007,
and Local Government,
2322653, 2322620
P.O. Box. 1923,
Fax No. (026) 2322116, 2322446,
DODOMA.
2321013.
E-mail: ps@pmoralg.go.tz
In reply please quote:

Ref. No. AB. 400/415/01/F/102

06th January, 2014

District Executive Director,
Ngara District Council,
Babati District Council,
Serengeti District Council

Re: RESEARCH PERMIT

Kindly refer to the subject matter above.

I would like to introduce to you Miss Milka Venance Otieno, PhD candidate from Victoria University of Wellington.

Miss Milka Venance has been granted research to carry out research in Rural and Urban Secondary Schools in Tanzania as part of her PhD study.

The research permit granted to carry out research in Babati, Serengeti and Ngara District Councils. However, she expect to gather data by interviewing School matrons, School girls and Heads of Schools your District Councils.

Please assist her accordingly.

Thank you for your continued cooperation.

For: PERMANENT SECRETARY

CC Milka V. Mussa Otieno,
PhD candidate,
Victoria University of Wellington,
Newzealand.
THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
PRIME MINISTER’S OFFICE

Regional Administration
and Local Government,
P.O. Box 1923,
DODOMA.

Telegrams “TAMISEMI” DODOMA
Telephone No. (026) 2322848, 2321607,
2322853, 2322420
Fax No. (026) 2322116, 2322146,
2321013.
E-mail: pm@pmzong.go.tz

In reply please quote:

Ref. No. AB. 400/415/01/F

24th January, 2014

District Executive Director,
Mtwara Municipal Council,
MTWARA.

Re: RESEARCH PERMIT

Kindly refer to the subject matter above.

I would like to introduce to you Miss Milka Venance Otieno, PhD candidate from Victoria University of Wellington.

Miss Milka Venance has been granted research to carry out research in Rural and Urban Secondary Schools in Tanzania as part of her PhD study.

The research permit granted to carry out research in Mtwara Municipal Council. However, she expect to gather data by interviewing School matrons, School girls and Heads of Schools your District Councils.

Please assist her accordingly.

Thank you for your continued cooperation.

M. S. Mrisho
For:- PERMANENT SECRETARY

CC  Milka V. Musa Otieno,
PhD candidate,
Victoria University of Wellington,
Newzealand.
HALMAHAURI YA WILAYA YA BABATI
(Baruza zote ziangikwe kwa Mkurugenzi Mtendaji)

Simu Na. 027-2531011/55
Fax Na. 027-2531055

Kumb. Na. DED/BBT/ED/A. 35/2

08/01/2014

Mkuu wa shule
Shule ya:
S. L. P. ...
BABATI

YAH: KIBALI CHA KUFANYA UTAFITI

Namtambulisha kwako Bi. Milka Venace Otieno ambaye ni mwanafunzi wa Shahada ya Uzamivu (PhD) katika chuo Kikuu cha Victoria nchini New Zealand.

Bi Milka anafanya utafiti katika shule za sekondari katika Halmashauri ya Wilaya ya Babati juu ya MTIZAMO KUHUSU USHAWISHI WA MATRONI KATIKA ELimu YA WASICHANA WA SEKONDARI NA UJUMUKAJI WAO KWENYE MASWALA YA KIJAMII NCHINI TANZANIA. Amepewa kibali cha kutembelea shule yako ili kuweza kuuliza maswali ili kupata taarifa zinayohusiana na utafiti wake. Tafadhali mpatie ushirikiano anaohitaji.

Nakutakia kazi njema

Judith Materu
Kny Mkurugenzi Mtendaji
Halmashauri ya Wilaya
BABATI
HALMASHAURI YA WILAYA YA BABATI
(Barua zote ziandikwe kwa Mkurugenzi Mtendaji)

Simu Na. 027-2531011/55
Fax Na. 027-2531055

Email: [REDACTED]

Kumb. Na. DED/BBT/ED/A. 35/2

08/01/2014

YAH: KIBALI CHA KUFANYA UTAFITI

Namtambulisha kwako Bi. Milka Venace Otieno ambaye ni mwanafunzi wa Shahada ya Uzamivu (PhD) katika chuo Kikuu cha Victoria nchini New Zealand.

Bi Milka anafanya utafiti katika shule za sekondari katika Halmashauri ya Wilaya ya Babati Juu ya MTIZAMO KUHUSSU USHAVISHI WA MATRONI KATIKA ELIMU YA WASICHANA WA SEKONDARI NA UJUMUJKAJI WAO KWENYE MASWALA YA KIJAMII NCHINI TANZANIA. Amepewa kibali cha kutembelea shule yako ili kuweza kuuliza maswali ili kupata taarifa zinayohusiana na utafiti wake. Tafadhali mpatie ushirikiano anaohitaji.

Nakutaka kazi njema

Judith Materu
Kny Mkurugenzi Mtendaji
Halmashauri ya Wilaya
BABATI
JAMHURI YA MUUNGANO WA TANZANIA

HALMASHAURI YA MANISPA WAGANO DODOMA
(Barua zote zandikwe kwa Mkurugenzi wa Manispa)

Mkoa wa Dodoma
Tel.: 2354817
Fax: 2354817/ 2321668

Ofisi ya Mkurugenzi wa Manispa
P. O. BOX 1249
DODOMA

E-mail:

Unapojibu tafadhali taja

Tarehe: 24/01/2014

Kumb. Na.HMD/E. SEK/207

Wakuu wa Shule: [Redacted]

Dodoma.

YAI: KIBALI CHA KUFANYA UTAFITI

Namtambulisha kwako Bi. Milka V. Otieno ambaye ni mwanaafu wa shahada ya
Usamivu katika chuo kikuu cha Victoria nchini New Zealand.

Bi.Milka anafanya utafiti katika shule za sekondari za Halmashauri ya Manispa ya
Dodoma juu ya MTIZAMO KUHUZU USHAISHI WA MATRONI KATIKA ELIMU YA
WASICHANA WA SEKONDARI NA UJUMUIKAJI WAO KWENYE MASWALA YA
KIJAMII NCHINI TANZANIA.

Hivyo atatembelea shule yake. Tafadhali mpatie ushirikiano.

Takutakia kazi njema

Sophia Mbuyu

Kny: Mkurugenzi wa Manispa

DODOMA
JAMHURI YA MUUNGANO WA TANZANIA

HALMASHAURI YA MANISPAA YA DODOMA
(Barua zote zisaidiwe kwa Mkurugenzi wa Manispa)

MKOA WA DODOMA
Tel.: 2354817
Fax: 2354817/ 2321668

OFISI YA MKURUGENZI WA MANISPA
P. O. BOX 1249
DODOMA

Unapojobu tafadhali taja

Kumb. Na.HMD/E. SEK/207

Tarehe: 24/01/2014

Wakuu wa Shule

Dodoma.

YAH: KIBALI CHA KUFANYA UTAFITI

Namumbilisha kwako Bi. Milka V. Otieno ambaye ni mwanaume wa shuhada ya Uzamivu katika chuo kikuu cha Victoria nchini New Zealand.

Bi.Milka anafanya uafiti katika shule za sekondari za Halmasauri ya Manispa ya Dodoma juu ya MTIZAMO KUHUSU USHAWISHI WA MATRONI KATIKA ELIMU YA WASICHANA WA SEKONDARI NA UJUMUKAJI WAO KWENYE MASWALA YA KIJAMII NCHINI TANZANIA.

Hivyo atatembelea shule yake. Tafadhali mpatia uhiririkiano.

Takutakia kazi njema

Sophia Mbegu
Kny: Mkurugenzi wa Manispa.

DODOMA
Tanzania Women Lawyers Association
P.O.Box 1920,
Dodoma.
Tanzania.
East Africa.

RE: REQUEST FOR RESEARCH PERMIT

I am seeking your permission to carry out research in with a group of women through your association as part of my PhD study.

I would like permission to interview women for a focus group discussion at a place and time suitable for them. My research topic is "THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL MATRONS ON GIRLS' EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN TANZANIA". I am hoping to interview school matrons, school girls, heads of schools and women groups at a central government and community levels. The data will contribute to the understanding of the role of school matrons and how they influence girls' educational outcome in the Tanzanian society.

I would appreciate your kind help with regards to this as it enables me to contribute towards educational processes to function at the best interest of all Tanzanians, for the development of Tanzania. I intend to provide participating organisations and the Ministry of Education with a link to my thesis and a summary of my findings to help inform secondary education policies in line with this study. Attached here with, is a copy of ethical approval from the faculty of Education at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand.

Kindly Request:

Milka Venance Musu Orieno
Appendix 2: Information sheets

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

INFORMATION SHEET FOR THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND
VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN TANZANIA

Research Project:

THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL MATRONS ON GIRLS’
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN TANZANIA

What is this study about?

This project seeks to:

• Better understand the role of matrons in Tanzanian secondary schools;

• Better understand the challenges girls face during the course of their secondary school experience; and

• Address issues of equity in education.

Why study this topic?

The study will provide data that will contribute to the ongoing work of addressing the quality of education in secondary schools, especially for girls.

What would be involved?

I plan to gather data from two urban and two rural secondary schools. I need a letter of introduction and permission from the Ministry in order to approach the schools and conduct interviews and focus groups.
In each school, I plan to interview one Matron and one Head of School (eight individual interviews in total). In two urban and two rural schools, I plan to run focus groups of girl students in Form three and four (approximately five girls per group, a total of 20 girls). Finally, I plan to interview two focus groups of women who may be parents or female teachers or a community group (approximately eight participants for each group, total 16 women).

**Who can take part?**

- Girls in Form three between 17-18 years of age;
- Matrons in co-educational secondary schools;
- Heads of Schools in co-educational secondary schools; and,
- Groups of women who have been through secondary school education and are interested in issues faced by girls in Tanzania

**What about participants’ confidentiality and privacy?**

It is important that participants feel safe and that their privacy is respected. To address this and to ensure that individual views will not be identifiable, I will ensure that all identifying features, including the identification of the school, will be removed from the interview transcripts. Moreover, the interviews will not be shared with anyone else other than my supervisors.

**May participants choose to withdraw from the study once I start?**

Participants have the right to withdraw their consent at any time up to the collation of data by 7th of April, 2014.

**What happens to the information shared in discussion?**

Discussions will be audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher. All participants’ will be given a chance to delete or make any amendments to the interview transcripts. At the end of each focus group, key themes arising from the discussion will be confirmed with group members. All audio-recordings and transcripts will be kept in a locked file and access restricted to the investigators and supervisors. All data will be destroyed five years after the thesis is submitted.

**How will I be kept up to date with the findings of the study?**
My completed thesis will be online, but if you would like a summary of the key findings, please tick the appropriate box on the consent form.

**Whom do I contact if I have a question or query?**

If you have any questions about the research, you are welcome to contact me or my supervisors at any time. Contact details are below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Mobile</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milka Otieno</td>
<td>PhD student</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School of Education Policy and Implementation,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td>[Redacted]</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Mobile:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Supervisors:**

Dr. Sue Cornforth
School of Education, Policy and Implementation,
Faculty of Education,
Email: [Redacted]
Phone: 04 463 5177

Dr. Joanna Kidman
School of Te Kura Maori,
Faculty of Education,
Email: [Redacted]
Phone: 044635882

The Faculty of Education Ethics Committee under the delegated responsibility from the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee has approved my research (reference 0000020429). If at any time you have any questions or concerns about your treatment as a research participant in this study, contact Dr. Allison Kirkman, Chair of the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee (telephone: [Redacted] E-mail: [Redacted]).
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

INFORMATION SHEET FOR HEADS OF SCHOOLS

Research Project:
THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL MATRONS ON GIRLS’ EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN TANZANIA

What is this study about?
This project seeks to:

- Better understand the role of matrons in Tanzanian secondary schools;
- Better understand the challenges of girls during the course of their secondary school experience; and,
- Address issues of equity in education.

Why study this topic?
The study will provide data that will hopefully contribute to the ongoing work of addressing quality of education in secondary schools, especially for girls.

What would be involved?
I plan to gather data from two urban and two rural secondary schools, and I am seeking your permission:

- To allow the research to be carried out in your school; and
- To take part in an individual interview.

If you agree, I would like to conduct an individual interview with you to explore your experiences of appointing and working with school matrons and comments on their relationships with girls.
The interview will last approximately 30 – 60 minutes and will take place at a time and place that is convenient to you.

In each school, I plan to interview one Matron and one Head of Schools (Eight individual interviews in total). In two urban and two rural schools, I plan to run focus groups of girl students in Form three and four (Five girls per group, a total of 20 girls). Finally, I plan to interview two focus groups of women who may be parents or female teachers or a community group (approximately eight participants for each group, total 16 women).

**Who can take part?**

- Heads of Schools in co-educational secondary schools;
- Girls in Form three between 17-18 years of age;
- Matrons in co-educational secondary schools; and
- Groups of women who have been through secondary school education and are interested in issues faced by girls in Tanzania

**What about participants’ confidentiality and privacy?**

It is important that participants feel safe and that their privacy is respected. To address this and to ensure that individual views will not be identifiable, I will ensure that all identifying features, including the identification of the school, will be removed from the interview transcripts. Moreover, the interviews will not be shared with anyone else other than my supervisors.

**May participants choose to withdraw from the study once I start?**

Participants have the right to withdraw their consent at any time up to the collation of data by 07th of April, 2014.

**What happens to the information shared in discussion?**

Discussions will be audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher. You will be given a chance to delete or make any amendments to the interview transcripts. All audio-recordings and transcripts will be kept in a locked file and access restricted to the investigators and supervisors. All data will be destroyed five years after the thesis is submitted.
We cannot guarantee that other members of the focus group discussions will respect your confidentiality, but I will discuss how important this is at the beginning of the group and get a verbal commitment.

**How will I be kept up to date with the findings of the study?**

My completed thesis will be online, but if you would like a summary of the key findings, please tick the appropriate box on the consent form.

**Whom do I contact if I have a question or query?**

If you have any questions about the research, you are welcome to contact me or my supervisors at any time. Contact details are below:

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<tr>
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<th>Position</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Mobile</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milka Otieno</td>
<td>PhD student</td>
<td>[PhD student]</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Education</td>
<td>Policy and Implementation,</td>
<td>Email: [PhD student] Email:</td>
<td>Phone:</td>
<td>Mobile:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Sue Cornforth</td>
<td>School of Education,</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Sue.cornforth@uw.ac.nz">Sue.cornforth@uw.ac.nz</a></td>
<td>Phone:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Policy and Implementation,</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:Sue.cornforth@uw.ac.nz">Sue.cornforth@uw.ac.nz</a></td>
<td>Phone:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Joanna Kidman</td>
<td>School of Te Kura</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Joanna.kidman@vuw.ac.nz">Joanna.kidman@vuw.ac.nz</a></td>
<td>Phone:</td>
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<td>Maori, Faculty of</td>
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</table>

The Faculty of Education Ethics Committee under the delegated responsibility from the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee has approved my research
If at any time you have any questions or concerns about your treatment as a research participant in this study, contact Dr. Allison Kirkman, Chair of the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee (telephone: [redacted]; E-mail: [redacted]).
What is this study about?

This project seeks to:

- Better understand the role of matrons in Tanzanian secondary schools;
- Better understand the challenges of girls during the course of their secondary school experience; and,
- Address issues of equity in education.

Why study this topic?

The study will provide data that will hopefully contribute to the ongoing work of addressing quality of education in secondary schools, especially for girls.

What would be involved?

I plan to gather data from two urban and two rural secondary schools.

In each school, I plan to interview one Matron and one Head of Schools (Eight individual interviews in total). In two urban and two rural schools, I plan to run focus groups of girl students in Form three and four (Five girls per group, a total of 20 girls). Finally, I plan
to interview two focus groups of women who may be parents or female teachers or a community group (approximately eight participants for each group, total 16 women).

**Who can take part?**

- Girls in Form three between 17-18 years of age;
- Matrons in co-educational secondary schools;
- Heads of Schools in co-educational secondary schools; and,
- Groups of women who have been through secondary school education and are interested in issues faced by girls in Tanzania

**What about participants’ confidentiality and privacy?**

It is important that participants feel safe and that their privacy is respected. To address this and to ensure that individual views will not be identifiable, I will ensure that all identifying features, including the identification of the school, will be removed from the interview transcripts. Moreover, the interviews will not be shared with anyone else other than my supervisors.

**May participants choose to withdraw from the study once I start?**

Participants have the right to withdraw their consent at any time up to the collation of data by the 7th of April 2014.

**What happens to the information shared in discussion?**

Discussions will be audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher. You will be given a chance to delete or make any amendments to the interview transcripts, or to the summary of the focus group discussion. All audio-recordings and transcripts will be kept in a locked file and access restricted to the investigators and supervisors. All data will be destroyed five years after the thesis is submitted.

We cannot guarantee that other members of the focus group discussions will respect your confidentiality, but I will discuss how important this is at the beginning of the group and get a verbal commitment.

**How will I be kept up to date with the findings of the study?**

My completed thesis will be online, but if you would like a summary of the key findings, please tick the appropriate box on the consent form.
Whom do I contact if I have a question or query?

If you have any questions about the research, you are welcome to contact me or my supervisors at any time. Contact details are below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milka Otieno [PhD student]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School of Education Policy and Implementation,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: [redacted]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone: [redacted]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobile: [redacted]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Supervisors:**

1. Dr. Sue Cornforth
   School of Education, Policy and Implementation,
   Faculty of Education,
   Email: [redacted]
   Phone: [redacted]

2. Dr. Joanna Kidman
   School of Te Kura Maori,
   Faculty of Education,
   Email: [redacted]
   Phone: [redacted]

The Faculty of Education Ethics Committee under the delegated responsibility from the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee has approved my research (reference 0000020429). If at any time you have any questions or concerns about your treatment as a research participant in this study, contact Dr. Allison Kirkman, Chair of the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee (telephone: [redacted] E-mail:[redacted]).
Information Sheet for School Matrons

Research Project:

The Perceived Influence of School Matrons on Girls’ Educational Experience and Social Participation in Tanzania

What is this study about?

This project seeks to:

- Better understand the role of matrons in Tanzanian secondary schools;
- Better understand the challenges of girls during the course of their secondary school experience; and,
- Address issues of equity in education.

Why study this topic?

The study will provide data that will hopefully contribute to the ongoing work of addressing quality of education in secondary schools, especially for girls.

What would be involved?

I plan to gather data from two urban and two rural secondary schools.

In each school, I plan to interview one Matron and one Head of Schools (Eight individual interviews in total). In two urban and two rural schools, I plan to run focus groups of girl students in Form three and four (Five girls per group, a total of 20 girls). Finally, I plan to interview two focus groups of women who may be parents or female teachers or a community group (approximately eight participants for each group, total 16 women).
Who can take part?

- Girls in Form three between 17-18 years of age;
- Matrons in co-educational secondary schools;
- Heads of Schools in co-educational secondary schools; and,
- Groups of women who have been through secondary school education and are interested in issues faced by girls in Tanzania

What about participants’ confidentiality and privacy?

It is important that participants feel safe and that their privacy is respected. To address this and to ensure that individual views will not be identifiable, I will ensure that all identifying features, including the identification of the school, will be removed from the interview transcripts. Moreover, the interviews will not be shared with anyone else other than my supervisors.

May participants choose to withdraw from the study once I start?

Participants have the right to withdraw their consent at any time up to the collation of data by the 7th of April 2014.

What happens to the information shared in the interviews?

The interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher. You will be given a chance to delete or make any amendments to the interview transcripts. All audio-recordings and transcripts will be kept in a locked file and access restricted to the investigators and supervisors. All data will be destroyed five years after the thesis is submitted.

How will I be kept up to date with the findings of the study?

A link to my completed thesis will be provided to your school for you to access, but if you would like a summary of the key findings, please tick the appropriate box on the consent form and provide your contact details on how this can be sent to you.

Whom do I contact if I have a question or query?

If you have any questions about the research, you are welcome to contact me or my supervisors at any time. Contact details are below:
Milka Otieno [PhD student]
School of Education Policy and Implementation,
Email: [Redacted]
Phone: [Redacted]
Mobile: [Redacted]

Supervisors:
1. Dr. Sue Cornforth
School of Education, Policy and Implementation,
Faculty of Education,
Email: [Redacted]
Phone: [Redacted]

2. Dr. Joanna Kidman
School of Te Kura Maori,
Faculty of Education,
Email: [Redacted]
Phone: [Redacted]

The Faculty of Education Ethics Committee under the delegated responsibility from the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee has approved my research (reference 0000020429). If at any time you have any questions or concerns about your treatment as a research participant in this study, contact Dr. Allison Kirkman, Chair of the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee (telephone: [Redacted]; E-mail: [Redacted]).
Appendix 3: Consent forms

CONSENT FORM 1

[Parents/Guardian]

RESEARCH TITLE: THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL MATRONS ON GIRLS’ EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN TANZANIA

I have read the information sheet, and my questions about the study have been answered well. I understand that my daughter has been invited to take part in a research project.

1. My daughter, aged ___________ years, has agreed to take part in group discussion, and the discussion will be voice-recorded and notes written down.

2. I can withdraw my permission for my daughter’s participation in this project at any time up to 7th April, 2014.

3. Nobody will be identified in public material taken from this study. My daughter and her school will not be identified.

4. My daughter is taking part in this study willingly.

☐ I agree that my daughter can take part in this study
☐ I do not agree that my daughter take part in this study
☐ I would like a summary of the key findings.

Parent/Guardian of Participant’s Name (Printed) __________________ Parent/Guardian of Participant’s Signature ______________ Date ______________

Contact details if you would like a summary of the findings:

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

NB. Girls will send forms to their parents, and bring back the filled in forms to their schools where I will collect them by the date agreed between me and them.
CONSENT FORM 1
(Swahili Version)
KIBALI CHA KUSHIRIKI 1
[Mzazi/Mlezi]

TOPIKI YA UTAFITI: MITIZAMO KUHUSSU USHAWISHI WA MATRONI KATIKA ELIMU YA WASICHANA WA SEKONDARI NA UJUMUIKAJI WAO KWENYE MASWALA YA KIJAMII NCHINI TANZANIA.

Nimesoma yaliyomo katika taarifa juu ya utafiti huu na maswali yangu kuihusu yamejibiwa ipaswavyo. Binti yangu amealikwa kushiriki na ninaelewa ya kwamba:

1. Binti yangu mwenye umri wa miaka____amekubali kushiriki katika kikundi cha majadiliano, na majadiliano hayatarekodiwa na kunakiliwa.

2. Ninawezu kuamua kuwa binti yangu asiendelee kushiriki katika utafiti huu muda wowote hadi tarehe 07.04.2014


4. Binti yangu anashiriki kwa hiari yake.

☐ Nimekubali kuwa binti yangu ashiriki katika utafiti huu.

☐ Sikubali kuwa binti yangu ashiriki katika utafiti huu.

☐ Ningepepanda kupata muhtasari wa mambo muhimu yatokanayo na utafiti huu.

Jina la mzazi/mlezi (Herufi kubwa/chapa)____________________________________ Sahihi
ya mzazi/mlezi. ___________________________________________ Tarehe____________________________________

Anwani ikiwa unapenda kupata muhtasari wa yatokanayo na utafiti huu:
__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________
CONSENT FORM 2.

[Heads of Schools and Matrons]

RESEARCH TITLE: THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL MATRONS ON GIRLS’ EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN TANZANIA

I have read the information sheet, and my questions regarding the study have been answered satisfactorily. I understand that:

1. I will be interviewed once and the interview will be audiotaped and transcribed;
2. I can withdraw from this project at any time up to the collation of data by 7th of April, 2014;
3. Neither I nor other individuals or schools that I refer to will be identified in any publications;
4. I am taking part in this research study voluntarily and without coercion;
5. Transcripts will be returned to me for comments or amendment.

☐ I agree to take part in this research
☐ I do not agree to take part in this research
☐ I would like a summary of the key findings.

Participant’s Name (Printed)_____________________________Participant’s Signature_____________________________

_____________________________ Date __________________________

Contact details for distribution of summary of findings:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
CONSENT FORM 2
(Swahili Version)
KIBALI CHA KUSHIRIKI 2
[Mwalimu mkuu/Waalimu walezi wa kike au matroni]

TOPIKI YA UTAFITI: MITIZAMO KUHUSU USHAWISHI WA MATRONI KATIKA ELIMU YA WASICHANA WA SEKONDARI NA UJUMUIKAJI WAO KWENYE MASWALA YA KIJAMII NCHINI TANZANIA.

Nimesoma yaliyomo katika taarifa juu ya utafiti huu na maswali yangu kuihusu yamejibiwa ipaswavyo. Nimealikwa kushiriki na ninaelewa ya kwamba:

1. Nitahojiwa mara moja na mahojiano hayo yaterekodiwa na kunakiliwa.
4. Ninashiriki kwa hiari yangu.
5. Nitapewa nakala ya mahojiano kuhakiki ya liyoniakiliwa.
   ☐ Nimekubali kushiriki katika utafiti huu.
   ☐ Sijakubali kushiriki katika utafiti huu.
   ☐ Ningependa kupata muhtasari wa mambo mhimu yatokanayo na utafiti huu.

Jina la M/Mkuu/mlezi (Herufi kubwa/chapa) ________________________ Sahihi ya M/Mkuu/Mlezi wa kike. ________________________ Tarehe ________________________

Anwani ikiwa unapenda kupata muhtasari wa yatokanayo na utafiti huu:
CONSENT FORM 3

[Women groups]

RESEARCH TITLE: THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL MATRONS ON GIRLS' EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN TANZANIA

I have read the information sheet, and my questions regarding the study have been answered satisfactorily. I understand that:

1. I will be interviewed in a focus group once and the interview will be voice taped and notes written down;
2. I can withdraw from this project at any time up to the gathering of data by 7th of April, 2014;
3. Neither I nor other individuals or the organisations that I refer to will be identified in public materials from this study;
4. I am taking part in this research study willingly;
5. Key points from the discussion will be agreed upon at the end of the discussion.

☐ I agree to take part in this study
☐ I do not agree to take part in this study
☐ I would like a summary of the key findings.

Participant’s Name (Printed)_________________________ Participant’s Signature ____________________________
Date __________________________

Contact details if you would like a summary of the findings:
________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
CONSENT FORM 3
(Swahili Version)
KIBALI CHA KUSHIRIKI 3
[Kina mama katika makundi]

TOPIKI YA UTAFITI: MITIZAMO KUHUSU USHAWISHI WA MATRONI KATIKA
ELIMU YA WASICHANA WA SEKONDARI NA UJUMUIKAJI WAO KWENYE
MASWALA YA KIJAMII NCHINI YA TANZANIA

Nimesoma yaliyomo katika taarifa juu ya utafiti huu na maswali yangu kuihusu
yamejibiwa ipaswavyo. Nimealikwa kushiriki na ninaelewa ya kwamba:

1. Nitahojiwa mara moja katika kundi la wanawake wanane na mahojiano hayo
yatarekodiwa na kunakiliwa.

2. Ninaweza kuamua kutoendelea kushiriki katika utafiti huu mpaka hapo tarehe
07.04.2014.

3. Hakuna ambaye atatambulika kati ya watakaoshiriki katika jalada mbali mbali za uma
zitakazotokana na utafiti huu.

4. Ninashiriki kwa hiari yangu.

5. Mambo muhimu yatokanayo na majadiliano yatapitiwa ili kuhakiki yaliyonakiliwa
kabla ya kufungwa kwa mjadala.

☐ Nimekubali kushiriki katika utafiti huu.

☐ Sijakubali kushiriki katika utafiti huu.

☐ Ningependa kupata muhtasari wa mambo mhimu yatokanayo na utafiti huu.

Jina la Mama anayeshiriki (Herufi kubwa/chapa) ______________________ Sahihi ya mama
anayeshiriki. ______________________ Tarehe ______________________

Anwani ikiwa unapenda kupata muhtasari wa yatokanayo na utafiti huu:
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________.
CONSENT FORM 4

[Secondary school girls in Form three and four]

RESEARCH TITLE: THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL MATRONS ON GIRLS’ EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN TANZANIA

I have read the information sheet, and it has also been explained to me. My questions have been answered well. I understand that:

1. I will take part in a group discussion and the discussion will be voice recorded and notes written down;
2. I can withdraw anything I have said up to the gathering of data by 7th April, 2014;
3. I will not be identified in documents made public from this study;
4. I am taking part in this research study willingly;
5. Key points from the discussion will be agreed upon at the end of the discussion.

☐ I agree to take part in this research
☐ I do not agree to take part in this research
☐ I would like a summary of the key findings.

Participant’s Name (Printed) ____________________________ Participant’s Signature ____________________________ Date ____________________________

Contact details if you would like a summary of the findings:

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

. 
CONSENT FORM 4
(Swahili Version)

KIBALI CHA KUSHIRIKI 4

[Wanafunzi wa kike kidato cha tatu na cha nne]

YAHUSU: MTIZAMO KUHUSU USHAWISHI WA MATRONI KATIKA ELimu YA WASICHANA WA SEKONDARI NA UJUMUKAJI WAO KWENYE MASWALA YA KIJAMII NCHINI TANZANIA.

Nimesoma yaliyomo katika taarifa juu ya utafiti huu na maswali yangu kuihusu yamejibiwa ipaswavyo. Nimealikwa kushiriki na ninaelewa ya kwamba:

1. Nitahojiwa mara moja katika kundi la wanafunzi watano na mahojiano hayo yatarekodiwa na kunakiliwa.
3. Hakuna ambaye atatambulika kati ya watakaoshiriki katika jalada mbali za uma zitakazotokana na utafiti huu.
4. Ninashiriki kwa hiari yangu.
5. Mambo mhimu yatokanayo na majadiliano yatapitiwa ili kuhakiki yaliyonakiliwa kabla ya kufungwa kwa mjadala.

☐ Nimekubali kushiriki katika utafiti huu.
☐ Sijakubali kushiriki katika utafiti huu.
☐ Ningependa kupata muhtasari wa mambo mhimu yatokanayo na utafiti huu.

Jina la mwanafunzi (Herufi kubwa/chapa)________________________Sahihi ya mwanafunzi: ___________________ Tarehe __________________

Anwani ikiwa unapenda kupata mhutasari wa yatokanayo na utafiti huu:
Appendix 4: RESEARCH AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Appendix 4A: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. **Main research question.**

   What is the influence of school matrons on girls’ educational experience, wellbeing and social participation in Tanzanian co-education secondary schools?

2. **Sub research questions.**
   
   2.1. What are the roles of school matrons in Tanzanian secondary schools?
   
   2.2. What are the challenges that matrons face in their roles?
   
   2.3. How are the matrons equipped to deal with the challenges that girls face in Tanzanian secondary schools?
   
   2.4. What are the contributions of matrons in helping girls achieve active social participation and general wellbeing?
   
   2.5. What are the challenges girls face in achieving active social participation and general wellbeing?
   
   2.6. What are the school matrons’ suggestions for improvement?
   
   2.7. What are the girls’ suggestions for improvement?

Appendix 4B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **Heads of Schools Interview Questions [Individual interviews]**
   
   1.1 I understand that being a Head of School you are also responsible to appoint a school matron, I wondered what specific qualities you have to look for in doing that?
   
   1.2 Are there any policy guidelines to be followed?
   
   1.3 What problems do your matrons face?
   
   1.4 How do they address such problems?
   
   1.5 Would it be possible for you to mention a few contributions of matrons’ on girls’ educational experiences? Why? Or why not?
   
   1.6 Do you have any recommendations and, or suggestions for improvement?
2. The Matrons’ interview questions [Individual interviews]
   2.1 Can you briefly describe your daily responsibilities in taking care of girls around the school environment?
   2.2 Why do you think you were appointed as school matron?
   2.3 Which specific aspects of your responsibilities as a matron do you think are helpful to girls’ experience in this school?
   2.4 What challenges do you face in your role as Matron?
   2.5 If you had a chance to lay out duties and responsibilities of a school matron what would they be?
   2.6 Why do you think these responsibilities are important?
   2.7 What would help you improve your role?
   2.8 What would help you make a better environment for girls in this school?

3. Girls’ focus groups interview questions to stimulate the discussion
   3.1 Tell me about the role of matron in your school.
   3.2 Can you provide some examples of what matrons do in your school?
   3.3 Is it good to have a school matron? Why
   3.4 What kind of challenges do you face at school? Example?
   3.5 Do boys face the same challenges as you? What are the differences?
   3.6 What do you think can help you deal with the challenges that you face?
   3.7 How do matrons make the school a safer place for you?
   3.8 Which proverb, saying idiomatic expressions or narrative can you use best to describe your experience of your school matron?

4. Women focus groups interview questions to stimulate the discussion
   4.1 What are the challenges facing girls in a Tanzanian society?
   4.2 Out of all the challenges you have described, which do you think are the most important?
   4.3 Do you think matrons might be able to help girls deal with these?
   4.4 What about other less immediate challenges?
   4.5 Do you think matrons would need any special assistance or training in order to deal with these challenges?