

**MALE PARTICIPATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES WITH SPECIFIC
REFERENCE TO KINDERGARTENS: THE CASE OF
OSHANA REGION**

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traditional gender roles that are upheld by society.

Some studies on childcare have shown that men and women are equally nurturing when they experience extended contact with their children during infancy and early childhood. Thus, the kindergarten level is important because socialization on gender issues takes place at this level.

The study concludes by offering a number of recommendations that could encourage equal participation of men and women in ECDPS and kindergartens.

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DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to the Ekandjo family, especially my father Joseph Nghiwete Ekandjo ya Shinayeni and late mother Helena Negamba Ekandjo as well as to my wonderful children Joas, Riundja, and Abla. You remain a great inspiration to me.

DECLARATIONS

I declare that this work, entitled “Male Participation in Early Childhood Development Programmes with specific reference to kindergartens: the Case of Oshana Region” is my own independent work except where stated otherwise in the acknowledgements or the text, and it has not been previously submitted in the whole or in part for an award at any institution.

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ACRONYMS

ADEA Association for the Development of Education in Africa

ECD Early Childhood Development

ECDPS Early Childhood Development Programmes

GRN Government of the Republic of Namibia

MWACW Ministry of Women's Affairs and Child Welfare

MBESC Ministry of Basic Education Sports and Culture

NGOS Non-Governmental Organizations

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 BACKGROUND

Research undertaken worldwide shows the importance of parental involvement in child development and the need for parents to be informed about their children's development. It is believed that children will benefit the most in terms of developmental needs (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual) when parents and other caretakers co-operate for the benefit of the children. Efforts are being made generally in terms of community participation of men and women in decision-making processes and the implementation of development programmes, especially for those programmes and actions of national governments that directly guard against social problems that interfere with the optimal development of children.

The international community and governments call for the mainstreaming of gender considerations into all government policies, programmes and projects. In this regard, governments are encouraged to adopt a national gender action plan and strong national women's machinery coupled with adequate resources to affect the mainstreaming process.

However, much of the literature on early childhood development points to the fact that the majority of men are not adequately involved in caring for their

children. For example, a research finding from one of the cross-cultural studies indicates that men spend one quarter the amount of time on childcare that women do (UNICEF, 1994:15). Lipinge et al. (2000: 184) point out that mothers take a key role in childcare. They revealed that fifty nine percent (59%) of mothers in Namibia were involved in taking care of children aged 0-5 years old while only eight percent (8%) of men were involved with the same age group (ibid.).

Given the findings indicated above, the Namibian Government adheres to democratic ideals and is a signatory to international and regional agreements regarding gender as well as children issues. At independence in 1990, Namibia initiated a legal framework in order to address the plight of women and children. This framework includes the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia (1990), the National Programme of Action for Children of Namibia (1991), the National Early Childhood Development Policy (1996) and the National Gender Policy (1997).

1.1.1 The Constitution of the Republic of Namibia (1990)

The Namibian Constitution (1991: 8) emphasizes gender equality before the law, and grants respect to the rights of children. For example, Article 5 of the Constitution recognizes the rights and responsibilities of parents and the extended family and holds them responsible for the care and guidance of the child (GRN 1992: 33; GRN 1990: 11). At the same time, children are assured

of their rights to be cared for by their parents (ibid: 34).

1.1.2 The National Programme of Action for the Children of Namibia (1991)

This Programme reflects Government's commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the World Summit Goals for children (GRN, 1991: 3). The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) spells out the rights that each child is entitled to regardless of sex, religion, and social origin. These rights concern the child's life and refer to human rights issues of survival, development, protection, and participation. Thus, Government and community interventions are called upon in order to ensure the implementation of the human rights of all children. The six sectors addressed under this Programme are summarized as follows (ibid.):

- Primary Health Care and Child Health
- Nutrition and Household Food Security
- Water and Sanitation
- Early Childhood Development, Basic Education and Literacy
- Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances
- The Advancement of Women

1.1.3 National Early Childhood Development Policy (1996)

This Policy was adopted in 1996 and recognizes early childhood development as vital for Namibia's future prosperity and for the success of formal basic education (GRN 1996: 14-17, 25). It also emphasizes the centrality of parental and community involvement in young children's overall development (ibid: 27, 37). More importantly, the Policy recognizes that early childhood development provision cannot be compartmentalized into health, nutrition, education, social and emotional components, but has to be provided in a holistic manner as a shortfall in one area has a direct impact on the other areas. The Policy caters for children aged 0-6 year old.

1.1.4 National Gender Policy (1997)

The National Gender Policy recognizes the gender inequalities that exist in Namibian society because of traditional and cultural barriers. Thus, it specifies the need to address gender power inequalities and gender relations (MWACW 1997: 5-6). The main critical areas of concern to the Policy are such as Gender, Poverty and Rural Development; Gender Balance in Education and Training; Gender and Reproductive Health; Violence Against Women and Children; Gender and Economic Empowerment; Gender Balance in Power and Decision-Making; Information Education and Communication; Gender and the Management of the Environment; The Girl-Child and Monitoring Mechanism (ibid: 7).

The Government has tasked the Ministry of Womens' Affairs and Child Welfare with the responsibility of ensuring that gender equality is achieved in all sectors

of society. Thus, the mission of the Ministry is to promote gender equity by empowering women through the dissemination of information, coordination and networking with stakeholders, mainstreaming of gender issues, promotion of law and policy reform and monitoring of progress so as to ensure that women and men can participate equally in the political, economic, social and cultural development of the country (DWA 1998:5).

It is important to note that the president of the Republic of Namibia is a staunch advocate of gender equality. One of his expressions is that "the Government is committed to the principle of gender integration and to the implementation of activities aimed at achieving gender equality (DWA 1997 b: 3).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Scientific studies about early childhood development have demonstrated that support of early childhood development initiatives has the potential to yield rich benefits for young children, their families, and the society. However, some cross-cultural studies on childcare have shown that men are not adequately involved in the care of children. Furthermore, the studies indicate that if children lack appropriate experiences during early years, there are some negative consequences to society.

Findings by Iipinge et al. (2000:182) on Namibia indicate that there are too few men involved in childcare and that childcare tends to target more women than

men. The implication is that the lack of male participation in early childhood development can have a negative impact on the social development of boys and girls and on parental participation in their children's care and education.

The Namibian Government of Namibia is committed to the well being of its children hence the recognition from the Government that the future of the country belongs to the children. Thus, there is a call from government for the involvement of men and women in the care of their children. Thus, equal participation of men and women in early childhood development, especially in kindergarten is critical to the optimal growth and development of children.

1.3 Research Objectives.

In view of the problem stated above, the objectives of the study are:

- To determine the factors that serve as a constraint to male participation in Early Childhood Development Programmes;
- To investigate public perceptions and attitudes regarding the participation of men in Early Childhood Development Programmes, especially in kindergarten;
- To determine the level of male participation in kindergartens;
- To find out whether current ongoing Early Childhood Development

Programmes do take into account gender concerns;

- To make recommendations in order to enhance male participation in Early Childhood Development Programmes (kindergarten).

1.4 Research Questions

The main research question:

Why are fewer males than females involved at the kindergarten level?

Sub-questions:

- What kinds of measures have been taken in Early Childhood Development Programmes to ensure that gender concerns are taken into account?
- What percentage of people working in kindergartens are men?
- How can men in early childhood development affect change positively in gender relations?

1.5 Justification of the Study

The demand for childcare has become more acute as parents continue to seek

safe and affordable places to leave their children while at work. Based on the findings by the National Planning Commission (2001), as at 2001, there were 200 000 children aged 3-6 enrolled in Early Childhood Development Programmes in Namibia (Namibia Population and Housing Census 2001). Approximately, 48.3% of all children between 3 and 6 years old attend an Early Childhood Development Programme in Oshana Region, and about 49% of them are girls and 47.6% are boys (ibid.).

The study by Iipinge et al. (2000: 184) appears to suggest the gender gap in caring for children. This implies that men are not fully involved in the care of children. Thus, the lack of male participation in childcare remains a cause for concern. In this regard, men are excluded from having a positive impact on their children's lives.

The rationale for this study is that several international studies have been conducted on male involvement in childcare. However, little has been written on the subject in Namibia. The researcher felt it was important to conduct a study on male participation in Early Childhood Development Programmes at the kindergarten level owing to the fact that gender socialization takes place at this level.

Thus, the study attempted to unravel positive values possessed by men and the contribution that they could make as good role models to early childhood development. The study findings will help to strengthen the existing gender and

early childhood development initiatives through gender balancing of men and women, and to contribute research findings to Government, non-governmental organizations, and early childhood development practitioners. Most importantly, the study brings the issue of male involvement in early childhood development out in the open.

1.6 Scope and Limitations

For the purpose of this study, the researcher's focus was on male participation in kindergartens in the Oshana Region. A limited number of 46 informants were drawn from institutions dealing directly with Early Childhood Development Programmes, kindergartens and gender issues.

The methodology included personal interviews with kindergarten teachers in the Oshana Region and informants from the national and regional levels (Ministries and Non-Governmental Organizations). A Focus group discussion was also held with a group of men and women from Ongwediva constituency. In total, the qualitative method included a mix of forty-six (46) respondents in terms of age, sex, and professional background.

The theoretical review was restricted to relevant literature and important issues related to male participation in early childhood development at the kindergarten level. The research study was limited to six weeks.

Oshana is a geo-political Region in the Northern part of Namibia. The Region is bordered by Omusati Region to the West, Ohangwena Region to the North, Oshikoto Region to the East, and Kunene Region to the South. The region is more rurally- oriented, has a strong Oshiwambo cultural influence, and is dominated by a subsistence agricultural economy. According to the National Planning Commission (2003), the total population of the Oshana Region during the 2001 population census was estimated at 161, 916 with 87,958 females and 73,957 males. The population aged 3-4 years of age was 16, 628 and of these were enrolled in Early Childhood Development Programmes with 49.0 percent being girls and 47.6 percent being boys (ibid). This implies that the enrolment of children in kindergarten in Oshana region was 83.0 percent (ibid.). The selection of Oshana Region is based on the fact that gender imbalances tend to be prominent in the rural areas.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This study aimed to investigate male participation in Early Childhood Development Programmes with specific reference to kindergarten in the Oshana Region.

The study is divided into five chapters:

Chapter one gives an introductory overview of international and national

government commitments towards gender equality and early childhood development, the background of the research problem, research objectives, research questions, and the justification of the study.

Chapter two presents the research methodology based on methods of data collection and analysis.

Chapter three presents the literature review on male participation in Early Childhood Development Programmes/kindergarten and gives insight on the importance of participation thereof.

Chapter four presents an overview of Early Childhood Development Programmes in Namibia and in the Oshana Region.

Chapter five presents qualitative analysis and interpretation of data collected during field research. The chapter entails key areas and questions asked during the course of the study as well as the summary of the findings.

Chapter six presents conclusions and recommendations. The conclusions are based on the findings of the study and whether the intended objectives of the study have been achieved. The chapter also includes recommendations based on the study and on the researcher's own input.

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order for the researcher to understand male participation in ECDP, face-to-face interviews and questionnaires were applied in the Oshana Region using qualitative research tools.

2.1 Qualitative Research Methods

Key-informant interviews were conducted. This research tool was used in order to enable the researcher to study a phenomenon or understand purposely-selected respondents' behaviour, motives and personality. The aim of these interviews was to make respondents express their personal experiences and attitudes, which are relevant to the problem under discussion. In this particular case, male participation in early childhood development programmes, especially in kindergartens. This method allowed the researcher to access personal information that would not have been possible using other methods. Thus, the face-to-face interviews at the local level were tape recorded with the informed consent of the informants.

2.2 Target Population

The study was undertaken in the Oshana Region and covered eight (8)

constituencies. The constituencies covered were as follows: Ondangwa,

Ompundja, Okaku, Uukwiyu-Uushona, Okatana, Oshakati-East, Oshakati-West and Ongwediva.

The target population sample size consisted of 46 respondents (12 men and 34 women) and data collection was conducted in the following three stages:

1). National level

- The Ministry of Women's Affairs and Child Welfare
- The Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture
- The National Non-Governmental Association on Early Childhood and Development

2) Regional level

- Lower primary school teachers (MBESC)
- Staff members from the (MWACW)
- Social worker from the (MWACW)
- Lecturer (Ongwediva College of Education)
- Senior Officer (Ongwediva Teachers Resource Centre)

3) The local level

- Kindergarten teachers
- Community members Focus group (discussion)

The study covered each of these categories in detail.

2.3 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure consisted of face-to-face interviews, semi-structured questionnaires and focus group discussion.

National level

Face-to-face interviews were held with 4 senior officers from the Ministry of Women's affairs and Child welfare. A semi-structured questionnaire was administered at the same level to the Namibian Non-Governmental Organisation responsible for Early Childhood Development.

Regional level

Semi-structured questionnaires were administered to 6 informants who responded to policy-related questions on Early Childhood Development

Programmes and gender. This category consisted of senior officers from the College of Education in Ongwediva and the Teachers Resource Center. At the same level, face-to-face interviews were held with 6 Primary school teachers from different schools in the Oshana Region.

Local level

Face –to- face interviews were held with 19 kindergarten teachers. This group consisted of 5 male teachers and 14 female teachers.

Focus Group

Focus group discussion was held with 10 community members from Sky Resettlement in Ongwediva Constituency. Volunteers consisted of 6 women and 4 men who were sought through the snow- balling technique whereby they had to recommend other people who could be approached.

2.4 Secondary Data

Documentary research was conducted on male participation in Early Childhood Development Programmes and kindergarten. Data was drawn from various sources such as government documents and reports, legal reports, documents from the libraries in the Netherlands and Namibia as well as from the Internet. Since the study focused on the Oshana Region, some of the studies by

researchers in Namibia were used. Thus a comparative study was conducted based on developed and developing countries in order to find out how other countries have raised the involvement of men of men in kindergarten. Relevant literature indicated in the reference section of this proposal has been reviewed and analyzed to enrich the study (see Reference).

In the Namibian context, the following legal documents were utilized:

- The National Gender Policy (1997).
- The National Early Childhood Development Policy (1996).
- The Constitution of the Republic of Namibia (1990).
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- The National Programme of Action for the Children of Namibia (1991)

2.5 Problems Encountered

It is worth- noting that the time constraint has been a major factor in conducting this study and the researcher had six weeks to undertake all interviews. The chosen time (September, October, and November) had been the busiest time for the year in the region for people were preparing themselves for the up-coming national, regional and national political elections. For example, in the Oshana Region, the majority of Namibians have been busy attending political rallies and community meetings.

At the regional and national level, it has been difficult for the researcher to gain access to most of the respondents because they were elusive. The majority of the respondents did not respond to the questionnaires that were administered at these levels despite the follow-up calls and visits made. Some of them complained that they had no time to respond to the questionnaires due to some tight work schedules. Others did not fulfill their promises in completing the questionnaires. Due to the poor questionnaire response rate at the national and regional level, the researcher opted for face-to-face interview method with the same respondents. The face-to-face interviews proved to be successful.

The main aim of this study was to reflect on the existing attitudes on male participation in kindergarten and not to cover the whole region of Oshana.

Given the time constraint, the researcher's experience is that it would have been very difficult to include more interviewees in the study.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Rationale for Male Participation in Early Childhood Development

The role and responsibility of men in bringing about gender equality is critical, especially, in early childhood development owing to the fact that particular gender roles and division of responsibilities shape the interaction that takes place between men, women and children.

Most people think gender is about women or the sex that we were assigned at birth. However, gender refers to the social roles and relations between men and women in a given culture or location. These gender roles are socially generated attitudes and behaviors, usually organized in terms of masculinity and femininity. These roles are prompted by gender socialization, especially on how children of different sexes are socialized into their gender roles. For example, as children, boys and girls develop ideas about what women and men are like, from the women and men they interact with on daily basis.

Gender is defined as a culturally and socially constructed identity ascribed to male and females (MWACW 1997:5). This implies that the concept of gender is a social construct that differentiates women and men socially and culturally, and it is not based on biological differences. In the same line of thinking, Groverman and Gurung (2001:10) define gender as consisting of *“roles,*

responsibilities, rights, relationships, and identities of men and women that are defined or ascribed to them within a given society and context."

Furthermore, Groverman and Gurung (2001:10) confirm that gender roles are determined from birth and are learned through the process of socialization. This implies that gender socialization gives rise to gender bias when men and women are treated differently just because they are male or female.

Levine et al. (1996:xi) describe socialization as a process, by which people come to adopt attitudes and behaviors, and a way in which humans are socialized to acquire gender roles as well as knowledge, skills, and dispositions that enable them to participate as more or less effective members of groups and the society. It is important to note that a family remains a potential agent of socialization followed by the influences of the school, friends, and the media (newspapers and electronic media). Thus, each of these agencies reinforces gender stereotypes.

In view of the above, culture plays an important role in terms of beliefs and norms and has an influence on the choice of childrearing practices and care strategies. For example, the assumption is that men and women acquire gender roles based on what is thought to be appropriate and acceptable behavior in a particular society. Generally, men are expected to enter the job market whereas women would concentrate on childcare and house chores. This is in line with

the common expression that says that 'women's work is never done'. This means that women have a lot to do and often their work includes routine household tasks which take up a lot of time. Despite their efforts, more often, their work is not valued.

The gender division of labour that prevails in most cultures dictates and holds women responsible for the care of children, the elderly, the sick, and the disabled. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2000) defines culture as "the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group."

The following major theoretical positions help us to understand and predict individual and group behavior and to identify ways in which behavior can be modified or changed. These theories also help us understand how childhood experiences affect adult behavior and why women and men behave differently based on their gender roles.

3.2 Psychoanalytical Theory

This theory is based on a set of assumptions used to explain personality or behavior. It emphasizes the pattern of thought, feeling and behavior that affects every aspect of a person's life. In this regard, it helps us to understand individual uniqueness or personality. Personality makes one person stand out

from others and makes him/her unique. Thus, this theory assumes that personality is determined by internal and external factors such as the environment.

Socialization forms the basis of this theory. This entails the process of acquiring behaviors that are considered appropriate by society. The child's personality, it is believed, develops because of early socialization processes. These processes are consolidated by the teachings and admonitions of parents, teachers, peers and the media. More importantly, this theory points at the sexual differences that exist between boys and girls, and how children aged between five and seven years old come to associate themselves with the same sex parent (man or woman) by adopting their values and behaviors (Berns 2001: 143). Children, in this regard, learn most of the values simply by watching the adults in their lives.

3.3 Social Learning Theory

In line with the theory above, the social learning theory explains human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences. For example, this theory emphasizes the importance of observing and modeling the behaviors, attitudes and emotional reactions of others. Bandura (1977:22) states: *"Learning would be exceedingly laborious not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on*

the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action."

What this theory implies is that gender roles are learned through observation and imitation of role models (Berns 2001:143). In this particular case, the development of children's gender occurs through role modeling of gender behaviours of parents. For example, the girl-child may imitate the mother in how to cook whereas the boy might imitate the father in how to milk the cows. A child is rewarded when he or she displays a gender-appropriate behaviour and is punished for a gender in-appropriate behaviour. In this regard, children are taught to act in a feminine or masculine way. Thus, culturally defined gender roles would determine how these roles are perpetuated in adulthood.

3.4 Cognitive Theory

Piaget's cognitive theory seeks to explain how the development and structure of thought processes occur and how they influence human behavior. The assumption is that development of thought processes can only occur by mastering several cognitive steps and this incorporates areas such as language, logical thinking, moral judgement and conception of time, space, etc. Thus, logical reasoning and the structure of knowledge serve as the basis of this

theory.

(<http://suedstudent.syredu/%7Eebarett/ide621/cognitiveprocess.htm>).

Piaget further reasoned that people are active processors of information and that cognitive development results from the interactions that children have with their physical and social environment (ibid.). According to this theory, cognitive development stages begin around the age of two and last to around seven years of age. During the course of these stages, children's mental reasoning begins to develop; they form stable concepts and develop egocentrism and intuitive thought (ibid.). Thus, this theory puts more emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge through learning experience.

Parents and other adults are expected to support a child's learning by providing a safe environment in order for a child to play with concrete objects; to make choices; to interact with peers and adults; and to be provided with a routine which can build security and confidence, and activities which create a sense of self-worth and belonging.

Owing to the above, these theories do not show major differences in explaining human behavior. They imply that gender and identity develop through biological and social influences such as parents, school, peers and the media. For example, cognitive theorists are more interested in internal processes that

must be inferred rather than directly observed. On the other hand, social learning theorists believe that social behavior can occur through the observation of the behavior of others. In this regard, the behavior of another person may serve as a source of information. The performer may use this information to perform the same behavior.

It is a fact that, across most cultures and traditions, women undertake childcare while men are excluded from this process. Research findings from Uukwaluudhi, in Namibia, reveal that only ten percent (10%) of the children aged 3-6 years old are taken care of by their mothers all day whereas fifty two percent (52%) of mothers did not interact with their children during the day (Evans 1994: 29). In this case, 60% of the fathers were reported as absent from caring for their children while thirty percent (30%) of the grandparents and forty three percent (43%) of older brothers and sisters were reported to be the primary caretakers (ibid.).

Iipinga et al. (2004:3, 20) confirmed the negative attitudes that exist towards gender equality at the national and local levels in Namibia. They pointed to the fact that discriminatory attitudes and behaviours of decision makers can seriously hamper the implementation of gender policies and programmes (ibid.). It is at these levels that policy makers and implementers should play an advocating role in sensitizing men and women about the importance of gender and early childhood development policies as well as to solicit compliance from

them.

The absence of men from childcare is also evidenced by the fact that more than a third of rural households were found to be female-headed (UNICEF/GRN 2002-2005:7). This implies that forty three percent (43%) of rural households are headed by women and thirty two percent (32%) headed by women in urban areas (GRN 1992: 32).

On the other hand, Government statistics on the proportion of males and females in the labor market show that forty nine (49%) of women as compared to sixty-nine (69%) of men are in the labour force (DWA 1999:12). This indicates that fewer women than men are recruited in the labour force. The unemployment rate in Namibia remains very high and has been estimated at 25-30% of the labour force seeking formal wage employment (GRN 1992:4).

It is worth emphasizing that women contribute to the nation's economy through paid employment and unpaid work that they do in the home and in the community. Much of the work done by women (housework and childrearing) is related to traditional roles and it is not recognized as being part of the labor force. In addition, women do not have the same opportunities as men to participate fully in economic activities. All what women tend to experience is unequal sharing of family responsibilities and insufficient support services such as childcare.

One can deduce from the above that it is the people themselves and their specific cultures, which dictate and influence which characteristics are to be seen as feminine or masculine as well as which activities, roles and responsibilities are appropriate for men and women. In addition, the attitudes and values placed on men and women coupled with their characteristics and attributes do play a major role. Thus, a culture that separates men from their children should be discouraged because this makes it very difficult for a father to have continuous contact with his child. Moreover, the linkage between the father and child may be weakened (Bruce et al.1995: 53).

The belief that treats women as caregivers and men as breadwinners is a myth. It is a myth that is upheld by socio-cultural beliefs. It is worth noting that gender roles, globally, have been changing owing to the increasing numbers of women entering the labour force. However, data from a number of countries indicate that income earned by women is more likely to be spent on children's needs than is spent from the income controlled by men (UNICEF 1994:18).

Although the gender gap in caring for children puts more emphasis on the women's role, men have not proven themselves capable of caring for children. According to Richard (1995:13), *"recent studies on gender equity in the family patterns indicate that growing numbers of children are not benefiting from the resources of their fathers to which they are entitled, and mothers must take full responsibility and carry the burden. Therefore, to be gender responsive, there*

is a need for special programme thrusts directed at promoting equity within the family and strengthening the parenting role of men". Men need to assume greater responsibility for childcare in order to relieve women's reproductive burden as well as the challenges that affect the development of children.

Engle (1994:2) puts it clearly that *"there is no evidence that parenting skills are limited to mothers. Early and extensive contact with children is likely to make the connection or the attachment between father and child stronger...lack of experience in care giving may be one barrier to greater father involvement"*. It has also been suggested that men can be as nurturing as women when they experience extended contact with their children during infancy and early childhood (ibid: 15).

Bruce et al. (1995:53) draws a distinction between hunters-gatherers, horticultural communities and industrial communities and how they relate to the upbringing of their young children. Research findings show that fathers in the hunter-gatherer communities tend to have more time and contact with young children owing to the fact that they live in a close-knit kinship system. On the other hand, horticulturalist fathers have been found to be more involved with older children than with infants because older children are of economic value for they assist their fathers in the fields (ibid.). In industrialist societies, there tends to be a minimal father-child link owing to the involvement of fathers in wage-earning labour, which takes place outside the home (ibid). It is

also estimated that the time that children spend interacting with their mothers and without their fathers seems to be the highest and this ranges from ten percent (10%) to thirty five percent (35%) of early childhood years (ibid: 86).

The Western world, Europe and USA have taken some initiatives in defining and promoting new roles for men, a shift from men as economic providers to men as nurturers as well. The term "co-parents" is becoming more popular in developed countries and it refers to equal sharing of family responsibilities between men and women childrearing.

(<http://www.nces.ed.gov/pubs98/fathers/inntro.htm>).

Levine (1993) found out from the survey of Head Start low-income families programme in the USA that most men are present in close to 60% of the family programmes. However, he also observed that gender stereotypes surrounding men from low-income backgrounds had a negative impact on policies earmarked for disadvantaged families. These policies identify "parents" as targets for their outreach initiatives yet programme implementation typically discourages the participation of men in parent involvement activities.

(<http://www.parentinginformation.org/fathermaleinvolve.htm>).

The same survey concluded that the majority of parents and staff members enrolled in the same programme shared the same sentiments that more fathers should be involved in the programme (ibid.).

In the United Kingdom, the MORI test undertaken on some public attitudes to men working in childcare revealed that almost eight in ten British adults (77%) are in favour of men being involved in childcare. However, only one in eight (12%) were against this. The youth and parents favoured men working in childcare. Interestingly, the same survey indicates that 27% of most men had considered working in nursery school clubs. This interest was also expressed by 35% of men under 55 years of age and by 38% of fathers.

(<http://www.nspec.org.uk/inform/conferenceReports/HeWhoCaresWins.asp>).

In Norway, one of the surveys found out that just fewer than 7% of employees in kindergartens were men. Due to this situation, the Norwegian Government has adopted affirmative action in respect to men and had set a target of 20% for male workers in childcare by the year 2001. The main areas covered under this provision are education and childcare. These are seen as positive aspects owing to the fact that kindergartens and schools are agents of socialization and gender.

(<http://members.odinsrage.com/pdmtfc/articles/parentswant.html>).

(<http://odin.dep.no/odinarkiv/norst/dep/smk/1998/taler/099005-991.../index-dok000-b-f-a.htm>).

3.5 Barriers to Male Participation in ECD

Some of the barriers to male participation in childcare have been summarized as follows:

- The fear of fathers that they do not possess the necessary skills in childcare;
- Men are perceived as main causes of problems that affect children;
- Lack of recognition of men's efforts;
- The inappropriateness of programme design and delivery and that most of the childcare programmes do not accommodate men's need and aspirations (<http://www.fath.../772.html?>).

3.6 Positive Aspects of Male Participation in Early Childhood Development

Some evidence show that the involvement of fathers in their child's early childhood experience and care can bring about the following positive outcomes:

- The children get better grades at school;
- Their children are less likely to be involved with drugs and alcohol;
- Their children are more emotionally secure as a result of a warm;
- Close relationship with their father;
- Father-child interaction provides a high level of positive, play activities.

(http://www2.state.id.us/dhw/ecic/AP/So_Much_.htm)

Of great concern to this study is the fact that men are distanced from participating in childcare and tend to falter in their role to take care of the needs

of their children. Another concern is that most of the households headed by women might not fulfill the demands related to childrearing. Under such conditions, children might become vulnerable to cases of poverty, malnutrition, poor health and restricted access to education opportunities. More critically, when either parent or both parents decide to work far away from home, there is a question of who should be responsible for household chores and childcare.

In reference to the above situation, social indicators in Namibia on child development reveal that, in many instances, human rights of children are violated at the household level (GRN/UNICEF 2002-2005). It was found that many children at the household level were exposed to cases of malnutrition, inadequate hygiene practices and a lack of stimulation. (Ibid.). However, the Namibian Constitution (1990: Article 95(j)) ensures the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of all persons in Namibia. It obliges the State to “...actively promote and maintain the welfare of the people by adopting, *inter alia* policies aimed at consistent planning to raise and maintain an acceptable level of nutrition and standard of living of the Namibian people and to improve public health”(ibid.).

In addition, the National ECD Policy (1996: 15-17) addresses directly the needs of young children and their families through ECDPS. For example, the Policy recognizes the benefits that can be derived from the implementation of ECDPS. In this case, Early childhood development interventions were found to be of great importance in terms of increased economic productivity, cost-effectiveness, reduction in social economic inequalities, reductions in gender equality, strengthened values, social mobilization, community and family benefits (ibid.).

CHAPTER FOUR: A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN NAMIBIA

4.1 Early Childhood Development Programmes

Early childhood is defined internationally as “ *the process of change in which the child comes to master more and more complex levels of moving, feeling, and interacting with people and objects in the environment*” (ADEA 2002:7).

Thus, the concept of early childhood comprises of the physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development of young children, referred to as holistic child development (ibid.).

Early Childhood Development Programmes in Namibia include crèche/kindergarten, day Care Center/nursery School and pre-primary school for the preparation of children to enter formal primary education (NPC 2003:30). The 2001 Population Census (NPC 2003: 30) counted about 200 000 children aged three to six years old according to ECD attendance (ibid.). From this figure, thirty -two (32%) of these children were attending ECD Programmes (ibid.). Another finding from the Census was that the number of children attending ECD Programmes in the rural areas was much higher than in the urban areas (ibid.).

The Population and Housing Census (2001: 15) indicates that the Oshana Region is one of the three Regions in the country with highest proportions, over 40% of children in Early Childhood Development Programmes for the age group 3 to 6 years old (ibid: 30). Other Regions are such as Khomas and Omusati. Furthermore, the same Census shows that twelve percent (12%) of the population in the Oshana region is composed of children less than five years of age.

In Namibia, the major concern has been the condition and status of young children between the ages of 0-6 years old. For example, in 1980, the under-five mortality rate (annual number of deaths of children under five years of age per 1000 live births) was 258 and for 1988 it was 298 (UNICEF 1990). In the Oshana Region, the Infant Mortality Rate (infant deaths per 1000 live births) for girls has been reported to be 41 for girls and 46 for boys (NPC 2003: 30).

On the other hand, both parents orphan two percent (2%) of children under fifteen years: six percent (6%) by a mother and twelve percent (12%) by a father (ibid.). Thus, in most cases, children in Namibia are perceived as victims of (the past) war, poverty, poor housing conditions, inadequate food supply, lack of sanitation and alienation (GRN 1996: 8).

Early childhood development serves as a strategy for human development as

well as a tool to address problems affecting young children aged 0-6 years old. The period from birth to the age of six is very critical and focuses on the vulnerability of the child in which early intervention can have lasting effects.

In this regard, the main purpose of ECDPS is to enhance child development by attending to the immediate needs of children and to shape a child to be able to interact with its environment. Early Childhood Development Programmes entail strategies and a variety of services earmarked for families and communities at large, in order for them to meet the needs of children. These programmes are geared towards addressing areas of child development such as the physical, emotional, moral, and the intellectual spheres. Other themes in the programmes are nutrition, education, and health care. These themes remain crucial to the overall development of children.

The Early Childhood Development Policy of the Namibian Government (1996) underscores the importance of Early Childhood Development Programmes based on the belief that children who have access to adequate early childhood programmes have a greater chance to develop their full potential. The Government (1996:14-17) and ADEA (2002: 3-4) summarized the benefits from ECDPS as follows:

- Early Childhood Development Programmes pave the way to greater equality between the rich and the poor children in their total

development;

- Early Childhood Development Programmes provide increased employment options for caregivers to earn and learn and can greatly enhance women's opportunities to participate in the market economy;

- Early Childhood Development Programmes facilitate the child's transition into the primary school and influence his or her performance. The Programmes also help children cross the barriers between home and the primary school. Importantly, there is much greater likelihood of children entering primary school and being able to adapt to that context if they have had an early childhood care experience in the years prior to entry into primary school.

4.2 kindergartens

A kindergarten is part of a learning institution and caters for children who are away from their home environment. It is a fact that the most immediate and important environment for the development of a child is the home and the family. However, most of the parents form part of the labour market and work outside their homes; they do not have time to look after their children during the day. Thus, a kindergarten serves as an alternative to the home and does not

take over the entire role and responsibilities of parents but complement them.

Care of children is extended at this age of 2-5 based on the assumption that if the family is unable to take care of children, then services must be made accessible to prevent inevitable negative consequences that might affect the child's development. It is also at this age where children begin their primary socialization and interaction with their peers and caregivers. Thus, this interaction is expected to be based on respect and cooperation.

In Namibia, kindergartens are part of Early Childhood Development Programmes and are found in rural and urban settings. They accommodate young children aged 2-5 years old. There are various aspects attached to kindergartens. For example, kindergartens are run on commercial principles (mostly in towns) whereby families pay fees for the attendance of children or they can pay in kind, especially in rural areas (MRLGH/UNICEF 1998:1).

Thus, the main purpose of kindergartens is as follows:

- To provide a safe, nurturing and loving environment;
- To view each child as a unique person with different levels of ability, varying developmental stages and learning styles that need to be

considered in the design of appropriate activities;

- To meet children's developmental needs by stimulating them physically socially, emotionally, morally and intellectually (ibid: 7).

It is against this background that the MWACW in collaboration with key line Ministries and Non-Governmental Organizations is responsible for the overall leadership and co-ordination of ECD services nationally as well as looking after the issues of orphans, children with disabilities and other vulnerable children.

CHAPTER FIVE: REASEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Data Analysis

This chapter presents and analyses qualitative data collected on male participation in Early Childhood Development with specific reference to kindergarten in the Oshana Region. Data was collected through personal interviews, focus group discussions, and the analysis of the discussions and interviews. The study presents the views of key informants on the topic hence the results are based on the questions posed and on the informants' own ideas.

The personal interviews at the local level and focus group discussion were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher (from Oshiwambo to English). Each interview took 30 to 60 minutes.

5.1.1 Face to face Interviews

Face to face interviews/questionnaire were conducted with the following categories of informants:

National level

Face to face interviews were held with:

- Senior Government officers (4)

- Non Governmental Organization (questionnaire)

Regional level

Face-to face interviews were held with:

- School teachers (6)
- Senior Government officers (6 questionnaires)

Local level

A total of nineteen (19 kindergarten teachers were interviewed and a focus group discussion was held with ten (10) community members. That is:

- Kindergarten teachers (19: 5 men, 14 women)
- Focus Group discussion (10: 4 men, 6 women)

5.2 Sample

The study was composed of 46 key-informants from the national, regional and local level. The national level included senior officers from Government and Non- Governmental Organizations and officers from Ongwediva in the Oshana Region.

5.3 Attitudes about Male Participation in Kindergartens

5.3.1 What is gender equality?

On the issue of gender equality, all female and male informants seemed to know the meaning of gender equality and what it meant to their organizations. All informants were in support of gender equality. They felt that gender equality would be achieved when men and women contribute equally to the full range of paid and unpaid work activities. They do not regard gender equality as a woman's issue only. Gender equality concerns both men and women.

During group discussion, all men in the focus group argued against gender equality. They argued that men and women were not born to be equal. They based their argument on the relationship that existed between Adam and Eve shown in the Bible. They claimed that Eve was one of Adam's ribs, thus she remained Adam's servant. As Christians, (all men claimed), they believed that a woman should always be submissive to a man. However, after an extensive debate, all men and women were convinced of the need for gender equality. Some of them cited the importance of gender equality as well as the right as stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia (1990), that all men and women should be treated equally before the law. Thus, to most of the group members (as it appeared to researcher) it was their first learning experience on gender issues. Eventually, both men and women reached consensus and agreed that both men and women, in fact had nothing to lose but to cooperate on

matters related to gender equality.

One of the female informants at the local level said that: *"Gender equality is good for women and men and for the development of our country. Other countries are striving for gender equality. Why not us?"* On the other hand, a male kindergarten informant had this to say: *"I find it a bit difficult to explain this concept. My understanding is that gender equality refers to what is expected of men and women when it comes to decisions that need to be made on matters pertaining to children and house chores, etc."*

According to one of the informants at the national level, *"Gender means among others that males and females get equal opportunities in all spheres of life including education, employment, national and community leadership, etc"*. He further indicated that no one should get an unfair advantage over the other because he/she is male or female in any situation.

A senior female informant at the national level explained that her organization *"recognizes that both males and females have the capacity to perform any task at any level of an organization. In other words, males and females can compete at any level within an organization as long as they have qualified to do the job. Hence, no one should be looked down upon on the basis of gender"*.

Informants at the national and regional levels added that there was some institutional support for gender equality in their respective organizations. To

mention a few, the type of support rendered to communities is in the form of gender sensitization programmes, gender mainstreaming, early childhood development training programmes, etc.

In view of all the above stated responses on gender equality, women and men differed in their responses towards gender equality with women proving to be supportive of gender equality. However, it is worth mentioning that, though the majority of key-informants were in support of gender equality, they appeared to have a superficial understanding of what gender is all about. For example, they lacked the understanding that gender is the way society views and treats women and men differently and that sex is the biological difference between male and females.

Gender inequality is caused when women and men are treated differently. These differences are embedded in the notion of socialization and the way it can reinforce the belief that women and men should have differences in terms of roles as primary breadwinners and caregivers. The gender imbalances that exist between women and men and within families may eventually lead to deprivation and injustice. However, gender roles and inequalities are not static but can be changed because they are defined by society.

In addition to the above, the studies on gender equality demonstrate that women and men do not benefit equally from development initiatives. This is in line with the National Gender Policy (1997: 6), which recognizes the inequality

that exists between men and women in society and how it has affected them in a negative way. What is needed is a gender sensitive culture that involves the changing of traditional perceptions of women and men and which is based on full recognition and respect of the rights, responsibilities and contributions of women and men in all spheres of life. Thus, the change in cultural norms, values and beliefs can help shape the transition to gender equality.

In support of gender equality, the strategy of Jahan (1995:128) on gender equality underlines that *"Advocacy of gender issues has been conceived as a win/lose scenario: changing gender roles and relations are good not simply for the women, it also benefits men, families, and communities, and would create significant inter-generational benefits"*.

5. 3.2 Involvement of men in childcare

Key-informants were asked whether men were involved in childcare in their respective communities. The findings from face-to-face interviews have shown that childcare is an exclusive domain for women. For example, one of the female informants at the local level reported that most of the time, younger children were left in the care of women. She explained that men tend to interact more with older children, especially boys. Boys are regarded as an asset because they assist their parents in carrying out some male-oriented tasks such as the slaughtering of cows (during local traditional festivities) and traditional roof thatching (collection of dry grass and roof thatching).

A concerned male informant from the local level said that: *"we must take cognizance of the fact that the majority of men are not employed. There is job scarcity in this country. Thus, an unemployed man has nothing to offer children."* Almost all men and women in the focus group discussion agreed that men were not involved in childcare in their respective community. They not only recognized the fact that women had more responsibilities in terms of household chores and childcare but also agreed that men should support their fellow women with childcare. Only a few men differed on this issue. They insisted that men were involved indirectly in childcare as economic providers in terms of foodstuff, clothing, and shelter.

Both male and female informants in the focus group confirmed that, generally, men were not involved in childcare in their respective communities. Some of the informants felt that men did not see the need to be involved in childcare. One of the informants maintained that: *"Women are primary care givers thus men do not consider childcare to be their concern"*.

However, very few of the female and male informants in the focus group maintained that men were involved in childcare in their communities. One of the informants said: *"Yes, men are involved in childcare because they send some money to their families for the payment of school fees and the buying of Schoolbooks for the children"*. Another one said: *"men are not fully involved in childcare. They only provide food, shelter, and security to their children and other family members"*.

Certain areas of childcare were mentioned during the interviews as being more restricted to women than to men. Areas that were restricted to women were such as feeding, breast feeding, bathing children, washing nappies and taking children to clinics and hospitals. Areas restricted to men include the provision of food, money and shelter.

When asked why men were not involved in childcare, some of the male informants from the focus group discussions argued that their support towards childcare was being under-estimated by women. One of the arguments was that: *"Given the high rate of unemployment in our country, how can an unemployed man possibly make a contribution towards childcare"*. The national and the regional informants were also in support of the idea that men were not involved in the care of their children.

In reference to the findings indicated above, it shows that the majority of men are not involved in childcare. These findings are also substantiated by the study on understanding traditional childrearing practices and beliefs among the people in Uukwaluudhi, Namibia. The research findings from Uukwaluudhi reveal that women are more involved in childcare than men are. For example, it was reported that sixty percent (60%) of fathers were absent from caring for their children while thirty percent (30%) of the grandparents and forty three percent (43%) of older brothers and sisters were reported to be the primary caretakers (Evans 1994:29). The conclusion reached on this study is that there is little understanding and under-estimation of the value of interacting with

infants and young children. As a tradition, adults do not play with children except with those who have reached pre-school years.

Cross-cultural studies on male participation in childcare have shown how hunters-gatherers, horticulturalist communities and industrialist communities relate to the upbringing of their children. The father-child link tends to be stronger in close-knit kinship systems whereas in industrialist societies it is weakened owing to the involvement of fathers in wage-earning labor that takes place outside the home (Bruce et al., 1995:53).

The studies further confirmed that horticulturalist fathers have been found to be more involved with older children than with infants because older children are of economic value for they assist their fathers in the agricultural fields (ibid.). The time that children spend interacting with their mothers and without their fathers has been estimated to be the highest, it ranges from 10% to 35% of early childhood years (ibid: 86).

The absence of men from childcare in Namibia is also evidenced by the fact that women head thirty two percent (32%) of the households in urban areas and forty three percent (43%) in rural areas (GRN 1992:32). This is coupled with the data from a number of countries, which indicate that income earned by women is more likely to be spent on children's needs than is spent from the income controlled by men (UNICEF 1994:18). Thus, the gender gap in caring for children tends to put more emphasis on the women's role while men have

not proven themselves capable of caring for children.

This study reveals that childcare is still regarded as a domain for women whereas male responsibilities are reduced to economic support of the family. The reliance of childcare on women is shaped by gender imbalance and is manifested in the separation of mothers and fathers' responsibilities. The division of sex roles between males as breadwinners and females as caregivers is crucial for the survival and well-being of children. Of major concern is that the gender disparity that exists between mothers and fathers in childcare can be transmitted from one generation to another through the children. The possibilities are that children might assimilate and model their parents' behavioral patterns.

The above assertion is also supported by Richard (1995:13) who confirmed that, *"recent studies on gender equity in the family patterns indicate that growing numbers of children are not benefiting from the resources of their fathers to which they are entitled, and mothers must take full responsibility and carry the burden. Therefore, to be gender responsive, there is a need for special programme thrusts directed at promoting equity within the family and strengthening the parenting role of men"*.

Childcare implies that children need care at certain times in their lives. One of the principles underlying childcare is that it contributes to the optimal development of children-physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually.

There is an expectation that a variety of community members will support the child's growth and development. This is in line with the fact that a young child does not have enough power to defend himself. Children should be able to have access to and rely on both parents for support and nurturing. In this respect, men should have the right to enhance and improve their participation in childcare and in the family.

In addition, men need to realize that their participation in childcare can help ease the burden on mothers/women, who are often overworked with the combined responsibilities of housework and childcare. Thus, there is a need for equitable sharing of responsibilities between men and women as well as the investment in Early Childhood Development Education Programmes and care, as a way to facilitate the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities.

5.3.3 Male participation in kindergarten

Key-informants' views were sought on male participation in kindergarten. There was overall agreement between men and women on the lack of male participation in kindergartens. For example, the majority of men and women informants at all levels rated male participation in kindergarten as very poor and agreed that there were no men involved in teaching in kindergartens. This was supported by the consensus among the male informants in the discussion group who believed that men were not involved in kindergarten as teachers. They, however, felt that they contributed money towards the establishment of

kindergarten centres in their community. The only exception is that five male informants (participants in face-to-face interviews) were kindergarten teachers.

All male and female informants have rated female participation in kindergarten as very good. The same view was expressed through the focus group discussions and questionnaires. For example, the majority of men and women in the discussion group agreed that there were no male kindergarten teachers in their community. In this case, there was no difference of opinions expressed.

One of the informants at the regional level had this to say: *"It will be unfair for me to define male participation in kindergartens. I should rather talk about how I see their involvement in kindergartens. I have not seen any male teacher at any of the kindergartens that I know. They rather take their children to ECD centres instead of committing themselves to spending more time with them in those centers. However we do have quite a number of teachers specializing in lower primary education"*.

Several reasons were given why men were not involved in kindergarten as teachers. For example, the majority of female informants maintained that men lacked the motivation to pursue a career in kindergarten. They perceived kindergarten work to be of low-status and as a responsibility of women. It is against this background that attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs about the role of men in early childhood development can prevent men from participating fully in kindergarten.

One of the views from a male informant was that men did not have the ability with children; hence, they felt incompetent. Another male informant felt that the lack of male participation in kindergarten was a matter of perception and attitude. He compared the differences that exist between the primary school male teachers and male kindergarten teachers in terms of salaries and the value attached to their work. He found out that the work done by kindergarten teachers is underpaid and undervalued compared to what is done at the primary school level. The informant felt that all careers related to kindergarten and primary school should be respected, recognized and granted equal treatment. On the whole, the efforts of both are targeted towards the well being of children.

On the other hand, the issue of low pay and payment associated with kindergarten makes it very difficult for the recruitment of men in kindergarten. Most parents are very poor and unemployed and cannot afford to meet school fee requirements. Instead of paying school fees in cash, they offer their payments in-kind. Payment in kind includes items such as live chicken, traditional baskets, etc. The value of these items is weighed against the monthly- fee payment earmarked for the attendance of children. Kindergarten fees per child vary from N\$25 to N\$50 per month.

This study indicates that male participation in kindergartens is very low as compared to their female counter-parts. This remains a cause for concern. It is

thus important to note that the denial of rights to men, specifically to their participation in kindergartens, impedes their full access to the realization of their capacities to provide children with basic needs. Ironically, if kindergartens are left to the care of women only, men, on the basis of traditional gender stereotyping, may ignore their responsibilities to care and protect their children. It is on this basis that gender mainstreaming is needed due to the prevalence of negative gender stereotypes and bias that exist in society. As a strategy, gender mainstreaming ensures culture change through shifts in thinking and promotes gender equality and human rights.

It is a fact that a family has a primary responsibility for the nurturing and protection of children as well as the introduction of children to the culture and values of their communities. However, a kindergarten is there to support the efforts of families and not to substitute them. It is designed to stimulate children's interest in learning and to prepare them for further stages in the educational process, and to ensure that certain basic skills are mastered based on the child's mental and physical development.

The care rendered at the kindergarten level serves as an alternative to meet the needs of children. Kindergartens accommodate children from different social, economic and cultural backgrounds and who have different needs. On the other hand, kindergartens are created based on the demand linked to the changes that are taking place in the traditional child-rearing practices. For example, mothers are forced by economic circumstances to engage in activities away from home.

They are overloaded with work; they combine work and childcare responsibilities. This goes with the saying that, "women's work is never done". Because of the latter circumstances, children might be affected by the inability and the absence of parental care and eventually become vulnerable and at risk when exposed to some form of abuse or neglect.

Traditional practices are valuable but sometimes knowledge and practices can be harmful or not be in the best interest of the child. What should be noted is the fact that, nowadays, more emphasis is put on democratic rights that embrace human rights of women, men and children. However, the challenge remains how to change women and men's attitudes towards gender equality in childcare.

Policy provisions on gender and ECD in Namibia imply that programmes affecting children must be applied within the context of the best interest of the child. These legal frameworks provide for Government to assist in the protection and maintenance of children beyond what families can offer. Thus, for the young child, pre-school years remain of fundamental importance to all later development.

The child not only has to learn more during the formative years but this learning provides the basis for all later progress in life. How a child master or fail during the formative years depends on the opportunities he or she had

available, which promote, for example, intellectual and language development. It is against this background that kindergarten teachers and all other caregivers who come into contact with the child should provide them with all the necessary support they need.

Owing to the above reasons, it is imperative that advocacy attempts be made to change the cultural and traditional attitudes that may be responsible for such behavioral patterns. Male participation in kindergarten would mean that men and women participate equally in programmes that impart skills and knowledge in order to enhance care and protection for their children. Importantly, men and women need to be sensitized about what they can achieve with their children, especially in terms of their potential, which is part of part of the spin-off from early childhood development education. Thus, gender equality in kindergarten is very important for the promotion of social interaction between men and women. Their interaction can indirectly benefit children by providing them with good role models and a supportive social environment.

5.3.4 Roles of male and female kindergarten teachers:

During the face-to-face interviews with male and female kindergarten teachers (question 2), all teachers mentioned that they conducted a comprehensive range of activities at their kindergartens, which were related to the development of younger children. To mention a few, activities are summarized as follows:

- Development of literacy and linguistic skills (Oshiwambo and English);
- Development of artistic and creative skills (drawings, arts and crafts);
- Development of physical skills (physical exercises);
- Clarification and understanding of health and hygiene issues (keeping the body clean, how to use toilet facilities);
- Self-expression through play and traditional drama.

On the roles that male and female kindergarten teachers should play in kindergartens, a female complained that men were good at producing children but failed to care for children in kindergartens. Another input was that *“Men and women should carry out equal responsibilities. They can become kindergarten teachers, discipline children, and serve as good role models”*.

During the focus group discussion, a remark was made that most of the activities at the local level included playing with children. *“Men should expect to play with children because children learn through playing. So, childhood is about playing.”* Thus, both men and women in the focus group reached consensus that if women and men participate equally in kindergarten activities, the understanding of each other’s needs and that of children would increase.

At the national and regional levels, one of the informants mentioned that: *"Males can play a role of teachers, school board members and patrons and supportive parents who take children to and from school (kindergarten)".* In addition, another informant said: *"I think that they should play a normal role that is being played by women and should not be given special tasks. They should only play the role of any other teacher who is working in kindergartens. They should not only be subjected to teaching but should also care for the young ones."*

Most female and male informants seemed to be interested in having more men participating in kindergarten and childcare. In this case, all male and female informants agreed that men should be involved in all activities conducted in kindergartens. They can get involved as caregivers, teachers, managers, etc.

One of the informants at the regional level maintained that an important aspect of supporting and enhancing early childhood development is to involve men in day-to-day care. The father is a key figure in the lives of babies and young children because children need a strong bond from an early age.

Furthermore, all male and female informants felt that male participation in kindergarten and early childhood development could lead to mutual understanding between male and female kindergarten teachers. In the end, this can also affect how gender equality is perceived at the kindergarten level. Thus, cautionary measures need to be taken at this level as well as at the household

level to ensure that traditional practices that have a negative effect on women, men and children are not reproduced at these levels.

The role to be played by men and women in kindergarten is very crucial due to the fact that a kindergarten serves as a support system to a family and is expected to replicate a good home environment where interaction between and among adults and children is fostered. This interaction should foster positive values, attitudes and intellectual development as well as child welfare. However, inadequate parental care, whatever the reasons for it, must be supplemented to ensure the well-being of children. Thus, ECD Programmes form part of the kindergarten system and are some of the ways that widen the child's opportunities while preventing him/her from becoming a victim of deprivation; socially, intellectually, spiritually, and physically.

One of the principles underlying childcare is that it is important in the sense that it contributes to the optimal development of children – physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually. Children require an environment that is full of affection and security and in which the entirely helpless and completely dependent child becomes able to understand and respond to the demands of his/her environment. Most importantly, parents, family, teachers and all who come into contact with a young child should provide them with honest interpretations of the world around them.

5. 3.5 Factors that are likely to prevent male participation in

kindergarten:

The researcher came across a wide range of factors mentioned during interviews and reflected in the questionnaire, that are likely to affect people's behavior and attitudes towards male participation in kindergarten. Culture and traditional beliefs seem to have the most dominating influence on the key-informant's' views on male participation in kindergarten.

Male informants at the local level felt that the relationship with children has an effect on how they are perceived by their friends, families, and society at large. For example, one of the male informants mentioned that: *"Our tradition and culture do not allow men to be involved in childcare. For example, it is believed that a child belongs to his/her mother's family"*. (Translated from Oshiwambo proverb, *"Okanona okakwao kayina"*). This implies that traditional roles tend to put more emphasis on a mother-child link rather than on a father-child link and the assignment of tasks and chores is based on a gender.

Another female informant strongly felt that: *"Our society is ignorant about men and women's issues. Thus, ignorance is a main stumbling block to male participation in childcare and kindergartens"*. Other factors that were mentioned through focus group discussion were those of alcoholism, promiscuity (men having many mistresses), and ridicule, low pay, labeling and resistance to change, inter alias.

The researcher believes that some of the constraining factors mentioned can have a much stronger impact on male participation in early childhood programmes and in kindergarten. The majority of women interviewed emphasized the fact that men tend to spend their money on alcohol and do not think of supporting their children. To quote a few examples, one woman said: *"Men do not have time for children's issues. The majority of men are only involved in drinking alcohol."* On the issue of labeling, another woman maintained that: *"What tend to discourage men from dealing with children's issues, especially at the kindergarten level is stigmatization. Thus, they fear to be ridiculed by friends and family members."*

At the national and regional level, it was felt that, nothing ideally should prevent males from participation in kindergarten. However, tradition and stereotypes are some of the main factors that can get in the way. On the other hand, the following factors were mentioned: lack of motivation, lack of understanding of gender equality, cultural background, superstition and lack of stimulation from the community.

In view of the factors mentioned above, culture and traditional beliefs seem to have the most dominating influence on gender. It seems that the lives of people are still permeated by traditional male and female gender roles and are molded into specific roles and careers. What needs to be realized is the fact that the different roles that men and women play are changing from that of being breadwinners and caregivers. Men's role can also change to that of caregivers.

Some studies from the Western world confirm the lack of male participation in kindergarten. For example, a survey on male participation in kindergarten found out that just fewer than 7% of employees in kindergartens are men. (<http://odin.dep.no/odinarkiv/norst/dep/smk/1998/taler/099005-991.../index-dok000-b-f-a.htm>)

The barriers to male participation in childcare, as cited from the Western countries, have been summarized as follows:

- The fear of fathers that they do not possess the necessary skills in childcare;
- Men are perceived as main causes of problems that affect children;
- Lack of recognition of men's efforts;
- The inappropriateness of programme design and delivery and that most of the childcare programmes do not accommodate men's needs and aspirations (<http://www.fath.../772.html?>).

Owing to the lack of men in childcare, the Norwegian Government has adopted affirmative action in respect to men. The main areas covered under this provision are education and childcare. This is seen as a positive aspect owing to the fact that kindergartens and schools are agents of socialization and gender (ibid). Thus, the Government of Norway had set a target of twenty percent (20%) for male workers in childcare by the year 2001.

(<http://members.odinsrage.com/pdmtfc/articles/parentswant.html>)

In the United Kingdom, the MORI test undertaken on some public attitudes to men working in childcare revealed that almost eight in ten British adults (77%) are in favour of men being involved in childcare. However, only one in eight (12%) were against this.

(<http://www.nspec.org.uk/inform/conferenceReports/HeWhoCaresWins.asp>)

The youth and the parents favoured men working in childcare (ibid). Interestingly, the same survey indicates that twenty seven percent (27 %) of most of the men had considered working in nursery school clubs. This interest was expressed by thirty five percent (35%) of men under the age of 55 years and by thirty eight percent (38%) of the fathers (ibid.)

It is worth noting that experiences from the West and the USA have proven that men are not only providers of goods to their families but have succeeded, to some extent, in transforming the traditional image of being breadwinners. In the context of Africa, Irvine (1999:121) took note of the relationships that take place between fathers and young children. Fathers are involved in the socialization of children, especially in the transmission of values and social mores and in the teaching of relevant life skills, folktales, etc.

Though the examples given above are encouraging, there is a need for an in-depth analysis on gender and childcare to determine the extent of male

involvement and their impact thereof.

Although some examples were given on the involvement of men in childcare in developed and developing countries, the researcher recognizes the fact that not every society responds to gender issues in exactly the same ways. Males and females have different roles and responsibilities as well as opportunities and rights. Moreover, traditional gender stereotypes and disparities still exist in developed and developing countries.

To set the basis for male participation in kindergartens, male participation in childcare should be encouraged at the household level. This would allow men to form life-long emotional bond with their children. Effective ways and strategies must be identified to encourage men to be more involved in kindergarten. Thus, education and training coupled with awareness-creation on the elimination of gender stereotypes will play a vital role in this regard.

5.3.6 How children would benefit from male participation in Kindergarten:

On the question of how children would benefit from male participation in kindergartens, the majority of male and female informants agreed that children will gain a lot through exposure to a wide range of male and female role models in a variety of occupations, namely in kindergartens. This would be the only way through which they can learn that there is nothing wrong with men being involved in careers that have traditionally been associated with women. Most of

the male and female informants from the focus group, agreed on the benefits that could be derived from the participation of males in kindergarten. They listed some of the benefits in terms of discipline, good manners, and respect for adults. They also pointed out that all these listed benefits would depend on the quality of the kindergarten teachers especially their own behaviour and attitude toward the children.

A key-informant at the national level said that: *“Youngsters are not just children of females. They have male and female parents. If both are involved, children will receive the care they deserve from parents, male and female. This would help them develop a more positive outlook on life, e.g. that which in society, no gender is above the other. They are all (sic) equal”*.

The impression given by the key-informants above is that male participation kindergarten is crucial in ensuring optimal health and development of children. In the same vein, it is important to note that the main purpose of the kindergarten is to enhance child development by attending to the immediate needs of children catered by centers away from the home environment. It fosters cognitive, emotional, and physical development, imparts social and moral values, and shapes a child to be able to interact with its environment.

Some of the evidence from the western countries shows that the involvement of fathers in their child's early childhood experience and care can bring about the following positive outcomes:

- The children get better grades at school
- Their children are less likely to be involved with drugs and alcohol
- Their children are more emotionally secure as a result of a warm,
- Close relationship with their father.
- Father-child interaction provides a high level of positive, play activities.

(http://www2.state.id.us/dhw/ecic/AP/So_Much_.htm)

5.3.7 Why some respondents decided to become kindergarten teachers:

On the issue of why some of the male and female kindergarten teachers decided to become kindergarten teachers, one of them said that: *"The majority of male teachers are involved in teaching at the primary and secondary school level. Thus, I want to make a difference by teaching younger children at kindergarten level"*. Another one had this to say: *"My choice is prompted by my love for children and encouragement from my sister Veronica"*. The other one added, *"Children are our future generation. I want to help them succeed in the future. As a male kindergarten teacher, I am committed to what I am doing because our culture is gradually changing for the better."* This seems to testify that these men are not concerned with the low pay attached to the type of work they do in the kindergarten, but whatever they do is based on compassion and altruism. All male and female key-informants in this category were satisfied with their choice of a career as teachers in kindergartens.

The perceived poor status of the kindergarten career coupled with the stereotype that women alone should care for children can limit the opportunities and talents of men and women. At the same time, the gender-biased work environment at the kindergarten level can reinforce differences in gender thus culminating in the self-fulfilling prophesy about gender roles. It should be realized that the gender bias that exist in kindergartens will only be done away with through equal participation of men and women in early childhood development.

5.3.8 Key areas in the National ECD Policy (1996) and National Gender

Policy (1997):

The national and regional level key-informants were asked to list three key areas from the National Gender Policy (1997) and National Early Childhood Policy (1996) that would advance the Government's overall objectives and international commitments regarding gender equality and equity between men and women. Some of the informants mentioned that the National Gender Policy (1997) offered a platform for males and females to discuss gender related issues as well as to get to know each other better. The policy was seen as contributing towards awareness creation in terms of gender equality. The Policy also helps to sensitize women in terms of the vital roles that they can play in nation building.

One of the critical areas of concern addressed by the National Gender Policy is

Gender Balance in Education and Training (GRN 1997:11). The Policy states that non-discriminatory education benefits both boys and girls and ultimately contributes to more equal relationships between women and men (ibid.). Thus, through the Policy strategy, the Government would ensure that curricula and all teaching and learning materials are free from gender-biased stereotype references including teacher training programmes (ibid: 13). It is noteworthy that, the strategy calls for the integration of gender awareness training programmes in order to equip teachers with gender sensitive teaching skills (ibid: 30). Other areas that were listed from the National Gender Policy (1997) include the Girl-Child, Reproductive Health, and Political Decision Making.

However, only one of the informants was able to identify the three key areas that could advance the Government's overall objectives and international commitments regarding gender and equality and equity between men and women in the National Early Childhood Development Policy (1996). Most of the informants had little or no knowledge of the contents of the National Gender Policy and the National Early Childhood Policy (1997). They were only familiar with policies that were related to their work environment. At the regional level, one of the informants admitted that: *"Let me admit my own ignorance on this issue. I am not familiar with the National Gender Policy"*.

This situation is a cause of concern and an indication that gender issues as well as early childhood issues are not given sufficient priority. Thus, there is a need for gender sensitization and awareness creation at the national, regional and

local levels of Government.

According to the findings based on this study, there seems to be an overall agreement on the lack of male participation in early childhood development, especially, in kindergartens. At the same time, the majority of male and female key-informants appeared to be supportive of male participation in kindergartens. However, the challenge remains in overcoming some of the obstacles that prevent men from participating fully in ECDPS and kindergartens.

It is a fact that societies cannot be considered democratic if there is no gender equality. Women and men should share equally in the planning and management of ECDPS and kindergartens. Thus, the literature acknowledges the importance of the notion of participation. Participation is widely recognized in terms of the basic rights of people and the success attached to development initiatives. The community as well as men and women are expected to provide some level of participation in the form of their time, leadership skills and physical efforts (Myers 1992: 312-315). This is based on how men and women command resources, contribute to, and take responsibility for the well-being of their households and communities. In this case, the role of men and women will have to shift from being passive recipients of services to that of active participants in development programmes, especially in early childhood development and care.

As a community development officer, the researcher believes that male participation in kindergartens demands more informed and active communities coupled with well-developed capabilities of men and women in order to enhance responsiveness. This would help pave the way for people to gain access to larger arenas of decision-making and to become major problem solvers in their communities. In addition, this would serve as the basis for cooperation, sharing learning from each other and improved community interaction and participation.

The legal framework in Namibia is supportive of gender and early childhood development. For example, the National Early Childhood Policy (1996) promotes the optimal development of all children under the age of six years and holds parents and communities responsible for the care of the children. In the same vein, Namibia was among the first countries to draw up the National Programme of Action for Children (1991) which embrace the pursuit of national social development goals. These developmental goals are incorporated in Government planning.

As part of Government commitment, the focus on gender equality has been shifted towards the mainstreaming of gender in development. In this regard, the Namibian Vision 2030 (GRN 2003:63) underlines the importance of gender mainstreaming in national development plans. Thus, the main aim of Vision 2030 on gender is *"to mainstream gender in development, to ensure that women and men are equally heard and given equal opportunities and*

treatments to exercise their skills and abilities in all aspects of life”.

Furthermore, the Vision requires the monitoring and evaluation of progress on gender issues such as the aggregated gender-related data and training of planners, researchers, etc. (Ibid.).

In support of Government efforts, the Second National development Plan (NDP2 2001/2002 until 2005/2006) recommends gender and development as key areas to be focused on in Namibia's political, economic and social domains. This includes specific areas such as the status of women, early childhood development (especially for girls), community development and Government commitment (NPC 2001:609).

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents conclusions and recommendations based on the study.

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated public perceptions and attitudes in terms of male participation in kindergartens. The study confirmed that there were fewer men than women involved in kindergartens. This finding was substantiated by all the key-informants at the national, regional and local level who confirmed that male participation in kindergarten is marginal. Thus, culture and tradition are assumed as having a detrimental effect on the optimal development of children and parental involvement in their children's care and education.

The implication of this study is that traditional beliefs concerning gender roles in kindergarten tend to be upheld by this study. For example, the positive role that men need to play in kindergarten is being neglected. . This is demonstrated by the fact that there are fewer men than women involved in kindergarten. It seems that only women are to take care of the increasing number of children in kindergartens.

What complicates the discourse on male participation in kindergartens is the fact that current ongoing Early Childhood Development Programmes do not

seem to take gender concerns into account. In this regard, gender and male participation in early childhood development and kindergartens is rarely or is never discussed.

Culture is important and matters a lot because it consists of learned patterns of behavior and belief and shapes the perceptions and attitudes of the division of roles in the home and society. For example, relationships between men, women and children are stratified and role expectations are clearly defined; women still believe that childcare is their sole responsibility whilst men remain the breadwinners. This indicates that women and men tend to share a number of learned patterns of thinking and behaving. Thus, the majority of women and men are trapped in this self-fulfilling prophecy, which serves as a contributory factor to inadequate childcare practices. The traditional gender stereotype embedded in childcare can undoubtedly limit women and men's opportunities in life.

As indicated before, culture is ever changing and does not rely on genetic inheritance. In this case, cultural norms can be unlearned and learned anew as human needs change. Thus, any ECD education and care programme, from birth to school entrance level, must emphasize on parental education and ensures that school curricula are free from gender-biased stereotype.

Assumptions about culture and gender need to be challenged; especially what

women and men think about childcare and early childhood development. After all, the literature confirms that men were found to be as nurturing as women when they experienced extended contact with their children during infancy and early childhood (Engle 1994: 15). Thus, the presence of men who are involved in kindergarten would help change the society to have a critical look at Early Childhood Development Programmes, and to introduce new ways of bringing up children. Government legislation should also ensure that both fathers and mothers share the same rights and obligations towards children as enshrined in the Namibian Constitution and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

Another area of concern to this study is that most of the senior officers interviewed at the regional and national level were not familiar with the Government Policies on gender and early childhood development. The impression derived from these findings is that there seems to be a gap between policy and implementation.

In view of the above, Government officers must ensure that they are conversant with Government Policies, especially the gender differentiated impact of interventions undertaken by Government and that Government policies address those inequalities that place women and men at a disadvantage in relation to children. Specifically, officers have a formal responsibility to analyze gender relations at all stages of Government programme intervention and to ensure that

no intervention overlooks the specific needs of women, men, and children. Thus, some strategic interventions are needed from Government, Non-Governmental Organizations and Donors to ensure proper implementation of gender equality and childcare.

It is a fact that women lag behind men in terms of socio-economic advancement in Namibia. However, it should also be recognized that men lag behind women in some of the areas like early childhood development. Therefore, not only are men's needs, perspectives and aspirations omitted from programmes supposedly intended to benefit them, but their potential remains untapped and undeveloped. Without men participating in kindergartens, it is unlikely that the full range of gender issues in ECD will be addressed. Equal participation of women and men in ECD and kindergarten, therefore, remains a crucial factor in child survival and good health.

Participation is about basic rights of people and the success attached to development initiatives. Therefore, a paradigm shift is needed whereby both men and women can have the same common interest in changing gender relations and to overcome some unjust imbalances and gender inequalities that exist in society. This situation calls for gender mainstreaming of ECDPS in order to accelerate the process of change and to overcome obstacles that currently constrain male participation in kindergartens.

Early Childhood Development Programmes should aim to reflect the diverse concerns of women, men and children and should not exclude or undermine the participation of any specific category of people. Thus, ECDPS should be designed in a way which is sensitive to children's specific needs but without undermining those family and other social structures which already exist to give care and protection. Above all, they should reflect and enhance women and men's strengths and capacities.

To conclude this chapter, the main research question, the sub-questions and the research objectives of this study have been achieved. The study confirmed that there are fewer men than women involved in kindergartens. Thus, recommendations made in the study serve as the basis to encourage male participation in early childhood development and care, especially at the kindergarten level. It is at this level that the future generation should be protected from the inequalities and gender-biases that exist in society.

6. 2 Recommendations

- Government, Non-Governmental Organizations and Donors should work more closely to ensure gender mainstreaming of all early childhood development programmes and gender interventions are placed in the context of national policy;

- Systematic monitoring and evaluation process must be developed to ensure effective implementation of gender mainstreaming in ECD in order to avoid negative bias in content and practices, and equally acknowledge the contributions of men and women;
- Government, in collaboration with Non-Governmental Organizations and Donors should ensure wider dissemination of existing research and information concerning gender and ECD in order to provide a more accurate picture of the situation of women, men and children, and, monitor change and assist in the development of future programmes;
- Greater transparency in ECD policy design and implementation is needed coupled with the greater use of participatory methods;
- Male participation in Early Childhood Development and kindergartens should not only focus on biological fathers but should include all the men who can play significant roles in children's lives;
- The role of kindergartens must be redefined and how kindergartens can play a transformational role to avoid the reproduction of prejudice and discrimination that affect the needs of men, women and children;
- There is a need to establish a baseline, using the parameters of

children's rights to health, physical, intellectual and emotional development and care. This baseline should be followed by assessment against knowledge and skills that are considered essential for child caregivers;

- There is a need for strong and committed awareness creation campaigns on Government Early Childhood Development and Gender Policies for senior programme officers in order to close the gap between policy and implementation;
- Most importantly, vigorous gender sensitization and awareness-creation campaigns should be executed at national and regional levels to modify cultural norms that affect gender perceptions and outcomes in ECD. These campaigns should foster male participation in kindergartens through training and education.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WITH NATIONAL LEVEL

1. What does gender means to your organization?
2. What types of gender-related activities are carried out by your organization?
3. What opportunities exist within your organization for men to become engaged in the promotion of gender equality?
4. What do you understand by early childhood development programmes?
5. How can men in early childhood development impact gender issues?
6. How important is male participation in gender equality?
7. How would you define male participation in kindergartens (for the age groups 3-5 years old children)?
8. What role should men play in kindergartens?
9. What factors are likely to prevent male participation in kindergartens?
10. What factors do you think are influencing attitudes towards gender equality?
11. How will children benefit from male participation in kindergartens?
12. Please list 3 areas that the Namibia National Gender Policy (1997) advances the government's overall objectives and international commitments regarding gender equality and equity between men and women?

13. How does the Namibia National Early Childhood Development Policy (1996) advance the Government's overall objectives and international commitments regarding gender equality and equity between men and women?

APPENDIX II INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WITH REGIONAL LEVEL

1. What does gender equality means to your organization?
2. What types of gender-related activities are carried out by your organization?
3. What opportunities exist within your organization for men to become engaged in the promotion of gender equality?
4. What do you understand by early childhood development programmes?
5. How can men in early childhood development impact gender issues?
6. How important is male participation in gender equality?
7. How would you define male participation in kindergartens (for the age groups 3-5 year old children)?
8. What role should men play in kindergartens?
9. What factors are likely to prevent male participation in kindergartens?
10. What factors do you think are influencing attitudes towards gender equality?
11. How will children benefit from male participation in kindergartens?
12. Please list 3 areas that the Namibia National Gender Policy (1997) advances the government's overall objectives and international commitments regarding gender equality and equity between men and women?
13. How does the Namibia National Early Childhood Development Policy

(1996) advance the Government's overall objectives and international commitments regarding gender equality and equity between men and women?

1. What do you understand by the concept of gender equality?
2. What are the obstacles created by your society?
3. Are you involved in activities in your community, especially at the household level? Yes or No. If yes, what type of activities are carried out?
4. Do men participate in the decisions in your community? Yes or No.
5. How would you rate the participation of men as kindergarten teachers in your community?
6. How would you rate women participation as kindergarten teachers in your community?
7. How would you rate men participation in Early Childhood Development programmes in your community?
8. What do you think the role of men should be in kindergarten?
9. How will children benefit from the participation of male kindergarten teachers?
10. What measures are there to prevent men from participating in kindergarten teaching?
11. How do you choose to work as a kindergarten teacher?

APPENDIX III INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WITH KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

1. What do you understand by the concept of gender equality?
2. What are the activities conducted by your kindergarten?
3. Are men involved in childcare in your community, especially at the household level? Yes or No. If yes, what types of activities are carried out?
4. Do men participate in kindergartens in your community? Yes or No.
5. How would you rate the participation of men as kindergarten teachers in your community?
6. How would you rate women participation as kindergarten teachers in your community?
7. How would you rate male participation in Early Childhood Development Programmes in your community?
8. What do you think the role of men should be in kindergartens?
9. How will children benefit from the participation of male kindergarten teachers?
10. What factors are likely to prevent men from participating in kindergarten as teachers?
11. Why did you choose to work as a kindergarten teacher?

APPENDIX IV FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by the concept of gender equality?
2. Are men involved in childcare in your community, especially at the household level? Yes or No. If yes, what types of activities are carried out?
3. Do men participate in kindergartens in your community? Yes or No.
4. How would you rate the participation of men as kindergarten teachers in your community?
5. How would you rate women participation as kindergarten teachers in your community?
6. How would you rate male participation in Early Childhood Development Programmes in your community?
7. What do you think the role of men should be in kindergartens?
8. How will children benefit from the participation of male kindergarten teachers?
9. What factors are likely to prevent men from participating in kindergarten as teachers?