

Sudanese Girls and Women Educational Attainment *

Tayseer AL Fatih Mohamed and Dr. Amna M. Badri **

Introduction

Education is a basic human right and essential for achieving sustainable peace and human development goals. (Beijing POA, 1995). The main purpose of this chapter is to explain the gender gap in education with reference to issues of accessibility, affordability and quality of education. Furthermore, issues of challenges and constraints facing education system in North and South Sudan are discussed. The chapter also includes issues related to the factors leading to gender gap in education and came out with proposed priority objectives and interventions for promoting girls education in Sudan to be implemented by the government, civil society organizations as well as the families. The right for education has been incorporated in many international human rights instruments, including the Convention on Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights (CSECR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Furthermore, the International community has declared in many International Conferences such as the Fourth International Conference on Women -Beijing 1995, Copenhagen, Population and Development –ICPD- (1994)- Cairo, International Conference of Human Rights – Vienna - (1993), ICPD +5 and in other forums such as the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2002 that education, particularly girls' education is a basic human right and is fundamental for her development and empowerment as well as for national and economic development. Moreover, the international community became committed to achieve gender equality in education through accomplishing by the year 2015 the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), specifically; MDG2: Universal Basic Education for All Children and MDG3: Gender Equity and Empowerment of Women.



At the National level, the government of Sudan has signed the CRC in 1990, CSECR, ICPD platform of actions, Beijing platform of actions and Dakar Declaration of Education for All in 2002. This commitment was renewed at Jomtien in 1990 and Dakar in 2000. In 2002 a National Forum for EFA (Education for All) was formed headed by the Federal Minister of Education with an executive body headed by a national co-ordinator. Thus, recognizing education as a right for all citizens irrespective of their gender, ethnicity and class...etc. Sudan is also committed to achieve the targets of the Millennium Development Goals of (2) Universal Basic Education for All Children and (3) gender equality and women empowerment.

As a result, plans and strategies were formulated such as the National Strategic Plan for the years 2000 - 2005, a plan of action for education for all which aims to raise the rate of literacy especially among women and to integrate other programs into adult education syllabus such as income generating projects, health and agriculture education. The plan also includes a special programme for education and vocational training of teenage dropouts in all areas. Currently the Sudanese Ministry of Education is also working on an education plan for 2007-2011 as part of the Country Comprehensive Strategic Plan.

In addition, a presidential decree was issued establishing a separate department for Girls Education with state level offices in 2000 and legislation for planning general education for all was set in place. Also Federal Ministry of Education has established a department of nomadic education which trains teachers and provides services of mobile schools as well as other services such as literacy classes for both women and men.

The most important accomplishment is abiding the state to guarantee free and compulsory education at the primary level and illiteracy eradication programs by the Interim National Constitution of the Republic of the Sudan 2005 in its articles 13-1 (a), 13-1 (b). Moreover, Interim National Constitution for the year 2005 gives persons and groups the rights to establish and maintain private schools and other educational institutions at all levels in accordance with the standards of law. It also has obliged the state to mobilize public, private and popular resources and capabilities for education and development of scientific research and to guarantee



and protect freedom in academic institutions and of scientific research. (Interim National Constitution of Sudan (2005), articles number, 13-1, 13-2, 13-3, 13-6, 44-1, 44-2. pp7 and 17)

Furthermore, the international, national and local non- governmental organizations, community based organization, and the private sector contribute to improve education in Sudan and to increase the number of educated population particularly women through undertaking different activities such as construction and rehabilitations of schools, provision of trainings for teachers, carrying out researches, advocacy campaigns, mobilization of resources, provision of textbooks, curriculum development, provision of literacy classes, provision of food and school uniforms, literacy classes .. etc. In fact 47% of education services in Sudan is provided by the private sector and community.

Despite the commitments and efforts of government, national non- governmental organization, community based organizations to achieve quality education for all; still the education sector suffers problems in three areas: enrollment, quality education and achievements.

1.1 The Enrollment Rates:

Pre-school Education:

Pre-school education is part of the general education system and absorbs children between three and five years of age. The data during the period 1998/99 to 2002/03 showed that the number of institutions for preschool children increased from 6252 schools in 1998/99 to 9823 and the number of children enrolled in pre-school level was 256742 in the year 1998/99 and became 491733 in 2002/03. This increase had been accompanied by the increase in the number of teachers. However, gender gap, with regard to enrollment rates and to the number of female preschool teachers to male teachers, still exists. The data for the year 2004/2005 showed that among 491733 children only 222945 children are females. It also showed that among a total of 14234 teachers, female teachers constitute 11790, while male teachers are 2444. (Central bureau of statistics, 2007)



Table 1: Preschool education: No. Of kindergarten, Khalwas, children and supervisors for 2002-2003

No. kindergarten &Khlawas	No. of children		No. of supervisors	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
9833	213748	221842	2444	11790

Source: Ministry of Education cited in Central Bureau of Statistics 2007

1.2 Basic Education

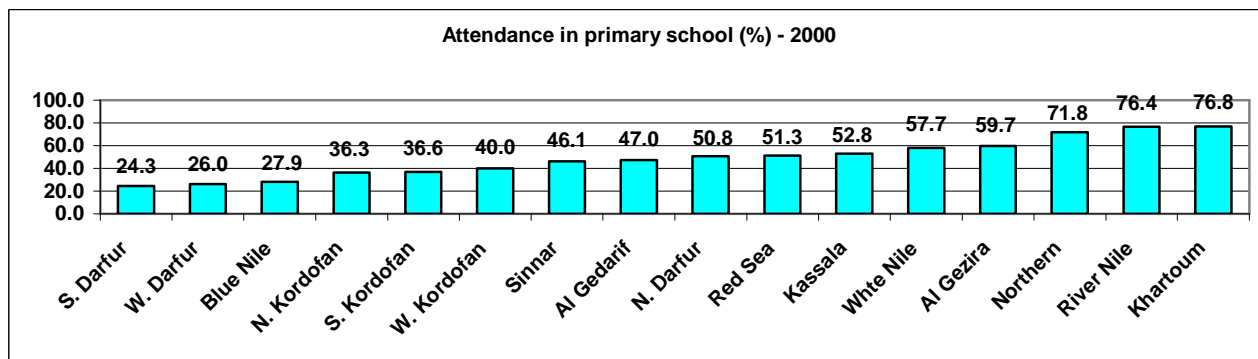
The duration of basic education is for eight years and pupils usually enroll at the age of six. Despite progress in expanded schooling, which is experienced in many regions of the Sudan, statistics show that the overall achievement of basic education is still low, with huge gender and regional disparities. The Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) in basic education during the period 2004 is 59.06%. The lowest enrolment rates are found in the Blue Nile State, Southern, Western and Eastern regions. The higher levels of enrollment rate are found in the northern regions and Gazira state which are not directly affected by the conflict, whilst the lowest rates correspond to conflict areas. There is a difference of (78.9%) between the Northern state and Bahr Al-Gazal state which is quite a large rate of geographic discrepancy. (See chart 1 and table 2 below).

The ratio of girls' intake in basic education in Sudan for the year 2002/2003 is (62.7%) in basic schools compared to a rate of (71.3%) for boys with a gap of (8.6%). While the rate of the girl's enrollment (56.1%) compared to a rate of (62.9%) for boys with a gap of (6.8%). (See Chart 2 and table 3).

Basic education also suffers from two problems; the problem of basic school pupil dropout and the problem of an out-of school- girl child. The latter refers to a girl at school age that has not enrolled in school or left the school before completing the cycle of basic education. The rate of dropouts shows large regional and gender disparities (See table 4). For example, dropout rates for both boys and girls are very high in Southern Sudan, Blue Nile, Red Sea, Gedarif, Kassala, North and South Kordofan and North Darfur as compared to Gizera and Khartoum. (FMOE and UNICEF, 2004)

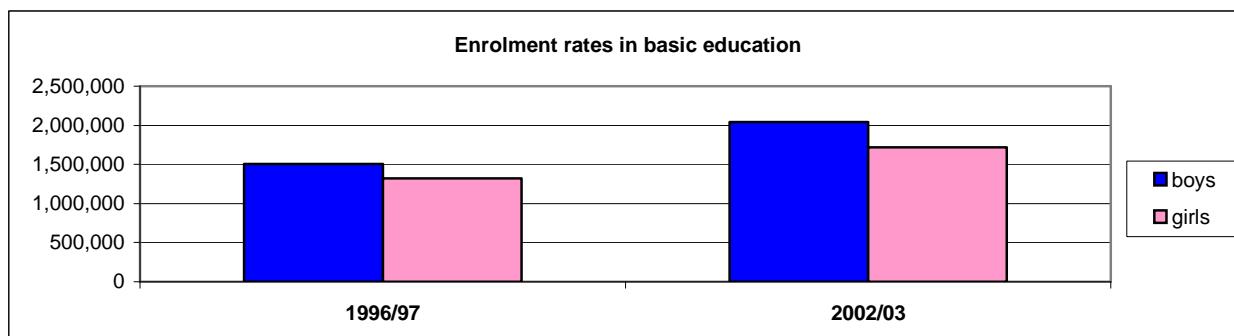


Chart 1: Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) Regional Variations



Source Sudan MDG report 2004

Chart 2: Girls/Boys Enrolment in Basic education



Source: Sudan MDG report 2004.



Table 2: Intake Rate in First Year Basic Education By Gender, Age and State 2002-2003

State	No of girls 6 years old	No. of girls in school	% of intake in schools	No of boys 6 years old	No. of boys in school	% of intake in schools
Northern	8023	8001	99.7%	8393	8316	99.1
River Nile	12482	11703	93.8	13306	13532	101.7
Khartoum	62622	56773	90.7	65549	57285	87.4
El Gezira	51172	42173	82.4	52353	48236	92.1
Blue Nile	9008	4589	50.9	6474	6092	64.3
Sinar	17785	9204	51.8	18340	15518	84.6
White Nile	23206	17732	76.4	23952	19958	83.3
NorthKordofan	23636	17058	72.2	24497	26560	108.4
South Kordofan	17121	10310	60.2	17780	11903	66.9
West Kordofan	17808	12829	72	18544	15274	82.4
North Darfur	22810	14364	63	23952	19810	82.7
South Darfur	42889	18900	44.1	44067	22235	50.5
West Darfur	23531	10635	45.2	25171	14054	55.8
Red Sea	8962	6143	68.5	9717	7746	79.7
Kassala	21320	15412	72.3	21304	16515	77.5
Gadaref	22005	12821	58.3	22851	14321	62.7
Bahr El Gazal States	22771	4141	18.2	23729	5056	21.3
Equatoria States	18431	4134	22.4	19614	5372	27.4
Upper Nile States	22214	3680	16.6	23032	4087	17.7
All Sudan	447796	280602	26.7	465625	331870	71.3

Source: FMOE EFA Plan of Action



Table3: Enrolment Rates in Basic Education (2002-2003)

	Number of Pupils			Population (6-7) years			% of enrolment		
	Boys	girls	Total	Boys	girls	total	boys	girls	total
Intake	331870	280602	604451	465625	447796	913421	71.3	62.7	67.1
Enrolment	2040360	1718334	3758694	3244516	3065610	6310126	62.9	56.1	59.4

Source: FMOE EFA Plan of Action; cited from Ahfad- UNDP report, 2003 from

Table 4: Repetition & Dropout Percentages in Basic Education in Sudan (Academic Year 2001/02)

State		Grade 1		Grade 4		Grade 8	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Northern	Re.	3.3	4.1	3.8	3.8	3.9	4.1
	Dr.	1.0	1.4	2.0	2.5	3.9	4.1
River Nile	Re.	0.0	0.0	1.4	1.1	2.0	1.3
	Dr.	1.2	0.8	1.6	0.9	1.8	1.3
Khartoum	Re.	3.9	4.8	3.6	3.9	1.0	1.1
	Dr.	1.1	0.8	1.7	0.9	1.3	1.3
Gazira	Re.	4.9	4.7	5.8	4.7	2.2	1.6
	Dr.	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.6
Senar	Re.	1.5	2.4	4.2	6.4	4.0	5.7
	Dr.	3.3	3.7	2.2	2.6	3.2	2.2
Blue Nile	Re.	2.6	5.0	12.8	7.0	6.2	10.0
	Dr.	6.3	22.7	21.5	3.8	37.8	16.7
White Nile	Re.	3.3	3.5	5.0	5.4	1.5	1.7
	Dr.	2.3	1.8	4.5	4.4	3.5	3.3
Gedarif	Re.	13.2	20.1	17.0	18.0	18.6	20.0
	Dr.	5.5	3.8	5.6	5.0	8.2	7.9
Kassala	Re.	0.0	0.0	18.5	26.5	46.9	61.2
	Dr.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Red Sea	Re.	10.2	10.1	12.3	11.9	14.1	11.0
	Dr.	12.0	13.0	9.2	12.2	12.8	11.5
N. Kordofan	Re.	8.8	9.8	10.8	8.0	0.0	0.0
	Dr.	4.8	7.9	1.7	1.6	2.2	2.4



South Kordofan	Re.	15.9	11.4	8.3	8.8	3.6	3.4
	Dr.	1.3	1.6	3.6	4.5	4.2	6.3
W. Kordofan	Re.	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.4
	Dr.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.8	1.8
N. Darfur	Re.	12.0	14.8	13.8	11.7	0.0	0.0
	Dr.	6.5	12.0	2.1	2.3	3.0	4.1
South Darfur	Re.	7.4	7.6	3.5	4.4	1.2	1.1
	Dr.	0.6	1.1	1.5	2.2	1.5	2.0
W. Darfur	Re.	0.0	0.0	4.0	4.1	7.7	6.0
	Dr.	5.1	16.1	23.9	17.1	7.1	5.8
Upper Nile	Re.	2.7	2.8	2.0	2.9	3.6	4.8
	Dr.	0.6	2.6	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0
Bahr el-Ghazal	Re.	2.8	2.9	2.0	4.0	5.5	10.8
	Dr.	0.6	5.9	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0
Equatoria	Re.	1.6	1.3	1.1	1.5	1.6	0.9
	Dr.	1.3	1.4	0.8	0.5	1.8	4.1

Source: FMOE and UNICEF 2004: Compiled from Educational Statistics, Educational Planning, Ministry of Education, Khartoum, (Academic Year 2001/02)NB: Re. = Repetition; Dr. = Dropout

1.3. Enrollment in Secondary Education

The National statistics indicate that the rate of girl's and boy's enrollment in secondary schools is estimated at 22.2 (Sudan MDG report 2004, AUW and UNDP report 2004). However, the FMOE annual report of 2004 shows that the overall enrollment rate for first year secondary school is (56.1%) for girls and (62.9%) for boys with a gender gap of (6.8%). It also showed that, there is gender gap in enrollment in secondary schooling which varies according to geographical regions. It shows that, despite gender disparities, the enrollment rate in first year secondary school is high in Northern, River Nile, Khartoum and El Gazira States. While the enrollment rates are remarkably low in the Southern states, West, South and North Darfur, South and West Kordofan and Blue Nile State. (See tables 5 & 6 and chart 3)

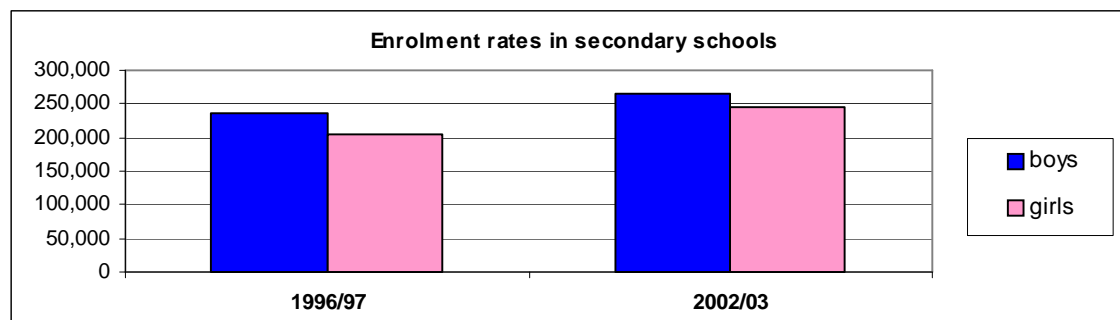


Table 5: Rate of Enrolment in Secondary School for 2003/2004

	Number of pupils			Population of secondary school age			% of enrolment		
	boys	girls	total	Boys	Girls	Total	boys	girls	Total
2003/2004	264551	245853	5140404	1181487	1095492	2306977	22.4	22.4	22.1

Source: FMOE 2004 cited from AUW and UNDP report 2004

Chart 3: Girls/Boys Enrolment in Secondary Education



Source: Sudan MDG report 2004



Table 6: Enrolment Rate in First Year Secondary School by Gender and Age 2002-2003

State	No of girls 6-13 years old	No. of girls in school	% of enrolment in schools	No of boys 6-13 years	No. of boys in school	% of enrolment in schools
Northern	59190	57472	97.1	61287	63055	102.9
River Nile	94997	80226	84.5	99529	87560	88.0
Khartoum	435295	358806	82.4	449795	383753	85.3
El Gezira	366821	275774	75.2	373972	314784	84.2
Blue Nile	69472	273	39.3	74564	39861	54.2
Sinar	134656	81337	60.4	137256	91093	66.2
White Nile	174600	104191	59.7	119741	177379	67.5
NorthKordofan	182471	124703	68.3	185897	149224	80.3
South Kordofan	135859	51122	37.6	141298	62697	44.4
West Kordofan	136815	58667	42.9	139768	81360	58.2
North Darfur	171975	84021	48.9	178030	112838	63.4
South Darfur	319837	92827	29.0	325445	120663	37.1
West Darfur	186106	51091	27.5	193293	86981	45.0
Red Sea	71764	42572	59.3	76072	49734	65.4
Kassala	158930	74325	46.8	157065	87942	56.0
Gadaref	161372	75987	47.1	166374	97792	58.8
Bahr El Gazal States	67905	23983	35.3	101857	27860	27.4
Equatoria States	71328	26920	37.7	106992	32780	30.6
Upper Nile States	66217	26982	40.7	99326	30642	30.8
All Sudan	3065610	1718334	56.1	3244516	2040360	62.9

Source: FMOE, Annual Report, 2003 cited from AUW and UNDP report 2004



1.4. Enrollment in Technical and Secondary Schools:

Technical and Science Schooling is part of the Secondary education system. Generally it is directed to males rather than females. Most of the technical training is provided for males while females are given training in activities related to their domestic roles. However, the established Technical and Science Secondary Schools do not have clear strategic goals or objectives to be achieved in the long run. The statistics shows that there is a low girls' enrollment rate in Technical and Science Secondary schools as compared to males since 1996 up to 2000. (See table 7 below)

The statistics indicate that the number of girls in schools was (7486) in 1996, which increased to become (7843) in 2000, while the number of boys increased to be (13362) in 2000 from (12216) in 1996. With regard to the number of schools, the data indicate that there is gender gap in favor of boys. In 1996, there were (139) schools, out of which (89) schools were for boys. This number increased to be (112) schools for boys in 2000, while the number of girls' schools became 58. (Eisa, 2002 p66)

Table 7: Distribution of Technical and Science Secondary Schools and students according to Gender and year, and the percentage of Males to Females.

Year	Number of Schools			Number of Students		
	Girls	Boys	%	Girls	Boys	%
1996	50	89	56	7486	12216	61
1997	52	94	55	7574	12493	61
1998	54	100	54	7662	12776	60
1999	46	106	53	7752	13066	59
2000	58	112	52	7843	13362	59

Source: Cited from Eisa, 2002. p66.



1.4 Literacy Rates of 15 – 24 years old: Also termed Adolescent Education

Literacy rates in Sudan is described as high since it constitutes (49.9%) for North Sudan and (53.2%) for urban South Sudan (FMOE and UNICEF 2004). Literacy rates also vary according to state. Female literacy varies from 24% in Western Darfur to 68% in Khartoum (SMS 1999). In rural areas illiteracy rates are (62%) for females, (44%) for males and in urban (34%) for females, (21%) for males (SMS 1999).

The Plan of Action for EFA aims to raise the rates of literacy especially among women and to integrate other programmes into adult education syllabus such as income generating projects, health and agriculture education. It also recommends the employment of National Service recruits to teach in literacy classes, of course this will require development of special training courses. The Plan also includes a special programme for education and vocational training of teenage dropouts in all states.

National and local NGOs and CBOs are the main contributors to adult education. One of the main factors in the success of literacy classes is the work at the grassroot level and with local people who are familiar with the target community and its socio-economic status and problems and can appropriately envisage possible solutions. An example of this is the Hausa Community in the White Nile state where girls work in the morning and attend school in the afternoon.

1.5. Enrollment in Tertiary and Higher Education:

The educational Statistics of 2001/02 indicate that the number of students who where nominated to enroll in institutes of higher education is(23209) girls and(23273) boys with a slight gender gap in favor of boys. Also, records of 2001 showed that the enrollment rate for girls in both private and public universities was (52.2%) comparing to (47.8%) for boys (JAM report: Gender Concern, 2004). This drop in boys' enrollment rates may be due to the fact that boys prefer working than continuing their education (AUW and UNDP, 2004)

There is also a slight gender gap in some specializations such as application sciences. For example, in education colleges the number of girls enrolled exceeds that of boys by (1742). In the specialization of Physics only (6) girls were enrolled as compared to (167) boys, the same applies to engineering colleges with a difference of (1524) in favor of boys (IBID).

Data from three governmental universities for the year 2001/2003 showed that the number of registered BSc male students in colleges of education and nursing was lower compared to number of females. Moreover, male students are concentrated in colleges of Engineering, Medicine, and economic studies (see below table 8 & 9)



Table 8 No. of Registered Students for B.Sc Degree in Three Governmental Universities for 2002/2003

College	Khartoum University		Omdurman Islamic University		Sudan University for Science and Technology	
	Male	female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Arts	899	1626	1230	1154	922	819
Economic and social studies	817	874	-	-	-	-
Economic and political Sciences	-	-	1084	959	-	-
Medicine	846	1164	-	-	-	-
Medicine and health sciences	-	-	814	809	-	-
Construction and engineering	2083	1290	1198	134	6008	2021
Nursing	55	390	-	-	-	-
Education	1186	1350	1286	1345	-	-

Source: Ministry of Higher Education

Table 9 No. of B.Sc Graduates from Three Governmental Universities for the Academic Year 2001/02:

College	Khartoum University		Omdurman Islamic University		Sudan University for Science and Technology	
	Male	female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Arts	239	426	281	234	83	87
Economic and social studies	195	235	-	-	-	-
Economic and political Sciences	-	-	299	308	-	-
Medicine and health sciences	-	-	110	126	-	-
Construction and engineering	324	88	236	13	473	214
Nursing	10	69	-	-	-	-
Education	161	633	401	338	-	-

Source: Ministry of Higher Education



2. Issues of Quality of Education:

Quality of education is related to quality schools, availability of textbooks, teachers, and effective management of education sector and achievement rates.

2.1. Schools:

There were 12,004 primary or basic schools for 3,589,981 students in 2003 in Northern Sudan. However, new class rooms are needed to deal with the large inflow of migrants students from Southern states that will enroll in schools in the North. The estimated classrooms to be build annually is 2,200 classrooms and to be provided with water and sanitation so as to reach the enrollment targets. (JAM Sudan 2005)

Moreover, two third of primary/basic schools are without adequate water and 50% have inadequate sanitation facilities which has a negative influence upon female school attendance and enrollment. (IBID)

In Southern Sudan, only 10 percent of the schools are in permanent buildings and the majority, 61 percent are in poor structures and there is one school per 1000 children. In 2005, there are approximately 1800 schools; of which (33) are secondary schools. Existing schools have inadequate facilities and sanitation and characterized as unsuitable for learning. (JAM Sudan 2005)

Other issues related to quality school are the location and the type of the school in terms of single gender school or co-education school. Studies and reports indicate that schools are usually located in towns and in rural areas far from the smaller villages. Therefore, children might take between three to four hours to reach the school. Reaching schools during rainy seasons is also a problem for many children, especially the very young ones and females who are not allowed to walk alone or sometimes have to be accompanied by one of her brothers. Thus, they leave school because of distance and unavailability of transportation, in addition to unavailability of food in school (FMOE and UNICEF, 2004)



In the disadvantaged rural areas which were affected by war or suffered from underdevelopment, co-education is predominant and considered as a constraining factor to girls' education. (IBID)

2.2. Textbooks and Educational Materials:

The majority of schools or other educational institutions lack textbooks and educational materials. It is estimated that the average official numbers of textbooks per pupil is 2.1, but the ratio is lower. Moreover, existing curricula in the South does not state specific learning or behavioral objectives, which lead to vagueness in teaching patterns and intended outcomes and if the curriculum used in Northern Sudan is to be adopted it is described as intensive and complicated for the pupils to absorb and the teachers are not well trained to teach. In addition, the mainstream national curriculum is claimed to be culturally, ethnically and religiously biased. It does not reflect girls' and boy's environments or needs and usually gender biased or stereotyped and does not tackle human rights, peace, life skills, environmental and gender issues nor consolidates the values of accepting others, equality, equity and democracy. (JAM Sudan, 2005)

In South Sudan, a process of Curriculum development and unification has been taking place as most of the schools follow the curricula of neighboring countries. Moreover, the South lacks the capacity to produce textbooks and materials to support teachers. Curriculum is also needed to be revised to include issues of integration, peace, human rights, self reliance, health and development.

The tertiary and higher education institutions lack updated references, textbooks, and libraries including electronics ones. (IBID)

2.3. Teachers:

Schools in Northern and Southern Sudan lack adequate number of qualified and trained teachers, especially females. The pupil – teacher ratio in basic education system was 28 in 2003 in Northern Sudan while it is planned to be increased to 35. Only an estimated six percent of



teachers are qualified in South Sudan, while 12 % are qualified teachers as required by the Federal Ministry of Education.

Another important issue is the low and sometimes irregular payment of teachers in the Northern and Southern states. Also small remuneration force teachers to quit their jobs, join other jobs with higher and regular payment or migrate to towns for better opportunities. Thus teachers who stay on the job have to look for extra income by forcing children to take extra classes which in turn increases the cost of education and discourages families from taking their children to school specially girls.

In rural areas teachers specially females might not find appropriate accommodation and access to daily amenities is difficult and supplies are hard to get. (FMOE and UNICEF, 2004, JAM Sudan, 2005)

2.4. Management of the Education Sector:

Management of the education Sector refers to the ways education sector is directed, planned, organized, coordinated, controlled and supervised by the responsible bodies.

After the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement 2005, the education sector has been characterized as a four-tiered decentralized system whereby basic education, secondary education and department of private education is part of the exclusive power of the States. Tertiary education, education policy and research is part of the concurrent power of the National Government and the Government of the South, education planning is the responsibility of the Government of the South. The local government has been assigned a role in providing education services by the states. (CPA, 2005)

However, previous experiences revealed that in the North, establishment and management of basic education has been the responsibility of the local government, secondary is that of the state and the tertiary is that of the federal government. Education Councils are the focal points of popular participation, playing a key role in school supervision or maintenance, and fund raising for covering school's and teacher's needs. Federal Ministry of Education is responsible for planning, policy, training, education research, curricula development and monitoring the quality



instructions. However, it has been obvious that States and localities lack the revenue base and technical capacity needed to fulfill their responsibilities in education. (JAM Sudan 2005)

There is lack of coordination between the different responsible bodies at the different levels after transferring some of the responsibilities of teacher's training and payments to the state and local levels. This has weakened the education system in the North. The situation in the South is worse. Education sector is dramatically under resourced in terms of staff and funding. Therefore, it has been almost dependant on parents and non-governmental organizations on management and funding. Still the education sector needs realistic plans, tools and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation to be developed. (IBID)

Achievements of Education:

Achievement of education refers to “ensure that girls and boys, women and men are literate, numerate and equipped with life skills” (UNICEF, N.D). Achievement is also a result of quality education and quality teaching which is lacking in Sudanese schools, thus forcing parents to rely more on private schools and depriving the poor and disadvantaged sectors.

Studies and research revealed that the level of awareness of males and females regarding human rights, good governance components, reproductive health, women empowerment and gender mainstreaming issues is limited. Furthermore, refresher courses and job tailored training is needed.

B. Challenges and Constraints:

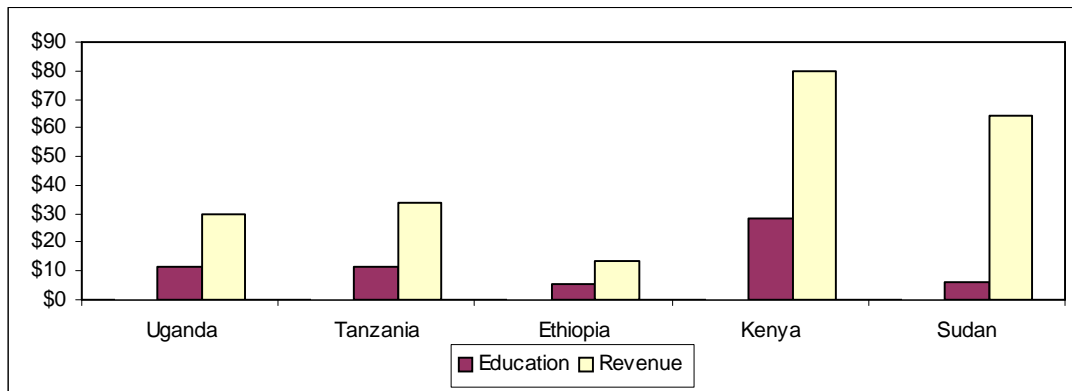
According to research papers and studies on the field of education and the girls and women education in particular, (Bedri, 2003; AUW and UNDP 2004, Sudan JAM 2004, FMOE, NCCA and UNICEF, 2004), the major factors leading to gender gap in education are:



B. 1. Barriers Related to Economic Factors:

Due to the economic sanctions, increase in foreign debts, introduction of structural adjustment policies (SAPs) government downsized the budget allocated for social services and investment in human development. The education sector received only (6.4%) of public expenditure in 2001, down from (7.0%) in 2000 and (7.7%) in 1999. Community contribution caters for 53.4% of education expenditure. (Sudan MDG 2004). Currently, public spending on education in the North is strikingly low relative to revenue and per capita GDP, (see annex I: figure 9).

Figure 9 : Per Capita Government and Education Spending versus Revenue (US\$, 2003)



Source: Sudan Ministry of Finance and National Economy and World Bank. Cited in JAM Sudan volume (1)

As a result, families are not able to meet the expenses of education such as the transport, school uniforms, breakfast, materials .. etc. On the other hand the decrease in education expenditure results in unpaid teachers or/and low paid teachers working in a poor environment. It became the responsibility of the state and the local government to face the cost of general education from the state and local resources. Thus, with the limited technical and financial capabilities, they are unable to build new schools near to the homes of the girls or boarding schools.

Moreover, with the absence of the support of the family and high cost of living and poverty, some families depend on child labor at the expense of their education. In such cases it is the girl who is taken out of school to work or to allow the boys in the family to pursue their education.

B.2. Socio- Cultural Barriers:

Culture and values emphasize women's domestic roles and place restrictions on women's mobility. Therefore, girls are not allowed to travel or walk for long distances to schools and universities in other rural or urban areas.

Furthermore, the culture glorifies women's reproductive role rather than women's productive role. Thus, education is not recognized as important for women as marriage and biological reproduction. Hence, early marriage is one of the important reasons for girls dropping out of schools. The tradition of early marriage for girls is declining in some states, but in others, e.g. some of the Southern States, early pregnancy is common.

Another culture belief which constraints women's education is the culture of son preference, thus its preferred to have boys sent to schools and for the family to support their education expenses because of the belief that they are the future breadwinners and will be responsible of the family economically.

Families and communities, especially rural communities, still have negative attitudes towards girl's education. Some families and communities, who are influenced by traditional beliefs regarding the ideal roles of women and girls in the society, see women's education as a challenge to the existing unequal power relations and that education is against women's modesty and honesty. Furthermore, education is not perceived as a basic human right; therefore, women are not allowed to enjoy their right.

Moreover, the implications of the gender biased school curricula, mass media and states play a vital role in fortifying discriminatory images of women and men and the role they should play in the society.

B.4. Barriers Related to Access to Mass Media

Mass media such as television, radio, magazine, journals and other means of Media are important tools for raising people's awareness on girl's education. However, in Northern and Southern Sudan, there are areas where there is no coverage of TV and of poor communication



infrastructures. Therefore, information on education and in particular messages related to girls' education might not be accessible to all communities.

The implications of the gender biased school curricula, mass media and states play a vital role in fortifying discriminatory images of women and men and the role they should play in the society

B.5. Health Related Factors:

Absenteeism and drop out of schools is high in rural areas because of frequent illness of girls and boys and spread of communicable diseases such as Malaria, Malnutrition..etc.

B.4 Barriers Related to War and Political Instability:

Armed conflict affects education of children, in particular that of girls, through destruction of educational infrastructure and internal displacement, lack of safe transport and existence of practices of violence against women.

B.5. Limited Educational Services Targeting the Disadvantaged Groups: Children under difficult circumstances like homeless children, working children, children of poor families, and children with disabilities especially in rural areas

B.6. Constitutional and Legal Barriers:

The National Interim Constitution (2005) does not grant explicitly girls and women the right to education. Thus there is no law forcing girls education despite the fact the child law of 2004 in its principles stressed the role of the government and family in supporting child education. Furthermore, education has not yet taken its proper place in the priority agenda of the State as still no specific budget has been allocated for promoting education at the state and local government level.

C. Proposed Priority Actions for Promoting Girls Education:

The indicator of girls and boys education revealed that both sexes face problems of enrollment, quality education and poor educational achievement. However, it indicates that girls and women



are in more disadvantaged position in comparison to boys and men. To deal with such problems priority objectives have to be identified first, then strategies and priority actions to be achieved. The following are priorities identified by the civil society / non state actors and government of Sudan regarding gender and education:

Priority Objectives:

- To achieve by the end of the interim period gender equality in access to primary, secondary and tertiary education and geographical disparities must be addressed.
- Equitable access to /and control over science and technology
- A revised gender and human rights based Curriculum that promotes a culture of peace and tolerance, achieving democracy and good governance, HIV/AIDS advocacy, environmental concerns and sanitation. Sexual education and civic education with consideration for diversity of cultural and ethnic groups in Sudan.
- To increase adult literacy rate by 50 % especially amongst women.
- Compulsory free basic education in ten states of Northern Sudan.
- Update references materials in schools and universities
- Add extra-curricular activities and home economics
- All girls and boys should get equal quality education without discrimination based on academic standard, gender, ethnicity or class.

D. Strategies to be used to achieve the identified priority objectives:

1. Fund and resource allocation:

Fund allocation for girl's education and adoption of scholarships policy.

Allocate sufficient resources for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the educational reforms which will be undertaken by the civil society.

2. Review and formulation of policies and regulations:

To review the National education policies so as to take gender issues into account emphasizing factors that lead to gender gap in education i.e. early marriage, domestic burden, boys preference...etc.



Formulate regulations for deterring cultural practices hindering girls and boys access to education.

3. Training:

To conduct training for teachers, policy makers and community leaders on gender and human rights reproductive health issues.

To conduct training for planners and executives at the different levels of the government, teachers, school heads on education sector management and governance.

4. Development of educational infrastructure:

Classrooms construction & school rehabilitation program including pit-latrines and water points.

Set universal standards for classrooms construction and environment

Reconstruction and rehabilitation programs for constructing roads, establishing communication means and boarding school.

5. Provision of Scholarships and Textbooks:

Provision of transport and boarding schools for boys and girls, scholarship, and targeted incentives to families adopted.

Provide enough textbooks and teachers, school libraries.

6. Implementing specific programs for targets with special needs:

To solve specific problems of those with special needs the following strategies to be undertaken.

6.1. Implementing special needs programmes targeting children with disabilities, refugees, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and Pastoralists such as flexible timetable..etc.

6.2. Initiating programs that target adult literacy and provide non-formal education for out-of-school children

6.3. reducing labor inside and outside the household.



Implementing of Empowerment Program for the purpose of:

- Empowering women and the families economically and socially. This is to be done by provision of employment opportunities through micro-credit programs and income generating activities, laws enforcement for eliminating violence against women and protecting women's rights, awareness raising programs to promote women's value in the society and the importance of girl's education, to let women and families have access to the information. The empowerment of women and families and ability to take free decision and overcome challenges to send their children to school, especially girls.
- Creating dialogue between the executives' bodies and civil society relevant members.
- Creating favorable economic, political and social climate and supportive environment to girl's education.

Networking and Coordination:

With regards to coordination and networking, the following strategies to take place;

- To develop links and programs with relevant government bodies and civil society organizations for promoting education of girls.
- To coordinate the education activities between the different levels of government and each level and the relevant non-governmental organizations, private sectors, community leaders and donors by creating effective communication strategy.
- To revive existing networks as most of them are important for supporting girl's education.

Peace Building and Sustainability:

Serious measures have to be taken to sustain peace so as to achieve conducive environment for education. These measures to include;

- Ending of war and building of trust among conflicting parties.



- Reaching an agreement with the armed parties for protecting non-armed persons and women and children from any act of violence, they might be exposed to on their way to schools.
- Disseminating of information on peace and the significance of education, especially women's education.
- Developing of peace programs to include disarmament, demobilization and integration projects.
- Forming of a committee from the conflicting parties and community leaders for monitoring and developing measure for protecting schools from destruction and promoting education in areas controlled by armed groups.

Actions to be undertaken by the Government Organizations and Civil Society Organizations to Achieve the Identified Objectives:

Different activities were suggested to be implemented by civil society organizations/non state actors, government organizations and other sister agencies. They are:

- Civil society: Media, networks, CBO, NGOs, INGO and FMOE to undertake gender and Human rights awareness campaigns
- Local Communities to participate in school construction and rehabilitation.
- Political Parties, trade unions, religious traditional groups to adopt adult education programs
- Private sectors especially banks to participate in Provision of boarding schools, uniforms, Transport, nutrition, proper sanitary schools, income generating activities to families, lawns to students, and scholarships for secondary and university education
- Academic institutions, human rights centers, environment associations to conduct training for teachers on gender, women empowerment, human rights, peace building, sustainable development and environment issues. In addition to undertake studies and researches to have examine the nature, location, cause, possible solutions for ending gender gap in education.



- Six clusters of the civil society to participate in planning, budgeting, implementing, monitoring of girls education programs.
- Private sector and international community to assist in Provision of necessary equipments (labs, computers, sports...etc).
- Ministry of Higher Education (MHE), Federal Ministry of education (FMOE), Ministry of Finance (MOF) other relevant bodies, International and national NGOs, and the private sector to provide training and scholarships at tertiary level.
- A council composed of retired educationists, Parents council, Women's organization to be responsible of receiving fund allocated for females' education
- Academic and research institutions to conduct researches (a) to investigate the factors leading to gender gap in education and suggest interventions, and (b) to evaluate the plans and programs implemented.
- Civil society and relevant government organization to conduct debate/meetings sessions for sharing ideas and experiences.
- Special programs for girl child education where cultural factors inhibit enrollment or retention e.g. incentives, awareness raising, reducing domestic burden by appropriate technology interventions ...etc
- Civil society and Ministry of Social Welfare to work on poverty alleviation through mothers' economic empowerment.
- Ministry of Education and Civil society to launch more appropriate curricula and support literacy programs for adolescents and female adults to give skills, raise self esteem and determination for autonomy and advancement.
- Policy makers to provide girls with opportunities in areas of vocational training, and life learning education for advancement of girls in non-traditional spheres.
- Federal Ministry of Education, State Ministry of Education and civil Society to develop new curricula that promotes gender equality, culture images and identities of equal dignity and prestige.



- The National Council for Child Welfare and representatives from the civil society organizations to form a committee for assisting in planning and monitoring of education system at the different levels and campaign for political support.
- Federal Government of Education, Ministry of Finance and relevant states bodies , donors and non governmental organizations to provide special support for promoting education in disadvantages areas such as Southern States, Greater Darfur, the two Eastern States and the Blue Nile State.

REFERENCES

1. Ahfad University for Women (AUW) and UNDP (2004) “*Situation Analysis on MDG 3: The Promotion Of Gender Equality And Empowerment Of Women*”. A Report Submitted To UNDP, Khartoum Office And WFP, Khartoum Office. Khartoum: UNDP and Ahfad University for Women.
2. Central Bureau of Statistics (2007) *Statistical Year Book for 2007*. Khartoum, <http://www.cbs.gov.sd/pub.htm>
3. CBS and UNICEF (2000) *Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS) 2000*. Khartoum: CBS & UNICEF
4. Eisa, Soad (2002) *Sudanese Women Education 1900-2000*. Khartoum: Master Publishing House
5. FMOE and UNICEF (2004) Baseline Study on Knowledge, Attitude and Practice on Girls’ Education in Selected States in the Sudan. Draft Research Report by the National Council for Child Welfare and United Nations Children Fund and Fedral Ministry of Education. Khartoum: UNICEF.
6. Government Of Sudan And United Nations Country Team (2004), *Millennium Development Goals Interim Unified Report*. Draft Version. Khartoum: UNDP Office.
7. Institute For Women, Gender And Development Studies, Ahfad University For Women (2nd April 2005),” The Minimum Agenda For Action During The Period 2005-2007” - A Call For Donors, The Sudanese Civil Society Document For The Civil Forum 7th – 9th April And The Gender Symposium 10th – April In Oslo
8. Joint Mission Assessment Sudan (JAM Sudan), 2005, *Framework For Sustained Peace, Development And Poverty Eradication, Final Review Draft*, Volume I. Khartoum: Joint Mission Assessment Sudan Office
9. Ministry Of Higher Education (2000-2001), *Higher Education Statistics (2000-2001)*. Khartoum: Sudan Press Limited
10. Ministry Of Higher Education (2001/2002) *Higher Education Statistics (2001/2002)*. Khartoum: Sudan Press Limited.



11. Ministry Of Higher Education (2003) *Statistical Year Book 2002/2003*. Sudan Press Limited: Sudan
12. Ministry Of Justice (1998) *Sudan Constitution of 1998*. Khartoum: Ministry Of Justice, Republic Of Sudan.
13. Republic Of Sudan (2005) *The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) 2005 between the Government of the republic of Sudan and Sudan people's Liberation Movement/Army*. Khartoum: Council of Ministers. Also found online on <http://www.unmis.org/English/documents/cpa-en.pdf>
14. Republic Of Sudan (2005) *Interim National Constitution 2005*. Khartoum: Ministry of Justice.

* This paper is originally published in **Sudanese Women Profile and Pathways to Empowerment**, Edited by Dr. Balghis Badri (Ph.d Sociology), Ahfad University for Women, Institute of Women, Gender and Development Studies, 2008.

** **Tayseer Elfatih Abdel A'Al** is a staff member at the Institute of Women, Gender and Development Studies, Ahfad University for Women. She obtained a MSc in Gender and Development (1999).

Tayseer Elfatih is engaged in teaching, researching and training on women, gender, peace and development issues since 1999, and a previous Head of Woman and Development office-Babiker Badri Scientific Association for Women Studies.

She published papers on issues of women and finance, women and education.

** **Dr. Amna Mohamed Abdel Karim Bedri** is currently assistant professor and Head of the English Language Unit at Ahfad University for Women, Teacher trainer and researcher in the field of English language teaching. She is also the President of the Association for Sudanese Teachers of English (ASTEL)

Dr Amnan obtained her Ph.D in English Language, University of Khartoum , after obtaining a M.A. TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and a Post graduate Diploma in Linguistics and English Language Teaching, Moray House College of Education - Edinburgh, UK .

She established the National Council for Child Welfare and was Secretary General for three years, regional consultant on girls' education for UNICEF and Member of the UNESCO Regional Office Advisory Team for United Nations Literacy Decade.

