

THE INFLUENCE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT ON GENDER EQUITY IN  
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AT THE SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL OF  
EDUCATION IN ELDORET MUNICIPALITY

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THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF  
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES  
(HUMAN ECOLOGY DIVISION) SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

March 2004

ABSTRACT

Education is valued as one of the most important sources of opportunity in the society. However, previous studies have shown that access to and achievement in education are often impeded by various socio-cultural and economic factors. The present study sought to investigate how factors in the urban environment influences gender equity in academic performance.

Data for the study was collected from a sample of six-day secondary schools in Eldoret Municipality in Kenya. Disproportionate stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques were used to obtain the required sample size consisting of students, parents and head-teachers of the sample schools. Pre-testing was done to establish the validity and reliability of the questionnaires used. The data was then subjected to both descriptive and inferential (chi-square) analysis.

The study established that residences with poor environmental conditions as well as students' social activities in the urban environment had a significant influence on their performance. The residence also caused a significant difference in the

performance of the two genders with female students being more than the male students. Other variables such as resources available to students, eating habits, transport and experiences students have while traveling to and from school were found not to have had any significant influence on their performance.

The present study recommended that town planning should incorporate libraries and recreational centers within residential estates to enable students especially girls to do their personal studies in relative safety, as parents may not want their daughters traveling far to access libraries and other social amenities. Staggered school timetables would also help students study at times suitable for them so that they don't miss classes due to various socio-cultural problems. Students also spend a good amount of their free time watching television or listening to the radio. These media resources could be used effectively to impart life skills to students especially girls who are most affected by life in residential estates of urban areas. Educational programs could also be aired through these media at appropriate times when students could make the best use of them.

The present study suggested that there is need to investigate the extent to which the provision of social amenities including libraries in the residential estates could influence the academic performance of secondary school students. Further, similar studies covering other urban areas in Kenya need to be conducted to find out the extent of the problems raised in the present study. Lastly, that a comparative study of urban and rural students be carried out to check for any similarities or difference in performance between the two groups as a result of their living environment.