Ensuring Gender Equity and Equality in Basic Schools in KEEA Municipality:
The Role of the Basic School Teachers

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Abstract:- There have been many elements of indiscrimination against some members of the societies including, females and children. The male counterpart have enjoyed and claimed superiority over the females for long. In some communities the male have overshadowed the female and trampled over the right of females as if they are sub-human being. At the work place some male Chief Executives Officers or Managers are claimed to have sexually abused some female subordinate making them become very vulnerable. In Ghana gender inequalities is recognised as critical societal problem and discussed in relation to education policies and programmes to be gender responsive so as to ensure equity and equality within all aspects of the institution's practice. There are four areas of concern claimed by T-TEL which include "Gender Responsive, the use of gender responsive Teaching and Learning Materials (TKMs), Academics, Programming and Pedagogy". With these, college authorities are expected to include female student teacher (ST) in every group or committee formed in the colleges. This study was done at Basic schools in the KEEA Municipality. The method that the researcher used for the study was Quantitative. The instruments used for collecting data for the research was questionnaires. The population for the study were all the teachers in all the 105 Basic School in the Municipality. The researcher selected a sample size of 200 respondents from the partnership schools using quota and simple random techniques. The research findings revealed that there are many areas where the teachers in KEEA Municipal Assembly were performing well. These include giving equal chance to all to answer questions in class, using participatory methods such as group, debate and role play to ensure equal participation of males and females. However, there are such as formation of gender club to discuss gender equity and equality and help confident to challenge traditional gender role in the society.

Keywords:- Mainstreaming, Discrimination, Stereotyping, Gender Responsive, Perceptions, Women Empowerment, Stigmatization, Partnership, Distinction.

I. INTRODUCTION

Of late gender studies has become a major concern to all. There have been all kinds of discriminations all over the world which many often make female become very vulnerable. Some aspects of discriminations against humanities include racial, gender, tribal and many more. The United Nations (UN) has shown much concern about this discrimination against humanities by instituting a number of policies including "The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)". All the UN member states agreed to achieve the eight MDGs by 2015. We have entered 2021; yet much need to be done to ensure equity and equality between male and female. Among the eight of the goals was to promote gender equity and empowering women into higher position. Edjah, Janhonen-Abruquah, Posti-Ahocas and Amu (2017) claimed that, in Ghana, gender inequalities is recognised as critical societal problem and discussed in relation to educational policies. In some societies women are discouraged to attain higher position in management. During community meetings the discussions would be all men affairs. These UN charters and conferences include setting target for equal access and enrolment for male and female students into educational institutions. There have been artificial barriers created between male and female since creation. To help bridge the gap of this disparity, Komenda College of Education has increased the College's female admission from 192 in 2019/2020 academic year to 287 in 2020/2021 academic year indicating 60.4% increase in enrolment.

Myers (2008) claimed that gender roles are our expectations about the way men and women behave. To Myers (2007) gender stereotyping are the acquisitions of a traditional masculine or feminine role practices in the society. Johnson (1992) outlined three contributing factors that promote inequalities among gender which make females being discriminated against. These are:
1. Teachers pay more attention to boys than girls in their classroom interaction.
2. Interactions with boys are made more public than girls and
3. Criticisms differ between boys and girls.

These become more critical when the teachers or lecturers concerned are male dominated. In such instances the tutors may not direct many of their classroom interactions to the opposite sex which may result to the tutors not being more suspected of sexual harassment. Therefore for some male tutors not to be suspected and accused of sexual harassment they may choose to be more cautious when dealing with the opposite sex.

This artificial distinction created by gender stereotyping has become international concern that it is being addressed in all policies world over. According to T-TEL (2016), tutors from colleges of Education are expected to take thoughtful and cautious steps to be gender responsive so as to ensure equity, inclusivity and equality within all aspects of the institution's practice. There are four areas of concern which include being "Gender Responsive, the use of gender responsive Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs), Academics Programming and Pedagogy". With this, college authorities are expected to include female student teacher (ST) in every group or committee formed in the colleges.

There has been cultural discrimination and stigmatization among the members of some societies. These perceptions of the Ghanaian culture were more often curried over to the school cultural environment during that period. Edjah, Janhonen-Abruquah, Posti-Ahocas and Amu (2017) supported this view that, gender position present in Ghanaian homes and the societies' cultures at large influence their practices. Formerly, the education of the girl child in Ghana was relegated to the background. The perceptions were that women irrespective of their education level may be compelled to marry to become housewives. We at times see and hear of teenage marriages in some Ghanaian philosophies and cultures. In some Ghanaian cultures, females were previously not allowed to contribute to public discussions. Edjah, Janhonen-Abruquah, Posti-Ahocas and Amu (2017) indicated that, in Ghana, the gender division of labour is still prevalent in many communities and cultures.

The researcher focussed on gender due to various argument about why gender studies. T-TEL (2017) claimed that there have been unfair treatments of female based on false assumptions about what they can or cannot do. T-TEL (2017) commented that the unfair treatment could be related to race, class or gender. These unfair treatments is said to be completely unjust because it may be based on hugely false assumptions and misconceptions about their (female) intelligence, ability, capabilities, physique and that one group is vulnerable or superior to another. T-TEL (2017) concluded that the effects of unfair treatment based on gender may limit persons' aspirations, affects persons' achievement and limit the entire groups, achievement and representation to some career choices. In Ghana, a ministry has been created to champion the affairs of the women and children. (During 2008 the government of Ghana through Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection introduce Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) of which it is claimed that females are most beneficiaries. Among the Ghana Police Service also a division has been created called Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) to see to domestic related issues and crimes usually against women.

In 1995, the United Nations organised " The Fourth World Conference on Women" held in Beijing to offer a platform of action which asserted women's right as human right concern which committed women to specific actions to ensure respect for the right of women. United Nations (2010) the General Assembly of the UN unanimously voted to create a single UN body tasked with accelerating progress in achieving gender equality and women empowerment. The UN is now focussing its global work on the recently developed 17 Sustainable Development Goals of which women have a critical role to play.

The Victorian Government (2019) outlined three vision statements as follows to ensure gender equality:
- Live in a safe and equal society
- Have equal access to power, resources and opportunities.
- Equal treatment with dignity respect and fairness.

These decisions from the government are aimed at bridging the gap artificially created by gender discriminations, stigmatisation and gender stereotyping which has become a worry to many societies and nations. In these steps taken, Edjah, Janhonen-Abruquah, Posti-Ahocas and Amu (2017) supported that, in Ghana, gender inequalities is recognised as critical societal problem and discussed in relation to educational policies. These include setting target for equal access and enrolment for male and female students. This gender stereotyping is not only peculiar to Ghana. Weiten (2007) claim that female tend to exhibit slightly better verbal skills than males. In particular, females are assumed to be stronger in tasks that require rapid access to semantic information in long-term memory and tasks that require the production of complex prose. As a result many females the world over are appearing to be very comfortable with the study of reading subjects. Contrary, Weiten (2007) claimed that during high school days males show a slight advantage on test of mathematical abilities. Myers (2008) supported the claim that, girls tend to display higher reading scores on the National Assessment of Education Process (N.A.E.P) while boys still outperform girls in mathematics portion of National Assessment of Education Process (N. A. E. P.) section.

Johnson (1992) suggested six ways of promoting and ensuring gender equality which are encouraging teachers to:
1. Be reflective and objective.
2. Get feedback from colleague teachers and students.
3. Use gender-neutral language whenever appropriate.
4. Explain the context that they use.

5. Seat ant group students intentionally with gender responsive-minded.
6. Use project base learning whereby the grouping will be mixed-gender grouping.

These and many other suggestions have made many governments improved, included and promoted gender responsive issues in their education policies of late. Many gender advocators always appeal to various governments to appoint many females into administrative and management positions. In Ghana the gender advocators are demanding forty per cent (40%) in the appointment into government's ministerial positions. In the District, Municipal and Metropolitan Assemblies the Government has agreed and have been appointing thirty per cent government appointee as female assembly members. This decision is a great achievement on the side of Ghanaian government.

Schneider (2015) suggested 10 things individuals can do to support gender equality. These are to:
1. Share the workload at home irrespective of gender (This refers to parents).
2. If you have children be an equal parent to both male and female (this implies be fair to all irrespective of one's gender).
3. Parents should encourage their kids to play with toys of his/her choice.
4. Walk and talk about income inequalities if it is found applicable in that society (it is said that in some countries, female employees receive lower salaries than their male counterparts. With some countries and institutions some positions have been reserved for the male)
5. Find female mentors/leaders
6. Encourage women to come forward and speak their minds without any oppression (being assertive).
7. Have an open-minded work environment devoid of sexual harassment and intimidation.
8. Be aware of gender stereotyping sentiments.
9. Promote and share the cause of social media. And
10. Stand up against harassment, burying and teasing.

Mwinchande, as reported in Crewe and Maritz 2005).claimed that some females Most often adolescent girls have been forced into their first sexual intercourse with male partners who are far older than the female partner and who have had sexual intercourse before. Mwinchande claimed that some of such adolescents are forced into early marriages of which they may have no choice. Some female adolescents are force into polygamous marriages of which some may have two or three rivals. These may look like slavery in disguise. Such atmosphere when created may take the females into bondage and therefore become more vulnerable in the societies in which they live. Therefore the study is meant to look at how effective gender responsive policies are considered in our basic schools in Ghana specifically Komenda Edina Aguafo Abrem (KEEA) Municipality.

There have been efforts from T-TEL (2016) to apply all other means to improvement of female students' academic performance so as to compete with their male colleagues in even areas which have been considered as no go area for female students. The means through which improvement of female students' performance is referred to as gender mainstreaming. The essence of gender mainstreaming dynamics in the curriculum, training and learning is to improve female students' performance, equal outcomes for tutors and students teachers' gender equality. To achieve this college leadership has to ensure that the colleges use gender sensitive curriculum and pedagogy so as to help the female student teachers achieve good and quality outcomes (T-TEL 2016). T-TEL (2016) continued that the implementation of gender equity strategies is likely to improve upon the disparities in female and male student teachers academic performance and outcomes. .

Objectives
The researcher intends to achieve the following objectives after the completion of the study:
1. To check if teachers in KEEA Municipality use gender responsive pedagogy and language in their classroom interactions.
2. To check if teachers in KEEA Municipality use gender responsive TLMs and challenge traditional gender roles
3. To check whether teachers in KEEA Municipality use gender responsive planning, activities and handle equal sexual maturity in gender responsive ways.

Research Questions
1. Do teachers in KEEA Municipality apply gender responsive pedagogy and language in communicating with students in class?
2. Do teachers in KEEA Municipality apply gender responsive TLMs and handle challenge traditional gender roles?
3. Are teachers in KEEA Municipality planning and handling sexual maturity in gender responsive manner?

II. METHODOLOGY

The method that the researcher used for the study was Quantitative which was based on variables that are measured through numbers and were analysed by means of applying statistical procedures. Creswell and Creswell in 2018 claimed that quantitative research used as a method which comprises the processes of collecting, analysing, interpreting data and writing the outcome of the study. On the other hand, Leavy, 2017 also asserted that quantitative approach to research has the purpose aimed at achieving objectivity, control bias, being specific and precise measurements that depend on deductive designs that aimed at refuting or building evidence in favour of specific theories.

Instrument

The instruments that the researcher used to collect data for the research was questionnaires adopted from T-TEL Gender Responsive Score Card (2017). Pelham and Blanton (2007) was of the view that questionnaire is standard set of written questions about their (respondents) attitudes, aptitudes, moods, experience and background characteristics considered. Questionnaires are set of questions present as predetermined set of stimuli to the respondents which, unlike interview questions, cannot be varied in the light of responses (Wittrock, 2005). Weiten (2007) Sidhu (2012) Castle (2010) Creswell and Creswell (2018) all of them claimed that questionnaires are process of devising a set of questions that are then disseminated to a sample of research respondents in order for the researcher to receive clear responses to a given phenomenon, which seems to be straight forward and comparatively pain-free.
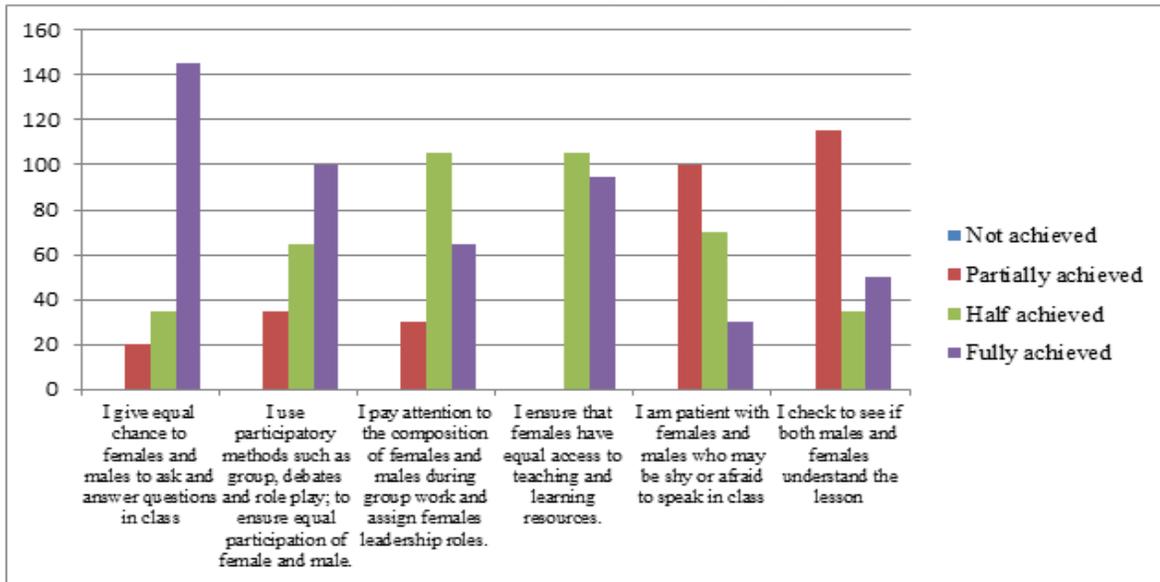
III. DATA ANALYSIS

The data gathered were analysed in line with the research questions as indicated as follows:

Research Question 1.

Do teachers in KEEA Municipality apply gender responsive pedagogy and language in communicating with students in class?

Figure 1: Gender Responsive Pedagogy

Source: field data 2020

In response to whether teachers in KEEA Municipal Assembly **"teachers give equal chance to females and males to ask and answer questions in class"** 20 respondents selected sometimes, with 35 and 145 going for often and usually. On whether **teachers use participatory methods such as group, debates and role play; to ensure equal participation of female and male, 35 selected sometimes with 65 and 100 choosing often and usually. The next item if teachers pay attention to the composition of females and males during group work and assign females leadership roles, 30 went for sometimes, 105 and 65 selected often and usually. On whether teachers ensure that females have equal access to teaching and learning resources, 105 and 95 respondents chose often and usually but no one chose either rarely or sometimes. Are teachers patient with females and males who may be shy or afraid to speak in class, 100 chose sometimes, while 70 and 30 opted for often and usually. Also, to check if both males and females understand the lesson, 115 selected sometimes with 35 and 50 selecting often and usually.**

Gender Responsive Language and Interactions

As a follow-up question the researcher wanted to know if teachers in KEEA Municipality use gender responsive language and interaction in their classrooms, if teachers don't use negative expression that females are not as good as males, 25 selected sometimes with 95 and 80 opting for often and usually. As to whether 20 chose sometimes, while 105 and 75 picked for often and usually. To check if teachers do not say things that reinforce false assumptions about females and males, 80 selected sometimes, with 35 and 85 selected often and usually. Also, the researcher wanted to know if teachers do not use body languages that show preferential treatment to boys, 55 and 145 chose often and usually with no one going for rarely and sometimes, As to whether teachers set ground rules that prohibit teasing/bullying particularly for males towards females, 30 went for sometimes, while 130 and 40 opted for often and usually. Do teachers build students' equal skills for self-confidence, speaking out and

leadership, 15 selected sometimes, 135 and 50 were the options for often and usually. Do teachers know the differences between "being friendly" and flirtatious with

girls, 35 selected sometimes, 45 and 120 went for often and usually.

**Figure 2: Gender Responsive Language and interactions**
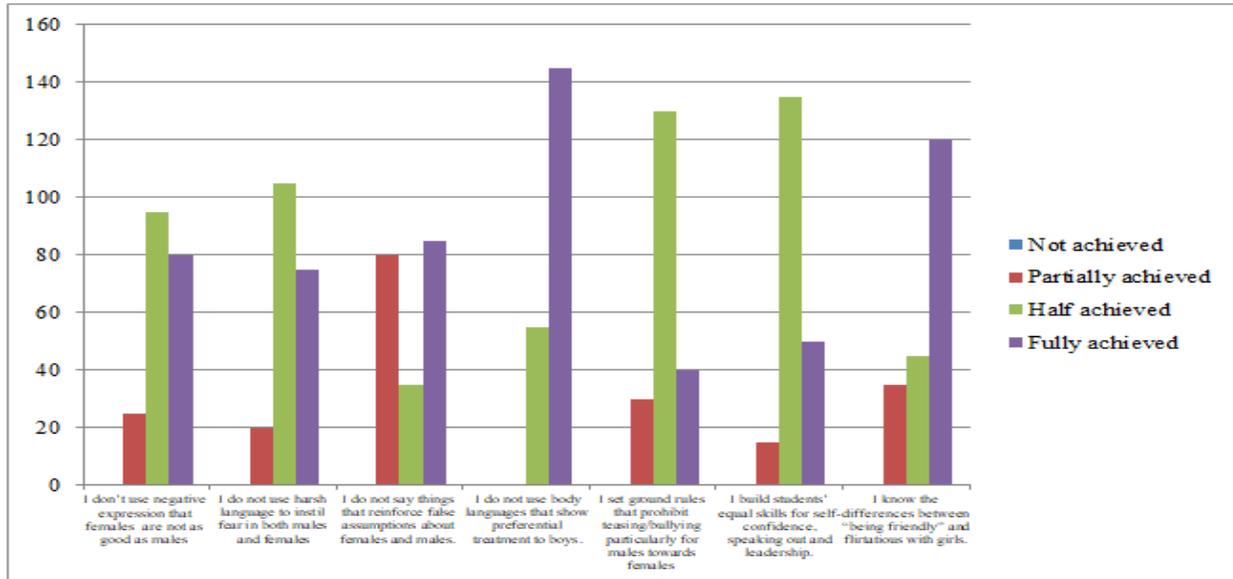
Source: field data 2020

Data from figure 2, wanted to know if teachers male students to critical of the challenges traditional views of masculinity e.g. male should not cook, 115 responded sometimes, 40 and 45 opted for often and usually. Also, do teachers identify traditional gender roles that appears in books/materials and make points to alert students these portrayals when using the materials, 10 selected rarely, 110 chose sometimes with 40 and 40 went for often and usually. The next was to discuss with students' portrayal of traditional

gender role limiting female students thinking ability, 15 and 65 responded rarely and sometimes, while 100 and 20 responded often and usually.

Research Question 2

Do teachers in KEEA Municipality apply gender responsive TLMs and handle challenge traditional gender roles? Responses to this question is indicated in figure 3.

**Figure 3: - Do teachers use Gender Responsive TLMs**
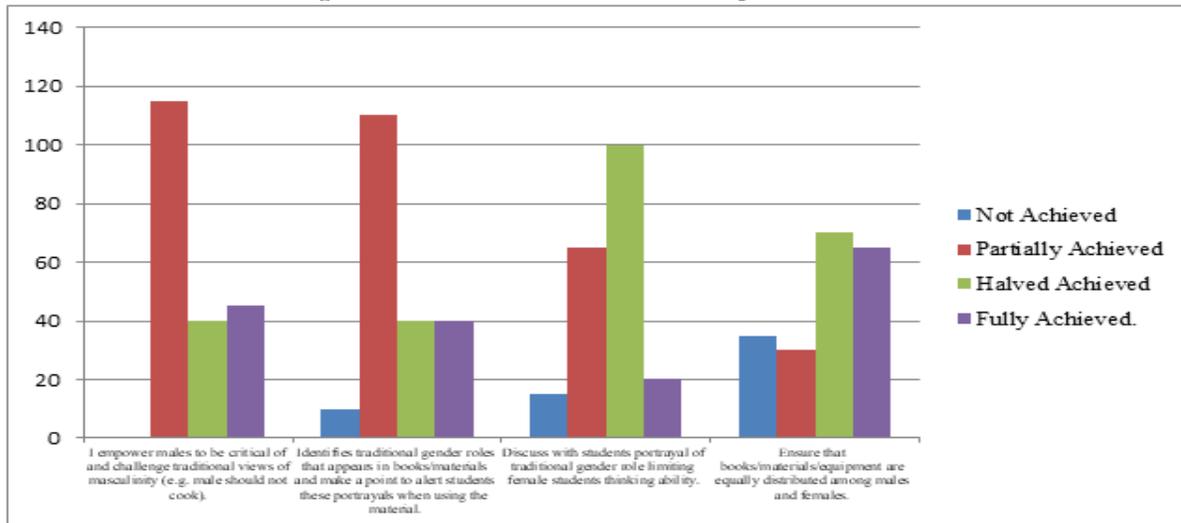
Source: field data 2020

The researcher wanted to know if teachers empower males and females to be critical of and challenge traditional views of masculinity e.g. male should not cook, 115 responded sometimes, while 40 and 45 chose often and usually. In response to whether teachers are able to identify traditional gender roles that appear in books/materials and make a point to alert students these portrayals when using the material, 10 responded rarely, 110 went for sometimes while 40 went for often and usually. On whether teachers discuss with students portrayal of traditional gender role limiting female students thinking ability, 15 chose rarely, 65 selected sometimes with 100 and 20 going for often and usually. Do teachers in KEEA ensure that books/materials/equipment are distributed equally among males and female, 35 opted for rarely, 30 for sometimes while 70 and 65 selected often and usually.

**Figure 4: -Teacher Challenge Traditional Gender Role**
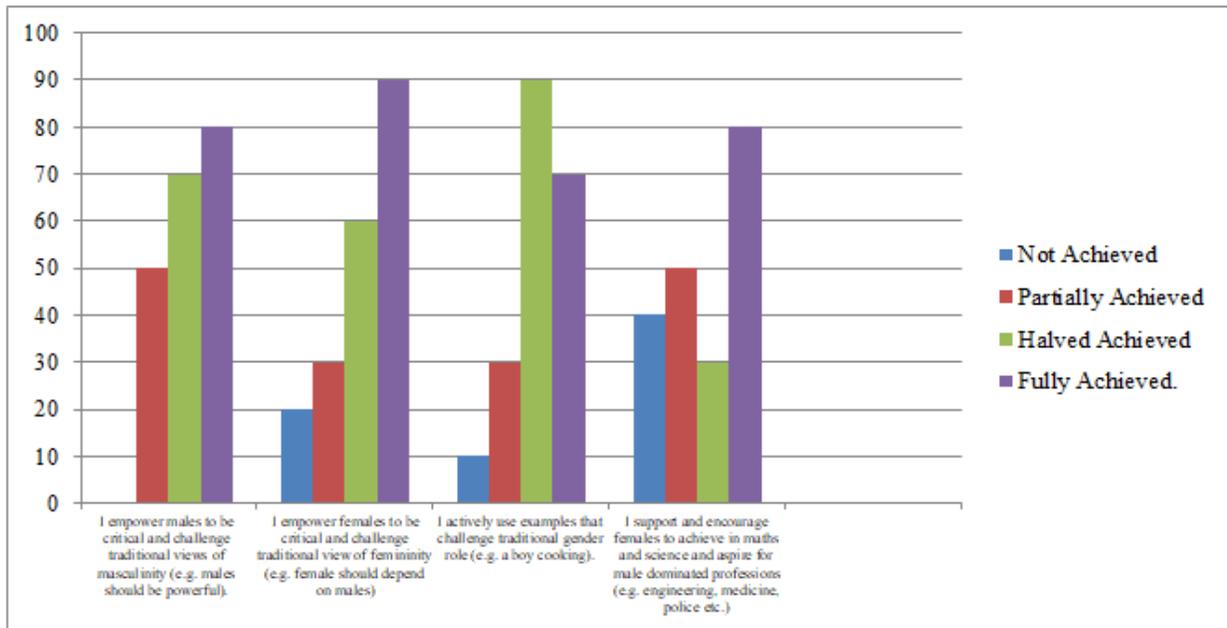
Source: field data 2020

Do teachers plan classroom seating to mix male and female and allow partially sighted to sit in front, 50 responded rarely and sometimes, while 60 and 40 went for often and usually. Further, do teachers review students' attendance every 2-3 months if there are problems with attendance and do follow up to students' homes, 60 ticked rarely, 40 went for sometimes while 70 and 30 went for often and usually. The researcher wanted to know if teacher review students assessment every 2-3 months if there are large gap between them. The response to this question is that, 70 ticked rarely, 50 for sometimes while 40 selected often and usually. As to whether teachers use teaching strategies to ensure equal participation, 20 selected rarely, 15 sometimes, with 85 and 80 going for often and usually. Do teachers review TLMs and use them equally between male and females,10 said no, as many as 100 went for sometimes while 40 and 50 deciding on often and usually. Finally, the researcher wanted to know if teachers plan to use exercises/ activities that enhance equality, 20 went for rarely, 50 for sometimes while 80 and 50 selecting often and usually.

**Figure 5: - Teachers use Gender Responsive Planning**
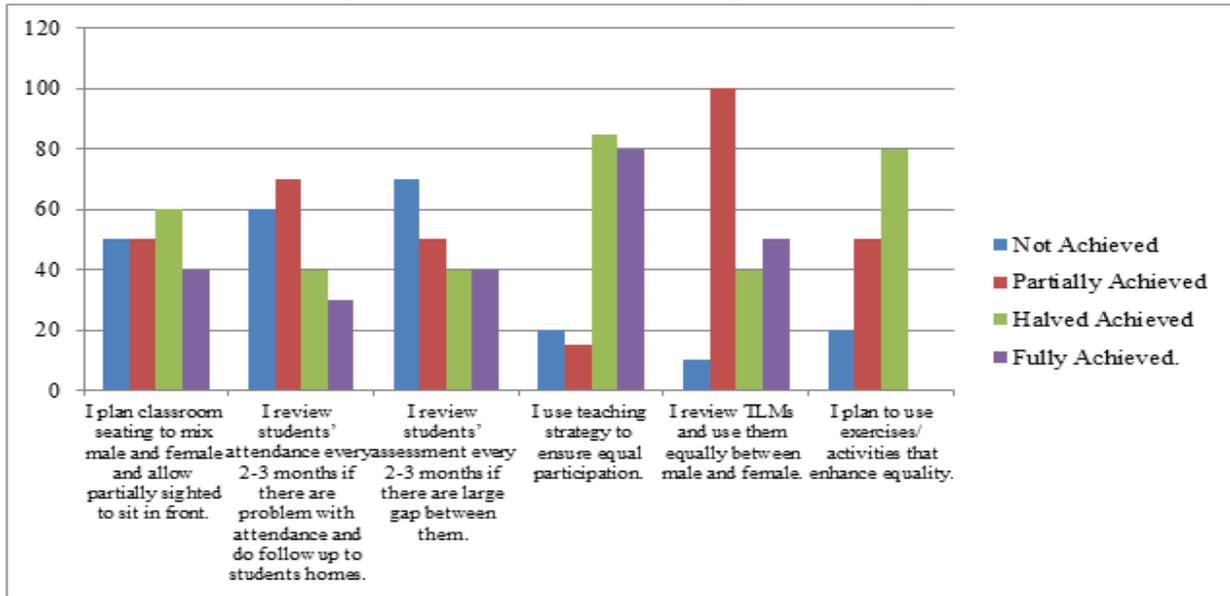
Source: field data 2020

The researcher wanted to if teachers empower males to be critical and challenge traditional views of masculinity e.g. male should be powerful, no one chose rarely, 50 chose sometimes with 70 and chosen 80 going for often and usually. Further, the researcher teachers empower females to be critical and challenge traditional view of femininity, 20 opted for rarely, 30 for sometimes with 6o and 90 opted for often and usually. Do teachers in KEEA actively use examples that challenge traditional gender role e.g. a boy cooking, 10 selected rarely, 30 for sometimes while 70 and 90 selected often and usually. Finally, the researcher wanted to check if teachers in KEEA support and encourage female students to achieve in mathematics and science and aspire for male dominated professions e.g. engineering, medicine, police etc., 40 selected rarely, 50 for sometimes while 30 and 80 opted for often and usually.

Figure 6: Teachers Deals with Sexual Maturation in a Gender Responsive Ways
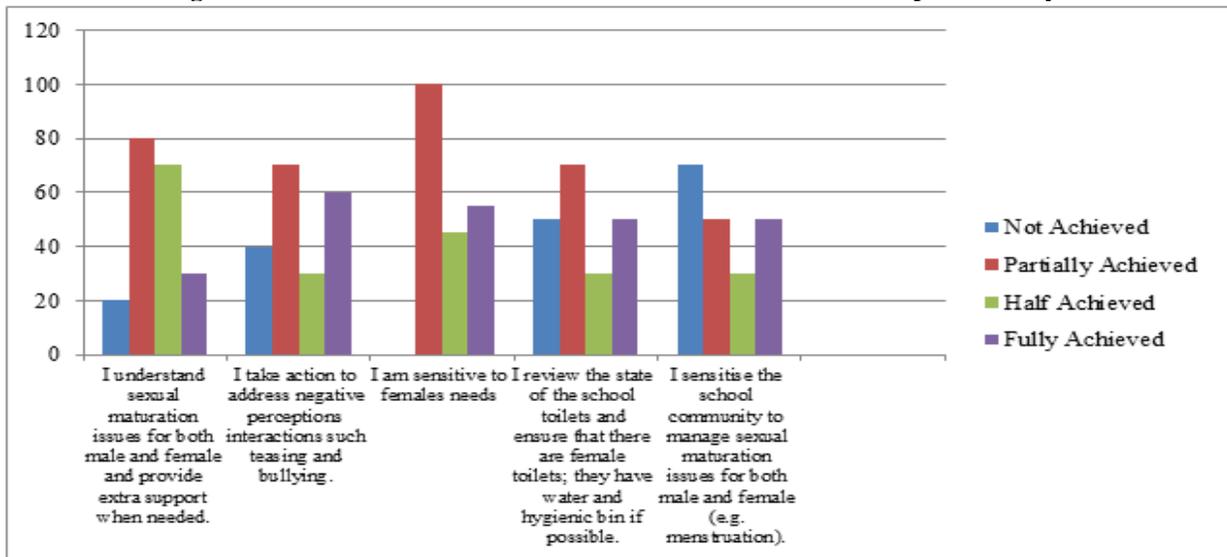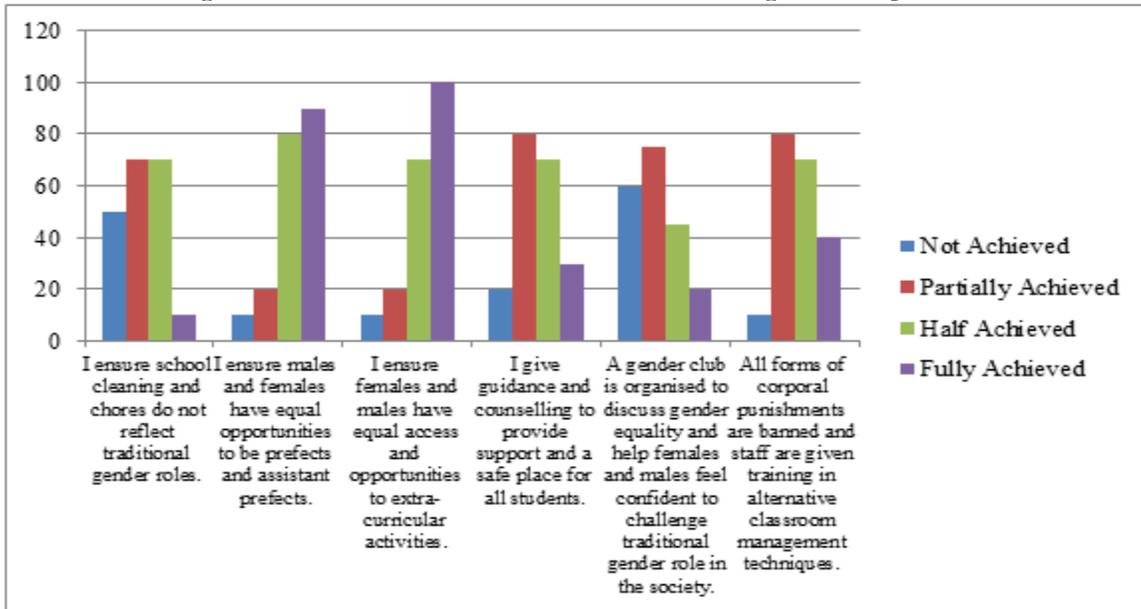

Source: field data 2020

Do teachers understand sexual maturation issues for both male and female and provide extra support when needed, 20 of the respondents selected rarely, 80 went for sometimes, with 70 and 30 opted for often and usually. Do teachers take action to address negative perceptions interactions such teasing and bullying, in response to this 40 opted for rarely, 70 for

sometimes, while 30 and 60 selecting often and usually. Are teachers in KEEA sensitive to females needs none of the respondents opted for rarely, as many as 100 responded sometimes with 45 and 55 going for often and usually. As to whether teachers review the state of the school toilets and ensure that there are female toilets; they have water and

hygienic bin if possible, 50 of the respondents opted for rarely, 70 for sometimes with 30 and 50 opting for often and usually. Do teachers in KEEA sensitise the school community to manage sexual maturation issues for both male and female (e.g. menstruation), as many as 70 stated rarely, 50 for sometimes while 30 and 50 selecting often and usually.

Figure 7: Teachers ensure that school activities Are gender Responsive.

Source: field data 2020

Do teachers ensure school cleaning and chores do not reflect traditional gender roles. In response to this question 50 of the respondents opted for rarely, 70 for sometimes with 70 and 10 selecting often and usually. As to whether teachers ensure males and females have equal opportunities to be prefects and assistant prefects, 10 responded rarely, 20 responded sometimes while 80 and 90 selecting often and usually. To check if teachers ensure females and males have equal access and opportunities to extra-curricular activities, 10 went for rarely, 20 for sometimes with 70 and as many as 100 going for often and usually. Do teachers give guidance and counselling to provide support and a safe place for all students, 20 opted for rarely, 80 for sometimes with 70 and 30 selecting often and usually.

IV. SUMMARY OF FINDING

The findings of the study indicated the teachers in KEEA Municipal Assembly schools were performing better in areas where they indicated often and usually. The following are the summary of the areas the teachers responded better:
- Teachers in KEEA Municipal Assembly giving equal chance to females and males to ask and answer questions in class

- Teachers in KEEA Municipal Assembly use participatory methods such as group, debates and role play; to ensure equal participation of female and male.
- Teachers in KEEA Municipal Assembly pay attention to the composition of females and males during group work and assign females leadership roles.
- Teachers in KEEA Municipal Assembly ensure that females have equal access to teaching and learning resources.
- KEEA Municipal Assembly Provide constructive/positive verbal feedback to both females and males.
- KEEA Municipal Assembly teachers don't use negative expression that females are not as good as males
- Teachers in KEEA Municipal Assembly do not use harsh language to instil fear in both males and females
- Teachers in KEEA Municipal Assembly do not say things that reinforce false assumptions about females and males.
- KEEA Municipal Assembly teachers do not use body languages that show preferential treatment to boys.
- Teachers in KEEA Municipal Assembly set ground rules that prohibit teasing/bullying particularly for males towards females
- Teachers in KEEA build students' equal skills for self-confidence, speaking out and leadership.

- Teachers in KEEA know the differences between "being friendly" and flirtatious with girls.
- Teachers in KEEA discuss with students portrayal of traditional gender role limiting female students thinking ability
- Teachers in KEEA ensure that book/materials/equipment are equally distributed among males and females
- Teachers in KEEA Municipal Assembly empower male to be critical and challenge traditional views of masculinity e.g. males should be powerful.
- KEEA teachers empower females to be critical and challenge traditional view of femininity e.g. female should depend on male.
- Teachers actively use example that challenge traditional gender role, e.g. boy cooking.
- Teachers support and encourage females to achieve in mathematics and science and aspire for male dominated professions e.g. engineering, medicine, police etc.
- Teachers use teaching strategies to ensure equal participation.
- Teachers plan to use exercises/activities that enhance equality.
- Teachers in KEEA ensure males and females have equal opportunities to be prefects and assistant prefects.
- Teachers in KEEA ensure females and males have equal access and opportunities to extra-curricular activities.

V. DISCUSSIONS

The research findings have revealed much improvement considering those the researcher has outlined earlier. Areas which require improve include forming gender club and organised them well to discuss gender equality and help females and males feel confident to challenge traditional gender role in the society need to critically looked at. There other areas such as seeing to banning forms of corporal punishments and see to it that staff are given training in alternative classroom management techniques. This is because many countries including Ghana have banned all means of corporal punishment and now considering other alternative approaches such as behaviour modification strategies, guidance and counselling, positive and negative reinforcement. Punishment is said to reduce the occurrence of misbehaviour but does not eliminate it totally.

Also, the concept of ensuring gender responsive, gender equity and gender equality is for all citizens to embrace to avoid stigmatisation, discrimination and violation of human right. This findings agrees with Edjah, Janhonen-Abruquah, Posti-Ahocas and Amu (2017) who supported that, in Ghana, gender inequalities is recognised as critical societal problem and discussed in relation to educational policies. These include setting target for equal access and enrolment for male and female students.

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