THE ROLES OF A GIRL CHILD

IN

HIGH AND LOW – INCOME SETTING IN KENYA

Magisterexamensuppsats
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Background

This study was undertaken to examine the role of the girl child in both low and high income settings in Kenya.

The study objectives were to identify the girl child roles in low income and high income settings, to identify and describe the parental perceptions of the girl child, to survey, perceptions of the girl child in regards to her role and to look at boys perceptions of their sisters’ roles within the family.

Method: Data was collected through questionnaire schedules for parents, interviews with the children, children drawings of smileys and trees, personal observation through video recordings. This data was later coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis.

Results: The research results showed that the girl child is marginalized especially in the low-income settings. Parental expectations have not changed in tandem with the changes in the world. The girl child socialization is greatly influenced by cultural and traditional practices. She is likely to marry early, still tied down by domestic chores such as fetching firewood and water, cooking and gardening.

In low-income settings the girl child has not been given adequate opportunity to go to school. The parents have dim expectations about her, for example she is likely to drop out of school or that it is a waste of resources for she will take everything with her when she
goes with her husbands. More so the parents prefer to educate their sons than their daughters.

In terms of socialization, girls are still regarded as weak and their brothers are socialized to treat them as such. This coupled with the continued treatment of girls as future wealth creation objects with payment of dowry has exacerbated the situation of the girl child in the low-income settings.

This contrast sharply with the high income settings. The study has shown that parents have made remarkable achievement in terms of improving the girl-child’s life. The girl is more likely to enjoy equal entitlements like the brother in terms of education opportunities and rights. More so, discrimination on the basis of gender is minimal. Further to that she is not tied to domestic chores like her counterpart in the rural areas. This proves that the parents in high income settings have as high expectations on their daughters as they have on their sons. They envisage their girl child to acquire university education before they think of marriage.

Conclusion: This study vouches that there is a need for enhanced advocacy and sensitization programmes targeted at the low income settings in order to sensitize the parents, siblings and the community members on the need to respect the rights of the girl child and her equal treatment. In order to achieve the above, sensitization can be conducted through the use of respected people with the relevant training, qualifications and experience to speak to parents and communities at public forums about the issues raised.

Parents, community leaders and other opinion leaders should also be specifically targeted for sensitization and should also be involved in community sensitization and advocacy efforts. Lastly mass media has a lot influence on the people. This medium should be used for the purposes of sensitization and advocacy.

Keywords: Role of girl child, parental perceptions, marginalization, high and low income setting in Kenya.
THE ROLES OF A GIRL CHILD IN HIGH AND LOW-INCOME SETTING IN KENYA

Two girls at the Africa Inland Church, in Kajiado, Kenya
Source: google images (Children in high income setting – school environment)

Children grinding seeds in Chief Mukuni's Village
Source: Google Images (growing up with the roles - in low income setting - Kenya)

(Above picture showing a poor girl child in low income setting - Kenya)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Background

‘Is it a boy or a girl?’ This is the most common question asked when a child is born. Why?

Human cognition involves categorising the world (children are part of the world in this context) into parts in order to make it understandable (Berk, 1998). Therefore when the sex of a baby is recognised, knowledge that the person ‘belongs’ to one half of humanity is attained.

Gender is socially constructed. In this respect, gender designates behaviours, attitudes, roles, status, etc that societies assign to one or the other sex in a given socio-cultural setting, in a particular socio-economic and/or socio-political context to govern relationships among the sexes. Gender socialization begins at birth. From the first day of a child, his / her interactions with others are based largely on whether born a boy or girl. This early socialization begins to chart a course for that child’s life and future. One’s identity, selfimage, roles, worldview, and ability to live up to his or her determination are influenced by these interactions and the expectations of others. In fact theoretical studies claim that this is the root of behavioural differences between women and men, (boy and girl) but varied in different cultures (Servin, 1999).

In the traditional African cultural society, (a society that follows traditional practices) one can note for instance ignore the fact that gender relations are in most cases based on patrilineal basis. In this systems, women usually as a necessity are totally submissive to men (their father, brothers, husband, uncles) and hardly do they either posses any decision-making powers nor the freedom of speech in public. This is manifested in situations that women easily yield to forced marriages; are political disenfranchised and cannot inherit property.

With changing realities of life, gender relations have tended to equally change according to the social class one belongs to as economically and/or politically empowered women, usually on top of the social ladder, play roles that make them less submissive to men. Society usually considers these roles (senior managers in private firms, successful business women, key governmental management positions, ministers, preachers) as devolving to men and so mostly women in these positions experience
difficulties in being accepted as such and have to struggle to keep their head above the waters.

It is worth noting however that gender relations in general, but particularly in Africa, are always patriarchal in nature and structures and therefore necessarily male dominates, which has led to men insisting on the subordinate status of women. This study focuses on the roles of the girl child in the low and high income settings in Kenya. The purpose is to deconstruct my childhood upbringing and education, and by examining the role my family and community played, thus, illustrating the significance of traditional model of Luo community where I was brought up. Changing practices, limited opportunity, and or lack thereof due to my gender, geographical region and socioeconomic origin and language hindered many privileges that I would have experienced as a girl child. My concern has been for the neglected poor rural girl child who lives in the micro system where I grew up and reared, in a situation where educational opportunities was and is still severely a limited opportunity.

Situational analysis of gender relations

The family

A close examination of girls’ and women’s situation in the family reveals a lot of discriminations in this institution especially in the low income settings. The girl-child, experiences gender inequalities as a result of simply her status of belonging to the female brood. Girls in some traditional African societies are denied even the simple right to existence in the minds of their fathers who are the family heads. Some men do not even count girls if asked the number of children born to them. This is a clear indication of son preference, detrimental to girls in the family. They are therefore undervalued in comparison with their brothers who are given the right to existence by their fathers. Women in these types of society due to helplessness accept these attitudes, which perennially perpetuate gender discrimination.
Socialization of girls in Kenya (low – income setting)

As the main educators of children of both sexes in the traditional African families, women usually socialize boys and girls to accept conditions of exploitation of females by males through the values they transmit. Boys then grow up with a superiority complex while girls are made to accept an inferior position in society. Both behaviours are considered by the family to be perfectly normal to either sex even though this form of socialization results in gender inequalities. In this situation, girls are lured to think that they must always put themselves last and accept the dominating role attributed to men (and boys) by society. They are trained to be submissive to men and are made to believe that their main role and purpose in life is that of becoming wives and mothers, at a rather early age in most cases. Their education is centered on their social and biological reproductive roles.

How much work a girl child does, how much food she receives, and the amount and type of education she is given are dependent on how her family and community value girl children. How she views herself, and in fact, her whole future, depends entirely on her socialization as a girl. A girl learns values and behaviors in preparation for her eventual transition to the home of her future husband; she will later take the life skills she has developed with her to her new environment (Brown, 1995). Though not universal, in many developing countries the first obligation of the girl is to her mother and the family during this period. When mothers begin earning income outside of the home, girls and older women are expected to take on childcare duties. In many instances this involves leaving school to take care of younger siblings, effectively limiting the chances a girl may have at achieving a better future for herself as a woman (Elias, 1996).

As social reproducers, girls are automatically educated to become the future caretakers of the family. Consequently, they are taught to appropriate the multiple roles their mothers play in the family. These roles range from food production and preparation to the portage of water and fuel over long distances, not forgetting of course the usual household chores (house-cleaning, laundry, taking care of their siblings). The girls are more encouraged to carry out household work than boys.

Often the larger role played by the mother is not seen as an expansion of her worth or value within the family, but rather in terms of her failure to maintain her womanly
duties for which her daughters, sisters, mother and grandmother must now compensate. Thus, making life better for girls requires challenging the gender perspectives of men, but also the community at large, remembering that women also help to perpetuate these expectations.

This excessive workload which society imposes on girls, who work along with their mothers in the private sphere, deprives them of any potential they may have to participate in public life and explains their inhibition from playing leadership roles in society later on in life. More so the teaching on their biological reproductive role is focused on accepting marriage, pregnancy, birth and lactation.

Polygamy, early marriage and early pregnancy are elements that accentuate gender inequalities and create reproductive health problems are, in this case, regarded as a normal practice. All this stems from the fact that biological reproduction in these traditional societies constitutes the very essence of existence for females because when this role is successfully accomplished, it helps women and girls to acquire prestige and a high social status in their community. It is a form of valorization for women in a male-dominated world structured to encourage the subordinate status of females.

In some countries, particularly in the closed, patrilineal communities, girls are considered to be transitory members of their families because the ultimate aim of their parents is to marry them off obligatorily into other families. Male family members therefore try to take advantage of the transient nature of girls in their birth-homes to buttress the idea that they do not benefit their families and are therefore of no value whatsoever to their birth families. This sort of attitude hampers girls’ right to protection by their families and makes them feel ill at ease in their own families. It also creates a constraint to a sound psychological development of girls and reinforces gender discrimination.

Consequently, married women for example, cannot inherit land or any property from their deceased husbands. Widows are thus left destitute or are passed on to their surviving brothers-in-law to perpetuate the levirate tradition, which is a blatant type of gender discrimination because it is imposed on women who have no right to choose especially when they have no means of subsistence. From these issues concerning certain aspects of gender relations in the family, it becomes clear that girls are socialized to
perpetuate, themselves, the socially and culturally sanctioned gender rules made and imposed by men. Girls are born into discrimination that follows them all their lives and deprives them of their basic rights as full citizens. They are considered in some cases as second class citizens because if they are not full members of their family how can they be full citizens of their country?

It is important to note that gender discrimination in the family, which generally disfavours girls, prevents their self-development because they are usually cloistered in the private sphere of life. In this private sector, they have no access to information on their different rights and they grow into womanhood nourishing inferiority complex and being unaware of what goes on in the public domain. This particular situation of girls prevents them from participating fully in the developmental process of their country because they can hardly bring themselves out as main actors in the public sphere of life. Formal education could perhaps be a way-out for girls to move from the private to the public sphere of life.

Socialization of boys in Kenya (low income – setting)
In contrast, boys have a different socialization pattern. Their survival skills often encouraged by boys are learned largely outside the home from friends, neighbors, or extended family members (Chevannes, 1996; Nieves, 1992). Parents tend to spend less time developing social skills and value systems for boys than they do for girls in many cultures. Boys are expected to learn these things on the road. Deviation from family norms for boys may yield harsher punishment in an attempt to toughen the boy or develop greater survival skills. Boys are also encouraged to seek sexual experience from a very early age in contrast to common prohibitions and restrictions placed on girls’ sexual exploration, This is a further demonstration of the double standard parents regularly submit to their girl and boy children despite similar risks of sexually transmitted disease, pregnancy, and exploitation (Brown, 1995).

Socialization as a root cause of discrimination
Discrimination against girls has its roots in these socialization processes, starting well before birth. In countries such as China, and parts of Southeast Asia where there is boy
preference and one-or two child policies, an unborn girl fetus is much more likely to be deprived of adequate pre-natal sustenance and care, and more likely to be aborted if the parents are made aware of her gender. At birth, boy preference in many societies can lead to neglect, malnutrition and abandonment of girl babies by mothers already overburdened, undernourished, or pressured by family to give birth to a boy. As the girl child grows, pressure to help care for younger siblings and do domestic chores often assumes greater importance than her own development (UNICEF, 2001).

Access is only the first form of discrimination against girls in terms of educational opportunity. Preference is given to boys over girls in school, as gender bias enters both written and unwritten teaching materials. The result is that in most developing countries, girls in school still receive less education than boys, and those that do stay tend to avoid typically male careers in science, mathematics, engineering and medicine (UNESCO: 1994). Gender bias also enters school through teachers, administrators and parents.

Expectations that boys must achieve more than girls creates a school culture, which promotes male achievement in academic subjects. Girls tend to be geared toward less ambitious careers, presumably to allow them time for future mothering duties (UNICEF, 1995). The situation has become so critical in recent years that strategy for promoting gender equality endorsed in Beijing Platform for Action from the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women had called for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against the girl child FAWE (1995) in turn has identified girls’ education as a priority first step toward achieving equal opportunity and gender equality for girls (UN, 2002).

**Role of men in the society**

In many parts of the world, men see their primordial role in the family as protector and provider (Barker & Loewenstein, 1995). Supporting one’s family economically is valued universally as a mark of masculinity (Brown, 1996; Chevannes, 1996; Bruce, 1995). Fathers who cannot financially support their families lose prestige and power, and may react by retreating from family obligations or reverting to violence against women and children. With more women sharing the provider role, men are in need of role models to help them adapt to their changing roles as fathers and spouses, while preserving the same
sense of personal identity (Barker, 1996). How men adapt to their changing role within the family and community has tremendous effects on children. The extent of men’s involvement with children as well as the image of manliness is influenced largely by culture.

In a study of men in three Caribbean countries, it was found that one couldn’t talk meaningfully about a man’s fathering roles apart from his roles in relation to women, or apart from his understanding of manhood. This concept of manhood involves 1) sexual prowess, offspring and multiple partners, and includes some level of homophobia; 2) roles of provider, protector and disciplinarian; and 3) God’s Plan which grants him authority over women and children and deems him the head of the home (Chevannes & Brown, 1995).

The decline of male authority in the home is also significant in shaping discriminatory patterns against girls. If men feel their authority is in jeopardy, they may attempt to tighten control over the women and girls around them, especially if it is perceived that female gains toward independence or equality mean a loss in their own entitlement as men.

**Men’s Share of Domestic Responsibilities**

Despite the added provider role, women’s role in domestic work and childcare has remained unchanged in many societies. The added burden of income generation has enormously increased the workload for women, and especially mothers. Although male financial contribution has decreased, many men have not proportionately increased their share of domestic responsibilities. Women shoulder almost all responsibilities for childcare, regardless of their involvement in paid work and household tasks (Desai, 1994).

In developed and developing countries, it is common that women, whether they are mothers or not, is working much longer hours than men (Bruce, 1995). Furthermore, some evidence even suggests that when men and women live together in a household, men add rather than share women’s workload.

The division of labour in the home is more than just an equal distribution of tasks between men and women, for example, Hobson, (1990) notes that social benefits such as
suparannuation are typically based on wage contribution, meaning that women who devote a significant proportion of their lives to unpaid domestic work will clearly be disadvantaged compared to men whose work lives are less restricted by domestic responsibilities. Feminist theories recognise that men’s power over women operates at both macro and micro levels, and processes at both levels underlie the reproduction of gender stratification (Chafetz, 1988; Blumberg & Coleman, 1989). Changing the distribution of labour in the household may therefore be dependent not just on changes of individuals’ attributes but changes in societal attributes.

**Role of father in child upbringing**

Radin (1981, p.419) in her review of the importance of fathers to children’s lives, concluded that there are many channels through which a father may influence his children’s cognitive development, including “through his genetic background, through his manifest behaviour with his offspring, through the attitudes he holds about himself and his children, through the behaviour he models, through his position in the family system, through the material resources he is able to supply for his children, through the influence he exerts on his wife’s behaviour for example when they are communicating, is he authoritative, rough, friendly understanding to his wife?, through his ethnic heritage, and through the vision or future plans he holds for his children. The extent of fathers’ involvement with their children changes, as the children grow older and also varies by whether the children are boys or girls. Regardless of the child’s age, studies often find that fathers are more likely to be involved with their sons than with their daughters (Marsiglio, 1991; Lamb, 1986; Radin, 1981).

Fathers (and mothers) spend less time with their children as the children grow older, in part because children themselves desire to spend more time with peers. However, even though they spend less time together, the importance of fathers to children’s development increases, as children grow older especially for sons (Thompson, 1986).

**The entry of women in the job market and families in transition**

Traditional households, especially those with father as provider and mother as nurturer and caregiver, are increasingly giving way to less conventional relationships and roles.
This is especially so as urbanization threaten the traditional rural and cultural way of life in Africa with Kenya as a country in particular. Important forces in altering the roles have been the increasing labor force participation of mothers, including mothers with young children (Demos, 1986).

The entry of a large number of mothers into the labor force has contributed to a marked decline in the strict gender division of labor within a family to an arrangement where the roles of mothers and fathers overlap to a great extent (Furstenberg, 1988). This has also been observable in the African families afflicted by the so called ‘Western-influences’. Nowadays, fathers, like mothers, have multiple roles: provider, protector, nurturer, companion, disciplinarian, teacher, and instiller of societal norms to name just a few (Lamb, 1997; Marsiglio, 1993). The term “co-parents” is often used to describe the situation where mothers and fathers share equally the responsibilities of maintaining a family. In reality, however, most families do not divide all household and child rearing tasks equally between mothers and fathers, but rather work out their own acceptable divisions of labor within the family (Pleck & Pleck, 1997).

Women have assumed an increasing share of the financial burden without a decrease in domestic and child-care responsibilities. When women earn extra income, most or all is dedicated to their household, including non-cash earnings (Bruce, 1995). However despite the non-decrease of domestic and child-care responsibilities, research has shown that children are better off in families where both the father and mother are contributing to the household, even when the male spends an estimated 30% of his income on non-family related expenses (Engle, 1995).

**Level of parental education and its effects on child rearing**

This framework is useful because it provides plausible explanations for why some of the factors described above may influence both parental involvement and children’s outcomes. For example, parental education is probably a proxy for several forms of capital. It not only measures the acquired skills of an individual, but it also indicates something about the educational aspirations, expectations, and beliefs of that individual. Although those with lower educational levels do not necessarily value education less than those with higher educational levels, it is likely that those with higher levels of education
have the wherewithal (such as more flexible jobs so that they can become involved and the confidence in their ability to help the child) to ensure that their expectations are met. Similarly, as income increases, it allows a family to live in a better neighborhood, to send their children to better schools, and to provide educational materials in the home. Compelling evidence shows that a child’s well being is strongly associated with the mother’s level of education. (UNICEF 2001). Educated parents understand their own social, emotional, psychological, and physical needs of their children and enhance relationship between them (UNESCO 2000). They also aim at promoting optimal development, learning and emotional literacy (Hall, 2003).

**Status of the girl child in Africa**

Gender disparities between men and female which include girl child in this context are still among the most profound in the world (Barka, 1999) giving figures that only 50% of females on the African continent may be considered literate compared to males 66% (World Bank, 2000).

According to (UNICEF, 2000a), African women, girls, by virtue of their lack of education are still confined the fringe of society in menial jobs, due to primarily poor access to education and training which differs from one country to another.

In Kenya the girl child is exposed to female genital mutilation usually done with poor primitive equipment in unsanitary conditions resulting in her poor state of health. This inhibits her performance of normal domestic chores due to untreated frequent infections, sometimes resulting in death or shock. The girl child in the rural area will run away from home to stay with other relatives to avoid such orchestrated traditions so she ends up not getting her way to proper education (FAWE, 1993).

Investment in girls’ education translates quickly into better family nutrition, poverty reduction, better health care and performance, as the girl who is a female gender belongs to a group that would achieve an effective and successful nation-building capital (Schultz, 1961). This greatly translates into girls making responsible mothers who when they get children, will raise healthy children, and the mothers will always want the best for their children in terms of education and health (Assie, Lumumba, 2000). Investment in girls’ education makes simple economic sense,’ No country has ever emerged from
poverty without giving priority to education, and if education is the escape door from poverty, then girl’s education is the key to that door’ (UNICEF, 2001). Investing in children, and especially girls’ education, is a pre-requisite for breaking the poverty circle

**Situation of girl child in Kenya**

In Kenya in the low income settings, girls still lag behind boys in education and health among other areas. More importantly, completion rate is also low. It can still be realised that 30 years later, compared to other developing countries like Asia, Latin America and the Carribean, girl’s literacy level are still lower than boys. According to (FAWE), education of girls still remains a major challenge in Africa, Kenya included (UNICEF, 2000). According to UNICEF’S 2000 State of the World Children report, some 16 of the 22 countries with 70% or more illiterate women are found in sub-saharan Africa. This situation is mainly as a result of poverty, attitude, traditions which continue to keep females out of the education system therefore perpetuating the gender gap. There exist deep – seated cultural, institutions and political bariers which have created perpetual gender disparity in access to education and cases where the parents are not able to take the girl child to school due to lack of school fees. Poverty undoubtedly limits her learning or other extra curriculum activities (Jarvelin, et al, 1994). It is amazing to realise that two thirds of the world’s 876 million illiterate are women, and girls comprise two thirds of the 100 million children who drop out of school before completing four years. (FAWE, 2000; Oxfam, 2000).

Low income families have limited choices in all aspects of their lives; schooling, clothing, food, transportation, recreation, and social events (Callahan & Lumb, 1995). This affects the girl child in return since she cannot even meet limited amount of resource to enable her achievement in education, roles, and even emotional needs. Lack of choices usually leave the girl child feeling powerless and without control ending into her engaging in feeling of hopelessness and helplessness (Goodman, Cooley, Sewell, & Leavitt, 1994). According to Carol Bellamy, UNICEF executive director, there can be no significant or sustainable transformation in societies and reduction in global poverty until girls receives the quality basic education they need and which is their fundamental rights. Ms. Bellamy continues to say that bolstering in girls’ education is not a question of
charity, but of laying the foundation for a thriving economy and a just society, and I believe this is very relevant to the status of girl child in this context.

The yardstick for measuring or determining who lies in the Low/High income setting shall be drawn from the World Bank definition of a poor person. The World Bank defines a poor person as one who lives on less than a dollar a day (World Bank, 2005: 349). This description of poverty, has many dimensions, among them, hunger, limited health care access, delayed cognitive development, limited leisure opportunities, crowded physical environment, unclean homes, poor emotional well being like increased stress, low self esteem and families interaction, inconsistent parenting and marital conflict over money and insecurity, with indicators as absolute poverty (UNICEF, 2001).

The Luo community in Kenya in this context will be studied with the understanding of Urie Bronfenbrenner, who states that each person is significantly affected by interaction among a number of overlapping ecosystems. In this case, here is the individual micro-system that intimately and immediately shapes the human development of the girl child, which primarily includes the family, peer group, classroom, neighbourhood, and sometimes even the church or extended family members (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, p. 227).

According to Bronfenbrenner, two characteristics of the micro system (girl child and her family) emphasizes how the persons in the immediate environment perceive the properties of the environment, a phenomenological view that is derived from behavioural perspective, the properties of the environment have the most power to influence the course of development in the individual. In this case the girl child assumes to be influenced by the environment within her family and community setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 22). However, the motivation forces that embed the girl child’s life are in the environment, and are important for steering her behaviour and roles (cited in Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 23).

The researcher make strong argument that the environment and the individual girl child as essentially inseparable. It is not (possible to exclude the characters that influence the girl child for example, the extent and nature of her siblings, parents, relatives, and neighbours who play basic roles in modifying her roles and have expectations to relay to the parents as they are culturally. Integrating the information on the individual girl child
as is taken to be important as well (Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Garbarino & Ganzell, 2000; Super & Harkness 1999; Wachs, 2000).

**Understanding of the family setting of the Luo**

In order to understand the upbringing of children in the Luo setting, one needs to look at the ecological model of a family system that most researchers now approach. The family form could be called a ‘system perspective’ (Kreppner & Lerner, 1989) emphasizing relationships within the family and between the child, and social environment influencing individual development and function. Therefore the girl child has more influences from the family. The Luo girl child has a large a micro system with people whom her parents get into contact directly thus neighbours and relatives help parents in defining her roles (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**The setting of rural home of Luo Girl child**

Ominde (1952) sheds light into the outline of the Luo girl child from infancy into marriage. The community and family are the lawmakers regarding the life of a child in this setting. The Luo community members speak a mother tongue, which is also called DhoLuo. Usually Luo community in Nyanza ranks as the poorest part of Kenya. These people experience low income in terms of economic status as compared to the rest of the country. Ominde gives information about the roles of a girl child and the treatment she gets from the parents or the guardian that makes her not venture in the same opportunities as the boy child. After fifty years, from the time of Ominde, very little has changed in terms of the culture and traditions within the low income setting. There are still existing sets of cultural pathways with tradition norms in which the parents still engage the girl child today. I would have expected many changes after many decades but this is not the case of the girl child as she still does many domestic chores like in the past years. She sleeps late, with parents dictating all that is within the tradition for example when there is no sleeping place at her parent’s house, she is sent to sleep at the grandparents house, sadly to say sometimes she shares the kitchen with goats and chicken since the domestic animals also are kept close to the sleeping places and near the kitchen. A number of social cultural factors and ethnic rules are still entrenching the home of the Luo girl child.
and all these factors over shadow her setting and this is by virtue of being a member of a specific community which is Luo community. Since the community is very poor, a number of socio-cultural and socio-economic factors still constrain girls’s roles. Beokou-Betts (1996) states that these are closely stereo typed interwoven factors that are constraints at household level and community still embraces the cultural norms.

The role of culture in lives of the Luo girl child
Culture is an important matter to be highlighted since it affects the way the families cope with their children and ethnic issues. In the Luo community, the effect of culture need to be taken into consideration when studying the roles of the Luo girl child in the low income and low and high income setting based on Wilgosh et al (2004) exposition. The family environment in which a girl child in the urban setting in this case, any Nairobi child and the rural areas (poverty setting) are not the same. Rural low-income families have a strong attachment to traditional cultural norms while urban ones are less concerned about elements of traditions.

Comparisons on the roles of a girl child between (High and Low income settings)
For example, a girl child in Nairobi (urban setting) can complain when she has problems with her mother while the one in rural setting does not raise a voice but would shy away.

- A girl child in Nairobi would have her own bedroom, watch television, learns how to read at the age of 4, while the one in rural sleeps in a one roomed house sometimes on a mat or floor with parents and siblings, has no television and rarely learns how to read until the age of 10 years.
- A girl child in Nairobi will sit with her family members at the dinning table during meals, lounge with parents and siblings in the sitting room, can contribute to discussions and participate in family debates while in the Luo girl will sit outside with other girls while parents eat alone and she is not allowed to talk or participate in family discussions.
- It is not uncommon to see four years old child running easy errands close to home in the rural area. The Luo girl child would fetch firewood for cooking, walk barefooted without shoes, wear tattered clothes which are sometimes not washed
due to lack of soap, while girl in Nairobi area will use gas or electric cooker, has clean laundered clothes and has shoes to put on, and has a house helper to run the errands.

- In low income setting, the girl child has strong attachment to tradition and culture while the girl in the Urban is less concerned about traditions but copy Western or other new cultures from developed countries.

**Roles of the girl-child in the Luo community**

The young girl is expected to be competent in house hold duties as early as possible. Mothers often report that girls who starts practising later than the school going age are generally inefficient in domestic works; thus in early discipline mothers protect themselves from future blame for poor training. The mother view the young girl as a prospective wife, and the mother is influenced by her desire to make her daughter of practical use to herself as soon as possible (Ominde, 1952). Up to date, priority is still given to girls’ future roles as mothers and wives. These are the types of survival skills that were and are still necessary for the efficient societal functions on the life of the girl child. The Luo girl is accorded with more submissive roles in the society as the man declare himself the major provider for his family and delegate the duties to the girl and the mother which are housewifery, craft, and cookery to. If mothers need to work outside the home, it s the older girls rather than their brothers, who tend to be left with domestic chores and these responsibilities include selling in the market, cooking, fetching firewood and water, and taking care of siblings (FAWE, 2000; Oxfam, 2000).

There is very little change that has taken place in the roles of the girl child in rural area since Ominde wrote his book. This means that the girl child still has to undergo early intiations to women’s roles and duties for future responsibilities as a wife and a mother. I can still remember vividly how often I used to run errands for my parents, older siblings, their peers, and neighbours. It is a common norm for a younger sibling girl to run errands and declining to do so was never a question or a thoughtful option and it is still an expectation placed on younger girls to be available to assist those older ones or boys. I have been nurtured, and cared for not just by my parents, grand parents uncles and aunts but also by neighbours, by extension and all these people dictated my roles within the
community. As I write these lines, my stepsisters are still embraced with the old cultural roles of girl, which to me is imminent fact that *culture dies hard!*

The trainings make the girl to adapt feeding manners. She eats normal adult food but as they grow to ages 7-9 years, feeding at odd times is restricted. The girls eat with mother while the boys eat with father. The mother of the family takes particular care that boys get some more food and even though she might go without food (Ominde, 1952:24). In the Luo community, female education at school going age as we have realised states that the girl child is mainly cultured to perform domestic chores, she is normally taken for formal education, because parents feel she might not complete but drop out of school as compared to the boy child who advances as far as parental finances can afford in education. Therefore the parents can take the boy alone to school and the girl is left at home to help the mother in carrying out domestic chores. In some cases when both the girls and boys have a chance to go to school, the fees is first paid for the boy then the girl comes last. Contemporary and cultural standards for family life and expectations regarding relationships with children have been affected by counter cultures of many years. In the 1960’s, and 1970,s, counter cultural parents made proactive efforts to change the nature of family lives including cultural models of sex roles, which could be related to the Luo girl child in this study. For example in urban areas, the families have managed to change the cultural norms. Some parents believing that changing sex stereotyping roles required new cultural meaning systems regarding gender, sex roles and sex typing.

**Parental interaction with the girl child in low income settings**

The girl child interacts with her mother at infant stage while she is doing domestic chores like cooking, washing, fetching firewood, she would be spending most of the time with the mother who ties her on her back while gardening, cultivating in the farms, going shopping and milking cows while the girl in town setting is never tied on the back of the mother but uses prams and bicycles, she does not have to follow the mother wherever she is going since they have housemaids to take care and look after her. The girl begins her association with playgroups through the action of the peers and siblings. At first there is also a caregiver who is always next to the mother, then
neighbours, then the child comes into contact with children from neighboring families thus acquire friends and playmates, and the social life begins early as the seventh month. The people around her immediate setting are the ones who determine her roles since, they nature her into all the learning stages (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

There exist developmental changes in caregiver child relationship, which influence the characters that the girl child will take, since she copies and imitates the caregiver. This could also promote care giving or parental emotional attachment to the child and plays a unique match, fundamental to the engagement and learning that takes place during the first few years in the infants life. Though the girl child is quite ignorant as an infant, by the age of three, the children are socialized participants in their culture so the girl becomes adapted to the cultural norms (Rogoff, Malkin & Gilbride, 1984).

Parents are generally away from the village, so the neighbours, and the children’s own sisters are the nurses. They play with home made leafy dolls or maize cobs, which they eventually adapt to their own needs. The girls often imitate the activities of the women while the male ones build mould bulls, motorcars, trains and carts. Female children concentrate on those activities that are leading to preparation of food and care or babies.

On being introduced to the playgroup, a girl child might begin with grinding of the soil, which is done over a small area of clay ground. Later, the grinding is done on flattish stone, a leaf being placed below it to receive the supposed flour. This is the initiation of mothers or sisters when grinding corn. The relationship is principally determined by two factors, discipline and provision of food. Parents feel the children of both sexes tend to prefer their mother partly because of her frequent contact with them and even more because their food in its ready state is under her control.

In feeding, mothers sympathises with the children but often restrict food because it is always less, but the reverse situation may exist and sometimes we find father who loves his children so much that he gives it all. If the father is unwelcoming then child naturally prefers the mother. A further complication arises when grandparents get involve, which are very effective in the micro system of a girl child. So delicately balanced is this relationship that looking at a girl child in an ecological perspective, it views her development from persons in her
immediate environment context, who are mother, father, sisters, brothers, grandparents, emphasizing that growth of this girl child and development take place within the context of the relationship which she has.

**Parental interaction in the high income settings**
The girl child in high income setting has almost everything being done for her from infancy to 14 years of age. The mother does not necessarily have to train her in domestic chores since there is always a domestic worker who does most of the work so the girl is always free and has less stress. She interacts openly and easily with her father and does not have to communicate with him through the mother. This is because the parents are educated and exposed with mixed western cultures that promote and enhance parental communication with their children. She can always go shopping with the mother or engage in family visits and can talk to the mother freely and openly about her needs but does not have to toil with work.

**Parental attitude**
The father plays a rather detached role but in actual fact he retains a deep –seated interest in his growing daughter as a future promise of wealth. Though fundamentally mothers are equally interested in son and daughters, they have at this time a more direct influence over the girls. A mother is interested in her daughter partly through her maternal responsibility and partly because of the girl’s immediate value to the family while the father being more definitely concerned with the male children.

Maternal control over the young girl is important when she reaches adolescent, though at this time the fathers control becomes increasingly essential in keeping her girl child to be a growing personality in the family. But parents’ assessment on the girl child is not very common in Luo community since she is only assessed, when necessary, by the mother who could be too busy with domestic chores. However as Beckman explains parental interaction is very crucial for families (Baile, et al., 1992). Though this is lacking in the Luo girl child’s life.
Justification of the Study

Little has been written on this area of study and there is a need to contribute more literature to supplement the existing one. This study is critical in that it consolidates the existing scattered data on the gender question particularly as it is complicated by situations of poverty in the low income settings in less developed countries with wide differences within high income settings. The study aims at challenging the existing conventional gender notions that view women as homogeneous entity and show the need to consider other factors affecting the woman (girl child) in discussing the gender issue in the wider developed discourse. The study will help to create awareness within the ranks of policy makers, planners, charged with the task of implementing gender related programs in Kenya within the high and low income setting and the lessons that can be learnt from these two settings. Contributions will be made within this study by enriching the expanded opportunities which would enable the girl child to tap into her own potential and become self sufficient and productive in areas where the female gender is prohibited to go, of no go zone (Bloch (1992).

The study will enhance creation of awareness in promoting and protecting the rights of the girl child and increase awareness of her needs, and potential in areas like education, health, nutrition, labour, violence, participation and economics and politics. Families perceptions on regard to the roles of girl child will be explored, exposing labour imposed on the girl child. This study also seeks to find and establish the perception and difference in how girls understand their roles in a low income setting and high income setting.

Research Questions

The broad objectives of this study are to establish the roles of the girl child, parental expectations, and the environment within which she grows with comparison being made between high income and low income setting in Kenya. The following research questions are posed.

1. What are the roles of a girl child in low/high Income settings in Kenya?
2. What and how are the expectations of families with focus on girl child?
3. How does the girl child perceive her role?
4. How does the boy child perceive the role of his sister?

**Ethical Considerations**

Assurance to the participants on confidentiality was given regarding the research. The participants were assured no names would be mentioned, feedback shall be given, and results shall be reported back to them.

The participants were also informed about the purpose of the study, which is, to ensure that their girl child gets support and that the research study results are likely to aid in highlighting the problems facing the girl child. This would also help in tackling her problems and in future, I believe my research paper and thesis will allow information to be disseminated internationally. All information from the participants was gathered by their informed consent by (signing a letter of consent), and had a right to withdraw /discontinue from the research or interrupt at will and have prior knowledge of what the research would be.

**2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

A number of feminist theories and epistemologies have been put a cross in the endeavour to discuss the place and plight of the girl child and women. They include: feminist, empiricism, feminist standpoint theory, and feminist postmodernism among others (Fine, 1998; Harding, 1993).

The selected theory that has laid the basis of this study is the *Feminist Postmodernism* and *Transformative*, which emphasizes on gender, economic, cultural, ethnicity, and political paradigms. This has been adapted from Guba and Lincoln (1994). Guba views transformative feminist perspective as activities that transform individuals. Thus the girl child in this context is in a community that is embedded by ill-cultural traditions that do not stop to reason or understand any areas related or pertaining to girl child for example everything is dictated, and imposed on her in the name of ‘’keeping the traditions’’ (Guba, 2000).

The label of transformative was chosen because of its critical theory and the approach that is appropriately included under the umbrella of the transformative
paradigm, which more accurately reflects the overall intent of the feminism that is a reflection of the girl child. The standpoint of transformative theories states that all knowing substantially involves the social and historical context of the particular knower. This is important for societies because it looks at issues among them where the female and male children come from (girl child and boy child), since it is stratified by class, gender issues, and sexuality (Alcoff & Potter, 1993 in Mertens 2005). Feminist (portrayal of female girlchild) generally agrees that historically, women have not enjoyed the same power and privileges as men either in public or private sphere. Still women live their lives in an oppressive society; this concept of oppression is extended to the girl child in question, and would like the voice of the girl child to be heard louder because she is a victim of pain, stress, lack of consideration and is discriminated (Martusewics and Reynolds, 1994 in Mertens 2005). The transformative approach that is lobbied by feminism is considered ideal for this study as it provides a strong basis for mixed method evaluating research as viewed by activist perspective. For this study, it was upheld because it continues to shape the society, politics, culture, economics, gender and disability. It also shapes those that are underprivileged or marginalised such as the girl child, which is the gender issue case that was studied (Oliver, 1992; Reason, 1994b; in Mertens, 2005). Thus, the transformative approach would relinquish control of the researched and marginalised groups (Forster, 1993a in Mertens, 2005). Educating girls improves their lives and enable them to make more informed choices about the kind of life she wants to lead, which is fundamental to human development. Educating a girl child empowers her with knowledge that opens an infinite number of doors that would otherwise remain shut.

Guidance in my study has been improved by referring to a number of literature reviews and authors who still believe that the girl child is neglected child, like Dr. Patricia Kameri- Mbote who addresses the different forms of feminist and their agendas that entail liberal feminists, Radical Feminists, Marxist, and Socialists Feminists. Apart from the plight of the girl child and women, the issues tackled have been more of customary laws and how they are reinforced into cultural practices that are not in favour of the female gender (Mbote, 2003). Also another important guidance has been that of Ousseini (1996) when he states that cultural practices disadvantage women and
discriminate against women in formal and informal education, which has formed one of
the many disadvantages that have faced the girl-child.

**Personal Pre-understanding**
The foundation for conducting this study was my preunderstanding of the two chosen
settings within which I was raised and grew up. These settings are the high and low
income. I am one of those girls who experienced the historical roots of marginalization,
growing up among ten children, 6 boys and 4 girls in a polygamous family. My
stepmothers had sons who were younger than me, to say, I was six years older than the
boys but my father did not think it necessary to educate me first but instead gave priority
of education to my step brothers. My father believed in educating the boys first before a
girl (myself) and his authority was not to be questioned. My childhood roles from age 4
were mainly doing domestic chores like fetching water, cooking, looking for firewood
while my brothers were attending school. I therefore started going to school at a late age,
10 years instead of the normal age 6 due to lack of fees. I had to wait for my elder
brothers to get a job in order to pay for my fees since my father was very discriminative,
he was against educating girls before boys despite the fact that he was literate enough to
understand the importance of equal education regardless of the the sex of a child.
However his cultural upbringing and traditions did not change with his education though
at the same time he could not afford to pay school fees for all his children. I realised that
literacy does not necessarily change people but the culture plays a large role like in the
case of my father’s attitude towards girl child- (Myself).

Due to my preconceived understanding of growing up with the concept and
construct of culture in the low income setting, which to me, as I can now clearly see after
my education, I would say that the Luo culture in the life of a Luo girl child is portrayed
as a complex of denial of knowledge, morals, with based customs and habits which are
made by man who dominates my society, my life and my family. I would agree with
Haviland (1990) who refers to culture as a whole complex, which includes knowledge,
belief, art, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a
member of society (p.30) and the man in this case was my late father. My belief is that I
was denied early education and knowledge at an early age, because of dictation of culture
and traditional influence by my father and I believe he did so while trying to uphold the Luo culture which believes that educating a boy is more important than a girl. In this case, my sibling, brothers were educated first before me though I deserved to have gone to school earlier than them since they were much younger than me. This was all done in the name of culture! Therefore I decided in this study to focus my research on an important issue to me, which is social institution-family, within which both culture, traditions and education played important roles in raising the child but denied the girl child early education in preference for boy child in the low income Luo community.

To get some understanding in a Luo community, it would be the same as the description of Tournas (1996) who says it is a unit consisting of “core of a husband and his wife or wives, children, perhaps the parents of the husband or wife, children of certain sons and typically daughters for whom no bride price had been paid, (polygamy is an important feature in Luo community) this implies larger family, many relatives and strong kinship”.

To be a Luo child means to have more than one sibling in most cases. It is within such a context rich with customs that the girl child, myself, was/is raised and educated and I can vividly remember how I used to fetch firewood, walk barefooted as I travel long distance to school. I remember how often I could sit on a bench in a classroom which had mud on the floor after heavy down pour of rain, how i sat on a bench and wrote on my lap since there was no desk on which to place an old tattered exercise book. I can recall during lessons, how I used an exercise book, which was plane white paper turned by mud to cream/brown colour for writing, doing mathematics, drawing and painting.

In view of these factors, I also had a different experience from the high income setting where I got a teaching job after attaining my education in high school. This was a very different setting altogether. I would say that being a teacher although I was not a mother, I had my own preconceived ideas that made me have a totally different perspective and experience in the knowledge of disseminating the actual roles of a girl child in a high and low income setting. I realised that the teachers also have attitude and methodology which suggests biases for instance, girls are not encouraged to participate in classroom discussions - a situation that plays a role in restricting their performance and
level of assertiveness in life. This attitude is a result of socialization with its strong
distinction in gender roles and expectations and these biases are rooted and acquired
throughout the communities and it is called, a reflection of socio-cultural beliefs and
practices that still remains to be the tradition surrounding the girl child and woman

During my research study, I saw the Luo girl child in low income setting still
wearing tattered torn clothes, bare footed, learning in a mud house with no table or desk
on which to place the paper or write! This reminded me, gave me fond but nostalgic
memories, feelings and motivation to explore and conduct a comparative research study
in the low and high income settings where I once belonged with an understanding that
things would one time change. The children and parents in the high income setting also
provided me with reflective memories different feelings, experience of being well
dressed, having enough food and adequate basic needs and not having all these items. I
can say ‘I have touched the human experience of growing in the low and high income
setting and it makes sense to feel the difference’!

3. RESEARCH METHODS

Design
The design used was a cross-sectional group comparison study. The study was an
exploratory with concurrent triangulation. I used this method because it allowed the use of
multiple data source to shed light onto emerging themes derived from interviews,
questionnaires, observations, face and smiles on children. It also allowed the use of
mixed method, quantitative and qualitative data collection with concurrent and
simultaneous, taking in one phase of the study.

The rational of paradigm, roles, attitudes, expectations and perceptions required
different instruments to be used in collection of data. This brought about a new set of
aims that underpinned the collection of qualitative as well as quantitative data, which
made me use various methods.

I used an interview schedule that was more of a questionnaire, which combined
structured questions that helped in interpretation and understanding of broad survey into
my findings. (The response to which were categorized according to predefined codes)
with open-ended questions which gave a scope for probing (responses were transcribed and analyzed qualitatively). My aim as a researcher was to code and quantify the qualitative data so that generally I could have the means of summarizing the data. The mixed questionnaires, self-response instruments filled out by respondents included a mixture of completely open and close-ended questions. Some respondents filled their answers in their own words. The close-ended questions were easily quantified to indicate participants’ view but the open-ended questions revealed participants’ views on the benefits and limitations, which might have been missed if I used only close-ended questions.

During the interview, I asked series of questions, some were probing questions especially when I wanted some clarity or more detailed information which was merely qualitative (Unstructured, expletory, open ended and typically in-depth). My identification with the informants through going to where they spent their days such as by the lake side during fishing, in schools, in garden, when cultivating, among others, enabled me to address the innuendos and other underlying issues that were not readily forthcoming. In this regard I preferred in-depth interviewing to elicit parent’s views of their children’s roles and expectations. The different types of responses generated by using interviewing method generated structured and unstructured material represented the experience of the parents and children in all their complexity and ambiguity. I self-administered questionnaires on the children in their natural environment like in schools, when playing or when doing domestic chores to also build on the data elicited forms parents. This provided an understanding of children’s experiences in living in different types of families and their own concepts of roles and place in their family.

The smiles and family tree were used to elicit data on social inequality and power differentials in the society where children were used as primary source of knowledge about their own views, perceptions and experiences. This was informed by the reality that most children are able to distinguish differences and meanings in drawings faster and would interpret meaning more often than when given written or verbal communication. Observation method was used to enhance data collected using other methods, which was captured through videotaping.

Broadly all these methods were conceived as addressing complementary aims. The questionnaire study sought to provide descriptive and contextual data while the interview
study and observation as well as smileys and family tree were intended to understand attitudes and context within which the respondents lived. These different methods allowed for the expression of contradictory views and feelings. The different methods are shown in the table below.

Table 3.1

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<th>Low Income Setting</th>
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Sample population
The study was conducted in Luo Nyanza and in Nairobi covering the low income and high income settings respectively. The study in low income setting was carried in a place called Oyugis in Nyanza province. Nyanza is an administrative province in Western Kenya with a total population of 3 million (Kenya Bureau of Statistics, 1994). The study in high income settings was conducted in Nairobi with a population of 2.5 million people.

Sample selection
The selection of children and families to participate in the study was purposive and judgmental within each setting. Each was drawn from those children whose parents had given written permission and who indicated their willingness to participate. Parents and children were given information about the study to allow them to make an informed decision about participation. Everyone who took part in the study was given guarantees regarding anonymity and confidentiality.

The study included 28 adult persons who the researcher found significant enough for the purpose of data analysis. This was composed of equal number of persons representatives in the low and high income settings respectively. The respondents were as shown in the table below. In addition, the 18 children who participated were related to the
adult participants. The study participants consisted of men and women who were parents, single mothers, children, and single men.

The environment in the rural setting was purposely conducive for interview since the participants realized I share the same culture with them and I was not an intruder or a stranger due to the way I was dressed, and the fact that I was speaking their mother tongue enhanced my communication and contributed positively to my study. The location of the site in the low income setting was conducive for communication since most of the participants were either loitering idlers with no jobs while others were busy men and women selling fish, or swimming which enhanced easy access for me to reach since they were in an open place where they could be easily seen, talked and approached. Some participants were school going children who had gone to fetch water while (see appendix 4, video dvd) others were children in a classroom.

In the urban setting I had to dress in a modern stylish fashionable way (the acceptable culture) to avoid being seen as a beggar or a person in need. The participants in the urban setting basically knew me, they were either my friends, or relatives, or acquaintances. I selected them purposely because Nairobi has a high population with mixed cultures thus it could have been difficult to do random sampling.

Research Tools
A number of methods were used to collect data. These were questionnaire schedules for parents, interviews with the children, and children drawings in both the low and high income settings. Ethnography was used in collection of data in the low income settings. This is because it describes a cultural community using language and ideas of the members of the community, and allows a researcher to have rapport with the respondents. The questionnaire and questions were asked in the native/local DhoLuo dialect (Luo language) while in the high income setting I spoke to them in English or Kiswahili which are the spoken national language. The job of collecting information began by a brief survey in the low income settings in Oyugis and high income settings of Nairobi.

Questionnaire
Parent interviews: Questionnaires were used to gather information on family background,
gender, level of education, chores by both boys and girls and life of the girl-child in both settings among others. A total of 28 parent’s interviews were conducted through a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire developed was designed using both open-ended and close-ended questions. (See Appendix 3) Close-ended questions were used to collect data on the sex, level of education, the age group social economic class, among other items from the respondents. There were 7 boys and 7 girls in the high income setting who participated in response to the main questionnaire, that targeted to elicit information. In low income setting, 9 boys and 3 girls participated with 2 non response being registered.

The Faces and family tree

Children interviews: Children were interviewed in order to gather information on their perceptions of their parent’s expectations of them and their brothers/sisters. Specifically, children were asked about their parent’s emotional reactions to their brothers and sisters (positive or negative), and their rating of the same. In addition the children were asked to enumerate their perception of the roles of their sisters and their position through drawings of smiley and indication of the place they saw themselves occupying in the family. The faces (smiley) instrument was a useful research tool where children were required to draw smileys. Most children are able to distinguish differences and meanings on drawings faster and would interpret meaning more often than when given written or verbal communication (See Appendix 2).

The family tree instrument was also used (See Appendix 2). Although a family tree may have different meanings, it portrays family ties, centres of power and how roles are distributed and described within the family. Therefore the children used ‘the family tree’ to explain how and where they are placed, how their relationship is with the mother and father. With use of these methods, 18 children participated with equal number being realised from low income settings and high income settings respectively. For the face and smiles drawings, 3 boys and 6 girls from high income setting participated while in low income setting, 5 boys and 4 girls participated. Children who participated in each of the setting were in the age group of 4 to 11 years. They were either sisters, brothers, siblings, or related to the participants.
Video observation (See Appendix 4)
The purpose of personal observation was to gain acceptance in the households, in order to record less obvious but essential information about the perceptions of the parents and the roles of both girls and boys in their homes. This was conducted especially in the low income settings by walking around in the villages and visiting the households during interviews. The video observation was also to help in understanding and giving practical picture of the surroundings. Note that I observed the participants behavior, listened to the responses, over and over again using the video thus I noted the interesting or relevant information that I thought had the nature of my research objectives which were recorded using video tape and are presented separately in support of this. During video observation, there emerged very distinctive characteristics from the participants for example, I could have a clear picture and understanding of the boys, girls and parents I interviewed because I was talking to them face to face, creating a rapport thus able to see their reactions, behaviour when answering questions, perceived expressions on their faces whether sad, happy or unsure. I found this as a good tool to employ for attractive qualitative data because I was able to generate a great deal of rich data in support of my analysis (Mile’s, 1979). I used the video observation as a tool to elicit the interviewee’s categories and interpretation of phenomena that he or she regards as significant, for example, how they perceive the domestic roles, education of the girl child and I feel it is more than a collection of open ended questions and the answers thereto, which is helpful in the interpretation and understanding of broad survey findings, thus enhancing multiple categorization of text, modification of emerging concepts, and the addition of new categories as the analysis proceeds which I used when I was analysing the data. Some of the responses that are recorded in the video are similar to the responses from the parents that were interviewed in the questionnaire for example, some parents in the low income setting felt that it is expensive to raise up a girl child giving reasons that daughters did not have any effects on their lives, so they cared less, and they were contented with their sons. When these responses from the video, questionnaires and from the children’s drawings are combined, it adds weight to the research questions and validity, whether there exists discrimination against the girl child in the low income settings and whether
girls are still marginalized (See appendix 4, video responses in text transcription from some of the participants interview). The video observation was a compliment to the interview conducted by the questionnaires, children’s drawings as you can see some family tree drawings of children indicated their perceived position of where the boy child and the father were placed. The girl child and the mother being at the bottom of the tree, which is in support of the position of less power that is indicative of the perception of the boy child regarding the roles of his sister as research question suggests. In the video, it emerged that the boy perceive his sister’s roles as domestic worker (See video where I interview school boys), suggesting that their sisters roles are domestic like cooking because that is their position where they belong. Some children also wanted to have sisters so that they could help them with the work, meaning girl children are domestic oriented in terms of roles which is different from the roles of the boys. The video sheds light into the research questions on the roles, perceptions, and expectations on the girl child.

Validity and reliability
The validity of this study is based on the paradigm that the information on this qualitative research study was constructivism which views knowledge as socially constructed and may change depending on the circumstances. Mathison (1998) defines constructivism from social perspective as “the view that knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context”. I had a fore knowledge about the meaning and reality of the communities I was studying during my research. The fact that I come from the same ethnic background with the participants, I lived among them and visited the same area where I grew up had enabled me to have proven experience and constructive knowledge, meanings, interactions between the Luo culture (Low income setting) and the people within the high income setting and I am conversant about the culture and traditions because I have experienced it. Being a girl, I was initiated and was made to perform part of the domestic roles, therefore I picked up elements of culture, acceptable social behaviors, and performed gender roles and social expectations, and I fully understand the
behavior, language objectivities, interpretation and I can justify the reality for the Luo girl child which according to Cushner et al. (2003) describes as very significant to the average African child who is at least speaking more than two languages. I also understand the ethnography of the samples and believe in the trustworthy of this study because I am in a culture that studies the same culture. I had pre-knowledge and research techniques to use during the interview. I had foreknowledge about their beliefs, theories on marginalization of girl child and had ideas of how they describe the girl child in their language terms. I had preconceived opinions regarding the roles of a girl child, understanding of the traditions, customs, behavior, artifacts, emotions, from the perspective of my upbringing and rearing and I could relate this study to be valid research findings. My using constant comparative method of data collection and interpretation, observation of everyday life of the respondents/interviewees, drawing of smileys and family trees by children, questionnaire interviews on the parents, video observation of the daily routines in the low and high income settings produced findings that were trustworthy. Cultural knowledge is communicated by language with which I was well conversant as (Spradley 1979, p.70) which describes the significance of language in this study. In addition to tactic knowledge, and as an ethnographer, I have taken inferences from the ethnographic data I obtained which contains diverse construction of multiple perceptions about a single reality. Healey and Perry (2002) in order to reveal the meaning of the research, for example, the concept of the culture to which the Luo girl child belonged to and her interactions was one of the ideas I had to explore during this study. This can be referred to a theory explaining human behavior in terms of meaning (Blumer, 1969, pp. 2-5). It is well known that human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that things have for them. The Luo participants in the low income setting acted on the girl child according to what they understood, perceived, that is, she is not as important as the boy child while high income setting believed in change, transformation and equal opportunities.

I believe I have fulfilled the requirement that the validly and reliability of this study was conducted to discover relationship among emerging themes and categories. Theoretical validity is achieved if there is evidence that the theory generated correctly corresponds to the observations made in this study with the use of my native language in the process of
the discovery of themes (Kirk & Miller, pp. 21-24), Kirk & Miller, 1986; Spradley, 1979). I would also emphasize synchronic reliability, which was useful in determining my objectivity of the research findings Kirk and Miller (1986).

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Data that was collected through questionnaires was fed into Excel spreadsheet database. Close-ended questions were coded in different categories by use of mathematical notions comprising 1,2,3,4… and so on depending on the number of categories. For example, gender was coded as ‘1’ for male and ‘2’ for female; Level of education was coded ‘1’ for primary ‘2’ for secondary ‘3’, for college, ‘4’, university and ‘5’ for post graduate level. Social Economic class was coded ‘1’ for AB, ‘2’ for CI,’3’ for C2, ‘4’, forD and ‘5’ for E. This format was adopted for all the other close-ended questions, which was done in order to make it easier for data analysis and reduce large volumes of data. The data was analyzed using SPSS package where frequency tables were main method of presentation in the results.

The smileys and tree drawings by the children were also transcribed in order to capture the various responses by the children, which were used to support the already collected questionnaires. Observation captured through videotaping was also transcripted and used by the researcher to enrich the data collected through other methods and check for other realities that could not have been captured by the other data collection instruments like in the questionnaires, face and smileys illustrations.

For the the open ended questions in the questionnaires, observation, interviews, faces and smileys, content analysis was mainly used to capture various responses from both the low and high income settings.

For content analysis, I used a rule of thumb, where i generated a concept list based on the frequently ocuring words from the qualitative data collected. The concepts texts, phrases from all texts and relationship types were then coded in to manageable content categories consisting of a word, set of words or phrases. I was able to focus on and code specific words or patterns that were indicative of the research questions. My basic idea was to identify from the conversation in the transcripts, the extracts data that were informative and I sorted out the important message hidden in the mass of each interview. I
categorized the verbal conversation, behavior, in a data so that my research would be classified and summarized in a table manner, the data had descriptive accounts, meaning that the data contained what was actually said by participants, what was implied. Note that I observed the participants behavior, listened to the responses, over and over again within the video thus I noted the interesting or relevant information that I thought had the nature of my research objectives. At one time I found myself using some of the categories several times because several data refer to the similar subject and were linked in some way. I compared, contrasted various categories, and developed a picture, seeing that some data were well fitting into the categories and items that fitted into more than one category, I listed. When the extracts from the interviews bore some relationship to each other I sorted out the categories that I saw fitted together and this formed the major them of my research.

The concepts were then chosen for examination, and the analysis involved quantifying and tallying their presence. The texts were coded by use of hand for example reading through text and and manually writing down concept occurrence. I developed a level of implication which allowed me to code, not only for the words with similar meaning or connotation but were based on perceived roles, attitudes, expectations of the girl child. A word frequency counts to identify words of potential interest used and then a key word in Context (KWIC) search to test for the consistency of usage of words was also used.

It would be important to note that since content analysis involve coding and classification of data, I was able to realize the basic idea in identifying from the transcripts the extracts of data that were informative and sort out the important messages hidden in the mass of interview either through observation, questionnaires or the children’s drawings.

Descriptive statistics was mainly used for analyzing close-ended questions where frequency tables were the main method of presentation of results. For the open-ended questions, content analysis was mainly used to capture the various responses from both low income and high income settings. Content analysis has been defined as a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 1980; and Weber, 1990).
Holsti (1969) offers a broad definition of content analysis as, "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (p. 14).

Under Holsti’s definition, the technique of content analysis is not restricted to the domain of textual analysis, but may be applied to other areas such as coding student drawings (Wheelock, Haney, & Bebell, 2000), or coding of actions observed in videotaped studies (Stigler, Gonzales, Kawanaka, Knoll, & Serrano, 1999).

Content analysis enables researchers to sift through large volumes of data with relative ease in a systematic fashion. It can also be a useful technique for allowing us to discover and describe the focus of individual, group, institutional, or social attention (Weber, 1990). It also allows inferences to be made, which can then be corroborated using other methods of data collection. Krippendorff (1980) notes that content analysis research is motivated by the search for techniques to infer from symbolic data what would be either too costly, no longer possible, or too obtrusive by the use of other techniques" (p. 51).

**Sample characteristics**

There were 4 various samples description that were used to classify the demographic characteristics of the participants, which included their Socio economic class definitions. (see appendix 5) for example there are fully qualified professional that fall under AB class which are defined as senior managers, professional/lecturer, graduate secondary teacher, or owner of a large farm. CI, that is defined as Junior or middle managers are mainly senior clerks, supervisor, or qualified technicians, laboratory, nursing or teachers. and foreman, C2 which is classified Skilled manual worker, mechanic, technicians, or owner of small farm and D which is defined as Semi skilled or partly trained manual worker for example apprentice or learner mechanic house servant, waiter and steward.

Table 4.1 below shows the number of respondents in the high and low income settings being 28 in total. The rural respondents were 14 adults with males being 3 and females 7 while urban was composed of 7 males and 7 females. There were 9 boys and 3 girls in the low income setting while the high income setting had both girls and boys taking equal numbers, being 7 boys and 7 girls respectively.
Table 4.1 No. of respondents in High and Low Income Setting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex of adult</th>
<th>Low income settings</th>
<th>High income settings</th>
<th>Sex of the child</th>
<th>Low income settings</th>
<th>High income settings</th>
<th>Face &amp; smileys drawing in low income settings</th>
<th>Face &amp; smileys drawing in high income settings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sex of the respondents

Of the total respondents from the lower income settings, approximately three quarters were female and a quarter was male respondents. For the high income settings, equal number of parental respondents were recorded with halve being mothers and halve fathers respectively.

Level of education

Table 4.2 Level of education of low income setting respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio Economic class</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>University Graduate</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the research, at least more than halve of the respondents in low income setting had secondary school level of education and lower, while about a third of the respondents held a certificate/diploma education.
Table 4.3 Level of education of high income settings respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio Economic class</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>University Graduate</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Post graduate</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents in the high income setting had substantially high level of education, with at least 3 of them having attained postgraduate level of education. A significant number, approximately almost half of the respondents having a university degree and half having attained at least college level education.

Age of the respondents

According to research study, above half of the respondents in low income settings were at least 36 years and above, one-fifth 31-35 years, and a third of them were between 20-30 years. In the high income settings majority of the respondents more than half, were 36 years and above with the rest being between 31-35 years old.

Social economic class of the respondents

Demographic characteristics:

The Social Economic groups Breakdown was performed with the conventional Socio-Economic Class definitions used by market research companies in Kenya (See Appendix 5).
Table 4.4 Social economic classes of low-income settings respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio Economic class</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the study, the majority of the respondents in low-income settings were found in poor social economic categories with more than half of the respondents being in the C1 and E categories. None of the respondents were found in the AB class. Mainly respondents occupied semi-skilled and unskilled careers among them, farmers, gardeners, housemaid, mechanic and teacher among other mentioned careers.

Table 4.5 Social economic classes of high income settings respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio Economic class</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approximately two-third of the respondents in the high income setting were in the AB social economic class category. This was explained by the fact that majority of the respondents were professionals in various categories. These professional categories of the respondents include lecturer, administrator, banker, accountant, medic, graduated clerk, and lawyers, among others.
5. RESULTS

The roles of a girl child in both low and high income settings
According to the research study, much of the difference in the roles of the children both in the low and high income settings was as a result of different environments that they lived in. A comparison of the settings showed that the roles that girls played were largely domestic in nature that revolves around the house while boys were largely on helping on roles that are largely considered to be manly. In case of girls in both the high and low income setting, they undertook various chores among them cleaning the homesteads, laundry and cooking. A girl in the low income setting was also expected to play other roles such as fetching firewood, fetching water from the river, running errands and looking after their sibling however it is noteworthy to indicate that the departure was not common occurrence in high income settings since there was a housemaids or servants to carry out these chores and girls to a larger extent played a helper role, doing the chores whenever she liked rather than carry the work load.

In the low income settings, boys undertook various chores among them farming, fishing, looking after cattle, doing odd jobs to raise money for school fees, clearing home and farm. They also worked in workshops, constructions site as wells as running errands and while in the high income setting, respondents mentioned various chores that boys engage and participate in among them washing the father’s car, general cleaning, washing their clothes, bringing food to the table, washing, shopping, cleaning, slashing, laundry and helping in the household chores.

The requirement for the girl child to participate in domestic chores was added credence by the research results where in the low income setting, ten of the respondence (three quarters) mentioned that the mother and daughter were the ones involve in putting utensils and food on the table. In the high income setting, although there was a likelihood of the mother or the house girl or the girl child putting utensils on the table, all the other members of the family were involve in this domestic activity. According to most of the respondence, they followed a timetable that was set for everyone.

The research study found out that in the low income settings, some of the reasons given by the respondents regarding the situation of the girl child were that she is considered to be future wives and culturally women should stay close to the kitchen, roles
that God created. Some respondents felt that these were women’s job and their culture stipulated that it was the woman who fed the men. Where daughters put food on the table, the respondents said they had to be trained to be wives unlike men.

Unlike in the low income settings, respondents in the high income settings, felt that there was collective responsibility and all, whether both boys or girls were to be taught about household chores.

**Expectations of families with focus on girl child**

According to the research study, parents in the low income settings had low expectations on the girl child as compared to their brothers. Educating the girl child was not considered as important as that of the boy as shown by over half of the responses that indicated neither of the parents paid for the girl child school fees. This effectively means that at the bare minimum, many girls did not attend schools. This is in a sharp contrast in high income settings where half of the respondents mentioned that both parents were involve in payment of the girl-child school fees. When parents had to make a decision whether to take the boy or girl to school due to limited school fees in the low income settings, it was usually the girl who formed the blunt of being sacrificed out of school. There were discriminatory tendencies by parents especially in the low income settings, for example by the high expectations placed on the boy child. Many parents in the low income settings felt that education was expensive, bearing in mind their economic status, they mentioned they would ensure their sons got good education and excelled academically. Some stated they did not mind the costs, as it is a worthy investment.

This converse can be said about the girl child. Many of the respondents in the low income settings seemed to have little regard for the girl child. At the slightest chance, the girls were marginalized where the brother was apparently accorded better treatment than the girl in terms of education, entitlements and attention. In the high income setting, there was consensus among the parents that the boy and girl child were treated equally in most cases. To add to the low expectation by parents on the girl child in the low income settings, half of the respondents felt that raising of girls was expensive, a compared to parent in the high income settings. Seven parents in the low income setting responded ‘‘Yes it is expensive to raise a girl child’ which was a total contrast to seven in the high
income setting who believed it was not expensive. Those in the low income setting felt it
was expensive raising the girl child because it is an expense that one would never know
when it would be paid back, some said that when girls get married, they left the family
and took every thing away to their husbands, and therefore do not expect benefits from
her. They say investment in daughter was a west of resources. In the high income
settings, respondents who said it was expensive mentioned that girls needed extra
security/care and demanded special attention from the parent. Another reason was that
due to the way the society mishandles the girl, she required extra attention unlike boys
that pushed their cost of upbringing. In the high income setting, those who regarded
raising girl child as not expensive stated that all children are equal, they need equal
opportunities, therefore expenses are immaterial. One parent felt that girls were very
understanding whenever they were given less (money) than they asked for. Some parents
in low income settings stated that although it was expensive to raise the boy child, the
deal was good and returns were good too. This was given credence by parents who said
since they would bring grandchildren, it was worth as the money stayed at home for boys
would not get married and go away unlike girls do. Others felt that raising up boys was
fairly cheap since they were handy and they were own security because they believed
boys would always have their houses built next to the homestead which is a sign of
security and their wives, grandchildren will always be looking after the grandparents
when girls are gone for marriage. Some parents in the low income settings responded that
the daughters was a source of stress to the family because they would get pregnant and
become indisciplined.

In the low income setting, one parent stated that the daughter should get married
despite her young age of 12 years. Some of the respondents felt their daughters did not
have any effect on their lives indicating that they rarely cared much about the girl child as
they were already contented as they had sons This has much do to with the perception
that were culturally cultivated, determined, where girls to a large extent were seen as a
burden. Some responses by parents showed that boys were valued more than girls, as one
parent said she got many daughters while trying to get a son showing how boys are of
high value. In the low income setting, a daughter was regarded as disgrace as a result of
going herself pregnant, while some parents looked at their daughter as a source of
wealth as a result of the expected financial windfall from dowry paid. This situation was exacerbated by the preference of boys over girls and perceived benefits accruing by having boys as opposed to girls in low income settings where ten of the respondents indicated that if they were to get another child, they would prefer a son rather than a daughter. While the high income setting scored as low as a third who indicated that they would prefer a boy child, the presence of boys was somehow not acute in the high income setting as respondents mentioned they would not mind the sex of the child.

In the high income setting, those who regarded raising of a girl child as not expensive mentioned that all children are equal, they need equal opportunities, and therefore expenses are immaterial.

In the high income setting, the respondents indicated their daughters had positive effect on most of the parents with one of the father respondent saying that he had indeed changed his traditional reasoning that girls are not heirs. Two of the mothers responded that they were proud of their daughters. Boys seemed to play a significant role in the family in the low income settings with the parents having more hope and expectations on their sons. The parents also hinged more hope on their help in the future. They therefore were considered pillars of the family and homemakers. They were also valued as the parents were convinced that the son would not desert the parents when mature and would help them in old age. The daughters (girl-child) on the other hand, was seen as on transit as they would leave home for marriage. In fact some parents looked at their daughters with a prism that they were objects of wealth creation. Therefore some parents felt it is a waste of money to use a lot of resources on them even one of them saying he can chose not to educate the daughter.

The above responses were in total contrast with those that were mentioned by parent’s respondents in the high-income settings who generally indicated that their children irrespective of the sex were important.

**How does the girl child perceive her role?**

In the low income settings, the girls as shown in the interviews, smiles and family tree drawings, viewed their position in the family as that of lesser person as compared with the brother. Many felt that their brothers treated them differently because their parents
gave them precedence and special treatment and were the favorite to the parents. This was corroborated by the faces and trees drawings which showed that girls in the low income setting considered themselves as a ‘leaf’ showing how small they feel in the family while brothers felt their position was ‘up the tree with their father’ to indicate the position of power. For the girls who draw faces in the low income settings most showed how the father was not happy with them for the simple reason that they were women. One of the girl indicated that her mother was sad and embarrassed about her for her inability to get a son, as she was the only child. Where the family had boys, it was shown that the father was very happy. As girls were expected as requirement to attend domestic chores and look after their young siblings in the low income settings, they did not get enough time to play.

**Boy’s perception of his sister’s role**

In the low income settings, the boys were of the opinion that their sisters were of lesser status in the family as compared to them. From the transcripts of the smiles and drawn family tree, by the boys, the sister and mother were in most cases drawn below the trunk showing the place of the woman in the family. One boy indicated that the mother was not suppose to laugh with the son as she was supposed to be strict for the son to grow being tough. Majority of the Boys and girls in the high income setting, felt they were treated equally for they are all children. The girls who felt they were treated differently felt that their brothers were bought for toys, bycicles, while the girls did not get everything they asked from the parents. In the low income settings, brothers and sisters treated each other differently as shown by nearly three quarters for the respondents. Treating of the sister/brother badly represented a sixth of the responses. Boys stated that girls were not as significant as them and being weaker sex, they could not be equal. Boys in the low income setting felt they would protect the family after the girls are married and help in perpetuating the family. Some boys in the high income setting felt they were treated equally for they are all the same children but some girls felt they had different treatment from their brothers.
Attendance in school and payment of girl-child school fees

The research study found that in 57% of the cases in low income settings, nobody paid the girl child school fees meaning that most of them did not attend schools. Half of the respondents in high income settings mentioned that both parents were involved in payment of the girl-child school fees. In low income settings, there was no mention of both parents participation. In both low income and high income settings, less than half of the respondents in each category mentioned that the father paid the girl child fees. Mothers in low income and high income settings were mentioned to pay their girl-child fees in less than one tenth and one seventh of the cases respectively. Where the mother paid for the girl-child school fees in the low income settings reasons were that the father did not have an income or the mother was single. Where nobody paid fees for the girl-child, various responses received included that the father had no income, or could not afford. Where the father paid, it was because he was the sole breadwinner and it was assumed that it was his responsibility.

In the high income setting the reason given why both the parents were involved in the payment of their daughter school fees was because both parents had a source of income. Where the father paid the fees, the mothers had no source of income and played the role of housewives.

Place of the children in the family

Responses regarding girl child life

In the low income settings parents had various responses about their girl child’s life. One of the trend in the responses showed that some parents regarded their daughter as burdens. One of the parent said she got many daughters while trying to get a son showing how a boy is valued more than than girls. Another felt the daughter was a disgrace as a result of getting herself pregnant, while some looked at their daughters as a source of wealth from dowry paid.

In the high income setting various responses that were given about the girl-child were largely positive with some parents mentioning that their daughters felt equal to their
brothers, while others felt that their daughters were obedient and hardworking, aggressive, as well as interesting and looked up to follow in their mothers’ footsteps.

**Decision making in the family**

(*Parent response*)

**Table 5.1** Daughter involvement in decision making in low income setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the low income setting a mere one-seventh of the respondents said that a girl-child was involved in making some decisions at home. This is in comparison with four-fifths of the respondents in the high income settings who said that their daughters did not have any decision-making role at home.

**Table 5.2** Daughter involvement in decision making in high income setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Half of the parents respondents in high income settings were likely to give some chance or involve their daughters in the decision making process. More than three quarters of the respondents in the low income settings indicated that their sons were not involved in decision making in the family. In the high income settings, less than half of the respondents said that their sons were involved in the decision making. This proves that there is no difference between boys and girls.
Discrimination based on gender

The research study found discriminatory tendencies by parents especially in the low income settings. This was shown by the high expectations placed on the boy child by their parents. Although many parents in the low income settings felt that education was expensive, bearing in mind their economic status, they mentioned that they would ensure that their sons got good education and excelled academically. Some said they did not mind the cost, as it is a worthy investment.

The converse can be said about the girl-child. Many of the respondents in the low income settings seemed to have little regard for the girl. At the slightest chance, the girl was marginalized where the brother was apparently accorded better treatment than the girl-child in terms of education, entitlements and attention.

In the high income settings the research study found consensus among the parents that the boy and girl child were treated equally in most cases.

Parental favors

In the low income settings, boys were the favorite children for both mother and father. This may be explained by the expectations placed on the boy by the family and the society at large. In one case a mother respondent said the husband wanted to marry again in order to have sons. Some of the respondents regarded boys as kings at home. They were expected to look after the parents in old age while also expanding the family tree and bringing grand children. In some cases, parents believed their sons would bury them meaning it is a tradition that when parents are about to die, it is their sons who make preparations for materials for burial like ceremonies, clothes, coffins, flowers, digging of grave yard.

From the research study it was evident that most of the parents in the high income settings did not support the idea of a favorite child. Various reasons given for this included, that it was a recipe for spoiling kids, as all children are the same regardless of sex. Some parents felt that favoring children on the basis of sex brought inferiority/superiority complex, which affected growth, and thus no one should receive preferential treatment.
Child preference
In low income setting half of the respondents said they never wished their daughter were a son in comparison with more than four-fifth of the parents in high income settings. For those who were contented with their daughters in the low income settings, indications were that it was for the purpose of balancing the family or because they already had enough boys. In high income settings, some of the responses given were that children were creatures of God and whether a child was a boy or girl was immaterial. Those who would prefer boys, in the low income settings had a dim view of the girl. Some mentioned that girls were disobedient and made life difficult for the parents and in some cases would loiter around with men.

Cost of raising children
The research showed that half of the respondents in low income settings felt that the raising of girls was expensive as compared to parents in high income settings. In low income settings seven parents responded ‘‘Yes it is expensive to raise a girl child’’ as compared with the high income setting who believed it is not expensive to raise the girl child The respondents who felt that it was expensive to raise a girl-child from low income settings, mentioned that it was an expense that one would never know when it would be paid back. Some said that when the girls married, they left the family and took everything away to their husbands, and therefore they do not expect benefit from her. They say investment in the daughter was a waste.

In high income settings respondents who said it was expensive mentioned that girls needed extra security/care and demanded special attention from the parent. Another reason was that due to the way the society mishandles the girl she requires extra attention unlike boys. For those who regarded that raising a girl-child was not expensive in low income settings, some mentioned that they would get a refund of the money when the daughter got married in form of bride price. Others thought it was not expensive as the daughters were not attending school.

In high income settings those who regarded raising of girl-child as not expensive mentioned that as all children are equal, they need equal opportunities, and therefore
expenses are immaterial. One of the respondent felt that in fact girls understood whenever they were given less (money) than they asked for.

In terms of the cost of raising boys, parents in low income settings said that although it was expensive, the deal was good and returns were good too. This was given credence by the parents who said since they would bring grandchildren, it was worth, as the money stayed at home for boys would not get married. The responses that were recorded from high income settings respondent, indicated that it was not expensive as they consumed the same as any other child. Others felt raising up boys was fairly cheap since they were their own security because they believed boys cared for them and would always have their houses built next to the homestead which is a sign of security. Their wives and grandchildren would also be looking after the grandparents while girls are gone for marriage.

Parental involvement in child life

Family communication

In the low income settings the study found that it was the duty of the mother to talk about her daughters to the husband. This was because according to the traditional cultural practices, girls were not supposed to face grown up men directly and therefore the mother acted as a go-between. The daughter told the mother about her problems and the mother discussed them with the husband from where mother relayed back the results to the daughter. In the high income setting parents to a great extent communicated with each other about the girl-child. The reasons that were given included that the father felt he had responsibility in the upbringing of the girls, and that the girls were closer to the father than the mother, and therefore easily confided in him.

Daughter marriage

The results of the study showed that the idea of the daughter’s marriage in low income settings is not very far from the parent’s mind regardless of the sex of the parent. Some responses about time for marriage ranged from 10-14 years as compared to high income
settings where the parents were unanimous that they would start thinking about their daughter marriage after she was through education at tertiary level.

For the case of the son, in both high and low and income settings, there was an agreement that the son should marry later when he is at least 20 years and over. However in the high income settings parent were emphatic that they envisaged their sons marrying after college with a majority stopping at nothing but the university.

**Children discipline**

In low income settings according to the study, a significantly high figure, four- fifths of the respondents said that a neighbor was likely to approach the mother if the daughter misbehaved. In the high income setting if a daughter misbehaved a neighbor was likely to approach either of the parents, most of the time depending on who was available or nearest.

In the rural setting, as 8 of the respondents said, the father would take the lion share in disciplining the daughter at a close to two-third as compared to a fifth of the respondents who said the role of disciplining the daughter laid with the mother. In high income settings, it was apparent from the respondents that both parents were involved in the disciplining of the daughter. Mothers assumed the largest role with slightly less than a third of the respondents. In low income settings, the mother was mentioned with to play a key role in disciplining of the son. In high income settings, parents equally shared the role of disciplining their sons with seven of the respondents saying that mother and father respectively disciplined the son.

**Girl-child contact with the parents**

In majority of the cases in the low income settings, it was found that girls sat near or next to their mother while in the high income settings, the study found that there was generally no sitting arrangement or a specific place where the girl was supposed to seat.
**Child gender**
In low income settings, ten of the respondents indicated that if they were to get another child, they would prefer a son rather than a daughter. This compares unfavorably with a third of the respondents in high income settings. More than half of the respondents in high income settings mentioned they would not mind the sex of the child.

**Time to play**
The research was not able to conclusively establish whether the girl-child had time to play in the low income settings as non-responses composed approximately third of respondents. While a third of the respondents said that they got some time to play compared with at least more than three quarters (11) of the girls in high income settings. For those who had time to play in the low income settings, they did so when the mother gave them a go ahead, when they were not cooking, or after completing other domestic chores. In high income settings, most mentioned that they got time to play according to the timetable followed by weekends and holidays.

**Sleeping time**
In the low income settings, the time of going to sleep for both boys and girls ranged from 9 P.M to 10.00 P.M while for the high income settings, both boy’s and girl’s time of going to sleep ranged from 8-10P.M. Differences accounting for the variance in time of sleeping were because of the roles they played. Girls in low income settings slept after completing domestic chores, while boys slept late as they protected the home as they were regarded as protectors. When girls woke up early in low income settings they did so to make breakfast for their siblings.

**Treatment by parents**
Of the children respondents in the questionnaire, approximately three quarters in the low income settings said that their parents treated them differently from their sisters or brothers in comparison with approximately six of the respondents in high income
settings. In the low income settings only one of the children respondents felt they were treated equally as their siblings by the parents.

In the low income settings, the girls felt that their brothers treated them differently because, their brothers are treated in a special way by their parents. Boys felt that they were treated different because they will protect the family after they the girls had married and help in perpetuating the family. This was corroborated by the faces and trees drawings which showed that girls in the low income setting considered themselves as a 'leaf' showing how small they feel in the family while the brothers felt their position was 'up the tree with the father' to indicate the position. For those girls who drew faces in the low income settings, most showed how the father was not happy with them for the simple reason that they were women. One of the girls indicated that her mother was sad and embarrassed about her for her inability to get a son, as she was the only child. Where the family had boys, it was shown that the father was very happy.

In terms of boys in the low income setting, who drew the tree and faces diagram, they showed their sister and mother as below the trunk showing the place of the woman in the family. In fact one boy indicated that the mother was not supposed to laugh with the son as she was supposed to be strict for the son to grow being tough.

In high income settings, those who felt they were treated equally said that their parents treated them equally for they are all children. The girls who felt they were treated differently felt that their brothers were bought for toys, bicycles while the girls did not get everything they asked the parents to buy.

Problems reportage and resolution

Reporting problems

In the low income settings, more than halve of the respondents (8) of the respondents indicated that if they had a problem, the first person they reported to was their mother. Children in low income setting reported their problems to their fathers in one fifth of the cases. In high income setting at least 10 of the respondents believe they can approach the mother. This proves that the mother is the proximal person to be approached whenever there is a problem.
Solving problems
In the low income settings, according to two-fifth of the respondents were involved in taking action on problem. Mothers according to a third of the respondents took action while a mere one –tenth of the father took action. Although majority of the children reported their problems to the mother in high income settings, both parents were more involved in solving the problem than the mother.

Sibling’s treatment
In the low income settings, brothers and sisters treated each other differently as shown by nearly three quarters of the respondents. Treating of the sister/brother badly represented a sixth of the responses. Reason given for treating the sibling differently by the girl were that boys felt special and were favorites of the parents. For the boys responses about why they treated their sisters differently is because girls were not as significant as boys, and being of weaker sex, cannot be equal to the boys.
In the high income settings half of the respondent’s children in the questionnaire felt that they received equal treatment from their sibling, while at least a third felt they were treated differently.

6. DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
“the girl in every woman precedes and shapes the woman in her. And to the extent to which girlhood is denied, liberated, and fostered, womanhood perishes or prospers” (Sohoni, 1995).
As the research study showed, cultural practices continue to be an important factor in low income settings as far as determining the role of the girl-child. As Foumbi and Lovich, (1997) asserts men, often dominant within the home, the community and the national level, have tremendous influence on the institutionalization of socially and culturally and politically prescribed gender roles. As fathers, brothers, husbands or friends, they exert their values and belief systems on the woman and girls around them. The way men are socialized is a good predictor of the extent to which they will, as adults, influence gender related policies and practices.
The fact that the girl child’s roles are delegated to the kitchen or around domestic chores especially in the low income settings means restriction in movement and activity. This in essence is an obstacle to the girl child not in the immediate but in future life and later years. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the question of gender and women empowerment is yet to take root at the grassroots’ levels of the community. This fact is qualified by the way parents in urban and rural areas treat both girl and boy child. The intensity of effort, levels of resources, and attention is quite distinct. Parents in the urban areas tend to take the human rights approach to the family. They both see children as equal and hence gives them equal opportunity for education, play and choice e.g. for marriage. The economic status of the parents in the low income setting contributed to the girl child not receiving education, since their level of income could not suffice to pay for the girl’s school fees. The level of education especially among the Luo communities living around the lake was pathetic. They did not get adequate education therefore they became part of the fishermen, who fall under the level of E (Unskilled, laborer, sweeper) of the demographic classification in Keny. This status places them in the categories of the very poor income earners therefore their priorities were also not well focused since they were cultural, tradition bound stereotyped groups who are resistant to changes when it comes to education the girl child.

I would agree with the transformative approach that emphasize enhancement of empowering the ‘underprivileged’ which relates to the Luo girl child in the rural area therefore I should say ‘let her voice be heard’ – reduce marginalizing (Gillan, 1982 in Mertens, 2005).

It is apparent in the study results that it is accepted that men would fill decision making and leadership capacities in society, while women plays a mainly supportive/nurturing role. With time, socio-economic changes have resulted in an expansion of the roles that women play, out of necessity and sometimes choice. However, the perception of women and their accepted roles and perceived capabilities have remained the same in the low income setting for example they still have strong belief in traditions. Many people therefore have difficulty accepting that there is a need to equip women with the skills and knowledge necessary, through education, to enable them to take up their new roles and function effectively in the modern world. The perceived ideal roles and
characteristics of women and girls seem to significantly influence how girls and boys are socialized in the home, community and school. Girls and women in general are considered physically weaker and less capable than men, they are often overtly protected and supervised to keep them from what is considered threatening to their safety i.e. physical, sexual, mental and emotional safety.

The emerging themes from the research

Analysis of the interview data from individual interviews and the questionnaires, as well as observations, resulted in several themes emerging.

Table 6.1 Emerging themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low income settings</th>
<th>High Income settings</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural practices continue to be an important factor in low income settings as far as determining the role of the girl-child.</td>
<td>Cultural practices seem to have little effect in determining the role of the girl child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The perceived ideal roles and characteristics of women and girls seem to significantly influence how girls and boys are socialized in the home, community and school.</td>
<td>Families living apart from kin groups and familiar social patterns especially in high income settings, especially in urban areas, show a greater willingness to accommodate diverse family structure and gender roles than their low income settings/rural counterparts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected that girls will in adulthood only take on the roles of wives and mothers. Many parents and community members believe that a formal education is not necessary in order for girls to prepare for these expected roles as they can be learnt from their mothers and others in the community</td>
<td>Parents expect their girls to succeed in life through selfdetermination and thorough drill. This is why parents put more emphasis on girl child education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largely negative attitudes towards girls education, parent’s level of literacy and pupil’s hopes and intentions about continuing their education all correlate with parents occupation, level of education, low economic status and rural/urban location</td>
<td>Largely positive attitudes towards girls education perhaps as a result of generally good education background of the parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-cultural factor of attitudes towards girls, traditional views of women’s ideal roles and the perception of their abilities combined with economic constraints, most seriously impedes advances in the development of female participation in education</td>
<td>High participation by girls in school as a result of low social-cultural influences</td>
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<tr>
<td>The perception of women and their accepted roles and perceived capabilities have tended to have generally remained the same</td>
<td>Parents in the urban areas largely tend to take the human rights approach to the family by treating both children as equals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The high expectation parents places on boys ensures that most of investment and resources are geared to providing them with the every advantage to help them fulfill this role, this includes educating them as far as possible</td>
<td>Parents generally have equal expectations about their children and therefore parents ready to give equal attention to both boys and girls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consideration of boys as custodians of homes, implying that without the boy-child, the family trees would diminish completely as girl would get married and move out of the home points to the girl was transitory place in the family</td>
<td>Parents have a wide world view and therefore are not affected by cultural thinking that boys are the only custodians of the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls marry early as parents do not have high hopes on the girl child</td>
<td>Delayed marriage as parents envision the girl marriage after completing college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys are generally preferred by both parents promulgating inequality</td>
<td>Most parents treat both boys and girls equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girls</strong></td>
<td><strong>Girls</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic chores impedes girl’s participation in school</td>
<td>Girls have equal participation just like boys as they are not buoyed down by domestic chores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls perceived themselves treated as inferior as compared to their brothers</td>
<td>Girls feel relatively treated equally just like the boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boys</strong></td>
<td><strong>Boys</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys feel more superior to girls and treat their sisters as weaker sex</td>
<td>Majority of boys feel equal to their sisters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The feelings of boys’ superiority starts from an early age and are socialized throughout life to treat women as inferior.</td>
<td>Consensus that boys feel that they are as their equals</td>
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</table>
Parental attitudes towards girls’ school attendance

A major deterrent to female take up and follow through of education opportunities (even when these are available) is a near universal fundamental cultural bias in favor of males especially in low income settings. In research study in seven countries, Brock and Cammish (1993) found out that the widespread operation of patriarchal systems of social organization; of customary early marriage; of the incidence of early pregnancy (in and out of marriage), of heavier domestic and subsistence duties of females (especially in rural areas) a generally lower regard for the value of female life, all combined though differentially in each case, to adversely affect the participation of girls and women in formal education. Such long-standing constraints result in dearth of female role models that could challenge the tradition one that is clearly acquired by both sexes at a very early age.

It is also note worth to record that these traditional views of women’s ideal gender roles and the perception of their abilities have a negative effect on parent’s attitudes towards educating girls. As Brock and Cammish (1993) study found out that the dominance of patriarchal is a hindrance to investment in a girl’s education and is regarded by the traditional society as wasteful since it benefits the family to which girl marries rather than her own. Brook and Cammish (1993) also realized that even in relatively good times, investment in education of daughters was often seen as a waste in that potential benefit would accrue to the family of the future husband.

During discussions and interviews with parents and children for this study, it became clear that for many, there was a commonly held view that girls were academically less capable than boys in the low income settings because the primary survey revealed that negative attitudes towards the education of girls are often well-established in 11 and 12-year old children. In a situation where parents have to make a choice, those who uphold this belief will choose to educate boys at the expense of girls, secondly some parents felt it was a wastage of financial resources which were scarce anyway considering their economic status.

In the low-income setting, the girl then, unlike the boy who is often allowed to concentrate on his school-work, was expected to divide her time between domestic duties and school. The study showed that although both boys and girls helped extensively
at home, girls helped more especially in preparation of food and care of siblings, acting as the surrogate mothers this is in accordance with a study showing that female children spend more than four times longer hours on household work than male children in Kenya (UNDP, 1995).

The study proved as shown in the video that most pupils in rural areas especially near the lake sometimes could not attend school because they had to do jobs for their mothers and fathers. Helping at home radically affect not only initial enrollment but also attendance by those children who do go to school, affects school dropouts as the school term clash with agricultural cycles and those who miss school over several weeks drop behind, despair and ultimately abandon school to sell fish.

Economically related problems affect the girl child. Research studies among them, Brock and Cammish (1993), shows negative attitudes towards girls education, awareness of cost of schooling, parent’s level of literacy and pupil’s hopes and intentions about continuing their education all correlate with family size, father’s occupation, low and high come settings and rural/urban location. The probability of children being enrolled in school increase with mothers’ education level and extra income going to mother which has more positive impact on household nutrition, health and education of children than extra income going fathers (UN, 2002). This explains why parents registered a high propensity to educate their daughters in the high income settings. Most of the mothers were career women and actively participated in upbringing and financial contributions to their families. In contrast mothers in low income settings were of less education and mostly housewives who impacted negatively on their ability to influence decision in their families in favor of the girl-children.

Sociocultural factor of attitudes towards girls, which especially combined with economic constraints, most seriously impeded advance in the development of female participation in education. Where poor resources make schooling a questionable investment for all children, it is girls whom parents seem most likely to withdraw. Inability to meet or cope with both direct and hidden costs in low income setting was seen to be a prime cause of low levels of involvement, enrolment and high levels of wastage. Items like exercise books, paper, writing materials, textbooks and sometimes
uniforms is prohibitive and family will have to choose which, if any, of the children will be supported to attend school.

Studies carried out in many Latin American countries (and elsewhere), shows there is a strong link between very poor, women-headed households in urban and rural areas and menial occupations as described also in demographic descriptions of this study. This is an association that will only diminish when educational levels are raised. Early marriage extends a woman’s potential childbearing capacity, which itself represents a risk to mothers (Adlakha, Arjun, Ayad & Sushil Kumar, 1991). In this light, early marriage can be said to have profound social and economic consequences for society as a whole, which are reinforced by the fact that the children of young and illiterate mothers tend to face the same cycle of childhood deprivation and damage experience by their mothers.

Most parents both male and female prefer investing in boys’ education than girls. The low income settings parents tend to be more victims than the high income settings parents. This is exemplified by the low education standards of the low income settings. It is also noteworthy to record the fact that these traditional views of women’s ideal gender roles and the perceptions of their abilities have a negative effect on parents’ attitudes towards educating girls. The factors informing this choices arise from the fact that their levels of educational and socialization process was also compromised at their adolescent stages.

During discussions and interviews with parents and children it became clear that for many, there was a commonly held view that girls were academically less capable than boys in low income settings. This attitude has a negative effect on girls’ participation in education in a number of ways. First of all, in a situation where parents have to make a choice, those who uphold this belief will choose to educate boys at the expense of girls. Secondly some parents felt it was wastage of financial resources, which were scarce anyway considering their economic status.

Another aspect of this that is that, because girls are considered less capable, they often receive less encouragement and are rarely challenged at home or school to strive to succeed in their academic work. Because less was expected of them, they also in turn expected less of themselves and were less confident of their academic abilities. Boys on the other hand was said to be “pushed” to succeed because more was expected of them by
their parents and society as a whole. Many parents in the low income settings and
community members also have the attitude that educating girls is a waste of time and
money, because they will eventually be married off and their education would therefore
only benefit their husbands and the families they marry into. Money spent on the girl’s
education would thus be considered lost to the girls’ family. Since there was also the
expectation that boys will become the “breadwinners” of their future families, many
parents and community members felt that boys should for this reason be provided with
the every advantage to help them fulfill this role, this includes educating them as far as
possible. Girls, on the other hand, it is expected, will have husbands who will provide for
them and an education is therefore not essential for them.

Girls were also considered a risk to educate because they were likely to get
pregnant or married and drop out of school and any money spent on their education
would therefore be wasted. For this reason some parents expressed the opinion that given
a choice, they would prefer to educate boys. However it need to be noted that in low
income settings where girls’ education is not valued in comparison with high income
settings, the issue of poverty further aggravated the situation of girls’ lack of access to
education because in such areas, parents when faced with scarce resources choose to
educate boys rather than girls.

It is important to understand that since 2003, the Kenya government initiated and is
still implementing free primary education as a basic right to all children. Although we
have a free primary education, some parents are hard pressed to take their children to
school. Some reasons are out of choice and others their preference for the boy at the
expense of the girl (UNICEF, 2001).

For example, the argument that it’s too expensive to take children to school is an
excuse for parental responsibility. It is exacerbated by massive ignorance and mis-
information, because there is free primary education. The expenses referred to here by
parents relate to costs of school uniforms, shoes, books, enrollment fee, which in law is
illegal, but some private schools exploit parents by charging this fee.
Place of the girl-child in the family

As the research results show, especially in the low income settings which are still in bondage of culture, girls are not expected to look men directly in the eye or even report their problems to their fathers and are expected to appear humble and respectful before their elders.

Another issue is that because girls in low income setting are expected to be obedient and socialized to feel that boys and men are in some ways their superiors; many are vulnerable to physical and sexual harassment and abuse and lack the confidence, skills and knowledge of such situations. Most fundamental is the low level of literacy, particularly among adult rural females most of who are mothers. The mother acts as role model for the girls and the fact that they are confined to the home and its immediate environs means that the girl male counterparts are likely to enjoy a richer experience albeit within a largely illiterate setting (UNICEF, 1995).

The often cited assertion that women are the weaker sex, in low income setting, is reinforced into boys from childhood as shown by the way boys regarded their sisters in the study. Also this was shown by the drawings of the trees and faces by children, which portrayed women as insignificantly in the family. Likewise, some parents in low income settings still consider the girl child as objects of creating for themselves wealth through dowry. Those that are bitter make connotations that elude the behavior of their girl children to prostitutes. There were some cases where girl child interviewed viewed their brothers as equals and not more superior to them especially in the high income setting. This points to the fact that families here have to a large extent embraced the girl-child as equal to their male counterparts. This distinguishes from gender and girl child in development while drawing the lines of relationships at family and individual level as well as partnership. According to Sohoni (1995), if girls live in the community where men are always the decision-makers, and women are considered to be less able and insignificant than men, girls may accept an idea that they must be inferior to boys. There is an underlying assumption in the low income settings that when boys grow up and go to school, get jobs, they will eventually support the parents, while girls are perceived as the opposite and therefore not worth the investment. It is said that boys are the custodians of homes, implying that without the boy-child, the family trees diminishes completely since
the girl shall get married and move out of the home thus, perceived as not part of the family.

In the middle and upper class families, parents conceive children as equal not only before God but having insignificant case of whether they are born girl or boy. As such most say, “Children are born equal, and therefore a child is child, as parents quoted from the Holy Bible (Genesis Chpt. 1:v27) God created man and woman in his own image, male and female equal’.

Men brand women weak. This assertion is reinforced into boys from childhood as shown by the way boys regarded their sisters in the study. Also this was shown by the drawings of the trees and faces by children, which showed women as insignificant in the family. There are few cases where the girl child interviewed view their brothers as equals and not more superior to them. This fact distinguishes from gender and girl child development while drawing the lines for relationships at family and individual level as well as partnership.

There is an underlying assumption that when boys grow up and, go to school and get jobs, they will eventually support the parents, while girls are perceived as the opposite and therefore not worth the investment. This is common among low income settings parenting. It is further exacerbated by the fact that the boys are the custodians of homes. The implied notion is that without boy child the family trees diminishes completely since the girl shall get married and move out of the home thus, perceived as not part of the family. This is a social cultural belief practiced by parents in low income setting, and they silently believe that marriage of the girl is the ultimate goal for and that they feel there would be no need investing several years of formal education since it would be ‘like watering another man’s garden’.

**Perception of Women Roles as Wives and Mothers**

Gender, refers to social roles, responsibilities, relationships, attitudes of men and women as defined and determined by a particular society or community at a particular time in a particular environment. Example of this is when a child is born gender distinctions start at birth, don’t cry like a woman, it is done more or less unconsciously, but later sink
deeper. It is institutionalized through socialization. Surprisingly it is women who impart the impressions in children.

According to many of the parents in the study in the low income settings, it is expected that girls will in adulthood only take on the roles of wives and mothers. Many parents and community members believe that a formal education is not necessary in order for girls to prepare for these expected roles as they can be learnt from their mothers and others in the community. As a result many parents do not enroll their daughters in school or withdraw them before completion. This denies these girls an opportunity for formal education in general and participation in school activities in particular. Some parents in low income settings still considered the girl child as objects of creating themselves wealth through dowry. Those that were bitter made connotations, which eluded the behavior of their girl children to prostitutes.

Parents had very high expectations of their sons in low income settings. As parents expected that the boys would eventually become the “breadwinners” of their future families so boys should be provided with every advantage help them fulfill this role, this includes educating them as far as possible while girls would have husbands who would provide for them so not much effort was put on them.

In urban settings, without extended families or community to reinforce the traditional society hierarchy, the basis for father or elder authority diminishes. Loyalties are no longer automatically bound to the family or community, but develop in response to a number of influences such as schools, cultural institutions, government services, and media. Individualism is taking precedence over the group (Engle: 1995).

The research study shows that families living apart from kin groups and familiar social patterns in high income settings, especially in urban areas, show a greater willingness to accommodate diverse family structure and gender roles than their low income settings/rural counterparts.

The effect of perceived gender roles on household division of labor and the consequences of this on Girls’ wellbeing

As the research study shows, girls are expected to take up the roles of wives and mothers in adulthood and their socialization at home, in the community and school is geared
towards providing them with experiences that will prepare them to carry out these roles effectively. These expectations determine the division of labor within the household, with girls being assigned the home making household chores like food preparation, cooking, cleaning, fetching firewood and water, washing clothes and, caring for younger siblings. This was also found in the study of Brock and Cammish (1993). In addition to this in some areas girls are also expected to participate in farming activities.

Generally results indicate that girls spent considerably more time performing household tasks than boys in low income settings. It was also noted that these chores was often performed by girls, either early in morning before school or in the evenings after school for those who went to school. These domestic chores in some cases were mentioned to prevent the girl from attending schools. This was seen to affect girls’ education in a number of ways.

Implications for the domestic chores points to a number of issues;

- The number of hours spent performing household chores and other tasks means that girls have little time and energy left to devote to their academic work.
- Girls also had an added disadvantage in that while the types of chores that boys do, like herding, allow them time and opportunity to study, the chores that girls do are difficult to combine with study, i.e. preparing food, washing clothes, fetching water from the lake etc.
- Girls are often late for school in the morning as a result of having to complete their household chores. This affects their performance, as they are already tired affecting their concentration.

Because girls are responsible for such a diverse number of household tasks, some parents prefer to keep their daughters at home. Many parents therefore find that the opportunity cost of education is too high. In both low income and high income settings, women were found to play the biggest role in the listening to their children problems. This can be explained by the fact that majority of the children have more access to their mothers as opposed to their mothers. This shows that the mother is the most influential parent in the child in the formative years.
My preunderstanding of attitudes concerning the girl child in low and high income setting influenced my study. I released that times have change as have perceptions, beliefs and traditions. I had initially expected that almost all parents in the low income setting would prefer education the boy child first but this was not the case as proved by the study. Parents in the low income setting were open, expressive during the interview unlike in early ten years ago when they used to shy away. They would openly and boldly say that boys are no longer providers as they used to before. Therefore they have changed their attitude and would still try to give the girl- child a chance to education. Surprisingly there were very qualified educated professionals in the low income setting which was not my expectations. Some parents were in the level of class AB, CI, which qualifies for professional, senior managers, headmasters and other graduate professionals yet despite their level of education, they still had great expectations on the boy child. I believe this was as a result of culture and environment where they lived. I would have expected them to have changed due to exposure and education achieved but this was not the case as the study revealed that education does not change people but the environment, the setting in which a person lives and interacts plays a big factor in shaping the attitude, culture, behavior which according to (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) is within the microsystem. Most parents with the same qualifications and profession in high income setting did not marginalize the girl - child neither did they take the boy child as superior because the environment where the child was reared and interacted did not condone marginalization of children but believed in equality between boys and girls. I had initially expected a higher percentage of respondents in the high-income setting to have high preference to the boy child but this was not the case as it used to be ten years ago when I was growing up.

**Strength and limitations in this study**

My research study emerged with some strength and weakness for example, when trying to access information I realized the procedures were too long and in order to access information and licence, I had to seek permission from the local government and officers concerned who proved to be very difficult in relaying the information. They seem to use a lot of delaying tactics. ‘They just don’t want to give a nod - they can't give Yes, go
ahead’ response until put under pressure.’ Because they thought they would get some financial gain yet they were on duty.

Getting participants on time was also very difficult. This was due to their cultural belief that ‘in Africa, we don’t keep time - there is no hurry’ therefore they were not in a hurry neither were they time conscious but could take it easy with time. The weather was not conducive with poor transport system. It had rained heavily so the lake was flooded, which made it difficult for me to go deep very closer to the water in order to interview fishermen in the boat because it would be dangerous.

There were also strengths in my research study for example the participants realized that I belonged to their culture and I was speaking their mother tongue which enhanced good rapport between us. They became open and friendly so they could open up information during the interview. The people around and the participants were happy that awareness had been created and that the problems, perception and marginalized girl child issues have now been made known internationally due to the research study although It would have been more practical to get a higher number of participants in order to achieve very valid results. Time limit was also short as this kind of research was rather intensive thus required longer time than what I had taken however, the research study captured my objectives and research questions were addressed. I feel I am equipped with good and quality information that could enable future researchers and myself to re-visit the area especially during my doctorate study.

Conclusions
Results show that traditional beliefs especially so in low income settings do have profound negative attitudes, which limit the girl child’s capacity for self-determination. It is an indisputable fact that without parents and community support, any efforts to improve girls’ lot in all spheres of life be it education, health, careers, leadership, and change in perceptions of their roles in particular will be greatly hampered. There has been great improvement in the way a girl is regarded in the high income settings with parents putting nearly equal emphasis on both boys and girls. Further the constellation of cultural explosions and interactions of people of different cultures have necessitated the
internalizations of new attitude and norms in the high income settings which has enabled the improvement in parental expectations on girls.

**Recommendations**

The study in light of the results would make some recommendations. As popular opinion about gender stereotypes is passed on through the family, school and the economic organizations of home and work and through the media, there is need to conduct vigorous advocacy and sensitization programs and activities. There is need for positive involvement of men in all interventions projects and proposals that are intended for girl-child situation improvement. This would not only contribute to strengthening of the family, but also would yield short and long term benefits to the community. This would positively impact on the societal perceptions and actions while accelerating the gains for the status of women, children, and the girl-child in particular, as well as the participation of women in community development and decision-making activities. Successful projects targeted at men have yielded outcomes such as increased women’s access to community level decision making, improved girls school attendance and reduced violence in the community (UN-NADAF, 1996).

In order to improve and encourage the emancipation of the girl child there is need for the society and especially so parents and the community to improve on sensitization on a number of issues. These include:

- The importance of and the advantages to, the family, community and country as a whole, of educating girls.
- That girls are equal to the boys and requires their entitlements as human beings
- The fact that girls have the ability to perform well in schools and for them to do so, they require, among other things, encouragement, motivation and material support from their parents and communities.
- On the issue of, domestic chores, parents need to be sensitized to be gender sensitive in the matter of allocation of chores. They need to realize that girls require and are entitled to as much time as boys to attend to their academic work.
- Home is the place where socialization of a child begins and where most exclusive change can happen about the empowerment of the girl child. Mothers and fathers,
and guardians alike, need to be made aware that both girls and boys are equal and that no preferential treatment should be given to any of them.

- Parents and the community in general need to be sensitized and made aware of the rights of children and in particular the girl-child.

In order to achieve the above sensitization, respected people with the relevant training, qualifications and experience can be used to speak to parents and communities at public forums about the issues raised.

Removal of gender bias in textbooks, teaching and learning materials which shows evidence of stereo typed materials so as to have ‘changing images’ (Obura, 1991). Community leaders and other opinion leaders should also be specifically targeted for sensitization and should also be involved in community sensitization and advocacy efforts. The use of the mass media for the purposes of sensitization and advocacy is also suggested. This would include articles in popular newspapers, as well as programs prepared for radio and television.

Socialization processes should be created throughout the life cycle with focus on developing life skills for boys and facilitating adaptation to changing family structure and roles for fathers. In Central America, at the Caribbean Child Development Centre, a gender socialization project explores deeply embedded elements in the socialization of boys and girls through discussion groups of men and women (Brown, 1995; Brown, Broomfield & Owen, 1994).

Where work and education opportunities have opened up for women, this has had the effect of encouraging parent’s support for their daughter’s education. Increased enrolment of girls in school and higher levels of educational completion has been conclusively shown to produce improvements in family wellbeing (King, 1990). Extensive research has shown that girls have the ability to perform well in schools and in some cases even better than boys. In order for them to do so, they require, among other things, encouragement, motivation and material support from their parents and communities (Brock & Cummings, 1993). Values and social skills taught primarily to girls need to be extended to boys, alleviating the confusion that mixed messages leave on children struggling to define their identity (Chevannes, 1995).
The more women and men communicate their needs with each other, the better able they will be to form strong partnerships. According to UNICEF (2002), in many (perhaps most) places, men and women are not accustomed to this level of dialogue, yet it is needed if they are to successfully negotiate roles and responsibilities based on family need, and not predetermined gender roles.

**Area for further research**

Research on understanding the knowledge, attitudes and practices of men in child rearing and other family responsibilities relevant for developing countries is limited. The available studies are from a few regional areas and are not representative of many regions therefore there is need for more elaborate new exploratory studies on this topic, and to further document the impact that men can have on the well-being of children and families.

There is a consensus that positive fatherhood is a key factor in breaking gender prescribed attitudes and promoting overall positive child socialization. There is need for further research to provide a clearer understanding of this in culturally specific contexts, which in the long-run can enable organizations running gender interventions to design more inclusive and targeted interventions to facilitate more male involvement for better child life, entitlements and gender equality.
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DATA INSTRUMENTS

Appendix 1

Daughter discipline

a) Parents who discipline the daughter in low income setting

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<th>Frequency</th>
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b) Parents who discipline the daughter in high income setting

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Child preference

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b) In high income setting

<table>
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Sex of the respondents

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b) Sex of the respondent in high income setting

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Age of the respondents

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b) Age of the respondent in high income setting

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Son involvement in decision-making

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b) Son involvement in decisionmaking in high income setting

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### Cost of raising Children

a) Is it expensive to raise a girl in low income settings?

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b) Is it expensive to raise a girl in high income settings?

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### Parent approached if daughter misbehave

a) Person neighbours approach in low income setting

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b) Person neighbours approach in high income setting

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### Daughter discipline

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b) Parents who discipline the daughter in high income setting

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Son disciplining

a) Parents punishing son in low income settings

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b) Parent punishing son in high income setting

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Time to play

a) Daughter playing time in low income setting

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b) Daughter playing time in high-income setting

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Children treatment by parents

a) Children treatment in low income setting by parents

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b) Children treatment in high income setting by parents

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Problem reporting

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b) High income setting

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The person who pays for the girl

a) In low income setting

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### Taking action

#### a) In low income setting

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#### b) In high income setting

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### Sisters/brothers treatment

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#### b) In high income setting

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2

Examples of drawings

A drawing portraying a sad & crying face of a girl in a low income setting

High Income setting. A drawing portraying how a girl feels the brother is a character of protection therefore she needs more boys for better protection
Low income setting. The tree shows the brother is a big person so he is on top of the tree while the sister and the girl are at the bottom being small.

The father is not laughing with the girl except with the boy child in low income setting. (9 yrs old)
The father is sad because he has only one boy. He would like his 3 girls to be boys. (High income setting)

The mother is angry because the father does not treat the girls equally.
QUESTIONNAIRES

Project: The roles of a girl-child in high and low income settings in Kenya.

Section 1: Demographics

1. Sex of respondent      Male      Female
2. Level of Education of respondent
   - Primary 1
   - Secondary 2
   - College 3
   - University graduate 4
   - Post graduate 5
3. Occupation of Respondents? ___________________________
4. Age category of Respondent?
   - 20-24 yrs 1
   - 25 – 30 yrs 2
   - 31 – 35 yrs 3
   - 36 – 40 yrs 4
   - Above 40 yrs 5
5. Social Economic class of Respondent
   - AB 1
   - C1 2
   - C2 3
   - D 4
   - E 5

Section 2: Family interview

6 (a) (i) please tell me something about your family?
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
6 (a) (ii) Prompt: How many
   - Boys
   - Girls
   - In school
   - Out of school

6 (b) (i) Who pays for the girl(s) Education (school fees)? _______________________________
b (ii) Why? _______________________________________________________________________

6 c (i) Please tell me more about your girl-child (daughter) s’ life?
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________

(c) (ii) Does the father/mother have the same feelings like you? Yes ☐ No ☐

(c) (iii) If No, explain?
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

6 (d) Prompt: (optional) Is your daughter involved in decision making in the family?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(ii) What about your son? Yes ☐ No ☐

6 (e) How does your daughter (s) affect your life? __________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

6 (f) Prompt: Is there anything you can tell me about your children with specific reference to your

boy(s) and girl(s)________________________________________________________

6 (g) Are there any specific demand made on the parents by:
(i) Boy child
(ii) Girl child

Please specify in each case ____________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

7 (a) Is mother/father supportive of girl or boy? In which ways? ______________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Alternative Question:

7 (b) (i) Who is the father/mother’s favorite child___________________________________________

b) (ii) Why? _______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
8 (i) Has there been any time you wished your daughter was rather a boy?  Yes ☐ No ☐

(ii) Why? ____________________________________________________________

9 (i) Do you think its expensive to raise a girl?  Yes ☐ No ☐

(ii) Why do you think so? ______________________________________________________

(iii) What about raising a boy? ______________________________________________________

10. What are some of the chores that your child help with or do you think should help with at home?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boy</th>
<th>Girl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>4.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>5.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. As a mother/father how does your daughter(s) affect your career? __________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________

12. (i) Does the father/mother communicate to you about your daughter or is it you who talk to him/her about your daughter?

(ii) Why? ____________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________

(iii) How? ____________________________________________________________

13. (i) When do you start to think of your daughter’s marriage?

(ii) How about your son? ____________________________________________________________

14. (i) When your daughter misbehaves who do the neighbors or other members of society approach?

(ii) Who disciplines your daughter?

(iii) How about your son?

15. (i) When you are seated together, where does your daughter sit? ____________________________
(ii) During meal time, who puts utensils and food on the table?

(ii) Why? ____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

16 If you were to have another child in your family, would you prefer a boy or a girl?

Boy □   Girl □   No difference □

17. (i) (Ask daughter) Do you normally have some time to play?   Yes □  No □

(ii) If yes When /what times ____________________________

________________________________________________________________________

18. (i) What time do you sleep and wake up (Question boy and girl child?) _________________

(ii) (If there is a difference in the time), ask why? ________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

19. (i)Do you think the brother/sister is treated different from you by your parents?  Yes □  No □

(ii) Can you explain why you think so? ________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

20. Whom do you report to when you have a problem? (Let the girl and boy explain what they understand about problem)

   Mother □   Father □

21. Who takes the action when you report a problem?  Mother □   Father □

22. (i) How does your brother /sister treat you?

   Equal □   Different □   Bad □   Rough □

(ii) Why? ____________________________________________________________
Sample descriptions

The following Class Description have been used:

AB - FULLY QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL;
C1 - JUNIOR/MIDDLE MANAGER/FOREMAN
C2 - SKILLED MANUAL WORKER
D - SEMI-SKILLED PART-TRAINED MANUAL WORKER
E - RURAL UNSKILLED

Over more recent years, there has developed a proportion of urban poor E-Class, which is normally not measured or accounted for by research companies.