

**PERCEPTIONS AND
PRACTICES TOWARDS FORMAL EDUCATION OF FEMALE
CHILDREN: A CASE STUDY OF MISISI AND ROMA TOWNSHIPS: 2008 – 2010**

By

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**A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Zambia in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of Master of Arts Degree in Gender Studies.**

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DECLARATION

I, Mbonyiwe Zulu Silumbu, hereby declare that this dissertation represents my own work, and that it has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other university. All published work or material from sources that have been incorporated have been duly acknowledged and adequate references thereby made.

Signed:

Date:

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APPROVAL

This dissertation by Mbonyiwe Zulu Silumbu is approved as fulfilling part of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Gender Studies by the University of Zambia.

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ABSTRACT

This study is entitled Perceptions and Practices towards Formal Education of Female children: A Case Study of Misisi and Roma townships: 2008 – 2010

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective for carrying out this study was to assess and compare the perceptions and practices of parents in Roma Township (high socio-economic area) and Misisi Compound (low socio-economic area) regarding girl child education. The specific objectives were:

1. To examine the practices of parents/guardians regarding sending their children to school.
2. To establish whether parents/guardians have been persuaded to accept that girl child education is as important as boys'.
3. To investigate whether girls are being socialized differently from boys in terms of different roles in the home.
4. To examine the views and practices by disaggregating the results in both areas.
5. To establish how the parents/guardians in the two areas get their perceptions underlying their concept of girl child education, whether it is through the media or other sensitization programmes etc.

STUDY SITE

The selected sites were Roma which is a high cost suburb (approx. population 35,000 people- Census 2000) and Misisi which is a low cost unplanned settlement (population 100,000)

METHODOLOGY

A sample of 200 parents with school age children was selected from Roma and Misisi.

Data was collected through structured questionnaires and focus group discussions.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis was done using quantitative and qualitative methods to come up with descriptive statistics.

STUDY FINDINGS

The study found more educated males than females in both areas. It established that the male and female respondents in both areas in practice favoured sending the boy to school over the girl. The majority of the respondents in both areas agreed that the public had received enough sensitization on the importance of sending girls to school and still sent more boys than girls. There were differences in opinions about the perceived anticipated levels of education for their children with parents in Misisi favouring grade twelve level of education as enough and the parents in Roma preferring tertiary and further education as a better option. It was further established that the poor were socializing their children to perform the same house chores regardless of sex as a survival strategy whilst the rich were socializing their children in performing specific tasks according to sex.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that though the rich and the poor had heard and accepted the importance of sending a girl to school, factors that disadvantaged the girl were common with both groups. Culturally, acceptable values and norms that regard the male as the bread winner result in practices and attitudes that are gender biased in the socialization of the girl and of the boy. There are persistent practices that have not changed over time such as preference of sending boys to school over the girl regardless of the social background.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that gender biases in the homes could be addressed through vigorous advocacy programmes by government in collaboration with NGOs that promote gender parity.

DEDICATION

To my mother, Elizabeth Mubanga Zulu

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was made successful due to the encouragement and guidance of my supervisor in the University of Zambia Department of Gender Studies, Dr Fay Gadsden. I would also like to thank the Head of Department of Gender Studies, University of Zambia, Dr Kusanthan who understood the nature of my demanding job that I was doing during the course of writing this dissertation. Lastly but not the least, my warm thanks go to my entire family for their support whilst I undertook this study.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CEDAW	- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	- Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	- Central Statistics Office
FAWEZA	- Forum for African Women Educationalists of Zambia
FNDP	- Fifth National Development Plan
GBV	- Gender Based Violence
GIDD	- Gender In Development Division
IEC	- Information, Education and Communication
MDGS	- Millennium Development Goals
MNPF	- Ministry of Finance and National Planning
MoE	- Ministry of Education
MoH	- Ministry of Health
NGO	- Non-governmental Organisation
PAGE	- Programme for the Advancement of Girls' Education
SADC	- Southern African Development Community
UNGEI	- United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNICEF	- United Nations Children's' Education Fund
VSU	- Victim Support Unit
ZDHS	- Zambia Demographic Health Survey

