

Praxes, Issues and Challenges in Mainstreaming Gender and Development at Senior High School

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ABSTRACT: *One of the pressing issues that the world is facing nowadays is the unresolved problem on gender equality. As being stipulated in the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDG) Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world. The objective of this study is to examine the common practices, issues and challenges on implementation gender and development programs at the Senior High School level in the Philippines. Different means in deciphering the issues was already implemented by different countries especially where gender inequality is in height. To name a few, education is the prime measure that they foresee. Issues on Gender Mainstreaming must be addressed through the following emerging themes; Identifying Identity, Execute the Experiences, Cultivate the Culture, Focus to Fairness, Decipher Differences, and above all Train the Teachers.*

KEYWORDS – Gender and Development, Philippines, Senior High Schools, Gender Responsive Curriculum

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the pressing issues that the world is facing nowadays is the unresolved problem on gender equality. As being stipulated in the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDG) Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world.

UNESCO's Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Framework (2003) defines Gender Equality as women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and for contributing to, and benefiting from, economic, social, cultural, and political development. Gender equality is therefore the equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences of men and women, and the roles they play. It is based on women and men being full partners in their home, their community, and their society.

Different means in deciphering the issues was already implemented by different countries especially where gender inequality is in height. To name a few, education is the prime measure that they foresee. Despite the fact that there is an apparent advance in technology brought by the development of education and research, there are still numerous disturbing incidents of gender discrimination that lead to violence. Issues on gender equality must be addressed immediately for it has direct effect on the nation's economic growth and human improvement.

The Department of Education (DepEd) has been true to its mission that all students learn in a child-friendly, gender-sensitive, safe, and motivating environment. Different programs were initiated to impart to the students as well as to the stakeholders the value of gender equality. Various department orders were implemented to empower the possible solution on gender equality.

DepEd took part in addressing the issue on gender equality through the DepEd Order 36 series of 2017 also known as Gender-Responsive Basic Education Basic Education Policy.

DepEd issues the enclosed **Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy** in line with its Gender and Development (GAD) mandate as stipulated in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Republic Act (RA) No. 9710 or the *Magna Carta of Women* (MCW), RA 10533 or the *Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013*, and the Philippines' International Human Rights Commitments to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) among others.

School is considered as one of the best implementing institutions in educating the young minds on the issues of gender equality. The pursuit of gender equality relies on everyone's interests and responsibility. Wide

understanding on the issues must be well identified which gender-based problems among men were failed to be discussed. Gender Mainstreaming does not only deal with women, but how policies will be assessed and make valuable impact on both women and men. It deals with every individual's right and needs as the member of the society.

The study purposively selected five senior high school principals and five senior high school teachers in the Division of Bataan and City Division of Balanga. Perceptibly, there appeared to have been an advocate of gender and development in their respective schools. Verbal consent was also considered from each participant and anonymity was also assured by using code names.

The researchers interviewed the participants using the interview guided questions to have a comprehensive data that can give light on the issues on gender mainstreaming. Data were treated thru the philosophical underpinning of Edmund Husserl's ontological assumptions of interpretivism which transpires in social reality based on the multiple perspectives of an incident and determined by interpreted meaning and symbols.

This study also ensured ethical undertaking as it employed issuance of consent among participants. Anonymity and privacy were also facilitated as participants were coded not in their real name and status.

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The integration of the gender and development in the teaching and other school activities has been a practice for a longtime among teachers and school administrators. One of the common in the practices is the overview of the idea of sex and gender.

Numerous seminars, trainings, Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, and benchmarking helped in identifying some gray clouds on the issues and challenges in mainstreaming gender equality among schools in the Division of Bataan and City Division of Bataan.

It is evident that matters of GAD and concerns in mainstreaming are broadly wide-ranging and swelled in various discipline.

This, in a way, manifest, that GAD issues and concerns are broad comprehensive and can cut across in various disciplines.

Identifying Identity

In teaching we applied the mix method, especially in having our group activity, each group are composed of both male and female in a group. Materials we used such as clippings, videos pictures, etc. are all gender sensitive before we use them.

Seat and Group students intentionally – by creating a dynamic seating chart, can break up boys or girls only cliques and encourage both groups to engage with each other integrating a mix of boys and girls within small group projects.

I am using group activities which can help students be given an equal opportunity to learn, interact and connect with others. I also make use of materials which are gender sensitive. I make sure that everyone is being treated fairly.

Execute the Experiences

Sadly, there are instances wherein some situation would call for better opportunities or chances for a particular gender. For example, some act and prefer MALE students for leadership.

Different views of both help each one of us to understand each other. Challenges help us grow both learner and teacher.

As a faculty, my views about mainstreaming GAD, is that it allows everyone to see and respect one's differences and could be a best platform in promoting Gender equality not only for gays, lesbian but for all. And for me the

greatest challenge of this GAD is the acceptance and sustainability of this program since we always have differences in terms of views, opinions, and culture.

As a faculty member, we just need to accept our differences. We must have an equal opportunity to express our point and views. But in the end having fair judgment be a must. We must enjoy the same status and conditions to realize our potentials and contribute to social, mental, and physical development of our students.

Cultivate the Culture

No. I guess there is no need for significant organizational change, everyone can get along well with others; it will only take, respect and understanding.

For me, significant organizational change is not required in truly mainstreaming gender. What we need is the change of mindset of everyone in the society.

Weighing each argument sensitively is a good way in accepting the views and opinions of your colleagues with fair assessment and judgment.

For me it is more of organizational culture and atmosphere that we need to change in order to truly mainstream gender, that we allow and value other preference in terms of their feelings about gender.

No, because gender is just an identity, it must not be a barrier. It means that there is no sex discrimination in the allocation of resources and benefits or access to services.

Focus to Fairness

I think seminar and symposium focusing on gender equality and differences can be a great help.

We (teachers) always have seminars about GAD which is happen yearly that include in our AIP and funded five percent of MOOE, at the same time we have incorporated programs in our intramurals and other school activities that showcase the talents of our students not only men and women but also gays and lesbians so that everybody can feel their belongingness inside the school.

In planning of programs and activities in school. It must be in an objective type event. The focus of each program is to develop holistically without discrimination. For teachers and non-teaching staffs, the school has series of workshop that equipped them the sensitively of such issue.

The school must plan activities that are gender sensitive and respect one another whether women or men. Also, the programs and activities develop equal status for building good relationship in molding our students and teachers towards gender development.

GAD for teachers, for learners I suggest to have / conduct Gender awareness symposium.

Decipher Differences

One of the biggest challenges on Gender Mainstreaming is the differences in views on the part of the students. Students may act in civil manner, but we can never fully claim that all students are open minded, and they have understood other genders preferences and status.

The greatest challenge on Gender mainstreaming is the acceptance and sustainability of this program since we always have these differences in terms of views, opinions, and culture.

Cultural biases and ideologies and stereotyping.

There still exists gender discrimination, the challenges are to overcome the discrimination and thru into acceptance and respect among genders.

Train the Teacher

Because when we talk about gender specialists, those are highly trained about handling different GAD issues which demands professional skills to solve that problem such as, bullying, rape and among others.

We need gender specialist to help the society change his view about gender.

Even DepEd already mainstreamed gender sensitivity, we still need a gender specialist because he/she is the one who is more knowledgeable in all the facets that discuss the sensitivity of the. He / she also can produce materials that the students could in their development. Through that we could create a better educational system that centers all genders.

He or she more knowledgeable than others. He / she can handle different issues regarding on Gender inequality. Also, he or she equalizes the opportunities that the school may encounter. His or her expertise as gender specialist is needed in school for having a friendly and gender – sensitive environment.

I guess a gender specialist can somehow identify the limitations of some of the programs of the Deped in mainstreaming gender. However, teachers can also be a specialist if they sense take considerations the premises of gender awareness and sensitivity despite cultural differences, status differences and social diversity.

Gender Mainstreaming is somehow being practiced among schools in the Division of Bataan and along other schools in the City Division of Balanga. Different contextualized practices are being exercise by the teachers and school administrators.

It is very common among the participants that they practice equality through identifying the gender identity of their students in every classroom and school activities. Through this strategy, they believe that they can be able to kelp the students to express their thoughts and feelings so that they can come up with an excellent output. Also, students can also have an equal chance to communicate to each other and exchange their ideas about the given topic. Based on the experiences of the participants, Gender Mainstreaming is an opportunity for everyone regardless of their gender identity to accept and sustain the program regardless of their differences in terms of views, opinions, and culture.

Participants also stress the importance of cultivating the culture of love and respect among everyone. Through this, everyone could be sensitive in accepting views and opinions and have a fair judgment in every circumstances. Although Gender and Development is being practiced in every schools long before, participants are still aiming to have a resilient continuity of the program. Programs, seminars, and even trainings that focus on the holistic development of every teacher, non-teaching personnel, school administrators, students, and stakeholders must be properly implemented. Proper utilization of the fund would probably help in equipping everyone on the challenges of Gender Mainstreaming.

Gender discrimination is still existing in every corner of the classroom. Students have their own views which influenced by their culture. The challenge among teachers is how they are going to eradicate borderlines on cultural bias and acceptance.

Teachers who are the front liners in educating the students on gender mainstreaming must be equipped with all the knowledge and skills. This could be possible with the help of the gender specialist that can guide them all the premises of gender awareness and sensitivity.

III. SYNTHESIS

Gender Mainstreaming does not only deal with women, but how policies will be assessed and make valuable impact on both women and men. It deals with every individual's right and needs as the member of the society.

Success of Gender Mainstreaming in a school organization entails significant change on the policy and practice. Attaining this change requires action across the entire DepEd Organization.

It is everyone's responsibility to fully implement Gender Mainstreaming which could address several issues in the school organization. Likewise, a monitoring and evaluation committee that will strategically address the implementation of mainstreaming is lacking. Thus, a schematic process on the mainstreaming through work instructions is relevant to pursue.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers who served as warriors in the battlefield must be armed with necessary knowledge and guarded with lots of trainings that can equip them in mainstreaming gender.

Teachers must first identify the identity of everyone inside the classroom so that they know how they are going to deal with the challenges of everyone's differences. Classroom is considered as one of the best platforms in executing the challenges in Gender Mainstreaming that whatever challenges it is, acceptance and sustainability of the program must be the top priority.

Teachers should also cultivate the culture of love and respect to everyone for love equates respect. Having love and respect can promote a sounding atmosphere where hatred and discrimination has no place. One of the guiding principles of gender mainstreaming is practicing fairness and equality. Teachers must be fair at all-time whatever circumstances it may be. To practice equality, teacher must decipher differences among students and everyone in the school community. Through careful identification, cultural biases, ideologies, and stereotyping will be addressed.

A Technical Working Group thru a committee may be helpful to address the issues on mainstreaming the Gender and Development in the Department of Education in partnership with the Local School Board in the Philippines.

Above anything else, all that have been mentioned would not be possible without the proper training the teachers. Support from the gender specialist must be given so that every teacher would have an utmost assistance.

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