



Article

From Colonial Shadows to Campus Equity: Gender Mainstreaming in Region 1's SUCs

Aniza C. Gadaza¹ & Mark Anthony D. Latoja²

¹Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University, & ²Saint Louis College, City of San Fernando

Correspondence: agadaza@dmmmsu.edu.ph

Abstract

This study aimed to evaluate and analyze the awareness and implementation of gender mainstreaming in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Region I, with the goal of informing a three-year strategic plan. Specifically, it assessed the extent to which SUCs integrate gender-sensitive curricula, gender-responsive research programs, and gender-responsive extension initiatives, while identifying challenges encountered in their implementation. Employing a sequential explanatory mixed methods design, the researcher utilized a validated, researcher-developed questionnaire complemented by one-on-one interviews. The study engaged 382 respondents, comprising school administrators, faculty, non-teaching personnel, and students, for the quantitative phase, and four GAD focal persons for the qualitative phase during the 2022–2023 academic year. Statistical tools such as frequencies and means were used to interpret the data. Findings revealed that respondents were highly aware of gender-responsive academic and institutional programs, and that these were very highly implemented across SUCs. The study culminated in the development of a thematic model and a validated strategic plan to enhance gender mainstreaming efforts. Framed within the broader historical context, the research underscores how contemporary gender initiatives in Region I's SUCs serve as a progressive response to deeply rooted cultural norms and colonial legacies that once shaped educational and gender structures.

Keywords: Colonial legacies, Campus equity, Gender mainstreaming, Gender-sensitive curriculum, Gender-responsive research program, Gender-responsive extension program

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Introduction

Education is widely recognized as a benefit to individuals and a development tool for countries. Education is concerned with fulfilling gender goals such as recognizing gender-based violence and discrimination, gender equality, gender equity, freedom of expression or right to say, gender-fair language and identity, and so forth. School is a strong factor in shaping children's belief system or orientation as they become adults. With this, education also provides the correct climate for gender equality. Although the family or community socially dictates gender, people's beliefs in themselves are often impacted by how roles are communicated. Often, communication is a symbol, not static but dynamic when created and then reflected in a personal interaction or social relationship with others. If the truth about equality can be conveyed, beliefs about gender can also be affected. Education and the younger generation also lead to increases in their later incomes or earning potential, enlarging the future choices and opportunities for both boys and girls.

Education is the process of education that has a global role in the development of the whole person, particularly personal and social development. Education aims to give people the knowledge, skills, and self-confidence to participate fully in the development process - an important way to empower people. It remains the most immediate tool for actively participating in the community and country's social, economic, and political life and concerns (Galamgam, 2021).

People become educated because they can, and it allows them to acquire new skills and interact with other people civilly. If they know the rights they must maintain, they can take some action when their rights are transgressed. Knowing one's rights gives them a basis to recognize instances of discrimination and abuse of power and can inform them on the appropriate course of action. Unfortunately, discrimination still exists and continues to be tolerated in many societies around the world; therefore, it is first necessary to help people see that women have the right to education, as it is a fundamental right, as well as men's. In addition to the commonplace discrimination in terms of gender preferences, many behaviors are damaging to individuals that are not paid attention to (Campbell, 2017).

Since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, coalitions for change have been established alongside partners in civil society, the private sector, and government organizations to advance the community. With the support of the World Bank, many hoped to include gender considerations in all their work. Feminism in Asia has gone beyond its understanding as the struggle for women's rights and legal reforms in education, property rights, and suffrage. Feminism's understanding has expanded to encompass an awareness and analysis of women's discrimination and

exploitation in diverse spheres, including at home, at work, and in society; as well as a conscious determination on the part of all women and men to end gender inequality (Lunsing, 2019).

A politically unified, economically integrated, socially responsible, and genuinely people-centered, people-oriented, and rules-based ASEAN. A region continued to experience phenomenal economic growth as they worked in free trade zones, manufacturing, and domestic service as migrant workers at home and abroad. In addition, they have been engaged in unpaid and undervalued reproductive work that holds families and communities together. They are now showing up in boardrooms as CEOs and economic managers. Increased education levels now allow women to enter politics and help shape the agendas of their governments. However, gender issues, especially discrimination, disparities in wages, and violence against women in all its forms across all dimensions of women's lives, have stopped women from realizing their all-around potential. Change must come at the institutional, structural, and, more importantly, in people's mindsets to enable women to participate equally in development.

The education sector in ASEAN continues to underpin an ASEAN community focused on the individual and an ASEAN awareness with a sustainable development agenda, focusing on equity in access to good quality inclusive education and promoting lifelong learning through quality capability and capacity building initiatives, and clear structural frameworks.

Universities are places of high occupational learning where individuals develop social, intellectual, and economic benefits. While many universities in Pakistan have the capacity to deliver quality higher education to their population, they agree there is a gap when compared to developed countries due to academic and administrative reasons. In addition, despite 69 years of independence, they are still not managing to find the best route to render standard and valuable education to their community because major issues in their education remain, such as a curriculum that has not changed in years, practice based learning and pedagogies, examinations that are not connected to real life situations and present political leadership interests, lack of genuine interest in education management and administration as referred to in Faridullah (2017).

The Philippines endorses the ASEAN Secretariat Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025 (2016) in Southeast Asia. All member states commit to improving the quality of life of their people through cooperative activities that are people-oriented and people-centered, environmentally sound, and aimed toward sustainable development. It also envisages an inclusive ASEAN that aspires to achieve gender

equality, eliminate all forms of discrimination, and address discrimination against women.

The 1987 Philippine Constitution states, *“The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make education accessible to all”* (Article XIV, Section 1). The implications are that the Philippines is under international and national legal obligations to incorporate gender equality into the principles, aims, and processes of Philippine education. It is consistent with other international commitments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The government further affirms its commitment through global action plans such as the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (on education), the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (Goal No.5 2 on Universal Education, and Goal No. 3 on Gender Equality), and the Sustainable Development Goals (Goal No. 4 on Quality Education, Goal No. 5 on Gender Equality, and Goal No. 10 on Reduced Inequalities).

The Philippine Commission on Women summarized and published the findings of the Women’s Empowerment, Development, and Gender Equality (Women’s EDGE) Plan 2013-2016 about the longstanding gender issues in the Philippine education systems which state that: a) boys underperform in key education indicators compared to girls; b) Indigenous Peoples (IPs) are lagging on enrolment data, experience discrimination and inequitable access; c) higher education credentials manifest notable gender segregations; d) gender biases and stereotypes remain and stay ingrained in the curricula, pedagogical practices and material and learning media; e) women and girls are still prone to sexual harassment and violence in schools.

The 2016 National Baseline Study on Violence Against Children, conducted by the Council for the Welfare of Children, and the Systematic Literature Review on the Drivers of Violence Affecting Children conducted by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) have revealed that violence against children is pervasive in both boys and girls and that boys are increasingly becoming victims of sexual abuse more than girls. Sexual harassment is the most recognized type of sexual violence, with girls being especially vulnerable. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth are at risk of sexual violence perpetrated by peers; LGBT children suffer physical and psychological bullying at an alarmingly high rate. Previous experiences of violence influence violence in schools. Although violence is prevalent in schools, disclosures are at a low rate, and when children disclose and seek assistance, the most common

person whom children disclose to is their teacher. Therefore, teachers and school personnel should appreciate and understand children's rights.

State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and other academic institutions are crucial in addressing the problem of gender inequality in the country. As Fraser argues, socio-economic and cultural injustices must always be weighed. Academic institutions must get rid of the traditional stance typically adopted, whereby, in the past, women's participation was largely excluded. They should provide institutional support to women academics and other male colleagues in working towards gender equality and women's human rights if we incorporate gender equality as a principle of development strategies (Pulmano 2016).

The pursuit of gender equity in Region I, in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), unfolds within a complex historical landscape shaped by centuries of colonial rule and enduring cultural norms. From the spiritual authority of pre-colonial babaylans to the gendered restrictions imposed during Spanish and American occupations, Philippine higher education has long been a site of contested gender roles and institutional power.

Commission on Higher Education (CHED) is the agency mandated to: (1) develop and promote gender-sensitive curriculum; 2) develop gender fair instructional materials; (3) ensure that educational institutions implement a capacity building program on gender, peace and human rights education for their officials, faculty and non-teaching staff and personnel, promote partnerships between and among players of the education sector; (4) promote partnerships between and among players of the education sector; (5) encourage advertising industry and other similar institutions to provide unrestricted use of space and installation of displays for schools, colleges and universities for campaigns to end discrimination and violence against women; and (6) guarantee that educational institutions provide scholarship programs for marginalized women and girls set the minimum standards for programs and institutions of higher learning, (MCW IRR, Rule IV, Section 16).

Pursuant to its mandate as a Responsible Agency to implement the MC W, CHED shall direct the institutionalization of the required policies, standards and guidelines to build its internal capacities and those of its external clientele and stakeholders in mainstreaming Gender and Development (GAD) within CHED and in the various functions of higher education, in accordance with the function of the State to "exercise reasonable supervision and regulation Of all educational institutions" (1987 Philippine Constitution, Article XIV, Section 4).

Thus, on July 2, 2010, the Commission approved the CHED Special Order creating the CHED GAD Focal Committee and Secretariat, which initiated the GAD

program of the Commission, in coordination with the PC W, Civil Service Commission, and other co-convenors from the public and private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Thereafter, the Commission approved the constitution of the GAD Focal Point System (GFPS) of CHED and committed to undertaking all necessary and appropriate mechanisms to advance the cause of GAD by the above-stated policies and directives.

As a consequence, the Commission directed the formulation of this set of Policy Guidelines to guide all HEIS in their concomitant responsibilities under applicable laws, rules and regulations of the PC W, which was endorsed to the Commission en banc (CEB) by the Central GAD Focal Committee and the Management Committee upon completion during their joint meeting with the CEB on January 26, 2015. Thereafter, the Commission en banc, issued Resolution 040, series of 2015, approving these Guidelines effective upon completion of the procedure provided for under Part XV, Section 2 hereof.

Thus, Gender Mainstreaming or Gender and Development (GAD) mainstreaming is the primary global strategy for ensuring that the government pursues gender equality in all aspects of the development process to achieve the vision of a gender-responsive society where women and men equally contribute to and benefit from development. Since governments committed to this concept in the Beijing Platform for Action during the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in 1995, its importance has been extensively discussed.

It endeavors to look more comprehensively at the relationship between men and women regarding their access to and control over resources, decision-making, and benefits and rewards within a particular system, which may be an organization, a government, or an entire society. Gender mainstreaming necessitates the transformation of institutional structures, culture, and practices wherein gender concerns become central instead of remaining as peripheral issues and concerns.

Through this study, the level of awareness of school heads and teachers on gender and development-related concepts, policies, and mandates could be identified, as this could be affecting the mainstreaming of GAD in the schools. Also, the challenges in implementing GAD can be identified, and the degree of seriousness of these challenges may be gauged as a basis for some needed gender and development programs, projects, and activities.

This study can help distinguish what needs to change or improve in the existing curriculum to lead to a better and more gender-sensitive education system. Also, teachers are made conscious of gender-role socialization, as well as the messages they convey without realizing it, such as providing different modes of delivery, unequal

time, and types of attention to boys and girls in the classroom. The study results can provide a foundation for better programs, projects, and activity planning for state universities. As such, this study is undertaken to determine how far and how well HEIs have implemented the GRBE policy. It aims to determine the extent of implementing gender responsive policies as part of the institutions' drive towards gender-fair education.

Methodology

The study used mixed methods with a sequential explanatory design. A researcher-made questionnaire was used for the data collection, which was announced as validated through a one-on-one interview format. The study's respondents included 382 school administrators, faculty, non-teaching personnel, and students for the quantitative data and 4 GAD focal persons for the qualitative data during the School Year 2022-2023. The statistical tools included frequencies and means.

Findings and Discussions

Summary of the Level of Awareness of Gender Mainstreaming

Table 1 shows the summary of the level of awareness of gender mainstreaming. It can be noted in the table that the overall awareness of the respondents on gender and development is 3.65, which is described as high awareness. This means that the faculty and department heads have a high awareness of gender and development in the institution; in particular, they have a very high awareness of how gender and development are incorporated into curriculum, research, and extension.

In addition, we can note that among the noted areas of interest, the highest sub-mean was on gender responsive curriculum. The respondents are most aware of how gender and development are incorporated in the programs, courses, and other academically related learning experiences.

Table 1: Summary of the Level of Awareness of Gender Mainstreaming

Indicator	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Gender Sensitive Curriculum		
a. Policy	4.00	HA
b. People	3.49	MA
c. Enabling Mechanisms	3.83	HA
d. Programs, Activities and Projects (PAPs)	3.66	HA
Sub Mean	3.75	HA
Gender Responsive Research Program		
a. Policy	3.38	MA

b. People	3.72	HA
c. Enabling Mechanisms	3.67	HA
d. Programs, Activities and Projects (PAPs)	3.65	HA
Sub-Mean	3.61	HA
Gender Responsive Extension Program		
a. Policy	3.79	HA
b. People	3.35	MA
c. Enabling Mechanisms	3.52	HA
d. Programs, Activities and Projects (PAPs)	3.72	HA
Sub-Mean	3.60	HA
Overall Mean	3.65	HA

Legend: HI- Highly Implemented MI-Moderately Implemented

Conversely, it can be noted that a sub-mean of 3.60 occurred on extension. While this is lower, it is still evident that it is regarded in a state of high awareness. This result may be due to moderate awareness in relation to people.

Summary of the Extent of Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming

Table 2 presents an overall summary of the survey responses on the extent of implementation of gender mainstreaming. As illustrated in the table, the overall implementation of the respondents on gender and development is 3.47, which is interpreted as moderately implemented. It implies that the faculty, students, and staff implemented some of the policies, enabling mechanisms, project activities, and programs concerning gender mainstreaming in general, concerning gender and development integrated into curriculum, research, and extension programs.

Furthermore, it could be noted that the three areas of focus under gender mainstreaming, the highest sub-mean of 3.58 was reported under gender responsive curriculum. It suggests that it is the easiest area in the institutionalized gender development program on basic intentions and learning experiences to integrate the program of gender and development.

The finding supports Beneria's (2018) perspective on bringing gender development into the curriculum. It suggests that teachers need to have gender awareness to respond to girls' and boys' learning and development choices and help children engage in identity exploration and establish connections among others to understand their place in their community, establish self-advocacy behaviors, and experience well-being (mentally, physically, culturally, socially, and spiritually), social acceptance, and social support. Gender integration enhances and promotes developing and implementing gender-transformative health initiatives, policies, and services.

Table 2: Summary of the Extent of Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming

Indicator	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Gender Sensitive Curriculum		
a. Policy	3.75	MI
b. People	3.50	HI
c. Enabling Mechanisms	3.69	HI
d. Programs, Activities and Projects (PAPs)	3.37	HI
Sub Mean	3.58	HI
Gender Responsive Research Program		
a. Policy	3.55	HI
b. People	3.25	MI
c. Enabling Mechanisms	3.17	MI
d. Programs, Activities and Projects (PAPs)	3.20	MI
Sub-Mean	3.29	MI
Gender Responsive Extension Program		
a. Policy	3.43	MI
b. People	3.59	HI
c. Enabling Mechanisms	3.61	HI
d. Programs, Activities and Projects (PAPs)	3.56	HI
Sub-Mean	3.55	HI
Overall Mean	3.47	MI

Legend: HI- Highly Implemented MI-Moderately Implemented

In another context, the lowest sub-mean of 3.29, which is considered moderately implemented, was reported in a research program. It indicates that while the topic of gender mainstreaming is a fascinating area of study regarding how gender is taken into consideration in development, or the way to view how social norms and power structures influence the lives and opportunities for different cohorts of men and women, the respondents are limited in time for conducting research. The low amount of research being done on gender development may also be due to the sensitivity of the issue. Some still do not feel comfortable speaking about workplace discrimination.

The findings are contrary to Bautista's (2021) finding that gender development studies give reports that investigate how greater gender equality can result in improved productivity, better developmental outcomes for the next generation, and more representative institutions. The finding was about markets, institutions, and households contributing to reducing inequality and the positive possibilities of globalization. National actors needed to focus on female mortality reduction, closing education and earnings gaps, increasing women's voice, and limiting vertical gender equality across generations. The international community had to ensure sustained

support, improve the availability of gender disaggregated data, and extend partnerships beyond governments and development organizations.

Validated Three (3) –Year Strategic Plan for Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is a systematic approach to ensuring that a gender perspective is included in developing all kinds of public policy, programming, and projects to deal with the complex public-sector policy issues facing policy and decision-makers today, improving the efficiency of resource allocation. Improving women's and men's well-being will contribute to greater social justice and an improved ability to deal with sustainability.

The importance of mainstreaming, especially in education, is critical to articulating the rights of all humans. Society imposes gender identity on males and females through socialization. Gender is "the social roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes a society considers appropriate for women and men. Gender stereotypes are also commonly held notions or stereotypes of a person's attributes based on incorrect and unproven hypotheses. Gender stereotypes are the social and cultural constructions of women and men based upon the fact that they all have different physical, biological, sexual, and social functions. Gender stereotypes are based on traditional concepts of the roles and positions of women and men in society. Gender stereotypes are preconceived notions in ways that describe behavior; men and women are classified in ways that suggest characteristics and behaviors are determined and limited by their sex. While how gender stereotypes are portrayed may change, the basic assumptions about the appropriate role for women as wives and mothers in families and communities survive in many societies. Deconstruction of stereotypes requires an understanding that human nature is comprised of combinations of male and female traits. That sex differences are biological only and have no significance to social, economic, or political outcomes in society.

As women, trans, gender non-conforming, and non-binary people are becoming more visible in the world, we must deconstruct the stereotypes and biases and provide them with safe spaces to study and work. For us, this means a shift in our mindset. The critical shift needs to be from 'mankind' to humankind. We must be aware of the differential outcomes of our thoughts, actions, and systems that impact men, women, and 'others', and then we must implement mechanisms that disrupt those inequities, in planning, actioning, monitoring, and reviewing at regular points in time.

Higher education institutions should be inclusive, where everyone is treated equally and provided an opportunity for that equality. Education should be

understood as a holistic approach to developing and acknowledging human worth. Higher Education institutions should consider gender an important part of their mission and vision by recognizing all subjects through the lens of 'gender'.

The three-year strategic plan was developed as one of the study outcomes, using the results of the researcher-made questionnaire given to the administrators, faculty members, non-teaching staff members, and students in School Year 2022-2023. The strategic plan stems from the identified weaknesses in the level of awareness and extent of implementation of gender and development. It will seek support from the administrators and personnel in multiple ways to make it effective due to the likelihood of engaging more people in more ways.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall, the following conclusions can be drawn from the study. Gender knowledge fosters the sharing of concepts, enhances understanding of many different perspectives, promotes capacity building and skills training for societal transformation. Gender knowledge provides consistent and accessible evidence to make sense of gender equality as a fundamental value of democratic societies. Gender knowledge coupled with gender expertise is important in embedding a gender consciousness into policies, programs, projects, and services that are gender aware and accountable to different women's and men's experiences, needs, and priorities. GAD experts, advocates, women's organizations, and other stakeholders build on each other and enhance their partnerships to work on sector-specific gender mainstreaming instances and issues. The thematic framework and validated three-year strategic plan are examples of collaborations that have engaged like-minded individuals to increase knowledge and capacity of gender mainstreaming initiatives, the reflection of the curriculum, research, and extension design and development.

It offers recommendations based on the results and conclusions of the study: The Higher Education Institutions in the province of La Union should consider the use and implementation of the thematic model and the validated strategic plan. The GAD focal persons of the HEIs in the province of La Union should continue their advocacy to raise awareness of changing attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs that reinforce inequalities between women and men. There should be an increase in awareness-raising approaches in practice, as it is imperative to generate a space conducive to debate, generate political interest, and encourage mobilization to seek broad support and political will to implement gender mainstreaming and gender equality policies. Gender awareness raising goes hand in hand with gender equality training, which is a mechanism to deliver the relevant information and knowledge, and to act. It is

particularly true for actors involved in policy processes because it equips them to develop interventions that respond to women's and men's priorities and needs. The GAD focal persons should develop community-based initiatives as local contextualized initiatives to mobilize communities, empower women, and promote community dialogue on gender equality by encouraging public meetings, presentations, workshops, and creative informal social events that use interpersonal and participatory approaches.

GAD focal persons should also formulate initiatives for men and boys. It is important to acknowledge the necessity of understanding the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality and having them participate in gender equality initiatives. SUCs should also increase the use of gender-neutral language, avoiding biased or exclusionary language or nouns that suggest reference only to males, or avoiding the use of gender pronouns to refer to people who may be either female or male, without relying upon stereotypes, gendered adjectives, paternalizing language, and sexist terms and expressions. Media should also prepare communication materials to represent and capture women's and men's voices and make them visible and treated equally in media products and messages, ensuring that the voices of both women and men are present in press releases, news stories, broadcasts, and other communications that the media uses to inform the public and to increase awareness. GAD Focal persons should also create an integrated communication strategy or program that includes all of the channels that reinforce the communicated message, which includes communications strategies that aim to effectively disseminate pertinent messages, involving larger media outlets so that the message reaches youth, social media, and networks, which address interactivity and the possibility for the message to be disseminated through online outlets.

College professors should include more in the syllabus gender-sensitive communications, which can help to challenge gender stereotypes through language and images to avoid the use of words and expressions that reinforce gender stereotypes and images that represent them and/or violence. College professors should utilize images that depict a balanced representation of both genders to ensure they do not discriminate against either gender or preclude the portrayal of a person. Future researchers should engage in research like other variables regarding gender mainstreaming.

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